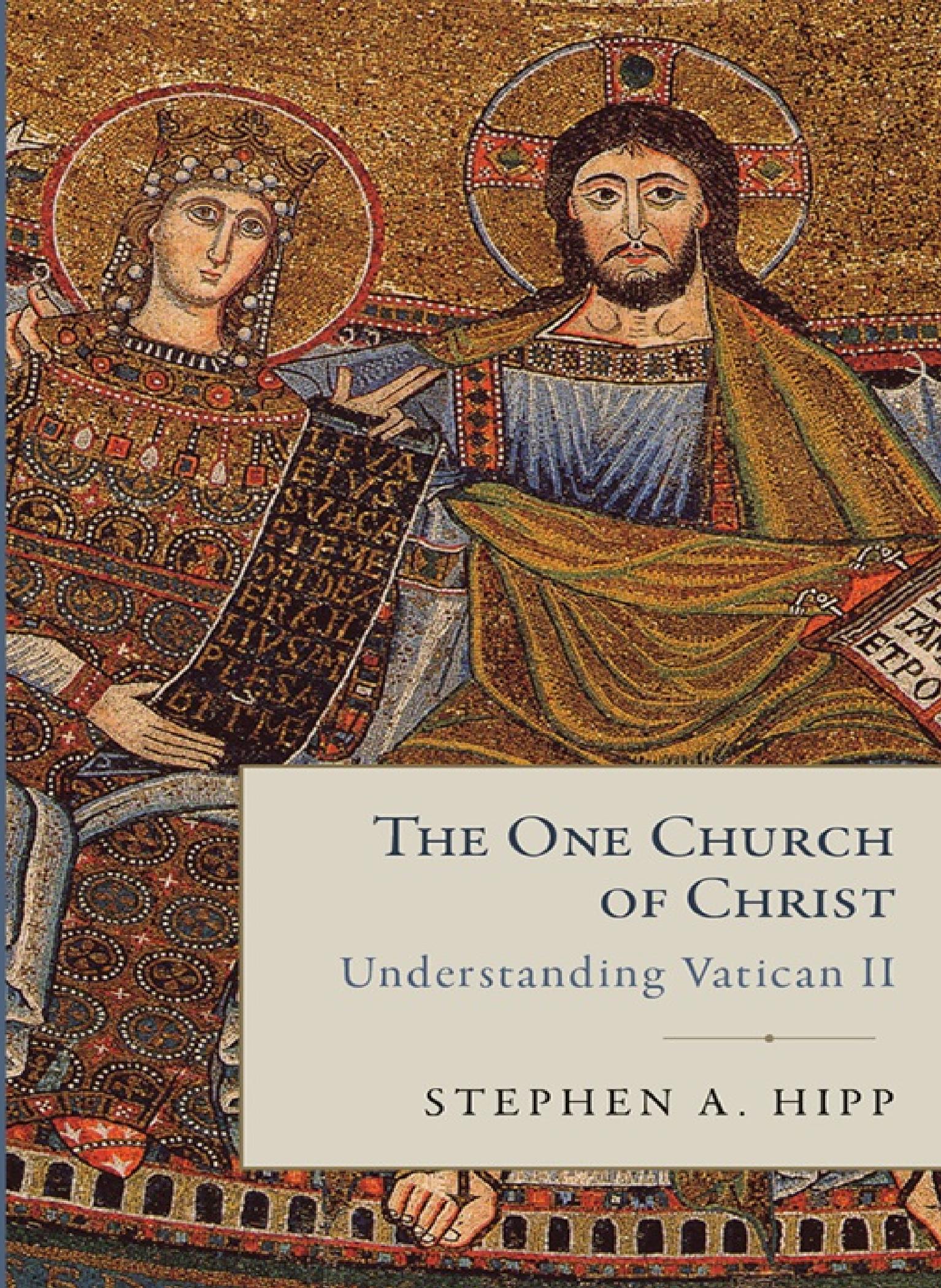


RENEWAL WITHIN TRADITION



THE ONE CHURCH
OF CHRIST
Understanding Vatican II

STEPHEN A. HIPPI

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RENEWAL WITHIN TRADITION

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Introduction

FEW TOPICS IN the history of theology have provoked as much controversy as the question of the relationship between Christ's Church and the multiple constituencies of a divided Christendom. The height of this controversy revolves around the ecclesiological teachings of the Second Vatican Council. Since that signal moment, theologians have argued uninterruptedly over the intended meaning of the Council's statements and specific vocabulary regarding the relations between Christ's Church, the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communities. As is well known, the Council addressed questions concerning not only the distinctively Catholic realization of the ecclesial mystery, but also the way that that mystery relates to other Christian communions and to human societies in general. It also adopted a specific and differentiated terminology to express different aspects of the *de facto* multivalent realization of Christ's ecclesial mystery. This terminology includes a set of terms applied uniquely to the Catholic Church, along with others that are applied to non-Catholic communities, terms denoting, for example, "fullness," "perfection," and "universality," on the one hand, and "partiality," "defectiveness," and "derivation," on the other. Thus, the Council speaks, for example, of the one and indivisible Church of Christ as "subsisting" in the Catholic Church, and of the presence within non-Catholic Christianities of "elements of sanctification and of truth";¹ and of the fullness of the means of salvation within the Catholic Church, and of the possibility for non-Catholic communions to serve as means of salvation.² What emerges is a nuanced theology of the Church presenting the Catholic Church in relation to her separated brethren in terms of profound unity and irreducible distinction. The necessity of simultaneously recognizing each of these features, and the tension and

metaphysical priorities and posteriorities implied by their conjunction, already highlights the difficulties facing the theologian wishing to expound the Council's ecclesiology. Its understanding of the ecclesial stature of the Catholic Church, the ecclesial status of non-Catholic Christian communities, and the intricate relation between them—marked by essential difference, commonality and causal dependency—must all be ascertained. Such is the proximate goal of the present volume. In the pages to follow, I will look first at the Council's understanding of the unique and irrepeatable manner in which Christ's Church exists in the Catholic Church; then at its understanding of the ecclesial character of non-Catholic Christian communities; then at the causal dynamism that bonds these communities with the Catholic Church; and, finally, at the manner in which the theological names "church" and "ecclesiality" can be applied both to the Catholic Church and to non-Catholic communions.

The first two chapters explore the various expressions taken up by the Council Fathers in their effort to relate the Church of Christ to the Catholic Church. Here I explain the significance of the Council's choice of the phrase "*subsistit in*" over the proposed alternatives, "*est*" and "*adest*." [Chapter one](#) details the possible meanings of conjoining Christ's Church and the Catholic Church through the use of "*est*" or "*adest*," bringing into relief the strengths and limitations of the former and the shortcomings of the latter, while [chapter two](#) undertakes a systematic investigation of the Council's use of the verb "*subsistere*," examining its philosophical elasticity, theological utility and specific meanings within different conciliar contexts. Among the fruits of this investigation is a demonstration of the perennial validity of the "*est*" formulation and its compatibility with both the "*subsistit*" language and the affirmation of elements of sanctification beyond the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church. At the same time, [chapter two](#) underscores the theological advantages of the "*subsistit*" phrase, proving that, while the ecclesiology of Vatican II introduces no doctrinal change to the Church's traditional self-understanding, it does represent a development thereof.

Closely related to the Council's precise and theologically gainful use of "*subsistere*" is its teaching regarding the presence within separated Christian communities of "elements" of the one Church of Christ. [Chapter three](#) examines this teaching and clarifies what is meant by affirming the presence of elements of sanctification and of truth in non-Catholic communions. There I address the

dignity and profound unity of all Christian communions by reason of sharing in the ecclesial mystery. At the same time, I show that the kind of ecclesiality that is attributed to separated Christianities on the basis of said “elements” is essentially distinct from that of the Catholic Church and implies a relationship of dependency upon the latter. The manner in which the being and properties of the Church are realized among non-Catholic Christianities, and the corresponding limitations of their salutary efficacy, are also addressed.

Chapter four develops these themes further by way of a systematic analysis of the causal parameters defining the relationship between non-Catholic communities and the Catholic Church. I illustrate how the Catholic Church is present within and operative upon every other community of faith, in such a way that she relates to them in the order of salvation as an exemplary cause, an efficient cause and a final cause, and, in a certain way, even as a formal cause. This clarification of the causal primacy of the Catholic Church both confirms and provides the *ratio* for the conciliar vision of the Catholic Church as the “universal sacrament of salvation” and “the all-embracing means of salvation.”³ It also confirms the Council’s teaching about, and metaphysically guarantees, the unity and unicity of Christ’s Church.⁴ Finally, owing to the nature of the Catholic Church’s preeminence among ecclesial communities and the qualitatively transcendent manner in which Christ’s Church is realized in her, it follows that the title “Church” belongs to her in a singular way unable to be affirmed of any other community of faith.

Thus the fifth and sixth chapters take up the Council’s use of the names “church” and “ecclesial community”⁵ with reference to separated Christian communions, explaining the difference between them as well as the distinct manner in which they are applied to non-Catholic communities and to the Catholic Church. There I show that the latter terminological differentiation is rooted in the irreducible ontological divide between the mode according to which the ecclesial mystery is realized in the Catholic Church and its mode of realization beyond her visible confines, demonstrating that those titles apply to different ecclesial communities in a strictly analogical sense. Underscoring this analogicity brings the book to a close by reinforcing the thesis maintained from the beginning that the Church of Christ is one, indivisible, unique and irrepeatable, and that its one reality exists concretely as the Catholic Church and anywhere her being or

operation can be found.

It is my hope, finally, that this study will help to bring closure to the disputed question of whether the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council represents a rupture with that of the previous magisterium. Despite widely polarized views on the topic, there is in the present literature a growing recognition that a hermeneutic of discontinuity for what concerns the Council's ecclesiology is neither correct (theologically or historically) nor entirely honest (at least with respect to the sources). The results of this study should make a positive contribution to that recognition, while also confronting a number of falsifications of the Church's official ecclesiology. Emphasizing the Council's teaching on the essential difference and vertical relationship that exists between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communions is necessary not only to present an accurate picture of the thought of Vatican II, but to counter the one-sided exaggerations of theologians and ecumenical groups obstinately refusing to accept the interpretative guidance of the magisterium. The latter has spoken frequently regarding the disputed passages and phrases of *Lumen gentium*, *Unitatis redintegratio*, and other conciliar documents.⁶ This, however, has not prevented some Catholics and even consultants to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity from advocating, contrary to the magisterium, flattened interpretations of the Council's ecclesiology that distort its true teaching with a host of unacceptable proposals, such as, for example, a genuine shift in the Church's ecclesial doctrine, the non-exclusive identity between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church, the partial incongruity between the historical Catholic Church and the Church of Christ, common membership in or joint constitution of the Body of Christ on the part of Christian communities, equal claims to apostolic origins or constitution, and others.⁷ If these pages can serve in some measure as a corrective to those distortions and help to recover the true sense of the Council's teaching about the Church, signaling both its continuity with the past and authentic doctrinal advancement, then they will have fulfilled their purpose.

* * *

It is perhaps best to note here that the kind of identity between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church affirmed just above—when it was stated that the

indivisible Church of Christ exists concretely as the Catholic Church and wherever she is present—is an identity *simpliciter*. As I demonstrate below, this identity cannot be ascribed to any other Christian community: the Catholic Church alone can be said to be Christ’s Church, and Christ’s Church is identical with the Catholic Church alone. This is the basis for an important concept in ecclesiology and ecumenism, namely, “exclusive identity,” a concept which (when properly understood) is representative of official Church teaching on the relationship between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, that expression bears a certain ambiguity, as a result of which it can be used in two significantly different ways, the differences between which are sometimes ignored. On the one hand, “exclusive identity” can be taken to signify that a relationship of identity (with Christ’s Church) belongs exclusively to one subject (the Catholic Church). This is the basic meaning of the expression as legitimately employed in Catholicism. On the other hand, it could be understood additionally to mean that the recognized identity (between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church) excludes that non-Catholic faith communities be included in the mystery of the Church, or that anything belonging to them be included in that mystery, or that they include something belonging to it. This latter and stronger sense, as I also demonstrate, is inadmissible from a theological perspective, absent from the tradition, and incompatible with the ecclesiology of Vatican II. It is critical, moreover, to bear in mind that the former sense of the expression, witnessed throughout the tradition, does not imply the exclusions associated with the expression taken in the latter way. By herself, and to the exclusion of any other institution, the Catholic Church is simply identical to Christ’s Church *at the same time* that she is operatively present and interior to every other authentic religious society; consequently, many things proper to Christ’s Church are verified among separated Christian communities, all of which are, in different ways, penetrated and embraced by the one Catholic ecclesial mystery.⁸ The exclusivity of the Catholic Church’s identity with Christ’s Church thus results in an *inclusivity* regarding her separated brethren, a multifaceted inclusivity, in which the Catholic Church lives and operates within them, and the ecclesial riches of those communities are interior to her own mystery.⁹ When, therefore, as commonly happens in ecumenism, one encounters controversy over the notion of exclusive identity, it is necessary to discern which sense is at stake, in order to appreciate

what is being defended when it is affirmed, and what comes under attack when it is rejected.

Adversaries of exclusive identity advance “non-exclusive identity” as an alternative. But this expression is equally ambiguous. It could be taken to mean, as it does for many ecumenists, that identity with Christ’s Church is not exclusive to the Catholic Church, such that other Christian communities are also identifiable with it, all of which are variously constitutive parts of a greater whole.¹⁰ Alternatively (though this is not what is ordinarily intended by its proponents), it could be taken to mean merely that the identity between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church does not exclude such things as the presence of Christ’s Church among non-Catholics, or the existence of its properties within them, or the assimilation of aspects of the life of non-Catholic communities and of their members within the Catholic Church. Once again, it is necessary to distinguish the sense in which the expression is employed. The first sense of “non-exclusive identity” described above is a theological impossibility, and it is inconsistent with the only acceptable sense of “exclusive identity.” But the second sense of “non-exclusive identity” is perfectly orthodox. Indeed, as alluded to above, the orthodox sense of “exclusive identity” actually ensures a certain inclusivity and is, therefore, a “non-exclusive exclusive identity.”

In the pages to follow, I shall speak and argue in favor of “exclusive identity” only in the first (and weaker) of the two senses indicated above. So understood, the notion is not only dogmatically unassailable, but eminently consonant with the acceptable version of non-exclusive identity, and, indeed, as I shall show, the very condition for numerous bonds of union by which the life and action of the Catholic Church is included within non-Catholic communities, and their salutary apparatus, actions and effects within her.

¹ See *Lumen gentium*, 8.

² See *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3.

³ See *Lumen gentium*, 48; *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3.

⁴ See, in particular, *Lumen gentium*, 8.

⁵ See *Unitatis redintegratio*, c. III (especially, a. 13, 19 and 22).

⁶ Outstanding examples from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (hereafter CDF) include (in

chronological order): *Notification on the book of Father Leonardo Boff: "The Church: Charism and Power"*: AAS 77 (1985): 758–759; *Declaratio de Iesu Christi atque Ecclesiae unicitate et universalitate salvifica*: AAS 92 (2000): 742–765; *Responsa ad quaestiones de aliquibus sententiis ad doctrinam de Ecclesia pertinentibus*: AAS 99 (2007): 604–608; *Commentary on the Document "Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church"*, *Notitiae* 43 (2007): 398–415.

- 7 Noteworthy examples include: Wolfgang Thoenissen, "Über Einheit und Wahrheit der Kirche: Zum Verständnis des 'Subsistit' im gegenwärtigen ökumenischen Disput," *Catholica* 61 (2007): 230–240; Angelo Maffei, *Ecumenical Dialogue*, trans. L. F. Fuchs (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 25–29; The Lutheran World Federation and The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt GmbH and Bonifatius GmbH Druck, 2013). The recent declaration of a US Catholic-Lutheran Task Force endorsed by the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, *Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry and Eucharist* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2015) (hereafter *Declaration on the Way*) suffers from a similarly "soft" reading of the Council; see, in this regard, Christian D. Washburn, "Doctrine, Ecumenical Progress, and Problems with *Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry, and Eucharist*," *Pro Ecclesia* 26 (2017): 59–80. Major representatives of these ideas are referenced, and the substance of their ecclesiological posture refuted, in the first two chapters of this book.
- 8 See chapter one, note 5.
- 9 From this perspective, it is also ecclesiologicaly orthodox to speak of "inclusive identity," provided it is understood correctly and as a corollary of "exclusive identity" properly taken.
- 10 I examine the problems associated with the common identification of many ecclesial communities with the one Church of Christ below. I also address the differences between the various forms of predicating of Christ's Church one or more Christian communities (and vice versa) in terms of the "whole," "parts" or "qualifications." See especially chapters one and three.

CHAPTER 1

Reaching for an Adequate Vocabulary to Express the Mystery of Christ's Saving Presence in the Catholic Church¹

Introduction

PERHAPS NO TOPIC in contemporary ecclesiology has received as much attention as the specific choice of terminology made by the council Fathers at the Second Vatican Council in order to express the relationship existing between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church. Various phrases were successively considered in an effort to find the best articulation of the manner in which the saving divino-human presence of our Lord, Jesus Christ, is both perpetuated in the Catholic Church and verified in significant ways beyond her visible structures. Among several key predicative forms of relating the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ to the historically concrete Catholic Church, the Council settled on the phrase “*subsistit in*” as that best suited to express the nature and uniqueness of that relation, a choice that was enshrined in the monumental formulation: “the one Church of Christ ... subsists in the Catholic Church,”² the theological significance of which has been the object of seemingly interminable disputes. To understand its significance, it is necessary to examine the various alternative expressions that were successively proposed and rejected by the Council Fathers prior to opting for “*subsistit in*.”

In this chapter, I provide a grammatico-metaphysical analysis of the terms

sequentially proposed by the Council Fathers on their itinerary toward the “*subsistit*” phrase, namely, “*est*” and “*adest*.”³ Particular attention will be paid to the grammatical modes of signification proper to these terms and to the predicative structure of the propositions in which they are employed. The benefits of such an analysis can be far-reaching, especially for understanding the elasticities and limitations inherent in the terminological options available. The goals of this analysis include: identifying the various senses in which the different terms can be employed, their possible semantic values (or connotations); specifying the sense or senses in which the Council used them; and illustrating the differences between them as well as ways in which they can overlap. As I demonstrate through the course of this chapter and the next, the phrase “*subsistit in*” as used by the Council is to be taken in a technical sense, by which it signifies something not signified by the “*est*” formulation, but which is nowise incompatible with the latter, representing, therefore, not a change in doctrine, but a development thereof. As shall become clear, all three terms—“*est*,” “*adest*,” and “*subsistit in*”—can harmoniously work together, the first and third having a special applicability to the Catholic Church, each having nuances unique to itself though neither being exclusive of the other, and the second having, in a way complementing the third, a special applicability to non-Catholic communions, even if it is a poor term to use with respect to the Catholic Church.

The “*est*” controversy

It is often suggested that the formulation of the relation between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church through the use of “*est*” as found in the original schema of the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* is doctrinally incompatible with speaking of ecclesial elements, ecclesial communities, and churches outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church. Thus it is argued that the Church changed her doctrine when she abandoned the “*est*” formula so as to acknowledge a greater universality on the part of Christ’s Church with reference to faith communities besides the Catholic Church. Such arguments are regularly put forth, however, without reference to what the “*est*” actually does grammatically and logically. Furthermore, most assume that “*est*” can only mean one thing (exclusive identity); but that term can be taken in various ways (including merely “to exist” or

“to be present”),⁴ with the result that possible interpretations of the “*est*” statement can range widely, from those maintaining an exclusive identity between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church that leaves no room for ecclesial existence elsewhere,⁵ to those suggesting that Christ’s Church be identified simultaneously with a plurality of Christian communions. As I shall show, while the extremes just mentioned are untenable, a proper understanding of the “*est*” formulation is completely at home in the ecclesiology of Vatican II.

It is especially a study of the nature of the predication involved in the “*est*” formulation that illuminates its role in uniting Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church. Before undertaking that investigation, however, it should be made clear that this manner of relating Christ’s Church to the Catholic Church is not a novelty that circulated only during the modern era. Rather, there exists a venerable and ancient tradition of its use, to which I now turn.

“Est” ecclesiology as a long-standing part of Catholic tradition

Since apostolic times, the historically concrete, catholic and apostolic Church has understood herself to be the sole community of salvation, the one Church of Christ, beyond whose lifeline there is neither eternal life nor the means thereto. Christ’s saving community was and is, plainly and simply, the Catholic Church.⁶ That identity was traditionally expressed in a manner equivalent to the “*est*” formulation by the *via notarum*, locating within the Catholic Church, and within her alone, all of the essential features or “notes” of Christ’s Church. It was likewise expressed in the (universally verifiable) exhortations of the Fathers of the Church concerned with disciplinary or doctrinal dissension in the Church, whose pastoral interventions in that regard underscore, as a mark of one’s belonging to the fold of Christ, adherence to the bishops, in whose presence and under whose leadership alone the reality of Christ’s Church is guaranteed.⁷ The early Church’s self-understanding as a people gathered by and called to remain in the presence of God, coupled with her understanding of the relationship between God’s presence and the bishop, who is viewed as the vicar of God, implies an understanding of Christ’s Church as a mystery defined by episcopal headship and communion, notes characteristic of the apostolic Catholic Church alone.⁸

Irenaeus boldly witnesses to the identification between the visible,

institutional apostolic Church and the life-giving fountain which is the body of Christ: “[of this body] all those are not partakers who do not join themselves to the [Catholic] Church.”⁹ Saving knowledge and ecclesial life come, according to Irenaeus, from “the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place ... guarded and preserved.”¹⁰ One could provide similar testimony from numerous Fathers of every patristic period, but this is neither necessary nor possible within the scope of this volume. Because of his clarity in this regard, however, Cyprian of Carthage merits attention. Christ’s members are, according to Cyprian, members of one Church, the unity of which is inseparable from the Catholic institution. In fact, for Cyprian, Christ’s Church is grounded in the episcopacy and the Petrine office which assures its unity, and these offices are the identifying marks of the Church.¹¹ Just as there is only one God, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, and one catholic faith (Ephesians 4:4), so, according to Cyprian, there is only one Church, whose unity (and therefore reality) has its root in Peter.¹² St. Jerome is stronger yet: “As I follow no leader save Christ, so I communicate with none but your blessedness, that is with the chair of Peter. For this, I know, is the rock on which the Church is built!”¹³ The early Church’s concept of Christ’s Church is unmistakable: Christ dwells in and fills with his Spirit that visible community where his appointed ministers and shepherds govern, and that is the Catholic Church, and there is no other Church on earth.

Theologians might dismiss these witnesses as a collection of mere theological opinions; however, the same strict-identity-theology is fully attested to in official papal and conciliar magisterium. Already Leo the Great affirms the strict identity between the Church founded on Peter and the divine mystery of Christ’s whole mystical body.¹⁴ Gregory the Great can similarly be cited.¹⁵ Later popes directly preoccupied with heresies and schism are especially clear. In 1208, Pope Innocent III prescribed for the Waldensians desiring to return to the Catholic Church the following profession of faith:

We believe with our heart and confess with our tongue the one Church, not of heretics, but the holy Roman, catholic and apostolic, outside which we believe that no one is saved.¹⁶

Shortly after, the Fourth Lateran Council declared:

There is indeed one universal Church of the faithful outside of which no one at all is saved, and in which the priest himself, Jesus Christ, is also the sacrifice ... in the sacrament of the altar ... according to the keys of the Church, which Jesus Christ himself conceded to the apostles and their successors.¹⁷

Examining the logical implications of the latter two documents taken together, Joseph Fenton aptly formulates the dogmatic content: “It is a divinely revealed truth that the one true *ecclesia* is the Roman Catholic Church, the social unit properly termed ‘the universal Church of the faithful.’”¹⁸ Clearly ratifying and reinforcing the same idea, Boniface VIII declares:

This one and unique Church, therefore, has not two heads, like a monster, but one body and one head, namely Christ, and his vicar, Peter’s successor.... If, therefore, Greeks or others should say that they were not confided to Peter and his successors, let them necessarily confess that they are not among Christ’s sheep.¹⁹

The conclusion is incontrovertible: the one and unique Church of Christ is, manifestly and unqualifiedly—i.e., “*est*”—the Catholic Church having Peter as Christ’s vicar; the flock of Christ which is his Church is identified only with those entrusted to Peter.

This line of thinking by no means subsides, but only intensifies in the dogmatic tradition. At the Council of Florence in 1442, the *Decree for the Jacobites* from the Bull of Union, *Cantate Domino*, issued by Pope Eugenius affirmed:

She firmly believes, professes and preaches that none of those who are outside of the Catholic Church, not only pagans but also Jews or heretics and schismatics, can share in eternal life and that they will go into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless they are joined to the Catholic Church ... and that nobody can be saved, no matter how much he has given away in alms and even if he has shed his blood in the name of Christ, unless he has persevered in the bosom

and the unity of the Catholic Church.²⁰

The language of Pius IX is stronger yet, and semantically identical to the “*est*” formulation:

Another error, no less destructive ... has taken up its abode in the souls of many Catholics who think that one should have good hope of the eternal salvation of all those who have never lived in the true Church of Christ.... For, it must be held by faith that outside the Apostolic Roman Church, no one can be saved; that this is the only ark of salvation; that he who shall not have entered therein will perish in the flood.²¹

No missing premise need be supplied here: the “true Church of Christ” is identified with Catholic Church, and the latter, unambiguously described as the “Apostolic Roman Church,” is the sole community of salvation. Specifically on the unity of the Church and its identity with the Catholic Church, Pius IX in a later encyclical affirms:

The foundation on which this [pernicious] society rests is of such a nature that it makes the divine establishment of the Church of no consequence. For, it is wholly in this: that it supposes the true Church of Jesus Christ to be composed partly of the Roman Church scattered and propagated throughout the whole world, partly, indeed, of the schism of Photius, and of the Anglican heresy, to which, as well as to the Roman Church, “there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism”.... The true Church of Jesus Christ (*vera Iesu Christi Ecclesia*) was established by divine authority, and is known by a fourfold mark, which we assert in the Creed must be believed; and each one of these marks so clings to the others that it cannot be separated from them; hence it happens that that Church which truly is and is called Catholic (*quae vere est et dicitur catholica*) should at the same time shine with the prerogatives of unity, sanctity, and apostolic succession.... whose beginning, root, and unfailing origin are that supreme authority and “higher principality” of Blessed Peter, the prince of the Apostles, and of his successors in the Roman

Chair. There is no other catholic Church (*Nec alia est Ecclesia catholica*) except the one which, founded on the one Peter, grows into one “body compacted and fitly joined together” [Eph 4:16] in the unity of faith and charity.²²

Here again, this time by way of the *via notarum*, Pius IX has equated the “true Church of Christ” with the Catholic Church. He further implies that the only existence Christ’s Church has is that of the Catholic Church when he explicitly identifies the Church which really exists (*quae vere est*) with the Church called Catholic (*dicitur catholica*). Logically speaking, this is more than saying “The Church of Christ is (*est*) the Catholic Church”; it is to affirm that the Church of Christ is *nothing other* than the Catholic Church along with its converse, so that the only individuating name for Christ’s Church is “Catholic.”²³

We must also consider the resolute teaching of Leo XIII regarding the true nature of Christ’s Church, decisively expressed in the encyclical, *Satis cognitum*, in which Leo reiterates everything we have noted above, enriching it with wide-ranging citations from the Fathers of the Church, whom he asserts unanimously confirm this teaching.²⁴ In particular, Pope Leo highlights the indivisibility and uniqueness of Christ’s Church:

But when we consider what was actually done we find that Jesus Christ did not, in point of fact, institute a Church to embrace several communities similar in nature, but in themselves distinct, and lacking those bonds which render the Church unique and indivisible after that manner in which in the symbol of our faith we profess: “I believe in one Church.” ... For this reason Christ, speaking of the mystical edifice, mentions only one Church, which he calls his own ... any other church except this one, since it has not been founded by Christ, cannot be the true Church.²⁵

Leo proceeds to marshal patristic evidence for the necessity of visible communion with the Catholic Church in order not to be separated from salvation and refers to other Christian communities as “adulteresses,” the joining of which is equivalent to leaving the Church of Christ.²⁶

It is abundantly clear from these texts that the official magisterium has consistently upheld the teaching that the Church of Christ (the true Church) is and is coextensive with the Catholic Church, paving a clear and straight path to the simplified form of expressing the same truth: “the Church of Christ is (*est*) the Catholic Church.” That is why the Second Vatican Council brought it under consideration in the first place. Pius XII, who obviously endorses that ecclesiology,²⁷ did not invent the expression, nor is he the first to have officially taught the doctrine. Very notably, if for the purposes of denoting a more specified and subtle aspect of the Church’s being the “*est*” formulation was set aside in the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* in favor of “*subsistit in,*” the Second Vatican Council continues to use the locution in *Orientalium ecclesiarum*, speaking of “the Holy Catholic Church, which is (*est*) the Mystical Body of Christ.”²⁸ We must now examine the full signification of that hallowed phrase.

Predicative structure of the “*est*” formula

What is meant when, epitomizing the tradition that preceded them, Pius XII, as well as the Council Fathers at Vatican II, affirm that “The Church of Christ is (*est*) the Catholic Church”?:

Pius XII: This true Church of Jesus Christ ... is the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Roman Church.²⁹

The Church was enriched with the fullest communication of the Holy Spirit ... the dew of the Paraclete’s gifts ... fell copiously and abundantly ... on the whole earth, that is on the Catholic Church.³⁰

The Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same thing.³¹

Schemata: There is only a single true Church of Jesus Christ, that Church which ... he handed over to be governed to St. Peter and his successors, the Roman Pontiffs. Therefore, only the Roman

Catholic is rightly called the Church.³²

The holy Synod teaches and solemnly professes that there is only a single true Church of Jesus Christ ... which the Savior ... handed over to Peter and the Apostles and their successors to shepherd.... Therefore, this Church is the Catholic Church.³³

Vatican II: The Holy Catholic Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ, is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit by the same faith, the same sacraments and the same government.³⁴

Prior to surmising possible semantic values of “*est*,” the first thing to observe about the statement “The Church of Christ is (*est*) the Catholic Church” is the grammatical structure of the proposition. This is a simple (unqualified) predication of one thing of another by means of the verb “to be,” in which the predicate term stands for a singular, non-accidental subject of existence, and in which the subject term, depending on how it is signified, stands either: (a) also for a singular, non-accidental subject of existence (which, given the context, is in all likelihood the case); or (b), in a hermeneutically appealing but metaphysically idiosyncratic way, for something like a universal (*per se* shareable), non-accidental nature or essence. Before taking stock of the implications of the different modes of signification attributable to the subject term, one interpretation of the ecclesial “*est*” formula can be ruled out from the start, namely, that which maintains that it is possible to affirm that Christ’s Church “is” (“*est*”) many different Christian communities, an interpretation that is prohibited by an unavoidable relationship between the subject and predicate terms based on the singular mode of signification proper to the predicate term.

Whether the Church of Christ (the subject term) should be thought of as a concrete singular thing or as a sort of instantiable universal, no sound-minded theologian would deny that, from the point of view of its intrinsic constitution, that Church is a whole, and not a part of a greater whole. In any ecclesiology, therefore, in which it is considered acceptable to predicate of the Church of Christ one or another ecclesial communion, the subject of the predication (the Church of

Christ) must be taken as signifying the whole, the entirety of the ecclesial reality.³⁵ Furthermore, if an ecclesiology wishes to predicate of Christ's Church not only the Catholic Church, but also other Christian communions, then, given that each of these communions is really distinct from the others (and, therefore, no more than one could be identified with the whole which is the Church of Christ), either all or all but one of those communions must be viewed as partial realities with respect to the whole, the Church of Christ. From the perspective of such an ecclesiology, therefore, (with the possible exception of one communion at most) each communion has but a part of what belongs to Christ's Church. Signified in their respective concrete singularity, the various communions are, as a result, commonly viewed in this ecclesiology as "parts" of the one Church of Christ.

Now, irrespective of the logical transgression made by moving from the notion of a multiplicity of beings that have but a part of something that is complete in itself to that of the same multiplicity as coexisting parts of that whole, this ecclesiology violates the rules of predication. It is impossible that the statement "The Church of Christ is the Catholic Church" could be reduplicated in parallel statements such as "The Church of Christ is the Lutheran communion"; for, although the whole can be predicated of the part, the part cannot be predicated of the whole (even if some property of the part can be predicated of the whole).³⁶ Thus, while it can be said, for example, that "the Church of Christ is a community of faith," the predicate of which statement is a property belonging both to the Catholic Church and to the Lutheran communion, by virtue of which, among other things, that communion has part of what is proper to the Church of Christ, it cannot be said that "the Church of Christ is the Lutheran communion." For (under the false assumption that the Lutheran communion is a "part" of the whole ecclesial mystery³⁷) such a statement would amount to the predication of a part of the whole. If it can be said that the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church, which might appear to be an instance of predicating the part of the whole, it is because the Catholic Church is *not* a part of that whole, but the very whole, only signified differently.³⁸ This, therefore, precludes the loose interpretation of the "*est*" formula entertained above, given that the predicate term (whether the placeholder is the Catholic Church, the Lutheran communion, or any other communion) is signified neither as an abstract nature nor as a property or set of properties.

Basic sense of the “est”

As should be evident by now, in order to assess the meaning of the “*est*” formula, careful attention must be given to the grammatical nature of the predication involved when saying that “the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church.” This approach, however, is not commonly adopted. One temptation is to try to understand the meaning of the copula (“*est*”) by way of comparison and contrast with the signification of the term “*subsistit*” adopted by the Council and used as a replacement for “*est*.” Thus the tendency would be to derive an understanding of the “*est*” formula from what theologians have to say about the “*subsistit*” formula, even when it may not be their intention to shed light on the “*est*” formula. In an explanation of the choice of “*subsistit*” on the part of the Doctrinal Commission, Joseph Ratzinger (who was part of that commission) reports:

When the Council Fathers replaced the word *est* that was used by Pope Pius XII with the word *subsistit*, this had a very precise significance: The term “is” [“*est*”] (from the verb “to be”) is broader than the term “subsist.” “Subsisting” is a particular way of being, namely, being an independent, self-contained subject. So the Fathers were saying: The being of the Church as such extends much farther than the Roman Catholic Church, yet in the latter she has in a unique way the character of an independent subject.³⁹

Anyone using this account of “is” (“*est*” as extensively broader than “*subsistit*”) to explain the meaning of the “*est*” in the traditional predication relating the Church of Christ to the Catholic Church misses something important. Being as it is considered in the above text, where its notion is compared to that of subsistence (as a more general notion to a more restricted notion⁴⁰), stands for being taken as act.⁴¹ It is with respect to this sense of being that its various subjects, the things that have being, are divided into the ten categories. This notion of being cuts across all the things that can be said in reality “to be” in any way.⁴² The “is” (“*est*”) in the traditional formula voiced by Pius XII, however, is being only as signifying the truth of a proposition.⁴³ Of course, the two senses are related (and Aristotle and Aquinas demonstrate how one is, in fact, the cause of the other⁴⁴), but the

incidence of “is” in the traditional “*est*” formula is a matter of *logical* being, signifying the truth of the proposition and the composition of the subject and predicate terms made by the intellect.⁴⁵ Of itself, in other words, it has nothing to do with expressing some sort of open-ended mode of being that is broader and more inclusive than one would express with the use of “*subsistit*.”

What the “est” really does

What the “*est*” formula actually tells us is that the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church are one in being, in the sense that they are an identical subject. The singular quantification and concrete mode of signification proper to both the subject term and predicate term imply their subjective identity (even if they are logically distinguished as related terms⁴⁶). Consequently, the identity in question here is an identity at the “substantial”⁴⁷ (intrinsically constitutive) level; and it follows, therefore, that they are one, not accidentally, but essentially (*idem per se*).⁴⁸ The singularity of the terms, moreover, implies that they are one, not in a relative sense (in some respect only), but absolutely. To illustrate the point, two men can be said to be one insofar as they are rowing a boat; but while it is fair to say, for example, that Simon and Andrew are one in that respect, one cannot affirm on that account that Simon is Andrew. Similarly, many men are one people insofar as they are ruled by one king; but no one of them is another.⁴⁹ Thus, to be precise, the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church are, according to the formula, one in their concrete being—the two are to be identified with each other: “The Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same thing.”⁵⁰

What we are dealing with, therefore, is an instance of predication *in quid*, responding to the question of what something is (*quod quid erat esse*), stating directly and undividedly its quiddity, and indicating what is true of it taken as a whole and absolutely considered. To say that the Church of Christ is (“*est*”) the Catholic Church signifies, therefore, that the Church of Christ is, taken as a whole and considered in itself absolutely, nothing other than the Catholic Church, a complete identity at a substantial level. This kind of identity carries with it a number of important implications regarding the sorts of statements that can be made about Christ’s Church, which I explore immediately below; but some further

clarification about the language of “substance” just employed seems mandatory at this juncture.

Note on the concept of “substance” as used of the Church

As already observed, the terminology of “substance” (and this holds for the terminology of “subsistence” as well) cannot be applied to the Church except in an analogical manner. The Church is certainly not a substance in the same way that a man or a horse is a substance. One might wonder, therefore, whether it is theologically or philosophically fitting to use such categories to speak about the Church. Of course, the same terminology is used to speak about God, who is certainly not a substance nor subsists in the same way as creatures. The concepts in question apply to God in an analogical way; but they permit us to articulate naturally knowable truths concerning his nature and attributes as well as to display important aspects of the content of Revelation with philosophical precision. If their analogical application to the Godhead is both permissible and helpful, there is no *a priori* reason for precluding their application to the mystery of the Church. Of course, the first objection will be that the Church, unlike the Godhead, is a communion among many substances, a social whole the existence of which consists in the existence of its members who, precisely insofar as they are *related* to one another, constitute (in one sense) the being of the whole. This is all true; however, the complex, supernatural mystery of the Church far exceeds the status of natural social institutions and invites (and virtually requires) us to describe its being and unity in more robust ontological terms, terms that exceed the social and moral orders. Thus, provided we always keep in mind their strictly analogical application to the Church, the notions of “substance,” “substantial unity,” “subject” and “subsisting” can be used in her regard.

But what about that mystery sanctions the use of these terms to begin with? The short answer is this: the extraordinary unity, fullness of being, self-sufficiency, and thoroughly concrete existence that characterizes Christ’s Church. This is no place to elaborate a theology of ecclesial unity; but suffice it to remark that the theological tradition has consistently described this unity as a unity of being, and of life and operation; as a bodily unity, and a unity like that between a body and a soul; as a unity comparable to a single and irrepeatable subsisting subject (like the

hypostatic unity in Christ); and as a unity that is substantial, and that is even numerical. Indeed, it is called a “mystical” unity, because the magnitude of that unity (which is *per se* supernatural) exceeds the analogical categories available to the human mind. To the question, then, “Is the Church of Christ really one thing in an ontological sense?” the answer is, unqualifiedly, “Yes”: even if her members are one *secundum quid*, the Church of Christ is one *per se* and absolutely, existing in itself as one complete and perfect body with a single intrinsic constitutive principle (the life of grace flowing from the Christ who, as Head, is organically one with the body). Notwithstanding the fact that the Church subsists (has concrete being) only in its members, given the physically real bond brought about by the influx of grace from the Head, the Church has, in an analogical way, its own singular being in the manner of a complete subject which neither requires other things in order to be (by way of contrast with substantial parts among corporeal beings) nor exists in another as within a subject of being (by way of contrast with accidents). Consequently, if, when signified as a whole, it is to be classified, reduced, or intrinsically compared to any of the categories of being, the only possible candidate is “substance.”

Now, substance is defined as that which exists in itself and not within another as within a subject (*ens per se*) and which, within the order of finite being, is the occasion for the existence of other things which it supports (namely, accidents, the generic being of which is to inhere in a subject). It is the former of these two aspects proper to substance that (as explained in the next chapter) is retained in the signification of “subsistence” technically considered: only the individual with a *per se* act of existence (the ontological status of primary substance) subsists. Interestingly enough, it follows from this that, if it is at all correct to speak of the Church in terms of subsistence technically understood, then, necessarily, it is equally correct to apply to her the concept of substance. Conversely, if it is correct to ascribe (analogically) to the Church the ontological status of primary substance, then it is correct to apply (analogically) to her the notion of subsistence technically taken.⁵¹

Implications of the “est” predication

Now, the complete substantial identity between the Church of Christ and the

Catholic Church signified by the “*est*” formulation leaves no room for any subsequent predication *in quid* in which the predicate term would not itself be predicable *in quid* of the Catholic Church. The situation is analogous to when it is said that “Socrates is this man,” to which we could adjoin a second predication *in quid*, “Socrates is this rational animal,” by which no division of being and no additional subject is introduced. Accordingly, the same kind of predication regarding the Church of Christ could never be made with respect to another ecclesial communion, unless that communion were identical to the Catholic Church and predicable *in quid* of it. In this kind of predication, the predicate term signifies the whole nature of the subject term. This means that the Catholic Church (to speak in grammatical terms of supposition) stands for and (to put it ontologically) embodies the whole of the Church of Christ, not just some part of it, however essential. When it comes to non-Catholic communions, however, the obvious privations of what belongs to the plenitude of Christ’s Church preclude any possibility of an “*est*” formulation in their regard. They may be said to *have* something of the one Church of Christ, but never to *be* that Church; and that Church may be said to be *in* those communions in some fashion, but never according to her totality.⁵²

Note that this nowise implies that the “*est*” formula is incompatible with the recognition of elements of sanctification outside of the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church. Although the “*est*” formula is silent about such elements, it never amounts to their denial. Note, furthermore, that the recognition of ecclesial elements among non-Catholic communities belongs to the Church’s longstanding tradition, the same tradition that unhesitatingly identifies the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church. The Church has consistently taught both of these pieces of doctrine, often in conjunction with each other,⁵³ precisely because they are mutually consistent.

Predicative topography for “*est*”

Without having to enter into the complexities of propositional logic, a cursory examination of the “*est*” formula allows us to see that its use by Pius XII and at the Second Vatican Council applies exclusively to the Catholic Church and that the

latter is understood to be identical to Christ's Church considered in its full determination: of Christ's Church, the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church alone, is predicated absolutely, *in quid*.⁵⁴ Now, the copula "*est*" does not by itself accomplish this, but rather the character of and the relationship between the parts of the predication. In fact, "*est*" of itself could signal one of two different kinds of predication, either predication *in quid* (absolute predication), which answers to the question of *what* a thing is; or predication *in quale* (sometimes called denominative predication), answering to the question of *how* or what *kind* or *quality* a thing is. In the latter instance, the predicate can be either essential or accidental to the subject term, but in either case the predicate term signifies only a determinate part of the subject: for example, "Socrates is rational," where "rational" signifies only that part of Socrates by which he is intelligent; or "Socrates is white," where "white" signifies but a separable quality of the subject.⁵⁵ Bringing this distinction to bear on ecclesiology, one will note that there are many forms of "*est*" predication applicable to the Church of Christ, each of which will fall under either predication *in quid* or predication *in quale*. In the next paragraphs, I examine these two general forms of predication as they apply to the Church, beginning with predication *in quale*.

By predication *in quale* (or denominative predication) we say "the Church of Christ is (*est*) one," and "the Church of Christ is (*est*) holy," and "the Church of Christ is (*est*) apostolic." Naturally, one will wonder whether a similar kind of predication might be possible with respect to the various Christian denominations, as, for example, in "the Church of Christ is (*est*) Lutheran," and "the Church of Christ is (*est*) Anglican," and "the Church of Christ is (*est*) Catholic." While this can appear possible from a purely logical point of view (prior to defining the predicate terms), the position is intrinsically problematic and helps none to understand what is going on in the traditional "*est*" formula. First of all, the predicate terms here stand for qualities or attributes (as is clear from their adjectival form). As such, they signify formal perfections or universals. This, of course, has nothing to do with the kind of predication operative in the traditional "*est*" formula, which predicates of Christ's Church not some quality or abstract nature, but a concrete singular. Secondly, the nature of the differences between Christian denominations is such that, with respect to what is distinctive of them,

the quality of being “Lutheran,” and of being “Anglican,” and of being “Catholic,” for example, cannot at once belong to the same Church of Christ, inasmuch as their conjunction implies contradiction.⁵⁶

But let us return to the realm of predication *in quid*. Is there no room to predicate absolutely and of the whole of Christ’s Church many things? In nature, we can predicate a plurality of things of a single subject according to predication *in quid*. We say, for example, “Plato is a man,” and “Plato is an animal,” each of which satisfy the requirements of predication *in quid*. Why, therefore, could not something similar be said with respect to Christ’s Church? Before responding to this question, it will be helpful to distinguish the levels at which predication *in quid* is possible. Since whatever is predicated *in quid* of a subject must be predicated absolutely and of the whole of the subject, this kind of predication occurs only with respect to substantial or *per se* predicates able to supposit for all that is included in the proper notion (essential structure) of the subject. This obtains only for predicates referring to the generic or specific or individual nature of a thing. Accordingly, in such predication, a thing is said to be something that is (in the order of second intention) either its genus (proximate or remote) or its species or itself. I have argued that the “*est*” formula of Pius XII is an example of the latter, singular (or discrete) predication *in quid*. Why could it not fall into one of the other two categories? To answer this, we must first of all recall that the subject term of the traditional “*est*” formula is the Church of Christ, not the Catholic Church. Thus, assuming the “*est*” formula could be applied to a plurality of Christian communions, we should affirm “the Church of Christ is the Anglican Communion,” and “the Church of Christ is the Lutheran Communion,” and “the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church,” for example, and not the converse (as in “such and such a communion is the Church of Christ”). Of course, it is possible to convert the terms so as to say, for example, “The Anglican Communion is the Church of Christ,” and “the Lutheran Communion is the Church of Christ,” and so on, but then either we would treat the Church of Christ as a universal (contrary to the mode of signification expressed by the article “the”), or, again, the conjunction of the affirmations would be contradictory.⁵⁷ Therefore, the only propositions to be examined are “the Church of Christ is the Anglican Communion,” and “the Church of Christ is the Lutheran Communion,” and so

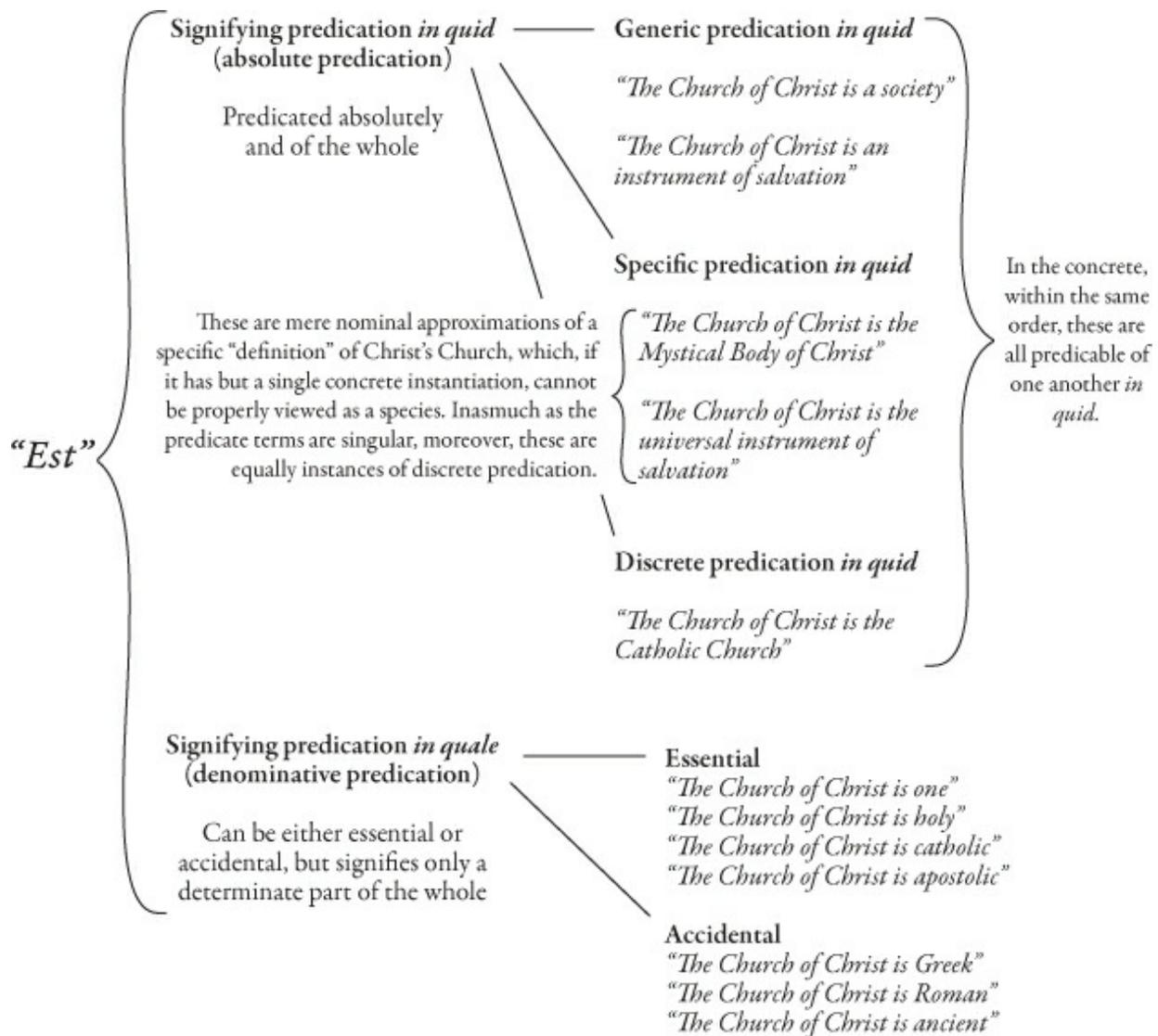
on.

To continue our response to the question of whether it is possible to predicate absolutely and of the whole of Christ's Church many things, as well as to the question of whether an *est* formulation could take the form of specific or generic predication *in quid*, let us next consider specific predication *in quid*. Examples of this kind of predication are "Socrates is a man," "Socrates is a rational animal," "Fido is a golden retriever," and "This is an elm," each of which predicates suppositis for the whole of what is signified by the subject term and determines it according to its essential and specific constitution. In such predication, when the same predicate is said of different subjects, those subjects differ numerically only, and when different predicates are said of different subjects, those subjects differ specifically. Note that in this kind of predication (specific predication *in quid*) the idea of predicating different predicates of the same subject is not an option.

It should be clear how this applies to the Church. Since the subject term is the Church of Christ, a subject term which remains constant, and since the proposed predicate terms are the various Christian communions, the notion of specific predication *in quid* is contradictory. It would be equivalent to saying that Christ's Church is one thing and another *specifically*, and we would conceptually mutate its intrinsic nature every time we affirmed its identity with a Christian communion (comparable to saying "Alcibiades is a man" and "Alcibiades is a dog"). This leaves to be considered only one species of predication, generic predication *in quid*. Examples of generic predication *in quid* would be "Cicero is an animal" and "Cicero is a substance." Could this be the sort of predication operative in the traditional "*est*" formula? A diversity of such predications are, in fact, part of official conciliar teaching on the nature of Christ's Church, as evidenced, for example, in statements such as "The Church of Christ is a society" and "The Church of Christ is an instrument of salvation." Could not something logically analogous take place when saying, for example, "The Church of Christ is the Anglican Communion," and "The Church of Christ is the Lutheran Communion"? The answer is no. In generic predication *in quid* (as with all predication *in quid*), anything so predicated of a subject is predicable in a like manner of anything else so predicated of the same subject. Stated otherwise, all predicate terms predicable of a given subject according to generic predication *in*

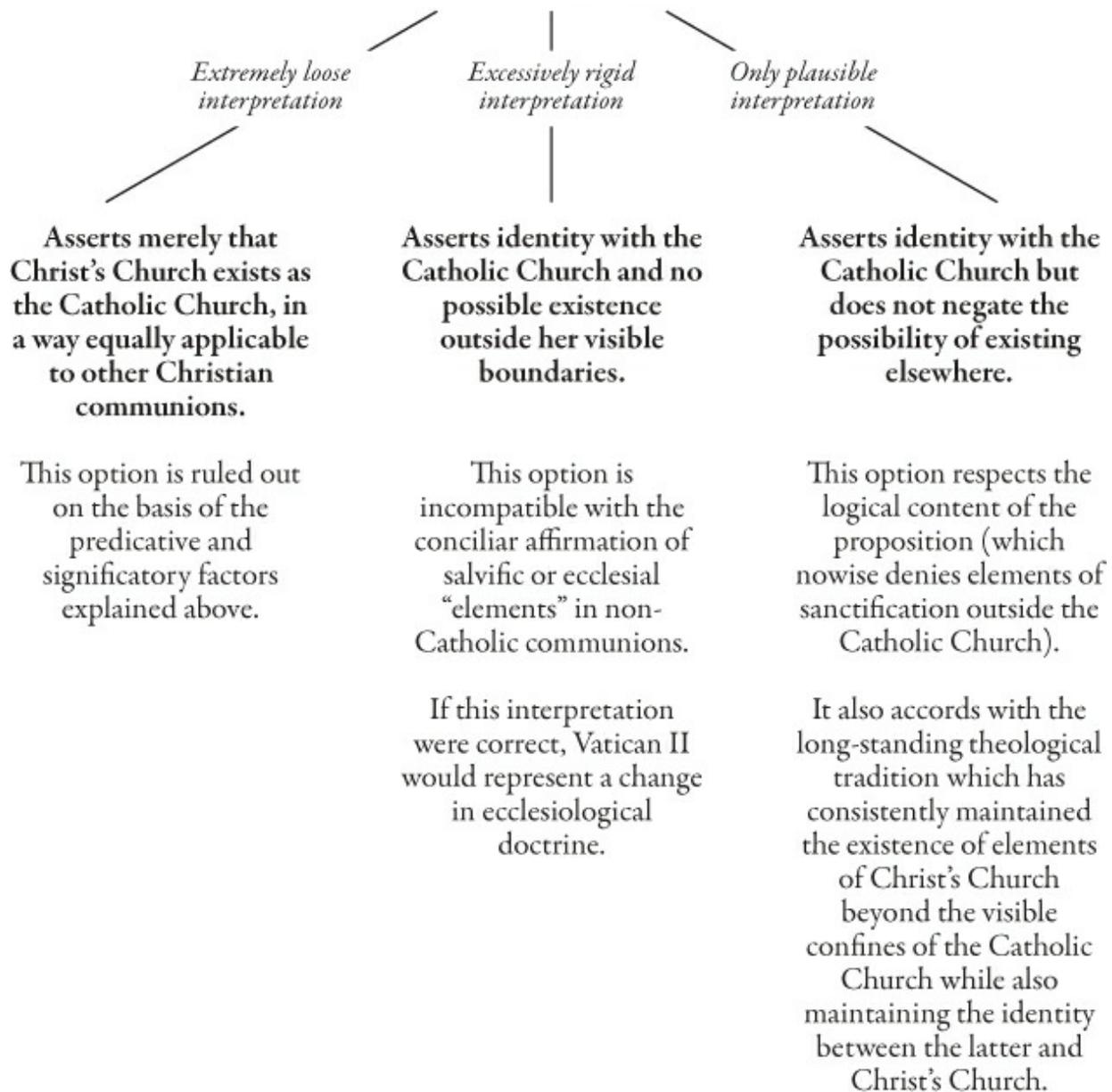
quid are, in the concrete, predicable *in quid* of one another. The example used above can illustrate the point: the animal that Cicero is is nothing other than the substance that Cicero is, and vice versa. Likewise, it can be said that “an animal is a substance” and “a substance is an animal.”⁵⁸ Now, the same logical relationships obtain when we say “The Church of Christ is an instrument of salvation” and “The Church of Christ is a society”; for it is true to say that this society is the instrument of salvation, and that this society is an instrument of salvation, and that a society is the instrument of salvation, and that a society is an instrument of salvation; and every converse of these is true. This logical state of affairs, however, does not obtain for the statements “The Church of Christ is the Lutheran Communion” and “The Church of Christ is the Anglican Communion”; for it is never the case that the Lutheran Communion is the Anglican Communion, or that the Lutheran Communion is an Anglican Communion, etc.

It follows from the above that the “*est*” formula can nowise be interpreted as capable of being applied to multiple Christian communions. Given, moreover, that it represents an instance of discrete predication *in quid*, it signifies an identity at the concrete, fully determinate and actual level. The following diagram can help to pinpoint the kind of predication involved in the traditional “*est*” formula and summarize its meaning:



The theoretically possible interpretations of the “*est*” formula in Pius XII and the schemata that led to *Lumen gentium* can be summarized as follows:

The “*est*” formula



From “*est*” to “*adest*” (a short-lived transition)

During a meeting of the subcommission responsible for the preparation of [chapter one](#) of the third schema of the Constitution on the Church, the term “*adest*,” which had been drafted by Bishop Jan van Dodewaard, was put forward for consideration as a substitute for what could be taken as an insufficiently flexible ecclesiology embodied in the use of the “*est*.”⁵⁹ The point of the deliberation was to

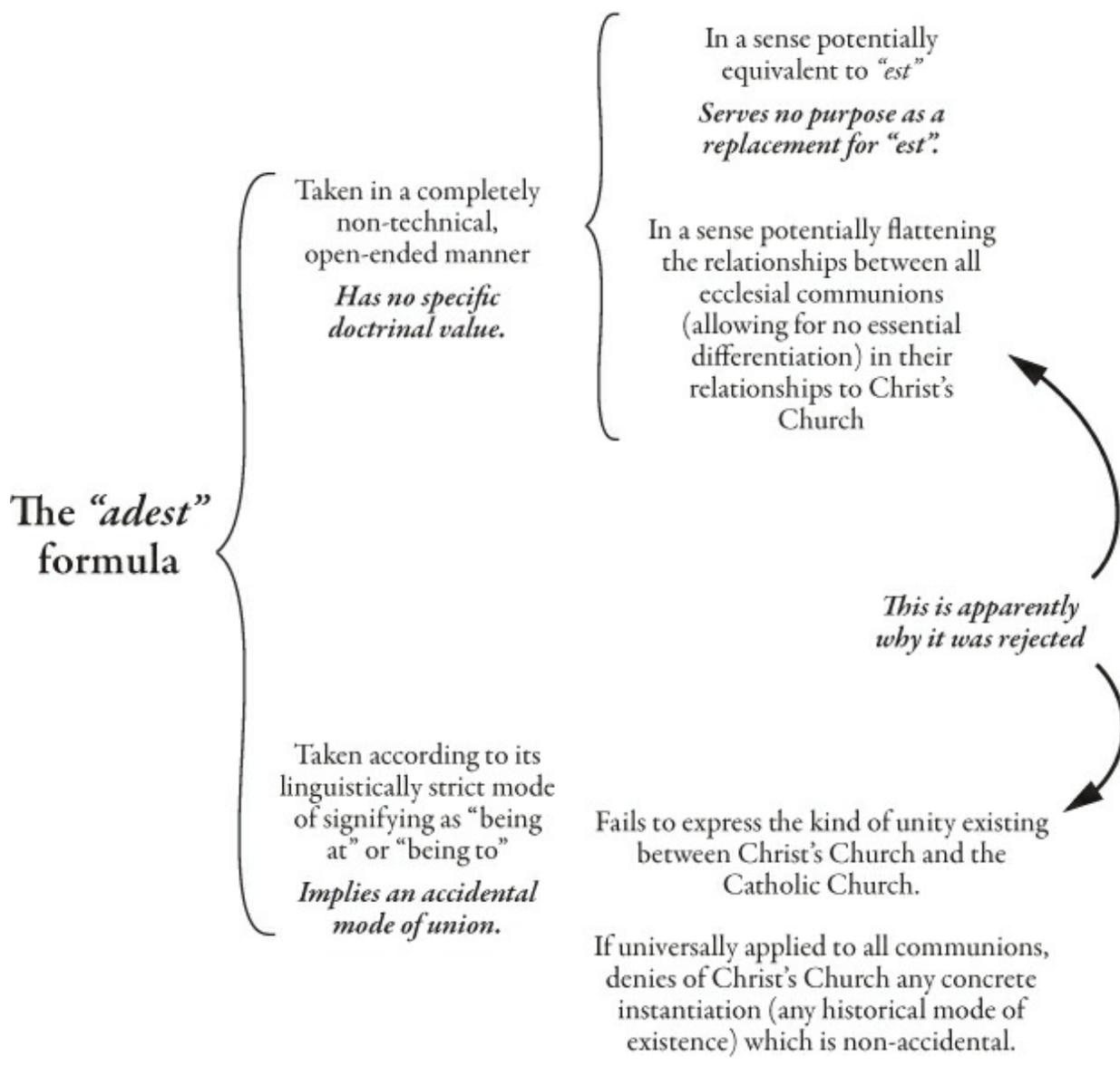
find an expression capable of synthesizing the traditional doctrine concerning the Catholic Church's relationship to the one Church of Christ with a more fully developed understanding of the latter's relationship to non-Catholics. The question was whether "*adest*" used to express the relationship between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church might be better suited to that end. Straight away, the Doctrinal Commission overseeing the schema (headed by Cardinal Ottaviani) raised objections to the use of "*adest*," because it was considered imprecise and too weak to express the relationship between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church. Apparently with no internal resistance, the commission readily accepted the alternative expression suggested by Sebastian Tromp, "*subsistit in*."⁶⁰ But why, exactly, should the "*adest*" language be undesirable? What does it say?

The term "*adest*" just means "being present" or "being there." The infinitive, "*adesse*," translates as "to be present" or "to be here" or "to be at hand."⁶¹ Now the term could be taken in an entirely non-technical way, so as to be equivalent to "is" or "exists" unqualifiedly. But this would be problematic in light of the predication at hand, since the term is used to relate the Church of Christ to the Catholic Church, and the predication of one of the other by means of a simple "is" would hardly take us beyond the original use of "*est*." As an alternative to "*est*," then, "*adest*" has a more technical (or at least an intentionally distinct) sense, one that (if we are to eschew arbitrariness) is inherent in the structure of the term itself.

As connoted by the prepositional morpheme, "*ad*," the term does not signify "to be" simply, but "to be at" or "to be to (some place)" or "to be present to." While the idea of "being present" necessarily presupposes the notion of existence, the existence in question here is of a qualified and accidental sort, namely, relative being. The concept of presence always implies being present *to* something. Even when we speak, for example, of being present to oneself, a logical distinction is made between the self to which the presence is made and the self made present; just as, in the spiritual order, the nature of reflexive knowledge implies the knower as subject as logically distinct from the same knower as object known. As a term that expresses a strictly relative mode of being,⁶² "*adest*" is not a wider term than "*est*," as though it served to indicate merely a presence of an indefinite sort allowing for any number of ways of being. To the contrary, "*adest*" ("*adesse*") is a more

restricted notion than “*est*” (“*esse*”). This is not to say that “*adesse*” expresses a weaker manner of existing than “*esse*” simply considered; for the latter as such is open to any number of determinate modes, including that of “*adesse*.” Compared, however, to the particular use of “*est*” made at the Second Vatican Council with reference to the Church of Christ (connoting the Church’s substantial and subsistent mode of being), the “*adest*,” because of the accidental mode of union it connotes, represents a significant weakening of the sense in which that Church is said to exist in relation to a concrete ecclesial communion. If the term might suffice to convey the manner in which Christ’s Church is joined to non-Catholic communions, it is entirely inadequate for what concerns the Catholic Church.⁶³ “*Adest*” could never capture the sense of the identity, the oneness *per se*, that exists between the Catholic Church and the Church of Christ. These points can be summarized diagrammatically:

Possible interpretations of the “*adest*” formula:



Some peculiarities regarding the use of “*adesse*”

One caveat, however, must be joined to this linguistic reading of the “*adest*,” inasmuch as the philosophical tradition is not devoid of a use of “*adest*” by which to describe an ontological relationship altogether different from that which I have associated with “*adest*” predication. I have emphasized the term’s proclivity for signifying accidental unity; however, within the Catholic theological and philosophical tradition, the term is put to at least one use that relates two things not accidentally but according to a real identity of being, namely, when a universal nature is said to exist within its subjective parts (i.e., its logical inferiors):

The universal whole is in (*adest*) each part according to its entire essence and power; as animal in a man and in a horse; and therefore it is properly predicated of each part. But the integral whole is not in each part, neither according to its whole essence, nor according to its whole power.⁶⁴

There are two parts to this passage, presenting two different kinds of wholes (and parts). I shall deal with difficulties presented by each in turn.

In the context of universals, the whole being of an essence is said to be present to (*adest*) each of its subjective parts (the latter of which are either species in relation to the universal understood as a genus, or individuals in relation to the universal understood either as a genus or a species). This means that the subjective parts possess everything proper to the notion of the universal, integrally exemplifying that essence. Transposed to our ecclesiological context, we could certainly say that the Church of Christ is present to (*adest*) the Catholic Church in the fullness of its being and, indeed, according to an identity in the concrete which is everything but an accidental union; but this is possible only when treating Christ's Church as a universal. I discuss the possibility of viewing the Church of Christ after the manner of a universal later in this chapter and in the next chapter. At this juncture, it suffices to note that, assuming Christ's Church relates to the Catholic Church as a universal to its particular instantiation, the "*adest*" need not imply anything accidental. Thus another (though contextually restricted) use of the "*adest*" could stand alongside the use I have presented above. Of course, the integral, complete instantiation requirement associated with using "*adest*" in this context automatically precludes the multiplication of the universal among logical inferiors deprived of the whole essence: the Church of Christ, in other words, could never be said to "*adest*" any non-Catholic communion. All of this supposes, of course, that Christ's Church stands in relation to the Catholic Church as the universal to the singular. Note, finally, that "*adest*" in this case would not be used in a technical sense, but nor would it, contrary to the efforts of Subcommittee 1, function any differently than the "*est*."

By way of contrast with universal wholes, Aquinas points out that integral wholes (which include things like houses, tables, plants, birds, and human beings, all of which are composed of quantitatively divisible parts) cannot exist in their entirety in each of the parts.⁶⁵ Christ's Church concretely considered, the Catholic

Church, is also an example of an integral whole; and the being and virtualities of that Church are obviously not to be found in their entirety in any particular church. This, of course, presents no difficulties for the position I have argued above. If we turn our attention, however, to another kind of integral whole, the question may yet seem unsettled, insofar as (an aspect of) the relationship between form and matter, which come together to constitute something *substantially one*, is sometimes also described with the use of “*adest*”: Aquinas affirms “the substantial form is present to (*adest*) each and every part of the matter; in fact, it perfects not only the whole, but the single parts.”⁶⁶ Does this mean that the “*adest*” mode of predicating is suited to signify the substantial unity between the substantial parts of an integral whole? No. In this particular case, the “*adest*” is not used to express the hylemorphic relationship as such,⁶⁷ but rather an effect of that composition. This is particularly clear in Aquinas’s formulation of the same idea in the *Summa*, where (without using “*adest*”) he states: “since the soul is united to the body as its form, it must necessarily be in the whole body, and in each part thereof; for it is not an accidental form, but the substantial form of the body.”⁶⁸ The central affirmation of both statements concerns the presence of the substantial form to the various *parts* of the matter; it expresses the fact that the soul is present in every place to which the matter extends (the latter being considered according to its potential divisibility). Such a use of “*adest*” is in keeping with its intrinsic mode of signifying. The term certainly may be used in a non-technical manner (and the scholastics also did so), but if we wish to use it in the strict manner following from its linguistic construction, then the term has a “local” connotation, in the sense that it expresses the presence of one thing to another thing. The following are good examples of this (more common) usage:

- In addition to his free will, there is present to (*adest*) man, moreover, the defense of his Angel, and the help of God, if he is willing to receive it;⁶⁹
- Eternity is present (*adest*) in its presentiality to any time or instant of time;⁷⁰
- To itself, the soul is always present (*adest*) in act;⁷¹
- From the fact that we love something we desire that thing if it be absent; we

- rejoice, of course, if it be present (*adest*);⁷²
- God is in all things; not, indeed, as part of their essence ... but as an agent is present to (*adest*) that upon which it works;⁷³
 - God is said to be in all things by essence, not indeed ... as if he were of their essence, but ... because his substance is present to (*adest*) all things as the cause of their being;⁷⁴
 - The beloved is present to (*adest*) the lover;⁷⁵
 - Now prophecy is not a habit; for “the spirit of prophecy does not always reside in (*adest*) the prophets”;⁷⁶
 - Now, this gift of grace is not in (*non adest*) unbelievers;⁷⁷
 - A thing is capable of knowing, not because intelligible species are present to (*adest*) it, but because a cognitive power is present to (*adest*) it;⁷⁸
 - In whatsoever heart the Lord is present (*adest*) by grace, there all wars cease;⁷⁹
 - In word and sacrament, the Holy Spirit is invisibly present (*adest*).⁸⁰

Every one of these examples pertains either to accidental properties or modifications of a subject or to an accidental union between subjects, and not to the unity between two that are substantially one. To directly describe the relationship between the body and the soul (and between matter and form in general), the ordinary language for Aquinas is not “*adest*,” but verbs such as “informs,” “specifies,” “determines,” and “perfects.” In fact, the latter concepts are viewed as the reason for the presence of the soul in (the fact that it “*adest*”) each bodily part. “*Adest*,” then, is not the term to directly convey non-accidental unity.

As a final consideration, it is worth noting that “*adesse*” can be put to another technical use, but in a very particular theological context, namely when trying to express the idea of being *with* another in such a way that no accidental mode of being is to be implied, in a way, that is, by which “*adesse*” is distinguished from “*inesse*,” the latter of which is the being of accidents. Accordingly, we can use “*adest*” to signify that one thing is present to another in a non-accidental way, owing to a substantial oneness between the two which nevertheless remain distinct

from each other relatively: “Our word, since it does not subsist, is not ‘with’ (*non adest*) us, but ‘in’ (*inest*) us; but the Word of God is subsistent, and therefore ‘with’ (*adest*) God.”⁸¹ Interestingly enough, the relative aspect of “*adest*” continues to obtain here, and in a particularly fitting manner, given that it is the strictly relative order that enables us to speak of the distinction necessary to ground an authentic being “with.” Were, however, a substantial identity to be affirmed without reference to the idea of being “with” and the relative distinction that that presupposes, the term “*adest*” would not be appropriate.

Conclusion

Since the time of the early Church, through the Middle Ages, to modernity, in the unambiguous teachings of the Fathers of the Church and official pronouncements of the magisterium, Catholic tradition has consistently understood and spoken of Christ’s Church as a mystery undifferentiable from, wholly and absolutely identical to, the visible society that is the Catholic Church.⁸² This *per se* and total identity between the Catholic Church and Christ’s Church is perfectly expressed in the teaching, operative both prior to and during Vatican II, that “the Church of Christ is (*est*) the Catholic Church.” As we have seen, the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Church of Christ expressed in this formula is unable to be multiplied or shared with any other Christian society. Built into its very predicative structures, the “*est*” formula represents an ecclesiology upholding the full and exclusive identity between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, Vatican II moved beyond this formulation, not, indeed, to make room for an ecumenically broader understanding of Christ’s Church—as the “*est*” formula never precluded that in any case—but to better express what is distinctive of the relationship between that Church and the Catholic Church in a way simultaneously connoting the possibility of its existence beyond the visible structures of the latter.⁸³ Thus the “*adest*” phrase was briefly entertained in the effort to achieve that goal, but it was readily rejected.

On account of the “*est*” formula’s seemingly monolithic signification, and due to the inadequacy of the term “*adest*,” owing to its open-endedness, theological imprecision and connotative dangers, in articulating the relationship between

Christ's Church and the Catholic Church another expression would have to be found. This expression would need to be able to denote accurately the profound unity that exists between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church (and thus uphold the dogmatically clear import of the "*est*" formulation), and, at the same time, and in a comparably theologically significant way, to accommodate (in a way more nuanced or more manifest than the "*est*") the Council's teaching regarding the expansiveness of the ecclesiological mystery and the multivalent breadth of her boundaries. The process involved in the choice to move beyond the limitations of "*est*" and in the ruling out of "*adest*" naturally prepared the way for the phrase that would prevail, "*subsistit in.*"

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- ¹ A previous version of the content found in this chapter and the next appeared in Stephen A. Hipp, "'*Est*,' '*Adest*,' and '*Subsistit in*' at Vatican II," *Angelicum* 91 (2014): 727–794.
 - ² "*Haec est unica Christi Ecclesia, quam in Symbolo unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam profiteamur ... Haec Ecclesia, in hoc mundo ut societas constituta et ordinata, subsistit in Ecclesia catholica*" (*Lumen gentium*, 8). Unless otherwise noted, all citations of official Church documents and translations thereof are from the Vatican website.
 - ³ Such an examination of these terms in relation to the ecclesiology of the Council is virtually non-existent. Alexandra von Teuffenbach conducts a similar sort of analysis with the term "*licet*" regarding "elements" and their relation to the "*subsistit*" but devotes only a few pages to that project; see A. von Teuffenbach, *Die Bedeutung des 'subsistit in' (LG 8): Zum Selbstverständnis der Katholischen Kirche* (Munich: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2002), 78–85 (hereafter *Die Bedeutung des 'subsistit in'*).
 - ⁴ See, for example, P. G. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 1865 (hereafter *Oxford Latin Dictionary*); E. A. Andrews et al., *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1797–1800 (hereafter *A Latin Dictionary*); Roy J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto, 2004), 373.
 - ⁵ The concept of "exclusive identity" must be properly understood. Although it is sometimes used to stigmatize theories locating Christ's Church exclusively within the Catholic Church visibly considered (theories that, because they are faithful neither to Vatican II nor to Catholic tradition, merit stigmatization), as is clear from the present context, the expression has a more nuanced meaning and applies (more commonly) to ecclesiologies fully recognizing a certain existence of Christ's Church outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church. By itself, the phrase "exclusive identity" should not be taken to imply that Christ's Church exists only in the Catholic Church and nowhere else. The meaning is rather that Christ's Church, wholly identified with the Catholic Church, is unable to be identified with any other community. Christ's Church, in other words, is identifiable exclusively with the Catholic Church, though this identity does not preclude its existence elsewhere. The "exclusivity" has to do *not* with the sheer unqualified existence or operative presence of Christ's Church (which extend beyond the visible

confines of the Catholic Church), but with the claim to and property of identity with that Church, inasmuch as the Catholic Church alone relates to Christ's Church according to identity, on which basis Christ's Church is said simply to "be" the Catholic Church, ontological and predicative relations that are exclusive to her. The sense of this exclusivity shall be clarified in what follows.

- 6 This "*est*" identification is manifest already in the fact that the early Church found no reason to speak at the same time of the "Church of Christ" and of the "Catholic Church," as though there were any distinction between them, but simply of Christ's Church or of the Catholic Church, interchangeably.
- 7 Of the latter, Ignatius of Antioch provides a noteworthy early example: "See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop.... Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church," *Letter to the Smyrneans*, c. 8, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to AD 325*, trans. and ed. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885; reprint Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 1:89–90 (hereafter ANF). The sacramental identification of the bishop with Christ as Head of the Body entails the shortened version: "Wherever the bishop is, there is the Church of Christ." See *id.*, c. 9: "It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honours the bishop has been honoured by God; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does [in reality] serve the devil" (ANF 1:90).
- 8 See, for example, Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Magnesians*, c. 6–7: "The bishop presides in the place of God" (*Ad Magn.*, c. 6: ANF 1:61); Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, c. 29; cf. Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Ephesians*, c. 4–6: "Let us be careful, then, not to set ourselves in opposition to the bishop, in order that we may be subject to God" (*Ad Eph.*, c. 5: ANF 1:51). See in these regards H. J. Vogt, "Ecclesiologia," in *Dizionario patristico e di antichità cristiane*, ed. A. Di Berardino (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1983), 1:1049 (hereafter *Dizionario patristico*).
- 9 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, Bk. III, c. 24 (ANF 1:508). See especially *idem*, Bk. III, c. 3; Bk. I, c. 10; Bk. V, c. 20: "But the path of those belonging to the Church circumscribes the whole world, as possessing the sure tradition from the apostles, and gives unto us to see that the faith of all is one and the same, since all receive one and the same God the Father, and believe in the same dispensation regarding the incarnation of the Son of God, and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit, and are conversant with the same commandments, and preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution" (Bk. V, c. 20: ANF 1:548).
- 10 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, Bk. IV, c. 33. For further references to Irenaeus in this regard, see A. von Teuffenbach, *Die Bedeutung des 'subsistit in,'* 124–125.
- 11 "You ought to know that the bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop; and if any one be not with the bishop, that he is not in the Church ... the Church, which is Catholic and one, is not cut nor divided, but is indeed connected and bound together by the cement of priests who cohere with one another" (Cyprian, *Epistle 68*, 8 [ANF 5:374–375]). See also *Epistle 43* (to the Roman Confessors): "It weighs me down and saddens me ... [that] contrary to ecclesiastical order, contrary to evangelical law, contrary to the unity of the Catholic institution ... another church should be set up; that Christ's members should be torn asunder; that the one mind and body of the Lord's flock should be lacerated by a divided emulation" (ANF 5:321).
- 12 "God is one, and Christ is one, and his Church is one, and the faith is one, and the people is joined into a substantial unity of body by the cement of concord. Unity cannot be severed; nor can one body be separated by a division of its structure, nor torn into pieces, with its entrails wrenched asunder by

laceration” (Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Church*, 23 [ANF 5:429]). See idem, 5: “The Church also is one ... as there are many rays of the sun, but one light; and many branches of a tree, but one strength based in its tenacious root; and since from one spring flow many streams ... yet the unity is still preserved in the source.... Thus also the Church ... sheds forth her rays over the whole world ... yet her head is one, her source one; and she is one mother” (ANF 5:423). Pope Benedict XVI underscores this patristic witness to the strict identity between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church when he points out, referring to Cyprian: “He never wearied of repeating that ‘if a man deserts the Chair of Peter upon whom the Church was built, does he think that he is in the Church?’” (*General Audience*, Wednesday, June 6, 2007).

- 13 Jerome, *Epistle 15* (to Pope Damasus), 2.
- 14 “This mysterious function the Lord wished to be indeed the concern of all the apostles, but in such a way that he has placed the principal charge on the blessed Peter, chief of all the Apostles; and from him as from the Head wishes his gifts to flow to all the body; so that any one who dares to secede from Peter’s solid rock may understand that he has no part or lot in the divine mystery” (Pope St. Leo the Great, *Letter 10*, 1; see *Letter 4*, 2).
- 15 See H. J. Vogt, “Ecclesiologia,” in *Dizionario patristico*, 1:1062
- 16 Pope Innocent III, *Profession of Faith Prescribed for the Waldensians*, in *Enchiridion Symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum: Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, ed. Peter Hünermann, Helmut Hoping, Robert L. Fastiggi, et al., 43rd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2012), 792 (hereafter DH).
- 17 Fourth Lateran Council, *The Catholic Faith*, DH 802.
- 18 Joseph C. Fenton, *The Catholic Church and Salvation in the Light of Recent Pronouncements by the Holy See* (Round Top, NY: Seminary Press, 2006), 6.
- 19 Boniface VIII, *Unam sanctam*: DH 872. See Innocent III, *Apostolicae Sedis primatus*: “Although the first and foremost foundation of the Church is the only begotten Son of God ... the second and secondary foundation of the Church is Peter ... so that anyone who wishes not to have him as his shepherd, even in his successors, should be deemed an alien to the Lord’s flock” (DH 774).
- 20 DH 1351. Shortly later, in the context of responding to the errors proliferated by the Protestant Reformation, the renowned ecclesiologist, Robert Bellarmine, synthesizes and refines this ecclesiology with reference to the concrete visibility of essential traits of Christ’s Church. See in this regard R. Bellarmine, *Explicatio Symboli Apostolici*, a. 9: *Opera Oratoria Postuma: Documentis variis ad gubernium animarum spectantibus* (Pont. Universitatis Gregoriana, Rome 1942–1969), 10:143: “The Church is called the ‘Congregation,’ not because all the faithful are gathered in a single locale, but because they are gathered under one banner of the Cross, and under one leader or head, Christ and his universal Vicar, the Roman Pontiff” (translation mine). Significantly, Bellarmine equates not just Christ’s Church, but the mode in which one has a share in the life of that Church, with what is distinctive of the Catholic Church, effectively tying the notion of ecclesiality to her manifoldly visible dimensions: “Three things, to be sure, are necessary for someone to be said to belong to the Church: baptism, the profession of faith, and submission to the head of the Church” (ibid.) (translation mine); see id., 145; cf. *De controversiis Christianae fidei*, contr. IV (*De Ecclesia militante*), Bk. III, c. 2–3; see Ludovico Billot, *Tractatus de Ecclesia Christi, sive continuatio theologiae de Verbo incarnato*, 3rd ed. (Rome: Libreria Giachetti, 1909) 1:291–296; Adolphe Tanquerery, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae* (Paris: Desclée et Socii, 1937), 1:671.
- 21 DS (vet.) 1646–1647. For an equally clear statement of the same idea, see Pius IX’s encyclical to the

bishops of Italy, *Quanto conficiamur moerore* (10 August 1863).

- 22 Pius IX, *Letter to the Bishops of England* (“*The Unicity of the Church*”), September 16, 1864 (DH 2886–2888). See also by Pius IX, *Iam vos omnes* “To all Protestants and other non-Catholics” (September 13, 1868), *AAS* 4 (1868): 131–135: “No one can deny or doubt that Jesus Christ himself, in order to apply the fruits of his redemption to all generations of men, built his only Church in this world on Peter (*suam hic in terris supra Petrum unicam aedificasse Ecclesiam*); that is to say, the Church, one, holy, catholic, and apostolic; and that he gave to it all necessary power, that the deposit of faith might be preserved whole and inviolable, and that ... all men might become members of his mystical body, and that ... this same Church, which is his mystical body (*eadem Ecclesia, quae mysticum suum constituit corpus*), might always remain in its own nature firm and immovable to the end of time” (English translations of *Iam vos omnes* are from James Kent Stone, *The Invitation Heeded: Reasons for a Return to Catholic Unity* (New York: Catholic Publication Society, 1870; reprint London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 5–14.
- 23 As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, this does not preclude the existence of “elements” of Christ’s Church outside of the visible structures of the Catholic Church. It does preclude, however, naming any other Christian community “the Church” or “Christ’s Church.” I explain these distinctions in detail in what follows.
- 24 Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum* (DH 3300–3310), 9.
- 25 Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, 4.
- 26 See especially *Satis cognitum*, 5. Note that the thoroughly visible dimensions of ecclesial unity are unambiguously underscored throughout the tradition: Christ’s Church, like the Incarnate Word, is essentially visible, and the integral realization of the mystery of ecclesial unity (which is unity in Christ) is necessarily visible. Any spiritualization of the Church’s being or any devaluation of the specifically visible expression of her unity undermines, therefore, the very *mysterion*. This, of course, has not prevented countless distortions of Church unity. More than once it has been suggested that ecclesial unity resides not at the visible level but at the purely invisible level, as though the mystery of man’s redemption should bypass the very things that are connatural to him. Recently, and regarding the very *notion* of unity, it has even been argued that the mark of ecclesial unity cannot be visible, since unity (like truth, beauty and goodness) is a transcendental, and the transcendentals are invisible. Were this merely an ecumenical attempt to steer ecclesiological reflection away from the level at which different Christian faiths are most obviously divided, it could not be condoned, since it comes at the expense of doctrinal consistency. Such an argument, however, is not only doctrinally unacceptable, but philosophically naive and theologically foolish. It is hardly necessary to point out that the conclusion is altogether inconsistent with the very meaning of “transcendental,” which implies that the perfection in question pertains to every being and every order of beings. Precisely as transcendentals, unity, truth, goodness, and beauty, transcend every category of being, cutting across substance and the nine accidents, and are common to the sensible and suprasensible orders alike. Thus the very notion of a transcendental implies that visible realities, indeed, all visible realities, also exhibit it (in a way proportioned to their mode of being). The concept of a transcendental further signifies that the perfection in question is capable of being realized in a maximal and subsistent manner. This is its absolute expression, free from any limitation of being, including the imperfections associated with material existence. Necessarily, this maximal instance of unity, truth, goodness and beauty, because it is immaterial, will not be visible. But this realization of perfection within the purely intelligible order in no way precludes its realization within the sensible. In fact, the exact opposite is true, since the limited modes of realizing unity, truth, goodness and beauty, and of realizing any

pure perfection for that matter, are themselves essentially dependent upon the transcendent, subsistent source of those perfections to begin with. In other words, the invisible, maximal realization of the transcendentals is the condition for their visible realization; and it is part of the plenitude of that maximal realization that it communicates something of its own perfection to others. This is what the entire doctrine of participation is concerned with, and the Christian theology of creation presupposes it. God did not have to create, but the entire array of the created multiplicity exhibits (*modo suo*, and analogously) the very perfections of the Godhead, including unity. Furthermore, *ens et unum convertuntur*; if the Church is not visibly one, then she is not visible at all (and what, then, would be the ecclesiological point of human beings coming together in a common place in a commonly-perceived activity in the pursuit of greater manifest communion?). See chapter four, notes 10 and 54; General Conclusion and Ecumenical Implications, note 24.

- 27 See, *inter alia*, *Mystici corporis Christi*, 13: “*Hanc veracem Christi Ecclesiam ... sancta, catholica, apostolica, Romana Ecclesia est*” (AAS 35 [1943]: 199). I examine this proposition and other statements from Pius XII immediately below.
- 28 *Orientalium ecclesiarum*, 2: “*Sancta et catholica Ecclesia, quae est corpus Christi mysticum.*”
- 29 “*Hanc veracem Christi Ecclesiam ... sancta, catholica, apostolica, Romana Ecclesia est*” (Pius XII, *Mystici corporis Christi*, 13: AAS 35 [1943]: 199).
- 30 “*Ecclesia ... uberrima illa Spiritus communicatione ditata est ... ut ros charismatum Paracliti ... large abundanterque ... universam terram, Catholicam scilicet Ecclesiam irrigaret*” (Pius XII, *Mystici corporis Christi*, 31: AAS 35 [1943]: 206).
- 31 “[*Revelatio*] *quidem docet corpus Christi mysticum et Ecclesiam Catholicam Romanam unum idemque esse*” (Pius XII, *Humani generis*, 27: AAS 42 [1950]: 571).
- 32 “*Docet igitur Sacra Synodus et sollemniter profitetur non esse nisi unicam veram Iesu Christi Ecclesiam, eam nempe quam ... S. Petro et Successoribus, qui sunt Romani Pontifices, tradidit gubernandam; ideoque sola iure Catholica Romana nuncupatur Ecclesia*” (*Schema constitutionis dogmaticae de Ecclesia* [first Schema of the Constitution on the Church, *Aeternus Unigeniti, Schema constitutionis dogmaticae de Ecclesia, Acta synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970–1980), vol. I, pt. 4, 15 (hereafter AS). English translation by J. Komonchak available online from jakomonchak.wordpress.com]).
- 33 “*Docet autem Sacra Synodus et sollemniter profitetur non esse nisi unicam Iesu Christi Ecclesiam ... quam Salvator ... Petro et Apostolis eorumque successoribus pascendam tradidit... Haec igitur Ecclesia ... est Ecclesia catholica*” (*Schema constitutionis dogmaticae de Ecclesia* [second schema of the Constitution on the Church], AS, vol. II, pt. 1, 219–220 [English translation mine]).
- 34 “*Sancta et catholica Ecclesia, quae est corpus Christi mysticum, constat ex fidelibus, qui eadem fide, iisdem sacramentis et eodem regimine in Spiritu Sancto organice uniuntur*” (*Orientalium ecclesiarum*, 2).
- 35 As noted, this ecclesial reality could be conceived differently from within differing theological perspectives. I have mentioned two important possibilities in this regard, namely viewing Christ’s Church as a concrete singular thing (which is, generally speaking, a common tendency within Catholic theology) or as a sort of nature in principle common to many. There are certain challenges, however, that need to be overcome within each of these perspectives. Concerning the former, the objection could be raised that the Church is a community, and communities (in the natural order at least) are reducible to their members, wherefore

the Church is just an aggregate of members, and not a real singular in the proper sense of the term. I address this objection below, where I defend the analogical use of our language with respect to the ecclesial mystery, and where I underscore the implications of the supernatural dimensions of ecclesial unity. The latter way of conceptualizing Christ's Church is more deeply problematic. I deal with it intermittently throughout this chapter and the next, particularly because it has an affinity with the "*subsistit in*" language officially adopted by the Council. Due to limitations of space, however, I refrain from a detailed analysis of the issue and simply highlight some of the logical and theological tensions it occasions. A third conceptual perspective should be mentioned here as well, namely, viewing Christ's Church as a kind of eschatological ideal to be realized in time through the gradual perfection of the many Christianities of which she is the collective whole. The fundamental problem with this concept, of course, is that the Church of Christ would nowhere be realized concretely as willed by Christ. I comment briefly on this clearly erroneous and easily dismissible hypothesis in the following chapter. I am grateful for the comments of Mark K. Spencer in these regards.

³⁶ See Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, c. 2 and 4. Note that we are not concerned here with literary figures of speech like synecdoche.

³⁷ The error in question is refuted later in this chapter.

³⁸ As explained within the remainder of this chapter and the next chapter, the historical Catholic Church is the concrete embodiment of the entire essence of Christ's Church, and the latter is existentially identical to the Catholic Church at every historical moment, even though, as the concrete expression of Christ's Church in the ever-changing spatio-temporal order, the Catholic Church never exhausts at any given moment all of the virtualities of Christ's Church relevant to its being accidentally considered, many of which display themselves only through the Church's successive development in space and time. In this respect, the same ecclesial mystery can be signified either according to the plenitude of its essential being conjoined with all of its possibilities at the accidental level, and this is to signify it as an actuality in relation to a multitude of unrealized potencies, or according only to its actual being within the concrete temporal order, inclusive of the particularities of its physiognomy at that moment but prescinding from other potentially realizable (and even destined to be realized) accidental modalities of its being. In the former case, we can speak of the Church as a mystery encompassing possibilities exceeding those actually realized within the Catholic Church at any given moment. In the latter case, we speak of the Catholic Church as the historically conditioned (i.e., particularly configured) concrete existence of Christ's Church here and now. But in each case, we are speaking about the same Church, only signified differently. This is why, in the immediately preceding sentences, I have twice dropped the qualifying possessive "Christ's" when designating the Church, once when considering it as a living, temporally developing entity, and once when considering it as a mystery full of unrealized possibilities (instances which, noteworthily, combine both sides of the distinction); and this is possible, and theologically significant, because there is no difference in reality between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church. The distinction *in ratione* here operative is just that, and not a distinction *in re*, as though the Church of Christ were one thing, and the Catholic Church another. Furthermore, it must be carefully observed that the possibilities/potentialities/virtualities in question are none other than the possibilities/potentialities/virtualities that belong to the Catholic Church. It is this concretely living society that has acquired the particular physiognomy it currently possesses and that shall come to assume newer expressions over time; and the virtualities we might, for conceptual convenience, locate within the "Church of Christ" are located *eo ipso* in the Catholic Church, the Church that is "constituted and ordered as a society in this world" (*Lumen gentium* 8, with reference to the *unica Christi Ecclesia*). As Christopher Malloy remarks, "the virtuality of the Church of Christ is the

very same as the virtuality of the Catholic Church” (Christopher J. Malloy, “Is Exclusive Identity Compatible with Ecumenism as a *Mutual* Exchange of Gifts?,” *The Josephinum Journal of Theology* 22 [2015] [hereafter “Is Exclusive Identity Compatible with Ecumenism”]): 200.

- 39 J. Ratzinger, “Es scheint mir absurd, was unsere lutherischen Freunde jetzt wollen. Ein Interview mit Christian Geyer zur Erklärung Dominus Iesus,” in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 221 (September 22, 2000) (hereafter “Es scheint mir absurd”): 51.
- 40 The same sort of comparison occurs in J. Ratzinger, “*Deus locutus est nobis in Filio*: Some Reflections on Subjectivity, Christology, and the Church,” in *Proclaiming the Truth of Jesus Christ: Papers from the Vallombrosa Meeting*, United States Catholic Conference (Washington, DC, 2000) (hereafter “*Deus locutus est*”), 27: “*Subsistere* is a special case of *esse*. It refers to existence in the form of an individual subject.” See also J. Ratzinger, “The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*,” *L’Osservatore Romano* 19 (September 2001): 8.
- 41 This is the “being” whereby a thing is posited in reality, and not the “being” whereby we can make affirmative statements about things even if they have, in themselves, no existence in reality (e.g., privations and negations).
- 42 See in this regard Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, c. 1. Aquinas is here speaking directly about the different ways in which a thing may be called “a being” (*ens*), and only indirectly and implicitly about the different kinds of being (*esse*) by which a thing can exist (as a real being or as a being of reason). The distinction operative in Aquinas, however, corresponds to the comparison I am making, inasmuch as, in the cited text, Ratzinger’s treatment of the verb “to be” ties its notion to the concept of “being” used of what falls under the ten genera, not allowing it to have a purely logical, non-ontological function. In Ratzinger’s text, the verb “to be” is understood with reference to the breadth of the objects which (grammatically speaking) it serves to unite or divide in predication, that is, with respect to an unrestricted concept of *ens*: the verb “to be” (or “is,” or “*est*”) is usable in predication for all *entia*.
- 43 The “*est*” here is not itself a predicate, but functions to join the predicate term to the subject term. In other words, this instance of “*est*” cannot be charged with ontological signification in itself, unlike what Ratzinger is doing with the term “is” when he says that “the term ‘is’ (*est*) ... is broader than the term ‘subsist.’” “*Est*” (not to be confused with the “*est*” in the “*est*” formula) certainly may have the ontological value ascribed to it by Ratzinger, and the claim he makes about “is” is, in fact, valid when “is” functions notionally or as a predicate. In the very texts dealing with these questions, Aquinas gives us an example of this, namely, when it is said that “Socrates is,” where without further qualification, the “is” assumes the role of a predicate (which, in this case, as Aquinas also notes, is the broadest and highest of all predicates, which, interestingly enough, corresponds to the referential breadth attributed by Ratzinger to “is”); see Aquinas, *In Meta.*, Bk. V, lect. 9, no. 896. Of course, the “*subsistit*” to which Ratzinger is comparing the “*est*” is not a predicate either. The difference, however, is that *subsistere* (as Ratzinger explains, and as shall be explained more fully below) expresses within its very concept a *mode* of being, thus telling us something about the nature of the subject of its predication.
- 44 See Aquinas, *In Meta.*, Bk. V, lect. 9, no. 896.
- 45 See in this regard Aquinas, *In Meta.*, Bk. V, lect. 9, no. 895; *De ente et essentia*, c. 1.
- 46 Affirmation of the identity between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church necessarily takes the linguistic form of a unity between two distinct terms; but this does not entail a real distinction between

those terms: “Sameness (*identitas*) is a unity or union. For things which are said to be the same are either many in being, but are said to be the same inasmuch as they agree in some respect, or they are one in being, but the intellect uses this as many in order to understand a relationship; for a relationship can be understood only between two extremes” (Aquinas, *In Meta.*, Bk. V, lect. 11, no. 912 [English translations for *In Meta.* are taken from *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, 2 vols., trans. J. P. Rowan (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961)]).

- ⁴⁷ The term “substantial” is placed within quotation marks here to signal the strictly analogical use of the notion of substance when applied to the being of the Church as such. To speak of unity at the substantial level, and to treat the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church as subjects of being after the manner of complete and concrete substantial things, raises questions as to the manner in which such categorical labels are applicable to the complex wholes represented by the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church. Clearly, the Church is not even remotely a substance in the same way, for example, as an individual human being. I discuss the strictly analogical manner in which the Church can be viewed as a substantial reality just below.
- ⁴⁸ See Aquinas, *In Meta.*, Bk. V, lect. 11 (especially no. 911).
- ⁴⁹ See Aquinas, *In Meta.*, Bk. V, lect. 7, no. 864; lect. 8, nos. 868–869.
- ⁵⁰ Pius XII, *Humani generis*, 27.
- ⁵¹ A similar justification for the analogical application of said metaphysical concepts to the Church can be found in C. Malloy, “Is Exclusive Identity Compatible with Ecumenism,” 185–187.
- ⁵² Note that the idea of having in a partial way what belongs to Christ’s Church is not at all equivalent to being a “part” of that Church. Depending on the kind of unity that is proper to an integral whole, the criteria for being a part of that whole can vary. In the case of the Mystical Body of Christ, being a “part” entails much more than merely resembling the whole, and much more than sharing properties of the whole, and much more than being in contact with that whole. I cannot fully address these questions here but offer only a basic solution to them. Fuller consideration of them and of the related concept of ecclesial “participation” is provided in the third and fourth chapters of this volume.
- ⁵³ One finds evidence of this as early as the third century with reference to the validity of baptism among heretical sects; see Stephen I, *Letter to Cyprian of Carthage* (On the Baptism of Heretics), 256; (DH 110); cf. Nicea, DH 127. Augustine explicitly taught that the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church and that there existed elements of Christ’s Church beyond the visible boundaries of the latter; see Augustine, *In Ioann.*, tract. VI, n. 16–17, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, 36:62; *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, in *The Fathers of the Church*, ed. T. P. Halton et al., trans. John W. Rettig (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1988–1995), vols. 78–79, 88, 90, 92, at 78:144–145; *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, P. Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1st ser. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1886; reprint Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989–1994), 7:44–45 (hereafter NPNF-1); *De baptismo contra Donatistas*, Bk. I, c. 10, no. 14 (*Bibliothèque Augustinienne* [hereafter BA] 29:14; NPNF-1, 4:417–418); *Epist.* 98, n. 5, CSEL 34:526; *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina* 33:362 (hereafter PL). One can also cite a host of witnesses from among the controversial theologians of the sixteenth century as well as the papal magisterium right up until Vatican II; see Christian D. Washburn, “The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, and *Subsistit in*,” *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 22 (2015): 145–175 at 171–174 (hereafter “The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, and *Subsistit in*”). It is noteworthy that, with reference to the official rites of Christian worship, Aquinas

presents a particularly illuminating distinction between sacred actions that function as a consequence of visible union with the one true Church and those that function by reason of powers able to be operative even in the absence of that union; see *Sum. theol.*, IIIa, q.82, a. 7 and ad 3 (read in the light of the principles set forth in a. 6). See chapter four, note 96.

- 54 Of course, and as follows from what was already said, anything simply identical to the Catholic Church, however it be linguistically expressed, is likewise predicable *in quid* of Christ's Church.
- 55 This is not to suggest that every quality is separable from its subject in the way that whiteness is separable from a man. The quality of being white can come and go without detriment to a man's existence not only because it is something added to his essence, but because it does not follow upon the principles of man's essence. There are, however, other kinds of qualities that, although adding a qualified being to their subjects, cannot be removed from those subjects forasmuch as they follow upon the essences of the subjects, namely, proper accidents, without which the subject does not exist. I do not distinguish every kind of predication *in quale*, as that would entail a careful analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic accidental modes of being along with the different modes of perseity, which lies beyond the scope of this volume. See Aquinas, *In Meta.*, Bk. V, lect. 9, no. 886–892.
- 56 The contradiction is implied by reason, primarily, of intrinsically incompatible faith claims and, secondarily, of extrinsically incompatible practices (an incompatibility in the practical order, the unworkability of attempting to do opposite things at once) based on or justified by the faith claims. As a community of faith that lives according to the faith, Christ's Church cannot be formally qualified by such different predicates. Against this reasoning, one might be tempted to argue that the conjunction of these predicates could indeed apply to Christ's Church, not insofar as they signify formal qualitative perfections of the Church, but insofar as they indicate the material parts of which the whole is constituted, in the same way that one could say of a man that he is at once "be-legged" and "be-armed." Accordingly, the Church of Christ is, *ex hypothesi*, at once "Lutheran" and "Anglican" and "Catholic" in its different parts. This is an interesting proposition, and, in one sense it seems correct, inasmuch as whatever remains of the true life of the Church in the Lutheran communion, for example, enables us to speak of Christ's Church as present within that communion, and on this basis that communion is "connected" in some way to the whole and therefore conceivable (in a certain sense) as a "material part." But note that the presence in question is based on the retention within the Lutheran communion of that which is proper to Christ's Church. That part or aspect of Christ's Church which remains within the Lutheran communion, however, is everything but what is distinctive of the Lutheran communion as such. In that by reason of which non-Catholic communions are distinct from the Catholic Church, they are separated from Christ's Church. It is only by virtue of what they presently enjoy of the being and life of the Catholic Church that the Church of Christ is within them. Thus it no longer would make sense to say that "Christ's Church is Lutheran," not even in the sense of indicating a material part or place to which the being of Christ's Church extends (as in "Christ's Church is be-Lutheraned"), since Christ's Church is there by virtue of that which in the Lutheran communion is non-Lutheran as such. It would be better to say that "Christ's Church, as it is found within the Lutheran communion (and anywhere else), is Catholic."
- 57 One could be tempted to think that a logically sound and theologically appropriate way around the dilemma would be to bring the mode of signification proper to the predicate term into conformity with its purported universality, such that the conjunctive affirmation would become "The Anglican Communion is *a* Church of Christ (in the sense of an *instance* of that Church), and the Lutheran Communion is *a* Church of Christ, and so on." The logical problem with this explanation is that everything essential to Christ's Church would have to be instantiated in each of these communions if they are to possess that

nature at all; but this is inconsistent with the fundamental indigencies characterizing all of them but the Catholic Church (deprivations pertaining to the essence of Christ's Church), as well as with the existence of differences between them at an essential level. The theological problem with this explanation is that, assuming the Catholic Church is just one more instance of many partial realizations of Christ's Church (an assumption that usually goes hand in hand with the explanation), Christ's Church would be deprived at once of an integral concrete realization (i.e., one that is complete, having every essential and integrally perfective determination), and of unity (a unity that is essential to her being, explicitly willed by Christ, and guaranteed by his promise and the Holy Spirit).

- 58 The coextensivity in question here cuts across the boundaries of all three kinds of predication *in quid* and is a function of: (a) the inclusion within a logical inferior of everything proper to what (within the same order) is logically superior (as the notion of man, for example, includes everything proper to animality); and (b) the fact that what is logically superior (within the same order) does not exclude but rather contains in an indeterminate way everything proper to its logical inferior.
- 59 The draft had undergone stages of development in which the "*est*" was first changed to "*invenitur in*" and later to "*adest in*." The entire subcommission approved the "*adest*," after which Mons. Gérard Philips explained the reason for the change during a subsequent meeting in which the Doctrinal Commission took up the modification. Interestingly enough, Philips himself had previously written the second schema in which the strict identity between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church continued to be affirmed by way of a simple "*est*." However, the extensive *modi* accompanying the second schema precipitated a series of suggestions as how best to formulate the relationship between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church, thus occasioning the suggestion of the "*adest*" drafted by van Dodewaard at the meeting of Subcommission 1. For the history of these events, see Karim Schelkens, "*Lumen gentium's 'subsistit in'* Revisited: The Catholic Church and Christian Unity After Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 875–893 at 887–890 (hereafter "*Lumen gentium's 'subsistit in'*"). At the plenary meeting of the Doctrinal Commission, Philips verbally explained: "*In hoc mundo societas constituta et ordinata Ecclesia 'adest in' Ecclesia catholica, ubi ponebatur 'est' Ecclesia Catholica.... Quia ... melius potest dici postea quod adsunt alibi elementa*"; see Karl Josef Becker, "An Examination of *Subsistit in*: A Profound Theological Perspective," *L'Osservatore Romano* 14 (December 2005): 11–14 at 11–12 (hereafter "An Examination of *Subsistit in*"). Note that although the occurrence of "*adest*" in this verbal explanation is "*adest in*," the "in" changes nothing significant. In fact, as I demonstrate shortly, the connotation of "*adest*" already imports the relative aspect denoted by the "in." I take up the significance of the "in" particle in more detail when dealing with the expression "*subsistit in*."
- 60 The principal opposition to "*adest*" came from Heribert Schaaf who advocated switching the term back to "*est*"; see A. von Teuffenbach, *Die Bedeutung des 'subsistit in,'* 375–378; K. Becker, "An Examination of *Subsistit in*," 12; K. Schelkens, "*Lumen gentium's 'subsistit in,'*" 887–890.
- 61 See P. G. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 53; E. A. Andrews et al., *A Latin Dictionary*, 45; R. J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 27.
- 62 The manner in which the relative mode of being is expressed here is different from that in which more recognizably relative terms, such, for example, as "father" or "master," or "similar" or "larger," express the same mode of being. The latter terms directly bring to mind the relatively opposed subject term of the correlative relation. A term like "*adeste*" does not readily do so; nevertheless, its notion indirectly signifies relative terms.

- 63 Naturally, this conclusion presupposes a properly Catholic theological understanding of the relationship between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church, one in which a concrete and *per se* identity between the two must be maintained, even if that identity need not be qualified as exclusive. The conclusion also assumes that the connotative properties of the term "*adesse*" are operative in its usage. Although that is not necessary, it is not at all obvious how to put the "*adest*" to meaningful use in the absence of a significative distinction from "*est*."
- 64 "*Totum enim universale adest cuilibet parti secundum totam suam essentiam et virtutem, ut animal homini et equo, et ideo proprie de singulis partibus praedicatur. Totum vero integrale non est in qualibet parte, neque secundum totam essentiam, neque secundum totam virtutem*" (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 1) (English translations for *Sum. theol.* are taken from *Summa Theologica*, 3 vols., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province [New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947]). See also *I Sent.*, d. 3, q. 4, a. 2, ad 1: "*Universale enim adest cuilibet parti subjectivae secundum esse et perfectam virtutem, et ideo proprie praedicatur de parte sua. Sed totum integrale non adest cuilibet parti, neque secundum esse, neque secundum virtutem*"; and *De spir. cr.*, a. 11, ad 2: "*sciendum est triplex esse totum. Unum universale, quod adest cuilibet parti secundum totam suam essentiam et virtutem; unde proprie praedicatur de suis partibus, ut cum dicitur: homo est animal. Aliud vero est totum integrale, quod non adest alicui suae parti neque secundum totam essentiam neque secundum totam suam virtutem; et ideo nullo modo praedicatur de parte.*"
- 65 "*Sed totum integrale non adest cuilibet parti, neque secundum esse, neque secundum virtutem*" (*I Sent.*, d. 3, q. 4, a. 2, ad 1); "*Totum vero integrale non est in qualibet parte, neque secundum totam essentiam, neque secundum totam virtutem*" (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 1).
- 66 "*Forma substantialis adest cuilibet parti materiae: non enim perficit tantum totum, sed singulas partes*" (*I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 5, a. 3, sed contra) (English translations for all citations of the *Sentences* commentary are mine); cf. *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 76, a. 8.
- 67 As such, hylemorphic unity is a relationship between two principles intrinsically constitutive of a numerically distinct instance of finite being; principles that stand toward one another, first and foremost, as the actuating and determining to the actualized and determined. Every other relationship between matter and form (within a composite) follows upon this fundamental ontological rapport.
- 68 *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 76, a. 8: "*Quia anima unitur corpori ut forma, necesse est quod sit in toto, et in qualibet parte corporis. Non enim est forma corporis accidentalis, sed substantialis. Substantialis autem forma non solum est perfectio totius, sed cuiuslibet partis.*"
- 69 "*Et super hoc homini adest praesidium Angeli, et auxilium divinum, si suscipere velit*" (Aquinas, *II Sent.*, d. 11, q. 1, a. 5, expos.).
- 70 "*Cuilibet tempori vel instanti temporis praesentialiter adest aeternitas*" (Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. I, c. 66, no. 8); see also *Quodl.* X, q. 2, a. 1 (unless otherwise noted, English translations of *Sum. contra gent.* are taken from *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 5 vols., trans. A. C. Pegis [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975]).
- 71 "*Ipsa autem anima semper sibi adest actu*" (Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. III, c. 46, no. 2) (English translation mine).
- 72 "*Ex hoc enim quod aliquid amamus, desideramus illud si absit, gaudemus autem cum adest*" (Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. IV, c. 19, no. 3).

- 73 “*Deus est in omnibus rebus, non quidem sicut pars essentiae ... sed sicut agens adest ei in quod agit*” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 1).
- 74 “*Deus dicitur esse in omnibus per essentiam, non quidem rerum, quasi sit de essentia earum, sed ... quia substantia sua adest omnibus ut causa essendi*” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 3, ad 1). See also *Comp. theol.*, Bk. I, c. 135: “*Deus omnibus adest per potentiam, essentiam et praesentiam, et omnia immediate disponit.*”
- 75 “*Amatum praesentialiter adest amanti*” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I-II, q. 28, a. 1).
- 76 “*Sed prophetia non est habitus, non enim semper spiritus prophetiae adest prophetis, ut Gregorius dicit*” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I-II, q. 68, a. 3, obj. 3); see *Super I Cor.*, c. 14, lect. 6.
- 77 “*Hoc autem donum gratiae non adest infidelibus*” (Aquinas, *De pot.*, q. 6, a. 10, sed contra 3) (English translations for *De pot.* are taken from *On the Power of God*, trans. English Dominican Fathers, 2 vols. [London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1933]).
- 78 “*Non enim aliquid est cognoscitivum ex hoc quod ei adest species cognoscibilis, sed ex hoc quod ei adest potentia cognoscitiva*” (Aquinas, *De anima*, a. 2) (With minor modifications, English translation is from *The Soul*, trans. J. P. Rowan [St. Louis: Herder Book Co., 1951]).
- 79 “*In quocumque enim corde dominus per gratiam adest, mox universa bella quiescunt*” (Aquinas, *Catena in Mt.*, c. 14, lect. 5) (With slight modification, English translations of the *Catena* are taken from *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected Out of the Works of the Fathers*, trans. John Henry Parker, 4 vols. [Oxford: J. G. P. and J. Rivington, London 1864; reprint London: Forgotten Books, 2013–2014]).
- 80 “*Verbo et sacramento invisibiliter adest Spiritus Sanctus*” (Aquinas, *Catena in Io.*, c. 3, lect. 2).
- 81 “*Verbum enim nostrum, cum non subsistat, non adest, sed inest; verbum autem Dei est subsistens, et ideo adest*” (Aquinas, *Super Io.*, c. 1, lect. 1, no. 55) (English translation from *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John*, trans. J. A. Weisheipl [Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1980]).
- 82 If already in Patristic thought Christ’s Church is understood as embracing at the same time all of the just since the time of Abel, and to extend beyond the earthly sphere itself, this universality was conceived always as an aspect of the universality of the one and indivisible Catholic Church, the realization of which has taken different forms at different stages in salvation history and will exhibit, until the end of time, manifold modes of expression. In all of this historical and trans-historical diversity, notwithstanding the distinct ways in which the reality of the Church is made manifest, those belonging to Christ are, ecclesiologically speaking, *one* and belong to the same Catholic Church by reference to, real causal ordination toward, and intrinsic dependency upon her. I treat such etiological questions in chapter four and take up questions concerning the Catholic Church’s identity in diversity in chapters five and six.
- 83 As noted, the Council never repudiated the “*est*” formulation as a means to express the truth about the relationship between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church. In fact, it retains the very expression: “The Holy Catholic Church (*Sancta et catholica Ecclesia*), which is the Mystical Body of Christ (*quae est corpus Christi mysticum*), is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit by the same faith, the same sacraments and the same government” (*Orientalium ecclesiarum*, 2).

CHAPTER 2

The Church of Christ “*Subsists In*” the Catholic Church

Introduction

COUNTLESS PUBLICATIONS voice opinions over the disputed meaning of the expression “*subsistit in*” used in *Lumen gentium* to express the relationship between the one Church of Christ and the Catholic Church. While official magisterial teaching subsequent to the Council maintains that that terminology captures something of the profound being and irrepeatable status of the Catholic Church,¹ and, in a similar way, a number of theologians hold to a metaphysical reading of the “*subsistit in*,”² some contemporary Catholic scholars submit that the “*subsistit*” language employed by Vatican II, contrary to official magisterial statements, signifies of itself nothing ontologically special.³ Scholarship on this topic tends to be divided into two methodologically distinguishable camps. On the one hand, serious effort has been made to discern what the Council Fathers meant by particular choices in terminology through strictly textual analysis. On the other hand, assessments of a more speculative nature have been conducted on the basis both of a philosophical analysis of the concept of subsistence and of the theological principles governing a Catholic understanding of the Church. All of the above synthesize these methodologies to varying degrees; but the present state of division among theologians regarding the official, or intended, or theologically acceptable meaning of “*subsistit in*” in *Lumen gentium*, testifies to the inadequacy of the

results so far and invites supplementation.

The present chapter systematically explores its possible interpretations in light of the historical, grammatical and metaphysical criteria governing its signification in *Lumen gentium* 8. As I shall show, an attentive and honest reading of the council documents reveals that the Council's use of "*subsistit in*" can be properly understood only in a technical, metaphysical sense, at once indicative of the plenary realization of Christ's Church in the Catholic Church and of the irrepeatability of that status (whereby it perpetuates the dogmatically positive content of the "*est*" formula), and of the possibility for inferior, non-divinely-intended expressions of Christ's Church in communities besides the Catholic Church (whereby it indirectly signifies something which, though not denied by, is not expressed by the "*est*").

Textual incidence of the "subsistit" expression

When on November 26 of 1963 the Doctrinal Commission met to discuss the latest schema of the Constitution on the Church, the "*adest*" modification that had been introduced by van Dodewaard and related by Philips was met with disfavor. Immediately following the objections raised by Heribert Schauf to the "*adest*," Sebastian Tromp suggested "*subsistit in*," which was unhesitatingly received by the commission.⁴ The phrase "*subsistit in*" became the means by which the final document, *Lumen gentium*, would express the nature of the relationship existing between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church:

This is the one Church of Christ which in the Creed is professed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic.... This Church constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church.⁵

Besides its occurrence in *Lumen gentium* 8, however, a comparable use of that phrase occurs in three other places in the Council documents:

We believe that this unity subsists in the Catholic Church (*in Ecclesia catholica subsistere credimus*) as something she can never lose.⁶

Among those in which (*in quibus*) Catholic traditions and institutions in part continue to exist (*subsistere pergunt*), the Anglican Communion occupies a special place.⁷

We believe that this one true religion subsists in the catholic and apostolic Church (*subsistere credimus in catholica et apostolica Ecclesia*).⁸

Additional infinitive or participial forms of the verb “to subsist” occur twice again in the Council:

What is this sense of sorrow, of evil, of death, which continue to exist (*subsistere pergunt*) despite so much progress.⁹

The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting (*subsistentem*) in himself.¹⁰

Given the differences of context and propositional content between these six occurrences, it is apparent that the term “*subsistere*” is used in more than one way in Vatican II.¹¹ It is especially our concern to determine the sense and implications of the expression in *Lumen gentium* 8. To that end, I will first lay out what is today the putative hermeneutic spectrum regarding its use at the Council, followed by a consideration of the understanding of the man who suggested the term in the first place, Sebastian Tromp, and proceed from there toward a theological analysis of its meaning and ecclesiological significance.

Possible meanings for “subsistit” at Vatican II

What are the possible meanings of “*subsistit*”¹² as employed by the Second Vatican Council? The term “*subsistere*” has a vast range of meanings, including “to exist,” “to stand firm,” “to remain,” “to be independently,” and so on.¹³ In the conciliar documents, moreover, the term is used differently in different contexts. What about *Lumen gentium* 8? In one way, representing one of two extremes, the term could be employed with exactly the same meaning that the Church had until then expressed with the term “*est*,” whereby, ecclesologically, it could be taken to signify

nothing more, and nothing less, than an identity and perfect convertibility between the unique Church of Christ and the Catholic Church (even to the exclusion of Christ's Church anywhere else).¹⁴ In another way, representing the other extreme, "*subsistit*" could be employed with a meaning more or less equivalent to that expressed by the term "*adest*," which, as commonly understood, implies merely being present or existing broadly speaking, on which basis one of a number of ecclesiologies could be supported, including the idea that all Christian communions are the Church of Christ. Between these two interpretations, which can be labeled, respectively, the "extreme strong sense" and the "extreme weak sense" of "*subsistit*," a third species of explanation, represented especially by the magisterium, including the *Relatio* which accompanied the third schema of the Constitution on the Church, mediates between them, an interpretation which (as I explain below) views the notion of subsistence as introducing a nuanced understanding of the *modes* according to which the unique Church of Christ exists.¹⁵

The man behind the language

But what about the man who (in the third schema) introduced the term to begin with? What was Sebastian Tromp's intended meaning? Although this is commonly disputed, judging from the manner in which the terminological changes were progressively introduced and from the context in which Tromp proposed the term "*subsistit*," it cannot reasonably be argued that he intended a meaning such as that associated with "*adest*," a mere presence or existence of any sort (the weak sense of "*subsistit*"). The fact that the choice of "*subsistit*" was occasioned by objection to the use of "*adest*," which was viewed by the Doctrinal Commission as insufficiently capturing the relationship between the unique Church of Christ and the Catholic Church, tells us that "*subsistit*" was chosen in order, precisely, to recover a truth about the Catholic Church perceived to have been relinquished by the language of "*adese*." On this basis, "*subsistit*" had to have for Tromp a semantic value closer to the strong sense than to the weak sense indicated above. Could the term represent a simple reversion back to "*est*"? Although possible, this is highly improbable, given Tromp's Neo-Scholastic training and the degree to which his

theological works were shaped by a critical use of Scholastic concepts.¹⁶ Tromp was thoroughly familiar with the philosophical significance of the term “*subsistit*” and its theological history. If, precisely when searching for a means to express the complex ontological relationship between transcategorical mysteries and their categorical instantiation, such a man were to refrain from the use of the technical philosophical precision available to him, no intelligible explanation could be given for it. The only logical assumption is that Tromp chose the term “*subsistit*” with the intention of conveying something specifically inherent in the signification of that term.

It should be noted here that the fact that a Neo-Scholastic environment mediated to Tromp (and others like him) the noetic framework of Scholasticism does not imply that the technical philosophical concepts he employs (such as that of subsistence) are of Neo-Scholastic origin or that they are unqualifiedly Neo-Scholastic. The concept of subsistence, for example, undergoes little significant development during the Neo-Scholastic period. It is rather the medieval Church and the theological world of Scholasticism itself that represent at once the source and normative development of its notion.¹⁷ Accordingly, subsistence should not be defined as a Neo-Scholastic concept.

Now, viewed from the technical theological and philosophical perspective, “*subsistit*” denotes something logically quite different from what is denoted by “*est*”; it therefore directly expresses something in the ontological order unable to be directly expressed with “*est*.” Since Tromp had to be aware of this, the choice of “*subsistit*” amounts to a doctrinal position regarding the relationship between the unique Church of Christ and the Catholic Church somewhere between interpretations advocating either the extreme strong or extreme weak sense of “*subsistit*” mentioned above. Based on the technical understanding of the term, what exactly does “*subsistit*” mean?

Digging deeper into the conceptual content of the term

For the sake of brevity, and in order not to repeat what was set forth earlier, I highlight here only several major (and relevant) features of the technical notion of subsistence and organize them in a deliberately simplistic way.¹⁸ From a traditional standpoint, the technical use of “*subsistit*” signifies several things, beginning, first of

all, with the fact of existence. That which subsists, exists. This, of course, reveals nothing exceptional about the notion of subsistence. But, besides the sheer fact of existence, subsistence, in the second place, signifies that special mode of existence proper to complete, concrete substantial beings, beings that are naturally perfect and that enjoy an independent (*per se*) act of existence. As a result, subsistence also indirectly implies the intrinsic ontological conditions necessary for such a mode of being, conditions that (inevitably) have just been mentioned, namely, concrete individuality, and complete natural perfection of the substantial order. Finally, such a being is the proper subject not only of existence but also of all the operations that follow upon its nature; and subsistence expresses this subjective quality as well. This set of perfections can, somewhat artificially, but not unusefully for our purposes, be grouped into two classes corresponding to two distinct ways of describing the meaning of “*subsistit*.” The first group, (α), includes the properties of being concrete, instantiating or embodying something one (subjectivity), and existing independently and in a relatively permanent manner. The second group, (β), includes the property of being naturally perfect or complete, an integral (essentially perfect) realization of a substantial nature. Certainly, (α) and (β) are not independent aspects, and in some respects the two sets are mutually implying;¹⁹ but the utility of distinguishing them lies in the fact that general attempts to explain the meaning of “*subsistit*” in *Lumen gentium* 8 tend to privilege one over the other. In fact, the failure on the part of certain interpretations to render a theologically acceptable account of the “*subsistit*,” or simply to substantiate conclusions based upon its purported meaning, stems from their failure to properly combine (α) and (β).

How much can be squeezed from the “*subsistit*” phrase?

With the foregoing, we can perceive something of the content of the third general interpretation of the “*subsistit*,” the *via media* between the strong and weak versions. This scholastically-informed understanding of the term represents the only plausible interpretation; but it is not necessarily exhaustive of its meaning; and, at least according to official Church teaching subsequent to the Council, the term “*subsistit*” has another function, a function that is not at all obvious from the technical meaning of the term. Based on various statements of the CDF and of

Cardinal Ratzinger, “*subsistit*” is supposed to signify something beyond the content just examined: the expression “*subsistit*” was specifically intended not only to imply (α), but also (what had hitherto not been on the radar for the metaphysician of subsistence) the fact that the unique Church of Christ has a concrete realization in a single instance only—call this (γ):

- The Church of Christ is present and operative in the churches and ecclesial Communities not yet fully in communion with the Catholic Church.... Nevertheless, the word “subsists” (*subsistit*) can be attributed to the Catholic Church alone.²⁰
- The Council chose the word “*subsistit*” specifically to clarify that the true Church has only one “subsistence.”²¹
- The idea, therefore, that subsistence can somehow be multiplied does not express what was intended by the choice of the term “*subsistit*.” In choosing the word “*subsistit*” the Council intended to express the singularity and non “multipliability” of the Church of Christ: the Church exists as a unique historical reality.²²
- *Subsistere* ... refers to existence in the form of an individual subject.... The Council wanted to say that the Church of Jesus Christ, as a concrete subject in the world, is found in the Catholic Church. This can only occur in a single instance, and thus the notion that *subsistit* could be multiplied precisely misses the meaning of the term. With the word *subsistit*, the Council wanted to express the singularity and non-multiplicability of the Church of Christ, the Catholic Church.²³

Interestingly enough, neither the affirmation of (α), nor the affirmation of (β), nor the conjunction of these affirmations implies the unicity of instantiation indicated by the above statements. But, according to these statements, the Council’s use of

the term “*subsistit*” is somehow intended also to affirm (γ), which leaves no room for an instantiation of Christ’s Church outside the Catholic Church.

Such an understanding flies in the face of interpretations of “*subsistit*” like that of Hermann Häring or Leonardo Boff. Of the “*subsistit*” clause, Häring asserts:

It is ... concerned with ... the ecclesial reality willed by God ... which we profess in the Creed to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. This very Church is professed in the Creed and lived by the churches of the Reformation as well.²⁴

Consciously working with a classical philosophical concept of subsistence,²⁵ Boff affirms:

The Church of Christ and the Catholic Church are not completely identical. The Church of Christ is larger than the Catholic Church.... the Church of Christ has been able to subsist in the other Christian churches and ecclesial communions as well, that is, to assume other historical and cultural forms. Together ... they constitute the Church of Christ in history.²⁶

What is clear from these passages is an understanding of subsistence that allows for multiple instantiations of a greater reality without detriment to its unity. Note that this is exactly in keeping with what was deciphered about the meaning of subsistence from the scholastic point of view. Boff’s interpretation of the “*subsistit in*” is, from this standpoint, fully intelligible. Nothing in the notion of subsistence as such requires taking the extra step from (α) + (β) to (γ). The only basis for making that step comes from a *theological* commitment about the indivisibility (non-multipliability) of the unique Church of Christ. That dogma is set forth repeatedly in *Lumen gentium* and other Council documents. It is likewise affirmed with clarity in the *Relatio*. It is another thing, however, to imply that the use of the term “*subsistit*” somehow bears that meaning.

Now, the ecclesiological relativism that accompanies an understanding such as Boff’s has its origin in part from an overly-simplified assessment of subsistence in

which one's attention is limited to (α) . Although he does not explicitly negate (β) , the latter is not a factor in Boff's theological application of the notion of subsistence to the Church. This is a critical flaw, since (and I explain this below), even if (γ) does not follow from the conjunction of (α) and (β) , (β) remains a condition for (γ) , and the only way to argue for (γ) is by insisting on (β) . Effectively, we have with Boff's account of the "*subsistit*": $(\alpha) + \neg (\beta)$, wherefore obviously $\neg (\gamma)$. Even Catholics can agree with Fr. Boff that that Church of Christ can exist in many places in an imperfect and partial manner. This is exactly what is affirmed in *Lumen gentium* and *Unitatis redintegratio*.²⁷ But, following what is implied by the CDF, such a manner of existing cannot be what is meant when the Church's existence is signified with the term "*subsistit*." In the explicit affirmation of (γ) , what the statements from the CDF take for granted is (β) , namely, that a subsistent mode of being, properly speaking, belongs to what is naturally perfect and integrally complete (and not to something that realizes a nature in but a partial or imperfect manner). Note that when (β) is properly taken into account and viewed as included in the notion of subsistence, the idea that the term could be said of many partial existences is ruled out. Insofar as different Christianities are viewed as so many partial instantiations of what belongs to Christ's Church, the latter could never be said to subsist in them.²⁸ To salvage a multiple subsistence ecclesiology, Boff could, of course, revert to a theory in which all communions really do embody in a full and perfect manner the redemptive life and the means to salvation intended by Christ and bequeathed by him to his disciples. The scenario would amount to: $(\alpha) + (\beta) + \neg (\gamma)$, implying the multiplication of Christ's Mystical Body into many ontologically perfect realizations of its being. Only an argument for (γ) can counter this kind of ecclesiology, and the philosophy of subsistence cannot provide it.

The presence of (γ) at Vatican II—bringing it in through the back door

How did the Council view the relationship between (γ) and the "*subsistit*" of *Lumen gentium* 8? Was (γ) viewed as following necessarily from that phrase? There are two conciliar witnesses concerning this question: Sebastian Tromp, and the *Relatio*. I shall take these up in turn, beginning with Tromp in this section, and

continuing with the *Relatio* in the following section.

Quite informative is the manner in which Tromp introduced and defended (γ) at the meeting of the Doctrinal Commission responsible for choosing the “*subsistit*.” In a recording of that discussion, Tromp affirms: “We can say, therefore, that it subsists in the Catholic Church, and this is exclusive, inasmuch as it is said that elsewhere there exist only elements.”²⁹ Note that it is by way of a conjunction and a supplementary clause that the idea of exclusivity is *added* to the affirmation of subsistence in the Catholic Church. Asserting the subsistence does not of itself suffice to entail exclusivity. One could reasonably conclude, therefore, that the concept of exclusivity is understood to be an *adjunct* to the notional content of the “*subsistit*.” This is reinforced by the fact that an explanation is provided for the exclusivity claim (as though an argument was necessary, the “*subsistit*” not being enough). The given explanation, moreover, makes no appeal to the notion of subsistence, but rather to the fact that only elements of the Church are found outside the Catholic Church. If we add one missing premise, the argument can be completed thus: Therefore, in none of these other communions can Christ’s Church be said to subsist (a negation equivalent to γ), because subsistence implies the full essential constitution of a thing (β). One reaches (γ), not on the basis of subsistence alone, but on the basis *both* of the fact: (a) that the Catholic Church alone possesses the fullness of everything essential to Christ’s Church; and (b) that subsistence implies such an integral/complete manner of being.³⁰ The “*subsistit*” does yield the second of these, but not the former. The fact, however, that Tromp could conclude to (γ) on the basis of the former demonstrates his understanding of the latter. He effectively, if implicitly, argues for (γ) by means of (β).

The overlooked (β)

The manner in which the *Relatio* introduces (γ) in its account of *Lumen gentium* 8 also merits attention:

The intention is to show that the Church ... is concretely found here on earth in the Catholic Church.... Thus there is to be avoided the impression that ... the Church is merely idealistic and unreal. Therefore

... the following points are successively treated: a) The mystery of the Church is present in and manifested in a concrete society.... and ... b) The Church is one only (*unica*) [meaning “one and only,” “sole,” “singular,” “unique”].³¹

Here the emphasis on (α) is unmistakable and continues right up to the brief affirmation of (γ). Absent from the text, however, is any explicit reference to (β), whence we appear to get a simple (α) + (γ) schema, similar to what we see in Ratzinger and generally characteristic of the CDF documents referred to above. Note, however, that the *Relatio*'s commitment to (α) shows adherence to the technical notion of subsistence, and therefore also to (β), even if not explicitly stated.³² Furthermore, its emphasis on (γ) would lose justification if (β) were not the case. Therefore, implicit in the position advanced in the *Relatio* is: (α) + (β) + (γ). Subsequent papal magisterial teaching similarly tries to bring together (α) and (γ) but largely misses the importance of (β) for successfully arguing (γ).³³ Interestingly enough, a footnote in the German edition of a CDF Notification that is in direct confrontation with Boff's ecclesiology (and thus directly concerned with γ), laboriously articulates an understanding of the “*subsistit*” in which (α) and (γ) are clearly affirmed, but in which there is no explicit reference to (β):

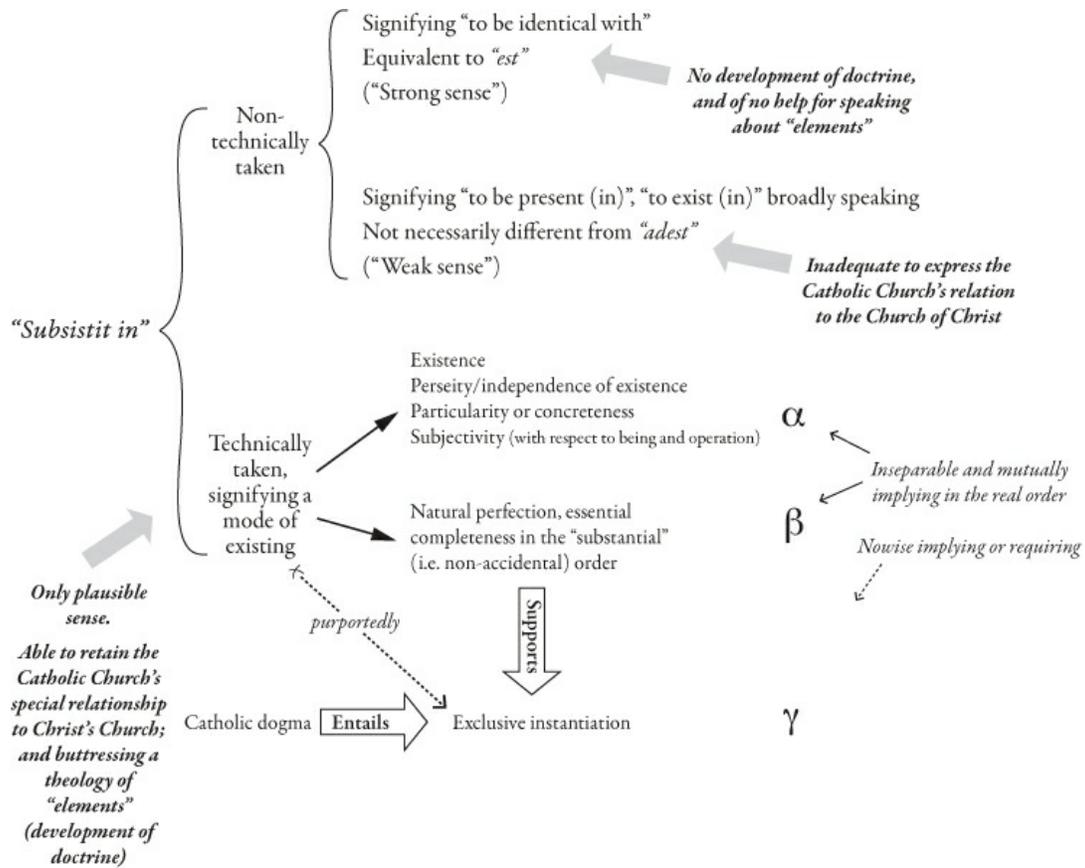
In German there is no equivalent for the Latin word *subsistit*. It is an intensified form of the verb “to exist” and denotes full and independent existence [α]. In using this term, the Council meant to say that the true Church is not an invisible idea or a mere eschatological expectation but rather is present in the institutional form of the Catholic Church as such [α]. In contrast, the non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities enjoy a different kind of participation in the being of the Church, which the Council described with the expression “elements” of ecclesiality. On the one hand, it intended thereby to explain the presence of what pertains to the Church outside the Catholic Church as well, without, on the other hand, surrendering her unity [γ] and visibility.³⁴

Obviously, the theological method and scope of the Notification clear it of criticism based on the logical relationships I have referred to, but it is remarkable

that an ecclesiology intentionally expressing itself with the terminology of subsistence (to the point that that very ecclesiology can, in principle, be structured on an understanding of that terminology³⁵) should fail either to discern or to exploit all that is inherent in the notion. In the general debate over the meaning of “*subsistit*” in *Lumen gentium* 8, even when (β) is explicitly pointed out, (α) and (β) tend to get lumped together in an unsystematic way. While this is unproblematic for the purposes of analyzing the philosophical concept of subsistence, particularly since aspects of (α) and (β) are mutually implying, it is infelicitous for the ecclesiological project apparently turning upon the conciliar use of “*subsistit*.” In the latter context, it is necessary to isolate (β), precisely in order to substantiate (γ).³⁶

As alluded to above, a rationally defensible determination of the full sense of the “*subsistit in*” will inevitably be the product of a *theology* of subsistence. It is a *theology* of subsistence to the extent that the task the phrase is intended to perform includes, over and above what is already accomplished by the philosophical notes included in its notion, expressing in some way the theological conviction that only a single subsisting realization of the Church is possible.³⁷

Not everything discussed above concerning the “*subsistit*” formula can be represented schematically. The following diagram, however, is an attempt to synthesize some of the more important points:



APPLICABILITY OF THE “SUBSISTIT” (TECHNICALLY TAKEN) BASED ON ITS SIGNIFICATION OR INTENDED SIGNIFICATION

α

Abstracting from (β) and (γ), “*subsistit*” would be applicable to all Christian communions.

Understood in *precision* from (β) and (γ), it would be applicable to all communions but the Catholic Church, i.e. to all communions not fully realizing the essential perfection of Christ’s Church.

All advocates of the “*subsistit*” technically taken.

$\alpha + \beta$

Applicable to any Christian communion fully instantiating everything proper to Christ’s Church. *De facto*, applicable only to the Catholic Church; but, *de iure*, to any communion meeting the requirements.

WHO HOLDS IT?

In abstraction from (γ), all advocates of the “*subsistit*” technically taken who hold that Christ’s Church subsists wherever the fullness of its nature is found.

In precision from (γ), all advocates viewing many Christian communions as perfect realizations of Christ’s Church.

$\alpha + \beta + \gamma$

Applicable *de iure* only to one communion (and, therefore, to the Catholic Church alone).

All advocates who maintain that Christ’s Church can subsist in but a single Christian communion.

Technical issues concerning the “in” in “subsistit in”

Up until now, significant attention has been devoted to the term “*subsistit*,” yet very little has been said about the prepositional construction in which it occurs in the conciliar documents. In both *Lumen gentium* 8 and in *Unitatis redintegratio*, where the respective contexts are significantly different, we encounter the prepositional form: “*subsistit in*”:

LG: This Church constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in (“*subsistit in*”) the Catholic Church.³⁸

UR: We believe that this unity subsists in the Catholic Church (*in Ecclesia catholica subsistere credimus*) as something she can never lose.³⁹

Among those in which (*in quibus*) Catholic traditions and institutions in part (*ex parte*) continue to subsist (*subsistere pergunt*), the Anglican Communion occupies a special place.⁴⁰

Two things must be observed right away. First of all, the passages of *Unitatis redintegratio* are concerned with *properties* of Christ’s Church, by way of contrast with the *whole* of the ecclesial nature signified in *Lumen gentium* 8. Secondly, the verb “to subsist” in each of the occurrences in *Unitatis redintegratio* is not to be taken in the technical sense of the term, but in the broad sense meaning simply “to exist” or “to persist.”⁴¹ As shall become clearer in what follows, the first of these observations renders account of the second, for the ontological difference between properties of a thing and its complete essential being preclude attributing to the former the mode of being proper to the latter.

Now, the preposition “in” here, if it has a technical value, signals the relationship between a set of perfections (essentially defining or otherwise) and their concrete embodiment in a subject: the reality of the universal Church, with its full complement of properties, has to be instantiated in a subject. That subject, of course, is the Catholic Church and her alone, since she alone possesses all the perfection of the one Church of Christ. This is why a technical use of “*subsistit*”

proves especially useful, inasmuch as it best denotes the unique mode of being that Christ's Church enjoys in the Catholic Church, one that is not only *per se* independent, concrete and incommunicably one, but also complete and fully determinate, lacking nothing proper to the perfection of Christ's Church. The difference, of course, between "*subsistit in*" said of ecclesial elements in relation to the Anglican Communion and "*subsistit in*" said of Christ's Church in relation to the Catholic Church has to do, first of all, with the difference between properties and complete substantial natures. The Anglican Communion is a subject that (in a defective way) enjoys a set of properties distinctive of the Church's nature;⁴² the Catholic Church is the sole subject in which the plenitude of that nature resides, the concrete instantiation of the nature taken as a whole. But in either case, something (or all) of Christ's Church is said to exist "in" an ecclesial communion, and even the Catholic Church is described as the concrete subject "in" which the Church of Christ subsists. An "in-subsistence" framework is thus applied to the relationship between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church. Is this possible metaphysically speaking? What does the "in" component of "*subsistit in*" really mean when used with regard to the Catholic Church?

The answer to these questions requires a closer analysis of the ontological status of the one Church of Christ considered in itself. From the perspective of "*est*" formula ecclesiology, the one Church of Christ is viewed according to its concrete identity with the Catholic Church, and, in the "*est*" predication, the subject term is identified with the predicate term because the former is signified concretely and as existing. From the perspective of "*subsistit in*" ecclesiology (if the "*in*" is to have any real function), the one Church of Christ is viewed with greater conceptual breadth, that is, as something, indeed, having a concrete mode of being in the Catholic Church, but also (and correspondingly) as something like a universal nature that acquires its concrete mode of being (by being received) in that Church.⁴³ The operative terminology here is noteworthy: "in," "acquires," "received." This terminology (in particular, "in" and "acquires") is commonly found among defendants of the "*subsistit*" language, including the *Relatio*. For something to have concrete being only "in" something, and for it to "acquire" such a mode of being, implies that, abstraction from that in which it is said to have acquired that being, it has but an abstract mode of being. To be realized concretely,

something beside it simply considered is required. If we are willing to treat the one Church of Christ as something like a universal nature, the specific constitutive principles of which, when realized in the concrete, constitute an instance of that Church, the “*subsistit in*” language becomes easier to work with. Christ’s Church could be viewed as acquiring its concrete existence through the spatio-temporal particularities of the Catholic Church, particularities which, although not part of the essence of the Church, are necessary for her concrete historical existence. Absolutely considered, Christ’s Church, moreover, would be characterized by a certain transcendence vis-à-vis the Catholic Church, inasmuch as the latter would be an instance of an essence the virtualities of which cannot be exhausted by the Catholic Church at any given stage of her concrete existence. Of course, this way of viewing Christ’s Church raises new questions as to why it could not be instantiated in a multiplicity of particular churches. Judging sheerly from the philosophical signification of subsistence language, or from the “in” language customarily used to describe the relationship between a universal nature and its inferiors, there is no reason to preclude the existence of Christ’s Church in many churches. Another reason must be given. At this point, however, I would like to say more about the notion of “subsisting in” as brought into relief by the relationship just considered between universal natures and the subjects in which they subsist.

Ordinarily common natures are said to subsist “in” a subject. Subjects, by way of contrast are said simply “to subsist.” When a nature is said to subsist in something, excepting further qualifications or contextual indications (including the specification that “*subsistere*” be taken technically), nothing about the specific mode of being it enjoys is expressed by that; that nature could be a substantial nature or an accidental nature, and it will enjoy a *per se* mode of being or an accidental mode of being accordingly. This is why “*subsistit in*” can be said both of the traditions and institutions that exist in the Anglican Communion and of the whole Church of Christ that exists in the Catholic Church. But in either case, we are dealing with a nature that resides in a subject, and only the subject subsists *simpliciter*. Furthermore, when, on the one hand, it is said of accidents or properties that they subsist in a subject, all that is meant is that they exist in that subject, but not that they enjoy the independent mode of being signified by subsistence technically employed and proper to substance alone (hence the non-technical value of “*subsistit*” when used of properties). But when, on the other

hand, it is said of a complete substantial nature that it subsists in a subject, the special mode of being expressed by subsistence technically understood is indeed attributed to that nature, but only insofar as the existing concrete nature is identical really with the subject.⁴⁴ In this way, even though nature as such is never the proper subject of being, a substantial nature can take the place of the subject term in a proposition that predicates subsistence, as in the proposition “the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church.”

Note, however, that it is the more universal reality that, properly speaking, subsists in the more particular, and not the converse. Properly speaking, we do not say that the Catholic Church subsists in the one Church of Christ. This is also illustrated to a certain extent even in the relationship between the divine persons and the common divine nature. The persons alone are, properly speaking, the subjects of subsistence, even though the divine nature subsists in them, and we commonly speak of the subsisting divine nature (which, for the reasons just alluded to, is also a subject of subsistence when signified as really identical with the persons, but this is not to signify the nature as such).⁴⁵ Sometimes, however, it is said that the persons subsist in the nature, similarly to when we speak of this or that man as subsisting in human nature. These usages of “subsisting in” are somewhat equivocal, since supposita, properly speaking, do not have their being “in” natures, but vice versa. The locution is commonly employed, nevertheless, in order to say that a suppositum subsists *according to* a given nature.⁴⁶ Thus the statement “Socrates subsists in human nature” means that Socrates is a subsistent of a human nature. Here it is important to keep in mind the fact that the perfection of subsistence enjoyed by a suppositum derives primarily from the *nature*, inasmuch as the *per se* mode of being proper to the suppositum is rooted in and necessitated by the *substantiality* of the nature of which the suppositum is the subject. Substantial natures, in other words, are included among the primary (and necessary) principles of subsistence. Because, therefore, it is on account of the nature that a suppositum subsists, we also say that the suppositum subsists in that nature, in the sense of *on the basis of* that nature. When, conversely, we speak of a nature as subsisting in a supposit, the locution is to be taken properly, inasmuch as a nature, substantial or otherwise, has no real existence outside of its concrete realization in a subject (the notion of which subject contains more than that nature considered as such, including primarily and essentially, the principle by

which the supposit is individual or distinct from others). It is clear from this that the relationship signified by the expression “to subsist in” has for its primary analogue (*quoad nos*) the relationship between a common nature and its individual instantiations. Even were there a case in which a nature had but a single concrete instantiation (and would, therefore, not be common to many), the nature would still be said to subsist in the subject in which it is concretely embodied, for, among finite beings, the subject is always greater than its nature as such; with the sole exception of God, the notion of a thing’s nature does not include its being (*esse*).⁴⁷

Let it be noted, lastly, that the language of “in-subsistence” found in *Lumen gentium* 8 was entirely necessary to express the relationship between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church in terms of subsistence. While subsistence can be predicated simply of a single concrete subject (as, for example, in the statement “this elk subsists”), the term cannot be predicated simply in a proposition relating one thing to another by means of the verb “to subsist.” As soon as we connect two things according to a subsistence relationship, the only possible grammatical form it can take is prepositional or (more rarely) adverbial, such as “subsisting in” or (more rarely) “subsisting as.” Thus the Church of Christ subsists “in” the Catholic Church.⁴⁸ If, therefore, some kind of doctrinal development is to be achieved through the adoption of terminology other than the “*est*” formula, and if the notion of subsistence best captures what is unique about the mode of being Christ’s Church enjoys in the Catholic Church, then the expression “*subsistit in*” is an excellent choice. To better appreciate what is gained by that choice, the comparative considerations taken up in the following sections can be particularly helpful.

The subsistent mode of being embedded in the “*est*” formula

In light of the foregoing, something significant about the “*est*” formula and its ontological density must be noted. As commonly understood, the “*subsistit*” phrase, when taken in a technical sense, has the unique ability to express the special mode of being inherent in the philosophical notion of subsistence. Interestingly enough, this mode of being made explicit by the “*subsistit*” formula technically understood is not excluded from the “*est*” formula. To the contrary, the mode of

predication operative in the “*est*” formula necessarily entails that the subject exists in the manner (analogically, of course) of a primary substance—that is, the manner of a subsistent⁴⁹—, precisely because the predicate signifies “what” (and not merely “how”) the Church is. If, judging from the copula alone, the mode of being appears to be indeterminate, judging from the nature of the predication, the mode of being can be ascertained:

Since some predicates signify what (i.e., substance); some, of what kind; some, how much; and so on; there must be a mode of being corresponding to each type of predication. For example, when it is said that a man is an animal, is signifies substance; and when it is said that a man is white, is signifies quality; and so on. It should be noted that a predicate can be referred to a subject in three ways. This occurs in one way when the predicate states what the subject is, as when I say that Socrates is an animal; for Socrates is the thing which is an animal. And this predicate is said to signify first substance, i.e., a particular substance, of which all attributes are predicated.⁵⁰

Since we are dealing here with predication *in quid*, the mode of being is none other than the mode of being otherwise signaled (explicitly) by the term “*subsistit*” (technically understood). This means that the “*est*” formulation of the relationship between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church actually possesses, albeit in an implicit way, what proponents of the “*subsistit*” formula hail as one major advantage of their language.

“Est” versus “subsistit in”: stagnation, change, or development of doctrine?

The possible interpretations of the “*est*” statement can range widely, from those positing that it signifies not only that the Church of Christ is identical to the Catholic Church, but that it has no existence or presence anywhere else, to those maintaining that the “*est*” tells us nothing more than that the Church of Christ can be found in the Catholic Church, as it could be found in other communions as well. If the rigid former version is correct, then the theology expressed by the “*est*”

predication would be incompatible with contemporary Catholic ecclesiology expressed in the language of “subsistence,” and the conciliar use of “*subsistit*” would represent a change in doctrine. If the extremely loose interpretation of “*est*” represented by the latter opinion is correct, then the “*subsistit*” language, when (as is not uncommon among Catholics today) it is understood to mean “being present,” would amount to but another way of saying the same (rather insignificant) thing as “*est*,” while, when understood as introducing differentiable modes of being (by its denotation of one mode of being), would signal a much more robust (doctrinally dense) ecclesiology with regard both to the Catholic Church and to non-Catholic Christianities. Between these extreme interpretations of the meaning of the “*est*” formula, there is room for another understanding in which the ecclesiology expressed by the words of Pius XII is neither doctrinally inconsequential nor inconsistent with the ecclesiology contained in the conciliar use of “*subsistit*,” however the latter term is understood. Properly received, the “*est*” formulation is not only consonant with, but complements what the language adopted by the Second Vatican Council intended to say not only about the relationship between the unique Church of Christ and the Catholic Church, but also about the relationship between the Catholic Church and separated Christian communities.⁵¹

“Est” and the language of “elements”

If the traditional “*est*” language and its doctrinal content can indeed be harmonized with the contemporary “*subsistit*” theology, it will have to be possible to show that the former is not incompatible with the additional language of “elements of sanctification” that goes hand in hand with the “*subsistit*” language, the idea that something of the unique Church of Christ or that certain perfections belonging to that Church exist in non-Catholic communions. It will also have to be possible to show that the language and doctrinal import of the “*est*” predication is not incompatible with speaking about certain non-Catholic Christian communions as “churches.” Within these pages, I offer several basic reasons for the fact that the “*est*” language is congruent with both.

Immediately after affirming the special unity that exists between Christ’s

Church and the Catholic Church, the Council states, with reference to non-Catholic communions, that “many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its [the Catholic Church’s] visible structure.”⁵² This teaching is reiterated in the document on ecumenism: “some and even very many of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church.”⁵³ Now, the presence of these “elements” in any Christian communion implies that something proper to the Church of Christ resides within them.⁵⁴ But how is it possible for the one Church of Christ to “be” elsewhere if she is said to be identical to the Catholic Church? Is this a contradiction? Was not the “*est*” formulation dropped precisely for this reason, namely, in order to make room for the existence of Christ’s Church outside the Catholic Church?⁵⁵

To begin with, the answer to the last question is undoubtedly no; and this is made evident, first of all, by the instances in which the Council documents unite affirmations of the presence of salvific elements within non-Catholic communions with affirmations of the strict identity between Christ’s Church concretely considered and the Catholic Church.⁵⁶ A footnote in the very article containing the expression “*subsistit in*” also indicates as much: from the cited references of footnote 10—namely, Pius XII’s *Mystici corporis Christi* and *Humani generis*, where the strict identity between the Catholic Church and the Church of Christ is affirmed⁵⁷—we can conclude that the Council understood itself as teaching that the Catholic Church remains identified in a unique and fundamental way with the one Church of Christ, whatever else might be said about the relation of Christ’s Church to other Christian communions. Furthermore, it must be carefully noted that, when the *Relatio* explains the rationale for the choice of “*subsistit in*” over “*est*,” the reason provided is not that the “*subsistit*” language permits one to affirm what one would otherwise (if left to the “*est*” language) not be able to affirm, namely, the existence of ecclesial elements outside of the Catholic Church. Rather, the stated reason is that the “*subsistit*” language *better* harmonizes (*melius concordet*) with the language of ecclesial elements beyond the Catholic Church.⁵⁸

If dropping the “*est*” formula better accords with the language of “elements,” this is not so much for what the “*est*” language affirms, but for what it does not affirm. Notwithstanding the fact that the one Church of Christ is (“*est*”) the

Catholic Church, it is not the case that Christ's Church has being only within the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church. Christ's Church also exists in an extended way in other communions, even if it cannot be predicated *in quid* of those communions.⁵⁹ By way of contrast with the "*est*" formula, when used to designate the existence of Christ's Church in the Catholic Church, the language of "subsistence" (technically employed), because it directly signifies a *mode* of being, presents itself as a *conceptual counterpart* to the notion of another kind of existence that Christ's Church enjoys elsewhere.⁶⁰

As for the language of "churches," it is enough to note two things here. First of all, the Church has used such language to refer to non-Catholic communions at least since the time of Gregory VII, and uninterruptedly to the time of the Council.⁶¹ That usage, in other words, has always been accompanied by speaking of Christ's Church as identical to the Catholic Church, wherefore the "*est*" language is wholly compatible with that of "churches." Secondly, the term was and continues to be used with regard to non-Catholic churches in an *analogical* manner only.⁶² Churches other than the Catholic Church are "churches" in a way similar to but different from the manner in which the Catholic Church is a church. Their "churchness" is but proportional to and (given the special kind of analogy in question) dependent upon the way that the Catholic Church is Church. It is, in fact, due to their bond with the Catholic Church, that within them by which they are (in a defective manner) still "Catholic," that they can be called "churches" at all.⁶³

The language of subsistence, although not a necessary condition for a theology of "elements," when compared to the "*est*" formula, gives us the means to speak of them with greater precision, and, therefore, also the means for articulating the analogicity under consideration. In this connection, something more must be noted about the language of "churches," in order to avoid confusion about the singularity of Christ's Church and its strict identity with the Catholic Church. The non-subsistent mode of presence of Christ's Church (which, as argued above, is equivalent to such a mode of presence of the Catholic Church) to some non-Catholic communions constitutes the basis for designating them "churches" analogically; but this is not to say that they are (even analogically) "the Church of Christ." Though it is correct to speak of many particular churches (as is best illustrated with the Catholic Church), there exists only one Church of Christ, the

unity of which allows for multiplicity in the order of extension. Although counted among its parts, not even a particular Catholic church can be equated simply with the Church of Christ / the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, because it is a part of that Church, it is integrated into and partakes of the singular being of the whole, with the result that it is a “church” in the full and primary sense of the term (posterior only to the sense in which the whole Church, the universal Church, is “Church”⁶⁴). The one Church of Christ exists in particular Catholic churches according to the entirety of its essence; and the latter, as parts of one body (united by the same intrinsic specifying, organizing and directing principle), do not divide Christ’s Church / the Catholic Church (which, in its formal notion, is one and indivisible in a way that is as bodily as it is spiritual). Because the same does not hold for “churches” separated from the Catholic Church, they can neither be called “the Church of Christ” analogically, nor “churches” in the primary sense of the term.⁶⁵

Let us be clear about the last negations. Although some non-Catholic ecclesial communities can be called “churches,” whence each such community is analogically “church” or analogically “a church,” this is not equivalent to affirming that such a community is analogically “the Church” or analogically “the Church of Christ.” The latter has a singular ontological status and may be spoken of in the singular alone, while the name “church” can be common to many (as it is even within Catholicism), the reality of being “church” or “a church” admitting of diverse particular instantiations. A proper instantiation of Christ’s one Church, however, requires the full realization of all of its essential features; therefore, any community designated “church” that falls short of this plenitude is “church” or “a church” in a diminished sense of the term. This is why non-Catholic churches are called “churches” in but an analogical way (one which bears reference to the ecclesial fullness proper to the Catholic Church alone).

Still, the question might yet be asked whether, given that they can be called “churches” in an analogical sense, they could also be called “churches of Christ” in the same analogical sense. From a somewhat superficial point of view, the denomination is perfectly coherent. Indeed, every ecclesial community (including those that are not churches) could be called an “ecclesial community of Christ,” inasmuch as all ecclesiality is a function of the operative presence of Christ. The same is true for ecclesial actions as well, all of which are “of Christ.” Setting aside

different possible meanings of “of” (for example, “deriving from,” “belonging to,” etc.), the genitive construction under consideration, “churches of Christ,” is, however, from another point of view, theologically unsound and inadvisable for a number of reasons. First of all, the expression could easily give the false impression that there are many churches of Christ in the sense of Churches of Christ or some other sense contrary to the substantial unity of Christ’s Church. Furthermore, as argued above (and explored in greater detail in [chapter four](#)), the same churches are “of Christ” precisely inasmuch as they are of the Catholic Church which is the Church of Christ; wherefore they would be denominated, equivalently, “churches of the Church of Christ” and “churches of the Catholic Church,” even while they are separated from the Catholic Church, none of which is theologically *apropos* or helpful. Moreover, particular Catholic churches are (in an even fuller sense) “churches of the Church of Christ” and could likewise be called “churches of Christ,” but this is not the practice; for there is only one Church of Christ. The use of our language in theology must be governed also by prudential considerations, and it is simply inappropriate to suggest multiplicity when speaking of the Church of Christ.⁶⁶

Relating Christ’s Church to the Catholic Church through the use of “*est*” assures the ecclesial plenitude distinctive of the Catholic Church and excludes the mistaken notion of multiple integral instantiations of that plenitude beyond the Catholic Church. At the same time, as we have seen, the very mode of predication inherent in the “*est*” formula implicitly bears out the subsistent mode of being necessarily associated with the concrete realization of Christ’s Church, and it does so without prejudice to non-subsistent (partial) modes of the Church’s existence, even if the “*est*” does not itself signify a modal variant of existence able to contrast therewith. In sum, the ecclesiological “*est*” language is more supple than is commonly thought. Not only does it affirm the strict identity between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church, but it also captures something of the modal precision inherent in the language of subsistence, while at the same time leaving room for a nuanced understanding of the being of Christ’s Church such that it can be present and operative somehow within non-Catholic communions.⁶⁷ In these respects, the “*est*” formula (for what it actually affirms) agrees entirely with the “*subsistit*” formula *per se*.

“Adest” compared to “est” and to “subsistit”

The value of the “*est*” formula comes more fully into view when compared with the “*adest*” formula. With the latter terminology, the concrete identity between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church is, at best, obscured. Not only does the “*est*” language explicitly declare this dogma, but it also implicitly safeguards the unicity of instantiation associated with it (γ). The “*adest*” can capture neither the dogmatic claim nor even the completeness that characterizes the manner in which Christ’s Church exists in the Catholic Church (β).⁶⁸ In place of “*est*,” therefore, “*adest*” was unacceptable. “*Subsistit in*” was chosen instead, because it was understood to retain, if in a less immediate way, the identity doctrine so clearly expressed with “*est*.”⁶⁹ In this light, “*subsistit in*” was everything but an affirmation merely of “presence.”⁷⁰

As shown above, the “*adest*” language and the “*subsistit*” language fundamentally differ in their mode of signification. Even if the “*subsistit*” were used in an entirely non-technical way, so as merely to express existence (a use to which the term was not infrequently put by the medievals and scholastics), “*subsistit*” and “*adest*” would not express the same thing. The fact that “*subsistit*” sometimes means nothing more than “to be present” does not mean that “*subsistit*” so taken is equivalent to “*adest*.” For, “*subsistit*” so understood prescind from the mode according to which the thing said to subsist exists or is present. That thing might subsist (in the non-technical sense of “subsist”) after the manner of a relative being, or of some other accidental category of being, or it might subsist after the manner of a substance. Contrarily, when “*adest*” is said of something (in relation to something else), the very mode of predication (and the concept itself of “*adesse*”) precludes either: (a) that the thing said to “*adest*” exist after the manner of a substance; or (b) that the unity expressed be more than accidental.⁷¹ Whatever “*adest*” another either exists in that other as within a subject of being or is related to it by an accidental union. Consequently, “*adest*” is a more restricted notion than “*subsistit*” non-technically taken.

Advantages gained by the switch to “subsistit in”

Owing to Heribert Schaaf and Sebastian Tromp, the “*adest*” phrase was exchanged for another expression free from the diminished sense of being and unity inherent in the “*adest*” and able to conserve the traditional theology imbedded in the “*est*” phrase. Regardless of its affinity or non-affinity with the identity claim of the “*est*” formula, and assuming it is being used technically,⁷² the “*subsistit*” phrase has the advantage of directly signifying the *manner* in which the Church of Christ exists in the Catholic Church (something which the “*est*” formula can do only implicitly). Inasmuch as the technical concept of subsistence indicates just one mode of existence (that proper to the Catholic Church, or to Christ’s Church as it exists in the Catholic Church⁷³), the “*subsistit*” language obviously leaves room for the possibility of other modes of existence. It is, therefore, easy to see how the “*subsistit*” ecclesiology may be compatible with the recognition of salvific “elements” in non-Catholic Christianities. Acknowledging the existence of such elements outside the visible structures of the Catholic Church does not require affirming their existence according to any special mode; it suffices that they exist or be present at all. Such a recognition, therefore, does not preclude another mode of possessing the same elements that is exclusive to the Catholic Church. Technically employed, the “subsistence” language explicitly introduces the notion of differentiated modes of being corresponding to the differentiated modes according to which the Church of Christ exists.⁷⁴

Another potential advantage of the subsistence language consists in the fact that, owing to the prepositional construction determining the “*subsistit*” in *Lumen gentium* 8 (“*subsistit in*”), it enables one to maintain a certain distinction between what is signified by “Christ’s Church” and what is signified by “the Catholic Church.” This is not to deny their convertibility in the concrete, but only to point out that the manner in which the Church is signified by those names differs, in such a way that one can meaningfully speak of Christ’s Church as something concretely instantiated or embodied in the Catholic Church. To many, this, or something like it, appears necessary in order to safeguard what is usually referred to as a certain “transcendence” on the part of Christ’s Church vis-à-vis the Catholic Church.⁷⁵

The notion of subsistence, furthermore, is particularly apt for describing that aspect of the Church according to which she, like any substantial reality, undergoes

variation and adapts over time, without ceasing to be what she is. Similar to the relationship of the subsisting human person to his body, the single subsistent act of the Church is perpetuated in the course of history amid constantly changing material conditions and circumstances. In one way, the person can be said to subsist in his body, where the body is signified as a part and represents, as an individuating principle, a spatio-temporal delimitation of the person's subsistence. In this sense, the subsisting person transcends his body as such, and we speak of the human person as subsisting/persisting through/across the temporal variations to which the body is subject owing to matter.⁷⁶ But, in another way, when the body is signified as a whole, the body itself (which, so signified, is the individual substance, the person) is said to subsist.⁷⁷ Similarly, when viewed according to her temporally conditioned natural endowments alone (human composition at a given moment, geographical extension, ecclesiastical traditions as such, etc.), the historical Catholic Church, so signified, is a material cause of the subsisting composite and the receptive subject of what is formally constitutive of the Church. But, when viewed in her intrinsic unity with the formal cause, the historical Catholic Church is nothing other than the one Church of Christ subsisting.⁷⁸

It is far from necessary that all or even some combination of these characteristics of subsistence language were on the minds of the Council Fathers at Vatican II. Quite obviously, the first and most important among them is dependent upon a technical usage of the verb "to subsist." That the Council Fathers intended to use it technically, however, appears to be the only plausible interpretation. Their references to Pius XII, moreover, as well as the testimony of the *Relatio*, confirm this. Furthermore, the analogies to which *Lumen gentium* directs our attention, whether immediately or by way of citing Pius XII, suggest a fuller concept of "subsistence" such as that traced above.

Conclusion

In the dispute over the terminology by which the Second Vatican Council expressed the relationship of Christ's Church to the Catholic Church and to non-Catholic communions, I have attempted to present a fresh angle from which it can be assessed. By examining the conceptual spectra within which to interpret the conciliar use of the terms "*est*," "*adest*" and "*subsistit*," I have argued against a

hermeneutic of discontinuity for what concerns the replacement of “*est*” with “*subsistit in*” in *Lumen gentium* 8, and this, as much on the basis of the meaning of the “*est*” formula as on the basis of the meaning of the subsistence language. Amid the many semantic values one could assign to the above terms, for each one (with the exception, perhaps, of the “*adest*”), by way of a convergence of probabilities—based on the historical stages by which the terminology evolved, the theological and philosophical formation of the men responsible for the terminological selection, the theological opinions of those same men (expressed both during and after the conciliar deliberations), the official *Relatio* regarding *Lumen gentium* 8, subsequent teachings of the official magisterium, and theological fittingness with respect both to ecclesiastical tradition and to the theology of the Church as such—one sense more than any other presents itself as the most reasonable if not the only feasible way in which to understand it.

Correspondingly, I have argued that the “*subsistit*” formula can be rightly taken only in a theologically and philosophically technical sense, one which signifies a special manner of existing by which the strict identity between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church can be maintained, while at the same time implicitly connoting another, distinct manner of existing suitably applied to non-Catholic communions for the salvific wealth that adorns them. Interior to this technical understanding of the “*subsistit*,” several metaphysical *significata* were distinguished and related to one another in order (primarily) to uncover the *rationes* according to which the technical notion of subsistence is variously applied by theologians of widely differing perspectives to the mystery of Christ’s Church. In this connection, the role of the ecclesiastical *usage* of language was also noted, inasmuch as the semantic function often ascribed to the “*subsistit*” was shown not to derive from the inherent meaning of the term (*praeter* Vatican II), but from what theologians (and official Church authority) want the term to say on the basis of theological convictions.⁷⁹ In the end, amid all that may be meant by the actual occurrence of “*subsistit in*” in *Lumen gentium* 8, it can neither be the logical equivalent of nor doctrinally incompatible with the “*est*.” It represents, rather, an authentic development of doctrine in perfect continuity with previous magisterium. By way of conclusion, therefore, and as a way of illustrating how the various phrases can be coherently related to each another, it can meaningfully and

rightly be said that:

Unica Christi Ecclesia est Ecclesia Catholica, et illa Ecclesia subsistit in Ecclesia Catholica, et in ipsa sola, dum, modo inseparabili Ecclesia Catholica, se extendit ad omnes eas communiones adestque in iisdem, in quibus, ex actione sanctificante Christi Capitis et Corporis sui, elementa huius Ecclesiae partim adsunt.

The one (“*unica*”) Church of Christ is (“*est*”) the Catholic Church, and this Church subsists in (“*subsistit in*”) the Catholic Church, and in her alone, while, in a way inseparable from the Catholic Church, it extends itself to and is present in (“*adest in*”) every communion in which (“*in quibus*”), by reason of the sanctifying action of Christ the Head and of his Body, elements (“*elementa*”) of this Church, in a partial way (“*ex parte*”), are found (“*adsunt*”).

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- ¹ See CDF, *Notification on the book of Father Leonardo Boff: “The Church: Charism and Power”* (hereafter *Notification*): AAS 77 (1985): 758–759; CDF, *Declaratio de Iesu Christi atque Ecclesiae unicitate et universalitate salvifica* (hereafter *Dominus Iesus*): AAS 92 (2000): 742–765; CDF, *Responsa ad quaestiones de aliquibus sententiis ad doctrinam de Ecclesia pertinentibus*, June 29, 2007 (hereafter *Responsa*): AAS 99 (2007): 604–608; CDF, *Commentary on the Document “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church”* (hereafter *Commentary on the Document “Responses”*), *Notitiae* 43 (2007): 398–415. See Jared Wicks, “Questions and Answers on the New Responses of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,” *Ecumenical Trends*, vol. 36, no. 7 (July/August 2007): 1–7 and 15–16 (hereafter “Questions and Answers”).
 - ² See, for example, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, “The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, ‘*Lumen Gentium*,’” *L’Osservatore Romano* 19 (September 2001): 7–8; “Es scheint mir absurd, was unsere lutherischen Freunde jetzt wollen. Ein Interview mit Christian Geyer zur Erklärung Dominus Iesus,” in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 221 (September 22, 2000): 51–52; “*Deus locutus est nobis in Filio*: Some Reflections on Subjectivity, Christology, and the Church,” in *Proclaiming the Truth of Jesus Christ: Papers from the Vallombrosa Meeting* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 13–30; Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger: Life in the Church and Living Theology: Fundamentals of Ecclesiology with Reference to Lumen Gentium*, trans. M. J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007) (hereafter *Joseph Ratzinger*), 314–315; Kilian McDonnell, “The Concept of Church in the Documents of Vatican II as Applied to Protestant Denominations,” *Worship* 44 (1970): 332–349 (at

338); Christopher J. Malloy, “*Subsistit In*: Nonexclusive Identity or Full Identity?,” *The Thomist* 72 (2008): 1–44 (at 31) (hereafter “*Subsistit In*”); “Is Exclusive Identity Compatible with Ecumenism,” 183–184; Christian D. Washburn, “The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, and *Subsistit in*”; William B. Stevenson, “*Subsistit in* as a Specific Determination of Substantial Being in *Lumen Gentium* 8,” New Blackfriars, forthcoming 2018. For a general discussion of the hermeneutical factions regarding the “*subsistit in*” in *Lumen gentium* 8, see C. Malloy, “*Subsistit In*,” 1–44; and for further examination of the division between metaphysical and historical readings of “*subsistit in*,” see Angelo Maffei, “Il dibattito sul significato della formula ‘subsistit in’ (*LG* 8) tra esegesi testuale e interpretazione teologica,” *Teologia* 38 (2013): 26–58 (hereafter “Il dibattito”).

- 3 See, for example, Walter Kasper, *That They May All Be One: The Call to Unity* (London: Burns and Oates, 2004), 65; Francis A. Sullivan, “Quaestio Disputata: The Meaning of *Subsistit in* as Explained by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,” *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 116–124 (hereafter “The Meaning of *Subsistit in*”), 118; “Quaestio Disputata: A Response to Karl Becker, S. J., On the Meaning of *Subsistit In*,” *Theological Studies* 67 (2006): 395–409 (hereafter “A Response to Karl Becker”), 397; “The Significance of the Vatican II Declaration that the Church of Christ ‘subsists in’ the Roman Catholic Church,” in R. Latourelle, ed., *Vatican II: Assessments and Perspectives, Twenty-Five Years After (1962–1987)*, 3 vols. (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1989), 2: 272–287 (hereafter “The Significance of the Vatican II Declaration”), 276; Edward Schillebeeckx, *Church: The Human Story of God* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 193; *The Language of Faith: Essays on Jesus, Theology, and the Church* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995), 56; Donato Valentini, “The Unicity and Unity of the Church,” in *Declaration Dominus Iesus* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), 6–77; Umberto Betti, “Chiesa di Cristo e Chiesa Cattolica,” *Antoniano* 61 (1986): 726–745. See also A. von Teuffenbach, *Die Bedeutung des ‘subsistit in,’* 110; and K. Becker, “An Examination of *Subsistit in*,” 11–12. It must be noted that, although these last two authors do not subscribe to a metaphysical reading of the “*subsistit in*” in *Lumen gentium* 8, they both understand that phrase to operate in such a way that it can retain the kind of identity claim explicitly conveyed by “*est*.” It is possible, therefore, to agree with those who view the “*subsistit in*” of *Lumen gentium* 8 as signifying nothing metaphysically special in itself, while holding a doctrinal position widely disparate from what they typically endorse. Similarly, and more obviously, one can disagree with von Teuffenbach and Becker as to the semantic value of the “*subsistit in*” while agreeing with their doctrinal stance on the identity between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church.
- 4 See A. von Teuffenbach, *Die Bedeutung des ‘subsistit in,’* 375–378; Schelkens, “*Lumen gentium*’s ‘*subsistit in*,” 889.
- 5 *Lumen gentium*, 8.
- 6 *Unitatis redintegratio*, 4.
- 7 *Unitatis redintegratio*, 13.
- 8 *Dignitatis humanae*, 1.
- 9 *Gaudium et spes*, 10.
- 10 *Nostra aetate*, 3.
- 11 As explained later in this chapter, all but the first and last of the six instances listed above represent a more

or less non-technical (and not uncommon) use of the term “to subsist,” where the notion of subsistence simply denotes existing or being present or continuing to exist. The last case, however, is different. There the term “subsisting” denotes the unique manner in which God exists, which is independent (*per se*), fully determinate, substantially complete and incommunicable to any other. This use of “subsistence” is common to the theological tradition since the fourth century; and there is no reason to assume *a priori* that the Council would not also use it in such a (theologically ordinary) technical sense. The first case is also different, as I intend to demonstrate in what follows.

- 12 To uncover the full meaning of the “*subsistit in*” in *Lumen gentium* 8, the immediately following sections are devoted primarily to the semantic value of “*subsistit*,” to a certain extent in abstraction from the import of the preposition “*in*” found in the combined phrase. This is necessary in order to focus on the distinct importance of each term. Although intermittently touched upon in various sections, the import of the “*in*” will be taken up directly in a later section.
- 13 See P. G. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 1850; E. A. Andrews et al., *A Latin Dictionary*, 1782; R. J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 1063. For its philosophical uses, see, for example, C. Fernandez, “Metaphysica Generalis,” in *Philosophiae Scholasticae Summa*, ed. L. Salcedo and C. Fernandez, 3rd ed. (Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1964): 1:770; J. Gretd, *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae* (Barcelona-Freiburg-Rome: Herder, 1958), 2:136–139.
- 14 The interpretation is not infrequently attributed to von Teuffenbach and Becker, who view the “*subsistit in*” as continuing (in one respect) to function in the same way that the “*est*” had functioned, inasmuch as it is considered by them to retain the doctrine of exclusive identity between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church. An unjustifiably inflexible version of this interpretation, however, has also been projected upon von Teuffenbach and Becker by Sullivan (“A Response to Karl Becker,” 395–409; “The Meaning of *Subsistit in*,” 116–124) and J. Wicks (“Questions and Answers,” 4–5). Sullivan and Wicks argue that Becker and von Teuffenbach reduce the “*subsistit in*” to the equivalent of “*est*” in a way that is incompatible with doctrinal development. This is not exact, since von Teuffenbach and Becker treat the “*subsistit in*” in a way equivalent to the “*est*” only with respect to its ability to express exclusive identity. It is their concern to show that “*subsistit in*” does not contradict the teaching of Pius XII. Neither Becker nor von Teuffenbach deny a development of doctrine with the choice of “*subsistit in*.” To view that phrase as consonant with the kind of identity claim made prior to the Council through the use of “*est*” does not deny its ability to signify what “*est*” cannot. As I have shown, the “*subsistit in*” can at the same time accomplish what is fundamental to the “*est*” and something more. The imputation made by Sullivan and Wicks is analogous to the attempt by Paolo Gamberini to attribute to Pius XII a conviction which does not at all follow from his endorsement of the “*est*” language, namely, that “nothing of the Church could be found outside the Catholic Church” (P. Gamberini, “‘Subsistit’ in Ecumenical Ecclesiology: J. Ratzinger and E. Jüngel,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 72, no. 1 [2007]: 61–73, at 62). See C. Malloy, “*Subsistit In*,” 12; A. Maffei, “Il dibattito,” 44–45, 50–51. Maffei points out that the use of the “*subsistit*” phrase on the part of von Teuffenbach and Becker is governed by a preoccupation to make of it an affirmation of exclusive identity, whence its equivalence to “*est*” in that regard.
- 15 For a survey of interpretations of “*subsistit in*” in *Lumen gentium* 8, see C. Malloy, “*Subsistit In*,” 1–44. Compared with the present study, Malloy’s article focuses more on the historical debate and divides the various interpretative positions more materially, describing the views held by their various proponents. I am concerned here primarily with formal possibilities, as delimited, in particular, by semantic and

syntactical considerations.

- 16 See in this regard A. von Teuffenbach, *Die Bedeutung des 'subsistit in,'* 62–64; C. Washburn, “The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, and *Subsistit in*,” 158–161. For a comprehensive exposition of the conciliar schemas, commissions, correspondence, deliberations and archived documents as detailed in the diaries and interviews of Sebastian Tromp, see *Konzilstagebuch, Sebastian Tromp, SJ, mit Erläuterungen und Akten aus der Arbeit der Theologischen Kommission / mit Erläuterungen und Akten aus der Arbeit der Kommission für Glauben und Sitten: II Vatikanisches Konzil*, ed. A. von Teuffenbach, 3 vols. (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006 / Nordhausen: Verlag Traugott Bautz GmbH, 2011–2014).
- 17 For a recent historical overview of the notion, see S. Hipp, *The Doctrine of Personal Subsistence: Historical and Systematic Synthesis*, in the series *Studia Friburgensia* (Fribourg, Switzerland: Academic Press Fribourg, 2012) (hereafter *The Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*).
- 18 I provide a detailed systematic study of the notion of subsistence in general in *The Doctrine of Personal Subsistence; “Person” in Christian Tradition and in the Conception of Saint Albert the Great. A Systematic Study of its Concept as Illuminated by the Mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation*, in the series *Beiträge zur Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2001).
- 19 A thing’s act of existence, for example, is intrinsically proportioned to its essence; if the thing possesses a complete and self-contained act of existence, then it must have an essence proportioned to it and on the basis of which it enjoys such an act of existence to begin with (given that the essence is the limiting, determining factor for *esse* in composite/finite being). A failure to fully discern (β) is, therefore, a failure to fully discern (α).
- 20 CDF, *Responsa: AAS* 99 (2007): 606.
- 21 CDF, *Notification: AAS* 77 (1985): 758–759. I cite the translation of the *Notification*’s text as found in the CDF’s *Commentary on the Document “Responses.”* The translation of the *Notification* on the Vatican website is equivalent but not as succinct (“the Council had chosen the word *subsistit*—subsists—exactly in order to make clear that one sole ‘subsistence’ of the true Church exists”). *Dominus Iesus* likewise affirms that the unicity doctrine is implied by the “*subsistit*” and cites the above quotation from the *Notification* to support it: “The interpretation of those who would derive from the formula ‘*subsistit in*’ the thesis that the one Church of Christ could subsist also in non-Catholic Churches and ecclesial communities is therefore contrary to the authentic meaning of *Lumen gentium*. “The Council instead chose the word *subsistit* precisely to clarify that there exists only one subsistence of the true Church” (CDF, *Dominus Iesus*, 16, note 56).
- 22 CDF, *Commentary on the Document “Responses,” Notitiae* 43 (2007): 398–415.
- 23 J. Ratzinger, “*Deus locutus est*,” 27; see also J. Ratzinger, “The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*,” *L’Osservatore Romano* 19 (September 2001): 8.
- 24 H. Häring, *Theologie und Ideologie bei Joseph Ratzinger* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 2001), 121 (as cited in M. Heim, 321).
- 25 See L. Boff, *Manifest für die Ökumene: Ein Streit mit Kardinal Ratzinger*, ed. G. Schmuttermayr (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 2001) (hereafter *Manifest*), 95; see M. H. Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger*, 313.
- 26 L. Boff, *Manifest*, 96 (as cited in M. Heim, 323).
- 27 *Lumen gentium*, 8 and 15; *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3, 13 and 22.

- 28 To be precise, it is inaccurate to speak of non-Catholic communities as instantiations of Christ's Church at all; they should not be referred to, that is, even as partial instantiations of that Church. That Church is an indivisible whole and cannot be embodied as such in anything less than an integrally perfect realization. See chapter two, note 42.
- 29 "*Possumus dicere: itaque subsistit in Ecclesia catholica, et hoc est exclusivum, in quantum dicitur: alibi non sunt nisi elementa*" (Sebastian Tromp, transcript of the tape recording of the Doctrinal Commission's discussion, November 26, 1963, cited in K. Becker, "An Examination of *Subsistit in*," 12 [English translation mine]). The discovery of the tape recording of the Commission's conversation and of Tromp's explicit clarification puts to rest the argument that one cannot discern the intended meaning of those responsible for introducing the term "*subsistit*." That term, moreover, was in the context of that very clarification accepted without resistance (see K. Schelkens, "*Lumen gentium's 'subsistit in*," 887–889; A. von Teuffenbach, *Die Bedeutung des 'subsistit in*,' 375–378). It is not merely inconsistent but unreasonable, therefore, for adversaries of the exclusive identity signification to switch their argumentative strategy from asserting that we have no way of knowing the responsible party's intended meaning to contending that we have no evidence that other members of the Doctrinal Commission agreed with Tromp's understanding (see F. Sullivan, "The Meaning of *Subsistit in*," 122). Furthermore, the hermeneutical principle operative in the latter tactic is fundamentally problematic (see C. Washburn, "The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, and *Subsistit in*," 158).
- 30 To avoid any misunderstanding, by the second conjunct I mean to say that subsistence implies the fullness of everything essential to Christ's Church (β), *not* that it implies the unique and exclusive manner in which that fullness is enjoyed by the Catholic Church (which is the task of the first conjunct to affirm). Together, they yield (γ), namely, that "*subsistit*" can be said with respect to no communion besides the Catholic Church (which is an exclusive claim regarding the subsistence, not the fullness).
- 31 AS, vol. III, pt. 1, 176 (as cited in J. O'Connor, "The Church of Christ and the Catholic Church," in *The Battle for the Catholic Mind*, ed. W. May and K. Whitehead [South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2001], 254). For the meaning of "*unica*," see P. G. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 2093; R. J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 1123.
- 32 The integral perfection of the Catholic Church is affirmed elsewhere in *Unitatis redintegratio* 3: "For it is only through Christ's Catholic Church, which is 'the all-embracing means of salvation' (*generale auxilium salutis*) that they [the separated Christian communions] can benefit fully from the means of salvation."
- 33 To be fair, there is some textual reference to (β), but it is either implicit or takes a back seat to and is rather obscured by doctrinal emphasis on (α). The strongest reference to (β) comes from the 2007 *Responsa*: "Christ 'established here on earth' only one Church and instituted it as a 'visible and spiritual community,' that from its beginning and throughout the centuries has always existed and will always exist, and in which alone are found all the elements that Christ himself instituted.... In number 8 of the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* 'subsistence' means this perduring, historical continuity and the permanence of all the elements instituted by Christ in the Catholic Church, in which the Church of Christ is concretely found on this earth" (CDF, *Responsa: AAS* 99 [2007]: 606). In this passage, not only is (β) shadowed by other concerns, but no connection between it and (γ) is made. In all rightness, it must also be noted that many of the texts under examination simply do not contain arguments. Where that is the case, they cannot be criticized for a failure to logically support conclusions, even if they can be critiqued for paucity of evidence for what they affirm.

- ³⁴ CDF, *Notification*, German edition in *Verlautbarungen des Apostolischen Stuhls*, no. 67, ed. Sekretariat des Deutschen Bischofskonferenz (Bonn, 1985), 6; see M. H. Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger*, 322.
- ³⁵ By this I am referring to the idea that, through the very use of the term “*subsistit*,” a whole theology is supposed to be implied.
- ³⁶ If the phrase “*subsistit in*” can be used with reference exclusively to the Catholic Church (γ), so that only a single instance of subsistence belongs to Christ’s Church—and assuming that that restriction has something to do with the meaning of “subsistence”—this cannot be a function of (α) as such (considered in abstraction from β), for non-Catholic communions are every bit as concrete as the Catholic Church and have a stable existence as societies unto themselves; but it can derive (in part) from (β), inasmuch as (β) belongs to the Catholic Church alone. Thus, by demonstrating the exclusive realization of (β) on the part of the Catholic Church, one provides a rationale for why the term subsistence (which carries α and β) should be reserved to the Catholic Church alone (γ).
- ³⁷ As a vehicle for expressing this revealed truth, the term “*subsistit*” is every bit as theological as it is philosophical; and since what is theological always presupposes something philosophical, but not vice versa, it is sufficient and accurate to call it (so employed) a theological term.
- ³⁸ *Lumen gentium*, 8.
- ³⁹ *Unitatis redintegratio*, 4.
- ⁴⁰ *Unitatis redintegratio*, 13. The Latin text does not use “*subsistit in*,” but “*subsistere pergunt*,” rendering the idea that Catholic traditions and structures “go on to exist” or “continue to exist” in these ecclesial communions. The “in-subsistence” of these elements is nonetheless affirmed through the use of “in” earlier in the phrase (“*in quibus ... subsistere pergunt*”).
- ⁴¹ As was pointed out above, the scholastics and medievals commonly use the phrase “to subsist” in this way. Noteworthy, even broadly taken, the expression “to subsist” is, in this context, preferable to “to exist,” insofar as the properties in question are viewed not just as existing, but as *continuing* to exist. Something of the technical sense of subsistence is thereby preserved in this non-technical use of the term “*subsistere*,” inasmuch as subsistence, technically understood, implies that mode of being which is stable and relatively permanent. Even in quotidian language, the non-technical use of the term frequently connotes this aspect denoted by its technical counterpart. The 2007 CDF clarification of the “*subsistit in*” in *Lumen gentium* 8 underscores this aspect of the term: “In number 8 of the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* ‘subsistence’ means this perduring, historical continuity and the permanence of all the elements instituted by Christ in the Catholic Church, in which the Church of Christ is concretely found on this earth” (CDF, *Responsa: AAS* 99 [2007]: 606). This application of the notion of subsistence recurs elsewhere within the Council documents, as, for example, in *Unitatis redintegratio* 3: “this unity subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church as something she can never lose”; and *Gaudium et spes* 10: “What is this sense of sorrow, of evil, of death, which continue to exist (*subsistere pergunt*) despite so much progress.”
- ⁴² Note that the partial existence within the Anglican Communion of such properties is not to be confused with a partial existence there of the nature of Christ’s Church *simpliciter*. A nature as such cannot be partitioned so as to exist only in part in a subject. Humanity, for example, cannot be said to exist partially where there exists only animality, or only intelligence. Natures come as indivisible wholes: “the forms of things and the definitions that signify them are like numbers. Among numbers, the addition or subtraction of unity changes the species of a number.... It is the same among definitions: the addition or subtraction of one difference changes the species” (Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. I, c. 54; see *Sum. theol.*, I-II, q. 52, a. 1;

De pot., q. 7, a. 4). This holds not only for substantial forms but for accidental forms as well, as a consequence of which it is somewhat equivocal even to speak of properties of Christ's Church as existing partially (*ex parte*) in non-Catholic communions. The ecclesial properties said to exist in these communions, though truly salutary properties, lack something proper to being "ecclesial"; they exist there to varying degrees, but never in their fullness, and never in right relationship to the full complement of ecclesial properties. This carries a number of implications, including the fact that such properties are *participant* in the fully realized (and fully ecclesial) properties belonging to the Catholic Church, and they are, to varying degrees, participations in the ecclesiality of the Catholic Church. I develop these themes in the following chapter. Note here, however, that the notion of degrees of participation does not apply to substantial forms, which do not admit of variation in intensity and are not susceptible to more or less (see *Sum. theol.*, I-II, q. 52, a. 1; *In Phys.*, Bk. VI, lect. 7, no. 825; *De virt.*, q. 1, a. 11; *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 93, a. 3, ad 3); therefore, the idea of realizing Christ's Church simply signified according to diverse degrees is ruled out, wherefore one should not speak of a partial existence of Christ's Church *simpliciter*.

- 43 In this scenario, the Catholic Church can rightly be said to be the Church of Christ only insofar as the latter is signified according to the concrete existence it has as instantiated in the Catholic Church (the nature as it concretely exists in the subject of its instantiation is, when signified according to that concrete and fully particularized existence, nothing other in reality than the individual otherwise said to "have" that nature, when the latter is signified abstractly). Signified in itself, however, as a universal, Christ's Church could not be identified with the Catholic Church, in the same way that no individual human person is identical with humanity. Although humanity has a concrete mode of being in this or that individual human supposit, and, when signified in its concrete singularity, is identical *in re* with that supposit, no human individual is humanity itself. This comparison should not mislead us into thinking that Christ's Church must have multiple instantiations (as humanity does). That is not necessarily the case, even if the Church of Christ were to have the modal properties characteristic of universals. Nevertheless, from within this framework, we are forced to posit the non-identity between Christ's Church as such (i.e., as universally conceived) and the Catholic Church in her concrete historical conditions. We thus encounter here something deeply problematic with trying to treat Christ's Church as something instantiable among many (like a universal). But there are other problems with it. Universals are not characterized by "membership" and are not societies, so, as such, Christ's Church in this scenario (i.e., when conceived as a universal) could not be populated by individual members or be a society, although its concrete instantiation, the Catholic Church, could. All of this raises the question of just what it is that Christ founded. He cannot have founded a mere universal. We can say he founded his concrete Church, which is the Catholic Church (and we are back to the strict identity claim of the "*est*"), but it is not clear then how we should understand the notion of its subsisting "in" the Catholic Church. Such questions cannot be fully answered within the space of these pages, and here I simply wish to highlight certain difficulties posed by the "*subsistit in*" formula. Nevertheless, it can be noted—as this study proves—that Christ's Church, even if taken after the manner of a universal, admits of no realization besides the Catholic Church; but the latter, considered at any concrete moment in time, although fully instantiating all that is essential to Christ's Church, never exhausts the limitless possibilities of its concrete and developing advenient expression. Many aspects of Christ's Church as it exists according to its essential visibility are accidental to its being, and their diversity is realizable only successively; yet all of them are virtually contained (as within their ontological principles) in the one Church of Christ. Only the progression of the Church in time can concretely express, therefore, certain features of the Church's universality (catholicity), a dynamic mystery that is never exhausted at once by the temporally subsisting embodiment of Christ's Church, but which

from the beginning, wholly exists in that Church as within its principles.

- ⁴⁴ The nature as such is never the subsistent subject, but as it exists in the concrete it is sometimes said to subsist, but precisely insofar as it is identical *in re* with the supposit. Signified formally, however, the nature is distinguished from that in which it subsists, as the universal from the particular. For a fuller explanation of these relationships, see S. Hipp, *The Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*.
- ⁴⁵ The relationship between human persons and human nature could similarly illustrate the point. One must remember, of course, that the theologically technical notion of subsistence was worked out in the context of the Trinitarian and Christological controversies. The Christological mystery equally exhibits the relationship between natures and suppositis; for the subsistent in Christ is not his natures as such, but the Word, into whose subsistent act the humanity has been drawn; see Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 2, a. 5, ad 2; Council of Florence, session 11, *Bull of union with the Copts in Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. N. P. Tanner (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 1:574, 24–33; DH 1344.
- ⁴⁶ See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 1, ad 3; q. 27, a. 2, ad 2; q. 29, a. 2 and 4; q. 30, a. 1; q. 31, a. 1, ad 4; q. 33, a. 2, ad 1; q. 39, a. 1 and obj. 3 and ad 3; a. 2 and ad 4; a. 3, obj. 4; q. 40, a. 3; III, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2; a. 2 and ad 1 and 3; a. 4; a. 5, ad 1–2; a. 8; a. 10 and ad 1; q. 3, a. 6, sed contra and ad 3; a. 7; q. 6, a. 6; q. 16, a. 6, ad 3; a. 12 and ad 1; q. 17, a. 1; q. 24, a. 1, ad 2; q. 37, a. 2, ad 1; q. 42, a. 3, ad 2; q. 50, a. 5, ad 2. For more detail, see S. Hipp, *The Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 88–89.
- ⁴⁷ The last observation about *esse* is the viewpoint of those adherent to a real distinction between essence and existence. Although not all contemporary scholastics or Catholics would agree with it, the general point about the difference between natures as such and their suppositis still holds for all corporeal beings and for all natures that are common to many (which require for their subjective parts principles of distinction other than the nature as such).
- ⁴⁸ It also subsists “as” the Catholic Church, but this becomes obvious only once the non-multipliability of the nature of Christ’s Church has been established.
- ⁴⁹ Note that this understanding does not deny that Christ’s Church / the Catholic Church is also constituted by a vast array of relations by reason of which its unity is as much a unity of order as it is “substantial.” Amid these relations, moreover, some extend to *relata* bearing no visible relationship to other *relata*. But these sorts of non-visible relationships do not suffice to make of their *relata* “parts” of the Church; for that, as mentioned above, a broader set of criteria must be met.
- ⁵⁰ Aquinas, *In Meta.*, Bk. V, lect. 9, nos. 890–891.
- ⁵¹ As shall be made clear, especially in chapter four, the presence of Christ’s Church within non-Catholic communities is nothing other than the presence of the Catholic Church, and the realization within those communities of properties essential to Christ’s Church is the realization within them of, and a participation in, the Catholic Church, all of which follows from the fact that Christ’s Church is unqualifiedly (“*est*”) the Catholic Church. See chapter two, note 59.
- ⁵² *Lumen gentium*, 8.
- ⁵³ *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3.
- ⁵⁴ “To the extent that these elements are found in other Christian communities, the one church of Christ is effectively present in them” (John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, 11).
- ⁵⁵ This is the opinion of Francis Sullivan; see F. Sullivan, “A Response to Karl Becker,” 400–401; “Quaestio Disputata: Further thoughts on the meaning of *subsistit in*,” *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 133–147 (see especially 134); “The Significance of the Vatican II Declaration,” 281. Similarly, M. Garijo-Guembe,

Communion of the Saints: Foundation, Nature, and Structure of the Church (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 108: “Quite consciously the council rejected the identity put forward in *Mystici corporis Christi* between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church, so as to acknowledge the elements of the Church present in the other Churches.” See also Hervé Legrand, “La théologie des Églises Soeurs: Réflexions ecclésiologiques autour de la déclaration de Balamand,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 88 (2004): 481–482.

- 56 See *Orientalium ecclesiarum*, 2: “The Holy Catholic Church, which is (*est*) the Mystical Body of Christ, is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit by the same faith, the same sacraments and the same government”; *Lumen gentium*, 8: “This is the one Church of Christ which in the Creed is professed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, which our Saviour, after his Resurrection, commissioned Peter to shepherd, and him and the other Apostles to extend and direct with authority.” The one Church of Christ is the Church governed under Peter, which is the Catholic Church (and no other, since the principle of visible unity is singular and unmultipliable). Something more concerning these statements is worth noting here. In the first of these quotes, the Catholic Church is the grammatical subject qualified by the determinations indicated in the predicate. In the second quote, the one Church of Christ is the subject qualified by the constitutive determinations. In both cases, the defining elements include the unitary government that is assured and made visible in Petrine Primacy. It is *this* visibly unified society that, in the same *Lumen gentium* 8, is said to subsist in the Catholic Church: the “*haec*” in the “*subsistit*” statement refers to the preceding “*unica Christi Ecclesia*” defined in terms of Petrine Primacy. Whether, therefore, we are speaking of the “*unica Christi Ecclesia*” (of *Lumen gentium*) or the *corpus Christi mysticum* (of *Orientalium ecclesiarum*) explicitly identified with the Catholic Church, governmental unity under Petrine headship is an essentially defining feature. Petrine governance, in other words, is a necessary and inseparable attribute of Christ’s Church. It follows from this that, in the absence of Petrine headship, the Church of Christ cannot exist in a complete and integral way. This is why it makes sense to speak of Christ’s Church as subsisting only in the Catholic Church, since she alone possesses all the essential attributes of that Church, including Petrine governance, and since the mode of being implied by subsistence is that of a complete and integral substantial nature.
- 57 The cited portions of *Humani generis* are most explicit: “The Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same thing” (*Humani generis*, 27). Note that the original explanatory heading that accompanied this same footnote during its drafting stages was entitled “On the identity of the Catholic Church and the mystical body” (AS, vol. I, pt. 4, 17).
- 58 “*Quaedam verba mutantur: loco ‘est,’ 1.21, dicitur ‘subsistit in,’ ut expressio melius concordet cum affirmatione de elementis ecclesialibus quae alibi adsunt*” (AS, vol. III, pt. 1, 176). In the act of promulgating the Constitution *Lumen gentium*, Paul VI affirmed: “this promulgation really changes nothing of the traditional doctrine.... that which was assumed, is now explicit; that which was uncertain, is now clarified” (Paul VI, Alloc. *Post duos menses* in Vaticana Basilica ad Conciliares Patres habita, die festo Praesentationis Beatae Mariae Virginis, tertia exacta Oecumenicae Synodi Sessione [21 November 1964], in *AAS* 56 [1964]: 1007, 1009–1010 [this is also cited in the CDF’s *Responsa*]). “The change from *est* to *subsistit in* takes on no particular theological significance of discontinuity with previously held Catholic doctrine” (CDF, *Commentary of the Document “Responses,” Notitiae* 43 [2007]: 398–415). As John Paul II aptly affirms, “On the one hand we can rediscover and, as it were, reread the magisterium of the last Council [Vatican II] in the whole previous magisterium of the Church, while on the other we can rediscover and

reread the whole preceding magisterium in that of the last Council. It would seem that the principle of integration, thus conceived and applied, is indirectly the principle of the Church's identity" (John Paul II, *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of Vatican II*, trans. P. S. Falla [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980], 40–41).

- 59 Given the nature of the identity between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church, the extended being of Christ's Church among non-Catholic communions has for its logical consequence an extension of the being of the Catholic Church: the presence of Christ's Church elsewhere entails the presence there of the Catholic Church. This understanding is as ancient as St. Augustine: "There is one Church which alone is called Catholic; and whenever it has anything of its own in these communions of different bodies which are separate from itself, it is most certainly in virtue of this which is its own in each of them that she, not they, has the power of generation" (Augustine, *De baptismo contra Donatistas*, Bk. I, c. 10, no. 14 [BA, 29:14; NPNF-1, 4:417–418]); see idem, Bk. IV, c. 1: "Men may indeed receive her baptism outside her pale.... For, as the words of Scripture testify, the streams from the fountain of Paradise flowed copiously even beyond its bounds.... and through what countries they flow, and that they are situated beyond the limits of Paradise, is known to all [see Gen 2:8–14]" (NPNF-1, 4:447). See *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3: "the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation, the efficacy of which is derived from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church"; cf. *Dominus Iesus*, 16. I deal with these implications and with the nature of the existence enjoyed by Christ's Church outside of the visible confines of the Catholic Church in chapter three.
- 60 Note that, as a result of this, the subsistence language furthermore lends itself to *relating* the different modes of ecclesial being, permitting us to coordinate non-subsistent modes of ecclesial being (for example, that of properties among non-Catholic communions) with the subsistent mode attributed to the Catholic Church by analyzing the causal relations between them.
- 61 Vatican II, in fact, references the Councils of Lateran IV, Lyons II, and Florence to justify its own use of the term "churches" with regard to the separated Eastern communions; see *Unitatis redintegratio* 3, note 19. What is more, the man who at the Council introduced the term "churches" with reference to non-Catholic communions, Jan Witte, added a footnote to the chapter on ecumenism bearing witness to 18 conciliar and papal documents spanning the period from 1074 to 1953 in which the language of "churches" was customary, and conjoined with adherence to the identity between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church (see *Schemata constitutionum et decretorum de quibus disceptabitur in Concilii sessionibus*, Series secunda [Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1962], 87–89). The same conjunction, furthermore, is widespread in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century manual tradition. See in these regards A. von Teuffenbach, *Die Bedeutung des 'subsistit in,'* 245 and 447; C. Malloy, "Subsistit In," 21–22; C. Washburn, "The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, and *Subsistit in*," 171–174; Jared Wicks, "The Significance of the 'Ecclesial Communities' of the Reformation," *Ecumenical Trends* 30 (2001): 170–173.
- 62 The analogical use of the term "church" exceeds the boundaries of ecumenism; it is already operative within the Catholic understanding of the relationship between the "universal Church" and the "local church" or "particular churches," and it is a common feature of Patristic reflection on the various stages by which God has realized the community of the Saints. For the analogical use of the term "church," see Wolfgang Beinert, "Dogmenhistorische Anmerkungen zum Begriff 'Partikularkirche,'" *Theologie und Philosophie* 50 (1975): 66; Adriano Garuti, "Sister Churches: Reality and Questions," in *The Primacy of the Bishop of Rome and Ecumenical Dialogue*, trans. Michael Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), 304–305; B. D. de La Soujeole, "Être ordonné à l'unique Église du Christ: L'ecclésialité des communautés non

chrétiennes à partir des données oecuméniques,” *Revue Thomiste* 102 (2002): 5–41; *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church*, trans. M. J. Miller (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 127–128; C. Malloy, “*Subsistit In*,” 22–24; Y. Congar, *Ministères et communion* (Paris: Cerf, 1971), 131; Jerome Hamer, *The Church is a Communion*, trans. G. Chapman (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), 90–91; T. Sanks, “Forms of Ecclesiality: The Analogical Church,” *Theological Studies* 49 (1988): 695–708; J. Wicks, “The Significance of the ‘Ecclesial Communities’ of the Reformation,” *Ecumenical Trends* 30 (2001): 170–173; F. Ocariz, “Christ’s Church Subsists in the Catholic Church: Forty Years After the Close of Vatican Council II,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, (21 December 2005): 9–10; Emmanuel Lanne, *Tradition et Communion des Églises: Recueil d’Études* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 523; Gregory Baum, “The Ecclesial Reality of the Other Churches,” in *The Church and Ecumenism, Concilium* (Theology in the Age of Renewal), ed. Hans Küng (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1965), 4:64, 74; E. Sauras, “The Members of the Church,” *The Thomist* 27 (1963): 78–80. I examine the analogicity of the one Church’s existence among separated Christianities in chapters five and six.

- 63 “There is one Church which alone is called Catholic; and whenever it has anything of its own in these communions of different bodies which are separate from itself, it is most certainly in virtue of this which is its own in each of them that she, not they, has the power of generation” (Augustine, *De baptismo contra Donatistas*, Bk. I, c. 10, no. 14 [BA, 29:14; NPNF-1, 4:417–418]). “For it is only through Christ’s Catholic Church, which is ‘the all-embracing means of salvation’ (*generale auxilium salutis*) that they [the separated Christian communions] can benefit fully from the means of salvation” (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3). See chapter six.
- 64 There has been an ongoing debate over the relationship of the local church to the universal Church, a debate principally represented by cardinals Ratzinger and Kasper. A survey of that debate is offered in K. McDonnell, “The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate: The Universal Church and Local Churches,” *Theological Studies* 63 (2002): 227–250. While not directly engaging the matter, my conclusions support the position of Ratzinger. For the different senses according to which the term “church” can be predicated of different ecclesial subjects and the scales of priority and posteriority in that regard, see chapters five and six.
- 65 No communion besides the Catholic Church, therefore, can be said to “be” the Church of Christ, because Christ’s Church—which, as such, must exist as one and whole—cannot be split into a multiplicity *per se*: the constitutive being of the Church cannot be divided. Because non-Catholic communions are divided bodily, both amongst themselves and from the Catholic Church, they cannot be called Christ’s Church, unless we are willing to affirm that Christ’s Church is many things, in the sense of multiple *res* or independent subjects with separate intrinsic principles of being (*ens et unum convertuntur*). Nevertheless, something, and, indeed, many things, *of* the Church of Christ can exist in them, and they can therefore be said to “have” something of that Church. Yet, by reason of their very separation from the Catholic Church (which is the fullness of Christ’s Church), they can never be said to have *everything* that belongs to Christ’s Church; nor, by reason both of that separation and that deprivation, can they possess *anything* of that Church in a non-defective way. Their whole ecclesial being (that with-in them that is of Christ’s Church) is derivative of the fullness belonging by right to the Catholic Church who has received in full from the fullness of Christ. Accordingly, the participation of non-Catholic communions in the fullness of Christ is a participation mediated to them through the mystery of Christ’s Church as it subsists in (and as) the Catholic Church. The precise nature of these relationships of participation will be spelled out more clearly in the following chapters.

- 66 Although the designation “church of Christ” would be unfitting for any community beside the Catholic Church, and while it is the case that the name “church” in general applies, properly speaking, only to fully-Eucharistic Christian communities (and to any of these besides the Catholic Church in a diminished analogical manner), in her official interactions with non-Catholic Christian communities, the Catholic Church refers to the separated Eastern communions as “churches” without reduplicative qualification and commonly applies the name “church” to Protestant communities as well. This is at once a practical necessity, as the use of technical theological qualifications in every instance of ecclesial reference would be preposterous and extinguish conversation, and a pastoral matter, as it manifests respect for the Church’s dialogue partners. In a similar way, when working with official leaders of Protestant communions commonly referred to in their own traditions by the title of “bishop,” it is customary for Catholics to likewise refer to these leaders as “bishops.” Thus, conventionally we call them “bishops,” just as we conventionally call Christian communities that lack an authentic Eucharist “churches.” But this should not be understood to mean that those so designated are properly bishops or churches in the theological senses of the terms. Such pastoral and ecumenical uses of the names are not proper expressions of the ontological, sacramental realities to which the names correspond. In the context of theological analysis, therefore, those names should be reserved for the referents meeting the requisite ontological conditions. Interestingly enough, however, there exists another ground for the Church’s custom of referring to ecclesial communities lacking an authentic Eucharist as “churches,” a ground which goes beyond mere convention and pertains, in fact, to ontology. As I explain in chapters five and six, Christian communities not intrinsically meriting the designation “church” can still be called “churches” in a non-trivial, theologically precise way corresponding to objective potencies rooted in their constitutive being. Thus, they may, indeed, be called “churches” in a metaphysical sense, when so denominated according to that form of predication/denomination known as extrinsic attribution (see, in particular, c. 5, “*Extrinsic attribution*”; cf. c. 6, “*On the Difference between the Use of the Name ‘Church’ with Regard to the Catholic Church and Non-Catholic Churches*”).
- 67 Note that the tacit openness of the “*est*” language, although it is compatible with, need not be equated with a notion of “non-exclusive identity” or “non-total identity” such as those put forth by Yves Congar (*Le Concile de Vatican II: Son Église, Peuple de Dieu et Corps du Christ*, Théologie historique 71 [Paris: Beauchesne, 1984], 16), Hans Küng (*The Church* [Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1976], 365) and others, or with a notion of “formal identity” such as that proposed by P. Gamberini (“‘Subsistit’ in Ecumenical Ecclesiology,” 68). See, in this connection, C. Malloy, “*Subsistit In*,” 12–14; in the following sections of the article, Malloy dismantles Francis Sullivan’s arguments against the notion of total identity.
- 68 To be sure, the “*adest*” formula does not deny (β), but it cannot affirm it; the “*subsistit*” can and does.
- 69 Thus the CDF *Responsa* can assert: “The use of this expression [*subsistit in*], which indicates the full identity of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church, does not change the doctrine on the Church” (CDF, *Responsa: AAS* 99 [2007]: 604–608).
- 70 As for the relationship between the notion of “subsisting” and that of “being present,” it should be noted that neither necessarily implies the other. Clearly the idea of being present to another nowise implies subsisting in that other, even less the idea of subsisting *as* that other. But what is less intuitively obvious is the fact that the notion of subsisting does not necessarily mean being present. Although that is the case for all finite beings, whose being always includes a multitude of relations to others, it is not the case for God. The notion of presence always implies being present *to* something, and if that relation is real, then that something must be really distinct from the subject said to be present. But, *praeter creationem*, God’s

simplicity precludes any possibility of his being relative to something else (and even after creation, the various relations of God to the creature are, on his part, *rationis* only, although we rightly speak of his presence to the creature in various ways by reason of a real correlative in the creature). It follows, therefore (given that the divine substance subsists), that not everything said to subsist is by that very token also said to be “present.” Of course, we do affirm the occurrence of an authentic presence in God, but this is based on something beside the nature taken by itself and the subsistent mode of being that that nature necessarily implies. Each of the persons of the Godhead are said to be present to one another (in a special way that, to express the depth of their mutual interiority, is named “circumincession”). But this presence is based as much upon the distinction of persons as upon the unity of nature. When we speak of presence in the Godhead, we are speaking about a presence between persons: presence is always relative.

- 71 The Council documents use the phrase “*adest*” with reference both to Christ and the Holy Spirit who are present in the midst of the faithful (see *Lumen gentium* 21; *Sacrosanctum concilium* 7 and 35; *Gaudium et spes* 26). Nothing could be less accidental than God; nevertheless the mode according to which God makes himself present to the creature in these contexts never brings about (*per impossibile*) a substantial unity between them.
- 72 As demonstrated above, there are at least four good reasons to assume that the term “*subsistit*” was employed with a technical meaning when used to relate the Church of Christ to the Catholic Church, including: (1) the exclusive use to which it is put in the ecclesiological context, where it is used only of the Catholic Church, revealing the presupposition that the term can be used in the way that it is being used once only; (2) the testimony of the *Relatio*; (3) the objections brought forth against the “*adest*” language; and (4) the technical theological expertise of the Doctrinal Commission responsible for its insertion in the final draft, fortified by the fact that the theological tradition had so used the term regularly and in a normative way since the fourth century.
- 73 The syntactical discrepancy involved in sometimes attributing subsistence to the Catholic Church and at other times to Christ’s Church was addressed above.
- 74 As a phrase denoting ontological identity, the “*subsistit in*” thus expresses what amounts to an exclusive form of inclusive identity, that is, an identity proper to the Catholic Church alone that does not exclude the one Church’s presence in other religious communities (see discussion of the concept of “exclusive identity” in the final paragraphs of the general introduction). In the next pair of chapters, I examine the magnitude of and metaphysical bases for this inclusivity.
- 75 As alluded to earlier, if it is indeed necessary to maintain a certain “transcendence” on the part of Christ’s Church in relation to the Catholic Church, when considering the former according to its concrete being, the distinction need not consist in anything more than a distinction of reason (having a grammatical manifestation in diverse modes of signification). See chapter one, note 38, and chapter two, note 43. Let it be noted here, moreover, that the subsistence language equally lends itself to the task of expressing the identity emphatically expressed by the “*est*” formula when it is joined to the particle “as,” as in “the Church of Christ subsists as the Catholic Church.”
- 76 This understanding of the *significata* of subsistence appears to be operative in 2007 *Responsa* of the CDF: “one Church ... from its beginning and throughout the centuries has always existed and will always exist.... In number 8 of the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* ‘subsistence’ means this perduring, historical continuity and the permanence of all the elements instituted by Christ in the Catholic Church” (CDF, *Responsa*, 604–608).
- 77 On these distinctions, see Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, c. 2. It is critical to note that an act of abstraction is

required when signifying the body as a part and as a material cause of the whole; only in abstraction from the formal cause by which the body is determined can the latter be viewed as a part.

⁷⁸ I examine ecclesial causal relations more closely in chapter four.

⁷⁹ Based on the traditional technical meaning of the term, “*subsistit in*,” used in regard of the Catholic Church, signifies that the Catholic Church possesses the fullness of Christ’s Church, embodying it in its integrity. “Subsistence” thus gives us *integritas* (β). But it does not of itself bring us to the idea of the unicity/irrepeatability of such an integral instantiation. Other considerations supply that doctrine, as, for example, when *Unitatis redintegratio* ³ expressly denies that Christ’s Church exists in a complete manner anywhere beyond the Catholic Church: “Christ’s Catholic Church ... is ‘the all-embracing means of salvation’.... Our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head.” It is precisely because *integritas* is proper to the Catholic Church alone that the phrase “*subsistit in*” cannot be said of any other communion (assuming “subsistence” entails *integritas*), whence the exclusivity of subsistence said with reference to the Catholic Church. Note that we have reached an exclusivity claim regarding the use of our language which is itself based upon the exclusivity of the complete instantiation of Christ’s Church. As a consequence of a doctrinal consideration, we restrict the use of “*subsistit in*,” a linguistic and conventional consideration. If such a use is normative, then the “*subsistit*” phrase has assumed (in the context of ecclesiology) a new, theologically technical value hitherto unenjoyed.

CHAPTER 3

“Elements of Sanctification and of Truth” within Non-Catholic Communities following Vatican II

Introduction

THE LAST FEW YEARS have witnessed a revival of interest in the ecumenical significance of the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council. In the context of this renewal, no small amount of confusion has been fostered by erroneous interpretations of the “*subsistit*” language employed by the Council with respect to the Catholic Church and some of her essential properties, interpretations tending to flatten the traditional distinction between the Catholic Church and other Christian communions (and between that Church and other religions in general) concerning their relationship to the saving power of Christ.¹ This reading of the Council has been rejected consistently by the magisterium and a growing body of literature.² The closely related issue of the language employed by the Council specifically in regard to non-Catholic Christian communions and that functions as a sort of counterpart to the *subsistit* terminology applied to the Catholic Church, however, has not received similar attention. In this chapter, I take up the conciliar affirmation of the presence of “elements of sanctification and of truth”³ among non-Catholic faith communities with the aim of specifying the meaning of that assertion. I will argue that the intended and only theologically acceptable sense of

the phrase implies the presence within such communities of parts or properties or actions of the Catholic Church, that all things supernaturally conducive to salvation on the part of such institutions represent features according to which they are in communion with the Catholic Church,⁴ and that nothing distinctive of non-Catholic communities as such (i.e., nothing within them by virtue of which they are non-Catholic) possesses *per se* salvific mediatory value. I also show how this understanding of the “elements of sanctification and truth” found beyond the visible confines of the Catholic Church not only is consonant with but inevitably follows upon the identity existing between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church as expressed by the Council in terms of subsistence.⁵

The Church of Christ “subsists in” the Catholic Church, making her the exemplar of “ecclesiality”

When in *Lumen gentium* 8 the Council asserted that “the Church of Christ ... subsists in the Catholic Church,”⁶ it affirmed the concrete identity that exists between the visible, hierarchically structured Catholic Church and the one Church of Christ instituted by Jesus as the universal instrument of salvation. By the expression “*subsistit*,” it indicated that Christ’s Church exists in the Catholic Church in a manner that is wholly concrete, historically manifest, and at the same time complete and perfect, having everything proper to its essence, independently of any other institution.⁷ It also implied that no community besides the Catholic Church enjoys such a status, by virtue of the unity and unicity of the one body of Christ.⁸ In so doing, the famous “*subsistit*” clause of *Lumen gentium* 8 represents not a rejection of, but a development of the traditional “*est*” language used to describe the identity between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church. In the Catholic Church alone can one find the full reality of Christ’s Church, even if something of that Church can be found outside of her visible boundaries.

This subsistent manner in which the Church exists in the Catholic Church represents the paradigmatic realization of Christ’s Church. Indeed, it is the only integral realization of that Church, the indivisible essence of which as such cannot be found anywhere else. Thus the Catholic Church alone displays the full meaning of ecclesiality, and the Catholic realization of ecclesiality becomes the standard of measure in assessing the ecclesial status of any Christian community. Nevertheless,

precisely on the basis of “elements of sanctification and of truth,” non-Catholic Christian communities are also “ecclesial” and merit the designation “ecclesial communities” even if they are insufficiently ecclesial to warrant the title “church.”⁹ Different endowments of “elements” thus bring about differing degrees of ecclesiality. At the same time, however, the overall ecclesial integrity of a Christian communion, the manner in which the Church of Christ there exists, directly conditions the being and effectiveness of its “elements.” To better understand this dynamism, and thus the significance of the elements adorning ecclesial communions, a rudimentary analysis of the notion of “ecclesiality” will be helpful.

The notion of “ecclesiality”

In a theologically broad sense, “ecclesiality” is nothing other than the present form of the redemptive economy and the realization of its ends. More specifically, “ecclesiality” is defined in terms of a community’s being a “sacrament of salvation” and of its carrying out the redemptive work of Christ through the continued exercise of his priesthood.¹⁰ What is of central importance for ecclesiality from this standpoint are the *interrelationships* between the institutional structures and spiritual gifts belonging to a faith community. The sacramental and Christological criterion implies the *coordination* of the various elements that come together to constitute the Church. This is first exemplified in the relationship between the visible aspects of the Church (institutional structures) and her invisible aspects (spiritual gifts). But it is, more generally, also exemplified in the relationships existing between each and every element of truth and sanctification (visible and invisible) with which the Church has been endowed; and this relational symbiosis is formally distinctive of “ecclesiality” and of the ecclesial quality that any such element enjoys. Taken individually or even collectively as an enumerable sum of elements, things such as dogmas, rites, sacramental graces, and hierarchical offices, for example, constitute this ecclesiality, in a certain sense, only *materially*, not *formally*. *Formally*, ecclesiality consists in the synergistic relation between hierarchical office and truth, for example, and between sacramental rites and the gifts of grace, and between the elements of truth and elements of holiness.¹¹ In every case, ecclesiality consists formally in a rich network of inseparable and *dynamic* relationships between elements that make up an organic whole, the life of

which qualitatively exceeds that based on the elements additively considered.

It is analogous to any living body: the living organism has a nobility, being and operative capacities that far exceed those of its parts. The parts constitute the organism materially, but an inner unifying principle constitutes it formally; and the parts are the kinds of parts that they are, ultimately, thanks to that inner principle. Similarly, Church dogma, hierarchical offices, even Christian holiness, are what they are thanks to their organic (i.e., living and interactive) unity with one another in and through Christ.¹² Ecclesiality follows, therefore, upon the compenetration of the elements mentioned. None of those elements, nor all of them together, can be the cause of this compenetration. The ecclesial reality in its essential mystery (which is Christ) ontologically precedes them and informs them.¹³ This is an entirely qualitative transformation of the quantitative whole. Indeed it is a quantitative whole, but it is also a qualitative whole, and the latter formality ultimately determines the ecclesiality of the former.¹⁴

Another way to go about explaining the meaning of “ecclesiality” is to ask the question: “What makes the Church Church?,” in which case one looks to define the Church by identifying her essence. Here it is necessary to signify both the corporeal makeup of the People of God as well as the specifying principle by which she is set off from every other society; thus it includes all the elements mentioned above, but again some, since it looks also to the material cause of the whole Church as a human society, a distinctive people. Beginning with the material (more generic) cause and moving to the formal (more specific) cause, the Church may be defined as “the visibly gathered people who are hierarchically ordered, incorporated in Christ and united in the one Spirit in faith, hope and charity and the actions that flow from these.” From this perspective, the interrelationship of the “elements” identified above better comes into view. Hierarchy, for example, has become an adverb, signifying its formative function vis-à-vis other elements; charity presents itself not only as a formal principle but also as a moving principle of the life and unity of the Church; and Christ and the Holy Spirit are immanent dynamic forces responsible for the very nature of the people *as gathered*. The value of this approach is that the two parts of the definition¹⁵ illustrate the *qualitative* nature of the unity of the elements.¹⁶ The unity of God’s People, the holiness of the members of Christ, the universality of the Church’s makeup and mission, as well as her mediation of divine authority (her oneness, holiness, catholicity and

apostolicity) are inseparable realities and indivisible aspects of her one being in which they share. If she is holy, she is so only by reason of the power of God at work in her through sanctifying grace received by faith and sacraments mediated by those Christ sends. If she is one, she is so only by the common bond of charity and the unifying Spirit of Christ which makes her holy. If she is universal, it is only because of the (correlative) grandeur of her unity, manifested in the degree to which she harmonizes diversities. If she is apostolic, it is only by being in conformity with the sanctifying and unifying beliefs and practices of her Apostles.¹⁷ One cannot isolate a single note of the Church from her other essential qualities; in a certain sense, either they all stand together, or they all fall together.

Consequently, ecclesiality is a dynamic mystery rooted in the self-communicative fullness of Christ, involving a living synergy between the many features that characterize the Church's life as such. It is a supernatural state of being, at once brought about by, sustained by, consisting in, and further engendering the "elements of sanctification and of truth" that distinguish the Christian People. Ecclesiality so understood enables us to better grasp the commonality as well as the magnitude and qualitative nature of the disparity among differing Christian communities.

Degrees of ecclesiality set differing communions and their "elements" apart from one another

In various places, the Council underscores the full and preeminent manner in which the Catholic Church alone realizes the features essential to the constitution of the Church. In *Unitatis redintegratio*, for example, the Catholic Church is described as possessing the *totality* of the means of salvation¹⁸ as well as the fullness of the ecclesial unity intended by Christ.¹⁹ This plenitude accounts for the perfect manner in which the Catholic Church is Church, and it is contrasted with the merely *partial* manner in which the Church's essential properties can be found among non-Catholics.²⁰ The contrast is critical for a proper understanding of the kind of ecclesiality attributed to non-Catholic Christianities. Reference to the fullness of the Church's being or ecclesiality, and to its counterpart, incomplete or partial realizations of the same, is an acknowledgment of *degrees* of ecclesiality. Different degrees of ecclesiality thus differentiate different ecclesial communities.

Among these degrees, there is, first of all, the “all-embracing” mode of ecclesiality proper to the Catholic Church. This is a superlative mode, with respect to which every other mode is inferior and only partial. Not only is this complete and perfect mode first to be considered (because all other modes are understood only with reference to it²¹), but it is first ontologically, inasmuch as every other form of ecclesiality depends upon it.²²

The last assertion follows from the theological principle that Christ established his one Church as the universal instrument of salvation,²³ as well as from the metaphysical principle that “whatever is first in any order is the cause of everything else within that order.”²⁴ It also follows from the fact that “whenever in some respect there are degrees of more and less, ‘more’ and ‘less’ are predicated with reference to something one that is maximal in that respect and upon which everything else in that respect depends.”²⁵ I shall have more to say about the implications of these principles elsewhere.²⁶ In the present context, however, one should note that the first division among the modes of ecclesiality is that between the foundational source of all ecclesiality and its participated (dependent) modes, between what is maximal and perfect and one, and a multiplicity the members of which, regardless of their distinctiveness, are, in their contradistinction from that singular realization, united in imperfection.²⁷ This imperfection both characterizes and is the result of the manner in which sanctification and truth are found within non-Catholic communities; indeed, it is the very reason for which only “*elements*” of sanctification and of truth may be attributed to them.²⁸ We observe, therefore, a simultaneously positive and negative connotation inherent in the language of “elements,” the meaning of which when applied to non-Catholic Christianities is set forth in terms both of what they have retained and of what they lack of the Church’s fullness.

The affirmation of “elements of sanctification and truth” beyond the visible confines of the Catholic Church

Directly following its central statement on the unity and concrete identity existing between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church, the Council affirms that “many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its [the Catholic Church’s] visible structure.”²⁹ The teaching is repeated in *Unitatis redintegratio*:

“Some and even very many of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church.”³⁰ Concretely speaking, just what elements of truth and sanctification can be found in non-Catholic ecclesial communities? Many of the features that coalesce to constitute, in a concrete way, the Church’s inner reality and physiognomy can be found within separated Christian communions. Noteworthy examples include Revelation (God’s word), faith, hope, charity, baptism and marriage (and, for some communions, other sacraments), as well as the exercise of some combination of the prophetic, priestly and royal offices associated with the sacraments. *Unitatis redintegratio* highlights: “the written Word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope, and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as visible elements.”³¹ The breadth of this endowment embraces not only properties like unity, holiness, communion in faith, etc., but also concrete things, such as sacred Scripture, liturgical rites, and art.³² The ecclesial status of these “elements” and of the non-Catholic communities to which they belong, as well as the relationship that these bear toward the Catholic Church, can be understood only against the backdrop of the Council’s description of the unique relationship existing between Christ’s Church (and its properties) and the Catholic Church.

The meaning of the “elements” language following from the Council’s “subsistit” language

Affirming the presence of elements of sanctification in non-Catholic communions could be understood to mean different things. It could be taken to imply: (a) that Christ’s Church is realized to a limited degree and in a defective way within these communities, inasmuch as they partially instantiate its essence; or (b) that various properties of Christ’s Church exist there in an imperfect and partial manner; or (c) both. The idea of partial instantiations of the one Church of Christ, however, is problematic. The essence of that Church cannot as such exist dividedly; any fragmentary realization of its essential components could only constitute something specifically other than Christ’s Church (although something generically formal to that Church could be instantiated in such a case).³³ Furthermore, if various parts of the essence of Christ’s Church are attributed to non-Catholic

communities, they cannot exist even according to their own proper perfection while existing in isolation from the rest of that essence. The integrity of each of the essential features of Christ's Church, as for each of her properties or notes, depends upon its unity with the rest of them; separated from any one of them, the remaining features cease to be fully themselves, existing in a withered condition, incompletely determined and deprived of (integral) form. Not only is option (a), therefore, impossible, but it is furthermore mistaken to think of elements as "parts" properly speaking of the essence of Christ's Church, since, as that essence is perfect, the parts of that essence are perfect and integrally united with the rest of its constitutive parts. This notwithstanding, when it comes to *properties* of Christ's Church, they are capable of existing in various degrees. As long as that which is formally distinctive of a property (its specific essence) is realized, it can be present in different subjects to a greater or lesser extent. Thus, irrespective of their defective mode of existence in non-Catholic Christian communities, it is correct to understand "elements of truth and sanctification" as referring to properties of the Church of Christ.

Now, based on the concrete identity between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church, the presence of such "elements" within communities other than the Catholic Church implies the presence within them of what is proper to her. The identity between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church presents us with a certain logical inevitability. If the former is in concrete being unqualifiedly one with the latter, then wherever the one is, there too is the other. Consequently, wherever the Church of Christ (or some part of Christ's Church) exists, irrespective of the mode of that existence, there too does the Catholic Church (or some part of her), in exactly the same manner. Whatever existence Christ's Church enjoys beyond the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church, therefore, is nothing other than an existence of the Catholic Church. Every reference to ecclesial "elements of sanctification and truth," or to "vestiges" of Christ's Church, in communions other than the Catholic Church is a reference to something proper to the Catholic Church and signifies some sort of existence of the latter within the former.³⁴ In other words, the Catholic Church is herself present and operative somehow within those communions.³⁵ But what exactly is the ecclesial status of these elements?

The ecclesial status of “elements” and the language of “defect”

Elements of truth and sanctification found outside the visible structures of the Catholic Church are elements torn from full communion with the organic whole. The immediate consequence of this is the incomplete and defective manner in which those elements exist.³⁶ All of the properties of Christ’s Church found in non-Catholic communions are intrinsically defective on account of their separation from the bodily unity of that Church and because of their isolation from the full complement of the properties essential to that Church.

An initial possible misunderstanding must be dispelled here. If it is true that the ecclesial properties found outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church belong by right to her³⁷ and are in a certain sense parts of the Catholic Church, it does not follow from the fact that among non-Catholics they are intrinsically defective that something defective is predicated of the Catholic Church. For the defects as such are pure privations, and the defectiveness of elements outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church resides in their relative separation from her fullness. Everything of positive reality in these elements represents goods belonging to the Catholic Church, and it is this positive content alone that is attributed to her, not the privative aspect of their mode of realization beyond her visible boundaries.

What sorts of (relevant) defects characterize non-Catholic Christianities? Among vital ecclesial properties and endowments, one could enumerate the defect/lack of the ministerial priesthood, sacraments, the Eucharist, Petrine office, hierarchical governance in general, an integral profession of faith, unity, and others. Each of these defects entails a diminution of the overall ecclesiality of the community in question, and together they (to use a mathematical analogy) “multiplicatively” undermine that status, such that every such privation affects the totality of the community’s positive salvific content.³⁸

To illustrate the manner in which such defects affect the whole and each of its parts, we can consider the example of defective faith. Given the present day ecumenically inspired emphasis on the communion of faith existing between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christianities, it is as pastorally as theologically important to underscore the degree to which a defect of faith affects a community’s relationship to Christ and his Church.³⁹ Any defect of faith seriously jeopardizes this relationship, distancing a community from the authentic life of the

Church and proportionately crippling its ability to participate in the Church's public mission of salvation. Partial faith, in other words, is effectively "implosive." When a community chooses to believe only part of what has been revealed by God, only a portion of what has been set forth for belief in a definitive way by the apostolic Church, then it has sacrificed the very principle by virtue of which faith is faith.⁴⁰ Faith of its very essence has divine authority as its formal object.⁴¹ Withdraw this formality, and there is, properly speaking, no faith at all.⁴² The implications of this are far reaching. Were a community adherent to nearly all of revealed truth, while voluntarily rejecting even a single tenant of the faith, the criterion of assent regarding all that is purportedly believed by faith will have been transformed into the subjective factor(s) responsible for deeming certain truths acceptable and others not. Regardless of the manifold material objects of belief, the supernatural foundation for assent to any of them, and thus the reality of Christian faith, would be undercut. This internal rupture of faith grievously injures participation in the prophetic mission entrusted to God's people, not only by reason of a compromised message of salvation, but also by promoting the false principle of deciding matters of revelation according to choice. Thus the internal defect proliferates at the external level in defective witness, testimony and teaching, hindering the community from radiating the truth of Christian life every bit as much as it is intrinsically destructive of the same.⁴³

Further consequences of this defectiveness

A general philosophical principle related to causal efficacy evocatively summarizes the redemptive implications of the preceding considerations: "*ex defectu causae sequitur defectus in effectu*" ("from a defect in the cause there follows defect in the effect").⁴⁴ The principle can be applied to the salvific condition and efficacy of a faith community with reference (*mutatis mutandis*) to any of the four Aristotelian causes by which to explain in a systematic way that community's intrinsic constitution, activity and orientation. A related axiom, commonly invoked in the analysis of moral action but equally relevant to ontology, can similarly be applied to ecclesial communions: "*bonum ex integra causa malum ex quocumque defectu*" (in the moral sense: "an action is good when good in every respect, but wrong when wrong in any respect"; ontologically expressed as: "a thing/effect is good when it

proceeds from an integral cause, but bad if it results from any sort of defect”).⁴⁵ In the absence of an integral cause—for example, when the formal cause is imperfect (not that intended by the agent), or if the efficient cause is defective, or there exists a defect in the matter—the immediate effect as such will be correspondingly bad.⁴⁶ The manner in which non-Catholic ecclesial communities are defective pertains to each of the aforementioned causal categories, though deficits involving efficient or material causality are traceable to a formal defect. For example, on account of the incomplete priestly apparatus (*defectus causae formalis*), Protestant communities have lost the power to effect the Eucharist (*defectus causae efficientis*).

At the heart of the formal constitution of the Church is her faith. When an authentic Christian truth, such, for example, as the teaching about the gratuity of grace and justification, is separated from the organic whole of the original deposit of faith, then that very truth becomes distorted and the faith of the community is no longer integral. To the extent that the faith lacks its integrity, the faith community is, to an equal extent, *mala ex defectu causae formalis*. Such a defect with regard to her constitutive causes will necessarily affect her priestly, prophetic and kingly functions (efficient causality). This manifests itself plainly in the proliferation of erroneous teachings by means of which ecclesial communities born of heresy attempt to justify their putative primitive intuitions. As a consequence of its impact upon the salvific activity of the community, such a *defectus causae formalis* will also jeopardize the community’s ability to procure the final cause. If, for example, a doctrinal error (defect in the order of formal causality) leads to divesting the community of sacramental rites (defect in the order of efficient causality), then that doctrinal error is responsible for depriving the community of grace (defect in the order of intrinsic final causality, which is also in this case a defect in the order of formal causality). Furthermore, inasmuch as the final cause is already partially realized in the realization of the formal causes of the Church (who is a mystery of the unity between God and man and of men amongst themselves in Jesus Christ), any degradation of her formal causal integrity represents a corresponding obliteration of her purpose and meaning in this life (a self-destructive and, when voluntary, self-contradictory, state of affairs).

Equally at the heart of the Church’s formal constitution are sacramental grace and the sacramental characters by virtue of which the Church is a priestly people. Now, the Church’s unity has to do as much with her action as with her being. If

she is deprived of the sacramental characters conforming her members to Christ (a question of her being), she will be deprived of exercising the priesthood of Christ through Christian worship (a question of her activity).⁴⁷ At both levels, something essential to ecclesial unity is lost. These losses, moreover, will redound upon the Church's causal efficacy in other respects, similar to the case of defective faith. In the end, any defect regarding the *regula fidei* or the *institutio Christiana* represents a *defectus* rendering the whole bad.⁴⁸ Because a non-Catholic ecclesial community lacks the integrity concordant with ecclesiality, that community, in what is distinctive of it, is (ecclesially) bad, even if there are many good things within it (those good things are not what is distinctive of it). Interestingly enough, to the integrity of a faith community's constitutive causes at the formal level corresponds the realization within it of the four notes of the Church. Only the Church which is thoroughly one, holy, catholic and apostolic is "*bona ex integra causa.*" Each of the *defectus* considered above represents a dissolution of the notes of the Church, perhaps only one directly and another indirectly, but simultaneously all of them in their unity and coinherence.⁴⁹

The modes of being proper to ecclesial elements found within the Catholic Church and beyond her visible confines

Just as the Council employs a specific language to express the unique manner in which Christ's Church exists in the Catholic Church, so it uses a specific language to distinguish the manner in which ecclesial properties exist within the Catholic Church from the manner in which they exist outside of her visible structure. In *Unitatis redintegratio*, the term "*subsistit*" is used with reference to the property of unity as found within the Catholic Church in order to underscore the perfection according to which it there exists (by way of contrast with its mode of existence elsewhere):

When the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion have been gradually overcome, all Christians will at last, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, be gathered into the one and only Church in that unity which Christ bestowed on his Church from the beginning. We believe that this unity subsists in the Catholic Church (*in Ecclesia catholica*

subsistere) as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time.⁵⁰

The council's use of the term "*subsistere*" with reference to the unity proper to the Catholic Church is not intended to suggest that the property of unity enjoys a subsistent act of being in itself, as though it were a proper subject of subsistence technically taken. Rather, in the same way that properties, accidents, or partial principles in general are sometimes said to subsist in the subjects of which they are the properties, accidents or principles (where the term "*subsistit*" is simply equivalent to "exists"), unity is said to subsist in the Catholic Church.⁵¹ Nevertheless, on account of the notions closely associated with the concept of subsistence technically taken—in particular, the notions of completeness and integral perfection⁵²—, the term "*subsistere*" was fittingly chosen to signify the existence ascribed to unity as found within the Catholic Church, where the property of unity is (essentially) perfect and complete, integrally complemented by every other essential feature of the Church. From this perspective, to say that the unity Christ intended for his Church subsists in the Catholic Church is to affirm its existence in that Church in a way that connotes the special, perfect manner in which it there exists.⁵³ To the extent that "*subsistere*" in this context is intended to connote the perfect modality according to which ecclesial unity is realized, the term acquires a certain technical value; but it must be noted that this technical usage is not equivalent to that operative when ascribing subsistence to Christ's Church as such. The latter usage denotes those features inherent in the philosophical concept of subsistence as applied to complete and concrete substantial wholes. Applied to the property of unity, which cannot enjoy the status of an independent subject of being, the word "subsists" simply denotes existence, as it does in other instances where it is employed non-technically, even if it connotes something regarding the special character of this existence. The connotative function of the term, however, is dependent upon its intended use. Whether the Council Fathers employed "*subsistere*" here with the intention of connoting features associated with its technical use and characteristic of proper subjects of subsistence is a hermeneutical question able to be answered only with reference to the origin and context of the text.⁵⁴ Let us examine these briefly.

As affirmed in the *Relatio* of September 1964 concerning the general

reasoning behind the decree on ecumenism and its April 1963 schema,⁵⁵ the import of the language employed in its first chapter must be interpreted in light of the ecclesiology set forth in the dogmatic constitution on the Church, where particular emphasis is placed upon the special manner in which Christ's Church and the properties of that Church exist within the Catholic Church and in her alone. The same *Relatio* states that it was a fundamental priority among the Council Fathers to unambiguously affirm within the Catholic Church a unity (along with the whole ecclesial mystery willed by Christ) the perfection of which, not as something yet to be attained, exists concretely and integrally here and now. It also underscores the fact that, under the Petrine principle, the Catholic faithful are shepherded in perfect unity.⁵⁶ Thus the notions of visible, concrete realization and integral perfection are deliberately associated with the kind of unity here invoked. But there is more to be said.

Unity is attributed to the Catholic Church in an integral way unable to be affirmed of any other Christian communion.⁵⁷ Regarding non-Catholic communions, the Council affirms:

Our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as Communities and Churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those who through him were born again into one body, and with him quickened to newness of life—that unity which the Holy Scriptures and the ancient Tradition of the Church proclaim.⁵⁸

This already explains the use of the term “*subsistit*” in the present context, where the nature of the unity predicated of the Catholic Church is explicitly contrasted with that predicable of other communions in which the property of unity is fundamentally imperfect and incomplete. Noteworthily, moreover, permanence is set forth as qualifying the very manner in which unity exists within the Catholic Church: permanence characterizes its very mode of being. On this count (over and above the perfect and integral manner in which unity resides in the Catholic Church discussed above), the stable and permanent mode of being associated with the notion of subsistence technically taken further recommends the use of the term “subsists” with reference to unity in the Catholic Church.⁵⁹ Finally, insofar as the

whole mystery of Christ's Church is a mystery of unity, it is all the more theologically fitting to associate the concept of subsistence technically considered with the mode of ecclesial unity realized within the Catholic Church, where alone the Church of Christ subsists.⁶⁰

When it comes to the unity, or any other ecclesial property attributed to non-Catholic communions, however, the mode of its existence is anything but subsistent properly taken. If the term "subsists" is there employed—as occurs with reference to certain ecclesial elements found within the Anglican communion⁶¹—it is used in the broad sense meaning simply "to exist." This is why the ecclesial elements ("Catholic traditions and institutions") ascribed to the Anglican Communion are said to "*continue* to subsist" (*subsistere pergunt*), where the term *pergunt* is added to supply for the concept of duration, which is absent from the notion of subsisting there attached to the term "subsist" (an addition which would be superfluous and unreasonable were "*subsistere*" intended in a technical or partially technical sense). The mode of being that such properties enjoy within non-Catholic communions is simultaneously accidental (in the sense of inhering) and incomplete (realized only *ex parte*⁶²). In fact, because of the incomplete degree to which it is realized, the ecclesial quality of the property is itself imperfect, since ecclesiality in the full sense of the term implies not only that something pertains to the Church, inasmuch as it derives from her or belongs to her or is ordered to her, but also that it bears the marks of (is informed and determined by) the intrinsic unifying principle (substantial form) of the Church as such, meaning that it bears every relation of synergy, of mutual coinherence and determination, that such a property can have with every other property of the Church and that is similarly exhibited by each of the properties of the Church.

Of course, this mitigation of ecclesiality similarly characterizes the Catholic Church to the degree to which her own ecclesial qualities remain (in this life and in Purgatory) imperfect. In this respect, the Church Militant and the Church Suffering, while fully ecclesial for what concerns the substantial form—since, unlike non-Catholic communities, they are bodily co-extensive with that form, and since that form is intrinsically without defect—have yet to realize their full ecclesiality with respect to the fullness of the properties following upon that form. This observation requires us to make a set of distinctions. It is a question here of distinguishing different respects in which the perfections of the Church may be

considered. We may consider an ecclesial perfection, for example, either according to its relationship to the Church's substantial form and to the body with which the latter is coextensive, or according to the degree to which that perfection is actualized. From another point of view, we can distinguish a perfection of the Church as it subsists in its Head from that perfection as it subsists in its members. In either way, it is possible simultaneously to affirm the integral perfection of some quality of the Church in one respect and to recognize its incomplete status in another.⁶³

This explains the rest of the text: "and we hope that it [this unity] will continue to increase until the end of time." In one respect (when viewed with reference to the order of extension), this increase in unity is purely accidental, but in another sense (when viewed intensively) it is essential and inseparable from the Church's intrinsic finality; but this does not (in either sense) affect the Church in her constitutive principles. Non-Catholic communities, however, because they are not part of the one body, cannot as such have the Church's one substantial form (which is co-extensive with the body). As bodies or visible societies in their own right, each of these communions represents a body *other* than the Catholic Church, having its own distinctive and unifying principle. This is why they cannot as such be considered "parts" of Christ's body, and it is why any property of that body that they possess is significantly (though not entirely) deprived of ecclesiality and qualitatively less perfect than the same property as found within the Catholic Church even when (in this life and in Purgatory) it has yet to reach its consummate perfection.

The "partial" "in-existence" of ecclesial elements in non-Catholic communions

Another conciliar text affirming the existence of ecclesial elements within non-Catholic communions merits close attention both for its content as well as its linguistic construction:

Among those in which (*in quibus*) Catholic traditions and institutions in part (*ex parte*) continue to exist (*subsistere pergunt*), the Anglican Communion occupies a special place.⁶⁴

As indicated above, the sense of “subsisting in” (*in quibus ... subsistere pergunt*) in this case simply means “continue to exist in” or “are present in”; the concept of subsistence here operative is non-technical.⁶⁵ But what exactly does the qualification “*ex parte*” mean? While the Council wishes to acknowledge the existence of Catholic traditions and institutions (elements of Christ’s Church) within the Anglican Communion, that existence is a qualified existence. To say that these things continue to exist “in part” is to say that they have an incomplete existence; in other words, not even the Catholic traditions and institutions in question fully exist within these communities.

This partial existence of ecclesial elements within the Anglican Communion or any other non-Catholic communion, it must be kept in mind, cannot be confused with a partial existence of the nature of Christ’s Church simply taken. As noted in [chapter two](#), natures as such are not divisible in such a way that they can exist only partially within some subject. A human nature is incapable of existing partially where there exists only animality, or only intelligence. Like numbers, natures come as indivisible wholes.⁶⁶ This is, of course, as true for accidental forms as it is for substantial forms; wherefore, to speak of properties of Christ’s Church as existing *ex parte* in non-Catholic communions is somewhat equivocal. What is really meant is that those properties, which exist as such in these communions, exist there according to greater and lesser degrees, but never in their fullness, with the implication that they are *participations* in those properties, which belong in their fullness only to the Catholic Church.⁶⁷ Because, however, the notion of degrees of participation does not apply to substantial forms, which do not admit of variation in intensity and are not susceptible to more or less,⁶⁸ the possibility of realizing Christ’s Church simply signified according to diverse degrees is ruled out, and one should not unqualifiedly speak of a partial existence of Christ’s Church. Properties of Christ’s Church, however, can and do admit of degrees of realization, and their mode of being among non-Catholic communions is incomplete and, in their degree of separation from Catholicism, intrinsically defective. Let us continue with our linguistic analysis.

The preposition “in”⁶⁹ further indicates that the manner of subsistence (existence) proper to these elements is analogous to that of non-substantial principles of being (such as accidents) which derive their existence from something ontologically more robust.⁷⁰ We are dealing here with *properties* as well as

accidental adornments of Christ's Church which, as such, are never complete subjects of being in their own right; they exist rather "in" a subject of being. From a certain point of view, this last observation might appear to be irrelevant, since the fact that such traditions and institutions subsist "in" the Anglican Communion serves in no way to distinguish the kind of existence they enjoy from that which they enjoy in the Catholic Church, where they also subsist "in" what is ontologically more ultimate. As properties, traditions and institutions necessarily depend for their existence upon the more foundational subject which is the Church, "in" which alone they have being.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the observation does indeed bear upon the manner in which the being of these traditions and institutions within the Anglican Communion differs from the being they have within the Catholic Church.

The difference has to do with the *source* of the derivative being of the properties. While in both cases, they receive their existence from something distinct from themselves (and which constitutes a proper subject of being), in *both* cases these properties receive their existence *primo et per se* from the one Catholic Church.⁷² If they subsist in some partial way within the Anglican Communion, it is precisely due to whatever degree of integrity they have retained from their Catholic origin and otherwise Catholic instantiation, and it is precisely because they continue to derive their being (if in an incomplete and defective way) from the same Catholic Church which, to the extent to which it is operative within the Anglican Communion, causes them according to their formal structure. Naturally, the Anglican Communion is also a cause of their existence in some way, for they are said to subsist *in* that Communion, the latter of which is, therefore, a subject by which they exist. But the causal function of the Anglican Communion is limited to just that, namely, being a subject within which the properties have being: it is a *material* cause of their existence.⁷³ Thus we witness a kind of ontological schizophrenia within separated Christian communions, inasmuch as the elements of sanctification and truth discernible within them materially derive their being from two separate subjects. It is this rupture in the unity of the principles from which their being derives that accounts for the defective degree to which they exist.

Further clarification on the categorical status of these elements

Are the “elements” encountered outside of the visible confines of the Catholic Church *parts* of the Catholic Church? Are they accidental *attributes* of that Church? Are they *actions* of the Catholic Church? Depending upon the elements considered, the answer to each of these questions can be affirmative. Elements are, as it were, stolen goods, parts, or aspects of the Catholic Church that have been withdrawn from her visible boundaries. They are still part of or belong to the one mystical body of Christ. Some of them remain, furthermore, visibly/sensibly identifiable within non-Catholic communions and produce their salutary effects upon members of these communions in a visible/sensible manner. Thus there exists a true physical, sensible contact between the Catholic Church and these separated Christian communions. This bodily/visible mode of contact does not mean that these communions are parts of the one body of Christ. Rather, it means that some parts or sensible expressions of Christ’s body exist inside of these communions; sensible features of Christ’s body are also part of these (non-mystical) bodies.⁷⁴ Of course, the presence of these Catholic goods within non-Catholic communities and the faith-informed relationships on the part of their members toward them bring about for these individuals a degree of incorporation in the Catholic Church; but this (non-visible) incorporation nowise implies an incorporation on the part of the communities themselves.

When the elements in question are not concrete things unto themselves (by way of contrast with integral parts, which are, relatively speaking, complete things of a sort integrated into a greater whole) but qualifications of the whole or of some part of the whole, then they are *attributes* of the Church. Unity and holiness are examples of such attributes. Christian holiness found within non-Catholic communions is a quality belonging to the Catholic Church, not, of course, with respect to that privative aspect according to which holiness encountered outside the visible structure of the Catholic Church is defective, but with respect to everything positively constitutive of that holiness as such.

Finally, some elements are *actions* of the Church (the Catholic Church), namely, when it is a matter of salutary acts, such, for example, as sacraments or the proclamation of the word. These are actions of the Catholic Church, first of all, because they are actions of the Head of the mystical body, Jesus Christ—who is organically united to the rest of the body, and who is the Church in its essential constitution as subsisting in its Head.⁷⁵ Furthermore, they are always

simultaneously actions of the entire mystical body, that is, of the visible Catholic Church, whether on account of the presence and instrumental action within non-Catholic Christianities of some of her visible endowments, or because her visible structures and actions mediate (in the orders of merit and satisfaction) spiritual realities on their behalf.⁷⁶

Implications of “elements” for the unity and distinction to be acknowledged between non-Catholic communions and the Church of Christ

As we have seen, the presence of ecclesial elements in non-Catholic communities raises a number of questions about their concrete relationship to the one Church of Christ, including the degree to which these communities may or may not be identified with it, or whether they can be said properly to belong to it. A response to these questions has already been sketched;⁷⁷ but to further clarify that relationship, we should first answer whether, on the basis of such elements, non-Catholic Christian communities can be called Christ’s Church. Now, an affirmative reply to this question would have to be based on the assumption that Christ’s Church can be many things *simpliciter*, many things numerically and subjectively distinct from one another. As I have shown above and elsewhere,⁷⁸ this is impossible. The universality (catholicity) proper to Christ’s Church does not render her many things *simpliciter*, but only *secundum quid*, inasmuch as she is qualified in manifold ways, some permanently enduring (e.g., being hierarchical), some constantly evolving according to the circumstances of her history (e.g., being in some particular place).⁷⁹ Such a diversity, however, is fundamentally different from that existing between non-Catholic communions and between them and the Catholic Church, with the effect that it cannot be said that a non-Catholic communion is the Church of Christ or, conversely, that the Church of Christ is a non-Catholic communion, not even if one is willing to admit that the Catholic Church is also, and in a more perfect manner, the Church of Christ.

The last claim, namely, that Christ’s Church cannot be said to be any non-Catholic communion, may be further clarified. As noted in [chapter one](#), the characteristic features of different Christian confessions considered in their distinctiveness cannot, without contradiction, be predicated of the same Church

of Christ. This is due, first of all, to incompatible faith claims, but it additionally follows from contrariety of actions in the practical order ultimately rooted in those faith claims. If Christ's Church is a community of faith whose life is shaped in accordance with that faith, it cannot be said, for example, that Christ's Church is both "Lutheran" and "Catholic" at the same time. Nor could one maintain the thesis that these names jointly apply to Christ's Church, not as formal qualifications thereof, but by indicating the material parts of which the whole is constituted, in such a way that Christ's Church may be called "Lutheran" and "Catholic" in its different parts.⁸⁰ For, although the Lutheran communion is intimately connected to the one Church of Christ, and the latter is actively present within it, this presence follows from what the Lutheran communion has *retained* of Christ's Church, which is not what is distinctive of the Lutheran communion as such. That which is distinctive of non-Catholic Christian communities as such, that by which they are non-Catholic, rather separates them from the Church of Christ; and all that they enjoy of Christ's Church is nothing less than a share in the being and life of the Catholic Church. In this way alone is it correct to speak of the presence of Christ's Church within them. Accordingly, we should not say, for example, that "Christ's Church is Lutheran," or that "Christ's Church is Orthodox," not even if we intend to indicate by that only that Christ's Church extends to these communities conceived as material parts or places in which it exists, since Christ's Church is there by virtue of something quite other than that which is Lutheran or Orthodox as such.⁸¹ Christ's Church is there by virtue of that which is Catholic within these communities. For this reason, it is more accurate to say that "Christ's Church, wherever it is found, is Catholic."

In sum, the Church of Christ does not subsist in non-Catholic Christian communities, nor do they subsist as Church. Non-Catholic communions subsist, but they do not subsist as the Church, even if they have some of her essential features. They subsist as variously defective ecclesial communions, that is, concrete communities of a partially mutilated Christianity which are subjectively other than the Church. On this basis, the Church of Christ can never be predicated of non-Catholic communities, nor may any of these communities be predicated of the Church of Christ.

Granting that non-Catholic communities cannot be identified with Christ's Church, might they be related to it as *parts*? Would not the elements of

sanctification and of truth within them suffice to make them parts of Christ's Church? The answer to this question is no. Non-Catholic communities as such cannot be parts of the Church. They can neither be nor be part of that Church any more than they can be or be part of the Catholic Church. Assuming they were once part of the universal Church, i.e., local instantiations of the Catholic Church, once they have abandoned or divested themselves of something essential to the constitution of that Church—such, for example, as Petrine Primacy, or the *regula fidei* (which includes anything set forth definitively as such at any time by the Church)—they sever themselves visibly from the body and cease to be parts of the Church, the essence of which is no longer instantiated in them, even if “elements” of that Church endure within them, and even if some among them retain enough from the life of that Church to warrant the title “churches,” inasmuch as they remain able to exercise (defectively) the priesthood of Christ.⁸² If, instead, these communities arise from principles other than a preexisting local expression of the Catholic Church, they are from the start visibly separated from the one body of Christ, forming another body unto themselves, and therefore not subjects of the Church's one substantial form.⁸³ If, by way of contrast, the *members* of such communities can be (imperfectly and incompletely) parts or members of Christ's Church,⁸⁴ such a status is related to the community as such only *per accidens*.

In effect, any aspect of these communities that implies communion with Christ and his members is an aspect according to which they are in communion with the Catholic Church and something whereby their members are incorporated in the one mystical body, not a body distinct from the Catholic Church (though it remains a non-visible mode of incorporation). In other words, every aspect of their bodily unity (bodiliness being taken here in the social sense ascribed to a society) that is based on something more than merely human moral, sociological and juridical categories (and that does not come from the forces of evil) is owed to causal factors extrinsic to their communion considered in its distinction from the Catholic Church and constitutes a unity quite other than the bodiliness characteristic of their communion in its separation (the latter of which bodiliness is non-mystical).⁸⁵ It is a unity brought about by the Catholic Church acting upon them and by which the members of these communities are “Catholic.”⁸⁶

Conclusion

I have shown how the Second Vatican Council's understanding of the special identity existing between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church leaves no room for a division or partitioning of that Church, and that the supernatural fullness bequeathed by Christ to his Bride finds, according to the same Council, its originary and complete and perfect expression within the Catholic Church alone. At the same time, that very Church and her manifold divine gifts were seen to extend beyond her visible boundaries so as to touch and embrace the lives of those belonging to communities separated from the fullness of life proper to her. Thanks to the diffusiveness of her gifts, and the supernatural foundations of their origin, non-Catholic communities can be authentic instruments of salvation, notwithstanding their bodily separation from Christ. By reason of the elements of sanctification and of truth that they have retained from their originary Christian identity, these communities are truly "ecclesial" and able to operate as means to organic unity with Christ and his members. Nevertheless, such communion is but partial and defective, and this a direct result of the partial and defective manner in which salvific elements exist within such communities. Although always also mutually upbuilding, outside of their plenary realization within the Catholic Church, elements of sanctification suffer an intrinsic defectiveness compounded by a mutually degradative influence, with a corresponding impact upon their salutary effects. In themselves, however, the elements are nothing less than the extended life of the one Church of Christ, the one visible Body of Christ which is the Catholic Church and which is active thereby in the midst of non-Catholic communities. Everything salutary within the latter flows from and is ordered to communion with the Catholic Church. If elements of sanctification and of truth render non-Catholic communions "ecclesial," it is precisely because they unite the members of those communities to the Catholic Church, and to the extent that such communities are thereby, contrary to their separated identity as such, "Catholic."⁸⁷

This understanding of the ecclesial status of non-Catholic communions neither defies nor presumes disaster for the ecumenical movement. To the contrary, it underscores and takes most seriously both the theological realities that unite Catholics and non-Catholic Christians, as well as those that divide them, while assuming, as aptly put by Yves Congar, "that there is room for a theological

determination of the status of the dissident Christianities *as* Christianities, of the relations of the dissident Churches, *as* Churches, to *the* true Church and to its unity—[and that] then indeed there can be ... and that there ought to be and is, a Catholic oecumenism.”⁸⁸

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- ¹ These interpretations are based on the faulty assumption that the “*subsistit*” language of the Council entails a weakening of the identification between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church, making it possible to affirm the ecclesial status of non-Catholic Christian communions. Representative of this position are (among many others): Leonardo Boff, *Manifest für die Ökumene: im Streit mit Kardinal Ratzinger* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 2001), 96; Lorelei F. Fuchs, *Koinonia and the Quest for an Ecumenical Ecclesiology: From Foundations through Dialogue to Symbolic Competence for Communionality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 123–125; M. Garijo-Guembe, *Communion of the Saints: Foundation, Nature, and Structure of the Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 108; Richard McBrien, “Dominus Iesus: An Ecclesiological Critique,” *Centro Pro Unione Semi-Annual Bulletin* 59 (Spring 2001): 19–20; Gerald O’Collins, *The Second Vatican Council: Message and Meaning* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 44; Francis A. Sullivan, “The Significance of the Vatican II Declaration that the Church of Christ ‘subsists in’ the Roman Catholic Church,” in René Latourelle, *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives: Twenty-Five Years After (1962–1987)* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988), 2:274; “Quaestio Disputata: The Meaning of Subsistit in as Explained by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,” *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 124; “Quaestio Disputata: A Response to Karl Becker, S. J., on the Meaning of Subsistit in,” *Theological Studies* 67 (2006): 395; “Quaestio Disputata: Further Thoughts on the Meaning of Subsistit in,” *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 137; Jared Wicks, “Questions and Answers on the New Responses of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,” *Ecumenical Trends* 36, no. 7 (July 2007): 7.
- ² See in this regard: Christopher J. Malloy, “*Subsistit In*: Nonexclusive Identity or Full Identity?,” *The Thomist* 72 (2008): 1–44; Stephen A. Hipp, “‘*Est*,’ ‘*Adest*,’ and ‘*Subsistit in*’ at Vatican II,” *Angelicum* 91 (2014): 727–794 (hereafter “‘*Est*,’ ‘*Adest*,’ and ‘*Subsistit in*’ at Vatican II”); Christian D. Washburn, “The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, and *Subsistit in*,” *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 22 (2015): 145–175; see also Karl Josef Becker, S. J., “An Examination of *Subsistit in*: A Profound Theological Perspective,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (14 December 2005): 11–14; “The Church and Vatican II’s ‘*Subsistit in*’ Terminology,” *Origins* 35 (2006): 515C–518B; Steven C. Boguslawski and Robert L. Fastiggi, *Called to Holiness and Communion: Vatican II on the Church* (Scranton, OH: University of Scranton Press, 2009); Fernando Ocariz, “Christ’s Church Subsists in the Catholic Church: Forty Years after the Close of the Vatican Council II,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (21 December 2005): 9; Alexandra von Teuffenbach, *Die Bedeutung des ‘subsistit in,’ (LG 8): Zum Selbstverständnis der Katholischen Kirche* (Munich: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2002); Lawrence J. Welch and Guy Mansini, O.S.B., “*Lumen Gentium* No. 8 and *Subsistit in* Again,” *New Blackfriars* 90 (2009): 602–617.
- ³ *Lumen gentium*, 8: “*Haec Ecclesia, in hoc mundo ut societas constituta et ordinata, subsistit in Ecclesia*

catholica, a successore Petri et Episcopis in eius communione gubernata, licet extra eius compaginem elementa plura sanctificationis et veritatis inveniantur, quae ut dona Ecclesiae Christi propria, ad unitatem catholicam impellunt.”

- 4 The concept of “communion” among different Christian communities is susceptible to a range of interpretations. I have used the expression to indicate a relation borne between non-Catholic Christian communities and the Catholic Church, and between non-Catholic Christian individuals and the Catholic Church, based upon the presence of the Catholic Church or of aspects of her life within those communities and within the supernatural experience and dispositions/endowments of their members, and upon the purely invisible partial inclusion of these individuals within, their imperfect spiritual assimilation to, the Catholic Church resulting therefrom. The various modes of this presence are dealt with in the next chapter. In many respects, it is merely punctuated (as, for example, when based on the transitory action of the Catholic Church upon or within non-Catholic communities and individuals); in other respects, it is relatively permanent (as regards, for example, creed, or enduring sacramental character, which are called “permanent” insofar as they are enduring, although capable of being lost). Regardless of its permanence or impermanence, however, the presence of Catholic ecclesial realities among non-Catholic Christian communities or individuals constitutes a bond of union (some form of sharing) between them. Given that these realities always pertain to the supernatural order, the unity in question is not unfittingly described as a form of communion (communion understood to pertain to the spiritual order). To a limited degree and in an imperfect manner, this communion implies on the part of the non-Catholic community or individual a real sharing in the life that is proper to Christ’s Church. Communion here does not imply, however, a simple identity among ecclesial perfections attributed to non-Catholic communities and those attributed to the Catholic Church. Nor does it imply a simple identity between the experience of ecclesial life on the part of non-Catholic communities or individuals and the experience of that life within the Catholic fold. The differences that coexist within this unity separate non-Catholic communities and individuals from the Catholic Church and Catholics in essential ways, such that the ecclesial endowments with respect to which they are “one” (in communion) are one only *secundum quid*, differing qualitatively, and not reducible to mere degrees of realization. Thus, when one speaks of “degrees of communion” between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communions, it is not equivalent to speaking about degrees of communion among Catholic churches, or degrees of communion with Christ and his Church on the part of individual Catholics (who, following *Lumen gentium* 14, can be more or less fully incorporated according to the visible and invisible criteria of communion). Note, furthermore, that, with respect to non-Catholic Christian communities as such, the *ratio* of this communion, the foundation for the relation of union between them, is unilateral, inasmuch as it results (as will be shown in the next chapter) from the operative influence and presence of the Catholic Church in their regard, but not vice versa. Thus, non-Catholic Christian communities as such are never present within the Catholic Church, even if the latter is present within them. It is only with respect to non-Catholic Christian individuals who share in the Catholic Church’s supernatural life that we may recognize a certain bilateral *ratio* of communion implying a (deeply imperfect, incomplete) mutual presence of one term to/within another. Accordingly, *Lumen gentium* 14–15 speaks of being “united,” “linked,” or “joined” to the Church, and of “sharing” in her benefits, only with reference to individuals. Consequently, if we are to speak of communion between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christian communities, it must be taken in the broad sense of the term implying a (partially) shared spiritual heritage, common (though qualitatively differently realized) ecclesial endowments, and a real contact between them, based on the ecclesial plenitude of the Catholic Church. This is quite distinct from the nature of the communion existing

among local Catholic churches, all of which are interior to one another according to their institutional identity as such (i.e., as true and proper churches, in each of which is realized the whole essence of the one universal Church). In the absence of such mutuality, insofar as, by way of contrast with their members, non-Catholic Christian communities are nowise interior to (or as such even assimilated to) the mystery of Christ's Church, perhaps the language of "contact," or "unilateral presence," or "asymmetrical presence," is preferable to that of "communion" when speaking about the relationship between non-Catholic Christian communities and the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, because we are dealing with a species of unity regarding elements of truth and sanctification, the notion and language of communion broadly taken seems appropriate.

- 5 The import of this analysis is not to disparage non-Catholic faith communions, but to present their relation to the redemptive action of Christ and his Church in a fresh light capable of adding clarity to a proper Catholic understanding of ecumenism and evangelization and of promoting greater urgency in their regard.
- 6 "*Haec est unica Christi Ecclesia, quam in Symbolo unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam profiteamur, quam Salvator noster, post resurrectionem suam Petro pascendam tradidit (cf. Io 21,17), eique ac ceteris Apostolis diffundendam et regendam commisit (cf. Mt 28,18ss.), et in perpetuum ut columnam et firmamentum veritatis erexit (cf. 1Tim 3,15). Haec Ecclesia, in hoc mundo ut societas constituta et ordinata, subsistit in Ecclesia catholica, a successore Petri et Episcopis in eius communione gubernata*" (*Lumen gentium*, 8).
- 7 See especially in this regard: J. Ratzinger, "Es scheint mir absurd," 51–52; "*Deus locutus est*," 27–28; see my, "*Est, 'Adest,' and 'Subsistit in'* at Vatican II," 762–764.
- 8 For demonstrations of this, see CDF, *Notification: AAS 77* (1985): 758–759; *Responsa: AAS 99* (2007): 606; *Dominus Iesus*, 16, note 56; *Commentary on the Document "Responses," Notitiae 43* (2007): 398–415; J. Ratzinger, "*Deus locutus est*," 27–28.
- 9 See *Unitatis redintegratio*, 19 and 22; *Dominus Iesus*, 17.
- 10 This understanding of ecclesiality is rooted in the sacramental concept of the Church presented in *Lumen gentium* as well as the liturgical nature of the life of the Church as presented by *Sacrosanctum concilium*.
- 11 As illustrated by the last example, the relations need not reduce only to those between visible and invisible aspects of the Church.
- 12 Such is the traditional understanding of the relationship between the four "notes" of the Church: "The true Church of Jesus Christ is constituted by divine authority and is recognized by the four marks that, in the Creed, we affirm must be believed; and each one of these marks is so joined to the others that it cannot be separated from them" (Pius IX, *Letter to the Bishops of England* ["*The Unicity of the Church*"], September 16, 1864 (DH 2888); see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 811.
- 13 Cf. 1 Cor 12:4–27. The essential mystery of the Church is ultimately Jesus Christ himself, in whom, as the sacramental embodiment of the unity between man and God, the whole mystery of the Church preexists and through whom it continues to live.
- 14 The situation is analogous to the unity of creation. The world is a "universe," that is, one and having a common finality, not by reason of consisting in some finite, countable number of things, but by reason of the innumerable relationships by which the various parts are united and participate in its motion. For Thomas, it is precisely this myriad of relationships that defines its intrinsic finality, its beauty, and its capacity to glorify God. Such a complexus of relations does not follow from the sum of the parts; rather it

is a property that transcends each and all of the parts when considered outside of their incorporation within the unity of the whole. See in this regard: Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 65, a. 2; I-II, q. 5, a. 6 and obj. 1; *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. I, c. 42; Bk. II, c. 24; c. 39; c. 42; Bk. III, c. 17; see also *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 22, a. 3; *Comp. theol.*, Bk. I, c. 3; *De ver.*, q. 5, a. 9, ad 3–4; q. 11, a. 2; *De pot.*, q. 7, a. 9; see my “Nature’s Finality and the Stewardship of Creation According to Saint Thomas Aquinas,” *Nova et Vetera* 10 (2012): 143–191.

- 15 Note that what is being observed here is characteristic of every definition, in which a substantive term or set of terms is coordinated with a qualifying term or set of terms.
- 16 This is easier to see with a simple definition, such as that of man who is a “rational animal,” where the essence cannot be understood to consist in two entities placed side by side, but where all that is animal is “rationalized,” and all that is rational is “animalized,” in such a way that only *one thing* results from the union of the two principles and everything proper to the whole is marked (directly or indirectly) by each. Thus we may speak of a duality of *principles*, but not of *res*. Analogously, the constitutive elements of the Church are many principles of her being, but, because they are united in the singular Christological and Pneumatological being of the Church, from the perspective of their ecclesiality, none of them are an ecclesial *ens* or *res* unto themselves.
- 17 On the mutual compenetration of the Church’s “notes” and for a general theology in their regard, see in particular Wolfgang Beinert, *Um das dritte Kirchenattribut*, 2 vols. (Ledgerus Verlag Hubert Wingen, Essen 1964); Yves Congar, *Esquisses du Mystère de l’Église* (Paris: Cerf, 1953): “L’Église et son unité” (11–57); “Catholicité,” in *Catholicisme, hier, aujourd’hui et demain*, ed. G. Jacquemet (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1950), vol. II, col. 722–725; Charles Journet, “Catholic Unity,” in *The Theology of the Church*, trans. V. Szczurek (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), 325–354 (hereafter *Theology of the Church*); B. D. de la Soujeole, *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church*, trans. M. J. Miller (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 515–621; Josef Neuner, “The Idea of Catholicity: Concept and History,” in *The Church: Readings in Theology* (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1963), 61–70. See also *Dominus Iesus*, 13–16; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 811.
- 18 “It is only through Christ’s Catholic Church, which is ‘the all-embracing means of salvation,’ that they [our separated brethren] can benefit fully from the means of salvation” (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3).
- 19 See *Unitatis redintegratio*, 4.
- 20 “Our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as Communities and Churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those who through him were born again into one body, and with him quickened to newness of life” (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3); “Among those in which Catholic traditions and institutions in part (*ex parte*) continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place” (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 13).
- 21 Anything conceived as “partial” or “imperfect” is conceptualized as such relative to that which (in the same order) is complete and perfect, that is, in comparison to the standard or ideal with reference to which alone it presents itself as incomplete or imperfect. See Aquinas, *De pot.*, q. 3, a. 5; *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 56, a. 1, ad 3.
- 22 It is precisely on account of the ecclesial plenitude proper to the Catholic Church that the members of the Catholic Church alone are capable of the fullest degree of incorporation into Christ and his Church: “Fully incorporated into the Church are those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept all the means of salvation given to the Church together with her entire organization, and who—by the bonds constituted by the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion—are joined in the

visible structure of the Church of Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops” (*Lumen gentium*, 14). To the differentiation of churches and ecclesial communions according to degrees of ecclesiality corresponds the conciliar differentiation of the various modes of ecclesial incorporation available to the members of these communions. On the Council’s introduction of the concept of “degrees” (expressed in terms of “fullness” and “partiality”) as applied to the question of individual incorporation within the Church, see A. Grillmeier, “The People of God,” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. H. Vorgrimler, trans. L. Adolphus et al. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 1:168–177.

- ²³ See *Dominus Iesus*, 16–17; cf. *Lumen gentium*, 48.
- ²⁴ “As stated in 2 *Metaphysics*, text 4: ‘Whatever is first in any order, is the cause of all that come after it’” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 56, a. 1). For Aristotle, see *Met.*, Bk. II, c. 1 (993b); see also Bk. X, c. 2 (1053b). “That which is first in any genus whatever is the cause of the things which are subsequent; as for instance, the first act is the cause of every being that is in act” (Aquinas, *De spir. cr.*, a. 1, obj. 25 [English translations for *De spir. cr.* are taken from *Disputed Questions on Spiritual Creatures*, trans. M. Fitzpatrick and J. Wellmuth (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1949)]. “What is said maximally and most truly in any genus is the cause of those which are posterior in the genus” (Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, c. 6 [English translations for *De ente et essentia* are taken from *Selected Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. R. Goodwin (New York: Macmillan, 1965)]. See also Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 3; *Comp. theol.*, Bk. I, c. 68.
- ²⁵ “‘More’ and ‘less’ are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 3). “Whenever something is found to be in several things by participation in various degrees, it must be derived by those in which it exists imperfectly from that one in which it exists most perfectly” (Aquinas, *De pot.*, q. 3, a. 5). See also Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 44, a. 1; *I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 4, a. 2, ad 3.
- ²⁶ I specifically explore the question of the causal relationship existing between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communities in the next chapter.
- ²⁷ The situation is notably analogous to the unsoundable abyss between the Creator and the multitude of creatures the radical identity of which as creatures begins with imperfection: limitation, finitude, the fact of receiving being (although this latter instance of imperfection is not, by way of contrast with non-Catholic Christianities, a matter of privation).
- ²⁸ Here I am referring to the fact that the existence of Christ’s Church among non-Catholic Christian communities is qualitatively inferior to the full and unqualified manner in which it exists in, and as, the Catholic Church, an ontological difference requiring a correspondingly contrasting set of expressions by which to designate the presence of Christ’s Church within them; and that contrast is inherent in the terminology of “elements” inasmuch as it is used in contradistinction from the terminology by which to indicate the presence of Christ’s Church within the Catholic Church, namely, “subsistence.” It follows from this, that it is entirely correct to speak of “merely elements” or “only elements” within the context of describing the distinct manner in which Christ’s Church exists among non-Catholic Christian communities as contrasted with its mode of existence in the Catholic Church. By saying “only elements,” moreover, nothing of the extraordinary dignity that follows upon such elements is subtracted from their subjects; but one should not need to point this out when drawing comparisons between the subsistent presence of Christ’s Church in the Catholic Church and its non-subsistent presence in other Christian communities. Of course, if one’s immediate aim is to treat of the fundamental dignity shared by all Christian communities as such, then the adverbs “only” and “merely” are out of place.

- 29 *Lumen gentium*, 8: “... licet extra eius compaginem elementa plura sanctificationis et veritatis inveniantur, quae ut dona Ecclesiae Christi propria, ad unitatem catholicam impellunt.”
- 30 *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3. On the historical development of the Council’s thought concerning the language of “ecclesial elements” and “church” as used of non-Catholic Christianities, see C. Clifford, “*Elementa Ecclesiae*: A Basis for Vatican II’s Recognition of the Ecclesial Character of Non-Catholic Christian Communities,” in *La théologie catholique entre intransigeance et renouveau: La réception des mouvements préconciliaires à Vatican II* (Leuven: Universiteitsbibliotheek, 2011), 249–269.
- 31 *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3; cf. *Lumen gentium*, 15.
- 32 Certain concrete things like art, individual liturgical rites and particular ecclesiastical traditions, even though subject to change over time and, in their particularity, accidental to the being of the Church as such, can be included among a community’s ecclesial “elements,” precisely inasmuch as they are concrete expressions of what is essential to the being and life of the Church. Even if they do not relate *per se* to the being of the Church, to the extent that they are vehicles by which a community has access to and a means to live the content of Apostolic Tradition, they can still be counted among that community’s ecclesial “elements” in a secondary sense. This mediatory relationship characterizes the so-called “monuments” of Tradition, through which many of the riches of the *regula fidei* and the core of the *institutio Christiana* are tangibly perpetuated and made available to all generations in the life of the Church. Of course, “elements of sanctification and of truth” in the primary sense refers to those spiritual and corporeal endowments directly (*per se*) related to the being and life of the Church. See Yves Congar, *Tradition and Traditions: The Biblical, Historical, and Theological Evidence for Catholic Teaching on Tradition*, trans. M. Naseby and T. Rainborough (San Diego, CA: Basilica Press, Simon & Schuster, 1966), 425–430; see Melchior Cano, *De locis theologicis libri duodecim* (Salamanca: Matias Gastio, 1563), Bk. III, c. 3–4.
- 33 See Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, c. 4. “As the Philosopher says (*Metaph.* VIII, 10), the forms of things are like numbers in which species vary by addition or subtraction of unity” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 47, a. 2). “Among numbers, the addition or subtraction of unity changes the species of a number.... It is the same among definitions: the addition or subtraction of one difference changes the species” (Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. I, c. 54). See also *De pot.*, q. 7, a. 4: “If anything be added to or subtracted from definitions which indicate the essence of a thing, the species is changed, as is the case with numbers, as the Philosopher observes”; *Sum. theol.*, I-II, q. 52, a. 1: “Species of things are like numbers, in which addition or subtraction changes the species.” A demonstration of the ecclesiological conclusion here drawn along with an explanation of how the philosophical categories just invoked can be applied to the Church is provided in my “*Est, Adest, Subsistit in*” at Vatican II,” 727–794.
- 34 “Indeed, the elements of sanctification and truth present in the other Christian communities, in a degree which varies from one to the other, constitute the objective basis of the communion, albeit imperfect, which exists between them and the Catholic Church” (John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, 11).
- 35 “It is possible, according to Catholic doctrine, to affirm correctly that the Church of Christ is present and operative in the churches and ecclesial Communities not yet fully in communion with the Catholic Church, on account of the elements of sanctification and truth that are present in them” (CDF, *Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church*, 2007); “To the extent that these elements are found in other Christian communities, the one church of Christ is effectively present in them” (John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, 11).

- 36 The Council employs the language of “defect” (*defectus*) with reference to the status of non-Catholic communions and of the salvific elements within them (see *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3 and 22). The sense of the term is that of a lack or absence of some quality that should be present and that ordinarily goes hand in hand with the ecclesial realization of such elements.
- 37 See *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3: “All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to Christ, belong by right to the one Church of Christ.”
- 38 The effect that each such defect has upon the ecclesial status of the community is more like the effect that multiplication has upon a numerical quantity than that of addition. With attentiveness to the obvious limits of the analogy, certain elements, moreover, could be considered as standing in relation to the others after the manner of an exponential relationship, as the ministerial priesthood and the corresponding reality of the Eucharist, for example, not only fundamentally impact a faith community’s ecclesiality but unqualifiedly determine its status as a “church” at all (see chapter six, “*The conciliar use of the names ‘church’ and ‘ecclesial community’*”).
- 39 Scripture, of course, underscores the necessity of right belief for salvation: see, for example, Mark 16:16; Heb 11:6; John 8:24; John 3:18; John 6, passim; cf. Luke 10:31. Indeed, doctrinal orthodoxy is a necessary and foundational aspect of salvation, inasmuch as religious ignorance is a result of sin and the work of the devil, the “father of lies” (John 8:44), and inasmuch as the Savior came as the “light of the world” to bestow the “light of life” (John 8:12) and “to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). “And so, from the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col 1:9–10); for “this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3); see also John 1:4–5; Col 2:2–3; Rom 1:18 and 28. What is said here about the necessity of right faith for salvation is applicable (*mutatis mutandis*) both to individual believers and to faith communities (having institutional expressions of their adherence to revealed truth). On the centrality of intellectual assent conformed to God’s self knowledge/disclosure in the sanctification and beatification of man, see Aquinas, *Comp. theol.*, Bk. I, c. 1; *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 5, ad 5; *De ver.*, q. 14, a. 11; *In Boeth. De Trin.*, q. 2, a. 1; q. 3, a. 1, ad 3; *In Meta.*, Bk. I, lect. 1, no. 3.
- 40 That principle is none other than obedience and submission to the authority of God who reveals. “The proper response to God’s revelation is ‘the obedience of faith’ (Rom 16:26; cf. Rom 1:5; 2 Cor 10:5–6) by which man freely entrusts his entire self to God, offering ‘the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals’ and freely assenting to the revelation given by him’»” (*Dominus Iesus*, 7, quoting *Dei verbum*, 4).
- 41 “Things concerning Christ’s human nature, and the sacraments of the Church, or any creatures whatever,” affirms Aquinas, “come under faith ... inasmuch as we assent to them on account of the Divine Truth” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, II-II, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1). See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, II-II, q. 2, a. 2: “The formal aspect of the object ... is the medium by reason of which we assent to such and such a point of faith; and thus an act of faith is to believe by God (*credere Deo*), since, as stated above, the formal object of faith is the first truth, to which man gives his adhesion, so as to assent on its account to whatever he believes” (translation my adaptation of that of the English Dominican Fathers). Leo XIII is especially clear on this matter: “As the Apostles and Disciples were bound to obey Christ, so also those whom the Apostles taught were, by God’s command, bound to obey them. And, therefore, it was no more allowable to repudiate one iota of the Apostles’ teaching than it was to reject any point of the doctrine of Christ himself.... The Church ...

regarded as rebels and expelled from the ranks of her children all who held beliefs on any point of doctrine different from her own. The Arians, the Montanists, the Novatians, the Quartodecimans, the Eutychians, did not certainly reject all Catholic doctrine: they abandoned only a tertian portion of it.... For such is the nature of faith that nothing can be more absurd than to accept some things and reject others. Faith, as the Church teaches, is ‘that supernatural virtue by which, through the help of God and through the assistance of his grace, we believe what he has revealed to be true, not on account of the intrinsic truth perceived by the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God himself, the Revealer, who can neither deceive nor be deceived’ (Conc. Vat., Sess. iii., c. 3). If then it be certain that anything is revealed by God, and this is not believed, then nothing whatever is believed by divine Faith. For what the Apostle St. James judges to be the effect of a moral delinquency, the same is to be said of an erroneous opinion in the matter of faith: ‘Whosoever shall offend in one point, is become guilty of all’ (*James* 2:10). Nay, it applies with greater force to an erroneous opinion. For it can be said with less truth that every law is violated by one who commits a single sin, since it may be that he only virtually despises the majesty of God the Legislator. But he who dissents even in one point from divinely revealed truth absolutely rejects all faith, since he thereby refuses to honour God as the supreme truth and the *formal motive of faith*” (Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, 8–9. See Augustine, *De haeresibus*, n. 88).

- ⁴² “Just as mortal sin is contrary to charity, so is disbelief in one article of faith contrary to faith. Now charity does not remain in a man after one mortal sin. Therefore neither does faith, after a man disbelieves one article.... Neither living nor lifeless faith remains in a heretic who disbelieves one article of faith” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, II-II, q. 5, a. 3, *sed contra* and *respondeo*). Again, the principles determining the formal integrity of faith are (*mutatis mutandis*) as applicable to individuals as they are to entire faith communities which professedly embrace and proclaim some ecclesial faith.
- ⁴³ Every community born of heresy is, as such, characterized in the manner just described. Communities of schismatic origin are similarly distinguished, since, concretely and historically, there exists no form of schism which has not sought to rationalize its separation from the Catholic Church and defend its claim to independence on the basis of an interpretation of revelation contrary to that of the Catholic Church, that is, by embracing some heresy: “The difference between heresy and schism is that heresy contains perverse doctrine, schism separates from the Church.... However ... no schism fails to concoct some heresy for itself, so that it may appear to have withdrawn from the Church rightly” (St. Jerome, *In Ep. ad Tit.*, 3.10–11 [English translation: Thomas P. Scheck, *St. Jerome’s Commentaries on Galatians, Titus, and Philemon* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 346]). Consistent with the symbiosis of ecclesial elements of truth and sanctification and their correlative mutual destructiveness when defective, this defect in faith entails a corresponding diminution even in the degree to which non-Catholic Christian communities are in possession of revelation. Materially speaking, they possess the word of God (though this only in part, for having rejected the voice of Tradition and, for many of these communities, certain books of Scripture), but because they do not accept this revelation according to an integral ecclesial faith, formally speaking, their very reception/possession of revelation must be called into question.
- ⁴⁴ Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, Bk. III, c. 14.
- ⁴⁵ See James J. Fox, “Good,” in ed. C. Herbermann, E. Pace, et al., *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 15 vols. (New York: The Encyclopedia Press Inc., 1913), 6:639; Brian Mullady, *Both Servant and Free: A Primer in Fundamental Moral Theology* (New Hope, KY: New Hope Publications, 2011), c. 6; see Christian D. Washburn, “The Ecclesiological Status of Non-Catholic Ecclesial Communities Stemming from the Reformation,” forthcoming.

- ⁴⁶ The principle is applicable to formal causality, inasmuch as a defective (or unintended) formal cause—owing to an antecedently defective agency (where an agent fails—either through a defect on its own part or on the part of an indisposition of the matter upon which it acts—to produce the intended form)—implies a correspondingly defective (or unintended) formal effect.
- ⁴⁷ On the nature of character and its relationship to Christian worship, see Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 63; see Liam Walsh, *The Sacraments of Initiation* (London: Cassell Publishers, 1988), 31–33, 93–95; Michael Dauphinais, “Christ and the Metaphysics of Baptism in the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Commentary on John*,” in *Rediscovering Aquinas and the Sacraments*, ed. M. Levering and M. Dauphinais (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2009), 14–27; see also David Berger, *Thomas Aquinas and the Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor, MI: Sapientia Press, 2005), 69–73, 83–87.
- ⁴⁸ This is obviously a question of the whole being bad *in some respect*. For the whole to be bad in some respect is not equivalent to its being wholly bad. Of course, the *respectus* in question here is that of ecclesiality and, therefore, anything but inconsequential.
- ⁴⁹ In sum, those genetic principles responsible for the defectiveness of ecclesial properties within an ecclesial communion effectively render the whole community ecclesially bad. This is particularly evident from the fact that the compenetration of elements which is a characteristic of the Church’s fullness formally considered is an essential feature of the Church’s constitution. Accordingly, the principle “*ex defectu causae sequitur defectus in effectu*” exhibits a twofold application here: if, first of all, defective causal principles stand behind the origin of an ecclesial community, then the whole community as such as an effect will be defective; furthermore, to the extent that an ecclesial communion operates as a defective cause (through lacking the integrity of the fullness Christ entrusted to his Church), to that same extent the fruits of its operation will be defective. As illustrated in the examples cursorily presented above, the indivisible unity, dignity and power of Christ’s Church are always realized simultaneously and inseparably at the levels of her being and operation.
- ⁵⁰ *Unitatis redintegratio*, 4.
- ⁵¹ The expression “*subsistit in*” in *Unitatis redintegratio* 4 functions very differently than its occurrence in *Lumen gentium* 8 where what is said to subsist is the whole Church of Christ—the substantial whole, not just a property. By definition, no property can subsist in the technical sense of the term (see Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, c. 1). It is said, therefore, to “subsist in” in the sense that any property exists *in another* (*in alio*) as in a subject of attribution and of inherence.
- ⁵² See chapter two, “*Digging deeper into the conceptual content of the term*”; S. Hipp, “‘Est,’ ‘Adest,’ and ‘Subsistit in’ at Vatican II,” 762–763.
- ⁵³ That the Council intended this is further evidenced in the *Relatio* of September 1964 explaining the general reasoning according to which the schemas of the document on ecumenism were elaborated. See AS, vol. III, part 2, 330–344. I come back to this just below.
- ⁵⁴ If the term is in fact employed with such an intent, then it acquires a technical sense somewhere between the fuller technical sense it enjoys when used of the one Church of Christ (as in *Lumen gentium* 8, with reference to the Catholic Church) and the loose sense it enjoys when used merely to convey existence plain and simply (as in *Unitatis redintegratio* 13, speaking about Catholic traditions and institutions within Anglican communions).
- ⁵⁵ AS, vol. III, part 2, 336.

- 56 “*Quamvis ex una parte, ut iam dictum est, non tota doctrina catholic de Ecclesia et hierarchia eius in schemate explicanda est, ex altera parte certe omnis ambiguitas evitari debet. Quapropter in textu haec principia maioris momenti in lucem ponenda sunt: 1) Christus Ecclesiam suam iam pro hoc mundo ut societatem visibilem fundavit. Ecclesia ergo non est res quae non nisi in futuro, id est in fine huius aevi existet.... 3) Christus Petrum elegit super quem Ecclesiam suam aedificavit, cui tradidit claves regni caelorum et munus ... omnes in Ecclesia pascendi in unitate perfecta*” (AS, vol. III, part 2, 337).
- 57 See *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3–4 and 22; *Lumen gentium*, 8.
- 58 *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3.
- 59 Note that the causes of this permanence are rooted in the very causes of the property. Unity is something the Catholic Church can never lose precisely because of the permanent principle of its being. The generic being of a property is derived from that of its subject. If the latter is imperishable, then, barring the intervention of a transcendent agent, so too is the former. I revisit these principles in the next chapter dealing with the causal relationship existing between the Catholic Church and non-Catholics.
- 60 This is not to confuse what is technically a property of the Church, namely, unity, with the subsisting whole, the Church as such; but it is to acknowledge the inexpressible degree to which unity defines the very essence of the Church and the integral and perfect realization of this unity in the Catholic Church (having its fullest manifestation in the Church triumphant). Given the extent, moreover, to which the Church can be understood as nothing other than a mystery of unity, that which is otherwise viewed as merely a property, having an accidental mode of predication (existing only *in alio*, and not in itself), can be viewed in some sense as taking on a substantial mode of predication, where the unity in question and the Church are convertible notions, and where this unity, like the Church, can be said to subsist in the fullest sense of the term.
- 61 “Among those in which Catholic traditions and institutions in part continue to exist (*subsistere pergunt*), the Anglican Communion occupies a special place” (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 13).
- 62 I examine this statement concerning the Anglican communion and the significance of the qualification “*ex parte*” in the following section.
- 63 There exist ample theological precedents for this manner of speaking about the perfection of the Church. That the Church has traditionally been defined as a “perfect society” is a salient example. The meaning of the expression is that she does not depend upon principles outside of her own supernatural constitution and endowment for whatever degree of fullness she is said to have, and that she possesses all the means to sanctification, wherefore she is perfect in these regards, even if she is obviously imperfect (and, therefore, *semper reformanda*) for what concerns the actualization of sanctity within her members.
- 64 *Unitatis redintegratio*, 13: “*Inter eas, in quibus traditiones et structurae catholicae ex parte subsistere pergunt, locum specialem tenet Communio anglicana.*”
- 65 Nevertheless, it should be noted that the subsistence language is well chosen in this context, inasmuch as the properties in question are viewed not just as existing, but as *continuing* to exist. Something of the technical sense of subsistence is thereby preserved in this non-technical use of the term “*subsistere*,” since subsistence, technically understood, implies that mode of being which is stable and relatively permanent. Frequently, and even in quotidian language, the non-technical use of the term connotes this aspect that is denoted by its technical counterpart. The 2007 CDF clarification of the meaning of “*subsistit in*” in *Lumen gentium* 8 remarks: “In number 8 of the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* ‘subsistence’

means this perduring, historical continuity and the permanence of all the elements instituted by Christ in the Catholic Church, in which the Church of Christ is concretely found on this earth” (*Responsa*, 606).

- 66 “The forms of things and the definitions that signify them are like numbers. Among numbers, the addition or subtraction of unity changes the species of a number.... It is the same among definitions: the addition or subtraction of one difference changes the species” (Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. I, c. 54; see *Sum. theol.*, I-II, q. 52, a. 1; *De pot.*, q. 7, a. 4).
- 67 This participatory relationship, coupled with the fact that the properties in question exist in their full and maximal state within the Catholic Church, has as a further implication that they are participant in the very perfections that adorn the Catholic Church. The dynamic features of this dependency relationship are explored in the next chapter.
- 68 See *Sum. theol.*, I-II, q. 52, a. 1; *In Phys.*, Bk. VI, lect. 7, no. 825; *De virt.*, a. 11; *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 93, a. 3, ad 3.
- 69 Though the Latin reads “*subsistere pergunt*,” and not “*subsistit in*,” as pointed out in chapter three, the sentence structure (“*in quibus ... subsistere pergunt*”) explicitly affirms the “in-existence” of said traditions and institutions.
- 70 The sole challenge to this rule is the humanity of Christ which is a complete, concrete, substantial reality and yet nevertheless subsists only “in” the Word. Of course, this is not really an exception to the rule, since that humanity is still analogically compared to accidents, precisely because it does not enjoy a completely independent act of existence proper to persons as such (which are unqualifiedly subsistent, i.e., not subsisting in another).
- 71 Note that the point being made here about “in-subsistence” is perfectly consonant with the use of “*subsistit in*” in *Lumen gentium* 8, where the notion of subsistence is employed in a philosophically technical manner to signify a special *mode* of existing. In the present context, the preposition “in” signals the relationship between a set of perfections and their concrete embodiment in a subject: the reality of the Church and all of its properties have to be instantiated in a subject. The difference, of course, between “*subsistit in*” said of ecclesial elements in relation to the Anglican Communion and “*subsistit in*” said of Christ’s Church in relation to the Catholic Church, has to do (*inter alia*) with the difference between properties and complete substantial natures. The Anglican Communion is a subject that (in a defective way) enjoys a set of properties distinctive of the Church’s nature; the Catholic Church is the sole subject in which the plenitude of that nature resides, the concrete instantiation of the nature taken as a whole. These questions and the implications of applying an “in-subsistence” framework to the relationship between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church were addressed in chapter two. See also C. Washburn, “The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, and *Subsistit in*,” 145–175; and my “‘*Est*,’ ‘*Adest*,’ and ‘*Subsistit in*’ at Vatican II,” 757–779.
- 72 Precisely how this can occur is a topic I take up in chapter four, where I examine the metaphysical parameters of the Catholic Church’s causal relationship to non-Catholic Christianities and to other religions.
- 73 This introduces an additional layer of complexity in accounting for the being of the elements in question, since they are rightly said to belong to the Catholic Church and are, as such, her properties. The solution lies in identifying that within non-Catholic communions by virtue of which they are the subjective bearers of ecclesial elements with the degree of “Catholicity” that continues to distinguish them as authentically Christian. It is by reason of that which is Catholic in them that they are subjective causes of the salvific

goods of Christ's Church. Thus, outside of the accidental order, not even a material causal role can properly be ascribed to these communities considered in their separation from the Catholic Church as such.

- 74 Note that the concept of bodily continuity for the mystical body cannot be understood in terms of continuous quantity. This is obvious from the multiplicity of human beings that materially compose the Church, each of whom is an incommunicably distinct body (discretely separated from others). Yet the unity enjoyed by the members of the Church is plainly and necessarily visible, such that we speak of them as constituting a unity that is as bodily as it is spiritual. See chapter one, "*Est' ecclesiology as a long-standing part of Catholic tradition.*"
- 75 Note that this affirmation of the Church's subsistence within but one part of the total reality of the Church, namely, the Head, cannot be seen as implying the possibility of an analogous affirmation of the Church's subsisting within non-Catholic communions, not only because, to begin with, they are not "parts" of the mystical body, but also because the subsistent mode of being requires an integral realization of the essence in question, and non-Catholic communions do not enjoy perfect or complete ecclesiality.
- 76 "The Church cannot forgive anything without Christ; Christ does not will to forgive anything without the Church. The Church cannot forgive anything except in the penitent, in other words, in the one whom Christ has touched; Christ does not will to guarantee any forgiveness in one who despises the Church.... The all-powerful Christ can do all by himself, in other words, baptize, consecrate the Eucharist, ordain, forgive sins and the rest; but, a humble and faithful Husband, he does not want to do anything without his spouse.... Be careful, therefore, that you do not separate the head from the body, preventing Christ from existing whole and entire forever, because Christ exists nowhere in his entirety without the Church" (Isaac of Stella, *Sermon 11*, no. 15 [trans. G. Salet, in A. Hoste, and G. Salet, eds., *Isaac de L'Etoile: Sermons, Sources chrétiennes* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967), 130:246–247]). "Just as the head and members of a living body, though not identical, are inseparable, so too Christ and the Church can neither be confused nor separated, and constitute a single 'whole Christ'" (*Dominus Iesus*, 16). The theme is strong in Aquinas: "The head and members are as one mystic person; and therefore Christ's satisfaction belongs to all the faithful as being his members" (*Sum. theol.*, III, q. 48, a. 2, ad 1); "Christ's Passion causes forgiveness of sins by way of redemption. For since he is our head, then, by the Passion which he endured ... he delivered us as his members from our sins ... in the same way as if a man by the good industry of his hands were to redeem himself from a sin committed with his feet. For, just as the natural body is one though made up of diverse members, so the whole Church, Christ's mystic body, is reckoned as one person with its head, which is Christ" (*Sum. theol.*, III, q. 49, a. 1; cf. III, q. 19, a. 4; q. 48, a. 2, ad 1; q. 69, a. 2); and, expressing the bi-directional attributive consequences of this mystical inclusion/identity, "We should understand that Christ and the Church are one mystical person, whose head is Christ, and whose body is all the just, for every just person is a member of this head.... While the merits of Christ, the head, are infinite, each saint displays some merits in a limited degree. This is why he says, I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions, that is, what is lacking in the afflictions of the whole Church, of which Christ is the head" (*Super Col.*, c. 1, lect. 6) (trans. F. Larcher, in D. Keating, ed., *Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians* [Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2006], n. 61). Augustine is particularly clear: "No greater gift could God have given to men than in making his Word, by which he created all things, their Head, and joining them to him as his members: that the Son of God might become ... one Man with men; so that when we speak to God in prayer for mercy, we do not separate the Son from him; and when the Body of the Son prays, it separates not its Head from itself; and it is one Saviour of his Body, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who both prays for us, and prays in us, and is prayed to by us. He prays for us, as our Priest; he prays in us,

as our Head; he is prayed to by us, as our God. Let us therefore recognise in him our words, and his words in us.... Therefore we pray to him, through him, in him; and we speak with him, and he speaks with us; we speak in him, he speaks in us the prayer.... Let no one then, when he hears these words, say, Christ speaketh not; nor again say, I speak not; nay rather, if he own himself to be in the Body of Christ, let him say both, Christ speaks, and I speak. Be thou unwilling to say anything without him, and he saith nothing without thee” (*Enar. in Psalm.* 86, n. 1: NPNF-1, 8:409–410); “*Habere autem caput Christum nemo poterit nisi qui in eius corpore fuerit, quod est Ecclesia*” (*Epistula ad Catholicos de secta Donatistarum*, 19: ed. M. Petschenig, CSEL, vol. 52, §49, 296); and regarding the ecclesial actions of any member or part of the Church, and every ecclesial action wherever it is found (whether within or beyond the Church’s visible boundaries), as actions of the whole Church: “The presentation of children for the reception of spiritual grace [in baptism] is not so much the act of those whose arms bear them up ... as the act of the whole society of the saints and the faithful.... It is accomplished, therefore, by the whole Mother Church which is in the saints; for the whole Church begets them all, and as a whole she begets every single one of them” (*Epistola* 98, n. 5, ed. A. Goldbacher, CSEL, vol. 34, 526; PL, vol. 33, 362) (English translation mine). See also J.-M. R. Tillard, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion*, trans. R. C. De Peaux (Collegeville, MN:Liturgical Press, 1992), 78–82; Jerome Hamer, *The Church is a Communion*, trans. G. Chapman (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), 49–64. The intricacies of the causal dynamism by which the Catholic Church can be said to act upon and within non-Catholic communions are treated in the following chapter.

77 See chapter two, note 65.

78 See chapter one; see my “*Est, Adest, and Subsistit in*” at Vatican II,” 727–794 (especially 731–747).

79 “There is nothing to prevent a thing which in one way is divided, from being another way undivided; as what is divided in number, may be undivided in species; thus it may be that a thing is in one way ‘one,’ and in another way ‘many’” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 11, a. 1, ad 2).

80 See chapter one, note 56.

81 Affirming the converse, namely, that “the Lutheran communion is (imperfectly) the Church of Christ,” or that “the Orthodox church is (imperfectly) the Church of Christ” is equally precluded, since nothing can be said to be something the essential/defining features of which it lacks. It is analogous to saying that an irrational animal is imperfectly a man.

82 I address the question of what it means to call separated Christian communions “churches” in chapter six. It should be clear from what has just been stated, however, that no such “church” represents an embodiment or part of the universal Church, for the latter (which is the Catholic Church throughout the world) exists everywhere and only where everything integral to the Church’s essence is realized. The same line of argumentation is presented by Pius IX in his Apostolic Letter to all non-Catholic Christian societies at the convocation of the Vatican Council: “Now, whoever will carefully examine and reflect upon the condition of the various religious societies, divided among themselves, and separated from the Catholic Church ... cannot fail to satisfy himself that neither any one of these societies by itself, nor all of them together, can in any manner constitute and be that one Catholic Church which Christ our Lord built, and established, and willed should continue; and that they cannot in any way be said to be branches or parts of that Church, since they are visibly cut off from Catholic unity (*neque aliquam peculiarem, neque omnes simul coniunctas ex eisdem societatibus ullo modo constituere, et esse illam unam et catholicam Ecclesiam, quam Christus Dominus aedificavit, constituit, et esse voluit, neque membrum, aut partem eiusdem Ecclesiae ullo modo dici posse, quandoquidem sunt a catholica unitate visibiliber divisae*)” (*Iam vos omnes,*

September 13, 1868: *AAS* 4 (1868): 131–135).

- 83 The historical and ongoing expansion of the universal Church represents something quite different from what has just been described, since, although new local churches are erected in places where the Church had not previously existed, the principle of this establishment is nothing other than the Church herself evangelizing. Here the singular intrinsic principle of the Church's life brings about an assimilation of new "matter," an organic expansion of her being analogous to the growth of a living body.
- 84 Because the Church is a bodily reality, to speak of "members" or of "parts" is equivalent; see E. Sauras, "The Members of the Church," *The Thomist* 27 (1963): 78.
- 85 The difficulties involved in conceptualizing this kind of bodily unity (which is far greater than the merely moral unity of ordinary human societies) are most easily surmounted by considering other theological mysteries of unity. The subjective/bodily unity of Christ's Church is analogous in more than one way to the personal identity of the Son of God. Were he, for example, to have assumed many human natures (a purely hypothetical consideration, but one which is metaphysically possible: see Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 7, a. 3), all of them would be the same supposit, notwithstanding their inevitable spatial separation with respect to the body. Of course, in this case there remain multiple bodies (indeed, complete substantial wholes) united in suppositum, as opposed to multiple spatially separated integral parts united in bodily unity. But the unity between Christ's person and his human body and soul during the period of his death prior to the Resurrection (see Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 50, a. 2) illustrates the same idea with regard to partial principles of a substantial whole. Physical separation in space nowise precludes the subjective unity of a multiplicity, whether that multiplicity consists of things existing according to an imperfect mode of being (e.g., accidents, properties, and incomplete substantial principles) or things existing according to a perfect and substantial mode of being. *Lumen gentium*, of course, invites this sort of application of the analogy of faith (see *Lumen gentium*, 8).
- 86 If a center of attention of this chapter has been the ecclesial status of non-Catholic communities and the elements that adorn them (and their relation to the Catholic Church), the implications that that status has for the members of such communities has been an inseparable consideration (and one which, in a reflexive, *a posteriori* fashion, sheds further light upon that status). Additional reflection on the relationship that the members of non-Catholic communities bear toward the Catholic Church is indispensable to a fuller appreciation of the ecclesial efficacy and overall "ecclesiality" of their respective communities and of the significance of the elements of sanctification and truth there partaken. For limitations of space, I cannot develop the topic here.
- 87 "The comparison of the Church with Paradise shows us that men may indeed receive her baptism outside her pale, but that no one outside can either receive or retain the salvation of eternal happiness. For, as the words of Scripture testify, the streams from the fountain of Paradise flowed copiously even beyond its bounds... and yet in Mesopotamia, and in Egypt, to which countries those rivers extended, there is not found that blessedness of life which is recorded in Paradise. Accordingly, though the waters of Paradise are found beyond its boundaries, yet its happiness is in Paradise alone. So, therefore, the baptism of the Church may exist outside, but the gift of the life of happiness is found alone within the Church, which has been founded on a rock, which has received the keys of binding and loosing. 'She it is alone who holds as her privilege the whole power of her Bridegroom and Lord,' by virtue of which power as bride, she can bring forth sons even of handmaids. And these, if they be not high-minded, shall be called into the lot of the inheritance; but if they be high-minded, they shall remain outside" (Augustine, *De baptismo contra Donatistas*, Bk. IV, c. 1 [NPNF-1, 4:447]).

- ⁸⁸ Yves Congar, *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*, trans. M. A. Bousfield (London: Centenary Press, 1939), as cited in Charles Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, trans. A. H. C. Downes (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 1:40; see Y. Congar, *op. cit.*, 127–131.

CHAPTER 4

The Causal Relationship between the Catholic Church and Non-Catholic Communities

Introduction

HAVING SET FORTH (in chapters one and two) the full and unique manner in which, according to the Second Vatican Council and traditional Catholic teaching, Christ's Church exists in the Catholic Church, and having, in accordance with that, explained (in [chapter three](#)) the meaning of the Council's language concerning those elements of sanctification and of truth adorning non-Catholic communions, important aspects of the Catholic Church's relation to non-Catholic faith communions have come into relief. In the present chapter, I examine more directly the fundamental nature of that relationship the two terms of which are, in the current phase of history, marked by a profound and dynamic unity that is conceptually inseparable from the equally profound difference between them. As alluded to above, the Catholic Church, precisely on account of what sets her apart from every other community of faith, stands toward them as a foundation, root and source of the supernatural life that is common to them. A basic appreciation of this dynamism demands an etiological analysis. The question to be answered is this: how is the Catholic Church causally related to her separated brothers in Christ?

References made in the previous chapter to the ordering of all men toward the Catholic Church already called for a more systematic investigation of the causal

relationships existing between the Catholic Church and other Christianities. The concept of ordering has principally to do with final causality, though it presupposes the passive and active principles responsible for the dynamism by which that finality is realized. While it is relatively easy to perceive the connection between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christianities in the order of final causality, whether there exists a connection in other causal orders, such as the efficient, formal or material, for example, is less evident. In what follows, I offer a defense of a robust understanding of the nature of the dependency of non-Catholic religious communities upon the Catholic Church, one spelled out in terms of each of the kinds of causality just mentioned, and (thereby) of the redemptive primacy of the indivisible body of Christ.

The teaching of the Second Vatican Council

If it is often erroneously asserted that Vatican II introduced the language of “subsistence” with respect to the Catholic Church in order to make way for a recognition of the presence of Christ’s Church among non-Catholics (a claim that has been sufficiently refuted above), and if, on the basis of this distortion, the Church of Christ is thought to enjoy a sort of parallel and relatively independent act of existence outside the Catholic Church, such that, by way of dependency on Christ alone, her separated brethren operate as means of salvation on their own, the teaching of the documents does not support this, but indicates the exact opposite. At the same time that the Council affirms a great wealth of ecclesial endowments adorning non-Catholic Christian communities, it also affirms that this wealth is dependent actually and essentially upon the Catholic Church, thereby shedding deeper meaning on what it means to say that the Catholic Church is necessary for salvation. Three passages from the council documents are especially significant in this regard, one from *Lumen gentium*, and two from *Unitatis redintegratio*:

This Church, constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him, although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure.

These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity (*ut dona Ecclesiae Christi propria, ad unitatem catholicam impellunt*).¹

Some and even very many of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church.... All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to Christ, belong by right to the one Church of Christ (*haec omnia, quae a Christo proveniunt et ad Ipsum conducunt, ad unicam Christi Ecclesiam iure pertinent*).²

It follows that the separated Churches and Communities as such, though we believe them to be deficient in some respects, have been by no means deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Church (*quorum virtus derivatur ab ipsa plenitudine gratiae et veritatis quae Ecclesiae catholicae concredita est*).³

What these statements mean, *inter alia* (and prescinding from what was examined previously), is: that the ecclesial gifts adorning non-Catholic communities belong, properly speaking, to the Catholic Church (with certain implications regarding the mysterious unity and universality of that Church); that the ecclesial reality of each of these communities represents a formal perfection spontaneously inclining toward full union with the Catholic Church (particularly, inasmuch as nature, as an intrinsic and *per se* principle of motion, is teleologically conceived);⁴ that their ecclesial gifts, though able to exist beyond the Church's visible boundaries, cannot exist beyond the Catholic Church *simpliciter*; and that these communities are able to serve as instruments of salvation only through the causal power belonging to the Catholic Church (a relationship, as I explain below, of *actual* and *per se* dependency). Let us take up some of the theological implications and metaphysical corollaries of this understanding.

The Catholic Church is, preeminently, “first” in ecclesiality, and the proper cause of all other ecclesiality

“Whatever is first in any order, is the cause of all that come after it.”⁵ Jesus Christ is first in the order of grace and of man reconciled to God. It is from Christ himself that any Christian communion, including the Catholic Church, enjoys whatever sanctity and whatever means of sanctification it has. All participate in the fullness proper to Christ: “from his fullness, we have all received.”⁶ But, just as Christ’s *humanity* mediates the supernatural life to man, so that economy is continued through the mediation of his mystical body, of which he is the Head. Christ wills to bestow his supernatural life in a mediated way, and first of all through that which is most intimately one with him, his bride, the Church, which is the Catholic Church:

The divinely established natural order is that every cause operates first upon what is nearest to it, and through it upon others which are more remote; just as fire first heats the nearest air, and through it it heats bodies that are further off: and God Himself first enlightens those substances which are closer to him, and through them others that are more remote, as Dionysius says (*Coel. hier.*, xiii).⁷

The Catholic Church is, ontologically speaking, nearest to Christ, and she therefore partakes of his supernatural life more fully than any other communion. Accordingly, the Council speaks of the Catholic Church, and her alone, as “the all-embracing means of salvation.”⁸ But, because every cause operates first upon what is nearest to it, and through it upon those things more remote, it is fitting that Christ should communicate of his fullness firstly and directly to the Catholic Church, and *through her* to communities more remote.⁹ In this respect, the Catholic Church occupies a unique place, as the instrumental principle by which all other communions participate in the fullness of Christ.¹⁰ The supernatural life of any community of faith thus has for its inseparable (if in a certain sense secondary¹¹) source the Catholic Church. Accordingly, among non-Catholic communions, all the properly ecclesial riches are derivative of the Catholic fullness and, in fact, belong more properly (and in a preeminent manner) to her. Thus, with reference to separated Christian communities, *Unitatis redintegratio* affirms:

“The Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation *which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Church.*”¹²

Because of her proximity to the very font of sanctification and of truth, “the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,”¹³ the Catholic Church, whom Christ has made “the pillar and bulwark of the truth,”¹⁴ is most configured to Christ, most in-formed by his plenitude and most fully the reproduction of his saving humanity, that is, most fully (and maximally) his mystical body on earth. This makes the Catholic Church “first,” in a qualitatively ontologically transcendent sense, in the order of ecclesiality; and for this reason, she is the cause of all other ecclesiality, as “whatever is first in any order, is the cause of all that come after it.”¹⁵

The principle is stated by Aquinas in another way, the formulation of which allows us to shed greater light on the redemptive primacy of the one Church of Christ:

What is said maximally and most truly in any genus is the cause of those which are posterior in the genus.... Accordingly, substance, which is first in the genus “being,” having essence in the truest and fullest sense, must be the cause of accidents, which participate secondarily and in a qualified way in the character of being.¹⁶

We can substitute the particular concepts used to illustrate the principles with the ecclesiological concepts the relations amongst which equivalently illustrate those principles: “Accordingly, the Catholic Church, which is first in the genus ‘church’ (ecclesiality), having the nature of / embodying Christ’s Church in the truest and fullest sense, must be the cause of all other ecclesial communions, which participate secondarily and in a qualified way in the character of ‘church’ (ecclesiality).”¹⁷

A matter of “participation” in the Church’s being and life

The causal relationship under examination is best expressed in terms of the philosophical notion of participation, according to which a perfection that belongs primarily and maximally to one is partaken by others in an inferior and limited (partial) way.¹⁸ Describing the characteristics of a multiform, gradated

participation in something one, Aquinas draws together the various aspects of the kind of relationship we have described above:

Whenever something is found to be in several things by participation in various degrees, it must be derived by those in which it exists imperfectly from that one in which it exists most perfectly: because where there are positive degrees of a thing so that we ascribe it to this one more and to that one less, this is in reference to one thing to which they approach, one nearer than another.¹⁹

Given the differentiation among Christian communities according to *degrees* of ecclesiality (something established in [chapter three](#)²⁰), the sense of the derivation of ecclesiality from the Catholic Church on the part of non-Catholics cannot be understood along the lines of univocal predicamental participation, or of purely logical attribution (such as characterizes the participatory relationship between a univocally predicated essence and its subjective parts, and between logical intentions in general); rather, it is a matter at once of efficient causal influx and formal actuation.²¹ The Catholic Church, in other words, stands in relation to non-Catholic communions as the efficient principle of their ecclesiality, in such a way that that very ecclesiality, rooted in the measure of a community's "elements," represents a degree of formal identity with and incorporation in her, so that the community in question is, as such and to the same degree, Catholic, and its elements part of the Catholic Church. It follows, furthermore, that the Catholic Church is also the *exemplary* cause of the ecclesiality of non-Catholic ecclesial communions, for "whatever is most perfect is always the exemplar, which the less perfect copies according to its mode."²² Thus, to answer the fundamental question raised in the introduction to this chapter, the Catholic Church is causally related to her separated brothers in Christ at once according to final, efficient, formal, material and exemplary causality.²³

Now, because every mode of participation represents a limited, partial realization of the participated perfection,²⁴ every non-Catholic ecclesial communion represents but a partial, imperfect realization of the being of the Church. This limitation of the participated form to the mode of being proper to the participant expresses another aspect of participation formulated by Aquinas in

the Aristotelian terms of potency and act:

Whatever participates in a thing is compared to the thing participated as potency to act, since that which is participated makes the participator to be actually such.²⁵

The potency-act corollary to the doctrine of participation is exceedingly relevant to ecclesiology, and ecumenism in particular. Because those Christianities participating in the full ecclesiality of the Catholic Church are related to her as potency to act, the pathway to reunification is, from a metaphysical point of view at least, clear—namely the progressive actualization of the potencies for ecclesial communion inherent in any human society, by way of the many (natural and supernatural) preparations for a complete reception of the authentic and integral Gospel, a dispositive itinerary which represents a drawing nearer to the active principle of ecclesiality, the Catholic Church, with the expectation that, thanks to that increasing proximity, she can exercise more efficaciously her supernatural causality, until the potency for full communion with the Catholic Church can be reduced to act.²⁶

Note carefully that that which is participated relates to the participant as its act,²⁷ that is, as the source of its formal perfection understood precisely as a sharing in what is proper to the participated. In our present context, this means that the ecclesial perfection of every non-Catholic Christian community represents the living presence within it of the Catholic Church under the defective mode of what is peculiar to that community as such. The relation is thus at once one of efficient causal dependency and formal assimilation. For, in every instance of participation, participants receive their perfection from the transcendent participated principle, and in this way they are likened to the higher principle, having a share in what is (by way of identity) proper to the participated. With every salutary action on their behalf, therefore, non-Catholic faith communities are likened further to the Catholic Church who, in each such instance, is also the instrumental source of that action.

This dynamism between the Catholic Church and her separated brethren (as also between Christ and the Catholic Church) verifies in a manner characterized by the modalities particular to participation a more general causal law related to

efficient causality, namely, that, in the order of efficient causality, a similitude of the agent is always produced in the effect, according to the principle “every agent produces something similar to itself.”²⁸ Once a *per se* efficient causal relationship is recognized between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communities,²⁹ the presence within the latter (in an analogous way at the very minimum) of that which is proper to the former is guaranteed. This presence of the Catholic Church within her separated brethren (the metaphysical parameters of which I examine more fully below) accounts for the very trajectory (natural inclination) of non-Catholic Christianities in what they possess of ecclesiality toward the Catholic Church.³⁰ For it is by reason of the immanent forms in things that they tend toward their proper ends, and it is on account of their immanent forms of perfection that creatures tend toward the first principle of those perfections as toward their ultimate end.³¹

Essentially different modes of possessing ecclesial elements

Besides their derivative nature, the mode according to which ecclesial elements are present to non-Catholic communions must be distinguished from the mode according to which they are found within the Catholic Church. It has already been observed that the properties of Christ’s Church exist in an intrinsically defective way within all non-Catholic communions.³² It follows from this that the ecclesial gifts found within them belong primarily to the Catholic Church, and they can never belong in a primary way to any other communion, for in her alone are they found in their entirety: “What belongs to anything according to part does not belong to it primarily.”³³ The unique manner in which “ecclesiality” is concretized in the Catholic Church is such that she possesses every property of Christ’s Church fully, not just in the sense of realizing each such property according to its complete essence, but also in the sense of realizing the essence of those properties to the extent that they can be realized, i.e., maximally and in an intensively unsurpassable manner.³⁴ Nothing of the sort can be said of any other Christian communion. Non-Catholic communions will vary among themselves according to the degree to which they realize that which is realized perfectly in the Catholic Church;³⁵ and the “ecclesiality” of each can be judged according to its approach thereto or recession therefrom.³⁶ The last observation is a consequence of the

participatory relationship described above and expressed in terms of degrees of similitude, or of “more” and “less” (with reference to the Catholic Church). Because “‘more’ and ‘less’ are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum,”³⁷ the Catholic Church is the *standard of measure* for what concerns ecclesiality, and her essential properties the standard of measure and exemplar for the ecclesial properties of every other communion.

Following upon the participated nature of their ecclesiality, the many elements with which non-Catholic Christianities are endowed are themselves merely participated; for “in proportion as a thing is participated, so, of necessity, must that be participated which is proper thereto.”³⁸ Having a participated ecclesiality, therefore, non-Catholic communions possess every one of their ecclesial properties, such as unity, apostolicity, and even holiness, in a participated way, which is to say, incompletely, and in a way intrinsically dependent upon another. All ecclesial sanctification and the possession of all saving truth reduce ultimately and essentially to the first principle of ecclesiality which is the Catholic Church.³⁹ Naturally, the Catholic Church also possesses the fullness proper to her as something received, indeed, as derived from the plenitude of Christ. In this sense, her entire ecclesial mystery is a participation in the mystery of Christ whom she is called to sacramentalize in the world. But it is uniquely in the case of the Catholic Church that this participatory relation is rightly ordered to Christ, not only in an ontological sense, inasmuch as the bond between her and the source of divine life is direct (displaying an intimacy that is truly and entirely spousal), but also in a moral sense, inasmuch as that relationship is fully in accordance with Christ’s salvific will. Now, Christ gives himself completely to his Bride. The difference between the union between Christ and the Catholic Church and his union with non-Catholic Christianities can be compared, respectively, to that between the union enjoyed by spouses and the union they share with their children. In a very real sense, non-Catholic communities of salvation are, as such, the fruit, the offspring, of the covenantal bond between Christ and his Bride, the Catholic Church.⁴⁰

The Catholic Church as “Mater omnium ecclesiarum et

universorum Christi fidelium” and some observations regarding the notion of “sister churches”

In connection with the last conclusion, I would like to offer a few brief comments on a topic of renewed interest in the dialogue between the Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodoxy, namely, the theme of “sister churches.”⁴¹ That expression has both an acceptable meaning and an unacceptable meaning, depending on one’s understanding of what is signified by “sister.” If, persuaded by its apostolic origins, we subscribe to the idea that Orthodoxy stands toward the Catholic Church or Roman Catholic Church as a “sister church” understood in a way exclusive of the sort of “filial” relation (genetic dependency) borne toward the Catholic Church by Protestant communities,⁴² then we fail to discern several fundamental truths. First, insofar as the sorority in mind envisages the Roman Catholic and Orthodox ecclesial institutions viewed according to their distinctive cultural and historical composition, the question of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox church is obscured, since the Roman Catholic Church so viewed is not plain and simply the Catholic Church.⁴³ Second, the Orthodox church does not have an origin independent of the Catholic Church. As shown above, the Catholic Church stands toward the whole of Orthodoxy (*qua* ecclesial) according to both natural and temporal priority. Third, there are fundamental problems with any theory of “sister churches” aiming to maintain a genetic equilibrium between them. What would account for their ecclesialities? Who would be the mother of these siblings? If Christ’s Church is neither an abstraction or Platonic Idea nor some transcendent incorporeal agency, then the origin of the many churches (considered in their ecclesiality) can be nothing other than the one visible Catholic Church.

Now, this Church (*Ecclesia Christi*) is the Church governed by Peter and his successors, which, in its visible principles, is located preeminently and *per se* in the Roman Catholic Church. It follows from this that, even if from one point of view the Roman Catholic Church is not exhaustive of the Catholic Church, from another point of view, the Roman Church is the nucleus of the ecclesial organism as a whole, upon which every local church depends for its ecclesial life, sacramentality, and union with and in the universal Church: “The Roman Church ... is by God’s plan the mother and teacher of all the faithful”⁴⁴; “We decree ... that

... the Roman Church ... has a primacy of ordinary power over all other churches *inasmuch as she is the mother and teacher of all Christ's faithful.*⁴⁵ This traditional understanding of the Roman Church is echoed by the contemporary magisterium: "All Churches must agree with the Church of Rome, recognizing in her the *measure* of the true Apostolic Tradition, the Church's one common faith."⁴⁶ Insistence upon the Roman foundation for the legitimate manifold expressions of the ecclesial organism is also common among the Fathers.⁴⁷ With respect to their ecclesial origins, therefore, there exists no footing of equality between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox church; and it is equally correct to speak of the latter either as the fruit of the Catholic Church or as a (prodigal) daughter of the Roman Catholic Church.⁴⁸ If, therefore, the separated Eastern churches are to be called "sister churches," this cannot be taken to imply parallel contributions to the concrete constitution of the Church of Christ *per se*. Rather, it evokes the profound communion and supernatural dignity shared by these churches as mystical extensions of Christ and his redemptive work, and exalts their sacramentally founded status as living expressions of his supreme priestly action. Given, however, the expression's inherent tendency to suggest equality with respect to origin, thereby suppressing the generative priority of the Catholic Church vis-à-vis the Orthodox church, and equality at the level of natural perfection, thus obscuring the fuller and unique manner in which the Catholic Church is Church (and in which particular Catholic churches are churches), as well as complementarity of a parallel sort in the constituting of a greater ecclesial whole, thus neglecting the subsistent form of unity of Christ's Church and the intrinsically Catholic dimensions of Orthodoxy's ecclesial status, it should be avoided.

The Catholic Church is truly present within non-Catholic communities of salvation

Following upon the essential causal influence of the Catholic Church for what concerns the ecclesiality and ecclesial elements of non-Catholic communions, and in accordance with what is implied by any participatory relationship, the perfection of the Catholic Church must be understood to be communicated in some fashion to her separated brethren. Given, furthermore, that all the elements

of sanctification and of truth that flow from the sole Church of Christ concretely identified with the Catholic Church are gifts belonging by right to the Catholic Church,⁴⁹ the presence of such elements in any communion implies that something proper to the Catholic Church, a part of it and its life, resides within them. We thus witness several *rationes* for the claim that the Catholic Church is present and operative within non-Catholic communions, including: the Catholic Church's primacy in the order of ecclesial grace by which she is the universal instrumental source of all ecclesiality; the participatory relationship deducible from the notion of grades of ecclesiality; and the proprietary relationship the Catholic Church bears toward "elements" beyond her visible boundaries (all of which *rationes* are patently manifest in the conciliar teaching). This causal interiority of the Catholic Church vis-à-vis her separated brethren is similarly confirmed by the post-conciliar magisterium. According to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith:

It is possible, according to Catholic doctrine, to affirm correctly that the Church of Christ is present and operative in the churches and ecclesial Communities not yet fully in communion with the Catholic Church, on account of the elements of sanctification and truth that are present in them.⁵⁰

Insofar as they possess any valid sacraments and any ecclesial means of salvation, and insofar as they exercise any valid sacramental or ecclesial salvific activity, the very life and action of the Catholic Church resides within these communities. This is one of the reasons for which the said elements of sanctification are "forces impelling toward Catholic unity,"⁵¹ inasmuch as they are like parts of the Catholic Church (of the one Church of Christ) that have been (in certain respects) temporarily separated from her and long for reintegration in the same way that all created being longs for and tends toward its own perfection as an effect that tends toward its cause.⁵²

The Council makes an important remark closely connected with this line of reasoning, in which the ecclesial gifts present to non-Catholics are described as principles of real union with the Catholic Church:

Likewise we can say that in some real way they are joined with us in the

Holy Spirit, for to them too he gives his gifts and graces whereby he is operative among them with his sanctifying power.⁵³

Note that the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit entail being joined really with the Catholic Church. Since this is more than a moral or intentional union, and more than just a relation of similarity, it can make sense only if the Catholic Church is the instrumental source of those gifts, or if, through the reception of those gifts, non-Catholics are made thereby, partially, and to the extent that they are sanctified, Catholic. This is necessarily the case if by such sanctification they are incorporated into Christ; for incorporation means becoming part of or being joined to his mystical body, the Church, which, as shown earlier, is (“*est*”) in its concrete form the Catholic Church.⁵⁴ Significantly, the Council correlates the notion of one’s degree of incorporation into Christ and his mystical body with the degree of one’s acceptance of and participation in the various spiritual and visible endowments (“elements”) constitutive of ecclesiality.⁵⁵ Those very means of salvation that flow from and belong properly to the Catholic Church are the medium of union with Christ, with his Church, and with the Holy Spirit. Any drawing nearer to Christ and his Spirit, whether this takes place within the social structures of the Catholic Church or beyond her visible boundaries, is always also, and inseparably, a drawing nearer to the Catholic Church and a concrete manifestation of its salvific presence.⁵⁶

Finally, the presence of the Catholic Church within separated Christianities is also attributed to the fact that those Christianities were, in their roots, once Catholic themselves. Precisely by what they *retain* of the Catholic Church, they are vestiges or faint images of the Church of Christ and partially informed by that Church, the Catholic Church.⁵⁷ What they possess of sanctification and of the means thereto, by which they are said to have an affinity with the Catholic Church, is the result of their previous unity with that Church, the patrimony of a lost identity. It is on this very basis that, speaking with reference to the Eastern churches which have retained a valid priesthood and Eucharist, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith affirms the operative presence of the Catholic Church within them:

The Churches which, while not existing in perfect communion with the

Catholic Church, remain united to her by means of the closest bonds, that is, by apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, are true particular Churches. Therefore, the Church of Christ is present and operative also in these Churches, even though they lack full communion with the Catholic Church.⁵⁸

In all of these ways, therefore, the Catholic Church is simultaneously a transcendent and immanent principle of the salvific content and action of every non-Catholic ecclesial community. Her very interiority (immanence), moreover, is itself a function of the qualitatively different (transcendent) manner in which the Church of Christ is realized in her. In this way, the salvific universality of the one Church of Christ is maintained along with its indivisible unity or singularity.⁵⁹

Differences in formal causality and in the efficient causal efficacy rooted therein

Following upon the fact that, thanks to her unity with Christ and the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church is “first” within the order of “ecclesiality” and, therefore, (instrumentally) the universal cause of all other ecclesiality, she is interior to her separated brothers as a *per se* cause is interior to its effect, that is to say, dynamically and according to the communication of form. Every effect receives from its non-univocal cause a formal perfection and unity which exists antecedently and in a pre-eminent manner within the cause itself. This implies the superior mode of realization characteristic of ecclesial elements found within the Catholic Church when compared with their realization among non-Catholic communities, as well as the *analogicity* of the ecclesial perfections in question, marked, on the one side, by integrity (including intensive perfection) and perseity, and, on the other, by partiality and essential causal subordination. This is part of the reason for which the Catholic Church alone may be described as the “universal sacrament of salvation,” since, with reference to redemption, she alone is fundamentally (if instrumentally) causal in everything she does as Church, while the salutary actions of every other faith community always operate as *effects* of the plenitude communicated to them through the Catholic Church and, in fact, inasmuch as they are one with her.

Of course, the effect of the Catholic Church upon her separated brethren is such, indeed, as to render them ecclesial, to unify them to herself, and to empower them to confer salutary effects both within and beyond the confines of their own communities. But just as their general ecclesiality is but a limited share in the full form of ecclesiality proper to the Catholic Church, so the efficacy of redemptive action on the part of separated Christianities is proportionately diminished, according to the principle: “the more perfectly an agent has the form by which it acts the greater its power to act.”⁶⁰ They too are causes, but their causality depends essentially (immediately and non-accidentally) upon that of the Catholic Church—who is, therefore, more responsible for the effects than they. Indeed, in their very causal agency, the Catholic Church is more the cause than they are, precisely because the power by which this action is performed belongs by right (and in reality), and *primo et per se*, to her; for “the cause of an action is the one by whose power the action is done rather than the one who acts: the principal agent, for instance, rather than the instrument.”⁶¹

This is a crucial point, and it is an important aspect of the thinking at Vatican II. The soteriological capacity of non-Catholic communions not only has its origin from the Catholic Church, but can be exercised only insofar as they are uninterruptedly sustained by the same Church. The present tenses of the verbs in the passages initially cited in this chapter express this truth.⁶² The Council did not say that ecclesial elements found within non-Catholic communions once *belonged* to the Catholic Church, or that they were *derived* from the Catholic Church, but that they *belong* (now) to her and *derive* (presently) from her. For all that is ecclesial within them, non-Catholic communions stand toward the Catholic Church as toward their proper cause to which they are essentially subordinated. Anything ecclesial, any saving work, that flows from them flows simultaneously and primarily from the Catholic Church, and the secondary role that they perform is itself performed by the power of the Catholic Church.⁶³

Summary of the general ways that the Catholic Church is in other communions

Vatican II, the post-conciliar magisterium, and the theological reasoning presented above all agree that the Catholic Church is in other communions in a number of

ways based on a number of complex factors. For the sake of clarity, it might be helpful to summarize the modes of this presence in simplified form. We can identify at least the following modes of presence on the part of the Catholic Church interior to non-Catholic communions:

- Her life and her instruments of salvation are in them. This includes sanctifying grace, habitual grace, character, sacraments, the inspired word of God, and other “elements.” Many of these constitute a visible presence of the Catholic Church and, in the manner described in the previous chapter, a real if anomalous extension of her bodiliness.
- She is in them by way of the saving power that is operative within and produces its effects through the concrete elements in them that serve as means of salvation. Much of this occurs by way of corporeal contact by reason of the visibility and corporeal use of sacred signs.
- Even when unable to act through visible points of contact with them, she is within and operates upon them through her spiritual power, or virtual contact. I examine this more fully below.
- She pervades the entirety of their being after the manner of an end, by reason of the plenitude of her spiritual goods toward which they are inclined on the basis of both natural and supernatural aptitudes.
- She is in them by the effects of her moral causality, as she witnesses to them, performs works of mercy for them, prays for them, and, above all, offers the Eucharistic sacrifice on their behalf and for the whole world.
- She is also in them in the individual members of these communities who, to varying degrees, are enlivened by Christ and able to mediate the message and

reality of salvation to others. Insofar as this is a fruit of the life of grace, the spiritual life of the Catholic Church is in these individuals and able to operate upon the lives of others whom they touch.

A question primarily of operative influence

The Catholic Church is “in” non-Catholic communions especially through the efficacy of her redemptive action. In the saving actions that take place outside her visible confines, it is she who acts in relation to other communions as a principal cause in relation to an instrumental cause, even as she is an instrument in relation to the primary causality of Christ (whose humanity is the conjoined instrument of the Word). Before examining this essentially subordinated causality more fully, let it first be noted that the instrumental hierarchization just described subtracts nothing from the power of God which is always immediate to all action and to every effect in creation. In a series of essentially subordinated efficient causes, not only is the power of the higher cause more responsible for the effect than that proper to its inferiors (and than that of all of them taken together), but it is also more intimate to and more interior to the effect than any other member of the series, even when, based upon the respective grades of being proper to the members of the series, the latter within the series exhibit a connatural mode of immediacy (proximity to the effect) not attributable to the higher.⁶⁴ Accordingly, God’s own power pervades the structure of all created agency, and the operative power proper to secondary causes is saturated with that of the primary cause, and the latter cause penetrates the being of the effect more deeply than those nearer to it in nature.⁶⁵ By virtue of these causal principles, everything accomplished in the economy of salvation belongs primarily and totally to God, at the same time that it belongs also totally, though in a subordinated way, to the humanity of the Lord, and to his Church. What belongs, furthermore, to the properly ecclesial action of any non-Catholic community of faith belongs primarily and totally to the Catholic Church, even as it belongs, in a subordinated way, also to that community.⁶⁶ Just, then, as the instrumental role of the Catholic Church subtracts nothing from the causal dignity and universality of Christ, the subordinated instrumental action carried out by non-Catholic ecclesial communities subtracts nothing from the causal dignity and universality of the Catholic Church, who, in the very salvific activity of

these communities, is more the cause than they, and whose power is more immediate to the effect than their own.

How can the Catholic Church act upon or within non-Catholic communions?

At a basic level, two things (amongst others) are required before an agent can exercise efficient causal action: (1) adequation of the agent to the effect in question; and (2) some kind of contact or conjunction between the agent and the patient.⁶⁷ Every cause must be proportioned to the kind of action it is to perform. Given that the Church always acts through, with and in Christ who, as her Head, is organically united to her in the one being of the whole,⁶⁸ there is no reason that she should not be proportioned to the supernatural operation here in question. In fact, the Church is about the salvation of the whole world, and she is called the “universal sacrament of salvation”⁶⁹ because she is proportioned (as an instrument organically united to Christ) as an indefectible and inexhaustible universal second cause in regard to salvific activity.⁷⁰

But something more than mere adequation is necessary for efficient causal activity. For an agent to act upon another, some kind of contact is required. If there exists no visible intersection between a non-Catholic communion and the Catholic Church, then she cannot, without the intervention of a visible medium, act upon that communion in a visible way; in the absence of such a medium, she will be able to act upon it only through some other form of contact.⁷¹ All efficient causal agency is based on some form of contact, either by way of substantial presence (as, for example, when a spiritual substance acts directly upon a corporeal substance, or the soul upon the body) or through the instrumentality of physical intermediaries.⁷² The principle applies to the redemptive economy not only by reason of metaphysical necessity, but also, in light of the Incarnation, by reason of theological propriety.⁷³

Now, the visible and institutional aspects of the Church’s nature as they are found within the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church cannot directly act upon anyone outside of the Church’s visible structures. But, setting aside moral causality (which I take up below), there exist two ways for the Catholic Church to act upon and within separated communions in an efficient causal manner. The

first of these is based, indeed, upon visible, corporeal contact; the second upon spiritual contact.

Within all Christian communions there exist not merely invisible gifts of the Holy Spirit, but visible and sensible gifts of the same Spirit—traditions, structures, signs, creeds, rites, etc.—all of which, because they belong to the Catholic Church and are parts of her own ecclesiality, constitute a corporeal means of contact with the Catholic Church, and, thereby, the instrumental means for salvifically efficacious actions. Each and every time these sensible ecclesial elements are used as instruments productive of or conducive to the supernatural life of grace, it is the Catholic Church who is there operative by way of sensible, corporeal contact.⁷⁴

There is also another way by which the Catholic Church is an efficient cause of salvation beyond her visible structures. By her spiritual power, the Catholic Church can directly touch other communions and act interior to them. As Aquinas explains, power is that whereby an agent acts upon other things that are external to it, and through the application of power to another, an agent is present to that other.⁷⁵ Now, the Church is an instrument of salvation according to a spiritual power. As a supernatural mystery consisting in a synergy between what is divine and what is human, the power wielded by Christ's Church is the power of God Incarnate:

The society structured with hierarchical organs and the Mystical Body of Christ, are not to be considered as two realities, nor are the visible assembly and the spiritual community, nor the earthly Church and the Church enriched with heavenly things; rather they form one complex reality which coalesces from a divine and a human element. For this reason, by no weak analogy, it is compared to the mystery of the incarnate Word. As the assumed nature inseparably united to him, serves the divine Word as a living organ of salvation, so, in a similar way, does the visible social structure of the Church serve the Spirit of Christ, who vivifies it, in the building up of the body.⁷⁶

The Catholic Church, in other words, is the locus in which and from which the saving power of Christ radiates. Ordinarily, this emanation (the distribution of graces) takes place through the instrumentality of visible signs, in particular, the

sacraments, but not necessarily. While the Church's spiritual power is applied to individual men and women in the most efficacious manner through visible signs, that power is not tied to the visible signs. Consequently, the Church has a spiritual power capable of operating in an invisible way, without the need for sensible contact.⁷⁷ Enriched with heavenly, incorporeal things, and filled with the indivisible Spirit of Christ, she applies this power and is made really present thereby even to communities external to her.⁷⁸ Accordingly, the Catholic Church is able to be "in" other communions by way of power (*per contactum virtutis*), comparable to the manner in which angels, for example, are (without being circumscribed in space) present to men and to the material bodies on which they act,⁷⁹ and comparable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the manner in which God is said to be present to all things by way of essence and power, whereby he holds them in being and governs their motion, respectively.⁸⁰ Indeed, the latter analogue better captures the relation between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communions, inasmuch as the existence, essential structures and actions of these communions *qua* ecclesial depend *per se* upon the Catholic Church. Through this very mode of presence, the First Cause is said to be more interior to all things than they are to themselves.⁸¹ By the same principle, with respect to what they have of Christ's Church, and in everything by which they are ecclesial, the Catholic Church is more interior to non-Catholic ecclesial communions as such than they are to themselves.⁸²

No dichotomy between spiritual power and bodily being

This depiction of the Catholic Church's spiritual activity beyond her visible boundaries is no species of dualism, dividing, as it were, the visible aspect of the Church from her invisible aspect, or what is divine in her from what is human. Nor does it commit the fallacy of predicating what is true of one part of a whole of another part on that account, as though the spiritual operations proper only to God were here predicated of what is human in the Church, or of predicating the part of the whole simply, as though the divine element in the Church were the Church simply. What I have affirmed is that the Church operates with a spiritual power by reason of what is divine in her. The Church is the subject of this operation, even if she is so only by virtue of that part of her that transcends the

sensible order. The situation is analogous to the relationship in Christ between his person and his divine nature: “Christ’s Passion, although corporeal, has yet a spiritual effect from the Godhead united; and therefore it secures its efficacy by spiritual contact.”⁸³ Such is the sense in which the Catholic Church’s spiritual contact with other communions must be understood; and *Lumen gentium* invites us to compare the mystery of the Church to that of the person of Christ⁸⁴ (even if it limits its comparison to the relationship between the divine person and his human nature and stops short of relating the same person in the flesh to his divinity).

But something more must be said about the manner in which the Church as a whole is the acting subject here. While it is true that only God can exercise the kind of power we are presently concerned with, the Catholic Church has for its Head, organically united with her, Jesus Christ. Thus it can be said that all the graces that are physically caused in souls by the instrumentality of Christ’s humanity are the fruit of the Catholic Church in its Head. Baptism in a Lutheran communion, for example, is related to the Catholic Church not only by reason of the fact that that sacrament belongs to and is part of the Catholic Church, and is thus something through which the Catholic Church is instrumentally operative by sensible contact, but also by reason of the spiritual operation of Christ, which is nothing other than the spiritual action of the Catholic Church in its Head. This mereological transitivity in ecclesiology, whereby the property or activity of the part is attributed to the whole, is comparable to that in eschatology, where it is said (as it is at Vatican II) that, in the person of Mary, the Church itself is already glorified.⁸⁵ Likewise, it is comparable to that in Mariology, where Mary’s spiritual maternity toward mankind is traditionally understood to have begun with the Incarnation when she conceived the Head of the body, wherefore theologians commonly say (as they said at Vatican II) that Mary conceived us at Nazareth.⁸⁶ Now, the Head is the Head only of the Catholic Church, for he is Head of the body which is identified with the Catholic Church, and a head is not the head of more than one body.⁸⁷ This means that the saving actions of Jesus Christ always involve, in an organic way, the Catholic Church which is his body. Even when operative outside of the instrumentality of sensible signs, therefore, the Church’s spiritual power is not independent of the visible Church: the visible Church of Christ is always involved in the communication of grace even when that grace is

communicated without visible instruments.⁸⁸

Combining the senses of “contact” by which the Catholic Church operates upon and within other communions, bringing together the greatest particularity and the greatest universality in causal principles—a breadth displayed in the individuality and diversity of ecclesial elements distributed among different communions, and in the simultaneously extensive and intensive comprehensiveness of the Church’s Christic influx—, one can conclude, synthetically, that all of the redemptive activity transpiring anywhere in the world is the work of the *Christus totus*, the activity of the whole Catholic Church, Head and members. As such, all saving actions are actions of Christ and of his Church, and of Christ acting through his Church, and of the Church acting by the power of Christ, who has made her, and her alone, the *sacramental* embodiment of his sacred humanity.⁸⁹

Liturgical causal efficacy

A theology of the Catholic Church’s causal relation to non-Catholic communities could not be complete without reference to her preeminent activity by which, in Christ, she redeems the whole world with an efficacy of boundless proportions. This is the celebration of the Christian rites, wherein the supremely pleasing, satisfactory and meritorious worship is rendered to God, and in which our very sanctification consists. Here we cannot enter into discussions regarding the inseparable relationship between the Church’s worship and her sanctification; or between the principal action of Christ and the subordinated action of his ordained ministers and the baptized; or many other complexities pertaining to sacramental causality and liturgical action in general. Nevertheless, several observations about the liturgy are necessary to fully appreciate the profound causal nexus that exists between the Catholic Church and all other communions, and the superordinate status that characterizes the Catholic Church alone in this regard, notwithstanding the fact that certain other Christian communions possess a full complement of liturgical rites.

Nothing can limit the intrinsic power of the Catholic Church’s worship in the orders of satisfaction and merit, due to her union with Christ and the identity of her worship with his own sacrificial worship of the Father. In, with, and through

Christ, the whole Church, and all of her members (the significance of whose influence resides primarily in the fact that they are members), pray for those who are separated from her. The efficacy of this causality, particularly in its sacramental form, cannot be underestimated:

Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of his Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.⁹⁰ ... It is the font from which all her power flows.⁹¹

This liturgy is the terminus toward which all sanctification is directed, and, therefore, toward which, to invoke the language and finality expressed in *Lumen gentium* 8, every Christian communion is “impelled.” Now, the sacramental rites involve much more than moral causality, and more than dispositive causality, inasmuch as they are (instrumentally) physical causes of grace. If the proximate supernatural effects of this physical causality are in most sacramental celebrations limited (materially speaking) to the recipients of the sacrament, the fact that the Eucharist contains the absolutely first principle of the whole supernatural order of grace (and this substantially) means that the agency there exercised is limited only according to the limits of Christ’s spiritual power, which, as illustrated above, admits of none. There is no human being, whatever his relationship to Christ’s Catholic Church, who cannot benefit directly from the salutary action of the Eucharistic Christ, and that is to say from the Catholic Church with whom (and with whom alone) he is conjoined.⁹²

To this form of worship, which is that of the whole Paschal Mystery in sign,⁹³ all other forms of ecclesial worship are ordered as toward their end, and from it all their efficacy derives.⁹⁴ By the power of this supreme form of worship (which is the Church’s most characteristic and principally defining activity), the causal power of all of the means of salvation derives. Every “element” found within any ecclesial communion thus finds the basis for its meaning and its *raison d’être* in the Church’s Eucharistic worship, and the latter ecclesial action exceeds in causal efficacy, intensively and extensively, every other ecclesial act, exhibiting a causal universality limited only by the Passion and salvific will of Christ.

Such causal influence is not common to all Christianities. Indeed, it is strictly

impossible among those communions stripped of apostolic succession and an authentic ministerial priesthood. Furthermore, even where in communions other than the Catholic Church the latter conditions obtain (in a defective, and, for what concerns the former, purely material way⁹⁵), those very conditions are aspects of the Catholic Church subsisting in their midsts, and their actuality is nothing less than a derivative of the being of the Catholic Church and a partial participation therein. In fact, when the supreme salvific action is exercised outside of the visible confines of the Catholic Church, as, for example, among the Orthodox churches, the acting subject is none other than the Catholic Church interior to the communities in question—which means that the incalculable effects of this most sacred sacrifice, wherever it is celebrated, are fruits of the Catholic Church.⁹⁶

Indeed, when the liturgical worship is Eucharistic, then all of the modes of operation attributed above to the Head of the mystical body are realized at once; and the instrumental role of the Catholic Church even in the effects of her visible structures (because it is through these that she is the instrument of the substantial presence of Christ) transcends the boundaries of space and the common necessity of physical contact to produce physical effects. Barring the obstruction of grace (*obex*), the effects of this worship are in the order of salvation directly transformative of non-Catholic communities and their members (as well as of the members of the Catholic Church), bringing about (in a manner concordant with the recipient) a real unity with Christ in his Catholic Church.

At the same time, of course, in the Eucharistic worship, and in every act of worship on the part of the body as a whole and of each of her living members, the Catholic Church exercises a moral causality; but, directly and immediately, this can bring about only a moral unity. This causal function is participable by all communions. Nevertheless, within the Catholic Church, where it is centered and grounded in a Eucharistic worship that is integrally perfect by reason of the latter's relationship to all the essential structures of Christ's Church, it has an efficacy outstripping that of all other Christianities.⁹⁷

In the same way that she is responsible for all ecclesiality, the Catholic Church is the source of all authentic religion

Though the attention thus far has focused on the Catholic Church's causal

relation to the ecclesial perfection of non-Catholic Christianities, the redemptive universality of Christ and his Church entails an isomorphic causal relationship on the part of the Church with respect to religious worship in general. More than once, the *Declaration on Religious Liberty* asserts the unicity of the authentic religion and affirms its identity with the worship of the Catholic Church, where, in the Council's own words, the fullness of true religion "subsists":

The council professes its belief that God himself has made known to mankind the way in which men are to serve him, and thus be saved in Christ.... We believe that this one true religion subsists in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, to which the Lord Jesus committed the duty of spreading it abroad among all men.... All men are bound to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and his Church ... the religious freedom which men demand in fulfilling their obligation to worship God ... leaves intact the traditional Catholic teaching on the moral duty of individuals and societies towards the true religion and the one Church of Christ.⁹⁸

Consistent with the Council's use of the term elsewhere, the term "subsists" occurs in this context, not to indicate the mere existence of the true religion within the Catholic Church, but to express the fact that it there exists in an integral and perfect manner, and by way of contrast with the manner in which authentic religion exists elsewhere. This is consonant, moreover, with the centuries-old terminology traditionally used to express the identity between the Catholic Church and the one true religion.⁹⁹

Just as there is but a single subsistence of Christ's Church and this Church subsists in the Catholic Church alone, on account of which the elements of truth and sanctification in other ecclesial communions have their origin from her and are expressions of their ordination toward her, so there is but a single subsistence of the religion desired by God and this religion subsists in the Catholic Church alone, on account of which all authentic religious elements found in other religious traditions derive from the religion of the Catholic Church and are expressions of the ordination of those traditions toward the religion of the Catholic Church.¹⁰⁰ Even if that within these religions that is authentically religious is not derived from

the Catholic Church in her visible dimensions, it is nevertheless derived from Christ, and from Christ as Head, organically united (always inseparably one) with his body.¹⁰¹ Thus, in some of the very same ways that the Catholic Church is the author of the ecclesial wealth and being of her separated brethren, she is also the author of all enduring pious religious sentiments, every heartfelt religious submission of intellect and will and every display of faithful adoration to be found anywhere among men or human communities.¹⁰²

This includes not only authentic religious acts of individuals, but also the authentic religious aspects of specific traditions found within non-Christian communities, all within those traditions that is conducive to acknowledging and adhering to the truth about the God of salvation and man's redemption.¹⁰³ The Catholic Church is the source of the supernatural infrastructures, those spiritual ligaments and vital energies, responsible for the authentically theocentric and theuarestic (God-pleasing) features found in non-Christian religious traditions, just as much as she is the font of the truly God-centered movements of heart and the authentic cultic dispositions and actions of the individuals who practice them.¹⁰⁴

This causality, like that regarding all elements of truth and sanctification, concerns the active presence of the Catholic Church within these communities and their traditions; and anything within these traditions efficacious in leading men toward salvation (by whatever instrumental capacity) is, as such, truly, if imperfectly, Catholic, and inclined toward its own perfection through its integration within the greater ecclesial mystery. In carrying out her mission of evangelization, the Church brings to completion the seeds of perfection—which are seeds of the Logos, and seeds of the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb—latent in the authentic religious traditions of non-Christian cultures.¹⁰⁵ Through their adaptation to the truth of Christ proclaimed by the Church and integration therewith, such traditions are purified and attain their fulfillment.¹⁰⁶ Note carefully that Christ is not only healer of the defects which abide among non-Christian religious traditions, but maker of whatever truth and grace may be found among them:

Whatever truth and grace are to be found among the nations, as a sort of secret presence of God, he frees from all taint of evil and restores to

Christ its maker (*Auctori suo*), who overthrows the devil's domain and wards off the manifold malice of vice. And so, whatever good is found to be sown in the hearts and minds of men, or in the rites and cultures peculiar to various peoples, not only is not lost, but is healed, uplifted, and perfected for the glory of God, the shame of the demon, and the bliss of men.¹⁰⁷

The Fathers of the Church have not failed to ponder this aspect of the universality of Christ's redemptive mediation, which is as trans-temporal as it is trans-spatial. In his view of Christ's action among every race of men in every age, Justin Martyr speaks of those who prior to Christ's coming in the flesh lived in accordance with the "logos" as *Christians*.¹⁰⁸ The upright among the pagans, moreover, are viewed as partially possessing and benefitting in an incomplete manner from the self-outpouring of the very same one who has poured himself out definitively in the fullness of time.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, the presence of truth and of ethically laudable action amongst those not having Christian revelation is something rooted in their relationship to Christ and consists, according to Justin, in a partial discovery of and adherence to him.¹¹⁰ Justin even indicates that the elements of truth and goodness among the nations are dim participations in the fullness proper to Christ and his People and imitations of the reality belonging to the latter,¹¹¹ at the same time that he asserts, much like *Unitatis redintegratio*, that such elements are the *property* of Christians.¹¹²

Irenaeus of Lyons and Clement of Alexandria corroborate these judgments. Commenting on Matthew 11:27 and Luke 10:22, Irenaeus ascribes the administration of all things, the source of all goodness and the revelation of every truth, from the beginning of the world, to the Son who was born of Mary.¹¹³ Now, if through the fragments of truth and goodness within their cultures and traditions the Son was actively revealing himself to men during the ages that preceded his coming in the flesh, and if the same Son was the author of all these goods, it follows that the same Son, who is now incarnate and mystically one with his Body, is the author today of everything conducive to salvation among non-Christian peoples and, through this, gently pointing and actively calling them to himself in his Church, the members of which constitute with him but a "single man."¹¹⁴ According to Clement, all the right thinking and righteousness among the

generations prior to Christ's coming in the flesh was driven by its finalization toward the fullness of the Gospel. This refers to something more than just a preparation for the Gospel (which, indeed, it is); it also represents for Clement a training and initial cultivation of their vocation in Christ Jesus who, in manifold ways, was actively calling and stirring them.¹¹⁵ The truth and everything profitable for life found anywhere beyond the visible confines of Christ's Church are not only a preparation for and stepping stone toward the fullness that is possessed and mediated by that Church, but have their very origin from and are an inchoate sharing in the fullness by which it is constituted.¹¹⁶

Similar, moreover, to the manner in which non-Catholic Christian communities are called by Christ to full Christian unity in the Catholic Church and gravitate toward her by an intrinsic impulse owing both to their splendid capacities and manifold forms of dependency in the order of ecclesiality, every human society (at least by virtue of the humanity its members share in common) and every human individual gravitates in some way toward the same Catholic Church by vocation as well as by reason of any gifts they may have received (and the actual bonds of dependency these imply) regarding all that is authentically religious.¹¹⁷ The primacy of the Catholic Church in the order of religion both makes of her the source of all authentic religion and entails the teleological ordering of all of the religious dimensions of human existence with reference to her:

All men are called to be part of this catholic unity of the people of God.... And there belong to or are ordered to it in various ways (*ad eamque variis modis pertinent vel ordinantur*), the Catholic faithful, all who believe in Christ, and indeed the whole of mankind, for all men are called by the grace of God to salvation.¹¹⁸

Not only are all religions, all human societies and all men called to unity in the Catholic Church, but they are said already to belong or to be ordered to her in some fashion. This truth brings once more into relief the redemptive universality and unicity of Christ's one Church. For this Church exists everywhere in some sense, and all belong to it in some way, owing to that "ordination" of which the Council speaks as well as the degree to which the "motion" it implies is actualized.

This “ordination” is not merely an objective or extrinsic possibility, lacking for its realization any intrinsic basis on the part of those called to ecclesial unity. Rather, it is something deeply rooted in the being of every human society as such and every human being as such, the ontological constitution of which is a really distinctive *potency*. With Aquinas, therefore, it is necessary to examine degrees of ecclesiality, like degrees of membership in the Church, in terms of potency and act.¹¹⁹ In so doing it becomes clearer how “those who have not yet received the Gospel are ordered ... to the people of God (*ad Populum Dei ... ordinantur*),”¹²⁰ and those Christian communities that are not fully Catholic “derive their efficacy from” and are “impelled toward” the Catholic Church. In this light, all things relevant to salvation point as toward their intrinsic *ratio* toward the one and only Catholic Church, and every mode of its realization represents a further coming into being of the Catholic Church. This teaching, which is that of the Council, is the diametrical opposite (and total repudiation) of religious indifferentism.¹²¹

Note on certain causal relationships interior to the Catholic Church herself

In the foregoing, I discussed the presence of elements of Christ’s Church in non-Catholic Christianities, and highlighted the differences between their instantiation within those communions and their instantiation in the Catholic Church. In this connection, the causal relationship between non-Catholic communions and the Catholic Church was also examined. Little was said, however, about the causal relationships existing between the Catholic Church and the essential features of Christ’s Church that are found within her. Regarding these relationships, there are several things to note. First, as was the case for the ecclesial elements discussed above, the Catholic Church is the ontological subject within which the essential features of Christ’s Church can subsist. In this regard, she is the concrete instantiation of the Church’s nature and, when viewed exclusively according to her historical, natural makeup, a material cause (receptive subject) with respect to the Church’s specifically constitutive nature. However, unlike the case of ecclesial properties found in non-Catholic communions, which have their being from the historically concrete Catholic Church,¹²² the Catholic Church does not efficiently cause the existence of her essential constitutive features. That would be viciously

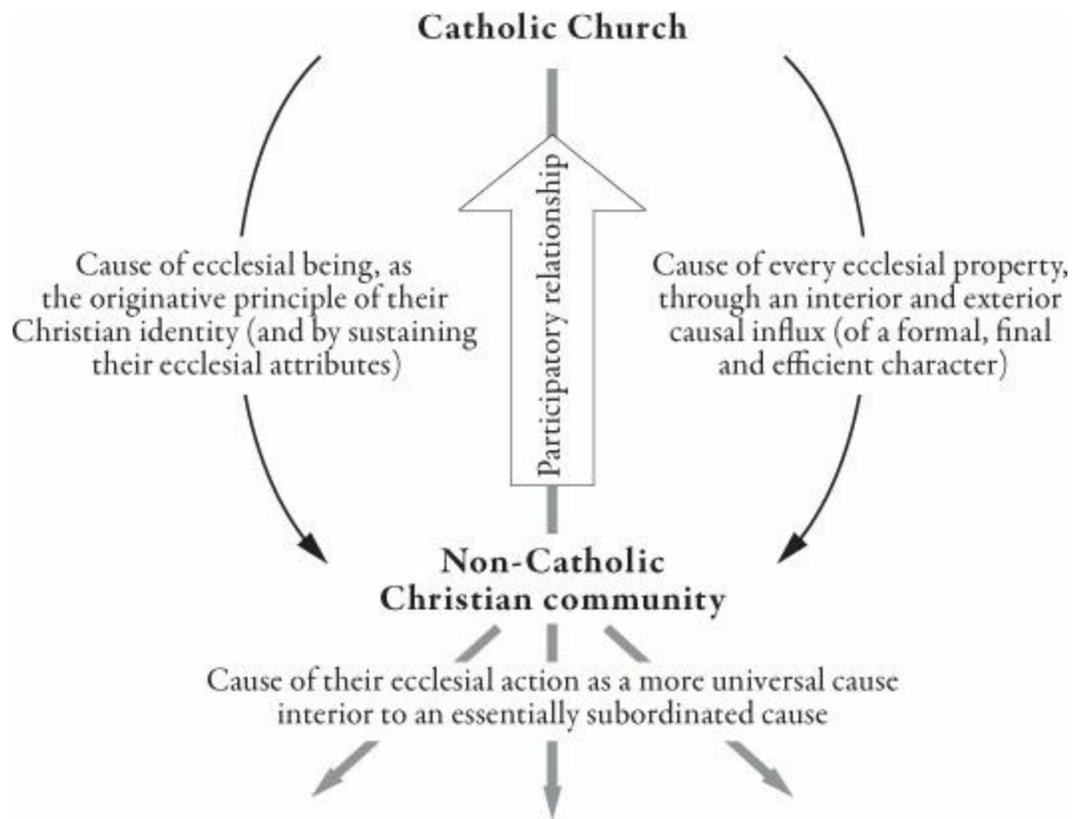
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To the contrary, it is those very features, communicated to her by Christ and the Holy Spirit, that make her to be the very Church she is, namely, the concrete embodiment of the one universal Church. In this way, Christ and the Holy Spirit are the efficient causes of the subsisting Church, a Church which has the one universal Church as formal cause and the visible assembly of the historically concrete Catholic Church as material cause. Viewed in her totality, the Catholic Church is plainly and simply the one Church of Christ in subsistent form. The situation is analogous to that of a natural composite of form and matter. It is only in abstraction from the formal cause by which a bodily substance is determined that its body is a material cause. Viewed as a composite and signified as a whole, the body is nothing other than a concrete instance of the specific nature in question. Similarly, as explained previously, when viewed according to her natural and non-essential endowments alone (human composition at a given moment, actual geographical extension, present ecclesiastical traditions as such, and so on), the historical Catholic Church, so signified, is a material cause of the subsisting composite and the receptive subject of what is formally constitutive of the Church. Viewed, however, according to her intrinsic unity with the formal cause, the historical Catholic Church is nothing other than the one Church of Christ subsisting.¹²³

Conclusion

In manifold ways, the Catholic Church operates upon and within every non-Catholic Christian community. The nature of this influence is complex. At a general level, it must be affirmed that the Catholic Church relates to all other Christian communities as the cause of their ecclesial being, the cause of their ecclesial properties, and the cause of their ecclesial action. She is, in the Christologically subordinated sense described above, a truly universal cause in the order of ecclesiality, and, therefore, in this phase of the history of salvation in which Christ acts on behalf of fallen man in spousal union with his Body, in the order of Redemption altogether.

The Catholic Church's universal causal relationship to non-Catholic Christianities regarding all things ecclesial can be represented in the following way:



The curved descending lines express the modalities according to which the Catholic Church is responsible for the ecclesial being and attributes of non-Catholic Christian communities. The central vertical line descending from the Catholic Church to non-Catholic Christian communities and branching out thenceforth represents the Catholic Church's role in the ecclesial action of non-Catholic Christian communities. The causal power of the Catholic Church, penetrates, actuates, and works in and right through non-Catholic Christian communities, down to each and every *per se* effect of their ecclesial activity, in the way that a superior causal principle within a series of essentially subordinated causes operates interior to the very action of its subordinated causes and is more responsible than they for the effect produced. The large arrow ascending from non-Catholic Christian communities toward the Catholic Church indicates the participatory relationship whereby the former look to the latter as to the source and exemplar of their ecclesial perfection, toward which they tend by reason of their very ecclesiality and which they approach by imitation and assimilation.

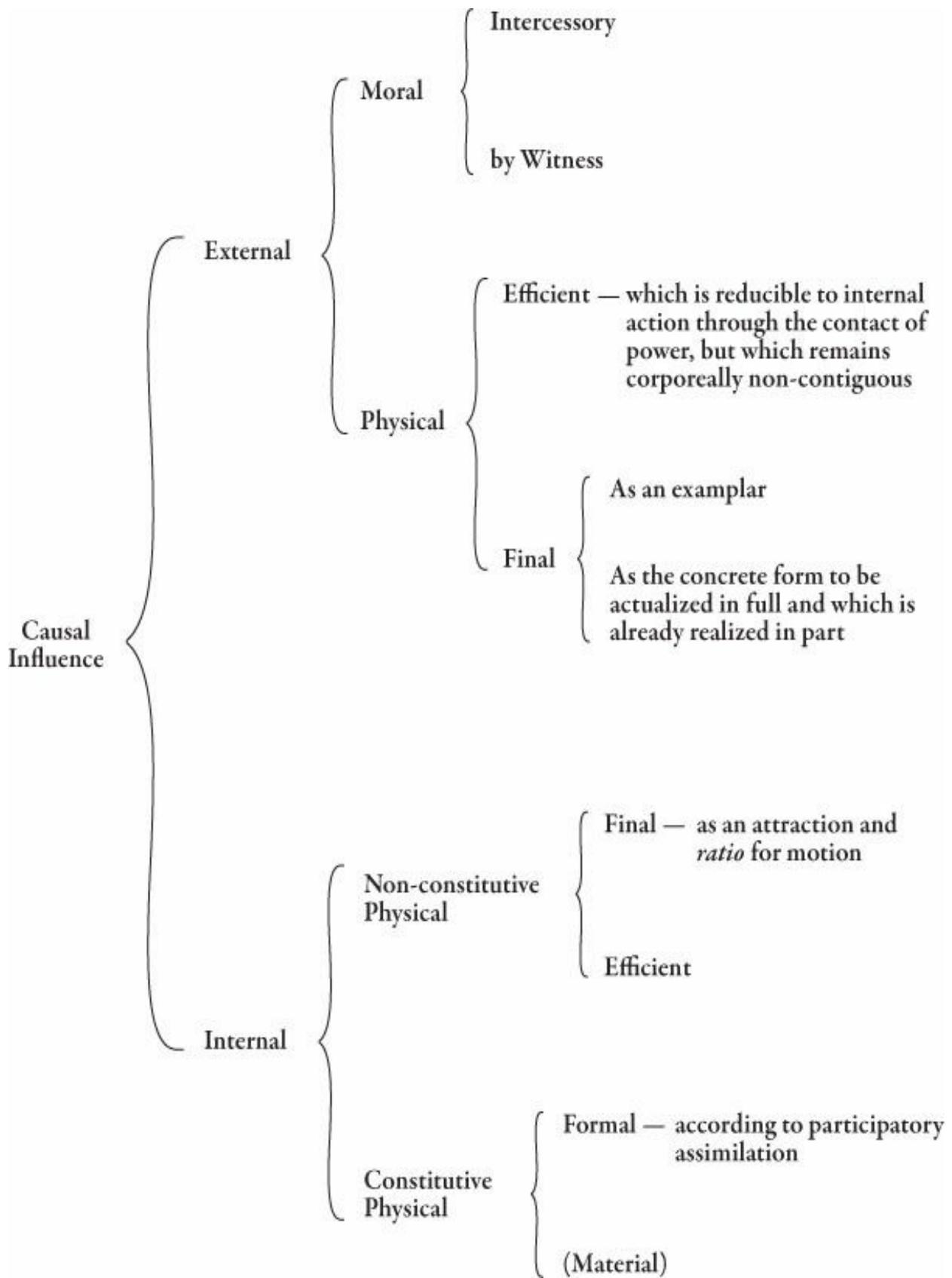
To summarize in more specific terms the nature of the Catholic Church's causal priority vis-à-vis her separated brethren, we might organize the relevant species of causality according to the following divisions.¹²⁴ To begin with, we could distinguish between external and internal causal influence. The Church's external causal activity is distinguished into her moral causality (consisting primarily of her intercessory power, but also in her institutional witness to the demands and

blessings of the Covenant¹²⁵), on the one hand, and her efficient operation by way of spiritual contact, on the other.¹²⁶ Her internal causal influence can be divided into efficient causality as well as a sort of derivative formal causality based on participation. She acts upon them according to an efficient causality *internally*, precisely to the extent that her action takes place through that within them according to which they are ecclesial (which concretely resides in their elements), while she acts upon them as an efficient cause *externally*, inasmuch as they are separated from her. To the extent that ecclesial elements in non-Catholic communities are Catholic and belong to the Catholic Church, they represent a real instantiation of the formal causes of her own ecclesial properties, even if these latter are there realized in an imperfect manner measured by the extent to which, existentially and concretely, they are separated from the fullness of the Catholic Church. Along with this formal causality, understood as a derivation from the Catholic Church along the lines of transcendent participation,¹²⁷ comes a certain material causality, following upon the individual conditions according to which those forms (which are extensions of her own formal perfection) are realized.¹²⁸

Lastly, the Catholic Church stands toward separated Christian communities (as she does toward all religions and all men) as a final cause and relates toward their being and influences their every ecclesial action accordingly. Because of the fullness of divine life which belongs to her, because she is the Spotless Bride of the Lamb, and because she is, as the *Christus totus*, the very Kingdom of God, she is the archetype (supreme realization) of “Church” and the very pattern of predestination in Christ;¹²⁹ and it follows that every ecclesial action, indeed, every salutary gesture, that transpires within non-Catholic communities takes place, consciously or not, with reference to and as tending toward the Catholic Church.¹³⁰ Now, as a final cause, she is exterior to them, as the terminus toward which their ecclesial life impels. As such a cause, however, she is, in a very particular sense, also interior to every non-Catholic community, in the manner peculiar to an end, inasmuch as they internally gravitate toward her by any dynamism of form within them having an ordination to her as toward its fuller actualization.¹³¹ She is thus an extrinsic goal that touches them also internally, at the very depths of their longing, by reason of her goodness that draws them (not as a moving cause, but as the reason for their movement and for all that moves within them).

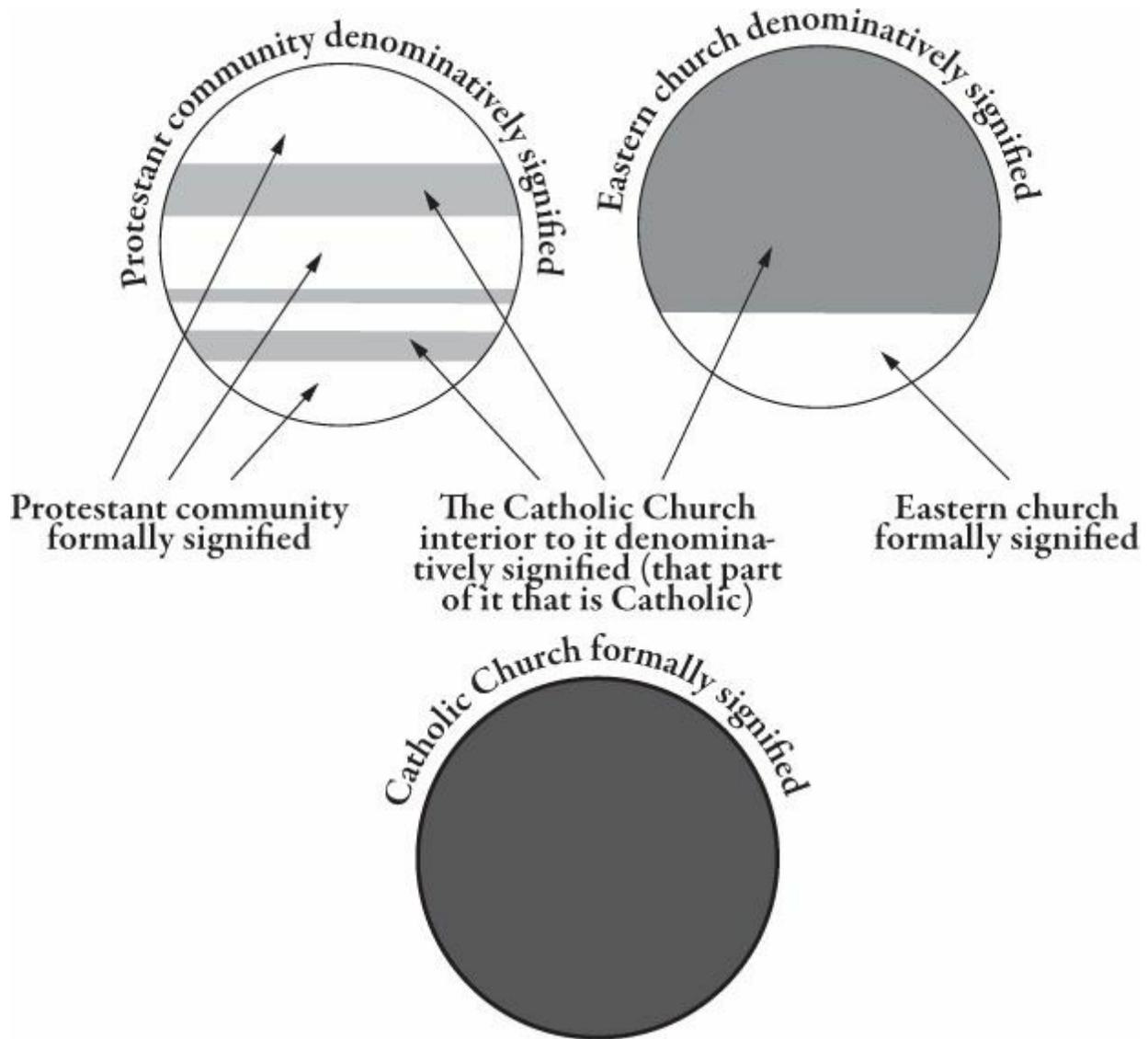
The divisions just outlined could be diagrammed as follows:

**CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TOWARD ALL NON-CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITIES**



It is important to observe, finally, that the Catholic Church exhibits no essential relation of dependence upon non-Catholic communions. The idea that the supernatural action of non-Catholic communions contributes to the ecclesial perfection of the Catholic Church is no exception to this rule. While it is not incorrect to affirm such a contribution when those communions are understood denominatively,¹³² formally signified—that is, when considered according to their particular confessional identity (that by which they are distinct from the Catholic Church)—no such contribution is possible. For even their prayers for the Catholic Church are able to be (dispositively) efficacious and to fruitfully impact the Catholic Church (in her members) only inasmuch as they flow from an authentic Christian holiness, which is to say, by reason of their formally Catholic status. For what concerns her supernatural edification as Church, then, not even in the order of dispositive moral causality can the Catholic Church be said to stand in an essential relationship of dependency towards any other human society.¹³³ She remains, in the end, the wholly universal font of salvation, supremely one, singular and self-sufficient, exclusive Bride and dwelling place of the Lord.

Lastly, the distinction between the ways that non-Catholic communions can be signified (due to their mixed, partially ecclesial and partially non-ecclesial, identities) can be helpful in sorting out the fundamental relationships of communion and severance that they bear toward the Catholic Church. All that is salutary in them belongs to them denominatively taken only, and is the living expression of the being of the Catholic Church within them. Everything about them formally signified represents, ecclesially speaking, a region devoid of the supernatural fullness of Christ, and, therefore, a place where Christ must build his Church. Each non-Catholic church and ecclesial community will enjoy a different degree of Catholic fullness with a corresponding degree of ecclesial emptiness, and, compared among themselves, the Catholicity within them will vary both as to its overall measure and as to the variegated range of “elements” each enjoys. In the following schematization of these relationships, the shaded regions represent the ecclesial fullness of a Christian community, while the empty regions represent their lack therein, rooted in their distance from the Catholic Church; note that the Catholic Church *formally* signified possesses the fullness of ecclesiality and each element thereof in a qualitatively superior manner, represented by the richer shading¹³⁴:



¹ *“Haec Ecclesia, in hoc mundo ut societas constituta et ordinata, subsistit in Ecclesia catholica, a successore Petri et Episcopis in eius communione gubernata, licet extra eius compaginem elementa plura sanctificationis et veritatis inveniuntur, quae ut dona Ecclesiae Christi propria, ad unitatem catholicam impellunt”* (*Lumen gentium*, 8).

² *“Ex elementis seu bonis, quibus simul sumptis ipsa Ecclesia aedificatur et vivificatur, quaedam immo plurima et eximia exstare possunt extra visibilia Ecclesiae catholicae saepta ... haec omnia, quae a Christo proveniunt et ad Ipsum conducunt, ad unicam Christi Ecclesiam iure pertinent”* (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3).

³ *“Proinde ipsae Ecclesiae et Communitates seiunctae, etsi defectus illas pati credimus, nequaquam in mysterio salutis significatione et pondere exutae sunt. Iis enim Spiritus Christi uti non renuit tamquam salutis mediis, quorum virtus derivatur ab ipsa plenitudine gratiae et veritatis quae Ecclesiae catholicae concredita est”*

(*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3).

- 4 Note here already that, if ecclesial elements are “forces impelling toward Catholic unity” (*Lumen gentium*, 8), and if they “come from Christ and lead back to Christ” (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3)—given the nearly tautological fact that they lead back to that toward which they tend—then they lead back to the Catholic Church, and are forces impelling toward Christ, precisely *by way of* union with his Catholic Church.
- 5 Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 56, a. 1 (quoting Aristotle, *Met.*, Bk. II, c. 1: 993b; see also Bk. X, c. 2: 1053b); see also Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 3; *De ente et essentia*, c. 6; *De spir. cr.*, a. 1, obj. 25.
- 6 John 1:16.
- 7 Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 56, a. 1. See also *In De caelo*, Bk. II, lect. 15: “The nature of a higher thing is participated in more by something closer to it than by something farther away from it” (English translation from F. Larcher and P. Conway, *Exposition of Aristotle’s Treatise On the Heavens* [Columbus, OH: College of St. Mary of the Springs, 1964], n. 440).
- 8 *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3.
- 9 The principle, as noted by Aquinas, applies to the divinely established natural order of things. Admittedly, on that basis alone it does not necessarily have to apply to God’s dealings with rational creatures in the supernatural order of redemption. Nevertheless, there is no reason (theological or otherwise) to assume it does not; quite contrarily, a traditional (and Biblical) understanding of the bestowal of eschatological rewards assumes it: “Consequently, the Word of God first bestows immortal life upon that body which is naturally united with himself, and through it works the resurrection in all other bodies” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 56, a. 1); “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ” (1 Cor 15:22–23). In fact, the same principle is customarily invoked among Mariologists to account (in part) for the privilege of the bodily Assumption/glorification of Mary, who is first to participate fully in the eschatological glorification extended by Christ to those he has drawn to himself. As a “type of the Church” (see *Lumen gentium*, 63), moreover, the applicability of the principle to Mary invites and, in a sense, necessitates its applicability to the Church.
- 10 Although, as God, Christ can operate from a distance, and although God can (and does) dispense his saving grace outside the sacraments, such a mode of communication is neither connatural to man nor to the means of salvation intended by God, the humanity of our Savior, of which the Catholic Church is the mystical extension. Christ wills to reach all humanity precisely through his Church, in a visible manner retaining all the intimacy characteristic of his visible mission on earth that began with the Incarnation. It is therefore the mission of the Church to be the universal source of salvation for the whole world, as the spousally-conjoined instrument of the Incarnate Word.
- 11 For what concerns all that is creaturely in the Church’s composition, her redemptive causality is “secondary” not only with reference to the primary agency of God as First Cause, but as subordinated to the principal agency of Christ and his Spirit, for whom that which is visible in the Church, like Christ’s own humanity, serves as an instrumental cause in relation to the divinity.
- 12 *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3 (emphasis mine).
- 13 John 1:14.
- 14 1 Tim 3:15.
- 15 This nowise undercuts the universal primacy of Christ in the order of grace and truth. He remains “first” in that order, while the Church is a sort of “first” only in the order of ecclesiality, which signifies an order

instrumentally subordinated to the personal mystery of Jesus Christ. Of course, considered in its Head who is Christ, the Catholic Church itself could, in a theologically orthodox sense, be denominated “first” in the order of grace, but this follows only upon the special mode of signifying the whole according to a part, the logical justification for which in this case lies in the organic unity existing between the Head and his members, and in the fact that the Head in question virtually contains everything formally perfective of the body (thus, for similar reasons, Christians are said to have been “conceived at Nazareth” and to have been “born at Calvary,” inasmuch as they and their destiny are ontologically and supernaturally included in the Head). In the words of the CDF, “He himself is in the Church and the Church is in him (cf. John 15:1ff.; Gal 3:28; Eph 4:15–16; Acts 9:5)” (CDF, *Dominus Iesus*, 16. See also Col 1:26–28).

- 16 Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, c. 6.
- 17 On account of her preeminence in the order of ecclesiality as such (and her corresponding preeminence with regard to all the means of salvation), moreover, each ecclesial action of the Catholic Church as such exceeds in causal efficacy any similar ecclesial action on the part of non-Catholic communions, for “the more perfectly an agent has the form by which it acts the greater its power to act” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 25, a. 2).
- 18 That the participatory schema is a proper framework for philosophically articulating the soteriological bonds existing between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communities is further reflected in the Council’s contrasting use of the concepts of “fullness” and of “partiality” with respect to the Catholic Church and non-Catholics, respectively. This connection was made above when taking up the statement from *Unitatis redintegratio*, 13 referring to the partial (*ex parte*) existence of Catholic traditions and institutions within the Anglican communion.
- 19 Aquinas, *De pot.*, q. 3, a. 5.
- 20 See chapter three, “*Degrees of ecclesiality set differing communions and their ‘elements’ apart from one another*”; cf. chapter two, note 42.
- 21 For overviews of the various kinds of participation in the thought of Aquinas, see Cornelio Fabro, *La Nozione Metafisica di Partecipazione secondo S. Tommaso d’Aquino*, 3rd ed. (Torino: Societa Editrice Internazionale, 1963), 24–35; 317–329; Cornelio Fabro and B. M. Bonansea, “The Intensive Hermeneutics of Thomistic Philosophy: The Notion of Participation,” *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 27, no. 3, “A Commemorative Issue: Thomas Aquinas, 1224–1274” (1974): 469–476; L. B. Geiger, *La Participation dans la Philosophie de S. Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1942), 26–31, 77–82, 238–243; Rudi A. te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 11–15, 66–79.
- 22 Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 56, a. 1, ad 3.
- 23 For reasons of length, I offer here only a superficial discussion of the formal causal dimension and largely prescind from questions related to material causality, the complexities of which were already noted in chapter three; see chapter three, “*Further consequences of this defectiveness*”; and “*The ‘partial’ ‘in-existence’ of ecclesial elements in non-Catholic communions.*”
- 24 “Whatever is participated is determined to the mode of that which participates and is thus possessed in a partial way and not according to every mode of perfection” (Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. I, c. 32).
- 25 “*Omne participans aliquid comparatur ad ipsum quod participatur ut potentia ad actum: per id enim quod participatur fit participans actu tale*” (Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. II, c. 53) (translation mine). See also

Aquinas, *De subst. sep.*, c. 3: “Every participating being must be composed of potency and act. For that which is received as participated, must be the act of the participating substance itself” (English translation from *Treatise on Separate Substances*, trans. F. Lescoe [West Hartford, CN: Saint Joseph College, 1959], no. 16); *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 4: “Everything participated is compared to the participator as its act... Now participated existence is limited by the capacity of the participator”; *Quodl.* III, q. 8, a. 1: “Everything which participates is related to what is participated as potency to act” (“*Omne autem participans se habet ad participatum, sicut potentia ad actum*”) (translation mine). See also Aquinas, *De spir. cr.*, a. 1.

- 26 The anthropological and Christological conditions for this to take place are beautifully set forth in the thought of the Angelic Doctor under his treatment of the Headship of Christ and of the degrees according to which men are incorporated within the Mystical Body of Christ; see especially, Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 8.
- 27 “Everything which is participated is related to the participant as its act (“*Omne participatum comparatur ad participans ut actus eius*”)” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 4) (see related references just above).
- 28 See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 4, a. 3; q. 6, a. 1; q. 19, a. 2; *De ver.*, q. 21, a. 4; q. 23, a. 5; *De pot.*, q. 7, a. 1, ad 8; *In De hebd.*, lect. 2, n. 24; *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. II, c. 24.
- 29 Such a relationship, we must add, is fully expressed in the notion of instrumental causality conceptually inherent in that of “universal sacrament of salvation.”
- 30 This is exactly the sense of *Lumen gentium* 8: “These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity” (emphasis mine). Metaphysically expressed, because every effect resembles the form of its agent, and because everything acts in accordance with its form, every effect has an inclination toward its end in accordance with what it has received from its agent and toward that very agent as toward its own perfection. For this chain of reasoning, see (in their unity) Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 4, a. 3; q. 5, a. 5; and q. 6, a. 1. It is important to note that the effect of the dependency relationship characterizing non-Catholic ecclesial communities amounts to more than merely being affected by the cause, receiving from it some formal perfection statically conceived; it also implies the capacity to similarly, though in a more limited way (and always by way of dependency on what it has, in fact, received from the cause) extend that power to further effects. “[In the case of a mover and a moved],” explains Aquinas, “the moving body through its power changes the body immediately next to it, which, thus changed, is able to change another, unto the ultimate term” (Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 1). (As the remainder of the article makes clear, the principle applies equally, *mutatis mutandis*, to the causal influence of spiritual substances). Thus their very receptivity from the Catholic Church provides the basis for the salvific operations of non-Catholic communions and the *ratio* for which the Holy Spirit can employ them as instruments of salvation.
- 31 “Now everything seeks after its own perfection; and the perfection and form of an effect consist in a certain likeness to the agent, since every agent makes its like; and hence the agent itself is desirable and has the nature of good. For the very thing which is desirable in it is the participation of its likeness” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 6, a. 1).
- 32 See, in particular, chapter three, “*The ecclesial status of ‘elements’ and the language of ‘defect.’*”
- 33 Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 4: “To be everywhere primarily is said of that which in its whole self is everywhere; for if a thing were everywhere according to its parts in different places, it would not be primarily everywhere, forasmuch as what belongs to anything according to part does not belong to it primarily.”

- ³⁴ This is not to say that the *members* of the Catholic Church are perfectly holy, fully united to one another, or suitably efficacious in the performance of apostolic works (and so on). The fullness of the Catholic Church has its fundamental root in the supernatural gifts that adorn her, principal among which are Christ himself who, as Head of the Church, is organically one with his body, and the Holy Spirit, after which the plenitude of the sacramental means of salvation. As such, the Catholic Church is indefectibly holy, the spotless bride of the Lamb. Nevertheless, she remains *semper reformanda*, inasmuch as the plenitude of perfection already proper to the Church as such has yet to be fully appropriated and interiorized subjectively by every one of her members: “For although the Catholic Church has been endowed with all divinely revealed truth and with all means of grace, yet its members fail to live by them with all the fervor that they should” (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 4).
- ³⁵ Following *Unitatis redintegratio* 3, it is precisely by imitation of, as similitudes of, the all-embracing means of salvation which is the Catholic Church that they can benefit from the means of salvation and serve as instruments thereof. The nature of the causal relationship between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communions necessitates the qualitatively surpassing “ecclesiality” of the Catholic Church; for “effects are said to be like their causes, inasmuch as they have the form of their causes; but not conversely, for the form is principally in the cause, and secondarily in the effects” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 42, a. 1, ad 3).
- ³⁶ As stated earlier, the nearer a thing is to an active cause, the more it participates in its causal influence, or (in the case of free agency) the more it is able to so participate. Those Christian communities that are more fully united with the Catholic Church partake of her plenitude and causal influx, and thus of “ecclesiality,” more fully than those less united with her. In this context, the notion of “proximity” and “distance” should be taken ontologically and spiritually; wherefore, the greater a non-Catholic community’s participation in some respect in the fullness proper to the Catholic Church, the nearer it is to it in that respect. This general dispositional measure of proximity, by which non-Catholic Christian communions can be differentiated from one another according to their respective complements of “elements” and the integrity thereof, cannot fully represent, however, the dynamic, ever-transforming manner in which they experience their spiritual proximity/distance from the Catholic Church. Proximity with that universal instrumental cause of salvation is uninterruptedly shaped by the various (active) modes of contact existing at any given moment between those communions and the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church exercises her saving action interior to her separated brethren in manifold ways, some of which involve a more intimate mode of contact than others, such that an ecclesial communion can be, in that respect and for the duration of the causal action in question, that much closer to the Catholic Church and thereby partake more intensely of her salutary power, while, nevertheless, ceasing to enjoy that mode of proximity in the very next instant. The degree of proximity with the Catholic Church must, therefore, be conceived organically, as something constantly expanding and contracting, and as a mystery to the Church in this life, the secret of which is apparent to God alone who governs it by his Breath.
- ³⁷ Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 3.
- ³⁸ Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 115, a. 1: “In proportion as a thing is participated, so, of necessity, must that be participated which is proper thereto; thus in proportion to the participation of light is the participation of visibility.”
- ³⁹ “Whatever is through another is to be reduced to that which is of itself” (Aquinas, *De pot.*, q. 3, a. 5).
- ⁴⁰ This filial relation to the Catholic Church characterizes the non-Catholic Eastern churches as much as any of the ecclesial communities born of the Reformation. The Catholic Church is the “mother” of every

church and, indeed, of all the faithful everywhere. See R. Bellarmine, *Explicatio Symboli Apostolici*, a. 9: *Opera Oratoria Postuma: Documentis variis ad gubernium animarum spectantibus* (Rome: Pont. Universitatis Gregoriana, 1942–1969), 10:142–147. As noted by C. Malloy, although non-Catholic Christian communions are endowed with a measure of ecclesiality, “because they lack an internal principle constitutive of church they can, it seems, bear only the effects of having the Church’s form” (“*Subsistit In*,” 30). It is easy to see how this accurately depicts Protestant communities; but it is important to note that it likewise applies to the separated churches of the East, who no more possess their ecclesiality in a way independent of the causal influence of the Catholic Church than the communities born of the Reformation. I develop this further below and in chapter six, but I should point out now that, even if recognized as “churches,” these communities, lack, indeed, an internal principle constitutive of church, notably, Primacy (universally conceived), and arguably other factors associated with its rejection related to an integral profession of faith.

- ⁴¹ On the use of this expression in ecumenism, see CDF, “Note on the Expression ‘Sister Churches,’” *Origins* 30, no. 14 (2000): 222–224; *Communio notio: AAS* 85 (1993): 838–850; John Paul II, *Ut unum sint: AAS* 87 (1995): 921–982; Will Cohen, “Clarifying the Doctrine of Sister Churches: Subsistence and Interdependence in Catholic-Orthodox Relations,” *Pro Ecclesia* 24 (2015): 343–365 (hereafter “Clarifying the Doctrine of Sister Churches”); *The Concept of ‘Sister Churches’ in Catholic-Orthodox Relations since Vatican II* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2016); Yves Congar, “Le développement de l’évaluation ecclésiologique des églises non-catholiques,” *Revue de droit canonique* 25 (1975): 169–198; Adriano Garuti, “Chiese sorelle’: Realtà e interrogative,” *Antoniano* 71 (1996): 631–686; Waclaw Hryniewicz, “The Cost of Unity: The Papal Primacy in Recent Orthodox Reflection,” *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 55 (2003): 1–27; Emmanuel Lanne, “Églises-soeurs: implications ecclésiologiques du *Tomos Agapis*,” *Istina* 20 (1975): 47–74; Hervé Legrand, “La théologie des Églises Soeurs: Réflexions ecclésiologiques autour de la déclaration de Balamand,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 88 (2004): 461–496.
- ⁴² See Will Cohen, “Clarifying the Doctrine of Sister Churches,” 345.
- ⁴³ In some ways, the conflation between the Roman Catholic Church and the Catholic Church is justified, and I comment on their inseparability just below; but one must not completely identify them when signifying the former according to the specifically Western ecclesiastical traditions that have shaped its experience and physiognomy in contradistinction from the authentic ecclesiastical traditions of the separated Oriental churches. One must likewise keep in mind that the Catholic Church includes many churches besides the Latin church. There presently exist twenty-four *sui iuris* Catholic churches grouped into eight principal rites. These have their own liturgies, hierarchies and apostolic origins, but they are part of the one Catholic Church, recognizing the successor of Peter as the visible principle and foundation of their common corporate unity (see *Lumen gentium*, 23).
- ⁴⁴ Lateran Council IV, c. 3: DH 807.
- ⁴⁵ Lateran Council IV, c. 5: DH 811 (emphasis mine); cf. Second Council of Lyons: DH 850; Council of Trent: DH 1616; Pius IX, *Qui pluribus*: DH 2781; for further references, see C. Malloy, “Is Exclusive Identity Compatible with Ecumenism,” note 54.
- ⁴⁶ Benedict XVI, *General Audience*, St. Peter’s Square, March 28, 2007 (emphasis mine).
- ⁴⁷ “With this Church, by reason of its preeminent origin, every church must necessarily agree, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as, to the benefit of all the faithful, the apostolic Tradition has been

preserved in her” (Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, Bk. III, c. 3, n. 2: translation adapted from A. Rousseau, *Contre les hérésies: Dénonciation et réfutation de la gnose au nom menteur* [Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985], 279–280); “Where Peter is, there is the Church” (“*Ubi ergo Petrus, ibi Ecclesia*”) (Ambrose, *Enarr. in ps.* 40, 30: PL, vol. 14, n. 879; CSEL, vol. 64, 250); and many others (Ignatius, Tertullian, Cyprian, etc.).

- ⁴⁸ As this volume demonstrates, the relationship between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic churches spells itself out not merely in terms of an asymmetry based on degrees of fullness, but also in terms of a strict and one-way causal dependency in the essential order. Even the special role of Mary as “universal Mother in the order of grace” (see *Lumen gentium*, 62) and preeminent member of the visible Church of Christ confirms the essential causal subordination of all non-Catholic Christian communities to the Catholic Church. Note that the fact that the Catholic Church’s “motherhood” can stand at the origin of so many disparate ecclesial communities has its principles in a variety of factors; see chapter four, note 59, describing how different effects can follow from one cause. Of course, the Catholic Church never engendered schismatic or heretical communities; rather she engendered complete churches which, in stripping themselves of part of their ecclesial identity and heritage, have distanced themselves to a greater or lesser extent from their maternal principle.
- ⁴⁹ “All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to Christ, belong by right to the one Church of Christ” (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3).
- ⁵⁰ CDF, *Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church*, 2007. The same reasoning had already been developed by John Paul II in *Ut unum sint* 11: “To the extent that these elements are found in other Christian communities, the one church of Christ is effectively present in them.”
- ⁵¹ *Lumen gentium*, 8.
- ⁵² This is the interpretation of the CDF which, commenting on the proper understanding of the Council’s differentiated use of the language of “subsistence,” on the one hand, and “elements of sanctification and of truth,” on the other, states: “The Council chose the word “*subsistit*” specifically to clarify that the true Church has only one ‘subsistence,’ while outside her visible boundaries there are only ‘*elementa Ecclesiae*’ which, *being elements of the same Church, tend and lead to the Catholic Church*” (emphasis mine) (CDF, *Notification: AAS 77* [1985]: 758–759). Note well the inferential language and the fact that the formal identity between the elements and the adornments of the Church from which they derive is depicted as the basis for their tending back toward her. “Upon the form follows an inclination to the end, or to an action ... for everything, in so far as it is in act, acts and tends towards that which is in accordance with its form” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 5, a. 5; see Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 1: “A thing is perfect so far as it attains to its principle.”
- ⁵³ *Lumen gentium*, 15. Notice that the Council is here speaking about individual members of non-Catholic communities and not of the communities as such. This accounts for the possibility of speaking of “incorporation,” since, as demonstrated in the preceding chapters, no non-Catholic community as such can ever become a part of the one Church of Christ.
- ⁵⁴ Should the language of “incorporation” seem too strong, as it can suggest the idea of “membership” which, as traditionally understood, is dependent upon *visible* communion with the Church, then some analogous notion of contact with Christ and with his mystical body (one effecting an invisible belonging/integration) would suffice to verify, in the same way and to the same degree, the Catholicity of the individuals in question. Of course, the Council deploys a notion of incorporation far from necessarily

implying the idea of membership visibly conceived. There are different perspectives from which to define and assess membership in the Mystical Body, and incorporation can be viewed either from the mystical perspective based on grace or the visible perspective based on the social, institutional nature of the Church. Note carefully, however, that, even when considered exclusively from the former of these two perspectives, incorporation always pertains to the whole mystery of Christ's Church, at once recondite and visible, so that even purely spiritual incorporation always means incorporation in the social, visibly and hierarchically structured body that is the mystical communion of grace. It is, however, theologically permissible to speak of an imperfect membership at one level without implying membership at the other, provided we understand it to signify a mode of belonging to a community always defined in terms of both, and provided we understand that *perfect* membership at either level necessarily includes membership at the other. See in this regard James M. Egan, "The Sin of Schism: A Contribution to the Discussion of Membership in the Church," *The Thomist* 27 (1963): 59–77; Emilio Sauras, "The Members of the Church," *The Thomist* 27 (1963): 78–87.

- 55 Besides the passage just cited, see especially *Lumen gentium*, 14: "They are fully incorporated in the society of the Church who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept her entire system and all the means of salvation given to her, and are united with her as part of her visible bodily structure and through her with Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops."
- 56 "Union with Christ is also union with all those to whom he gives himself. I cannot possess Christ just for myself; I can belong to him only in union with all those who have become, or will become, his own" (Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 14). In this light, to tend toward Christ is to tend toward the community of salvation he has won, toward his one Church and the full realization of ecclesial communion that is available in the Catholic Church alone. For the Catholic, this entails continuously growing in spiritual communion with every Christian in Jesus Christ. For the non-Catholic, it entails not only what has just been noted with regard to the Catholic, but also (and more fundamentally) moving toward full visible communion with the Catholic Church, the latter of which mode of communion with Christ is both the expression of the former and the indispensable condition for its perfect realization. On the latter condition for the perfection of charity and the notion of an authentically Christ-centered "ecclesial charity," see Charles Journet, *Theology of the Church*, 168–186.
- 57 See *Unitatis redintegratio*, 19: "Yet they have retained a particularly close affinity with the Catholic Church as a result of the long centuries in which all Christendom lived together in ecclesiastical communion"; and *Unitatis redintegratio*, 4: "Catholics must joyfully acknowledge and esteem the truly Christian endowments derived from our common heritage (*a communi patrimonio promanantia*), which are to be found among our separated brethren." Noteworthy, the verb "to preserve" and its cognates are prevalent throughout *Lumen gentium* and *Unitatis redintegratio* where the notion of preservation is presented as a principle by which to determine the authenticity and integrity of ecclesial elements and of the whole ecclesial mystery both with respect to the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communities.
- 58 CDF, *Dominus Iesus*, 17 (for the context and criterion of historical continuity, see a. 16); cf. *Unitatis redintegratio*, 22.
- 59 Consideration of the indivisibility (and unicity) of the Catholic Church in conjunction with the indefectibility and universality of her (instrumental) salutary power might raise questions regarding the multiplicity of the effects that proceed from her. Why is it the case that, if she communicates to other communions her very self (something of her own form) and does so as a self-sufficient means of grace and truth, the degrees to which her very ecclesiality is brought about in other communions are so disparate?

Although something of the Catholic Church is communicated to her separated brethren, and although the Catholic Church is one and indefectible as an instrument of salvation, she is, nevertheless, interior to these communions in differentiated ways that vary by degrees, marked by the limited ecclesial perfection of each. These differentiated modes of her presence are a function, first of all, of the differences between the societies dependent upon her. The fact that *quidquid recipitur, recipitur secundum modum recipientis* accounts for a wide-ranging diversity among the effects of the Catholic Church's causal influence upon non-Catholic communions. Of course, the "mode of the receiver" in the present context is as much a function of the particular (to a great extent culturally-determined) dispositions that characterize a community of faith as of the community's basic (largely confessionally defined) affinity with (proximity to) the Catholic Church, each of which factors are highly complex and continually, and organically, undergoing change. The Spirit alone knows the latent potentialities, fruitful points of contact, tributaries of healing ingress, and impasses that trace at any given moment the interface between the Catholic Church in her visibility and her separated brethren. As for the unity of the Catholic agency in regard of their multiplicity: "Every effect which is not an adequate result of the power of the efficient cause, receives the similitude of the agent not in its full degree, but in a measure that falls short, so that what is divided and multiplied in the effects resides in the agent simply, and in the same manner; as for example the sun by exercise of its one power produces manifold and various forms in all inferior things" (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 5). The causal influx of the Catholic Church brings about different effects within different communities, but these differences are not inherent in the mode according to which the formal perfections of those effects belong to her.

⁶⁰ Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 25, a. 2; see *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 42, a. 1: "things of a more perfect nature are more powerful to act."

⁶¹ Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. III, c. 67. See Aquinas, *Super De causis*, prop. 1: "Any characteristic belongs more eminently to the cause than to the effect. But the activity by which the second cause causes an effect is caused by the first cause, for the first cause aids the second cause, making it act. Therefore, the first cause is more a cause than the second cause of that activity in virtue of which an effect is produced by the second cause.... Therefore, that the second cause is the cause of its effect is due to the first cause. To be the cause of the effect, therefore, lies primarily in the first cause and only secondarily in the second cause.... The effect, then, proceeds from the second cause only through the power of the first cause. The power of the first cause thus enables the effect to be affected by the power of the second cause" (English translations for *Super De causis* are taken from *Commentary on the Book of Causes*, trans. V. Guagliardo, C. Hess and R. Taylor Taylor [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996]). The ecumenical application of this metaphysical principle is found already in Augustine; see *De baptismo contra Donatistas*, Bk. I, c. 10, no. 14: "There is one Church which alone is called Catholic; and whenever it has anything of its own in these communions of different bodies which are separate from itself, it is most certainly in virtue of this which is its own in each of them that she, not they, has the power of generation" (BA, 29:14; NPNF-1, 4:417–418); cf. *In Ioann.*, tract. VI, 13–17. Augustine also anticipates the language of the Council regarding the basis for the salutary benefit of ecclesial acts on the part of non-Catholics: "it is only through Christ's Catholic Church, which is 'the all-embracing means of salvation,' that they can benefit fully from the means of salvation" (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3); "and yet it may be that one may have baptism apart from the dove; but that baptism apart from the dove should do him good, is impossible" (Augustine, *In Ioann.*, tract. VI, 13; NPNF-1, 7:44). See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 64, a. 9, ad 2, where he also references Augustine: "Be well assured and have no doubt whatever that those who are baptized outside the Church, unless they come back to the Church, will reap disaster from their Baptism." The *Decree for*

the Jacobites in the Bull of Union, *Cantate Domino*, of the Council of Florence forcefully affirms the ultimate inefficacy of all ecclesial communions withdrawn from Catholic unity: “She firmly believes, professes and preaches that none of those who are outside of the Catholic Church, not only pagans but also Jews or heretics and schismatics, can share in eternal life and that they will go into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless they are joined to the Catholic Church before the end of their lives; that the unity of the ecclesiastical body is of such importance that only for those who abide in it do the Church’s sacraments contribute to salvation and do fasts, almsgiving and other works of piety and practices of the Christian militia produce eternal rewards; and that nobody can be saved, no matter how much he has given away in alms and even if he has shed his blood in the name of Christ, unless he has persevered in the bosom and the unity of the Catholic Church” (DH 1351).

⁶² See James T. O’Connor, “The Church of Christ and the Catholic Church,” in *The Battle for the Catholic Mind*, ed. William May and Kenneth Whitehead (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2001), 258–259.

⁶³ The discussions surrounding the relevant passages of *Unitatis redintegratio* leave no doubt as to the intention of the Council. With regard to article three of the Decree, the *relatio generalis* of October 10, 1964 explaining the *modi* to the schema reports the concern among some bishops over describing non-Catholic communions as “means of salvation,” given that “separated communions, as such, theologically speaking, cannot be called ‘means of salvation’ (*Communitates separatae, ut sic, non possunt theologice vocari ‘media salutis’*)” (AS, vol. III, part 7, 35). The Commission’s response affirms the theological reasoning set forth above and sheds greater light on the causal nexus between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communions: “Without a doubt, God makes use of these separated Communities, not indeed as separated, but insofar as they are informed (*informatis*) by the aforementioned ecclesial elements (*Deus procul dubio utitur ipsis Communitatibus seiunctis, non quidem qua seiunctis, sed qua informatis praedictis elementis ecclesialibus*)” (ibid.). Note the language of “in-formation,” which forcefully captures the essential and participatory nature of the priority-posteriority relationship between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communities. Similarly, another *ratio* expresses fear of the “erroneous and harmful idea” that saving action could flourish beyond the Catholic Church in the absence of communion with her, as though non-Catholic communities could, as such, exercise salvific power *per se* (“*Ne erronea et nociva innuatur idea, quod extra Catholicam Ecclesiam versantes per se salvi fieri valeant, quin communio cum ipsa Catholica Ecclesia ut quid per se necessarium appareat*”) (ibid.); the response to which affirms that “The necessity of communion with the Catholic Church in order to obtain the grace of Christ and salvation is sufficiently indicated in the entire context [of the document] (*Necessitas communionis cum Ecclesia catholica ad gratiam Christi et salutem obtinendam sufficienter indicatur in toto contextu*)” (ibid.). See in this regard James T. O’Connor, “The Church of Christ and the Catholic Church,” in *The Battle for the Catholic Mind*, ed. William May and Kenneth Whitehead (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2001), 248–263.

⁶⁴ “If we consider the power whereby the action is done, then the power of the higher cause is more immediate to the effect than the power of the lower cause; since the power of the lower cause is not coupled with its effect save by the power of the higher cause: wherefore it is said in *De causis* (prop. 1) that the power of the first cause takes the first place in the production of the effect and enters more deeply therein” (Aquinas, *De pot.*, q. 3, a. 7).

⁶⁵ “The higher the cause the greater its scope and efficacy: and the more efficacious the cause, the more deeply does it penetrate into its effect” (Aquinas, *De pot.*, q. 3, a. 7). “What is more powerfully in a thing

inheres more profoundly. But the first cause impresses more powerfully upon the effect than does the second cause.... Therefore, its impression inheres more profoundly” (Aquinas, *Super De causis*, prop. 1). “The power of the first cause takes the first place in the production of the effect and enters more deeply therein” (Aquinas, *De pot.*, q. 3, a. 7).

- 66 The difficulty in speaking about non-Catholic communions as subjects even of instrumental ecclesial action lies in the fact that their ability to so serve is a function of their Catholicity, whence the mode according to which such action “belongs” to them considered as such reduces almost exclusively to a defective form of material causality. The formal perfection by which they are ecclesial has nothing *per se* to do with that by which they are distinct from the Catholic Church. Since substantial forms do not come in degrees, moreover, they cannot be regarded as imperfect realizations of the Church simply taken, wherefore they can neither be proper subjects (not even imperfectly) of ecclesial action, though, analogous to the separated instrumentality of sacramental signs, they can operate as instruments of a saving action having the Catholic Church as its proper instrumental subject.
- 67 On the first of these principles, see Aquinas, *In Phys.*, Bk. III, lect. 4; *De princ. nat.*, c. 3 (no. 15 and 17); c. 4 (no. 23 and 25); c. 5 (no. 26–28); *De ver.*, q. 5, a. 2, ad 8; *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 3; q. 25, a. 1; *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. II, c. 16; c. 20 (no. 6); c. 21 (no. 6); c. 23; c. 39 (no. 5); c. 56 (no. 6 and 8–10); Bk. IV, c. 77. On the second, see *In Phys.*, Bk. VII, lect. 3 (no. 897); lect. 4 (no. 909); Bk. VIII, lect. 7 (no. 1028); lect. 9 (no. 1044); lect. 11 (no. 1064); lect. 22–23; *De pot.*, q. 3, a. 1, ad 15; q. 3, a. 11, obj. 5 and ad 5; q. 6, a. 7, obj. 11 and ad 11 and obj. 12 and ad 12 (see also q. 5, a. 8, obj. 6); *De ver.*, q. 28, a. 8; *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 1, ad 3; III, q. 64, a. 1; *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. III, c. 68 (no. 3); *Comp. theol.*, Bk. I, c. 45; *I Sent.*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 1. See Aristotle, *Physics*, Bk. VII–VIII.
- 68 “Just as the natural body is one though made up of diverse members, so the whole Church, Christ’s mystic body, is reckoned as one person with its head, which is Christ” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 49, a. 1; see q. 49, a. 1; *Super Col.*, c. 1, lect. 6). This theme was treated above in chapter three.
- 69 *Lumen gentium*, 48.
- 70 “He willed that his Church should be enriched with the abundant gifts of the Paraclete in order that in dispensing the divine fruits of the Redemption she might be, for the Incarnate Word, a powerful instrument that would never fail. For both the juridical mission of the Church, and the power to teach, govern and administer the Sacraments, derive their supernatural efficacy and force of the building up of the body of Christ from the fact that Jesus Christ, hanging on the Cross, opened up to his Church the fountain of those divine gifts, which prevent her from ever teaching false doctrine and enable her to rule them for the salvation of their souls through divinely enlightened pastors and to bestow on them an abundance of heavenly graces” (Pius XII, *Mystici corporis Christi*, 31). This is the *ratio* for the conciliar claim: “Christ’s Catholic Church ... is ‘the all-embracing means of salvation’” (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3).
- 71 “No action of an agent, however powerful it may be, acts at a distance, except through a medium” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 1, ad 3); see III, q. 64, a. 1: “no agent can operate immediately where it is not.”
- 72 “It is said universally that the mover and the moved are together and not just specifically in regard to local motion; for it is common to every species of motion for the mover and the moved to be together” (Aquinas, *In Phys.*, Bk. VII, lect. 3, no. 897) (English translations for *In Phys.* are taken from *Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics*, trans. R. Blackwell and R. Spath [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963]). See *In Phys.*, Bk. VII, lect. 4, no. 909: “After he has shown in regard to local motion that the mover and the

moved are together, he shows that the same thing is true of alteration; namely, that there is nothing intermediate between that which alters and that which is altered” (and similarly with regard to the other species of motion); see also *In Phys.*, Bk. VIII, lect. 23; *I Sent.*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 1. For an examination of Aquinas’s application of and rationale for the thesis that action at a distance is metaphysically impossible, see especially C. Decaen, “The Impossibility of Action at a Distance,” in *Wisdom’s Apprentice: Thomistic Essays in Honor of Lawrence Dewan, O.P.*, ed. P. Kwasniewski (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 173–200.

- 73 This is illustrated beautifully in Aquinas’s Christology and sacramental theology. Salvation is the work of Christ, and Christ in heaven is the cause of our salvation. Yet there his humanity remains the instrument of God, not only by way of his moral intercession, but through his physical action, a physical action that can be either invisible or visible, the latter, inasmuch as instrumentalized by the sacramental Church. Jesus has given us the mediation of the hierarchy and the sacramental rites precisely in order to prolong his *sensible contact* with mankind; for man must unite himself with Christ to be saved, and man is a corporeal being. Accordingly, in the incarnational dispensation, salvation reaches man inasmuch as spiritual power is mediated through bodily things, and inasmuch as corporeal things achieve trans-temporal and trans-spatial efficacy through their union with spirit. “Although Christ’s Passion is corporeal, from its union with the divinity it possesses a spiritual power. And therefore it obtains its efficacy through spiritual contact, i.e., through faith and the sacraments of faith” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 48, a. 6, ad 2). “The things which Christ in his humanity accomplished or suffered were saving acts for us through the power of his divinity.... This power is extended by being present in all times and places, and this virtual contact is sufficient to explain this effectiveness” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 56, a. 1, ad 3; cf. q. 52, a. 8). “Christ delivered us from our sins principally through his Passion.... Likewise by his Passion he inaugurated the rites of the Christian religion by offering himself.... The sacraments of the Church derive their power specially from Christ’s Passion, and by receiving the sacraments, we enter into communication with the virtue of Christ’s Passion” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 62, a. 5).
- 74 Along with the essential properties of bodiliness, including extension in three dimensions, we must acknowledge a non-spatially defined principle of corporeal continuity proper to the Church as a body. Because some elements of the Catholic Church are tangibly present within non-Catholic communions and operate as instruments of salutary effects in a sensible, corporeal manner, it is right to speak of a sensible, bodily contact existing between the Catholic Church and separated Christian communions. This mode of contact represents a mode of bodily continuity between the Catholic Church and her separated brothers, one which is evidently not to be conceived after the manner of continuous quantity, but which has its ground in the unitary formal and sanctificatory principle (existing in its plenitude and universal generative source in the Catholic Church) by which the corporeal elements (whether in the Catholic Church or separated communions) possess their salutary signification and efficacy. In a similar way, and on the basis of the same kind of distinction, we can speak of a certain corporeal continuity between all who belong to Christ, a continuity with Christ himself and with one another thereby: “In a certain way, our bodies enjoy continuity with the body of Christ, not according to quantity, or according to natural perfection, but insofar as there dwells within us the Holy Spirit who resides in the fullest manner in Christ” (Aquinas, *III Sent.*, d. 13, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 3, ad 1).
- 75 “Power is the principle of acting on another; hence by power the agent is related and applied to an external thing; thus by power an agent may be said to be present to another” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 3, ad 3).

76 *Lumen gentium*, 8.

77 *Agere sequitur esse*. The Church's being is manifold; she will operate according to the complexity of her being, at once divinely and humanly, at once spiritually and sensibly. While her proper sensible action upon man is always also spiritual, inasmuch as the sensible aspects of her being are instrumentally ordered to the spiritual principles of her being, she is also capable of acting in a purely spiritual manner. For "The Mystical Body of which we are speaking ... is supplemented by another 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.... it is something in itself infinite, uncreated: the Spirit of God, who, as the Angelic Doctor says, 'numerically one and the same, fills and unifies the whole Church'" (Pius XII, *Mystici corporis Christi*, 62). Regarding the duality of principles of salvific action in the Church, the Holy Father continues: "Although the juridical principles, on which the Church rests and is established, derive from the divine constitution given to it by Christ and contribute to the attaining of its supernatural end, nevertheless that which lifts the Society of Christians far above the whole natural order is the Spirit of our Redeemer who penetrates and fills every part of the Church's being and is active within it until the end of time as the source of every grace and every gift and every miraculous power. Just as our composite mortal body, although it is a marvelous work of the Creator, falls far short of the eminent dignity of our soul, so the social structure of the Christian community, though it proclaims the wisdom of its divine Architect, still remains something inferior when compared to the spiritual gifts which give it beauty and life, and to the divine source whence they flow" (Pius XII, *Mystici corporis Christi*, 63). Note that these two principles of supernatural operation are always subjectively joined, inasmuch as the *whole* Christ (Head and members), the *Christus totus*, is the (mystically) indivisible subject of all ecclesial salutary actions, whether viewed as proceeding directly from Christ who is its Head or through the visible structures of the saving institution which is his body. "For, just as the natural body is one though made up of diverse members, so the whole Church, Christ's mystic body, is reckoned as one person with its Head, which is Christ" (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 49, a. 1). In the ordinary dispensation of grace, this duality of ecclesial principles of operation is furthermore united objectively, according to the instrumental subordination of the Church's visible structures to the principal agency of Christ and the Holy Spirit. For theological applications of the notion of "virtual contact" (contact by way of spiritual power), see Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 52, a. 1; q. 53, a. 1; q. 76, a. 6, obj. 3 and ad 3; q. 105, a. 2, ad 1; III, q. 48, a. 6, ad 2; suppl., q. 70, a. 3, ad 7.

78 "Incorporeal things are in place not by contact of dimensive quantity, as bodies are, but by contact of power (*per contactum virtutis*)" (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 2, ad 1). "Incorporeal substances, like God, an angel and the soul, are called indivisible. Such a kind of indivisible does not belong to the continuous, as a part of it, but as touching it by its power; hence, according as its power can extend itself to one or to many, to a small thing, or to a great one, in this way it is in one or in many places, and in a small or large place" (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 2, ad 2).

79 "An angel and a body are said to be in a place in quite a different sense. A body is said to be in a place in such a way that it is applied to such place according to the contact of dimensive quantity; but there is no such quantity in the angels, for theirs is a virtual one. Consequently an angel is said to be in a corporeal place by application of the angelic power in any manner whatever to any place" (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 52, a. 1).

80 For further clarification on the manner in which a spiritual substance is able to act upon other substances, see especially Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. II, c. 56: "There is, however, a certain kind of contact

whereby an intellectual substance can be united to a body.... if attention is given to activity and passivity, it will be found that certain things touch others and are not themselves touched.... Consequently, if there are any agents not in contact by quantitative extremities, they nevertheless will be said to touch, so far as they act.... Hence, it is possible for an intellectual substance to be united to a body by contact, by touching it in this way.... This, however, is not contact of quantity, but of power” (no. 8–9; cf. the rest of the chapter). See also *Quodl.* I, q. 3, a. 1–2: “So just as a body is in a place by contact of its dimensive quantity, so an angel is in a place by the contact of its power (*contactum virtutis*). But if anyone wishes to call virtual contact ‘operation,’ because to operate is the proper effect of power, an angel could be said to be in place by way of operation” (*Quodl.* I, q. 3, a. 1) (English translation from *Quodlibetal Questions 1 and 2*, trans. S. Edwards [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983]).

- 81 “As long as a thing has being, God must be present to it, according to its mode of being. But being is innermost in each thing and most fundamentally inherent in all things since it is formal in respect of everything found in a thing.... Hence it must be that God is in all things, and innermost” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 1). “Because in all things God himself is properly the cause of universal being which is innermost in all things; it follows that in all things God works intimately” (*Sum. theol.*, I, q. 105, a. 5). Note that the criterion for the intimacy of the agent and of its agency is the intimacy of the effect itself. Given that, in our ecumenical context, the effect in question is “ecclesiality,” as the efficient source of all ecclesiality, the Catholic Church will be most intimate to every ecclesial communion considered as such.
- 82 “The higher the cause the greater its scope and efficacy and the more efficacious the cause, the more deeply does it penetrate into its effect” (Aquinas, *De pot.*, q. 3, a. 7). As a universal cause in the order of ecclesiality, therefore, the Catholic Church must be understood to penetrate *innermostly* every ecclesial communion with respect to everything ecclesial about it. *Contactum virtutis* provides an additional and dynamic account for affirming the concrete presence within non-Catholic communities of the life and being of the Catholic Church. “Since contact of power, which appertains to intellectual substances, extends to the innermost things, it makes the touching substance to be within the thing touched, and to penetrate it without hindrance” (Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. II, c. 56, no. 9). In that part of her by which she exceeds the spatio-temporal limitation of her visible corporeity—that is, in her Head and in the Spirit of which he is the principle, and in the spiritual power of the sacramental action which she carries out in union with her Head—the Catholic Church penetrates to the innermost of the supernatural being proper to every non-Catholic communion.
- 83 Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 48, a. 6, ad 2. “Spiritual contact ... is understood in the sense in which a thing that moves or acts touches the thing that is moved or is passive, even though it be incorporeal; and for this reason Aristotle says in *De generatione* 1 that certain things touch and yet are not touched, because they act and are not passive” (Aquinas, *De spir. cr.*, a. 2).
- 84 Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 8.
- 85 “The Mother of Jesus, glorified in body and soul in heaven, is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come” (*Lumen gentium*, 68).
- 86 “This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent which she gave in faith at the Annunciation” (*Lumen gentium*, 62).
- 87 This in no way undermines the universal Headship of Christ, as though he were not the Head of *all* men. Christ is, indeed, the Head of all humanity (and of every rational being); but he is their Head precisely to the degree to which they have been incorporated into his one Catholic Church, a state of being that can

exist in full actuality or merely in potentiality, or anywhere in between. See especially, Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 8.

- 88 The fact that Christ's saving actions as Head always involve the Body mystically joined to him is further and evidently confirmed by the role assigned to Mary, "preeminent and singular member of the Church" (*Lumen gentium*, 53), in the distribution of graces: "She is our mother in the order of grace. This maternity of Mary in the order of grace ... lasts until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up into heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation" (*Lumen gentium*, 61–62). The ecclesiology of Joseph Ratzinger strongly emphasizes the same inseparability between Christ and his mystical body. Every sanctifying gift is mediated by the ecclesial whole, such that, as aptly summarized by K. Bidwell, "ecclesiology and soteriology are inseparable, and faith [wherever it is found] is essentially a gift of the Church, and as such leads to communion with the RCC" (*The Church as the Image of the Trinity: A Critical Evaluation of Miroslav Volf's Ecclesial Model* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011], 99). See J. Ratzinger, "Warum ich noch in der Kirche bin," in J. Ratzinger and H. U. von Balthasar, *Zwei Plädoyers: Warum ich noch ein Christ bin. Warum ich noch in Kirche bin* (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1971), derisively simplified by M. Volf in theologically correct terms: "A faith, a church, the word of God, a liturgy not received from the larger Church is 'self-invented faith,' a 'self-constructed congregation'" (Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1998], 64). See also J. Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy*, trans. G. Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 30: "It is impossible to start a conversation with Christ alone, cutting out the Church: a Christological form of prayer which excludes the Church also excludes the Spirit and the human being himself." For a fuller elaboration of the principle (and with specific reference to the "subsistit" teaching of *Lumen gentium*), see J. Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*, trans. H. Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005), 140–147.
- 89 "The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (*Lumen gentium*, 1); "He sent his life-giving Spirit upon his disciples and ... established his Body which is the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation" (*Lumen gentium*, 48); see also *Lumen gentium*, 9.
- 90 *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 7.
- 91 *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 10.
- 92 Such salutary action, moreover, is applied to this man or that man according to the intentions of the Head, and this, in no small measure, deliberately as a function of the extent to which those intentions are specified by the Body (the Catholic Church as a whole) acting through its ministerial representative whom Christ has empowered to represent himself. "The Church cannot forgive anything without Christ; Christ does not will to forgive anything without the Church. The Church cannot forgive anything except in the penitent, in other words, in the one whom Christ has touched; Christ does not will to guarantee any forgiveness in one who despises the Church.... The all-powerful Christ can do all by himself, in other words, baptize, consecrate the Eucharist, ordain, forgive sins and the rest; but, a humble and faithful Husband, he does not want to do anything without his spouse.... Be careful, therefore, that you do not separate the head from the body, preventing Christ from existing whole and entire forever, because Christ exists nowhere in his entirety without the Church" (Isaac of Stella, *Sermon 11*, 14–15, in Isaac of Stella, *Sermons*, ed. G. Salet Sources Chrétiennes, trans. H. McCaffery [Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967], 130:246–

247). On the representative role of the ministerial priest, see *Lumen gentium*, 10; *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 2; cf. Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 84 and 93; Paul VI, *Inter insigniores*, 5. See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, suppl., q. 31, a. 1, ad 1.

- 93 “For well-disposed members of the faithful ... they are given access to the stream of divine grace which flows from the paschal mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, the font from which all sacraments and sacramentals draw their power” (*Sacrosanctum concilium*, 61). See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1085. See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 65, a. 3 and 5.
- 94 The Eucharist, in the words of *Lumen gentium*, is the “source and summit of the whole Christian life” (*Lumen gentium*, 11; cf. *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 10). “All the other sacraments seem to be ordained to this one as to their end. For it is manifest that the sacrament of Orders is ordained to the consecration of the Eucharist; and the sacrament of Baptism to the reception of the Eucharist; while a man is perfected by Confirmation, so as not to fear to abstain from this sacrament; and by Penance and Extreme Unction man is prepared to receive the Body of Christ worthily; and Matrimony at least in its signification, touches this sacrament; in so far as it signifies the union of Christ with the Church, of which union the Eucharist is a figure” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 65, a. 3).
- 95 In the absence of communion with the Roman pontiff, the collegial identity and collegial action of the episcopacy dissolves: “But the college or body of bishops has no authority unless it is understood together with the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter as its head.... The order of bishops, which succeeds to the college of apostles and gives this apostolic body continued existence, is also the subject of supreme and full power over the universal Church, provided we understand this body together with its head the Roman Pontiff and never without this head” (*Lumen gentium*, 22 [see a. 23–25]). Hierarchical communion with Peter constitutes an essential feature of the episcopal college as such and of the exercise of the collegial authority entrusted to the successors of the Apostles. Such communion, according to the Council, is a prerequisite for the very assumption of the apostolic office and the presupposition to the authority to teach.
- 96 In chapter one, we noted the efficacy of sacramental actions carried on outside the visible structures of the Catholic Church. Here we have traced the principles responsible for that efficacy. We also observed in chapter one (note 53) that certain liturgical actions depend upon visible communion with the Catholic Church, as a result of which, even if sacramental efficacy can be preserved on the part of a separated Christian community, the efficacy of other liturgical actions, in particular, prayers to be exercised in the name of the Church, is lost. In answer to the question whether heretics, schismatics and the excommunicated can consecrate the Eucharist, Aquinas affirms, “If a priest severed from the unity of the Church celebrates Mass, not having lost the power of order, he consecrates Christ’s true body and blood; but because he is severed from the unity of the Church, his prayers [the prayers a priest offers on behalf of the community by virtue of an official capacity to act as the representative of the Church] have no efficacy” (*Sum. theol.*, III, q. 82, a. 7). The tragic consequences of visible separation from the one Church of Christ are particularly clear here, especially if we consider the extraordinary richness of the liturgies of the separated Oriental churches, a richness that (abstracting from the *ex opere operato* efficacy proper to the seven sacraments) is, at the hands of these communities, dissipated and rendered inert. There exists an entire realm of liturgical efficacy that is lost to them, an efficacy residing somewhere between the *ex opere operato* efficacy of the seven sacraments and the *ex opere operantis* efficacy of the personal prayer and devotion of liturgical ministers and participants. This is the efficacy of the prayer of the Church as such. This efficacy (abstracting from the seven sacraments) is indeed *ex opere operantis*, but it qualitatively

transcends that associated with personal prayer and devotion, inasmuch as it is the official prayer of the whole Church, the visible body with her Head; and this the separated churches cannot enjoy. At the same time, however, there is a sense in which the beauty and wealth of their liturgies redound in manifold ways to the spiritual welfare of their members. For, as the last two chapters bring into relief, the liturgical abundance in question represents a point of intersection between these communities and the Catholic Church. There is a sense in which a bond of imperfect communion exists between them and the Catholic Church on account of that wealth. Moreover, if we consider the situation of the separated Oriental churches, it is clear that many of the liturgical prayers distinctive of their traditions are of ancient origin and part of the Catholic patrimony. Not only do they possess a valid Eucharist, therefore, but they exercise sacred actions in other ways that express a form of contact with the Catholic Church, at the very least inasmuch as they are “elements” proper to her, and insofar as they provide occasions or conditions for her operative influence to reach into those communities with greater efficacy. This allows the ritual actions carried out by non-Catholic communities a certain efficacy with respect not only to sacraments but also to other aspects of public worship, precisely in accordance with the degree of communion such actions have, the bond that they enjoy, with the Catholic Church. Such a recognition subtracts nothing from the teaching of Aquinas. It merely adds to it another consideration (of which Aquinas is not unaware, and which is particularly consistent with his teaching in *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 8, a. 3) prompted by the conciliar theology of varying modes of union with the Catholic Church and consisting in the acknowledgment of differing respects according to which a community and the actions it performs (and the members that perform them) can be, simultaneously, in partial union with and severed from the Church of Christ.

⁹⁷ The Catholic Church’s intercessory prayer, furthermore, is at every moment coupled with and perfected in the extraordinary intercessory power of the Mother of God, the efficacy of whose prayer knows of no bounds besides the will of her divine Son: “For from her union with Christ she attains a radiant eminence transcending that of any other creature; from her union with Christ she receives the royal right to dispose of the treasures of the Divine Redeemer’s Kingdom; from her union with Christ finally is derived the inexhaustible efficacy of her maternal intercession before the Son and His Father” (Pius XII, *Ad caeli Reginam*, 39). “Queen of heaven and earth by the Lord, exalted above all choirs of angels and saints, and standing at the right hand of her only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, she intercedes powerfully for us with a mother’s heart, obtains what she seeks, and cannot be refused” (idem, 42). “Having been associated with the King of Martyrs in the ineffable work of human Redemption as Mother and cooperatrix, she remains forever associated with him, with an almost unlimited power, in the distribution of graces which flow from the Redemption” (Pius XII, *Radio Broadcast to Pilgrims at Fatima*, May 13, 1946, *AAS* 38 [1946]: 266) (English translation: *Queen of the Universe*, ed. S. Mathews [St. Meinrad, IN: Grail Publications, 1957], 230–235; M. Miravalle, “*With Jesus*”: *The Story of Mary Co-Redemptrix* [Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing, 2003], 160). Mary’s suppliant omnipotence is one of two fundamental ways according to which “she is our Mother in the order of grace” (*Lumen gentium*, 61). This aspect of her spiritual maternity has to do with the distribution of the graces won for mankind by her Son, the application of the fruits of his general redemptive work. The other form of her spiritual maternity resides in the unique role she exercised in the phase of the acquisition of graces, essentially defined by her “compassion” understood as the formal element of her co-redemptive acts. Taken in their conjunction—drawing together merit, satisfaction, and sacrifice, along with adoration, thanksgiving, and impetration (and keeping in mind that on Calvary Mary offered to the eternal Father her only-begotten divine Son)—Mary, as an “icon of the Church,” displays the very modalities by which the Catholic Church in her Eucharistic celebration sanctifies and bears witness to every other religious community and mankind in general.

- 98 *Dignitatis humanae*, 1.
- 99 See, for example, Leo XIII, *Affari vos*, 5: “For the Catholic, the one and only true religion is the Catholic religion” (“*Atqui catholica homini una atque unica vera est religio catholica*” (English translation mine). See Francisco Xaverio de Abarzuza, O.F.M. Cap., and Serapio de Iragui, O.F.M. Cap., *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Ediciones Studium, 1956), 1:390, 391, 394; R. P. J. Herrmann, *Theologia Generalis, Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, 7th ed. (Paris: Emmanuelem Vitte, 1937), 1:426, 432; Jean Marie Hervé, *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*, 16th ed. (Westminster, MD: The Newman Bookshop, 1943), 1:374, 403; Hugo von Hurter, S. J., *Theologiae Dogmaticae Compendium*, 12th ed. (Oeniponte: Libreria Academica Wagneriana, 1908), 1:179, 180, 184; Camillo Mazzella, *De religione et ecclesia praelectiones scholastico-dogmaticae* (Rome: Officina Typographica Forzani et Socii, 1896), 531, 639, 647; Gerardus van Noort, *Christ’s Church, Dogmatic Theology*, trans. J. Castelot and W. Murphy (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1961), 2:169, 171, 136, 190; Joachim Salaverri, *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, 4th ed. (Matriti: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1967), 1:651, 945; Franciscus Xaverius Schouppe, *Elementa theologiae dogmaticae e probatis auctoribus collecta et Divini Verbi ministerio accommodata opera Francisci Xaverii Schouppe*, 26th ed. (Paris: Delhomme et Briguet, 1901), 1:201, 202, 481; Reginald Maria Schultes, *De ecclesia Catholica praelectiones apologeticae* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1931), 244, 255; Francis A. Sullivan, *De ecclesia: Tractatus Dogmaticus* (Rome: Pont. Univ. Gregoriana, 1962), 145; *De ecclesia, I: quaestiones theologiae fundamentalis* (Rome: Pont. Univ. Gregoriana, 1963), 156–157; Adolphe Tanquery, *Brevior synopsis theologiae dogmaticae*, 9th ed. (Paris: Desclée and Socii, 1949), 118; *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae* (Paris: Desclée et Socii, 1937–1938), 1:398–406, 412–413, 544–545, 550; Timotheus Zapelena, *De ecclesia Christi: summarium; ad usum auditorum Universitatis Gregorianae* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1932), 135, 206, 211; Valentín Zubizarreta, *Theologia dogmatico-scholastica ad mentem S. Thomae Aquinatis* (Bilbao: Editorial Eléxpuru, 1948), 384, 386. See C. Washburn, “The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, and *Subsistit in*,” 153.
- 100 This follows, of course, only under the assumption that authentic religion is a function of Revelation and of man’s response to it through the gift of faith. Of course, that assumption is theologically necessary and saliently manifest in the unanimity of the Old and New Testaments regarding the worship that is acceptable and pleasing to God. See Exod 19:4–6; 1 Chr 16:8–34; Ps 50:7–9; Ps 51:6–7, 10, 15–17; Isa 1:11–18; Jer 31:31–34; Bar 4:4; John 4:22–24; Rom 12:1–2; 14:18; 15:8–9, 16; 1 Cor 2:7–16; 2 Cor 3:3–6, 10, 14; Eph 1:11–14, 17–22; Phil 4:7–9, 18–19; Col 1:9–14; 1 Thes 4:1–5; 2 Thes 2:13–14; 1 Tim 2:3–5; Heb 5:5–10; 6:19–20; 7:11–28; 8:1–7; 9:13–14, 23–26; 10:11–14; 12:28; 13:15–16, 20–21; 1 Pet 1:3–11; 1 Pet 2:5; Rev 7:13–15; see *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 10.
- 101 “Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change” (James 1:17); and all these gifts come from above through Jesus Christ; “through him all things were made; and without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:3), and “through whom you bestow on the world [O Lord] all that is good” (Eucharistic Prayers III and IV). Among the preeminent gifts of God to man is that of sacred worship itself, the authenticity and efficacy of which flows from and resides in the mystery of Jesus Christ and his Paschal Mystery (perpetuated and “re-presented” in the rites of the Catholic Church): “Through him, with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, forever and ever.”
- 102 Nothing is said here about simple and momentary acts of piety or religious expressions of gratitude and

praise directed to God, which, for all their “authenticity” in one sense, would have no supernatural value if not flowing from charity, and which might be sustainable for a brief period even without grace, and which might of themselves imply nothing of a communal nature. But this is not the proper sense of “authentic religion.” The real meaning of “authentic religion” is found only in the mystery of Christ, in whom alone the worship desired by God is both revealed and achieved (see, for example, Rom 12:1–2; 1 Pet 2:4–5; Heb 10:11–14; 13:15).

- ¹⁰³ Vatican II openly recognizes the positive values inherent in the religious traditions of non-Christian communities: “The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men” (*Nostra aetate*, 2); see *Ad gentes*, 9 and 11; *Lumen gentium*, 17; see Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (AAS 84 [1992]: 414–446) (hereafter *Dialogue and Proclamation*), 16–17; see id., 14, 29 and 35. *Nostra aetate* underscores the contemplative and mystical character of Hinduism, the ethos of liberation and quest for illumination inherent in Buddhism, as well as the Abrahamic patrimony and numerous theological convictions of Islam, and the special unity that exists between the Jewish religion and Christianity rooted in the entire history of salvation and their common religious heritage. For an examination of the relationship between non-Christian cultures and the Church’s missionary character, see J. Auer and J. Ratzinger, *The Church: the Universal Sacrament of Salvation* (in the series *Dogmatic Theology*) (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 385–394. One must carefully observe, however, that, even if aspects within these traditions are conducive toward salvation and, therefore, the fruit of Christ’s priestly sacrifice with which he associates his Bride, they remain defective and incomplete until they are purified by and incorporated into Christ in accordance with God’s plan of salvation: “What has not been taken up by Christ is not made whole” (*Ad gentes*, 3; see id., note 4 for Patristic testimony to the theme). As noted in *Dialogue and Proclamation*, 30–31, “The fruits of the Spirit of God in the personal life of individuals, whether Christian or otherwise, are easily discernible (cf. Gal 5:22–23). To identify in other religious traditions elements of grace capable of sustaining the positive response of their members to God’s invitation is much more difficult. It requires a discernment for which criteria have to be established.... An open and positive approach to other religious traditions cannot overlook the contradictions which may exist between them and Christian revelation. It must ... recognize that there is incompatibility between some fundamental elements of the Christian religion and some aspects of such traditions” (*Dialogue and Proclamation*, 30–31).
- ¹⁰⁴ In accordance with the Christological source of grace and truth wherever it is found, the Catholic Church is the cause of all that is good from a salutary point of view, all that is conducive to salvation, within non-Christian religious traditions. To the extent that such traditions are efficacious in that respect, she is, moreover, the cause of their very flourishing as such.
- ¹⁰⁵ See *Ad gentes*, 11, 15 and 18; *Lumen gentium*, 17.
- ¹⁰⁶ “For the Church is compelled by the Holy Spirit to do her part that God’s plan may be fully realized.... Through her work, whatever good is in the minds and hearts of men, whatever good lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, is not only saved from destruction but is also cleansed, raised up and perfected unto the glory of God, the confusion of the devil and the happiness of man” (*Lumen gentium*, 17); “Indeed, she proclaims ... Christ ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6), in

whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to himself” (*Nostra aetate*, 2).

- 107 *Ad gentes*, 9. See Phil 3–4, containing an elaborate and chiasmically layered demonstration of the Christological foundations for everything admirable and praiseworthy among men: “Rejoice in the Lord always ... The Lord is at hand.... Have no anxiety about anything ... and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.... whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you. I rejoice in the Lord greatly” (Phil 4:4–10); “Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phil 3:8).
- 108 “We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above that he is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived reasonably (*μετὰ λόγου*) are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists.... So that even they who lived before Christ, and lived without reason, were wicked and hostile to Christ, and slew those who lived reasonably. But ... according to the will of God the Father and Lord of all, he was born of a virgin as a man, and was named Jesus, and was crucified, and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven” (Justin Martyr, *I Apol.*, c. 46 [ANF, 1:178]).
- 109 “And those of the Stoic school ... as were also the poets in some particulars, on account of the seed of reason (*σπέρμα τοῦ Λόγου*) implanted in every race of men, were, we know, hated and put to death ... And ... the devils are proved to cause those to be much worse hated who live not according to a part only of the word diffused (*κατὰ σπερματικῶν λόγου μέρος*) [among men] but by the knowledge and contemplation of the whole Word (*παντὸς Λόγου*), which is Christ” (Justin Martyr, *II Apol.*, c. 8 [ANF, 1:191]).
- 110 See Justin Martyr, *I Apol.*, c. 10.
- 111 See Justin Martyr, *II Apol.*, c. 13.
- 112 “Whatever things were rightly said among all men, are the property of us Christians (*ἡμῶν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἔστι*)” (Justin Martyr, *II Apol.*, c. 13 [ANF, 1:193]); cf. *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3: “All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to Christ, belong by right to the one Church of Christ.”
- 113 “But the Son, administering all things for the Father, works from the beginning even to the end, and without him no man can attain the knowledge of God.... ‘No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; nor the Father, save the Son, and those to whomsoever the Son shall reveal [him].’ For ‘shall reveal’ was said not with reference to the future alone, as if then [only] the Word had begun to manifest the Father when he was born of Mary, but it applies indifferently throughout all time” (*Adversus haereses*, Bk. IV, c. 6 [ANF, 1:469]); see all of c. 6; cf. c. 20.
- 114 “All men are one man in Christ, and the unity of Christians constitutes but one man” (Augustine, *Enar. in Psalm. 29*, enarratio 2 [n. 5]); see Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 19, a. 4; q. 48, a. 2, ad 1; q. 49, a. 1; cf. I-II, q. 81, a. 1.
- 115 “‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen her chickens!’ ... How often, and where? ... in every mode of quantity and quality ... by all means save some, both in time and in eternity.... the preparatory training for rest in Christ exercises the mind, rouses the intelligence, and begets an inquiring shrewdness, by means of the true philosophy, which the initiated possess, having found it, or rather received it, from the truth itself” (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Bk. I, c. 5 [ANF, 2:305–306]).
- 116 “And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be Head over everything for the Church,

which is his body, *the fullness of him who fills everything in every way*” (Eph 1:22–23, emphasis mine); cf. 1 Tim 3:15; John 1:16–17. “And should one say that it was through human understanding that philosophy was discovered by the Greeks, still I find the Scriptures saying that understanding is sent by God.... ‘The Lord is on many waters’; not the different covenants alone, but the modes of teaching, those among the Greeks and those among the Barbarians, conducing to righteousness.... For philosophy is full of knowledge, inasmuch as it was given by the Lord, and again explained by the Lord to the apostles” (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Bk. VI, c. 8 [ANF, 2:494–496]). “But in proportion to the adaptation possessed by each, he has dispensed his beneficence both to Greeks and Barbarians, even to those of them that were predestinated, and in due time called, the faithful and elect.... Now that which truly rules and presides is the Divine Word and his providence, which inspects all things, and despises the care of nothing belonging to it.... having assumed sensitive flesh, he came to show man what was possible ... he easily prevails in what he wishes, leaving not even the minutest point of his administration unattended to” (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Bk. VII, c. 2 [ANF, 2:524–525]).

- 117 According to the *Relatio* for *Lumen gentium* 16, every grace is ordered in some way to the Catholic Church (“*omnis autem gratia quandam indolem communitariam induit et ad Ecclesiam respicit*”: AS, vol. III, pt. 1, 206). Indeed, every genuine religious structure or activity prior to the coming of Christ or subsequently preceding the reception of the Gospel was/is but a preparation for mature worship in Christ: “These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God” (Col 2:17–19); “Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ” (Col 1:28).
- 118 *Lumen gentium*, 13; cf. *Lumen gentium*, 16.
- 119 “We must therefore consider the members of the mystical body not only as they are in act, but as they are in potentiality.... [Accordingly] if we take the whole time of the world in general, Christ is the Head of all men, but diversely” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 8). “Those who are unbaptized, though not actually in the Church, are in the Church potentially” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 8, a. 3, ad 1).
- 120 *Lumen gentium*, 16.
- 121 Contrary to popular opinion, the *Declaration on Religious Liberty* strongly reinforces this teaching, affirming both the unicity of true religion as well as the moral obligation for all men and every society to move in the direction of full Catholic union: “this one true religion subsists in the Catholic and Apostolic Church.... all men are bound to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and his Church.... it is upon the human conscience that these obligations fall and exert their binding force.... [The notion of religious freedom] leaves untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ” (*Dignitatis humanae*, 1).
- 122 As pointed out above, this dependency is twofold. The Catholic Church, often from within these very communities, efficiently produces in them a diminished, partial realization of what belongs to her in fullness. Given, however, that the effects in question are extensions of her own being, her own essential perfections, we must also speak of the Catholic Church as constituting something within them according to formal causality (a formal causation that takes place, however, only in that part of them by which they are ecclesial, and thus not really in them understood as distinct communions).
- 123 As a living, organic mystery, involving internal development and adaptation, and as a mystery of the unity

between God and man and of men with one another in which divine and human agencies are coordinated and intertwined, the causal dynamics of the Church considered in herself are much more complicated than the snapshot presented here. For a systematic overview of the Church's constitutive causal features, see Charles Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, trans. A. H. C. Downes (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 1:45–49.

- 124 This mapping could be done in a variety of ways, and what I offer here is but a (very limited) example of how it might be done, particularly in consideration of the seemingly equally advantageous (or disadvantageous) competing principles of division.
- 125 The external witness rendered by the Catholic Church to other Christian communities, to other religions, and to the whole world, represents a defining feature of the Church's vocation since its inception with the People of God of the Old Testament who were called to bear—through their worship—witness to the nations, that the latter might recognize in Israel the way of salvation and discover that worship which alone is pleasing to God. This aspect of Israel's covenantal relationship with God is carried over to and remains a constitutive feature of the New Covenant. Right worship defines, for Peter, the very household of God: "Like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5). This true worship is what the world does not know, and yet it is exactly what the Father desires from man and for man, and it is what the Church has been given to understand and possess, and what she is therefore called to display that the world may come to know it and enter it and possess it in the Church: "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him" (John 4:22–23). The importance of this ecclesial function cannot be overstated. That mission, and the means to fulfill it, are among the essential, defining features of the Church. Division from the Catholic Church, unfortunately, destroys those means, and with it, the essence of Christ's Church. For, Jesus Christ indicated the kind of unity required to fulfill that mission, and although unity by itself is neither a sufficient nor the only necessary means to that end, that end cannot be achieved without it: "That they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become *completely* one, so that the world may know that you have sent me" (John 17:22–23; emphasis mine). No measure of disunity is permitted here, not only for what concerns the being of the Church, but for what concerns her efficacy as a sign. In the absence of complete and visible unity, found in the Catholic Church alone, Christian witness to the "Gospel of reconciliation" loses its credibility. This is part of why Paul must condemn every form of ecclesial division (see 1 Cor 1:10–17). A fundamental feature of the Catholic Church's redemptive service to other Christian communities lies in the testimony she gives to the will of God, to the true nature of the covenantal relationship, to what it means to be a sign of salvation to the world, and to the only worship that is "acceptable and pleasing to God" (Phil 4:18).
- 126 Of course, the notion of spiritual contact, because it implies the presence of the agent to the patient, as well as an interiority transcending spatial boundaries, renders this classification partially inadequate. Nevertheless, the idea of spiritual contact, understood as supplying for the absence of corporeal contact, is suitably (and instinctively) represented in terms of a certain distance between agent and patient—one which is at least metaphysical, and, in the ecclesial case at hand, always accompanied by the corporeal distance between the Catholic Church and her visibly separated brethren (the very fact that demands an ulterior form of contact that is virtual).
- 127 To be sure, I am not suggesting that the formal cause of the Church is communicated to non-Catholic communities, the impossibility of which was demonstrated in chapters one and two. Recall that the

Church's substantial form is one and indivisible and cannot be multiplied among a multiplicity of communities; nor can communities beside the Catholic Church be said to be informed by the one substantial form, sharing it with the Catholic Church, since they lack features constitutive of and necessarily following upon that form, while, as with all substantial forms, the form of the Church comes as a whole or not at all. Nevertheless, certain attributes of the Catholic Church are truly though defectively realized in these communities thanks to her efficient causal influx in their regard, and this amounts to a communication of form and is responsible for the fact that they are, to a limited degree, and only in their elements, "Catholic." Forms proper to the Church's being, in other words, are also in these communities, not in the same way that they are in the Catholic Church, but as diminished derivations of them, and as that by which these communities are, in fact, *assimilated* to the Catholic Church.

- 128 Because they are properties of the Church (and said, accordingly, to "belong by right to her"), and because there is, and can be, only one Church, their concrete realization represents not just something that formally pertains to the Catholic Church, but also something pertaining to her subjectively, that is, as a subject having the properties in question, even if the latter reside also within these non-Catholic communities. Official magisterial teaching describes the Catholic Church herself as present within separated communions, and I have indicated some of the ways that this may be understood, including the recognition that parts of her visible physiognomy (such as sacramental signs) are concretely and bodily located within them. On this account, there exists a sort of "material" instantiation of the Catholic Church interior to these communities corresponding and directly proportionate to the formal actuality of their ecclesial elements. If indeed it is correct to affirm some kind of material causal presence, it may be possible, in that respect, to regard the Catholic Church's relation to other Christianities as somehow analogous to that of a soul toward a body. Besides the concrete instantiation within other Christian communities of forms proper to her, the Catholic Church's intrinsic efficient causal agency in their regard is not unlike that exercised by the soul in relation to the body, where, among other things, the soul operates as the active principle of bodily motion and of the vital activities of the whole, and where the body serves the soul as an instrument for her vital operations. Of course, these other communities perform ecclesial activities of their own; but, as illustrated above, this is never *on* their own, and it is always subordinated to the principal agency of the Catholic Church considered in her organic unity with Christ. Certainly the analogy has severe limits, not least of which is the fact that we are not dealing here with the actuality within non-Catholic Christianities of the Church's substantial form. If we are to meaningfully employ the analogy, furthermore, it implies (as earlier noted) a certain, discontinuous extension of the Church's corporeity. But it does capture a number of the aspects according to which it is right to affirm a simultaneously corporeal (visible) and spiritual (invisible) residence of the Catholic Church within these communities.
- 129 Christ is himself the pattern of that pattern: the Church is a pattern of communion with God in Christ, because Christ has made her his own by producing himself and the pattern of his own life in her.
- 130 The universality and supreme measure of her supernatural goodness (always as a function of her mystical unity with the Lord, and always in light of her eschatological realization and its present actuality in Christ and Mary) means that the Catholic Church is—in the order of salvation—the "*bonum honestum*," the first and wholly universal good under which every other salutary good is comprehended. The ends of every salutary action on earth as such presuppose the Catholic Church as their ultimate *ratio* and incline toward the consummate realization of all of her virtualities (latent in every non-Catholic community, and, at an individual level, in all Catholics still estranged from perfect visible and invisible communion with Christ in his Church).

- 131 This dynamism is, of course, not the presence of the end, but presupposes the end and is itself moved by the end, so that the end exercises its influence (*modo suo*) in that dynamism as such. See Aquinas, *De ver.*, q. 21, a. 1.
- 132 By “denominatively,” I mean signified according to all that belongs essentially or accidentally to the grammatical subject of the predicated property or action in question. In the present context, this means signifying the non-Catholic community according to the many features within it by which it is something more than the communion it professes to be, including the many elements within it by which it is (to some degree) Catholic.
- 133 It is mistaken, therefore, to present the Orthodox church as such, or any other non-Catholic community or set of communities as such, as a necessary component, one which must be taken in conjunction with the Catholic Church (existing in all her local churches), for the full realization of the Church of Christ essentially considered; and it is incorrect to affirm that “the Catholic Church [in the sense of the whole Church of Christ] cannot be the Catholic Church alone [due to the fact that] its relationship with the Orthodox Church is one of interdependence” (W. Cohen, “Clarifying the Doctrine of Sister Churches,” 344), or that “neither is the one without the other ... neither is the exact and complete embodiment of the Church of Christ without the other” (id., 360). The Catholic Church is, indeed, the complete embodiment of Christ’s Church with regard to all that is essential to and formally perfective of that Church. She is not, however, at any given moment the complete embodiment of everything able to characterize Christ’s Church according to the particularities of the spatio-temporal order and according to the material conditions within which her formal perfection is realized. But, from the latter point of view, not all of the particular churches throughout the world, Catholic, Orthodox and all others combined, could embody at a given point in history the limitless possibilities that are the virtualities of Christ’s Church. Now, indeed, the Catholic Church stands much to gain from her relation with the separated Eastern churches, but, as explained above, this gain, significant as it might be to the Church’s ever-developing doctrinal tradition and lived experience, pertains to the Church’s being accidentally. This radical independence characteristic of the Catholic Church can be attributed to no other Christian community; for, while the Catholic Church depends in no essential way, for example, upon the Orthodox church, the latter depends essentially upon the Catholic Church for everything ecclesial about it. In this context, and as noted by C. Malloy (“Is Exclusive Identity Compatible with Ecumenism,” 199), it is critical to make a distinction between the Catholic Church herself and the Western tradition of Catholicism. If we may speak of a certain insufficiency of the Western tradition and the fact that, through a receptive disposition toward the separated Eastern churches, it can benefit by way of an ongoing enrichment of theological and ecclesiastical traditions, this is neither to speak of the Catholic Church herself as standing in need of such enrichment, nor to speak of that enrichment as pertaining to anything beyond the accidental order. The sort of interdependency envisioned by Cohen is simply not in keeping with the proper understanding of the “*subsistit*,” nor is it supported by the teaching of Vatican II in general. Of course, I am not suggesting that the Catholic Church today stands nothing to gain from any other ecclesial community. Quite the contrary, the Catholic Church at all times continues to grow in many ways, much as any living being progressively unfurls its potencies while remaining essentially the same. In this respect, and with reference to what is Christic within them, the differences among splintered Christian communities can complement the endowments of the Catholic Church and serve as stimuli for the deepening of her own lived ecclesiality. In this sense, the Catholic Church can even be said to have a *need* for other Christian communities, to complete the myriad expressions of the Church’s universality and existential breadth (including such things as theological method, liturgical forms, religious sensitivities,

and other culturally or historically conditioned expressions of Christian life). Ironically, however, such a need exists only on account of the division to begin with, and a great many of the “deficits” in the accidental order by which the Catholic Church has been marked at different points in history are the direct consequence of a selfish adherence to Christ’s gifts by those who have abandoned her. Only the restoration of Christ’s Church to full unity, which is the goal of ecumenism, would permit the Catholic Church to shine in all of her divine and fleshly brilliance as initially intended by Jesus. Of course, as pointed out by Cohen (id., 365), this full unity cannot be a question of “one church without the other,” as though the battle of ecumenism were a battle between ecclesial factions or seeking the triumph of one church over another. Indeed, in the position I have laid out, the goal of ecumenism is anything but the victory of one over the other. As I have argued, the “other” is not entirely “other,” but also “Catholic”; and the Catholic Church could neither “win” nor exist without retaining all of herself. But the goal of ecumenism is neither a question of “one church *with* the other” in the sense spelled out by Cohen (id., 344–345, 352, 365), involving an interdependency according to which the Catholic Church is not fully herself without the separated churches considered as such, that is, in what is distinctive of them as “other.” The idea, in any case, of two or more essentially distinct self-contained churches constituting a single Church is a contradiction.

¹³⁴ In a similar manner, on account of a valid priesthood and an authentic Eucharistic worship (in which the Church’s ecclesiality finds its preeminent expression and toward which all her elements are ordered), Eastern churches enjoy whatever combination of elements they possess in a manner qualitatively superior to that characteristic of Protestant communions (again represented by a deeper shading).

A Strictly Analogical Use of the Notion of “Ecclesiality” and of the Name “Church”

Introduction

FOLLOWING FROM THE universal causal primacy of the Catholic Church for all things salutary, from the fact that the ecclesial identity and redemptive efficacy of every other Christian community is a function of her own redemptive plenitude, the Catholic Church is “church” and “ecclesial” in a way similar to yet fundamentally different from the manner in which other Christian communities are “church” and “ecclesial.” As a result, the significations intended by the names “ecclesial” and “church” as said of non-Catholic Christianities are not entirely the same as when they are said of the Catholic Church; rather, they are analogical.¹

In this chapter, I explain why it is necessary that the designations “ecclesial” and “church” must be understood to apply in a strictly analogical manner to the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christianities. I also explore the ways in which those names analogically apply to them. It is important to do this in order to better grasp the universality of the indivisible Church of Christ and the correlative unity that exists among different Christian communities, a unity in distinction that expresses itself not only in terms of the communion of being and causal subordinations discussed in previous chapters, but also in the signification of our words and concepts that refer to these communities and to their ecclesial perfections. This is not an investigation into the historical use of the terms

“church” and “ecclesial” by the tradition or their philological variants. I aim merely to sketch the *de iure* factors that determine the ways in which, theologically speaking, the terms “church” and “ecclesial” can be employed of different Christian communities as follows upon the very nature of ecclesiality and of Christ’s Church according to the teaching of Vatican II. After a brief introduction to the notion of analogy, followed by an explanation of its principal divisions, I examine the analogical use of the ecclesial names in terms of the traditional forms of analogy inherited from the Thomistic commentator tradition, in particular, analogy of extrinsic attribution, analogy of intrinsic attribution, analogy of inequality, and analogy of proper proportionality.²

The notion of analogy

The doctrine of analogy has its origin in mathematics, where the term “analogy” designated a proportion or *ratio* between different quantities or geometrical figures, or between different sets of such proportions. The concept was extended to philosophical usage, where it acquired important applications in logic and metaphysics, and where it signifies, in general, a proportional or relational identity between diverse things.³ Aristotle’s analysis of the difference between equivocal and univocal uses of language, different kinds of equivocation and the various senses in which “being” is said became the framework for medieval developments of the doctrine of analogy.⁴ This development, shaped by the Neo-Platonic and Arabic commentator tradition, culminated in sophisticated Scholastic theories of language concerned primarily with the theological problem of speaking meaningfully about God and other suprasensible realities. If God infinitely transcends the whole created order, how can words used to signify natural realities be transposed to the divine? How can the same word apply with any consistency of meaning across such a vertical divide? The doctrine of analogy can be viewed as an attempt to provide an answer to these and other questions related to the application of common terms to fundamentally disparate realities. If a strictly univocal use of words falsely reduces the divide, and pure equivocation destroys the logical relatedness of our words, then, if we are to conceptualize and affirm anything truthful about supra-physical reality, some other use of language must be possible, and this is “analogy.” Accordingly, analogy is depicted as something

“midway between univocity and pure equivocation”⁵ and as a matter of similarity in dissimilarity. Enfolded in this description of analogy are its features as a semantic theory as well as its features as a metaphysical doctrine.

Briefly, in a univocal use of language, a word is used of different things with exactly the same meaning; the concept it signifies is identical in each case, and it is said of each in exactly the same way. An example of univocity is “man” as said of Socrates and Plato, or “plant” as said of an oak and a daffodil. In an equivocal use of language, a common word is used of different things with a completely different meaning; the concept signified is totally different, such that the word alone is the same. Examples of equivocation are “bark” as said of a dog and of a tree, or “pitcher” as said of a carafe and of one who throws. By way of contrast with each of the above, in analogy, a name is applied to different things in neither an identical way nor a completely different way, but as having a meaning in some sense identical and in some sense diverse.⁶ The concepts signified by an analogical name are neither wholly the same nor wholly different, but share something in common by reason of an ordering amongst them or their common ordering to another. Examples of analogy are “good” as said of God and of the creature, or “being” as said of substance and accidents, or “foot” as said of an animal extremity and the base of a mountain. As illustrated by these examples, the structure of the relations between analogical uses of language varies, giving rise to different kinds of analogy. I discuss their classification and respective characteristics below. But the metaphysical character of analogy alluded to above must be noted here.

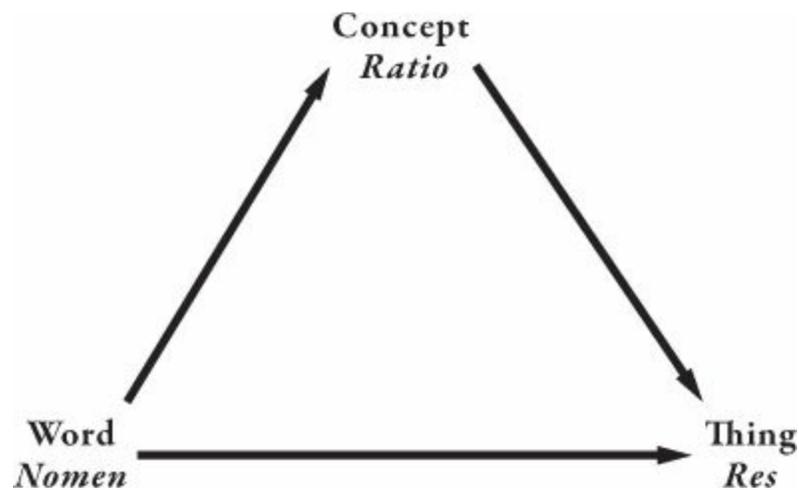
Besides being a logical phenomenon (concerned with signification, denomination, and concepts), analogy is also a feature of ontology. The partial similarity and partial difference in meaning as well as any ordering among the concepts involved in analogical language correspond to a similarity and dissimilarity among the realities they represent and to an ordering existing either among those realities themselves or between relations that belong to them. In this respect, analogy has to do with things and not just words, and the “intermediary” character of an analogical term (when compared with univocity and equivocity), the fact that it signifies something neither wholly the same nor wholly different, is (if our words refer to reality) rooted in the real similarities and differences between things. Thus the simultaneous unity and diversity among the concepts expressed by analogical terms has its origin in unity and diversity, likeness in difference, at the

ontological level, and the variance in the meanings of analogical words derives from that. In fact, it is precisely because we move from the real to the conceptual to the verbal that we can speak of words as signifying things themselves,⁷ for we name things in accordance with our understanding of them,⁸ and our understanding has its principal in objective reality.⁹ Thus, if we are referring to the real, our analogical use of language follows upon the analogical structure of reality, where things simultaneously exhibit likeness and unlikeness in some respect.

It is crucial to note, however, that our words attain to things themselves through the medium of the concepts of which they are signs. As such, analogical terms can aptly be defined as “words which signify in diverse things a reality neither exactly the same nor totally different but in some manner common to both.”¹⁰ When we say, therefore, that the name “church” or “ecclesial” is used analogically of different Christian communities, it implies that the ontological conditions corresponding to our concepts of “church” and “ecclesiality” exist within these communities in similar but non-identical ways. This coincidence of the logical and metaphysical sides of analogy follows from the semantic relations inherent in the structure of human thought and discourse, the fundamental framework for the understanding of which is Aristotle’s famous “semantic triangle.”¹¹ An examination of the basic features of these relations is particularly important for understanding the similarities and dissimilarities involved in analogical naming and predication.

In the Aristotelian account of signification, words immediately express what is conceived in the mind, though, in a mediate way, they signify things within the real world, inasmuch as our concepts are the similitudes of things.¹² A highly developed theory of these semantic relations is deployed by St. Thomas, for whom the semantic relationship between names and the things to which they refer is inseparable from the relationship between those names and our concepts as well as the relationship between those concepts and the things themselves. Words used to signify things attain to them through the medium of the concept,¹³ and the character of a word as equivocal, analogical, or univocal, is a function of the concept it immediately expresses, that is, the intelligible content or *ratio* which, in the act of denomination, it also posits in the thing. This threefold relational complexus can be represented diagrammatically in the following manner, where the arrows represent relations of signification, whether natural (as in that of a

concept toward objective reality) or conventional (as in that borne by words):¹⁴

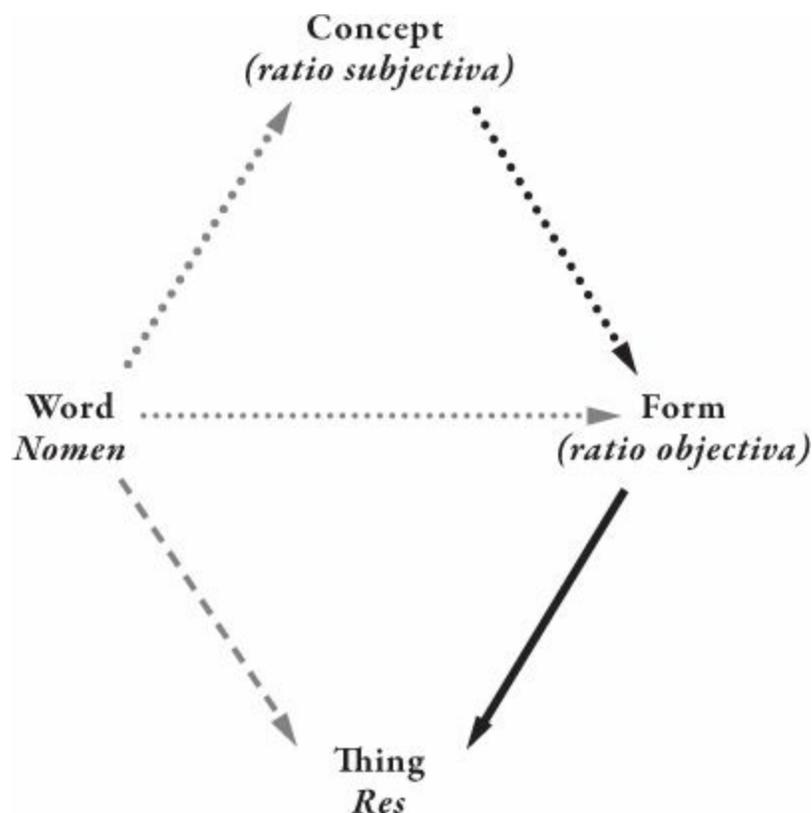


As noted, however, names signify things only because they directly signify concepts, and the latter signify things inasmuch as they represent them.

The manner in which concepts represent things is particularly important here. They do so only with respect to that in things which is intelligible (to us), that is, with respect to their formal perfection, whether substantial or accidental. Accordingly, concepts are said, broadly speaking, to signify real things, things which are individual and enjoy different acts of existence, not according to their individuality or acts of being, but as isomorphic representations of their formal constitution. In this respect, the content of the concept, what it expresses, is one and the same as the intelligibility of the thing, or one and the same as the thing in its intelligibility. This is nothing other than the “form” or “nature” of the thing, its *ratio* (that principle by which it is known and by which it is knowable), and that which is signified by a definition.¹⁵ So names denominate concrete things according to their *rationes*, which, as their intelligible structures, are not only in the intellect as concepts, but also in the things as forms.¹⁶ This is why names can be said to signify concrete things themselves. Strictly speaking, they signify the formal *ratio* of things, but because that *ratio* is in things, the names supposit for the things themselves.¹⁷

These principles form the foundation for properly grasping what is meant in saying that a name applies equivocally, analogically or univocally to several referents.¹⁸ When a common name is used to refer to diverse things, the meaning (concept, *ratio*) of the name might be identical, completely different, or analogical,

and this meaning in each case corresponds to (and ideogenetically derives from) the ontological constitution (form, nature, *ratio*) of the subject denominated by the name. Within the category of analogy, moreover, the different but similar ways that what is signified by a name can belong to diverse things can be as much a function of the relation between the *ratio* and the concrete mode of being of the supposit as of the relation between the distinct *rationes* of the supposit, as well as the relation between relations intrinsic to the supposit or to the *rationes* of those supposit. What I have just sketched in abstract terms are the conditions for analogy of inequality, analogy of attribution, and analogy of proportionality, each of which forms of analogy are verified in the relation between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christian communities, and each of which must be kept in mind when speaking of them as “churches” and “ecclesial communities.” Before examining these modes of analogicity, however, a clearer picture of the structural components of analogous signification can be obtained by reconstructing the “semantic triangle” in the fuller form of a “semantic diamond”:¹⁹



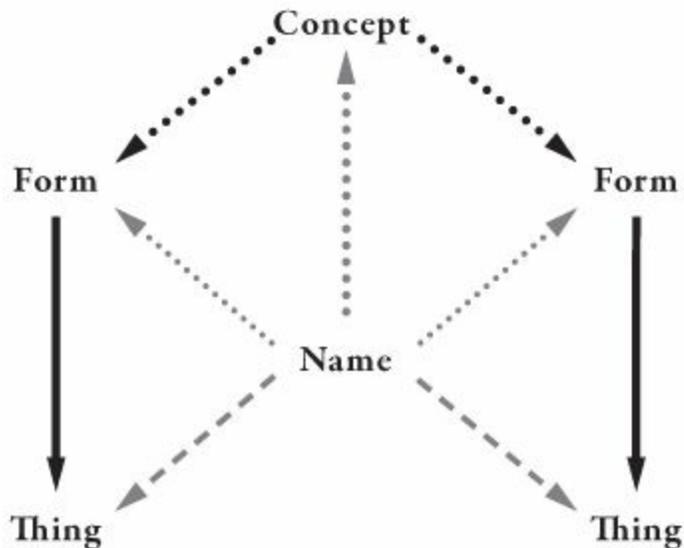
Relations of signification (direct or indirect, natural or conventional, mental or

verbal) are represented with dotted lines; the relation of denomination or supposition (which presupposes the former relations) is represented by the dashed line; and the relation of formal determination or inherence with the solid line. Natural relations are represented in black, conventional relations in gray. How can this help to differentiate univocity, equivocity, and analogicity, as well as the latter's various forms?

In the case of univocity, two or more referents are denominated according to a single *ratio*, each referent possessing identical formal perfections²⁰ intellectually represented by a single concept. Between the subjects of reference, the conceptual representations and corresponding inherent forms (from which the name is imposed²¹) are equal. In the case of pure equivocation, two or more things are denominated by the same word, but the formalities from which the name is imposed are not only different but unrelated; its meanings, and the relevant formal perfections of its referents, are unrelated *per se*. These two forms of speech and their ontological counterparts are easily represented as follows:

Univocation:

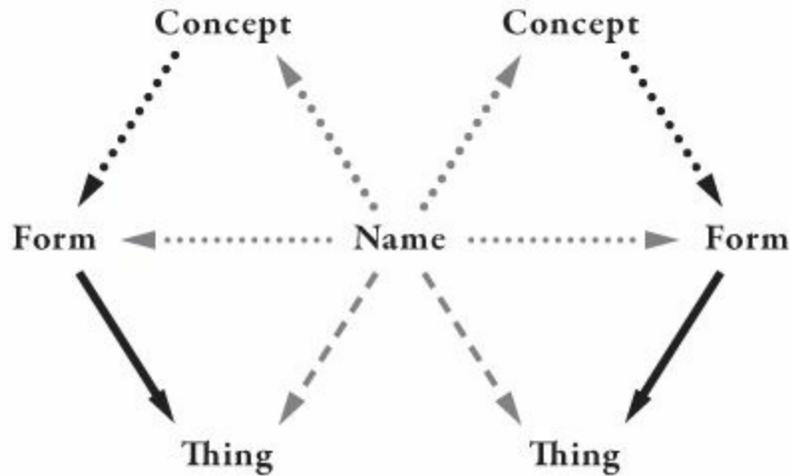
A single concept, and a single formal perfection uniting distinctly individuated but equal forms in each subject



Between the left and right sides there is total equality aside from material individuation and supposition.

Equivocation:

Two per se unrelated concepts and forms



Between the left and right sides altogether, there is no identity (similarity) aside from the suppositing name.

Between these extremes lies analogy. In the following section, I examine the major forms of analogy commonly acknowledged by Thomists, the present theological value of which will become clear in their ecclesiological application.²²

The divisions of analogy

Amid scattered appeals to and a handful of brief discussions of analogy in Aquinas, the substance of his thought on the matter is set forth in: *I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1; *Sum. theol.*, Ia, q. 13, a. 5–6; *Sum. theol.*, Ia, q. 16, a. 6; *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. I, c. 34; *De ver.*, q. 2, a. 11; *De ver.*, q. 23, a. 7, ad 9; and *In Nic. Eth.*, Bk. I, lect. VII.²³ A close analysis of these passages lies beyond the scope of this volume, but we can distill from them much of Aquinas's understanding of the divisions of analogy and their chief characteristics. Beginning with Thomas's *Sentences* commentary, we can distinguish, first of all, three ways that something can be analogous:

According to intention and not according to being;

According to being and not according to intention; and

According to intention and according to being.²⁴

The first of these, exemplified by the term “health” as predicated of an animal, medicine and urine, involves a name referred to many things but which is properly predicable of only one of them (the primary analogate) and used to denominate the others only insofar as they bear a determinate relationship to it.²⁵ Such analogy, we are further told in the *Summa*, requires that the primary analogate be placed in the definition of the secondary analogate considered as such (i.e., as so denominated).²⁶ The primary analogate alone properly realizes what is signified by the name, whence the name belongs primarily to it, and only secondarily to the others, and inasmuch as they are ordered to it.²⁷ This mode of analogy is known (especially since Cajetan’s *De nominum analogia*) as “analogy of attribution.”²⁸

The second mode of analogy, “according to being and not according to intention,” involves the application of one name to many things, all of which perfectly realize the *ratio* signified by the name, but which differently possess that formality in reality, the being of which varies in diverse analogates. As Cajetan notes, “the notion indicated by this name is exactly the same but unequally participated in,”²⁹ an inequality that implies priority and posteriority in the order of perfection. This form of analogy, known as “analogy of inequality,” can be illustrated with the name “animal”: notwithstanding generic unity, “animal” is not in the brute and in man according to an equal grade of perfection. Thus, while from a purely logical point of view the name is univocally employed (and the notion of each animal insofar as it is an animal is the same), from the metaphysical point of view it is not, because the concrete mode of realization of the *ratio objectiva* (the mode of being of the determining formality) is diverse.³⁰

The third sort of analogy, “according to intention *and* according to being,” occurs when a name is applied to many things neither equal in intention nor in being, that is, where the notion expressed by the name is not entirely one, though proportionally one, and where the *ratio* signified by the name, though formally present within each analogate, differs according to perfection. The inequality among the analogates pertains not only to the concrete manner in which they instantiate the form, but also to what is signified when they are denominated with the common name. Often (but not always) these inequalities are related according to priority and posteriority, such that there exists among the analogates an essential order that is natural or logical or both. Being as said of substance and accidents illustrates the twofold inequality according to priority and posteriority in both

respects: the perfection signified by “*ens*” is real in each of them, though it belongs primarily (according to natural priority) to substance and only secondarily (derivatively) of accidents; and the name “*ens*” is said of accidents only by reason of a determinate relationship to substance which enters into their very definition (logical priority).³¹

The third way of being analogous sometimes shares in common with the first the fact that the name applies to secondary analogates only by reason of their relation to the primary analogate. It differs from the first, however, by reason of the formal presence of the analogon within all of the analogues. For this reason, it is sometimes called “analogy of intrinsic attribution,” in contradistinction from “analogy of extrinsic attribution” characteristic of the first way of being analogous where the proper *ratio* of the analogon is found in only one analogue. This third mode of analogy, however, can admit of the relevant logical and metaphysical inequalities (variation in *ratio* as well as in concrete mode of being) without implying any determinate relation between analogates. Such is the case with instances of what is called “analogy of proportionality” in which different proportions are proportioned to one another,³² to which I now turn.

In *De ver.*, q. 2, a. 11, Aquinas contrasts two fundamental kinds of analogy: that of simple proportion, in which secondary analogates are named with reference to a primary analogate that more properly realizes the *ratio* of the name, and in which the secondary analogates stand toward the primary according to a determinate (causal) relationship; and that of proportionality, in which two things agree in name on the basis of similar relationships, such that the similarity in difference resides between two *relations* intrinsic to their respective analogues, and not in a determinate relation between the analogues themselves, and neither analogue receives its denomination from the other.³³ The former of these is the “analogy of attribution” (whether intrinsic or extrinsic), involving logical and natural priority and posteriority. The latter consists in an imperfect resemblance between sets of relations, whether they are ordered according to priority and posteriority or not, as, for example, in the proportion between the relation borne by eight to four and the relation borne by six to three, or the proportion between seeing in relation to the body and intellection in relation to the soul.³⁴ Among modes of analogy, this mode has the broadest theological application and occupies a privileged place in the metaphysical and theological thought of Aquinas.³⁵ All the

relations between God and the creature are undergirded by this mode of resemblance in dissimilarity, and all the names we commonly apply to God and creatures, thanks to a real similarity between them, whether gathered from natural experience or consigned to us through Revelation, belong to God radically differently than they belong to the creature. Whether we speak of wisdom, or goodness, or life, such perfections stand toward subsistent being and exist in him according to a proportion fundamentally diverse from that of their existence in creatures. Yet, because *omne agens agit sibi simile*, a real likeness exists between wisdom as said of man and wisdom as said of God. In some respect, therefore, uncreated wisdom is to God in a way proportional to the way created wisdom is to man (even if the difference between the ways that they possess wisdom far outstrips their proportional unity).³⁶

In the end, we have four different modes of analogy: extrinsic attribution, inequality, intrinsic attribution, and proportionality. Two or more things can be named analogically in any of these four ways, and according to varying combinations thereof. Denomination according to analogy of extrinsic attribution is, of course, incompatible with the intrinsicalness of the perfection/formality implied by denomination according to the analogies of inequality, intrinsic attribution or proportionality. Nevertheless, two things can be named according to analogy of extrinsic attribution in one respect and according to another form of analogy in some other respect. So there is no reason that all four types of analogy cannot be verified at the same time of the same set of things. It remains now to examine the different but similar—the analogical—ways that the names “ecclesial community” and “church” apply to non-Catholic Christianities and to the Catholic Church.

The analogical use of the ecclesial names

The Church is the assembly of God’s holy people, called forth and formed by, around and in Jesus Christ. It is a concrete reality of living members of Christ united and enlivened by the Spirit and the hierarchical and sacramental riches of which Christ is the source. If something of this Church can exist among non-Catholic Christianities according to varying degrees of actuality, then there is every reason to call them “ecclesial,” inasmuch as the supernatural perfection they enjoy

derives from, orders them to, and unites them with the one Church of Christ. For some of them, there is even reason to call them “churches,” inasmuch as they are, albeit imperfectly, sufficiently complete concrete expressions of the life-receiving and life-giving spousal and sacrificial unity with Christ that is the Catholic Church. In every case, it is by reason of the special relationship they bear toward the Catholic Church that non-Catholic Christian communities bear the names “ecclesial” or “church.” That relationship is based on a variety of ontological relations defined chiefly in terms of efficient causality, formal causality and final causality, but which also reveal a proportional unity between those communities consisting in imperfect likenesses between sets of relations within them. We discover, therefore, that relationship to the Catholic Church permits non-Catholic communities to enjoy the ontological status and denomination “ecclesial” and even “church.” We discover, furthermore, thanks to the former discovery, that the names “ecclesial” and “church” belong to non-Catholic communities in a way subordinate to the way in which they belong to the Catholic Church, such that the Catholic Church alone is “ecclesial” and “Church” in the full and propermost sense of those terms. She is the “primary analogate” with respect to which every other referent of those names is so denominated (and thus secondarily). This analogical use of the names “ecclesial” and “church” will assume the form of one of the types of analogy examined above; and, depending on the theological context, each of those forms of analogy, even that of extrinsic attribution, can operate in a non-trivial way in our use of those names. Let us take them up in turn.

Extrinsic attribution

Although the ecclesial analogy of extrinsic attribution has a limited application to ecumenism and is largely irrelevant to an ecclesiology focused on the Church’s *ad intra* mystery, it serves in a unique way to underscore the Church’s missionary relationship to the world of non-believers, at the same time that it permits a systematic clarification of the ecclesial ordination inherent in Christian communities deprived of an authentic Eucharistic worship. A religious community can be called “ecclesial” or even a “church” according to an analogy of extrinsic attribution if it receives that denomination precisely and only by reason of its order (determinate relation) toward the redemptive plenitude of the one Church of

Christ. This is the case if it is “ecclesial” or “church” merely in potency. Here what is signified by the denomination “ecclesial” or “church” is nothing other than the potency for Catholicity (or for full Catholicity); and the *ratio* of the name includes the notion of the actuality with respect to which the potency is defined. Thus the names “ecclesial community” and even “church” can be applied according to an analogy of extrinsic attribution to religious communities completely lacking “elements” in act, as long as they are in potency to those elements and the comitant ecclesiality. It could not, however, be so applied to religious societies that have, as institutions, extinguished the potency for authentic worship by way, for example, of its formal repudiation, as is the case with constitutively anti-Catholic Masonic organizations and satanic sects. Nor is the name so attributed to non-religious human societies as such, since the (relevantly proximate) potency for Catholicity is rooted in the specifically religious dimensions of human association. In such instances, the names “ecclesial community” or “church” could be used only equivocally.³⁷

For what concerns the name “ecclesial,” it is important to observe that this form of the ecclesial analogy, that of extrinsic attribution, pertains only to religious communities lacking any intrinsic realization of the elements of truth and sanctification proper to Christ’s Church. It has, therefore, no direct application to ecumenism, but interreligious relevance, regarding non-Christian religious groups. Although the spiritual pursuits of the latter might seem to indicate, counterfactually, the presence of at least something of the interior/invisible “elements” proper to the Church, this is not necessarily the case. For, even when not willfully opposed to the only authentic worship that is Catholic (which marks the satanic³⁸), such a community’s religious sensitivities and expressions do not on that basis alone amount to a sharing in what is Catholic. Instances of tribal worship, for example, not only lack those elements fundamentally constitutive of the Church, such as right faith, sacramental character, the Eucharist, hierarchical office, etc., but, notwithstanding their natural religious virtue, can also lack the presence of the Holy Spirit in the form of an intrinsically unifying or interiorly directive principle (as author of habitual grace, source and guarantor of office, etc.). Many of the so-called “world religions” can be similarly described.³⁹ My intention is not to discredit these spontaneous manifestations of man’s religious sensibility, or the virtues inherent in non-Christian religions having some basis for their cultic

institutions in the revelatory data. My point, rather, is to highlight the fact that even where no elements of Christ's Church are actually verified, that Church can indeed exist in potency.⁴⁰ As a result, many more religious communities than we are customarily inclined to think can, in a broad and extended sense of the term as specified by analogy of extrinsic attribution, meaningfully receive the name "ecclesial," a possibility that is rooted in their fundamental ordination to the Catholic Church, the mystery of which, as supernatural actuality, is expressed in the very use of the name in connection with non-Christian religious communities.

Although Vatican II does not directly speak of such extrinsic denomination, the Council's attention being fixed upon the *actual* realization of elements beyond the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church, it nevertheless underscores the ontological dynamism inherent in the notion of an ecclesial analogy of extrinsic attribution based on potency:

All men are called to be part of this catholic unity of the People of God....
And there belong to or are related to it in various ways (*ad eamque variis modis pertinent vel ordinantur*), the Catholic faithful, all who believe in Christ, and indeed the whole of mankind.⁴¹

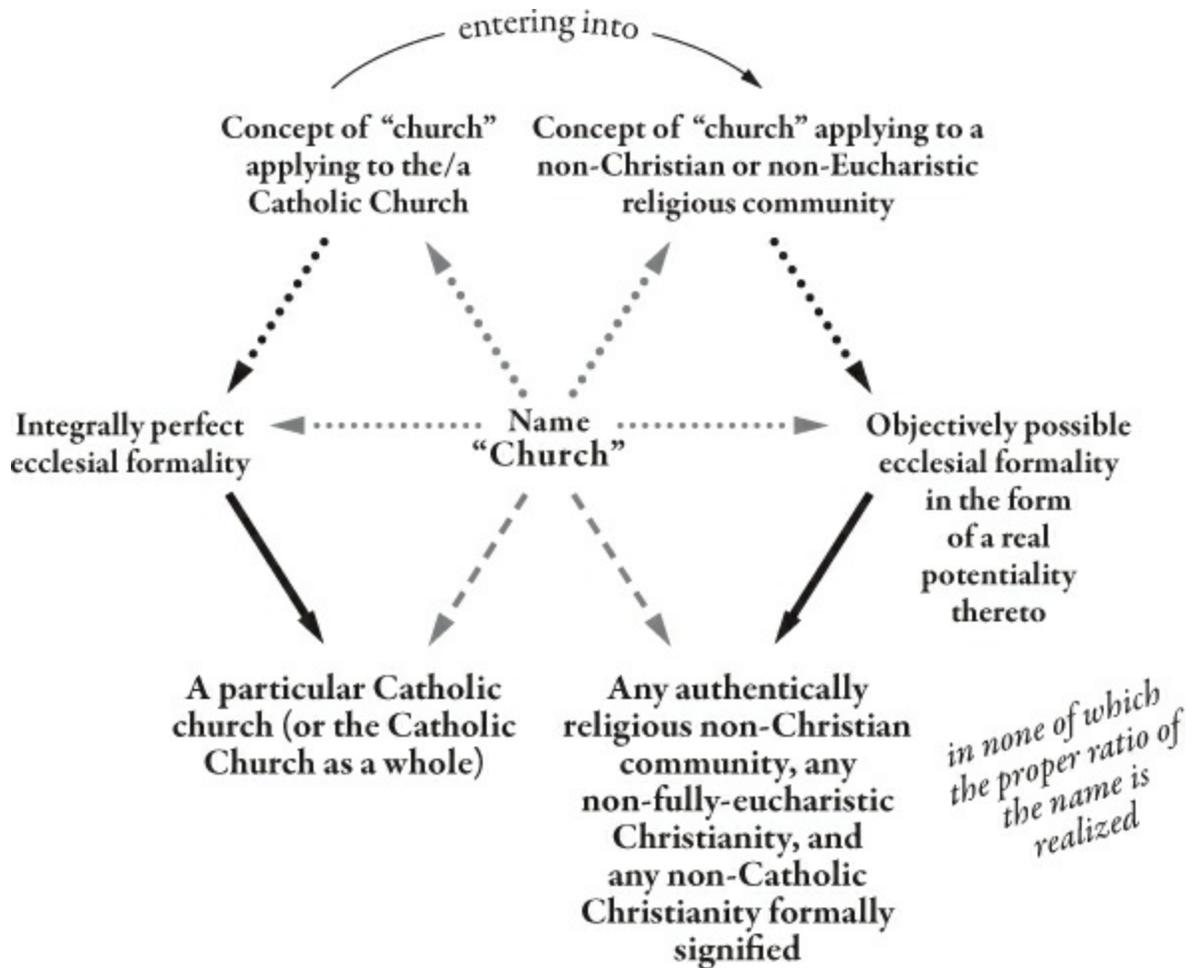
For Aquinas, this same line of reasoning constitutes the basis for affirming that Christ is the supernatural Head of *all* men, that all men are incorporated in him and made members of the Church in some sense, even if only in potency.⁴² What I have just described is the institutional expression of the same law regarding human communities merely in potency to the redemptive blessings promised in Jesus Christ. Such a use of the names "ecclesial" and "church," however, is anything but a prominent feature of tradition. Moreover, if the Church is to be defined as the members of Christ actually united and enlivened by his Spirit and hierarchic sacramental gifts, then the non-actual reality of the Church should not be called "church" without serious theological caution. This caveat is less critical for what concerns the denomination "ecclesial," since the latter, as an adjective, directly signifies only those qualities or principles by reason of which something is or shares in what is proper to the Church.

Nevertheless, it is also possible to apply the ecclesial analogy of extrinsic attribution to certain Christian communities, namely those stemming from the

Reformation, not for what concerns the title “ecclesial”—the natural significate of which *ratio* is intrinsically verified in them, making them actual places of specifically Christic mediation—, but for what concerns the name “church” understood as expressing something fundamentally more profound than what is signified by the less determinate name “ecclesial community.”⁴³ Because features intrinsic to the *ratio* of the name “church” (taken in the sense used at Vatican II and specified by the magisterium since then) are absent among Protestant communities, if they are sometimes loosely called “churches,” it is only by extrinsic attribution based upon their determinate relation to the Catholic Church in whom alone the proper *ratio* of the name is realized and with reference to whom they are so named.⁴⁴ This semantic reference to the Catholic Church (the fact that the signification of the name “church” as said of them includes the notion of the Catholic Church) has its roots in their ontological ordination to the same. Beginning with baptism, the ecclesial endowments with which they are blessed in actuality confer upon them a *per se* ordination toward that more complete ecclesial realization signified by the name “church” as applied to its primary analogate, the Catholic Church.⁴⁵ Note that the analogy of extrinsic attribution here follows precisely from the non-actuality of those perfections essentially constitutive of the being of a particular church, a state of mere potentiality in that regard.

The situation of the separated Oriental churches is somewhat different, inasmuch as they possess in actuality certain fundamentally essentially constitutive features of a local church. Whether this promotes them to a state of ecclesiality sufficient to merit the name “church” in a manner superior to that of analogy of extrinsic attribution is controversial. I offer an argument for the affirmative below, but the official magisterial documents in this regard are ambiguous and, in fact, present forceful reasons against it. In any case, those forms of analogy besides extrinsic attribution are far more relevant to our use of the ecclesial names and to our understanding of the unity in distinction that exists among different Christian communities. Before turning to these, we can summarize the analogicity just examined with the following representation:

Analogy of Extrinsic Attribution:



Note that the very *ratio* of "ecclesiality" as applied to non-Christian religious institutions and the very *ratio* of "church" as applied to non-Eucharistic Christian communities is a *relation* to the form characterizing the primary analogate.

Standard application of the ecclesial analogy to Christian institutions

Each of the remaining instances of the analogy of ecclesial names pertains to specifically Christian communities, all of whom are intrinsically endowed with the supernatural life and a portion of the means thereto that flow from Christ and his Church. But the ecclesial identity of non-Catholic Christianities is something inseparable from their identity with the Catholic Church, and this presents a certain complexity in the manner in which they can be signified. In order, therefore, to address the analogical manner in which a non-Catholic Christian community can be called "ecclesial" or "church," we must first revisit the modes

according to which those communities can be signified.

As set forth in the previous chapter, there are basically two ways of looking at non-Catholic Christianities: according to that by which they are distinct religious institutions, and according to that by which they are Catholic. There are also two ways of considering the ecclesial “elements” with which non-Catholics are endowed: either inasmuch as these elements are defectively instantiated outside of the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church, or insofar as they are the property of the Catholic Church and extensions of her own being.

Beginning with elements of truth and sanctification within a non-Catholic Christian community (from which the latter’s corresponding degree of ecclesiality), we may consider them, first of all, as belonging to the Catholic Church *simpliciter* (without further qualification or consignification). In a certain respect, the name “ecclesial” used with reference to these elements does not in this case refer to anything different from properties, parts, or powers of the one Catholic Church, wherefore, with reference to elements in non-Catholic communities and the Catholic Church alike, that by reason of which the name is imposed, the inherent formal perfection as such, and the meaning of the term, are the same, and, therefore, no analogicity obtains. Of course, this can only take place with respect to *parts* or aspects of non-Catholic communities (i.e., the elements that they possess) and never with respect to those communities considered as a whole (even when denominatively taken). Second, we may consider these same elements, not simply inasmuch as they belong to the Catholic Church, but as elements substantified within a non-Catholic community; that is, as instantiated outside of the visible confines of the Catholic Church. This manner of considering them can happen in two ways. The first is when signified according to the indigence connoted by the mere “elements” language consignifying the defective/mutilated mode of being they have on account of separation from the plenitude of the Church’s endowments (attention here is on their formal mode of being). This gives rise to analogy of attribution and proportionality. The second is when considered inasmuch as they remain parts of the Catholic Church, and therefore not according to their formal imperfections/privations, yet still as found outside of her visible confines (attention here is on the subjective mode of being and material causality). This gives rise to analogy of inequality.⁴⁶

The situation is slightly different when considering the name “church” and

the compound name “ecclesial community,” which are used to denominate a community as such. Now, in one sense, it is possible to refer exclusively to what is Catholic within a non-Catholic community when employing the name “church” or “ecclesial community,” but as this requires abstraction from everything formally distinctive of it as non-Catholic, it eliminates many (perhaps most) of the concrete visible structures by which it is an identifiable society, thus evacuating the name of part of its basic content. This is, of course, not how the names are used. Were they so employed, however, one might be inclined to think that such denomination would be univocal, in a way similar to the manner in which the designation of elements can be univocal, since the referent in each case is Catholic. This does not follow, however, because, unlike the case with elements and ecclesiality, the names “church” and “ecclesial community” stand for the entire subject of ecclesial being (the substantial whole, as it were). Therefore, even if envisaging only what is Catholic within a non-Catholic Christian community, because that set of gifts is partial, an incomplete collection of ecclesial properties, when compared with all that is Catholic within the Catholic Church, it cannot bear the name “church” or “ecclesial community” (not even logically) in the same way as the latter. To claim contrarily would be equivalent to calling both a part and the whole a “whole” in the same way. Considered as subjects of ecclesial being, the difference between all that is Catholic within a non-Catholic communion and all that is Catholic within the Catholic Church is not merely a difference in the concrete mode of instantiation (giving rise to the merely metaphysical analogy of inequality), but of formal constitution. As noted, however, this has little to do with the ordinary use of the names “church” and “ecclesial community.” These expressions refer rather to a Christian community taken as a whole.

The names “church” and “ecclesial community” belong to non-Catholic Christian communities in another sense, inasmuch as, denominatively taken, they possess everything required to be societies of redemption, even if this is thanks to the presence within them of the Catholic Church. In such reference/denomination, it is *they*, and not the Catholic Church, who, by reason of what is Catholic in them, are called “churches” or “ecclesial communities,” and in this case the use of these names is analogous, according both to attribution and proportionality.

Intrinsic attribution

Following upon the nature of ecclesiality and of ecclesial elements as described in [chapter three](#), ecclesial elements are elements either essentially constitutive of or that pertain *per se* to the being and life of Christ's Church. Simply put, the term "ecclesial," strictly taken, means having essentially to do with, being related *per se* to, the Church. Clearly, non-Catholic Christian communities are "ecclesial" (i.e., concern or are related to Christ's Church) in a way different from the way in which the Catholic Church is "ecclesial" (i.e., has to do with or is related to Christ's Church). The latter subject of ecclesiality relates to Christ's Church by way of concrete identity. The former subjects of ecclesiality relate to Christ's Church precisely insofar as they relate to the Catholic Church,⁴⁷ wherefore the very notion of the latter falls within the definition of their own ecclesiality, their ecclesiality is understood only with reference to the Catholic Church. Decisively, therefore, the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christian communions share the designation "ecclesial" only by an analogy of attribution. Similarly, every one of their respective elements of sanctification and truth are called "ecclesial," not univocally, but according to the same kind of analogy.

The same conclusion imposes itself from a consideration of the essential indivisibility of Christ's Church. If "ecclesiality" said of both Catholics and non-Catholics were univocal, then ecclesiality would be common to both sets of communities after the manner in which a species is common to many individuals: the very same *ratio* of ecclesiality would be predicated of each, and the very same (formally identical) ecclesiality would belong to both, as a result of which the very essence of Christ's Church would be multiplied (in the same way that the species is multiplied in its individuals). But it is impossible for the Church and her ecclesial essence to be multiplied. Therefore her ecclesiality can be extended (beyond the parts of the undivided whole which is the Catholic Church) only in an analogical, and not in a univocal, manner.⁴⁸ The mode of analogicity here in question, however, is anything but one of extrinsic attribution, since the properly ecclesial character of the elements among non-Catholic Christianities, their instrumentally salvific function, is intrinsic to them. Thus we are speaking of an analogy of *intrinsic* attribution. Yet the intrinsic perfection these elements represent are defined with reference to another (*ad unum*), according to manifold relations to

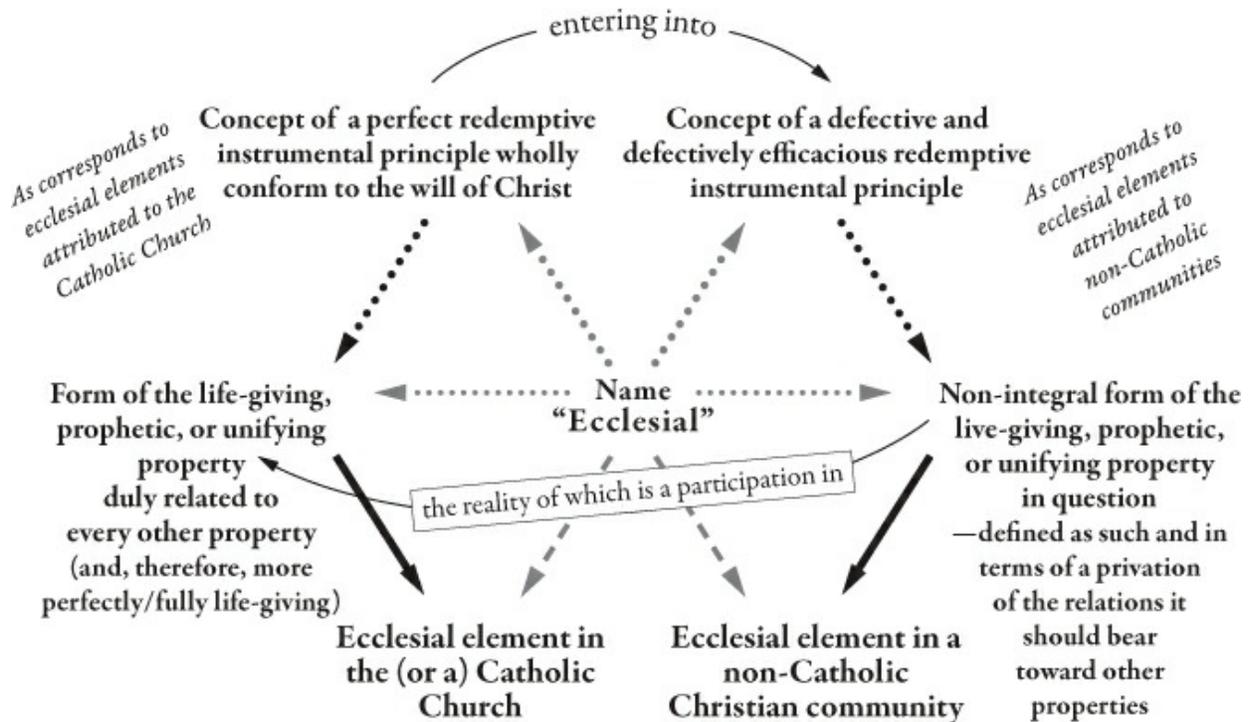
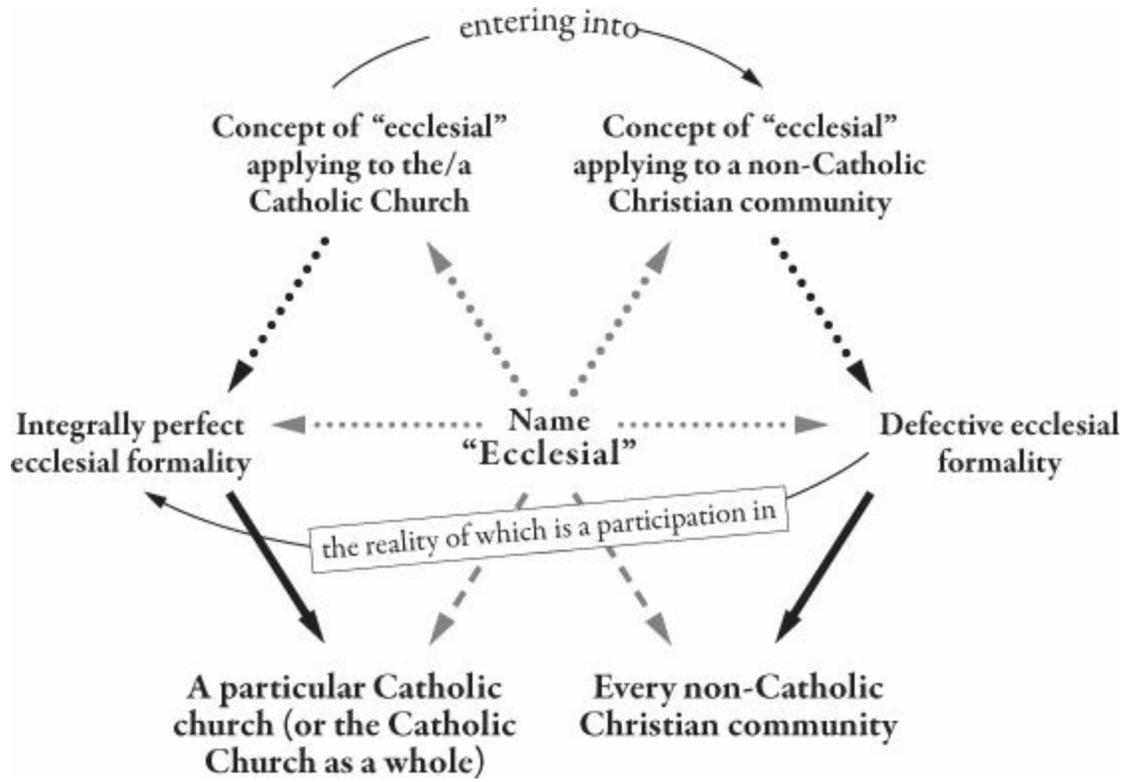
the one Catholic Church:

Of itself Baptism is only a beginning, an inauguration wholly directed toward the fullness of life in Christ. Baptism, therefore, envisages a complete profession of faith, complete incorporation in the system of salvation such as Christ willed it to be, and finally complete ingrafting in Eucharistic communion [all of which is a determinate relation to Catholic fullness].⁴⁹

Moreover, some and even very many of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church.... All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to Christ, belong by right to the one Church of Christ. The brethren divided from us also use many liturgical actions of the Christian religion.... These liturgical actions must be regarded as capable of giving access to the community of salvation [the Catholic Church].⁵⁰

All of the features of the analogy of intrinsic attribution are thus verified in the use of the name “ecclesial” as said of non-Catholic Christian communities and their elements. As explained in the following chapter, in a similar way the name “church” can be applied to the Oriental churches not in full communion with the Catholic Church according to the analogy of intrinsic attribution, owing to the actual presence within them of an authentic Eucharistic worship. These instances of analogical attribution are intrinsically tied to the Catholic Church, moreover, according, ultimately, to the causal dynamisms explored in [chapter four](#), expressed primarily in terms of participation. We can schematically summarize the present ecclesial analogy as follows:⁵¹

Analogy of Intrinsic Attribution:



This is a matter not just of an unequal participation in the same *ratio*, but of different *rationes*. Numerically distinct subjects of differing institutional identity can never have the same *ratio* when it comes either to the *ratio* of the Church or to that of any of her distinctive properties (mere analogy of inequality is thus ruled out)

in the case of “inter-denominational” comparisons).

Note that the very *ratio* of “ecclesiality” as applied to non-Catholic communities and to their ecclesial elements, though not reducible to, always involves a relation to the form characterizing the primary analogate.

Inequality

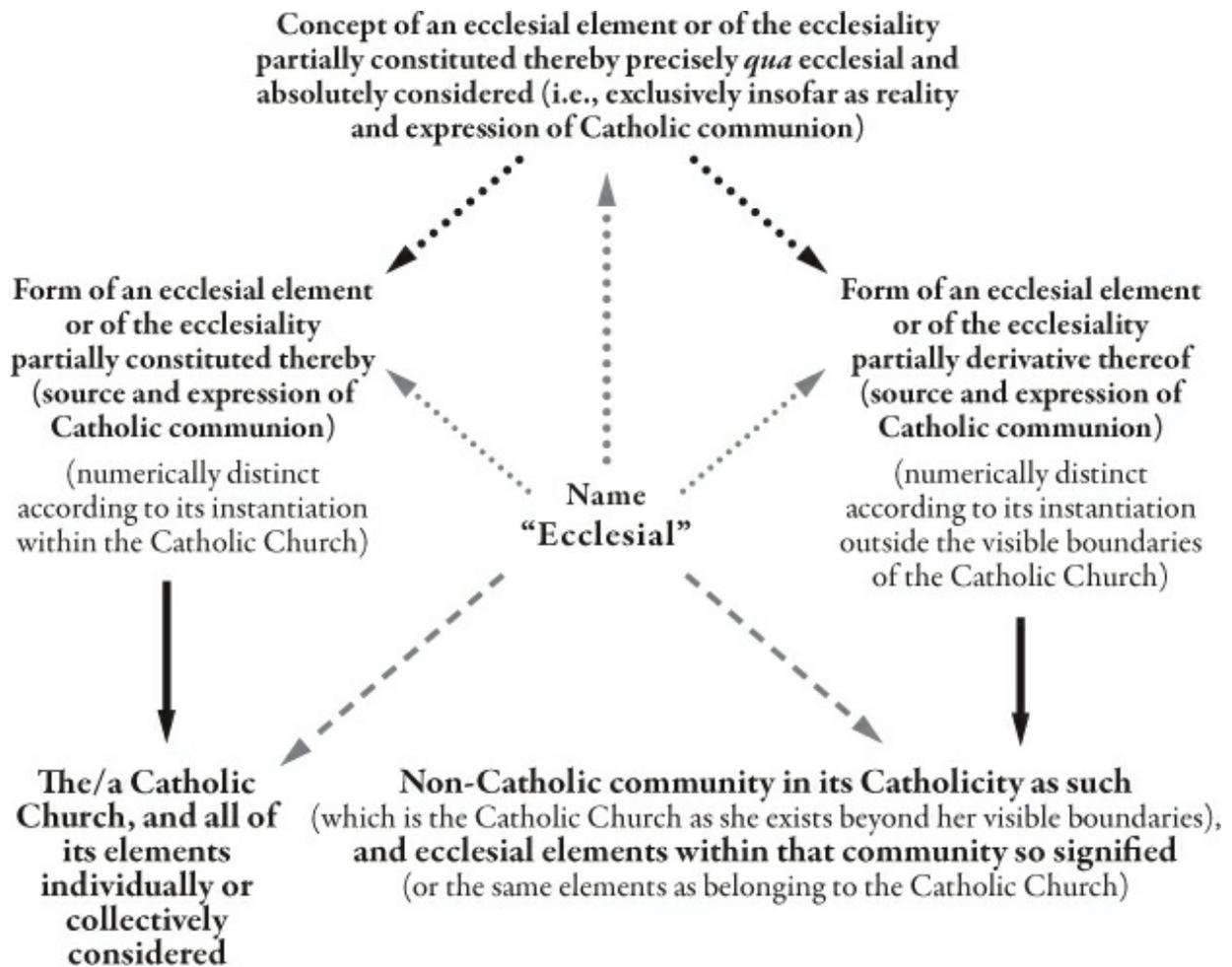
In the case of analogies of participation, where there is one primary analogate and many secondary analogates, the secondary analogates can vary among themselves as to the degree and/or mode of realization of the participated perfection. When the difference is merely in degree, as in one man’s having greater knowledge than another, then the perfection as said of one is univocal with the perfection as said of another (as “knowing” is said with the same meaning of the wise man and the fool). When, however, the difference is modal and not merely in degree, as in the case of “living” as said of man and of the bacterium, then the perfection is analogically instantiated, even while the notion of the perfection is the same. This is a case of analogy *secundum esse tantum*, sometimes denominated “analogy of inequality” and described in terms of “generic likeness.”

Now, in both of these respects (in degree and mode), the Catholic Church exceeds every other Christian community with regard to her ecclesiality and every element *per se* constitutive of the Church. This was shown in [chapter three](#), but the modal difference is especially pertinent here, inasmuch as it accounts for the merely analogical attribution of ecclesiality to non-Catholic Christian communions in comparison with the Catholic Church, and in more than one way. Thus, when used of both the Catholic Church (or particular Catholic churches) and non-Catholic Christian communions as such, the name “ecclesial” always involves analogy *secundum intentionem* (and we have just examined two instances of this analogy: extrinsic and intrinsic attribution). But the modal difference bears itself out also at another level, by which all that is formally ecclesial (Catholic) within non-Catholic Christianities, every one of their ecclesial properties as such, exists in a *subjectively* diminished way when compared to the existence enjoyed by the same formal perfections (*rationes obiectivae*) within the Catholic Church, that is, where the very Catholic reality of these institutions is supposed in an incommensurably inferior way.

Even when viewing a non-Catholic Christian community according to that by

which it is Catholic, the subjective mode according to which ecclesiality and any ecclesial elements are present in it is inferior to their mode of presence within the visible confines of the Catholic fold. Thus, even when signifying non-Catholic Christian communities according to their Catholicity, with reference to the notion and name “ecclesial,” there obtains in their regard (in comparison with the Catholic Church) an analogy of inequality or *secundum esse*. Note that this is not to attribute an analogically inferior mode of participation in ecclesiality to that which is as such Catholic within them (as if Anglican baptism considered insofar as it belongs to the Catholic Church were in itself inferior to Catholic baptism), but to these communities as subjects endowed with such elements, that is, the communities as a whole in precision from all that is not Catholic within them. This distinction is required to account for the peculiar, aberrant subjective mode of perfection belonging to those “parts” of the Catholic Church that are found outside of her visible boundaries, where the subject to which they belong, and the material cause of ecclesiality in general, is complicated by a rupture in visible unity resulting in a complex mode of their instantiation. Attention was called to this problem in the preceding chapters. The ecclesial analogy of inequality can be represented in the following way:⁵²

Analogy of Inequality:



The *ratio* of ecclesiality *insofar as it is a Catholic reality* is the same, but that *ratio* is neither in all ecclesial communities nor in their respective elements equally. “The analogates are considered equal in the *ratio* signified by the common name but are not held equal with respect to the *esse* of this *ratio*” (Cajetan, *De nominum analogia* §6), and, as “corporeity is more noble in a plant than in a mineral” (*ibid.*), the ecclesiality of everything ecclesial in the Catholic Church is more noble than the ecclesiality of everything Catholic outside of her visible confines.

Proportionality

The kind of analogy according to which non-Catholic communions can be called “churches” or “ecclesial” is, first of all, an analogy of attribution. This follows from the fact that everything ecclesial about every non-Catholic communion belongs primarily to the Catholic Church and only secondarily, derivatively, and partially to those separated Christian communities.⁵³ At the same time (looking at these communities from a more “relative” perspective), the language of “church” and of

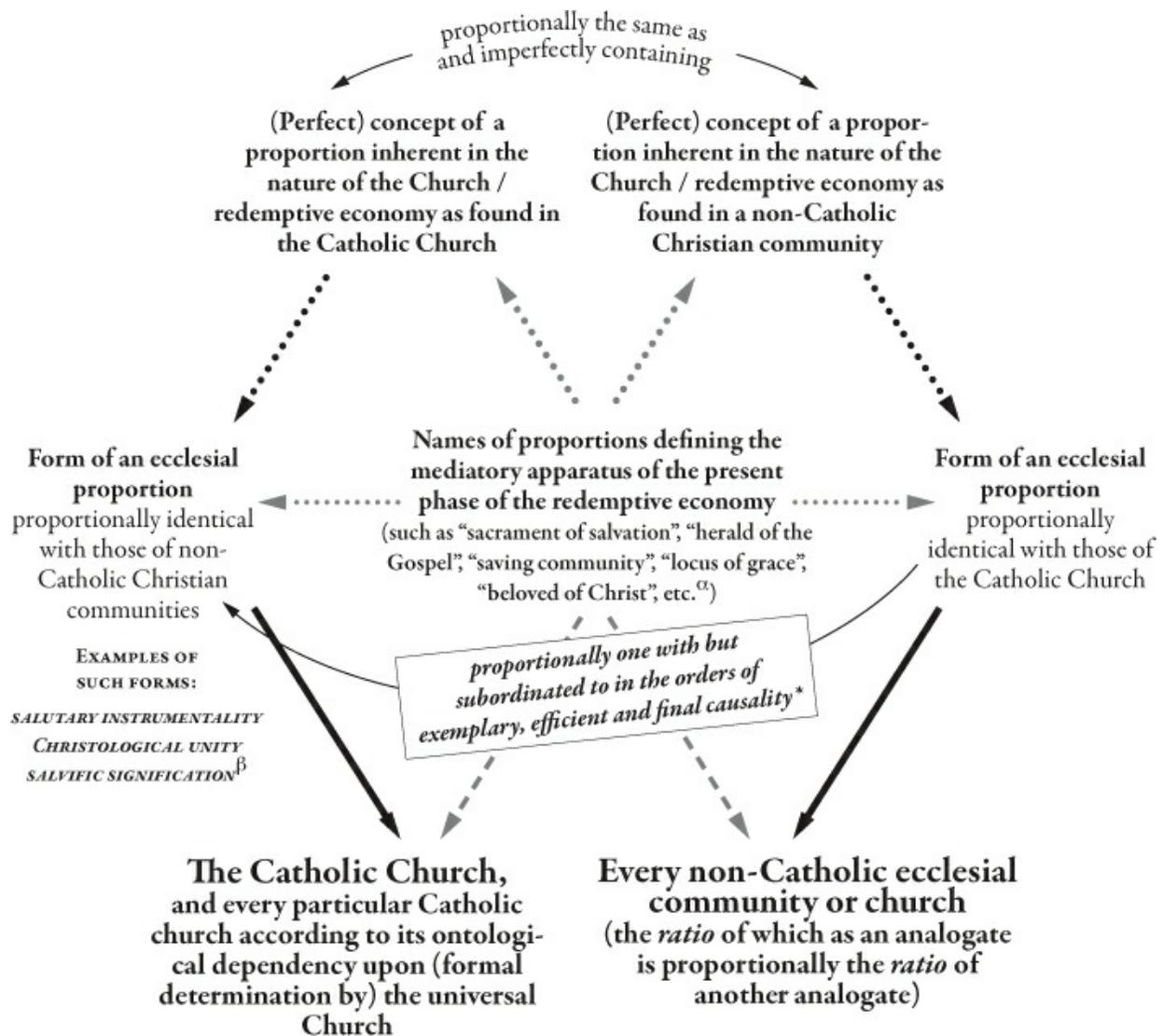
“ecclesial community” is attributed to our separated brethren in keeping with their sacred status in the world and the active role that they exercise in the present redemptive economy; for, like the Catholic Church (even if by reason of her), they too have served and serve as instruments of God’s saving work in Jesus Christ.⁵⁴ This means that they bear toward the world a salvific relation similar in kind to that of the Catholic Church, and that they stand toward Jesus Christ in a manner similar to the bond existing between him and the Catholic Church, and that their visible structures relate toward their spiritual riches in a way that is in some measure comparable to the sacramental dynamism of the Catholic Church. In other words, the names “church” and “ecclesial community,” and the realities signified by those names, are rightly attributed to separated Christianities on account of a proportion that exists between them and the Catholic Church with respect to the set of relations just mentioned and others like them. Consequently, we must recognize an analogy of proportionality between the ecclesial plenitude of the Catholic Church and the ecclesiality of her separated brethren, and, on this basis, the need to employ the terminology of “church” and “ecclesial community” according to the same type of analogy.

Non-Catholic communions can be called “churches” or “ecclesial” according to an analogy of proportionality at several levels, expressing itself, for example, in the relationship between the institution and the spiritual effects that it both expresses and brings about, or between the entire community and the person of Jesus whose transformative and spousal presence it is called to signify, or, at a more particular level, between specific rites and the effects these are supposed to bring about. Precisely because “the Church, in Christ, is in the nature of a sacrament,”⁵⁵ there are innumerable ways that we can speak of an analogy of proportionality, corresponding to the innumerable ways in which it has pleased God to employ the corporeal world he has united to himself in Christ in the work of redemption. There also always exists, however, an analogy of attribution regarding every level at which we might speak of an analogy of proportionality, inasmuch as all of the relations upon which the latter can be based depend upon the Catholic Church and, considered as such, characterize non-Catholic communities precisely insofar as they are Catholic. The very manners in which they realize ecclesiality according to an analogy of proportionality are, as such, reducible to the Catholic Church as to their cause, and thus attributed to them according to an analogy of

attribution.⁵⁶ Of course, this analogy of attribution is not that of extrinsic denomination, but of intrinsic denomination, signifying a real formal perfection of the subject in question, in this case, the genuine, if diminished, ecclesiality of that subject, which constitutes the basis for speaking of an analogy of proportionality, in which the formal notion of the proportion is realized really, though differently, in each of the analogates. This is why the efficient causal influx from the Catholic Church in their regard results in the fact that they too become instrumental efficient sources of redemptive effects (even though they remain capable of this only by reason of their *per se* dependency upon the Catholic Church, or, stated more simply, by reason of their Catholicity, given that that causal dependency is at once efficient and formal, in the sense explained in the previous chapter).⁵⁷

Awareness of the analogy of attribution helps to temper the sort of ecumenical enthusiasm that would oversimplify and exaggerate the efficacy of non-Catholic communities or propound pluralistic ideas about the Church of Christ. At the same time, however, the analogy of proportionality safeguards us from interpreting the analogy of attribution in a way that is too thin, as well as from an overly-simplified identification of Christ's Church in the present stage of history with the visible confines of Catholicism. The latter may be schematized thus:

Analogy of Proportionality:



* This aspect of the relationship between the proportional ecclesial proportions is not a function of the analogy of proportionality, but of the analogy of attribution according to which ecclesial analogies of proportionality obtain, inasmuch as the ecclesial proportions of non-Catholic communities are participations in those of the Catholic Church.

α Each of these names signifies not a relation between analogates, but the *foundation* of a relation of one analogate to another.

β These forms (and others like them) are relations essential to the communitarian structures of every Christian community as such, rendering it a visible effect and principle (to whatever degree of efficacy) of the redemptive work of Christ. They include such things as the community's truthfulness in relation to the Gospel (the relation of the communitarian faith and witness to the content of the Gospel), the community's redemptive relation to the world of fallen man (rooted in the extent of its prophetic, priestly and kingly powers), and the community's unity with Christ (rooted in both its communitarian holiness and its communitarian missionary disposition/inclination).

Conclusion

Based on the essential causal relationship existing between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christian communities, as well as the concrete (and not merely abstract) unity of Christ's Church, the ontological status of the ecclesiality of non-Catholic Christianities is fundamentally different from that proper to the Catholic Church, and the sense in which some of these non-Catholic Christianities constitute churches is fundamentally different from the manner in which the Catholic Church is Church. Correspondingly, the language by which a non-Catholic Christian community is (taken as a whole) named according to its institutionally Christian identity—that is, according to its specifically ecclesial status, or as constituting a church (as in the denominations “ecclesial community” and “church”)—signifies differently than it does when used of the Catholic Church. The difference lies in the manner in which the common name, such as “ecclesial” or “church,” applies to the subjects of which it is predicated and is marked by relations of priority and posteriority between the meanings/definitions/*rationes* of the name as used of those subjects, the semantical variances of which are rooted ultimately in ontological differences between the subjects, or between relationships proportionally common to the subjects. What has just been described is the analogical use of language, which, when founded on a real diversity between things, is an expression of the analogy of being. When we apply an ecclesial name both to the Catholic Church and to a non-Catholic community, because the same name is employed according to *rationes* that are different though similar or involving a determinate relation of one to another, we are dealing with analogical denomination. As shown above, this analogicity—the subordination (priority and posteriority) or proportionality existing among the meanings of the name as applied to these subjects—is manifold: sometimes consisting in a relationship of reference alone (analogy of extrinsic attribution); sometimes consisting in a degree of formal identity defined in terms of participation (analogy of intrinsic attribution); sometimes consisting in a proportion between notions of proportions that are imperfectly one (analogy of proportionality); and often consisting in a combination of the latter two.⁵⁸ In every instance of such analogy, the Catholic Church is the primary analogate, the concept of whose ecclesiality is the defining point of reference for and ultimate measure of the content of the names “ecclesial” and “church” as applied to non-

Catholic communities.

- ¹ Although we have employed these ecclesial names to speak of both the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communities since the beginning of this study, the concept of analogy and the analogical application of said names is fittingly treated here, inasmuch as the logical and linguistic parameters of our use of these names are the consequence of the ontological differences between the Catholic and non-Catholic realizations of the realities to which the names refer. That is, our strictly analogical use of the ecclesial names when speaking of both the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christian communities follows from the metaphysically diverse ways in which they realize ecclesiality to begin with; and these differences must be spelled out in advance (as done in chapters three and four) if we are to properly understand the analogical manner in which the ecclesial names are employed.
- ² I prescind from consideration of the analogy of improper proportionality, since the focus of this study is not directly concerned with metaphor.
- ³ For the history of the notion of analogy, see A. Guzzo and V. Mathieu, “Analogia,” in *Enciclopedia filosofica*, 2nd ed., ed. C. Giacon, A. Moschetti, et al. (Rome: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1957), 1:191–199; Gregory Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 77–92 (hereafter *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*). On the Aristotelio-Thomistic notion of analogy, see John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 543–573 (on analogy in general), and 73–93 (on the analogy of being); Gregory Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 93–195; Ralph McInerney, *Aquinas and Analogy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996); Steven Long, *Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011) (hereafter *Analogia Entis*). For specific treatments of the “doctrine of analogy” in Aquinas, see chapter five, note 23.
- ⁴ Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, *Categories* and *Nicomachean Ethics* provided the principal sources for examining questions related to the use of words applied to metaphysically diverse kinds of things and the semantical differences and similarities between such uses and their logical implications.
- ⁵ See, for example, Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 5: “No name is predicated univocally of God and of creatures. Neither, on the other hand, are names applied to God and creatures in a purely equivocal sense, as some have said. Because if that were so, it follows that from creatures nothing could be known or demonstrated about God at all; for the reasoning would always be exposed to the fallacy of equivocation.... Therefore it must be said that these names are said of God and creatures in an analogous sense, i.e., according to proportion.... Now this mode of community of idea is a mean between pure equivocation and simple univocation (*iste modus communitatis medius est inter puram aequivocationem et simplicem univocationem*). For in analogies the idea is not, as it is in univocals, one and the same, yet it is not totally diverse as in equivocals.”
- ⁶ In his commentary on Aquinas’s *De ente et essentia*, Cajetan explains: “The univocated are those whose name is common, and the meaning according to that name is simply the same. The purely equivocated are those whose name is common, and the meaning corresponding to that name is simply different. The

analogated are those whose name is common, and the meaning corresponding to that name is in one sense the same and in one sense different, or is the same in a qualified sense, and different in a qualified sense.... Whence, the analogue is a medium between the purely equivocal and univocal; just as between what is simply the same and simply different, there is a medium which is the same in a qualified sense and different in a qualified sense. And as a medium takes on the nature of both extremes, the analogy has in a way many meanings and in a way one” (Cajetan, *In De ente*, §21) (English translation: L. Kendzierski and Francis C. Wade, *Cajetan: Commentary on St. Thomas Aquinas’ On Being and Essence* [Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1964], 79–80). See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 5.

- 7 “Since ... words are signs of ideas, and ideas the similitude of things, it is evident that words refer to the things signified through the medium of intellectual conception” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 1); see *In Periherm.*, Bk. I, lect. 2, no. 5 (numerical references and translations for this work come from: *Expositio libri Peryermeneias: Aristotle On Interpretation: Commentary by St. Thomas and Cajetan*, trans. J. Oesterle [Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1962]).
- 8 “We can give a name to anything insofar as we can understand it” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 1; see *Comp. theol.*, I, c. 24).
- 9 See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 14, a. 8, ad 3: “we receive knowledge from natural things ... the natural objects of knowledge are prior to our knowledge, and are its measure”; *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 16, a. 1 and ad 3: “the truth of our intellect is caused by the thing” (ad 3); see *De ver.* q. 1, a. 2.
- 10 Francis L. B. Cunningham, ed., *God and His Creation* (Dubuque, IA: The Priory Press, 1958), 155.
- 11 On this topic and medieval developments of it (particularly in Aquinas), see Gyula Klima, “The Semantic Principles Underlying Saint Thomas Aquinas’s Metaphysics of Being,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 5 (1996): 87–141; Paul Spade, “The Semantics of Terms,” in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. N. Kretzman et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 188–196; E. J. Ashworth, “Signification and Modes of Signifying in Thirteenth-Century Logic: A Preface to Aquinas on Analogy,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 1 (1991): 39–67; Mark D. Jordan, *Ordering Wisdom: The Hierarchy of Philosophical Discourses in Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 3–39; Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The ‘Divine Science’ of the Summa Theologiae* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2006), 98–102; Peter Weigel, *Aquinas on Simplicity: An Investigation into the Foundations of his Philosophical Theology* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), 46–49.
- 12 See Aristotle, *De interpretatione*, 16a3–9; see Toivo J. Holopainen, “Mental Word / Concepts,” in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy between 500 and 1500*, ed. H. Lagerlund (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 2:760.
- 13 “*Voces sunt signa intellectuum, et intellectus sunt rerum similitudines. Et sic patet quod voces referuntur ad res significandas, mediante conceptione intellectus*” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 1). See *In Periherm.*, Bk. I, lect. 2, no. 5: “vocal sounds signify the conceptions of the intellect immediately and things by means of them.”
- 14 In its general features, the following schematization is commonly employed in semiotics. I am indebted, however, to the very resourceful use to which it is put by Joshua Hochschild in his work *The Semantics of Analogy: Rereading Cajetan’s ‘De nominum analogia’* (hereafter *The Semantics of Analogy*) (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), various features of which I adapt for the purposes of its ecclesiological application.

- 15 On the different senses in which the terms “*ratio*,” “form,” “concept,” etc. are used in the context of theories of signification, see Joseph Greder, *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae* (Barcelona: Herder, 1958), 1:10–13; see also R. McNerny, *Aquinas and Analogy*, 78–85; J. Hochschild, *The Semantics of Analogy*, 86–91. See Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3.
- 16 See Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3: “From this it becomes clear in what sense the *ratio* is said to be in the thing/reality (*in re*).... It is said to be in reality inasmuch as in reality outside the mind there exists something that corresponds to the conception of the mind, as what is signified by the sign” (*ex hoc patet secundum, scilicet qualiter ratio dicatur esse in re.... dicitur esse in re, inquantum in re extra animam est aliquid quod reponet conceptioni animae, sicut significatum signo*) (translation mine); see *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 5, a. 2: “The *ratio* signified by a name is that which the intellect conceives of the thing and signifies through the imposition of the name” (“*Ratio enim significata per nomen, est id quod concipit intellectus de re, et significat illud per vocem*”) (translation mine).
- 17 See Aquinas, *III Sent.*, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3; *De pot.*, q. 9, a. 4; see R. McNerny, *Aquinas and Analogy*, 82–85.
- 18 “This triadic account of signification—vocal sound, mental grasp, thing—is,” according to McNerny, “the great presupposition of the distinction between univocal, equivocal, and analogous names” (*Aquinas and Analogy*, 54).
- 19 The graphical symbolism in the following semiotic diagrams adopts (with some alteration) the basic features and legend of the diagrams presented in J. Hochschild, *The Semantics of Analogy*, 40–41, 119–120, 128, 147.
- 20 The identity here is not numerical but formal only; it is a question of the existence of formally equal perfections in distinct individual ways within distinct subjects of existence.
- 21 See Aquinas, *III Sent.*, d. 6, q. 1, a. 1, where Aquinas distinguishes between that from which the name is imposed (“*id a quo imponitur nomen*”), tied to the signification of a name and the origin of that signification, and that upon which the name is imposed and for which the name supposit (“*id cui imponitur*”). Variance in supposition is not the basis of equivocation, but variance in signification, the *ratio* of the name. See *De unione Verbi incarnati*, a. 2, ad 4; see R. McNerny, *Aquinas and Analogy*, 78.
- 22 I carry out (and endorse) this classification irrespective of the contemporary debate over whether, textually, it is clearly attested to in Aquinas. For a clear and balanced presentation of the *status quaestionis* in this regard, see J. Hochschild, *The Semantics of Analogy*, 1–32 (also 47–64); see R. McNerny, *Aquinas and Analogy* (throughout); John R. Mortensen, *Understanding St. Thomas on Analogy* (Rome: Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2006) (reprint: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2010).
- 23 For systematic analyses of Aquinas’s doctrine of analogy, see especially: Bernard Montagnes, *La doctrine de l’analogie de l’être d’après Saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Béatrice-Nauwelaerts: Publications Universitaires, 1963); George Klubertanz, *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960); Hampus Lyttkens, *The Analogy Between God and the World: An Investigation of Its Background and Interpretation of Its Use by Thomas of Aquino* (Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1952); Joseph Owens, “Analogy as a Thomistic Approach to Being,” *Medieval Studies* 24 (1962): 303–322; Gregory Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 93–195; John R. Mortensen, *Understanding St. Thomas on Analogy* (Rome: Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred

Doctrine, 2006) (reprint: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2010); John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000) (c.3 and 13); Ralph McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy*; Steven Long, *Analogia Entis*.

- 24 “Something is said according to analogy in three ways: [1] according to intention only and not according to being, and this is when an intention is referred to many according to priority and posteriority, and yet has being in but one of them, as the intention of ‘health’ is referred to an animal, urine and diet in diverse ways according to priority and posteriority, but not according to a diversity of being, since the being of health is in the animal alone; or [2] according to being and not according to intention, and this occurs when a plurality of things are equal regarding the intention/concept of something common, but the being of this common thing has not the same *ratio* in them, as all bodies are made equal in the intention of corporeity. Hence the logician, who considers intentions only, says that the name ‘body’ is predicated univocally of all bodies, though the being of this nature is not of the same *ratio* [in diverse bodies] ...; or [3] according to intention and according to being, and this is when they are equal neither in common intention nor in being, as being is said of substance and accident, and in such things it is necessary that the common nature has some being in each of the things of which it is said, but differing according to greater or lesser perfection. And similarly ... truth, goodness and all such things are said analogically of God and of creatures; whence it is necessary that all of these are in God according to their being, and in creatures according to greater or lesser perfection” (Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1).
- 25 Health, for example, is merely extrinsically attributed to urine or to the color of an animal’s skin, inasmuch as they are signs/effects of the health properly predicated of the animal. Similarly, medicine is called “healthy” inasmuch as it is a cause of health in the animal, but not because it possesses that formality in itself. The proper *ratio* of health is found in the animal alone.
- 26 “In names predicated of many in an analogical sense, all are predicated because they have reference to some one thing; and this one thing must be placed in the definition of them all. And since that expressed by the name is the definition, as the Philosopher says (*Metaph.* iv), such a name must be applied primarily to that which is put in the definition of such other things, and secondarily to these others according as they approach more or less to that first” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 6).
- 27 “But when anything is predicated of many things analogically, it is found in only one of them according to its proper nature (*ratio*), and from this one the rest are denominated” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 16, a. 6); see also *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 6 and 10; III, q. 60, a. 1, ad 3; *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. I, c. 34; *II Sent.*, d. 42, q. 1, a. 3; *In Meta.*, Bk. VII, lect. 4 (n. 7).
- 28 See Cajetan, *De nominum analogia*, §2–3 (all references to this work correspond to the Zammit edition, Rome 1934, rev. H. Hering [Rome: Angelicum, 1952]); English translations are taken from Thomas De Vio Cajetan, *The Analogy of Names and the Concept of Being*, trans. E. Bushinski (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1953). Analogy of attribution is usually referred to by Aquinas as analogy according to proportion (*secundum proportionem*) and subdivided into analogy of one thing to another (*ad alterum*) and analogy of many things to one (*ad unum*); see *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 5; *In Meta.*, Bk. V, lect. 8, no. 879; cf. *De ver.*, q. 23, a. 7, ad 9. Though usually ascribed to Cajetan, designating this kind of analogy in terms of “attribution” (e.g., “*secundum attributionem*” or “*per attributionem*”) appears to have its origin in Averroes; see Joseph Owens, “Analogy as a Thomistic Approach to Being,” *Medieval Studies* 24 (1962): 316.
- 29 Cajetan, *De nominum analogia*, §4.

- 30 This mode of analogy expresses an integral part of the spectrum of ontological variation that defines the hierarchy of being. From the metaphysical point of view, the diversity among species within a common genus can give rise to incommensurable (qualitatively disparate) strata of perfection notwithstanding their unity within a broader ontological stratum, as, for example, a man is incommensurably superior to the brute, having animality in an incommensurably superior way than the latter. Thus, in their being only (*secundum esse tantum*), they are, in relation to one another, “animals” according to priority and posteriority (*per prius et posterius*), as one is a more perfect animal than the other. By way of contrast, in analogy *secundum intentionem*, there is priority and posteriority among the very intentions or notions by which the things are signified. Here the notions signified by a common name refer to different things according to an order amongst the very notions, as “health” referred to things besides an animal contains within its very notion a reference to the health of an animal; the priority and posteriority characterizing this form of analogy pertains not to the being of the subjects to which the notions refer, but to the very notions themselves.
- 31 See (in addition to Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1) Aquinas, *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. I, c. 34; see also *De ver.*, q. 2, a. 11; *In Nic. Eth.*, Bk. I, lect. VII, no. 95; *II Sent.*, d. 42, q. 1, a. 3; *De malo*, q. 7, a. 1, ad 1.
- 32 The perfections listed by Aquinas at the end of the passage cited from *I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1, namely, truth, goodness and the like, as predicated of God and creatures, can be considered either from the point of view of the causal relation that undergirds their presence in the creature, or from the point of view of their inherence therein, as immanent formal determinants. From the former perspective, the analogy is one of attribution *ad unum* (see *Sum. contra gent.*, Bk. I, c. 34); from the latter, of proportionality (see *De ver.*, q. 2, a. 11; q. 23, a. 7, ad 9). In *De nominum analogia*, §23, Cajetan asserts: “This analogy [of proportionality] is referred to by St. Thomas in *I Sentent.* as «analogy according to ‘to be’ and according to intention.» The reason is that the analogates are not considered equal in the perfection expressed by the common name, nor in the ‘to be’ of this perfection, yet they agree proportionally both in the perfection expressed by that name and in its ‘to be.’”
- 33 “Two kinds of community can be noted in analogy. There is a certain agreement between things having a proportion to each other from the fact that they have a determinate distance between each other or some other relation to each other.... Again, the agreement is occasionally noted not between two things which have a proportion between them, but rather between two related proportions—for example, six has something in common with four because six is two times three, just as four is two times two. The first type of agreement is one of proportion; the second, of proportionality.... In the other [the second] type of analogy, no definite relation is involved between the things which have something in common analogously, so there is no reason why some name cannot be predicated analogously of God and creature in this manner” (*De ver.*, q. 2, a. 11) (English translations for *De ver.* are taken from *The Disputed Questions on Truth*, trans. R. Mulligan and R. Schmidt, 3 vols. [Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952–1954]). “In this way there is a likeness of the creature to God, because the creature stands to the things which are its own as God does to those which belong to him” (*De ver.*, q. 23, a. 7, ad 9).
- 34 For these and other examples, see Cajetan, *De nominum analogia*, §23 and 26; Aquinas, *In Nic. Eth.*, Bk. I, lect. VII (no. 95); *De ver.*, q. 23, a. 7, ad 9; *In Meta.*, Bk. V, lect. 8 (no. 879). It is crucial to observe that a name analogically common to many according to this kind of analogy does not signify a relation between the analogates—as happens in the case of extrinsic attribution, in which the very *ratio* of the name as said of a secondary analogate is nothing other than a relation to the primary analogate (as, for example, when “healthy” is said of medicine)—, but relations interior to the analogates, which are foundations for

relations between the analogates themselves. Thus the analogon (the proportionally common perfection signified by the common name considered in its commonality) signifies that within an analogate by reason of which it is proportionally one with another analogate, that by which it is related to the other according to a distinct proportion commonly denominated.

- 35 “To this kind [of analogy] belong all attributes which include no defect nor depend on matter for their act of existence, for example, being, the good, and similar things” (*De ver.*, q. 2, a. 11); “and similarly ... truth, goodness and all such things are said analogically of God and of creatures; whence it is necessary that all of these are in God according to their being, and in creatures according to greater or lesser perfection” (*I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1, translation mine). For a superb and resolute defense of the centrality of analogy of proportionality in Aquinas and an account of its pivotal role in the realms of faith and natural theology, see Steven Long, *Analogia Entis*.
- 36 The similarity between the two wisdoms based on the causal relation between God and the creature represents an analogy of intrinsic attribution; while the similarity between the relation between one kind of wisdom and the subject of which it is the perfection and the relation between the other kind of wisdom and its respective subject represents the analogy of proportionality; and the latter illuminates the meaning of the similarity involved in the former.
- 37 Even among institutions that are self-proclaimed adversaries of the Church, there remain, of course, those basic anthropological foundations as well as the sociological foundations embedded therein for full communion with Christ and his Church. From this point of view, extrinsic attribution of the ecclesial name on the basis of mere potentiality seems extendable to any human society whatsoever; but this succumbs to an unreasonable use of language and defies the commonsense meaning of our names. Based on the virtually limitless potencies inherent in finite being, especially exemplified in every creature’s obediential potency toward God, denomination according to extrinsic attribution based on potentiality could be carried beyond reasonable application, inasmuch as one could declare nearly anything potentially anything else. Prudence must draw a line as to where potencies cease to be relevant to the act in question, and not every form of agency or metaphysical possibility need enter into consideration. It seems fitting, and in keeping with the obviously intended meaning of the name, to limit the ecclesial analogy of extrinsic attribution to religious societies alone, and to those only that are not by institutional definition opposed to Catholic actuality.
- 38 The designation is accurate at more than one level. First of all, the Hebrew name “Satan” (שָׂטָן) signifies “adversary,” “opposer” or “accuser.” As expressed by the very name, “Satan lives in radical and irreversible denial of God” (John Paul II, *General Audience*, 13 August 1986; see 1 John 3:8). Anyone who directly opposes the divine will, which finds its fulfillment in the worship of God’s only-begotten Son, operates, therefore, in a “satanic” manner by definition (see also John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, 38). Secondly, to the extent that human beings operate under the influence of the devil, whether directly or indirectly, they operate like and on the basis of the father of lies, who “tries to transplant into man the attitude of rivalry, insubordination and opposition to God” (John Paul II, *General Audience*, 13 August 1986; see John 8:44). Even when the wills of the individual members involved in the communal actions of a society that opposes the Church have not been directly inspired by the devil, inasmuch as they are working against God’s will, they operate under his indirect influence by reason of original sin as the impetus for personal sin. Thus, Trent speaks of “captivity under the power of the devil” for Adam and his descendents, all of whom are, after the Fall and without the grace of Christ, “servants of sin” (session V, *Decree on Original Sin*; session VI, *Decree on Justification*, c. 1 and 13). According to Paul, Satan is

universally at work among those who are separated from Christ: “And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience ... and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind” (Eph 2:1–3). Among those who deliberately assail the Catholic Church, of course, there are many directly inspired by Satan. The active counterpart to this subjugation is nothing less than war against the Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus and his Church (see Matt 4:8–10; 12:25–30): “He who is not with me, is against me; he who does not gather his store with me, scatters” (Matt 12:30). In Pope Francis’s first homily following his election to the Chair of Peter, he states (quoting the poet, Léon Bloy): “When we do not profess Jesus Christ, the saying of Léon Bloy comes to mind: ‘Anyone who does not pray to the Lord prays to the devil’” (homily of the “*Missa Pro Ecclesia*,” Sistine Chapel, 14 March 2013). The Scriptures are no less clear: “But ... the heathens ... they sacrifice to devils, and not to God. And I would not that you should be made partakers with devils” (1 Cor 10:20; cf. Ps 95:5). The ecclesiological import of Christ’s words in Matthew 12, Pope Francis’s statement about worship, and Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians, is unmistakable. As noted by Werner Foerster, satanic opposition to God’s will is focused primarily upon the community (W. Foerster and K. Schäferdiek, “σατανᾶς,” in G. Kittel, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971], 7:161). Hostility, therefore, to the authentic worship of Christ, which resides principally in the public worship of the Church, is *emblematic* of the satanic. Indeed, tearing at the Catholic Church is a distinctive mark of Satan, which is why Jesus assures Peter that, though the powers of hell shall seek to destroy the Church, they will never prevail (Matt 16:18). I offer this justification of my use of the expression not only for the sake of clarity, but in order also to underscore something closer to home than what concerns blatant assault against the Christian worship, namely, the spiritually startling implications of division from Christ and his Catholic Church within the Christian fold itself. The warnings of Ignatius of Antioch perhaps sum it up most forcefully: “For Ignatius, salvation is by sacramental union with the Church.... where the unity of the Church is threatened, the *κακοτεχνία* [deceit] and *ἐνέδραι* [treachery] of the *ἄρχων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου* [ruler of this aeon] are at work (Ignatius, *Tral.*, c. 8; *Phil.*, c. 6), and the man who leaves the unity of the Church in schism, or in heresy, or by evading the moral control of life by the new being mediated through the Church, falls back into the sphere of Satan’s dominion (*Smyr.*, c. 9; *Eph.*, c. 10 and 17; *Pol.*, c. 7)” (Knut Schäferdiek, “σατανᾶς,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971], 7:164).

³⁹ Accordingly, *Dominus Iesus* 22, while affirming the possibility of divine grace for all, points out the “gravely deficient situation” for all who follow a religion other than that of the Catholic Church.

⁴⁰ Of course, all authentic cultic actions throughout the history of salvation, whether inspired by God’s objective revelation or not, imply the action of Christ, and the application of his Paschal Mystery, with which, in the present dispensation, he associates his Bride. This was explained in chapter four. In a certain sense, therefore, even the least religiously virtuous action on the part of any genuinely religious society represents for that society a share, fragmented and defective as it may be, in the religious virtue belonging to the Catholic Church. Consequently, within the non-Christian religions of our day, such actions and the institutions that sustain them can, as such, rightly be called “ecclesial” in a broad sense of the term based on their teleological and efficient causal relationships to the one Church of Christ. This is obviously a diminished sense of the term “ecclesial” when compared to its usage with reference to the properties and structures of Christian communities as such, particularly given the absence of the baptismal foundation for sacramental incorporation in Christ and the qualitatively infinite transforming effect this has on everything concerning communal worship and every remaining element of sanctification and truth.

Though pious elements among non-Christian religions can be called “ecclesial” in this diminished way, they are *not* ecclesial in the fuller sense corresponding to that in which the Council speaks of “ecclesial communities” and in which we speak of ecclesial elements interior to the latter. Furthermore, and more significantly in the present context, even if some aspects of non-Christian worship are in one sense “ecclesial,” inasmuch as they are “of the Church” and “toward the Church,” this does not suffice to render the communities themselves “ecclesial.” No matter the partial degree to which it is God-centered, a non-Christian religious community, precisely by reason of its institutional separation from Christ, cannot be considered actually “ecclesial” as such. Nevertheless, their varying dispositions for perfection in Christ Jesus constitute a foundation for considering non-Christian religious societies “ecclesial” in potency, and thus for so naming them according to the analogy of extrinsic attribution.

⁴¹ *Lumen gentium*, 13.

⁴² See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 8, a. 3.

⁴³ I am referring to the distinctive meaning of “church” underscored by the magisterium since Vatican II and reflected in the Council’s terminology for separated Christian churches as contradistinguished from that of “ecclesial community” unqualifiedly taken. This distinction is examined more fully below.

⁴⁴ These are the features of the analogy of attribution, which Aquinas has in mind when he affirms: “When anything is predicated of many things analogically, it is found in only one of them according to its proper nature, and from this one the rest are denominated” (*Sum. theol.*, I, q. 16, a. 6); and “In names predicated of many in an analogical sense, all are predicated because they have reference to some one thing; and this one thing must be placed in the definition of them all” (*Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 6); cf. *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 10; *II Sent.*, d. 42, q. 1, a. 3; *In Meta.*, Bk. I, lect. 14, no. 17.

⁴⁵ An awareness of such an analogical extension of the name “church” even to communities born of the Reformation is evident in the conciliar discussions surrounding the 1963 draft of the *Decree on Ecumenism*. See in this regard AS, vol. II, pt. 6, 312; and, for a fuller account of the proceedings and specific interventions concerning the Council’s choice of terminology in these regards, Jared Wicks, “The Significance of the ‘Ecclesial Communities’ of the Reformation,” *Ecumenical Trends* 30 (2001): 170–173. I examine these questions in more detail below.

⁴⁶ Following from what was said above concerning the divisions of analogy, and as further clarified below, the emphasis on material causality in this context is not to suggest that the grades of perfection by which within a common genus or with respect to a common form different ontological subjects are essentially differentiated is *per se* a function of what is material within those subjects. What is formally identical in an analogy of inequality is diversely realized on the part of the analogates according to greater or less actuality, such that the respective modes of being according to which the (logically identical and univocal but metaphysically analogical and rankable) common perfection is shared pertain to the principles of the supposita as such. These principles, in the case of corporeal substances, are intimately bound up with material individuation, and, in every case, the formally identical perfection or *ratio objectiva* is differently “subjected” within different analogates, receiving diverse concrete modes of existence by reason of the subjects in which it resides.

⁴⁷ See *Unitatis redintegratio* 3 and 22, in which a determinate relation to Catholic ecclesial fullness is presented as a defining character of the elements of sanctification and truth found among non-Catholic Christian communities as well as the *ratio* for their saving relation to Christ.

⁴⁸ If there is a multiplication of concrete instantiations of the one Church of Christ in local Catholic

churches, this is not a multiplication of the essence of that one Church, as though there were many individual instances of Christ's Church, but rather of the parts in which that Church concretely exists in its indivisible fullness. Collectively, the local churches materially constitute Christ's Church according to its concrete mode of being; they are but parts of a single whole, the unity of which is rooted in the formal constitution of each by everything essential to the Church as such. On this account, compared with one another, each of these local churches is "church" in a univocal sense of the term. That by reason of which they are so denominated, however, does not obtain in the case of non-Catholic communities. While the latter may be called "ecclesial" or "church" according to univocal uses of the names when limiting comparisons among themselves, when the comparison is with the Catholic Church or Catholic local churches, the shared use of the names is purely analogical. See chapter six, note 71.

⁴⁹ *Unitatis redintegratio*, 22; see *Dominus Iesus*, 17.

⁵⁰ *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3.

⁵¹ In the first diagram, the name "ecclesial" is applied to Christian communities as such; in the second, it is applied to elements within them.

⁵² Note that the analogicity based on unequal concrete modes of realizing the same formal perfection is analogous in a metaphysical sense, but not analogous in the purely logical sense. See Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1; *In Phys.*, Bk. VII, lect. 8, no. 947.

⁵³ These communities "derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Church," and their ecclesial elements, "all of these belong by right to the one Church of Christ" (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3; see *Lumen gentium*, 8). That the terms "church" and "ecclesial" can be attributed to separated Christian communities only in a diminished and secondary manner follows from the inferior and incomplete mode according to which ecclesiality is possessed by them, including the fact that something *essential* to the nature of the Church is lacking in them.

⁵⁴ "For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Church" (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3).

⁵⁵ *Lumen gentium*, 1 (also *Lumen gentium*, 9 and 48).

⁵⁶ Note that, if the possibility for ecclesial analogies of proportionality has its origin in the causal bountifulness of the Catholic Church vis-à-vis non-Catholic institutions, resulting in a natural priority of the ecclesial analogies of attribution over those of proportionality, there sometimes exists a logical priority of the latter with respect to the former, inasmuch as, epistemologically speaking, the causal account drawing our attention to the analogies of attribution presupposes an acknowledgement of certain ecclesial effects, the being of which is defined in terms of a proportion, the intelligibility of which is (for the human intellect) grasped only in comparison with a similar (proportionally identical) proportion of another analogate.

⁵⁷ The essential causal dependency of non-Catholic ecclesial communities upon the Catholic Church, responsible for the analogy of intrinsic attribution between them, is also the foundation for another analogy of proportionality, not between these communities and the Catholic Church, but between the relation between them and the Catholic Church and the relation between the Catholic Church and Jesus Christ. Non-Catholic Christian communities are to the Catholic Church in a way proportionally one with the manner in which the Catholic Church stands toward Christ (N : C :: C : X). Just as non-Catholic Christian communities depend essentially upon the Catholic Church for the ecclesial endowments they enjoy, so the Catholic Church depends essentially upon the ecclesial plenitude she receives (directly and interiorly) from Christ as Head (considered in distinction from his Body with which

he otherwise constitutes a bodily whole, the *Christus totus*). Note that the recurrence in this proportionality of one of the terms, namely, the Catholic Church (“C”), is not atypical of analogies of proper proportionality. Although usually defined as a “four term” analogy, the interior terms can be the same materially (and even unqualifiedly identical in mathematical proportions, as, for example, $2 : 4 :: 4 : 8$, or, as in the golden ratio, $b : a :: a : a+b$). In the present analogy of proportionality, the interior terms are not signified identically, since, in the first instance, the Catholic Church is considered according to her act of conferring ecclesial perfection as an instrumental cause thereof, while, in the second instance, she is considered according to her receptive disposition in relation to Christ.

- 58 We had also noted another mode of analogicity based on what might be described as a materially disjointed formal identity, analogy of inequality. I have not included this form of analogy in the present list, since it has to do with metaphysical differences in identity, not with the differences in unity existing between the *meanings* of a common name. Nevertheless, as noted above, the analogy of inequality occupies an important place in an account of the ontological analogy (analogy of being) that exists between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christian communities.

Tradition, Vatican II, and Subsequent Magisterium on the Name “Church”

Introduction

HAVING EXAMINED THE notion of analogy and the ways in which the ecclesial mystery in all of its breadth is intelligible only in terms of analogy, it remains to see how the Church herself has employed and continues to employ the name “church” with reference to the People of God in its various states and conditions. The previous chapter dealt with the analogicity of the ecclesial names from a somewhat *a priori* point of view, uncovering the *de iure* parameters governing our use of those names. The present chapter proceeds in a more *a posteriori* fashion, reaching a set of conclusions that confirms and reinforces those of the preceding chapter by looking at the *de facto* practice and explicit teaching of the Church. I begin by rapidly sketching the polyvalent and analogical use of the name “church” since the time of early Christianity. This is followed by an examination of the Council’s distinctive understanding of the name “church,” after which I explore the difference between its application to the Catholic Church and to non-Catholic churches according to the contemporary magisterium. Following a brief refutation of false endorsements of ecclesial analogicity, the chapter concludes with a reflection on the ecclesial analogy that exists between the Church and Mary.

The name “church” across the centuries

The English term “church,” derivative of the Middle English “chirch/kirke” and, more remotely, of the Anglo-Saxon “cirice,” translates the Greek word “ἐκκλησία” and its Latin transliteration “*ecclesia*.” The Greek term derives from “ἐκκαλεῖν,” “to call out,” from “ἐκ,” “out,” and “καλεῖν,” “to call,” whence its common usage to denote a “convocation,” an “assembly” of persons, in some sense called apart from others. Though occasionally used to designate a secular assembly, in the Biblical literature “ἐκκλησία” signifies above all God’s holy People, called out and set apart from the world by God, by and for the sake of communion with and service to him. This is the central meaning of the name “church” (ἐκκλησία) as employed in the New Testament and in the Septuagint with reference to the “Qahal (קהל) Yahweh,” and it is applicable to every community of salvation called into being by divine wisdom since the time of Adam.¹

The distinction between a secular and a religious (and specifically cultic) use of the name in Scripture already reveals its analogical flexibility. We are, of course, concerned exclusively with the latter usage, but here too the name admits of multivalent signification, as follows, first of all, from the vastly differing states of the People assembled by God over the course of salvation history. In one sense, the “church” is the mystical city delightful to God, built upon the foundations of the prophets and apostles, to whom the just throughout the ages have belonged, who were transferred from Babylon to Jerusalem by the Spirit of Jesus Christ upon whom and in whom the whole edifice resides. This is the People of God throughout the history of salvation, signifying the assembly of God universally, at every covenantal phase. Augustine regularly speaks of the Church in this sense:

Christ is our Head; we are the Body belonging to this Head. Does this include merely ourselves, and not also those who have gone before us? All who have been upright of life from the beginning of the world have Christ as their Head. They indeed believed in the future coming of him whom we now believe to have come. They too were healed by this same faith, even as we likewise are, so that he might be Head of the whole city of Jerusalem, comprising all the faithful from the beginning to end.²

In another sense, characteristic of New Testament usage, the name “church” signifies the People of God assembled through the foundation of the New

Covenant in the Paschal Mystery of Christ as contradistinguished from the assembly of the Old Covenant:

By the synagogue we understand the people of Israel, because synagogue is the word properly used of them, although they were also called the Church. Our congregation, on the contrary, the Apostles never called synagogue, but always *Ecclesia*, whether for the sake of the distinction, or because there is some difference between a congregation whence the synagogue has its name, and a convocation whence the Church is called *Ecclesia*.³

When speaking of the old synagogue, the “difference” between synagogue and *Ecclesia* is a difference in unity (a dissimilarity in similarity involving continuity). The *Ecclesia* is the eschatological realization of the Qahal, whose newness is rooted first of all in the immediate principle of the assembling and the immediate principle of the People’s communion, a communion which emanates from Jesus Christ by whom they are called, upon whom they are centered, and in whom they are visibly gathered and sustained. This eschatological assembly, in which the People are made into a “new creation,”⁴ admits itself of various levels of realization, by which we speak of the universal Church, regional churches, and local churches, at each of which levels we encounter the fullness of Christ’s saving presence in its effects and in its means.

We further refer to the Church in differing respects depending on whether we signify her according to one or more of the manifold modes of being by which she exists in the present redemptive age, viz., her earthly mode of being (with respect to which we call her the “Church Militant”), her mode of being in Purgatory (with respect to which she is called the “Church Suffering”), and her heavenly mode of being (in which respect she is called the “Church Triumphant”). For Augustine, the heavenly Church is an archetype of the earthly Church, and both belong to the Church conceived as the “City of God,” which includes all the righteous of all times, past, present and future, as well as the angels.⁵ These and similar themes are characteristic of Patristic ecclesiology.⁶

In sum, the name “church” is used of the ecclesial mystery in a variety of ways, sometimes to denote but a part, temporal dimension, or ontological aspect of that

mystery, and sometimes to denote the whole, but always in terms of the singular redemptive plan set in motion according to divine wisdom and contained and made manifest in the mystery of Jesus Christ.⁷ That name can signify any of the following:

**The Church before the Old Covenant,
The Church of the Old Covenant,
The Church of the New Covenant, or
All of the above at once;**

**The Church on earth, or
The Church on earth, in heaven and in the state of purification at
once;**

**The Church universal extended throughout the world, or
A local church as a concrete expression of the one Church of Christ.**

All of these possible meanings are intimately related to the others by their common reference to the same ultimate redemptive principles—whether (following upon the abstractive formation of concepts) this semantic community is: (a) a result of shared intrinsically constitutive principles, related according to causal subordination of one to another, or of many to one, or simply related by proportional similarity; or (b) based on shared generative and teleological principles alone; or (c) a combination thereof. This logical unity in dissimilarity, which is the essence of analogical signification, and which is rooted in the ontological analogicity of the commonly denominated realities, is an inescapable corollary of the providence of God both formally and executively considered:

The eternal Father, by a free and hidden plan of his own wisdom and goodness, created the whole world. His plan was to raise men to a participation of the divine life. Fallen in Adam, God the Father did not leave men to themselves, but ceaselessly offered helps to salvation, in view of Christ, the Redeemer “who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” All the elect, before time began, the Father “foreknew and pre-destined to become conformed to the image of his

Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren.” He planned to assemble in the holy Church all those who would believe in Christ. Already from the beginning of the world the foreshadowing of the Church took place. It was prepared in a remarkable way throughout the history of the people of Israel and by means of the Old Covenant. In the present era of time the Church was constituted and, by the outpouring of the Spirit, was made manifest. At the end of time it will gloriously achieve completion, when, as is read in the Fathers, all the just, from Adam and “from Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect” will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church.⁸

Catholic tradition has spoken and continues to speak of the Church in all of the above ways, and each such use of the name “church” is related to the others according to analogy.

These are especially analogies of proportionality. For example: Israel stood towards God in a way similar but not identical to the way that the Catholic Church stands toward the Incarnate Lord; the rites of the Old Law related to the People of the Old Covenant in a way similar but not identical to the way that the sacraments of the New Law relate to the People of the New Covenant; the kingdom of the righteous before the coming of Christ was related to Christ and his future Passion in a way similar but not identical to the way that the present *Ecclesia* relates to Christ and his Paschal Mystery; the Church on earth relates to the Blessed Trinity possessed in faith in a way similar but not identical to the way that the Church Triumphant relates to the Trinity it possesses in vision; the angelic hosts relate to Christ their Head in a way similar but not identical to the way that the community of the redeemed relates to Christ’s Body; a particular church relates to the work of the salvation of souls in a way similar but not identical to the way that the universal Church is the all-encompassing source of salvation; and so on.

They are also analogies of attribution, as the figure is defined with reference to the reality, the anticipatory and preparatory with respect to their fulfillment and realization.⁹ This, moreover, not merely in the intentional order based on a comparison made by the examiner of history, but in the realities themselves insofar as they are (*in re*) types of other things.¹⁰ In certain respects, moreover, they are

analogies of attribution of participation, at least insofar as whatever ecclesial reality former regimes possessed was itself received on account of the foreseen merits and satisfaction of Christ, and inasmuch as the holiness they possessed and gave witness to derived from their spiritual relation to Christ;¹¹ and in other respects, inasmuch as the Church Suffering receives from and is perfected by the abundance of the redemptive activity of the Church on earth and the Church in heaven, and inasmuch as the Church on earth and the Church in Purgatory depend in no small measure for their unity and holiness upon the Church Triumphant;¹² and so on.

Thus far, the examples of the use of the name “church”—examples manifesting the highly analogical character of that name—have pertained to the Community of Salvation or communities of salvation faithful to God’s covenantal invitation. What about religious communities having stepped outside of God’s (antecedently willed) plan for salvation? Have they also received the name “church” in Catholic tradition? Indeed they have; but when the name is applied at the same time to them and to any of the forms of Catholicity described above, it is clearly a case of loose denomination, or of a vastly disparate association of meanings according to proportionality, or of analogicity according to posteriority and priority in which the propermost *ratio* belongs to one analogate alone. This is manifestly established throughout the patristic age in which the distinctive notes of the one and universal Church of Christ, uniquely invested with divine apostolic authority, is contrasted with every other human society, including those having abandoned the true Church.¹³ It is also evident in the instances of its use with reference to non-Catholic communities throughout the medieval period to modernity.

Since the time of Gregory VII, right up to the Second Vatican Council, the Church has unceasingly used the language of “churches” to refer to non-Catholic Christian communions. The Councils of Lateran IV, Lyons II, and Florence were all cited at Vatican II to justify its own use of the term “churches” with reference to the separated Eastern communions;¹⁴ and no less than eighteen conciliar and papal documents from the eleventh century to the twentieth century were referenced as witnesses to this use.¹⁵ But each of these uses of the name “church” with reference to non-Catholic communities is accompanied by adherence to the doctrine of the strict identity between Christ’s Church and the Catholic Church encapsulated in the “*est*” formula. The nineteenth- and twentieth-century manual tradition

similarly reflects this juxtaposition.¹⁶ Given that this extended use of the name “church” always occurred within the context of an “*est*” ecclesiology and is commonly accompanied by speaking of Christ’s Church as identical to the Catholic Church, the meaning of the term as applied to non-Catholic communities cannot be the same as its meaning when used of the Catholic Church, which is identifiable with the one and indivisible Church of Christ.

The name “church,” then, has different possible meanings, depending on the intention with which it is employed and as determined by one’s understanding of the subject to which it is referred. In the context of ecumenism, all of these meanings are related to a primary meaning of the term which applies to a single reality *in relation to which* the remaining recipients of that name are ontologically apt to receive it in a secondary manner. Let us now turn to what the recent magisterium has to say in this regard.

The conciliar use of the names “church” and “ecclesial community”

Vatican II refers to non-Catholic Christian communions with a carefully discerned, theologically nuanced set of terms in which the name “church” bears a signification differentiated from that of “ecclesial community.” The *loci classici* for the theological distinction between what is signified by the name “church” and what is signified by the name “ecclesial community” are *Lumen gentium* 15 and, more extensively, *Unitatis redintegratio* 3, 14–15, 19 and 22, in which the name “church” is reserved for those Christian communities alone which have retained a valid episcopate and Eucharist, while the name “ecclesial community” applies more broadly to any Christian community.¹⁷ The latter name is, of course, properly applicable to the universal Catholic Church, local Catholic churches, separated Oriental churches, and Christian communities born of the Reformation; but it is not commensurate with the ecclesial plenitude and dignity belonging both to Catholic churches and separated Oriental churches, a fullness and dignity directly signified by the name “church.” In comparison with the name “church,” therefore, the name “ecclesial community” is a term of theologically inferior signification. A correspondingly distinctive use of these names has become standard theological practice in Catholicism.

The claim to the designation “church” is, above all, a question of apostolic

succession and a genuine Eucharist. *Unitatis redintegratio* is especially clear:

Everyone also knows with what great love the Christians of the East celebrate the sacred liturgy, especially the eucharistic celebration, source of the Church's life and pledge of future glory ... Hence, through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in each of these churches, the Church of God is built up and grows in stature.... These churches, although separated from us, yet possess true sacraments and above all, by apostolic succession, the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are linked with us in closest intimacy.¹⁸

The ecclesial communities which are separated from us lack the fullness of unity with us flowing from Baptism, and ... they have not retained the proper reality of the eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Orders.¹⁹

As explained by Journet: “the Church will exist in her fullness only where the priesthood of Christ—through Christian worship—continues to be exercised.”²⁰ That priesthood, the priesthood of the total Christ, is exercised, *primo et per se*, in the Sacred Liturgy. It is the Eucharist which builds up the body of Christ. It is the Eucharistic celebration which manifests her unity visibly.²¹ All of this is envisaged by baptism; baptism is only a beginning.²² The whole mystery of the Church is essentially a cultic movement through, with and in Jesus Christ, borne and centered in this life upon his sacrificial offering in which the People of God partake and which the High Priest, Christ Jesus, offers in and through his members whom he draws into his action. Without this cultic dynamism of a hierarchically differentiated People, flowing and having its apogee in the Eucharistic sacrifice (safeguarded by a valid episcopacy), there is no church in the proper sense of the term.

On the difference between the use of the name “church” with regard to the Catholic Church and non-Catholic churches

Vatican Council II speaks of the Eastern Christian communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church as “churches,” “particular or local

churches” and “sister churches.”²³ An official interpretation of this language is provided in *Dominus Iesus* (2000) and further clarified by the CDF’s *Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church* (2007) and subsequent *Commentary on the Document ‘Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church’* (2007).²⁴

After affirming that there exists but a single Church of Christ concretely existing in the Catholic Church, the declaration *Dominus Iesus* presents a contrast between two ways that non-Catholic Christian communities are related to the one Catholic Church, a contrasting set of relations grounding the distinctive use of the names “church” and “ecclesial community”:

The churches which, while not existing in perfect communion with the Catholic Church, remain united to her by means of the closest bonds, that is, by apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, are true particular churches ... even though they lack full communion with the Catholic Church, since they do not accept the Catholic doctrine of the Primacy, which, according to the will of God, the Bishop of Rome objectively has and exercises over the entire Church. On the other hand, the ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, are not churches in the proper sense; however, those who are baptized in these communities are, by Baptism, incorporated in Christ and thus are in a certain communion, albeit imperfect, with the Church. Baptism in fact tends per se toward the full development of life in Christ, through the integral profession of faith, the Eucharist, and full communion in the Church.²⁵

There are three things to note here. First, communion with the Catholic Church, having a share in the fullness proper to her, is the criterion for a non-Catholic community’s degree of ecclesiality. Second, the difference between the names “church” and “ecclesial community” as used of non-Catholic communities is a function of the respective degrees of communion with the Catholic Church which those names signify. Third, the degree or mode of communion with the Catholic Church by which another community may properly receive the name “church” is a

function of an authentic Eucharist as guaranteed by apostolic succession.

The CDF's 2007 *Responsa* explains the rationale for the Council's use of the name "church" with reference to separated Oriental churches thus:

"Because these churches, although separated, have true sacraments and above all—because of the apostolic succession—the priesthood and the Eucharist, by means of which they remain linked to us by very close bonds," they merit the title of "particular or local churches," and are called sister churches of the particular Catholic churches. "It is through the celebration of the Eucharist of the Lord in each of these churches that the Church of God is built up and grows in stature."²⁶

Two things should be noted here. First, the reason for meriting the title of "local churches" resides essentially in the preservation of the priesthood and the Eucharist. Second, the reason for meriting that designation is inseparable from the relation these communities bear toward the Catholic Church with whom they are intimately linked on account of that priesthood and Eucharist.

Immediately following these affirmations, however, the *Responsa* points out an inherent discrepancy involved in attributing the title "church" to these separated communities:

However, since communion with the Catholic Church, the visible head of which is the Bishop of Rome and the Successor of Peter, is not some external complement to a particular church but rather one of its internal constitutive principles, these venerable Christian communities lack something in their condition as particular churches.²⁷

If they are to be called "particular churches," therefore, it cannot be in the same sense that a local Catholic church is so denominated: compared with any particular Catholic church, they are neither to the same degree church, nor according to the same meaning of the term "church." This is especially clear from the absence within them of an internal constitutive principle of the being of a particular church. The latter privation implies that they can be called "particular churches" in an analogical manner *at best* when compared with Catholic churches, and, insofar as it pertains to something *essential* to ecclesiality (which is more even than an

integral part of ecclesial perfection), suggests, at face value and in the absence of further qualification, that they can be called “churches” in but an equivocal sense or by analogy of extrinsic attribution.

This tension is similarly underscored in the CDF’s later *Commentary on the Document “Responses.”* In that *Commentary*, we encounter the same fundamental rationale for ascribing the name “church” to separated Eastern churches, and this is qualified with the same caveat. But the positive basis for that ascription is explicitly coupled with an additional conciliar citation that sheds light on what could be identified as a metaphysical ground legitimating our use of the name “church” in an intrinsically analogical sense in their regard (thereby rescuing us from the alternative of mere equivocation or purely extrinsic denomination):

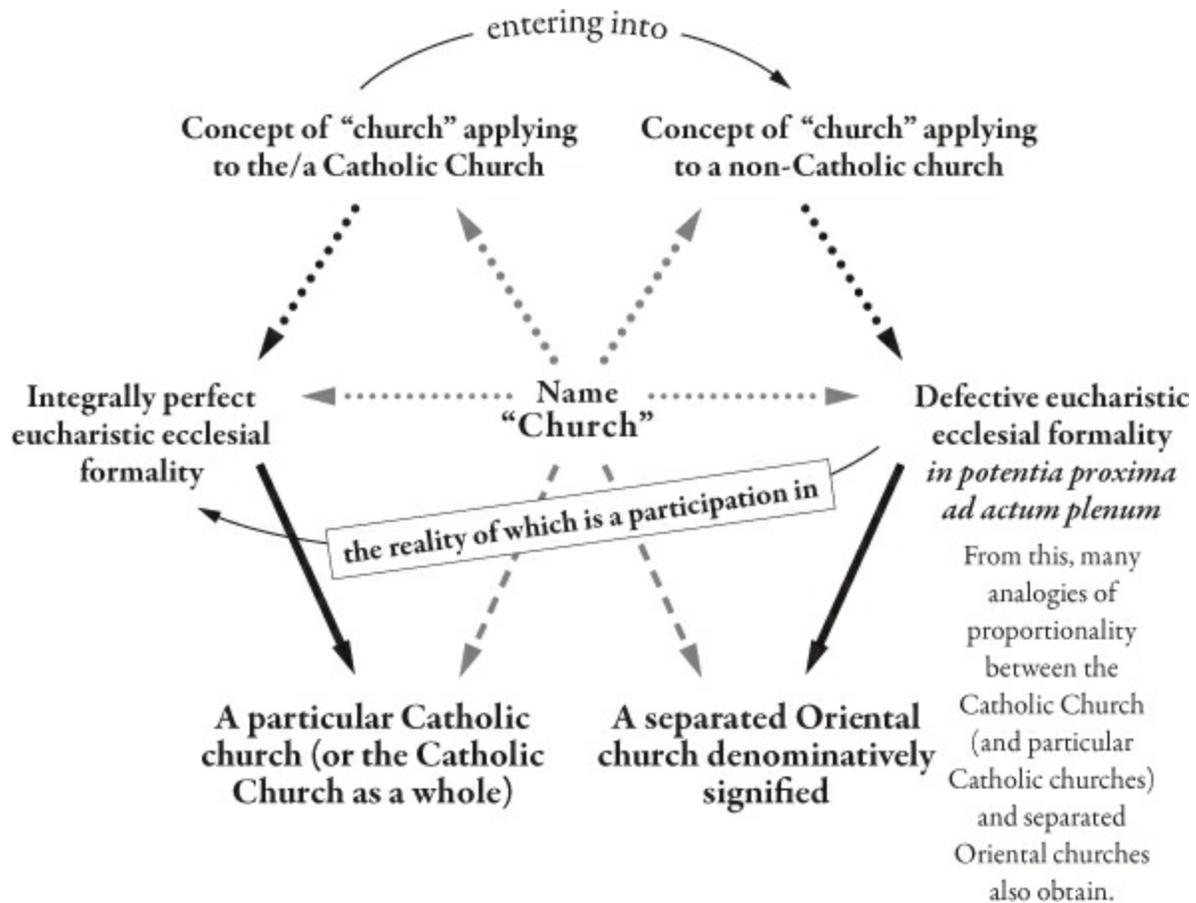
The document [*Responsa*] gives them the title “particular or local churches” and calls them sister churches of the particular Catholic churches because they remain united to the Catholic Church through the apostolic succession and the valid celebration of the Eucharist “through which the Church of God is built up and grows in stature.”²⁸

Not only are apostolic succession and the valid celebration of the Eucharist set forth as necessary conditions for that ecclesial plenitude/status rendering a community worthy of the name “church,” but the metaphysical implications of those conditions are pointed out, metaphysical implications providing us with a real foundation for the analogical application of the name “church.” Even if these communities lack something essential to the constitution of a local church, they nevertheless possess everything constitutive of a local church in germ. That is, even if they are not properly local churches in actuality, they are local churches in potentiality—and not just in some broad or remote sense of potency able to be ascribed to any religious community, but proximately. What is this proximate disposition qualitatively distinguishing the Oriental non-Catholic churches from Christian communities born of the Reformation? The actual presence within them of that from which the Church organically unfolds.²⁹ Oriental churches not in full communion with the Catholic Church are said to merit the title “church” by reason of the presence within them of the intrinsic generative principle of the Church, a status which obtains even if they are not in actuality fully “churches.”

That they are not actually fully “churches” follows from the privation of the doctrine of (and practical and juridical order that follows from) Primacy, which “according to the Catholic faith is an ‘internal constitutive principle’ of the very existence of a particular church.”³⁰ Because no such church is fully “church” in actuality, it is called a “church” only by analogy with the use and meaning of the name as applied to the Catholic Church. This is clear not only from the fact that they are not fully church (lacking a formal reality constitutive of what is signified by the name, a formality the notion of which is included in the *ratio* of the name), but also from the fact that the designation “church” is ascribed to them with reference to that which of itself is but the *principle* of the Church.³¹

Nevertheless, thanks to this inner principle, they are, by reason of what is actually ecclesial within them, inchoately “church” in a fuller sense of the term. Merely inchoately, however, since the eventual actualization of that potency is presently impeded by the refusal of Primacy and the related effects of schism. This inchoate ecclesial plenitude, however, suffices to denominate them, with *Dominus Iesus*, “true particular churches,”³² provided, of course, that the truth of that denomination (the truth of predicating of them what is signified by the name “church”) be grounded on an analogical use of the name. They are truly particular churches in a way similar but not identical to the way in which a particular Catholic church is a particular church; and they are true particular churches in a way similar but not identical to the way in which a particular Catholic church is a true particular church. Both the *Responsa* and the *Commentary on the Document “Responses”* underscore the difference between the manner in which a separated Oriental church and a particular Catholic church is (and can be called) a particular church, noting not only the logical tension involved in designating them by the same name, but pointing out the theological inconsistency that would follow if using the language univocally.³³ We can thus add to our schematic summaries from the previous chapter the following diagram:

Analogy of Intrinsic Attribution:



Note that defining the use of the name “church” in these contexts as purely analogical is not contrary to the CDF’s pronouncement in *Dominus Iesus* that the separated Eastern churches are “true particular churches”³⁴ or to the same Congregation’s assertion that they receive that designation in a “proper sense.”³⁵ Proper denomination and proper predication are not opposed to analogical denomination and analogical predication. Analogous denomination represents one form of the “proper” use of names. This should be clear from the distinction drawn above between analogous denomination and pure equivocation, as well as from the distinction within the Commentary tradition between proper and improper analogy of proportionality. It is also clear from Revelation, which discloses saving truth about God, not merely or even predominantly through metaphor, but in terms signifying concepts the formalities of which properly belong to him (albeit not according to our mode of conceptualizing them).³⁶

Summary of the ways non-Catholic ecclesial communities can be

called “church”

By affirming that Protestant communities “are not churches in the proper sense,”³⁷ *Dominus Iesus* insinuates that there exists at least some sense, even if an improper sense, in which they can be referred to by that name. The ground for such a (extrinsic) denomination lies in their ordination to that which constitutes the very condition for being called a “church” in the proper (intrinsic) sense of the term, namely, fully Eucharistic worship and the communion with the Catholic Church that this implies.³⁸ It is crucial to observe that the baptismal tendency toward full and Eucharistic ecclesial communion pertains to the *ratio* according to which Protestant communities can be called “churches” according to an analogy of extrinsic attribution. By virtue of baptism, they are (at least in their members) intrinsically ordered toward the Eucharistic fullness which is the very condition for being a “church.”³⁹ This is an ordination *ad unum* with respect both to the efficient cause and final cause, inasmuch as these communities are endowed with their ecclesial wealth by reason of the Eucharistic sacrifice perpetuated among the churches intrinsically so denominated⁴⁰ (efficient causal relation), and inasmuch as the Eucharist worship is the reason for their baptismal qualification (final cause). Such an understanding of the signification of the name “church” is perfectly consonant with the Council’s teaching on the Eucharist as the “source and summit” of the Church’s life⁴¹ and follows as one of its ecumenical implications.

Note that the extrinsicness of the denomination means that the *ratio* of “church” is not to be found within these communities, even if they have an intrinsic ordination toward the conditions for the realization of that *ratio*. Although they are “ecclesial” according to intrinsic attribution, they are “churches” (if, with notable theological looseness, we opt to speak this way) only by extrinsic attribution, since features formal in a rudimentary way to the being of a particular church (viz., the ministerial priesthood and the Eucharist, and not just Primacy) are lacking, and, therefore, components intrinsic to the *ratio* of the name “church” are absent from its concept as applied to them.

As for Eastern churches, in comparison with the manner in which it is said of the Catholic Church, the name “church” belongs to them, not univocally, but according to an analogy of intrinsic attribution (resulting in a variety of ecclesial analogies of proportionality). This is because they lack part of the essence of the

Church considered according to her proper *ratio*, wherefore the *ratio* of the name “church” is not perfectly satisfied by separated Eastern churches.⁴² Still, they are called churches by intrinsic analogy, since they possess a sufficient fullness relevant to the identity of a church as a living source of life through, with, and in Christ. This sufficient fullness makes them qualitatively different from Protestant communities. In their redemptive institutional identity, non-Catholic churches represent not merely a greater collection of “elements” in comparison with ecclesial communities born of the Reformation; their ecclesiality exceeds that of Protestants in a fundamental manner touching on the intrinsic principle of the total and universal ecclesial organism, the sacrificial Christ.

But no local community can be called a church in the full sense of the term (the sense proper to the primary analogate) unless it possesses everything essential to the Church, including the gift of Primacy. When all that is essential to the Church is concretely realized in a local community, that community is a local instance of the universal Church, a true local church, in the full sense of the term. As such, and only as such, is it also a “part” of the one Church of Christ, the being of which is one and the same (and therefore complete) in each of its parts. Being a “part” of Christ’s Church and having an integral ecclesial endowment go hand in hand. Accordingly, no non-Catholic Christian community can in the full sense of the term be called a “church,” inasmuch as it is not part of the one Church. Because the separated Oriental churches lack Petrine Primacy (and arguably other elements essential to the Church’s being in first act), they cannot be viewed as parts of that whole. They are rather like a limb that is separated from the body and deprived of the perfect being proper to the whole. Unless it is grafted onto the whole, as such, its being is not that of the whole.⁴³

Two distorted theories of the analogicity of the name “church”

If the former chapter as well as the preceding sections of this chapter demonstrate that the name “church” applies to the Catholic Church and to non-Catholic Christian communities in but an analogical manner according to priority and posteriority, what was noted already in [chapter one](#) regarding the strict-identity-ecclesiology of the patristic era and of the whole magisterial tradition equally makes it clear that the title “church” cannot be used univocally of Catholics and

non-Catholics alike. We must, therefore, immediately dispel an erroneous ecclesiology suggesting that a non-exclusive identity ecclesiology is convertible with (or that it entails or is entailed by) the notion of an analogous realization of Christ's Church among varying forms of Christianity:

Although there are considerable differences of opinion on this matter in the Catholic Church it is pointed out on [the] Catholic side that there is no exclusive identity between the one church of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church (see Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 8). This one church of Christ is actualized in an analogous manner also in other churches. That also means that the unity of the Roman Catholic Church is not perfect but that it strives toward the perfect unity of the church.⁴⁴

A perfectly benign reading of these statements can be admitted if: (a) the negation of exclusive identity were intended merely as a denial of the claim that Christ's Church enjoys no existence beyond the visibly-envisaged Catholic Church; (b) the adverbial "also" in the second statement were intended merely to point out that, aside from its complete and perfect actualization in the Catholic Church, Christ's Church further exists among non-Catholic churches in analogical ways; and (c) the imperfection ascribed to the ecclesial unity of the Catholic Church were intended with reference only to the order of extension or the ever-intensifiable degrees of spiritual unity among her members.⁴⁵ But these conditions seem not to obtain.

The unqualified denial of exclusive identity is acceptable to Catholicism only when narrowly defined in a manner quite distinct from the predominant (and affirmative) Catholic use of that expression. Statements that blanketly deny it should, therefore, be qualified. If not, then they are to be taken as denying the ordinary meaning of that expression as found among its principal proponents. This ordinary sense, as previously explained, denotes the unique status of the Catholic Church among all religious institutions, inasmuch as she alone relates to Christ's Church according to predication *in quid*, and vice versa, without prejudice to (incomplete forms of) its existence beyond her visible confines. Catholicism cannot and has not denied this. As for the second sentence, the syntax insinuates

the analogous actualization of Christ's Church among non-Catholic churches and the Catholic Church along the lines of a common analogical footing, as though they were actualizations of Christ's Church in equally analogical, if not altogether equal, ways.⁴⁶ Finally, given the supposed relationship of inference between the second and third statements, the incomplete status of the Catholic Church's unity is presented as a function of intrinsically unachieved ecclesiality, bringing into question the substantial constitution of the Church as such.

None of the above statements, therefore, are acceptable as such. To the extent, furthermore, that the conjoined statements are intended as a sort of argument, problems of logical inference come particularly into view.⁴⁷ Aside from the *non sequitur* assertion that imperfect unity would characterize every analogical realization of Christ's Church (a claim inconsistent with the very definition of those forms of analogy involving a primary analogate⁴⁸), and aside from the theologically unacceptable appeal to *Lumen gentium* 8 in support of non-exclusive identity, the negation of exclusive identity is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for the analogical use of the name "church," nor is the analogical use of that name an indication of non-exclusive identity. In fact, it is precisely the doctrine of exclusive identity that assures what is arguably the most prominent form of its analogical usage, namely, that according to analogy of attribution, where the proper *ratio* belongs to the primary analogue alone. As we have seen, this divides into an analogy of extrinsic attribution when (in a theologically improper way) the name "church" is applied to non-integrally Eucharistic communities (e.g., Protestant communities), and an analogy of intrinsic attribution concerning integrally Eucharistic communities (e.g., the Orthodox churches). But in both cases the proper *ratio* belongs to the Catholic Church alone, and in both cases the "church" quality of the non-Catholic communities is understood only with reference to and in dependency upon the "Church" quality of the Catholic Church, the mode of whose ecclesiality is qualitatively different than and transcends that of non-Catholics, and whose ecclesial properties suffer no *per se* deficit on account of that difference.

Equally untenable is a notion of ecclesial analogicity based on the constantly morphing accidental features that characterize the Church's physiognomy at any given moment in history:

The changes and challenges of the postconciliar experience in the life of the parish have prompted ... the experience of ... emerging forms of ecclesiality, or of new ways of being church ... my thesis is that the Church is and always has been an analogical notion, that the various ways in which the Church has taken on historical concreteness have been conditioned by historical particularities and therefore were partly alike and partly different—analogous rather than univocal.⁴⁹

The shifting externals of a concrete living organism like the Church have nothing to do with an analogical realization of her being as such. The notion of “church” is analogical only as applied to essentially distinguishable ecclesial communities, but not as applied to the Catholic Church considered according to different historical situations across the centuries, or to the multiplicity of local Catholic churches considered from any temporal standpoint, or even to separated Oriental churches in a similarly diachronic or synchronic way (even if the notion with reference to them is but analogical when compared with its application to the Catholic Church). It is true that the various manners in which the Church has existed concretely over the centuries have been partly alike and partly different, but these differences pertain not to the essential features of the Church, but to features extrinsic to her nature as such. The proper notion of the Church undergoes no variation on that account, even if the concrete modalities of its existence do.⁵⁰

The Church in Mary

Neither an overview of the analogical uses of the name “church,” nor an introductory study of the one Church of Christ according to Vatican II would be complete without some exposition of the Council’s teaching regarding the intimate and mystical relationship existing between the Church and Mary, who is the living reflection, image and model of the Church, the entire mystery of which is found in Mary, at the same time that Mary belongs to her.

Vatican II calls Mary the “type of the Church.”⁵¹ This relates Mary to the Church in a manner identifying her with that redemptive mystery according to an analogy of proportionality as well as an analogy of attribution. Of course, if the imaging here is but comparable to that of a painting with respect to the object it depicts, or reduces to mere symbolic representation, then we would be dealing with

analogies of improper proportionality (metaphor) and extrinsic attribution. But the teaching of the Council is much more robust than this. The whole mystery of the Church is personally embodied in Mary, at once in the personal perfection with which she is endowed, and the complete victory over sin which this exemplifies, and in her association with the Redeemer in both the objective phase of redemption (the acquisition of grace for mankind) and its ongoing application (the distribution of grace), and the definitive and universal conquest over evil that this represents. Within the present pages, I can merely sketch but some of the rudimentary features of the Council's rich teaching in these regards. Our focus must remain on the ecclesial analogy, and I prescind from theological examination of the Mariological doctrines here introduced.⁵²

As the concluding chapter to the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, the eighth chapter devoted to Mary already intimates in a structural way the analogical unity between Mary and the mystery of the Church as a whole. This unity / analogical identity consists especially in the following aspects:

- Mary is a type of the Church in the orders of faith and charity, bridal union with Christ and his redemptive work, and eschatological finality.⁵³
- Each are virgins and mothers in proportional similarity.⁵⁴
- Like the Church, Mary gives spiritual life to all of those justified in Christ. In a way proportional to the Church's Eucharistic sacrifice and prayer, she does so through the supernatural benefits she won for mankind in communion with the sacrificial atonement of her Son, and by all she continues to do from heaven as the Mediatrix of grace.⁵⁵
- At the same time that Mary exemplifies everything the Church is called to be in a way that but imitates her own plenitude, she is also a member of the community of the redeemed, and, therefore: (a) she is herself a fruit of the redemption; and (b), by reason of the organic and mystical communion intrinsic to the mystery of the Church, in her the whole body enjoys the perfections with which she is personally adorned—in one of its members, the whole enjoys the eschatological fullness promised in the Resurrection of Christ.⁵⁶

As Virgin, as Spouse, as Mother, and as gloriously configured to her risen Son—in each of these ways, the Church and Mary stand toward one another according to analogies of proportionality. The two are proportionally one regarding the doxological, redemptive, justificatory, and regal places they occupy in the salutary dispensation. But these proportionalities between Mary and the Church are hierarchically ordered, in such a way that those virginal, spousal, maternal and regal qualities (all of which are *proportiones* in their own right, insofar as defined in relation to Christ and his redemptive work and fruits) are realized in Mary as an individual as the paradigm and exemplar of their realization in the Church. The parallel (*proportio*), in other words, between the ecclesial relations (*proportiones*) defining the mystery of Mary and the analogically common ecclesial relations (*proportiones*) defining the mystery of the Church (considered collectively and as distinguished from Mary) is imperfectly proportional; for the ecclesial proportions in Mary are more perfect, more intimately one with the person and work of Christ, and (in subordination to Christ) the measure of the ecclesial proportions attributed to the rest of the Church. This surpassing excellence of Mary's ecclesial being exceeds the exemplary order; it also manifests itself in terms of participatory causal dynamism, constituting the foundation for an analogy of attribution regarding the same ecclesial perfections.

Because of their proportional identity, “one may in practice consider *Mariology* and *ecclesiology* as two parallel tracts, treating the same mystery: considered, on the one hand, in its *exceptional* realization and, on the other, in its *common* realization.”⁵⁷ Because, however, of the surpassing excellence of Mary in comparison with the rest of the Church, a superiority expressing itself in terms of loftier dignity and greater causal universality, they also stand toward one another according to analogies of intrinsic attribution, whence Mary is rather a *terminus*—an interior point of gravitation—toward which, in all of her being, the Church is impelled. If both are virginally pure, co-redemptively maternal, and espoused and configured to the Risen Lord, Mary is each of these in a way that excels not only every other saint, but the Church as a whole: she is *personally* and *exemplarily* what the Church is only *collectively* and *imitatively* in her regard.⁵⁸ Of course, the whole mystery of Mary is relative to that of Christ, and every one of her privileges is itself a participation in and imitative of the mysteries of Christ's person and work;⁵⁹ but

her unique mode of participation in those mysteries makes her something “maximal” in the order of ecclesiality, and it is this quality that places the Church in relations of causal dependency upon her.

Without getting further into the extraordinary privileges by which Mary is the “New Eve,” Mother of all the living and of Life itself, we may compare the “ecclesial” virtues of Mary to those of the rest of the Church along the lines of an analogy suggested by Journet,⁶⁰ in which the “ecclesiality” of every ecclesial community (including the Catholic Church) has its archetype in the “ecclesiality” of Mary, and in which the supreme ecclesial perfection of Mary already crowns the subsistent mode of being of Christ’s Church within the Catholic Church, while heralding the goal toward which the militant and suffering portions of that Church are continually tending in the present age. Just as a polygon approximates a circle in proportion to the number of its sides, so every ecclesial community on earth approximates the perfection of Christ’s Church in proportion to its imitation of Mary. She is the perfect circle emanating from the Church’s center which is Christ. As a *member* of the Catholic Church, however, the latter is, in her, already “circular”—whence another *ratio* for the dialectic of perfection attaining perfection within the Catholic Church (perfect society, without spot or wrinkle, *semper reformanda*),⁶¹ and a new reason for the gravitation of every other ecclesial community as such toward the Catholic Church.⁶² Let us briefly summarize the modes of analogy by reason of which and according to which Mary may be declared to be the very mystery of the Church in its exceptional realization.

Mary is, first of all, a “type” of the Church, and its “archetype.” The intrinsic perfection and redemptive mission of the Church is realized preeminently in Mary. For everything God desires to accomplish for man through and in his Church has been accomplished *in* Mary, who is Christ’s chosen one (Spouse), holy and spotless (Virgin), in a fruitful union with him (Mother), and consummately glorified (enthroned); and all of it has been accomplished *through* her, since God has made her a partner in Redemption (Spouse), wholly and continuously devoted to him (Virgin), bearer of divine life (Mother), and splendid mediatrix of grace (enthroned/Queen). Mary is the comprehensive expression of our covenantal existence in Christ. Between the People of the Covenant and Mary the analogy of proportionality is unmistakable. Correspondingly, she is the Church, and the Church is Marian.⁶³

As Mother of the Church, Mother of the members of Christ in the order of grace, the ecclesial analogy between Mary and the Church is also one of attribution. This analogy of attribution is both intrinsic and participatory, marked by a causal influx from Mary to the Church,⁶⁴ and having the propermost realization of that ecclesial form and *ratio* of the name in the individual person of Mary. Due, however, to the fact that her role in this regard is itself a finite participation in the satisfactory, meritorious and dispensational activity of Jesus Christ, whose humanity is the supremely universal instrument of salvation, the incomparably superior source of all of the redemptive privileges of Mary and the Church, the singular analogue to which all are reduced and by which they are denominated is the Godman in the flesh. Thus it is with reference to Jesus Christ that everything ecclesial is ultimately defined. It may indeed also be defined with reference to Mary, as an exemplar toward which it is pulled, but, by transitivity, the finality there implied terminates in Christ.⁶⁵ The same sort of thing has already been observed with reference to the ordination of all mankind toward the Catholic Church, which is a corollary of their ordination toward living union with and incorporation in Christ. But we did not make the distinction based on transitivity in that context, because Jesus Christ is mystically one with his Bride, in organic identity with the Body of which he is the Head, such that every finality defined with reference to Christ is a finality understood with reference to the Catholic Church itself.⁶⁶ This law is, in fact, reflected in the complex ecclesial identity of Mary. At the same time that her “circularity” is an eschatological goal and point of reference for the Church and other ecclesial communities, as a member of the Mystical Body, every tendency of every ecclesial community toward greater conformity with Mary’s exemplarity signifies a tendency toward conformity with the Catholic Church.⁶⁷

There is a sense, therefore, in which the participatory dynamism of this analogy of intrinsic attribution is simultaneously inverted, inasmuch as the Church, understood in specifically Christological terms, is also the font of Mary’s ecclesial character. Irrespective of Mary’s extraordinary mode of redemption,⁶⁸ as a member of those redeemed by Christ (and thus incorporated into his Body and made a partaker in his redemptive mediatorship), the analogy of attribution is defined by the causal influx from Christ the Head—in whom the Church exists in all of its virtualities—to Mary. Note, however, that the sense in which the Church

here is something of a primary analogate in relation to Mary pertains to the Church only as it exists within its plenary self-sufficient principle which is Christ Jesus, and not the Church taken in the sense of all of those whom that High Priest and King has won to himself.

We witness, then, a hierarchical structure among the analogies defining the ecclesial mystery in each of its subjects, in which: (a) Jesus Christ is the supreme exemplar and preeminent analogue of all that is ecclesial (whether canvassing the Church in its entirety or any one of its perfections), and in which even Mary is a secondary analogate in relation to the mystery of the Church contained in Jesus; (b) Mary is a primary analogue of the same supernatural mysteries in relation to the rest of the Church, which is “Church” secondarily through its relation to Mary; and (c) that Church (as demonstrated in previous chapters) is the primary analogate for everything ecclesial pertaining to every other Christian community, the ecclesiality of which and the ecclesiality the elements of which are secondary/posterior to those of the Catholic Church.

Conclusion

Many features of Vatican II’s ecclesiology preclude a univocal use of the names “ecclesial” and “church” as said of non-Catholic Christian communities and of the Catholic Church. Among them we have highlighted the Council’s teaching on:

- (1) The *una et unica ecclesia*;
- (2) The strict and exclusive identity between the Catholic Church and the Church of Christ;
- (3) The intrinsic dependence upon the Catholic Church for all that is ecclesial about non-Catholic Christian communities;
- (4) Their intrinsic ordering toward fully Eucharistic Catholic communion;
- (5) The incomplete mode of realization of their overall ecclesial endowment (ecclesiality);
- (6) The imperfect (defective) mode of being of every one of their elements;

- (7) Their visible separation from the one body;
- (8) Their similar but constitutively different manners of carrying out the redemptive mission of the Church and of relating to the paradigmatic (primordially universal) instrument of salvation which is the humanity of Christ;
- (9) The pointed meaning of the name “church” (and its differentiation from “ecclesial community” simply taken); and
- (10) The archetypal ecclesial identity of Mary, supreme visible participant in the mysteries bringing forth and constituting the Church in the subsistent fullness of her being.

According to conciliar teaching, the ecclesial being of non-Catholic Christianities is a sacred condition received directly from the fullness of the Catholic Church and ontologically structured according to relationships of participation in that plenitude. Their ecclesiality, their community in being and in operation with Christ’s Church, is shared with the Catholic Church, therefore, according to analogy. Likewise, their share with the Catholic Church in any of the elements of sanctification and truth is an analogical community. If a certain fullness (and strict combination) of these elements (and the redemptive dynamism that follows therefrom) is the foundation for calling an ecclesial community a “church,” then—based on the preceding conclusion—any church beside the Catholic Church is (in comparison with her) a church analogically. Churches besides the Catholic Church are churches in a way proportionate to but different from and dependent upon the manner in which the Catholic Church is a Church. Indeed, it is by reason of their communion with the Catholic Church that they are “churches” at all.⁶⁹

As explained earlier, the subsistent mode of being that defines the concrete realization of Christ’s Church is a distinctive characteristic of the Catholic Church, which is why she alone “is” the Church of Christ. It is also the reason why the Catholic Church alone is, and may be called, a “church” in the propermost sense of that term, that is, in the primary sense of the term, with reference to which the intelligibility of other uses depends. The fully integral and perfect mode of being expressed with the notion of subsistence is, in other words, intrinsic to the

proper *ratio* of the name “church”; and the fact that no Christian communion beside the Catholic Church can be identified with the Church of Christ corresponds to the fact that none of them are “churches” in the full sense of the term, even if they can be called “churches” in a proper analogical way. If, *per impossibile*, they were churches in the full sense of term, realizing everything inherent in the *ratio* of the name, Christ’s Church would be many churches. It is precisely an ecclesiology that upholds the analogical realization of “churchness” that can retain the dogma of the *una et unica Ecclesia* while ascribing the status of “church” to other Christian communities.⁷⁰ Such an ecclesiology, moreover, is able not only to affirm both sides of this phenomenon of divided Christendom, but to do so in an integrative way that shows their logical and ontological unity in terms of notional and causal subordination, given that the latter aspect (the extended being and use of the notion of “church”) is a function of the former (the singular being and privileged notion of “church” pertaining to the Catholic Church).

Now, the non-subsistent mode of presence of Christ’s Church to some non-Catholic communions suffices to designate them “churches” analogically; but this does not mean that they are even analogically “the Church of Christ.” If there can exist a multiplicity of particular churches (which is the case even with the Catholic Church), there can never be more than one Church of Christ (even as there can never be more than one Catholic Church). No single particular Catholic church, for that matter, is plain and simply the Church of Christ, although it is a part of Christ’s Church. As a part of Christ’s Church which shares and is integrated into the one being of the whole, it is a “church” in the primary sense of the term. Particular Catholic churches are fully “churches,” because the one Church of Christ is in them according to the entirety of its essence,⁷¹ and because, as parts of a single body, they introduce no division in Christ’s Church / the Catholic Church. Neither of these conditions, however, obtain in the case of churches separated from the Catholic Church. As a consequence, not only are they unable analogically to be called “the Church of Christ,” but they cannot be regarded as “churches” in the primary sense of the term. On account of its bodily division from the Catholic Church, no non-Catholic Christian community can be identified with Christ’s Church or called by that name, lest we destroy the unity proper to the latter.⁷² Not even in an analogical way, therefore, are non-Catholic communions able to “be” the Church of Christ, even if they bear the name

“church” in a secondary, posterior sense of the term.

Nevertheless, as the Council teaches, these communities are blessed with an abundance of gifts belonging to Christ’s Church such that something of its fullness resides truly within them. This, thanks precisely to the Catholic Church, given that their whole ecclesial being (that within them that is of Christ’s Church) derives from the fullness that belongs to the Catholic Church who has received in full measure from the fullness of Christ.⁷³ As a consequence, however, of their very separation from that Church, all non-Catholic Christianities are deprived of the fullness (and, indeed, of the integral essence) of Christ’s Church, having as a further consequence a loss of the integrity of each and every one of their ecclesial gifts. This is why even the very concept of “elements” as attributed to them has not the same meaning as when it is applied to the Catholic Church. Quite the contrary, whether we are speaking of a community’s status as a “church,” or of its character as “ecclesial,” or of the “ecclesiality” of its elements, these names apply to non-Catholic Christian communities with a meaning that is different from but proportioned to their meaning as referred to the Catholic Church, and the very *rationes* of these names always express an ordination to and often a participatory relation of dependence upon the Catholic Church, the “universal sacrament of salvation (*universale salutis sacramentum*).”⁷⁴

¹ For the philological background to the name “church,” see K. L. Schmidt, “ἐκκλησία,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 3:501–536; See E. Dublanchy, “Église,” in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, ed. A. Vacant, E. Mangenot and É. Amann (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1939), 2108–2113.

² Augustine, *Enar. in Psalm.* 36, enarratio 3, n. 4 (English translation: S. Hebgin and F. Corrigan, *Ancient Christian Writers* [Westminster: Newman Press, 1961], 30:307–308). See also *Enar. in Psalm.* 87 (Lat. 86); *Enar. in Psalm.* 91, n. 13: “The Holy City is not the Church of this country only, but of the whole world as well: not that of this age only, but from Abel himself down to those who shall to the end be born and believe in Christ, the whole assembly of the Saints, belonging to one city; which city is Christ’s body, of which Christ is the Head. There, too, dwell the Angels, who are our fellow citizens” (NPNF-1, 8:450).

³ Augustine, *Enar. in Psalm.* 82 (Lat. 81) n. 1 (NPNF-1, 8:395).

⁴ See 2 Cor 5.

⁵ See in these regards: T. van Bavel, “Church,” in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 169–175; *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, ed. F. van Fleteren and J. Schnaubelt (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 280–284.

- 6 See H. J. Vogt, “Ecclesiologia,” in *Dizionario patristico*, 1:1049–1062; see Joseph Ratzinger, “The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, ‘*Lumen Gentium*’” *L’Osservatore Romano*, 19 (September 2001): 5–8.
- 7 See Eph 1:9–10; Heb 1:1–2; cf. Gal 4:4–5.
- 8 *Lumen gentium*, 2.
- 9 Every use of the name “church” with reference to those who are being saved (τοὺς σωζομένους) prior to the Incarnation represents an analogical use of the name both in the sense of proportionality, inasmuch as it signifies a community set apart in the service of God’s redemptive economy, and in the sense of attribution, inasmuch as such institutions were figures (types) of the Church to come, thus including the concept of that “reality” (antitype) in their very notions, and to whatever extent they were effects of that reality, not only in the order of exemplary causality, but also in the order of efficient causality for what concerns their dependency for salvation upon the future redemptive work of the Head (whether conceived merely in terms of moral instrumentality or of a transtemporal physical agency).
- 10 The typological ordination *ad alterum* is more than an *ens rationis*: things themselves, and not just the words we use for things, are objectively signs of other things (a fact which undergirds the spiritual senses of Scripture), *a fortiori* when they are created by the author of salvation history precisely for that purpose, something constituting an essential aspect of their revelatory (and therefore salutary) function. See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 10 and ad 1: “The author of Holy Writ is God, in whose power it is to signify his meaning, not by words only (as man also can do), but also by things themselves. So, whereas in every other science things are signified by words, this science has the property, that the things signified by the words have themselves also a signification” (*respondeo*); “*ipsae res significatae per voces, aliarum rerum possunt esse signa*” (ad 1). Of course, a mere signification relation to the definitive institution of salvation which is the Church in the present phase of salvation history would make of any Old Testament type of the Church a “church” according to extrinsic attribution only. But the Qahal Yahweh was always also “church” in a fuller way, inasmuch as the covenantal relationship (even if inferior to its realization in Christianity) was realized intrinsically in the relationship between Israel and Yahweh. Thus “ecclesia” as predicated of the Qahal Yahweh involves both an analogy of extrinsic attribution as well as an analogy of intrinsic attribution; and this is accompanied by analogies of proportionality regarding a number of relations interior to the Qahal Yahweh comparable to relations interior to the New People of God in Christ Jesus.
- 11 “All the just that ever were since the world began have Christ for their head. They believed that he should come, we believe that he has come. They were healed by faith in him, even as we are ... that he might be head of the entire city of Jerusalem, composed of all the faithful from the beginning to the end of time” (Augustine, *Enar. in Psalm. 36*, enarratio 3, n. 4) (English translation: Edmund S. Foulkes, “Church,” in *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines; Being a Continuation of ‘The Dictionary of the Bible,’* ed. William Smith and Henry Wace [London: William Clowes and Sons, 1877]), 1:536). See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, II-II, q. 1, a. 7; III, q. 8, a. 3, ad 3; q. 68, a. 1, ad 1.
- 12 This is especially clear from the role of the Blessed Mother of God, Mother of all Christians in the order of grace (see *Lumen gentium*, 61).
- 13 See E. Dublanchy, “Église,” in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, ed. A. Vacant, E. Mangenot and É. Amann (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1939), 2119–2128.
- 14 See *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3, note 19.

- 15 See chapter two, note 61; see *Schemata constitutionum et decretorum de quibus disceptabitur in Concilii sessionibus*, Series secunda (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1962), 87–89.
- 16 See A. von Teuffenbach, *Die Bedeutung des 'subsistit in,'* 245 and 447; C. Malloy, "Subsistit In," 21–22; C. Washburn, "The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, and *Subsistit in*," 171–174 (Washburn provides an extensive bibliography in this respect); Jared Wicks, "The Significance of the 'Ecclesial Communities' of the Reformation," *Ecumenical Trends* 30 (2001): 170–173.
- 17 For example: "They also recognize and accept other sacraments within their own churches or ecclesiastical communities" (*Lumen gentium*, 15); "In these churches and ecclesial communities there exist important differences from the Catholic Church" (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 19).
- 18 *Unitatis redintegratio*, 15.
- 19 *Unitatis redintegratio*, 22. The *Relatio* accompanying these texts explicitly affirms that the denomination "church" was reserved for those communities that have retained a valid episcopate and authentic Eucharist (see AS, vol. III, pt. 2, 335).
- 20 Charles Cardinal Journet, *Theology of the Church*, 106 (cf. 108, 110–111, 155, 168–170, 181–183); see 1 Pet 2:9.
- 21 Sacramental Eucharistic communion and the visible expression of unity it involves relate in a fundamental way to the very being of the Church: "Of itself Baptism is only a beginning, an inauguration wholly directed toward the fullness of life in Christ. Baptism, therefore, envisages a complete profession of faith, complete incorporation in the system of salvation such as Christ willed it to be, and finally complete ingrafting in eucharistic communion" (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 22). "This explains the richness of the expression 'The Church is Eucharistic.' ... The Fathers of the early centuries ... refuse for this reason any Eucharistic celebration which would bring together members of churches which are canonically or explicitly divided" (J.-M. R. Tillard, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion*, trans. R. C. De Peaux [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992], 38).
- 22 "Baptism is the beginning of the spiritual life, and the door of the sacraments; whereas the Eucharist is, as it were, the consummation of the spiritual life, and the end of all the sacraments ... for by the hallowings of all the sacraments preparation is made for receiving or consecrating the Eucharist. Consequently, the reception of Baptism is necessary for starting the spiritual life ... by partaking not indeed actually, but in desire, as an end is possessed in desire and intention.... by Baptism a man is ordained to the Eucharist, and therefore from the fact of children being baptized, they are destined by the Church to the Eucharist; and just as they believe through the Church's faith, so they desire the Eucharist through the Church's intention, and, as a result, receive its reality" (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 73, a. 3). See *Unitatis redintegratio*, 22; cf. *Dominus Iesus*, 17.
- 23 See *Lumen gentium*, 15; *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3–4 and 14–15; *Orientalium ecclesiarum*, 26 and 30.
- 24 See, additionally, CDF, *Communio notio*: AAS 85 (1993): 838–850; *Mysterium Ecclesiae*: AAS 65 (1973): 396–408; "Note on the Expression 'Sister Churches,'" *Origins* 30, no. 14 (2000): 222–224.
- 25 CDF, *Dominus Iesus*, 17.
- 26 CDF, *Responsa*: AAS 99 (2007): 604–608 (ad 4).
- 27 CDF, *Responsa*: AAS 99 (2007): 604–608 (ad 4). The same principle is expressed in *Christus Dominus* 11: "By adhering to its pastor and gathered together by him through the Gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit, it [the diocese or local church] constitutes a particular church in which the one, holy, catholic, and

apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative.”

- 28 CDF, *Commentary on the Document “Responses”*: *Notitiae* 43 (2007): 398–415 (4a); cf. *Unitatis redintegratio*, 15.
- 29 “Through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in each of these churches, the Church of God is built up and grows in stature” (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 15).
- 30 *Commentary on the Document “Responses”* (4a); see CDF, *Communione notio*, n. 17: *AAS* 85 (1993): 849.
- 31 This reinforces the arguments presented earlier and supplies another reason for why the one Church of Christ must not be conceived as concretely constituted from the conjunction of particular Catholic churches and particular non-Catholic churches (see W. Cohen, “Clarifying the Doctrine of Sister Churches,” 352). The teaching of *Lumen gentium* 23 that it is in and from the particular churches that the one and only Catholic Church comes into being (“*in quibus et ex quibus una et unica Ecclesia catholica existit*”) indicates that the one Church is constituted concretely of all of those particular Churches that realize within them the integral reality of the universal Church, after which every authentic particular church is modeled: “[it is] particular churches, *fashioned after the model of the universal Church*, in and from which churches comes into being the one and only Catholic Church” (*Lumen gentium*, 23) (emphasis mine). The universal-particular relationship here operative (and which is just a part of the complex-us of relationships expressed) has its (analogical) paradigm in the relationship between a nature and its individual supposita, the concrete subjects in which alone that nature exists. But that nature is said to have existence “in and out of” its individual instantiations only insofar as each one of them integrally realizes the entirety of its essential structures. No separated church enjoys that status. Given, moreover, the analogically subordinate manner in which the separated churches are “churches,” any ability they might (*ex hypothesi*) have to contribute to the constitution of the universal Church would be a function of their (ontological) relationship to the Catholic Church, whence any constitutive function they would putatively exercise formally reduces to the Catholic Church as to its causal principles. Finally, the Church of Christ is not realizable in a divided manner. But, given the plain and bodily division between the separated churches and the Catholic Church, to say that they together constitute the universal Church is to render that Church many in the concrete order, making of the Church of Christ, contrary to Catholic dogma, but a unity *secundum quid*.
- 32 See *Dominus Iesus*, 17.
- 33 “Despite this unequivocal recognition of their ‘being particular churches’ and of their salvific value, the document could not ignore the wound (*defectus*) which they suffer specifically in their being particular churches.... that they consider themselves *complete* in their particularity ... is obviously not compatible with the doctrine of Primacy which, according to the Catholic faith, is an ‘internal constitutive principle’ of the very existence of a particular church. It will, therefore, remain necessary to emphasize that the Primacy of the Successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, is not seen as something extraneous or merely concurrent with that of Bishops of particular churches” (CDF, *Commentary on the Document “Responses”* [4a]).
- 34 CDF, *Dominus Iesus*, 17.
- 35 CDF, “Note on the Expression ‘Sister Churches,’” a. 8 and 11 (*Origins* 30, no. 14 [2000]: 223–224).
- 36 See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 6; *Comp. theol.*, Bk. I, c. 27. On the proper use of the name “church” as analogically applied to different Christian communities, see Christopher J. Malloy, “*Subsistit In*,” 23–24.
- 37 *Dominus Iesus*, 17.

- 38 “However, those who are baptized in these communities are ... in a certain communion, albeit imperfect, with the Church. Baptism in fact tends per se toward the full development of life in Christ, through the integral profession of faith, the Eucharist, and full communion in the Church” (*Dominus Iesus*, 17).
- 39 See *Unitatis redintegratio*, 22; *Dominus Iesus*, 17.
- 40 This ultimately reduces to the Catholic Church, since Eastern churches are churches by reason of their Catholicity.
- 41 “The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows” (*Sacrosanctum concilium*, 10); cf. *Unitatis redintegratio*, 22.
- 42 “The other [kind of division] is the division of the analogously common into those things of which it is said according to priority and posteriority.... And in such things the common *ratio* is satisfied perfectly in one alone (*perfecte salvatur in uno*), but in the others in a certain respect and posteriorly (*secundum quid et per posterius*)” (Aquinas, *De malo*, q. 7, a. 1, ad 1, translation mine).
- 43 See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 2, a. 6, ad 2; *In Phys.*, Bk. IV, lect. 4. The conclusions drawn in this chapter regarding the simultaneous unity and disunity that exists between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic churches reinforces the conclusions from previous chapters concerning the existence of degrees of imperfect communion between non-Catholic Christian communities and the Catholic Church. Between them, we witness, in ways that cut across the visible and invisible orders alike, a varying spectrum of unity in disunity expressed, ultimately, in terms of dynamic relationships founded on the ecclesial preeminence and causal primacy of the Catholic Church spanning the ontological divide between them. All of this sheds greater light on the meaning of the Council’s teaching on “elements of truth and sanctification,” ecclesial “incorporation,” and Christian unity.
- 44 Joint Lutheran-Roman Catholic Study Commission, “The Gospel and the Church,” Malta Report, 1972, *Lutheran World* 19, no. 3 (1972): 259–273, n. 71.
- 45 See chapter three “*The modes of being proper to ecclesial elements found within the Catholic Church and beyond her visible confines*” (final paragraph).
- 46 This follows all the more if the operating concept of “analogous actualization” is taken in the colloquial sense understood (mistakenly) as always implying a diminished realization of the perfection in question. The intimated parallelism would presumably be construable according to an analogy *ad unum*, in which both the Catholic Church and non-Catholic churches would stand toward, and could be understood only with reference to, an extrinsic ecclesial paradigm, and in which the differences between those churches would, from the perspective of this analogy, be a matter only of degree.
- 47 Does the denial of exclusive identity imply or require the analogical realization of ecclesiality? Do analogical realizations of Christ’s Church defy an ecclesiology of exclusive identity? Does the analogical realization of Christ’s Church entail ecclesial imperfection for all churches or every relevant analogue? The answer to each of these questions is not necessarily. In the light, moreover, of the ecclesiology of Vatican II, the antecedent of the first is not an option for Catholics, while the answer to the second and to the third is simply no.
- 48 The primary analogue always realizes the *ratio* of the name in the fullest possible sense.
- 49 T. Sanks, “Forms of Ecclesiality: The Analogical Church,” *Theological Studies* 49 (1988): 695–708.
- 50 See in this regard Paul VI, *Ecclesiam suam*, 46–47. The article by Sanks just quoted somewhat misleadingly cites *Christus Dominus* in support of an ecclesiological analogicity understood to touch upon the structures inherent in the exercise of the Church’s pastoral office: “An episcopal conference is a kind of

council in which the bishops of a given nation or territory jointly exercise their pastoral office by way of promoting that greater good which the Church offers mankind, especially through forms and programs of the apostolate which are fittingly adapted to the circumstances of the age” (*Christus Dominus*, 38; Sanks, 700). “Forms and programs of the apostolate” are fittingly adapted to new circumstances; the foundational pastoral office, which is made effective through the exercise of the priestly, prophetic and royal offices of Christ and which is the *basis* for specific apostolic actions, is not adapted. The adaptation lies in the *application* of the Church’s constitutive powers (fundamental operative capacities) to their respective objects concretely considered. The author rightly goes on to describe the analogical modes in which collegial operation might apply itself in different circumstances to concrete situations.

- 51 *Lumen gentium*, 63.
- 52 Studies on the ecclesiotypical Mariology of the Council abound. Especially noteworthy among them are John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater* (Encyclical Letter “On the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life of the Pilgrim Church”), *AAS* 79 (1987): 61–433; H. U. von Balthasar and J. Ratzinger, *Mary: The Church at the Source*, trans. A. Wakeer (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005); Walter J. Burghardt, “Mary in Eastern Patristic Thought,” in Juniper Carol, ed., *Mariology* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1957), 2:88–153; Burghardt, “Mary in Western Patristic Thought,” in *Mariology*, 1:109–155; Lucian Deiss, *Mary, Daughter of Zion*, trans. B. Blair (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1972); Paul Haffner, *Mystery of the Church* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2007), c. 9, 238–272; C. Journet, *The Theology of the Church*, trans. V. Szczurek (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), c. 4: “The Blessed Virgin in the Church”; Mark Miravalle, *Mary: Coredeptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate* (Santa Barbara: Queenship Publishing, 1993); Ignace de la Potterie, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant* (New York: Alba House, 1982); J. Ratzinger, *Daughter Zion*, trans. J. McDermott (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1983); E. Schillebeeckx, *Mary Mother of the Redemption* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964); O. Semmelroth, *Mary Archetype of the Church*, trans. M. von Eroes and J. Devlin (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963); Cyril Vollert, *A Theology of Mary* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), c. 3–5 (113–190).
- 53 “The Mother of God is a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ” (*Lumen gentium*, 63); “Piously meditating on her and contemplating her in the light of the Word made man, the Church with reverence enters more intimately into the great mystery of the Incarnation and becomes more and more like her Spouse” (*Lumen gentium* 65); “Seeking after the glory of Christ, the Church becomes more like her exalted Type” (*Lumen gentium*, 65); “The Immaculate Virgin preserved free from all stain of original sin, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory ... that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords, and conqueror of sin and death” (*Lumen gentium* 59).
- 54 “In the mystery of the Church, which is itself rightly called mother and virgin, the Blessed Virgin stands out in eminent and singular fashion as exemplar both of virgin and mother” (*Lumen gentium* 63); “The Church ... herself is a virgin, who keeps the faith given to her by her Spouse whole and entire. Imitating the mother of her Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she keeps with virginal purity an entire faith, a firm hope and a sincere charity” (*Lumen gentium* 64).
- 55 “In this singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Saviour in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore she is our mother in the order of grace” (*Lumen gentium*, 61); “This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent which she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, and lasts until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but

by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation” (*Lumen gentium*, 62).

- 56 “She is hailed as a pre-eminent and singular member of the Church” (*Lumen gentium*, 53); “The Mother of Jesus, glorified in body and soul in heaven, is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come” (*Lumen gentium*, 68); “In the most holy Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she is without spot or wrinkle” (*Lumen gentium*, 65).
- 57 Charles Journet, *Theology of the Church*, 92.
- 58 “When we say that Mary is the supreme realization of the Church, we mean that Mary is, in the Church, more a Mother than the Church, more a Bride than the Church, more a Virgin than the Church. We mean that she is Mother, Bride, Virgin *prior* to the Church and *for* the Church; that it is *in* her, above all, and *by* her that the Church is Mother, Bride, and Virgin” (Charles Journet, *Theology of the Church*, 98).
- 59 “This [role of Mary as Advocate and Mediatrix], however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator. For no creature could ever be counted as equal with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer.... the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source” (*Lumen gentium*, 62). Mary’s co-redemptive work on earth and heavenly mediation are but expressions of the plenitude of the mediatorship of Christ himself. In fact, the very mediatory capacities of Mary and of the Church are themselves mediated to them by Christ. By recognizing the mediatory roles of Mary and the Church, we glorify *him*; by availing ourselves of it, we avail ourselves of *his* salvific power and action. Thus the Constitution continues: “The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary ... and commends it to the hearts of the faithful, so that ... they may the more intimately adhere to the Mediator and Redeemer” (*Lumen gentium*, 62).
- 60 See Charles Journet, *Theology of the Church*, 92.
- 61 In the person of Mary, the entire Church is already glorified in one of its parts; the whole Church is endowed in a certain way with the preeminent virtues of Mary inasmuch as she is part of that organic whole and inasmuch as that whole is characterized by a total sharing of being and perfection: “We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another” (Rom 12:5)... “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.... If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Cor 12:12, 26). See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, II-II, q. 58, a. 5: “A part, as such, belongs to a whole, so that whatever is the good of a part can be ordered to the good of the whole.”
- 62 We must make distinctions, however, if we speak of the Catholic Church as ever growing toward perfection in this life in imitation of Mary. For the faith of the Catholic Church on earth is integrally pure or virginal; if she advances in this respect it is only in the orders of extension and explicitation, and within her members; and the Catholic Church on earth is the singular Bride of Christ, indissolubly bound to him, and without spot or wrinkle, even if sin is to be found within her members; and every generation and nurturing of the spiritual life among men flows from the universal maternity of this same visible Catholic Church. Thus the distinction between the circle which is Mary and the many-sided polygon which is the Catholic Church collectively considered in distinction from Mary holds in certain respects but not in others. The inclusion of Mary within the very mystery of the Catholic Church, moreover, reduces this distinction to an inadequate distinction between ontologically inseparable aspects of a whole with an intrinsic reference of one toward the other. In these respects, even the analogy of proportionality falls short of capturing the overlap/continuity/identity between Mary and the Catholic Church.

- ⁶³ See John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*.
- ⁶⁴ The causal parameters of Mary's co-redemptive and mediatory functions vis-à-vis the Church cannot be developed here. If theologians are divided as to the precise value and extent of Mary's efficacy in these regards, all agree that she exercises at least an active mediate role in the universal salvation, and nearly all ascribe to her an active direct role in the objective redemptive work, as well as an active role in the application of the fruits of that work.
- ⁶⁵ "The Church ... commends this [devotion and adherence to Mary] to the hearts of the faithful ... that they may the more intimately adhere to the Mediator and Redeemer" (*Lumen gentium*, 62).
- ⁶⁶ Given the special identity between Christ and his Mystical Body, the dependency of all ecclesial realities upon the Catholic Church and their ordination thereto can be stated simply, without need to explicate the ultimate reduction of those relations to relations to Jesus Christ. In the present Mariologico-ecclesial context, explicitly highlighting the transitive directedness of all things ecclesial toward Christ can seem more mandatory in one sense. Yet the just mentioned mutual referentiality based on organic inclusion pertains in its own way also to Mary on account of her incorporation in the Mystical Body.
- ⁶⁷ That Mary's ecclesial membership means being a member of the visible Catholic Church follows from the theological and dogmatic principles set forth in the opening chapters: "The Holy Catholic Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ, is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit by the same faith, the same sacraments and the same government" (*Orientalium ecclesiarum*, 2); "This is the one Church of Christ which in the Creed is professed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, which our Saviour, after his Resurrection, commissioned Peter to shepherd, and him and the other Apostles to extend and direct with authority" (*Lumen gentium*, 8; see also *Dignitatis humanae*, 1). It also follows from the very experience of the nascent Church and Mary's concrete place in that experience. Visibly united with the apostolic cell at the moment of the Church's definitive constitution (cf. Acts 1:13–14; *Lumen gentium*, 59), and visibly united with the sacrificial outpouring of blood and water whence the ecclesial mystery is formed (cf. John 19:25–27; *Lumen gentium*, 58), this Woman, who as Mother of the Head was already Mother of the Church at Nazareth, is, at every stage of its historical development, the preeminent member of a Church that concretely exists as a visible society gathered under the Apostles in a common profession of faith, sacramental life and unity of order in fraternal love (cf. Acts 2:42; *Unitatis redintegratio*, 2).
- ⁶⁸ Here I refer to the wondrous manner in which our Lord, Jesus Christ, redeemed the Mother of God—not by *cleansing* her from sin, but by *preserving* her from its stain altogether at the moment of her Immaculate Conception.
- ⁶⁹ See Augustine, *De baptismo contra Donatistas*, Bk. I, c. 14; see *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3.
- ⁷⁰ In this sense, we can completely agree with the insight that "a clarified and stabilized doctrine of sister churches can do much to help clarify and stabilize the meaning of the Catholic doctrine that the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church" (W. Cohen, "Clarifying the Doctrine of Sister Churches," 344); and I would add, somewhat conversely, that a sound understanding of the "*subsistit in*" can do much to help clarify and stabilize the Catholic doctrine of an exclusive identity that does not exclude other modes of ecclesial existence. There exists but a single Church of Christ concretely consisting (in its earthly composition) of the many particular Catholic churches only. But the being of this Church extends in an imperfect way to non-Catholic churches, where it actualizes within them the ecclesial mystery of redemption; and these are "true particular churches" precisely by reason of that internal dependency. Thus, in response to Cohen (352–353), if we discard the false concept of *per se* "interdependency" and

substitute it with that of the essential dependency outlined above, we can speak of “asymmetry and dependency,” the meaning of which is elegantly reflected in the interplay between the adverbs “fully” and “truly,” understood as highlighting the manner in which the Catholic Church and the separated Eastern churches are “church.” For, non-Catholic churches are “true” churches by reason of the “full” manner in which the Catholic Church is church, whose very fullness implies its overflow to and is the source of Christic unity for those beyond her visible boundaries. This “asymmetry and dependency,” and the adverbial modifiers “fully” and “truly,” are partial expressions of what is more fully articulated in terms of the analogies of attribution and proportionality and indicate the difference in similarity according to which the *ratio* of “church” is realized in its primary and secondary analogates.

- 71 For this reason, the name “church” predicated of different local Catholic churches is said not analogically, but univocally. We see again from this that a name can be used in either a univocal or an analogical sense depending on the context, just as it can be used in some cases according to an analogy attribution and in others according to an analogy of proportionality. Note that the full manner in which the one essence of Christ’s Church is realized in a particular Catholic church does not make of that particular church the Church of Christ, which is undividedly present in all of its parts according to the fullness of its essential being.
- 72 As explained in the first two chapters, Christ’s Church cannot be split into a multiplicity *per se*, and, because its constitutive being—inseparably spiritual and bodily—cannot be divided, the Catholic Church alone can be said to “be” the Church of Christ (see chapter one; cf. chapter two, “*Est’ and the language of ‘elements’*”).
- 73 Accordingly, the participation of non-Catholic communions in the fullness of Christ is a participation mediated to them through the mystery of Christ’s Church as it subsists in (and as) the Catholic Church.
- 74 *Lumen gentium*, 48.

General Conclusion and Ecumenical Implications

Principal conclusions of this study

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL represents an extraordinary moment in the history of the Church, and for that reason an extraordinary moment for the history of mankind. The Council's rich teaching on the mystery of Revelation, the mystery of the Church, and the mystery of her Sacred Liturgy, as well as its deeply theological and specifically Christocentric vision of the mystery of man, with its strides toward fruitful dialogue with the modern world, are all inestimable gifts of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit of Christ, who is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever,"¹ can be discerned throughout the conciliar documents, stamped as they are by a perspective both of youthful freshness and ageless continuity distinctive of the life of the Church. Nevertheless, the same council has been the occasion for much controversy and division, both between Catholics and non-Catholics and within the Catholic Church herself. Much of this discord has sprung from and continues to be fueled by contentious interpretations of the Council's teaching on specifically ecclesiological matters, among which none have occupied center stage more than the question of the unique relationship borne by the Catholic Church toward the one Church of Christ and toward her separated Christian brothers.

These debates, as we have seen, rage today with no less intensity than was generated in the decades immediately following the council. The principal rift in theological opinion has to do with how to understand the Council's teaching (particularly in *Lumen gentium* 8) regarding the special status of the Catholic Church as embodiment of Christ's Church. As typically presented, the problem

lies in determining whether that teaching represents a perpetuation of traditional ecclesiological perspectives antecedent to Vatican II or a rupture with that tradition entailing a new awareness of the broader mystery of the Church and a correspondingly new invitation to greater ecumenical openness. This formulation of the issue, however, is both imprecise and spurious, inasmuch as it suggests that the Council's position on the relationship between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church amounts to either a mere repetition of the past or a break therewith, leaving no room for the possibility of both preserving the ecclesiology of the Church prior to the Council and making significant ecclesiological advancements at the same time, a possibility which, as we have seen, is objectively the case. As demonstrated in this volume, the claim that Vatican II ushers in a new perspective hitherto unseen regarding the breadth of Christ's Church is simply false. Nevertheless, it is necessary to acknowledge substantive ecclesiological progress on the part of the Council. This progress, however, comes not *adjunctively* to the preceding tradition, as a novel addendum to its content, but as an unfolding of the very wealth of that content from within. Thus there is neither stagnation nor rupture, but what could be described as "continuity of principles in logical sequence."² In short, the Council's teaching on the ecclesial relationships at stake, including its original insights and theological advancements, are perfectly harmonious with the traditional ecclesiology that preceded it and, indeed, perpetuate it, if in ways more nuanced than before, while also developing it.

The message of Vatican II concerning Christ's Church is at once perfectly consonant with the long-standing Catholic tradition and an instance of organic development. Thus the joint content of its *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* and its *Decree on Ecumenism* presents us a picture of the ecclesial mystery that situates the Catholic Church in relation to Christ in a manner qualitatively incommensurate with every other Christian community; and it is in this qualitative difference, the Catholic Church's salvific *transcendence* in regard to every other community of faith, that the Council roots—as in its genetic and sustaining principle—the very supernatural communion enjoyed by any and every Christian community with the Catholic Church and with one another.

From various angles, I have attempted to illuminate the complex mystery of the one Church of Christ in light of the teachings of Vatican II. That council displays the Catholic Church as the plenary and unique realization of the

community of salvation desired and established by Jesus Christ. Not only is the Catholic Church the fullest realization and (more simply) the fullness of Christ's Church, but no other Christian community is Christ's Church. Indeed, as demonstrated above, non-Catholic Christian communities are neither the Church of Christ nor parts of that Church. But the Council also presents the Catholic Church as spilling beyond her visible structures so as, quite literally, to *embrace* all things salutary and to *pervade* the world of non-Catholic redemptive societies, each of which is *thereby* endowed with something of the fullness of the supernatural life and means thereto conferred by Christ upon the Catholic Church, by reason of which they enjoy, radically, a union with her exceeding and more precious than the entire universe of creation. The articulation of this unity in irreducible distinction with extraordinary balance and with a newly developed theological vocabulary stands among the highest achievements of the Council. Amid the major findings of this study, we have noted the Council's consistent use of contrasting sets of terminology in its account of the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christian communities (including, but not limited to, "fullness," "perfection," "universality," and "subsistence," on the one hand, and "partiality," "defectiveness," "derivation," and "elements," on the other). Carefully examining the conciliar debate over how best to express the relationship between Christ's Church and the Catholic Church, the strengths and limitations of the use of "*est*" as a linguistic means to do so were brought into relief, as were the inadequacies of the alternatively proposed "*adest*," terms giving way to the famous "*subsistit in*" clause, the precise signification of which was explored in detail. In that context, the perennial validity of "*est*" ecclesiology and its compatibility with the affirmation of ecclesial elements beyond the visible structures of the Catholic Church was demonstrated. At the same time, the special value of the "*subsistit*" formula was placed in relief and its use at Vatican II proven neither to be logically equivalent to nor doctrinally incompatible with the "*est*," signaling what must be regarded not as a change in doctrine but as a development thereof. This development consists in no small part in the synthetic capacity of "*subsistit in*" to simultaneously express the nature of the identity between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church, an identity which is strict and exclusive, as well as the possibility for Christ's Church to exist in qualitatively different, reductive ways beyond the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church.³

The “*subsistit*” language signifies the concrete, historically manifest, complete, perfect and self-sufficient mode of being enjoyed by Christ’s Church in the Catholic Church and in her alone, by reason of which she alone “is” the Church of Christ and every other Christian community is, precisely by its salvific relation to Christ, essentially related to the Catholic Church.

Coupled with the Council’s insight into the subsistent mode of ecclesial being proper and exclusive to the Catholic Church is an equally strong emphasis on the supernatural dignity of non-Catholic Christian communities and their profound unity with the Catholic Church based on the presence within them of “elements of sanctification and truth.” The Catholic Church alone is endowed with the fullness of ecclesial being, but other Christian communities have a share in that fullness. As demonstrated, however, due to the absence of features essential to the very being of the Church, these communities are defectively ecclesial and incapable of constituting instances or even parts of Christ’s Church. The Council underscores not only the indivisibility of Christ’s Church, but also the essentially defective nature of non-Catholic forms of ecclesiality (the standard of measure for which is its sole integral realization, the Catholic Church). This defectiveness, as we have shown, pertains according to Vatican II not only to the ecclesial identity of a non-Catholic community, but also to every one of its ecclesial properties, in such a way that the ordinary synergy that characterizes the essential attributes of the Church as displayed in their Catholic realization (a sort of virtuous circularity) decays in part into a form of mutual degradation (vicious circularity), negatively impacting in untold ways its efficacy as a community of salvation.⁴ In themselves, however, these elements are, according to Vatican II, nothing other than the extended life of the one Church of Christ in the midst of non-Catholic communities. Their entire ecclesial endowment was seen to flow from the Catholic Church and to constitute and be ordered to communion with her.⁵

As a consequence of this influx from the Catholic Church to non-Catholic communities, by which the latter can be authentic instruments of salvation, the Catholic Church herself is present and operative in their very midst, acting interior to them both visibly and spiritually. This dynamic understanding of the relationship between the Catholic Church and every other community of faith was displayed in terms of her exemplary, efficient, final, and even formal causality in their regard. What emerged was a picture of the universal causal primacy of the

Catholic Church in the order of salvation, clarifying the meaning of the Council's teaching on the Catholic Church as the "universal sacrament of salvation" and "the all-embracing means of salvation."⁶ The same causal ordering was shown to provide the key to understanding and the metaphysical basis for the unqualified unity and unicity of Christ's Church. Concretely, it was demonstrated that the Catholic Church stands toward every non-Catholic Christian community as the cause of its ecclesial being, cause of its ecclesial properties, and cause of its ecclesial action—such that the one Church of Christ, the fullness of which in this yet imperfect phase of the realization of God's Kingdom is spread among divided Christian communities, simply exists as the Catholic Church, and wherever her being and operation are found.⁷ Indeed, the salutary features of non-Catholic Christianities, all of their ecclesial gifts, "derive their efficacy from," "lead to" and "belong by right to" the one Catholic Church,⁸ whence their entire ecclesiality is an expression of the life of the Catholic Church within them, and every region within the lives of these communities that is *per se* non-Catholic represents, quite simply, a region in need of Christ and his Church.

It follows as a necessary conclusion that the titles "ecclesial" and "Church" belong to the Catholic Church in a singular way. We witnessed an irreducible ontological divide between the manner in which the ecclesial mystery is realized in the Catholic Church and its mode of realization among non-Catholic Christianities, with the result that the names "ecclesial" and "church" cannot be used of the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communions in identical ways. The ecclesial mystery in all of its breadth is intelligible only in terms of analogy. The doctrine of analogy accounts with metaphysical precision for the kind of unity in distinction that exists between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic religious communities; and the analogies explored above provide us a suitable conceptual and linguistic means to grasp and articulate the ecclesial mystery at once in all of its wealth as found within the Catholic Church and in all of its breadth as reaching beyond the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church and participated by other subjects of true ecclesial perfection. As explained above, the very names "ecclesial," "ecclesial community," and "church," when used both of the Catholic Church and of non-Catholic Christian communities, signify in similar but essentially different ways, comprising relations of priority and posteriority between the meanings, definitions, and *rationes* of those names, relations of semantic subordination that

correspond to ontological structures of priority and posteriority, causal dependency, and derivative influx by which the ecclesial mystery of non-Catholic Christian communities is subordinated to that of the Catholic Church. This analogicity expresses itself especially in terms of analogies of attribution as well as the analogy of proper proportionality, by which the ecclesial ontology and predicates belonging to non-Catholic Christian communities are compared with those of the Catholic Church, and where the Catholic Church is, in every case, the primary analogate, the concept of whose ecclesiality is the defining point of reference for and ultimate measure of the content of the names “ecclesial” and “church” applied to any other Christian community.

Our investigation proceeded to highlight numerous features of the ecclesiology of Vatican II that preclude a univocal use of the names “ecclesial” and “church” as applied to the Catholic Church and non-Catholic institutions, including, among others, its teaching on the qualitative difference between the full Catholic realization of Christ’s Church, on the one hand, and, on the other, the partial realization of its essence in other Christian communities, as well as the differentiated use of the names “ecclesial community” and “church,” and the rationale behind that distinction. Without a valid episcopate and an authentic Eucharistic worship that this guarantees, no Christian community is a church in the proper sense of the term. Furthermore, any community that falls short of that full visible unity with Christ’s Church assured by Petrine Primacy alone fails, as we have seen, to be a church in the full sense of the term. According to Vatican II, the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Church’s life, not only as regards that life within the subsistent, Catholic realization of Christ’s Church, but also as regards its reality beyond her visible structures. This is manifest even in the case of Protestant communities, which, although not churches in the proper sense, are by baptism intrinsically ordered toward the fullness of Eucharistic worship that is essential to being a church. Their entire ecclesial endowment is a fruit of the Eucharistic sacrifice, and Eucharistic worship is the very reason for their baptismal qualification. The sole paradigm, however, for this Eucharistic worship—which is nothing less than the supreme and most universal exercise of the High Priesthood of Christ—is the Catholic Church, who, together with her Head, constitutes the *Christus totus*, singular subject of the redemptive work.⁹ She alone, moreover, realizes everything essential to being a church. Every church beside the Catholic

Church, even if it merits in some sense the name “church,” nevertheless lacks something essential to the very being of a church.¹⁰ Strictly speaking, therefore, the proper *ratio* of “church” belongs exclusively to the Catholic Church, and the “churchness” of separated Christian communities must be understood with reference to and as dependent upon the “churchness” of the Catholic Church. In other words, the name “church” used of the Catholic Church and non-Catholic churches is used in a strictly analogical manner. Its capacity to uphold without theological compromise the *una et unica Ecclesia Christi* while simultaneously applying the name “church” to other Christian communities in a way not reducing to lip service proves to be one of the central advantages of the analogical approach conducted in the latter chapters of this study.

This approach, we have shown, both is bolstered by and offers a prescription for what could be described as a “Mariotypical” ecclesiology (to invert the expression “ecclesiotypical Mariology,” and thereby already draw out one of its implications), the significance of which for ecumenism cannot be overstated. For Vatican II, the “ecclesiality” of every ecclesial community, including the Catholic Church, finds its archetype in the “ecclesiality” of Mary, point of gravitation toward which, as an intrinsic end, the entire ecclesial mystery on earth and in Purgatory is tending, and crowning perfection of the whole society of the redeemed, on earth, in Purgatory, and in heaven. Preeminently, Mary is a model, therefore, for the ecumenical movement. She is this, moreover, not only for what concerns the goal toward which it strives, but equally for what concerns the means to its achievement. For Mary displays all of the virtues and actions required for authentic adherence to Christ in humble reception of the word of God, sacrificial love of others, and courageous cooperation with his redemptive plan. Her place within that economy, we also observed, further reveals the singular and indivisible, historically concrete and visibly ordered being that the Kingdom of her Son has assumed in the form of his mystical body which is the Catholic Church. The analogical “churchness” of Mary confirms the primary analogacy of the Catholic Church and demarcates the *telos* of all ecclesial development as nothing other than the Catholic Church definitively perfected. Like the salvific and latreutic functions of that Church, finally, all of Mary’s mediatory and intercessory privileges, the Council is careful to note, are at once a fruit of and a sure and compassionate line of access to the fullness of the Lord who, in his humanity, remains the one

Mediator between God and man, a Mediator who, in emptying himself, has handed over his entire being to his Bride, the visible mystical extension of his body, the Catholic Church.

* * *

This Church is the one and only ark of salvation, the locus in which the Triune God has bound himself with history and unreservedly pours himself out upon men. Thus we may confess, together with our belief in one God, “I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.”¹¹ Similar to the oneness attributed to God in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the oneness attributed to the Church in the same profession of faith refers simultaneously to the Church’s unity and unicity.¹² Not only is the Church a mystery of the highest supernatural unity, second only to that of the Trinity and the Incarnation,¹³ but she is also a mystery of indivisibility, singularity and irrepeatability. As a unity expressing itself in the form of the greatest possible breadth (catholicity), the one Church of Christ enjoys a completeness that is supremely integrative, cutting across and uniting all human differences, times, places, circumstances and cultures, including every natural and supernatural perfection, and bridging every ontological order.¹⁴ In its general realization, this universality is part of the completeness and historical concreteness claimed for the Church in the title of “subsistence.” Yet her universality has another dimension, inasmuch as her indivisibility and non-multipliability make of her the one and only institution of salvation established by God. This aspect of her redemptive universality is (since the time of the Council) likewise denoted in the claim of subsistence, signaling, in its own way, the Catholic Church’s unique status as the universal means of salvation in Jesus Christ. It cannot be otherwise, for “there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ”;¹⁵ and the qualities of the Church—including her universality and unicity—are a function of the qualities of Christ himself.¹⁶

It is in this light that the Council’s teaching about the traditional axiom “outside the Church, no salvation”¹⁷ must always be understood. As the Council observes, there are two poles to be reconciled: the explicit teaching of Jesus on the necessity of baptism, and thereby of the Church, for salvation, as presented, for example, in Mark 16, and the universal salvific will of God, as expressed in 1

Timothy 2.¹⁸ Neither principle can be relinquished, and the coordination of the two cannot be sought (as it often has been) in a narrowing of the scope of the former, as though the Council's teaching that "Whosoever, therefore, knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or to remain in it, could not be saved"¹⁹ implies that the axiom applies only to those satisfying the above description. Nothing of the sort is stated or implied in the Council documents. Although subalternate to and disproportionate to the universality of the axiom, the statement just cited is one of any number of conclusions that follow from its strict and all-inclusive application. But this strict reading (and adherence to tradition) entails none of the woeful consequences needlessly feared by those rejecting its universal application out of deference for the salvific principle expressed in 1 Tim 2. For the Council beautifully resolves the tension at hand with its purposeful introduction of a terminology and endorsement of a theology of *degrees of incorporation* in the mystery of Christ and the one community of salvation,²⁰ thus leaving room for a variety of modes of incorporation in the ecclesial mystery of salvation based on varying degrees of communion regarding all that is constitutive (both visibly and invisibly) of the one Church of Christ. Many, then, who may not be in communion with that Church in a visible manner, can, indeed, be incorporated in her in an invisible way, constituting an authentic insertion within her mystery.²¹

This teaching provides not only a theologically satisfying and dogmatically sound solution to the problem of salvation for those who within the current phase of redemption have never come to know the Gospel, but also an additional and nuanced theological basis for affirming rich and manifold modes of communion between the Catholic Church and her separated Christian brethren. The Council's insistence on the necessity of belonging to the one Church of Christ for salvation, coupled with its teaching on degrees of incorporation, forms the very basis for speaking about the inclusion of non-Catholic individuals within the Catholic Church, providing for an expanded understanding of the communion that concretely exists between the Catholic Church and the communities to which these individuals belong. As we have seen, according to Vatican II, the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church; but this Church also exists in non-Catholic communities, thanks to their elements of sanctification and truth. Thus there exist points of intersection, zones of communion (in which there is identity), between

the Catholic Church and other Christianities. Furthermore, the members of these separated Christian communities are themselves *in* the Catholic Church by whatever degree of communion they enjoy with her. In their very members, therefore, these communities are (in ways perhaps incompatible with their own confessional identity) tending toward that full communion with the Catholic Church which is the goal of ecumenism.²²

We may speak, therefore, of a nearly limitless reach and of potentially inexhaustible modes (the multiple levels) of partaking of the salvific power of Christ's Spouse.²³ Nevertheless, it is crucial to observe that, if the axiom "*extra Ecclesiam, nulla salus*" does not exclude diminished and even latent modes of ecclesial incorporation able to be salutary, this nowise implies that any manner whatsoever of belonging to Christ and his Church suffices to be saved. One can belong to Christ and his Church even according to supernatural actuality without that union necessarily being life-giving,²⁴ which serves as a reminder of the need for continual conversion on the part of every Christian and every Christian community.²⁵ Nor does a theology of diverse incorporative modes (by which, within human hearts, the mystery of the Church is, in an additional way, dilated beyond her visible structures) imply that other religions or other Christian faiths are equal ways of salvation or construable as complementary or parallel to the Catholic Church.²⁶ The indifferentist attitude is plainly inconsistent with the theology of Vatican II which, as shown above, teaches: that all men are ordered to the Catholic Church; that every grace is ordered in some way to the Catholic Church; that every incorporation in Christ bereft of visible communion with the Catholic Church is deficient and incomplete; and that, although able to benefit from it, religious societies lacking the sacraments altogether cannot exercise the priestly activity of Christ, in which the principal dignity of the New People of God resides. For the sincerely religious individual living outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church, then, to be indifferent to the Catholic Church is to be indifferent to the very nature of the salvific events present within and objectively ordering his or her life. The conclusions demonstrated in this study suffice, therefore, to forbid any modicum of indifferentism regarding different Christian communions: there exists no source of salvation on earth besides the Catholic Church; and in that by which other Christian communities are non-Catholic as such, there is nothing *per se* redemptive about them.²⁷

Important implications for ecumenism

These and other conclusions drawn above have tremendous implications for the ecumenical movement. To begin with (and I mention only several of the ecumenically relevant ramifications that flow from this study), the thesis commonly maintained by ecumenists that to deny that non-Catholic Christian communities are the Church of Christ precludes the possibility of ecumenism²⁸ is patently false. Ecumenism is anything but impossible when working within an ecclesiological framework of exclusive identity. Faithfully acknowledging that identity simply entails a certain *kind* of ecumenism, one that is informed by sound Catholic biblical and theological principles, and one that is consonant with and better reflects the authentic teaching of Vatican II.²⁹ Not only is ecumenism possible for those committed to exclusive identity, but it is precisely that dogma that ensures the meaningfulness of ecumenism, and, indeed, its necessity. All non-Catholic Christian societies simultaneously yearn for the fullness belonging to the Catholic Church and stand within the sphere of her salutary influence, having everything to gain through their approach to her, while she has, regarding all that is essential to ecclesiality, everything to give. Ecumenism is always a matter, therefore, of increased proximity to/union with the Catholic Church. By this, the boundaries of Christ's Church shall spread until all Christians, in this life or the next, are filled with and wholly transformed by his one Spirit.³⁰ Yet this is not to suggest that there is nothing to be gained by the Catholic Church herself in the ecumenical itinerary. Though she cannot change in any essential way, a mutually beneficial exchange of gifts between Catholics and non-Catholics is indeed possible, inasmuch as the Catholic Church / Christ's Kingdom expands with every advancement made by non-Catholics toward Catholicism, and inasmuch as the Catholic Church can be meaningfully enriched by gifts particular to other traditions, thus recovering aspects of the universality proper to her and discovering new lived expressions of communal life in Christ.³¹

As here demonstrated, moreover, this properly Catholic ecumenism recognizes even deeper bonds of union between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christian communities than are (or can be) recognized from within alternative ecclesiologies of non-exclusive identity. For, if the Church of Christ were to be many different Christian communions, and each of these could be said in some way to be the Church of Christ, then, though undoubtedly sharing in that

denomination, the bonds of communion between these ecclesial subjects would lack that preeminent form of communion that follows from the unity and indivisibility of Christ's Church as taught by the Catholic Church since her beginnings to the present day, including Vatican II.³² What I have brought into relief concerning the causally dynamic presence of the Catholic Church within non-Catholic Christianities, and the intrinsic causal dependencies of the latter for their very ecclesiality upon the Catholic Church, represents a species of ecclesial "perichoresis" (mutual penetration among a multiplicity) and manifests the ineffable depths of the Catholic Church's immanence to (communion with) other Christianities without any compromise of that perfect ecclesial unity and unicity proper to Christ's Church, making it, like Christ and in Christ, the truly universal sacrament of salvation. Indeed, the concentration of the totality of the ecclesial mystery considered in all its breadth within the Catholic Church becomes the very *condition* for that more perfect, truly ecclesial form of communion between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christian communities. This understanding provides an additional, theologically rich basis for celebrating our Christian commonality.³³ At the same time, it reveals, in no ambiguous terms, the only legitimate itinerary of the ecumenical movement, which is indeed about conversion to and full communion with the Catholic Church,³⁴ but which is equally about the continual actualization of the deeply Catholic realities already interior to the being and action of every Christian community.³⁵ In their current configurations, of course, full communion with the Catholic Church is impossible for non-Catholic Christian communities. The very notion of a confessional identity distinct from that of the Catholic Church is both contradictory to the idea of full ecclesial communion and incompatible with the nature of the unity essential to Christ's Church.

Another implication of this study for ecumenism is the unacceptability of ecclesiologies resembling the so-called "branch theory" of Christianity. Contemporary attempts to relativize the unity of Christ's Church and to present non-Catholic Christian communities as parts of the one Church or Christ, or as a collection of ecclesial communities who, together with the Catholic Church, complete the historically divided Church of Christ, or as (currently) less perfect instantiations of an essence that is perfectly instantiated in the Catholic Church,³⁶ effectively amount to reincarnations of "branch theory" ecclesiology. As proven in

this study, such a hypothesis—in which the effects of sin have purportedly shattered the unity of Christ’s Church, leaving so many fragmented churches now called to combine their spiritual, cultural and historical array in complementary fashion—has no legitimate theological traction. The magisterium has explicitly condemned the position;³⁷ and, in addition to the essentially *visible* unity of Christ’s Church, the fundamental differences in faith between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christian communities, and between non-Catholic Christian communities themselves, suffice to preclude the existence within the latter of the indivisible essence of Christ’s Church.

At the same time, and as an additional consequence of the fact that full communion with the Catholic Church lies beyond reach for non-Catholic Christianities in their present structures, a number of practices by which the ecumenical movement seeks to promote greater unity between them must be carefully reconsidered. The authors of the recent *Declaration on the Way*, for example, strongly advocate expanding opportunities for intercommunion.³⁸ This is particularly at odds with Catholic pastoral and doctrinal principles.³⁹ Its theological seriousness is, in fact, proportionate to the very problem of division and to the significance of truth itself.⁴⁰ In its own way, the practice of open communion is similarly problematic, inasmuch as the ecclesial communion it is ordered of its very nature visibly to signify is incongruous with the interior separation of individuals belonging to different faith communities.⁴¹ Whether speaking of intercommunion or open communion, a common theological rationale for them is the conviction that differing Christian communities, or the baptized in general, enjoy with one another a sufficient degree of ecclesial communion to justify their practice. Now something behind this line of reasoning is correct, namely, that a certain level of communion is a prerequisite for shared Eucharistic communion; this is a given in Catholic theology, where Eucharistic communion is understood to presuppose, and to require for liceity, an antecedent communion of faith.⁴² But one of the premises involved in that reasoning is blatantly flawed when it comes to shared communion between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic communities, or between Catholics and non-Catholics in general, namely, the belief that the participants in question actually enjoy the requisite degree of communion. The right “way” to deal with these questions is to ground the discernment process in the very principles invoked, viz., a sound theology of

ecclesial communion, and this is exactly where the findings of this study can contribute to the current ecumenical endeavor. Contemporary advocacy for intercommunion and open communion tends to be grounded on ecclesiological presuppositions that either deny exclusive identity or disregard its implications.⁴³ The manner in which one conceives the mystery of Christ's Church and its relationship to the Catholic Church and to other Christian communities, and the *directly resulting* understanding of the kind of communion that exists among these communities, must exercise a determinate role in the Church's pastoral and sacramental ecumenical action.

Finally, to the extent that they are institutions of salvation, Protestant and Orthodox communities alike are already, if imperfectly, Catholic; and inasmuch as they are seeking and moving toward perfection, (consciously or not) they yearn for and are inclined toward full Catholicity.⁴⁴ Much of the ecumenical task lies in highlighting these distinctive features of non-Catholic Christianities, which, if inevitably diminishing (in certain respects) the redemptive importance of non-Catholic societies as such, brings into fuller light the nature and magnitude of the unity they share with the Catholic Church (which founds their redemptive importance) and the self-diffusiveness of the one Church of Christ, the munificence of a mystery exclusively identified with the Catholic Church.

As a natural corollary, part of the import of this study for the Catholic should be humble edification and profound gratitude before the hidden mysteries of divine providence and the predilective superabundance of God's mercy toward some. After the example of Augustine (and Jerome), we can acclaim, with dignity in humility: "this non-Catholic is holier than I, but my state is better than his."⁴⁵

Closing remarks

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and the Catholic Church is his Body, called and endowed with every power to bring that light to all men. She is the living and efficacious sign of communion between God and man and of men among themselves in Christ. As the sacrament of Christ to the world, this Church is, like Jesus Christ, one and irrepeatable, and intensively and extensively all-embracing. This one Church of Christ extends her reach to all men in every age, ceaselessly drawing them toward the fulfillment of their supernatural vocation through union

with Christ in his mystical body. Through the exercise of the priestly, prophetic, and kingly privileges fully communicated to her from her Head, the Catholic Church is at work, inviting to and producing this divine unity, both within and beyond the confines of her visible structures, on behalf at once of those fully incorporated in the mystery of the Incarnate Word and those presently limited to partial modes of union with him and his members.

To those visibly integrated in her hierarchico-sacramental mystery, she intensifies their union with Christ in the Spirit with every outpouring of grace. To those partially united to her in faith and priestly office, she nourishes the Christian life through her example, intercession, and the exercise within their very communities of the mysteries of salvation that belong to her. To those, finally, who have not yet received the Gospel, she is the source of every redemptive blessing and the integral sign of their calling to life in Christ. For every religious society beside her, the Catholic Church is (in her causal subordination to Christ and his Spirit) the exemplar, efficient cause, and final cause of every authentic expression of religion, every ecclesial perfection, and every step toward definitive union with God.

Each and every exercise of Christ's saving power, as an exercise of the conjoined instrumentality of his sacred humanity perpetuated in the mediatory apparatus of his Church, as the covenantal action of a Spouse unconditionally united with his Bride, and as the action of a Head inseparably one with the Body, is an exercise of a causal dignity it has pleased him to seat within the Catholic Church. Such is the strength of Christ's redemptive work, that it should make of the people he saves the very community of salvation, that he should make with them one mystical instrument of salvation for the world. Just as Jesus is the singular source of all salvation, so the Catholic Church, his handmaiden, Spouse, and Body, is, with him, in him, and through him, the unique and universal source of man's redemption in whatever circumstances it may be found.

Apart from its bonds with this one Church of Christ, no other religious community has claim to the prerogatives or hope of salvation. If outside of the hierarchico-sacramental communion of the Catholic Church, the ecclesial mystery is dispersed on account of sin in the present age, the fragments of the Church's mystery which there reside are nothing less than the spilled blood of the Lamb, flowing from the pierced side of his sacred Body, laboring in pain for the children

of God. This is the life of the Catholic Church continually poured out for the multitude, and crying out to the Lord. She it is who bleeds within the midst of every other Christian community, for the sake of the redemption of its members, and for the sake of her own completion in the order of extension and the variegated expressions of ecclesial life. There is no righteousness, no Christianity, in ecclesial division. But in this vineyard, still at work is the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, who stretches his arms to the corners of the earth, to gather his children as a hen her brood under her wings—that they may all be one, so that the world may believe, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know the love of God, and the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in men, and every man mature in Christ.⁴⁶

“I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

... lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power” (1 Cor 1:10, 17);

“For there is one body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:4–6);

“And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all” (Eph 1:22–23);

“So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Rom 12:5);

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members ... are one body, so it is with Christ.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor 12:12–13).

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- 1 Heb 13:8.
 - 2 See John Henry Cardinal Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994) pt. II, c. 7 (163–180) and 9 (195–204); see Ian Ker, *Newman on Vatican II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 40–71 (especially 40–43); International Theological Commission, “On the Interpretation of Dogmas” (1989), *Origins* 20, no. 1 (1990): 1–14.
 - 3 A careful account was provided for the fact that this existence of Christ’s Church beyond the visible confines of the Catholic Church is *not* an existence simply beyond the confines of the Catholic Church. If that existence is exterior to her visible structures, it is not exterior to her unqualifiedly. To the contrary, every existence of Christ’s Church under any and all of its circumstances is nothing other than the existence of the Catholic Church (according to the same set of circumstances).
 - 4 It was also pointed out that the degradative consequences of tearing ecclesial elements away from their full ecclesial complement, of the isolation of some of the Church’s properties from others, and of their incomplete mode of realization to begin with, does not subtract from them their fundamental, divinely given capacity to serve as authentic means of Christ’s redemptive work. Because they are gifts of the Holy Spirit deriving from the mystery of Christ himself, notwithstanding their *defectus* and the deleterious effects this necessarily implies, they retain their status as supernatural mysteries of sanctification and of truth and efficacious instruments of salvation.
 - 5 It is important to observe that part of the fullness that is distinctive of the Catholic Church both expresses itself and further consists in its very overflow to other societies. This is analogically comparable to the mystery of the fullness of Jesus Christ (cf. John 1:14), the very character of whose plenitude is magnified by and in part a function of its overflow to others (cf. John 1:16).
 - 6 See *Lumen gentium*, 48; *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3.
 - 7 To say that Christ’s Church always exists as the Catholic Church, or to deny that it exists as any other community of faith, does not contradict the teaching that Christ’s Church exists within or among non-Catholic Christian communions. As explained above, there are in this ecclesiological context important differences between predications made with “as” and predications made with “in.”
 - 8 See *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3.
 - 9 As noted, according to the Council, other Christian institutions are, indeed, true instruments of salvation, but this salvific instrumentality, like every instance of instrumentality, presupposes a coextensive superior agency and nowise precludes the possibility of a proximate principal agent which is itself subordinated to an ultimate principal agent, such as the Holy Spirit or Jesus Christ. The ascription of salvific efficacy to separated Christian communions is perfectly compatible with ascribing every redemptive effect to the Catholic Church. For, as also explained, this coordinated agency is not to be understood along the lines of parallel causal actions, but of subordinated causes, each completely responsible for the effect within its own order, but the one operating as such in total dependency upon the other, such that the higher (or moving) cause is the cause of the very causality of the inferior (or moved) cause, and such, therefore, that the higher cause is principally responsible for the effect. As for the *Christus totus*, we have already discerned the manner in which that mystical body embraces also the members of separated communities, insofar as those members are in spiritual communion with Christ and his Church, and therefore included/incorporated (in that respect) in the *Christus totus* or Catholic Church.
 - 10 See *Christus Dominus*, 11; CDF, *Dominus Iesus*, 17; *Responsa: AAS* 99 (2007): 604–608 (ad 4); *Commentary on the Document “Responses”* (4a); *Communio notio*, n. 17: *AAS* 85 (1993): 849.

- 11 On the development and significance of the credal profession of faith “in” the Church, see Henri de Lubac, *The Splendour of the Church*, trans. M. Mason (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 12–28.
- 12 See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §200 and 816.
- 13 On the realism, and sacramental and mystical depth of this union, see, in particular, Lucien Cerfaux, *Le Christ dans la théologie de saint Paul*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Cerf, 1954), 264–266; Cyril of Alexandria, *In Joan*, lib. XI, c. 11 (*Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca*) 74:559–562; see chapter one, “Note on the concept of ‘substance’ as used of the Church.”
- 14 This essential aspect of the Church (as intensive as it is extensive in nature) is also an aspect of the mystery of Christ, considered not only in the microcosmic totality of his own humanity in conjunction with its divine complement, but especially as the *Christus totus*, in which the plenitude of Christ has bourgeoned into the pleroma of the Church, giving additional (specifically ecclesial) meaning to the Pauline acclamation: “In him all things hold together” (Col 1:17).
- 15 1 Tim 2:5; cf. Acts 4:12.
- 16 This is the overarching theme and the argumentative driving force for the conclusions of *Dominus Iesus*.
- 17 The theme is explicit in Origen, Cyprian, Augustine and many others, and it is present already in the thought of Irenaeus. For Patristic sources in this regard, see Thomas Halton, *The Church: Message of the Fathers of the Church* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1985), 42–52, 86–90; *Texte der Kirchenväter. Eine Auswahl nach Themen geordnet*, ed. A. Heilmann and H. Kraft (Munich: Kösel Verlag, 1964), vol. 4, section 1, n. 1–41 (passim); E. Sylvester Berry, *The Church of Christ: An Apologetic and Dogmatic Treatise* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 134–139. On the dogmatic and historical development of the doctrine, see especially Joseph Fenton, *The Catholic Church and Salvation in the Light of Recent Pronouncements of the Holy See* (Round Top, NY: Seminary Press, 2006); “The Theological Proof for the Necessity of the Catholic Church,” parts I-III, in *The Church of Christ: A Collection of Essays by Monsignor Joseph C. Fenton*, ed. Christian D. Washburn (Tacoma, WA: Cluny Media, 2016), 141–202.
- 18 “This missionary activity derives its reason from the will of God, ‘who wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, himself a man, Jesus Christ, who gave himself as a ransom for all’ (1 Tim 2:4–5), ‘neither is there salvation in any other’ (Acts 4:12). Therefore, all must be converted to him, made known by the Church’s preaching, and all must be incorporated into him by baptism and into the Church which is his body” (*Ad gentes*, 7). “For Christ alone, who is present to us in his body, which is the Church, is the mediator and the way of salvation; and he, by stressing in express language the necessity of faith and baptism (cf. Mark 16:16; John 3:5), at the same time confirmed the necessity of the Church, into which men enter by baptism, as by a door” (*Lumen gentium*, 14). See also *Ad gentes*, 5.
- 19 *Lumen gentium*, 14.
- 20 “Fully incorporated into the Church are those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept all the means of salvation given to the Church together with her entire organization, and who, by the bonds constituted by the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion, are joined in the visible structure of the Church of Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops” (*Lumen gentium*, 14); see *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3.
- 21 It must be carefully noted that the Council’s teaching in this regard pertains exclusively to individual persons, and not to communities as such. This is clear not only from the passage cited above, but also from

the specifically ecumenical portions of *Lumen gentium*: "... these Christians are indeed in some real way joined to us in the Holy Spirit ..." (a. 15). As shown above, no non-Catholic community can constitute a part of the one Church of Christ; correspondingly, no such community may be "incorporated" in that Church. It must also be carefully noted that the persons with respect to whom the notion of degrees of incorporation applies include Catholics as much as non-Catholics; for, a Catholic fully incorporated in Christ's Church in every visible way may, in fact, stand without in any number of invisible ways. For the individual believer, full incorporation implies the simultaneous totality of both interior and exterior communion with Christ and his Church. Such perfection always remains a goal for every individual Christian in this life and represents an ecumenical itinerary shared by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. The trajectory of that itinerary, however, is nothing less than perfect communion with, complete incorporation in, the Catholic Church: "We believe that Our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, in order to establish the one Body of Christ on earth to which all should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the people of God" (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3).

- 22 Because the Church is in them, there exerting her saving influx, these communities enjoy a degree of living communion with her, having for its result that their own members partially reside within the Catholic Church, their (albeit defective and incomplete) mystical inclusion within the one body of the *Christus totus*. This penetration of the mystery of the Church within the life of the believer and the latter's inclusion within the Church is, for Catholics and non-Catholics alike, an expression of the polyvalent ecclesial signification of the Pauline doctrine of mystical inclusion in Jesus Christ, a facet of "the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you (Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν), the hope of glory ... that we may present every man mature in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ)" (Col 1:27–28).
- 23 This is the precise theological perspective for a viable version of "recognition" and "reception" ecumenism. The salvific riches possessed by separated Christian communities, "elements" which are nothing other than a sharing in the one life and fullness of the Catholic Church, are the basis for the ecclesial recognition of those communities; the very foundation for such recognition (and the reception that goes with it) is, in other words, the extended fullness of the Catholic Church. In ecumenism, the "legitimacy and authenticity of the dialogue partner" (W. Rusch, *Ecumenical Reception: Its Challenge and Opportunity* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007], 85) as such consists in its Catholicity, that is, in the degree to which the Church of Christ there exists.
- 24 See Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 8, a. 3 and ad 2; q. 49, a. 1, ad 5; cf. I-II, q. 23, a. 8; q. 62, a. 4. For Aquinas, the *sine qua non* for salvific communion with Christ is charity. In this life, it is a matter of faith informed by charity, themselves derived from the fullness of Christ and received by individual believers by means of contact with him and his Paschal Mystery, a contact brought about through faith and the sacraments of faith (see Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 48, a. 6, obj. 2 and ad 2; q. 64, a. 2, ad 3). Clearly, the interior, spiritual, invisible aspects of the ecclesial mystery constitute the heart of the Church's being as a mystery of communion. Nevertheless, the exterior, institutional, visible side of her mystery is *inseparably* related to that inner being. For there can be no genuine interior bond with Christ and his Body barring the outward expression it spontaneously assumes; and the visible apparatus that grounds the Church in history and renders her connatural to the human condition was established by Christ himself as a generative source of the Church's inner spiritual reality. For Aquinas too, the faith itself comes from the visible society that belongs to Christ as Mediator of divine revelation (see Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, II-II, q. 6, a. 1). The seemingly twofold mode of contact, "faith and the sacraments of faith," are nowise independent or separable realities.

Not only is faith received by hearing, but the sacraments are, by their very essence, at once expressions of faith (intrinsic to their signification) and faith informed actions. For these reasons, and with reference to ecumenical engagements, acknowledging, as we must, the absolute primacy of interior forms of ecclesial communion over its exterior forms is no prescription for minimizing or relativizing the latter. Any form of belittling the visible and historically concrete unity that belongs to the Church of Christ, or any of its visible principles, is simultaneously an attack against its most profoundly constitutive spiritual principles. With this understanding, William of Auvergne affirms: “Precisely for this does she [the Church] deprive one of exterior communion, in order that he be led back to interior communion ... contempt for excommunication ... is one of the sins that most obliterates spiritual communion” (*De sacramento ordinis*, c. 12, in *Guilielmi Alverni, Opera Omnia*, ed. A. Pralard [Paris: 1674; reprint Frankfurt am Main: Minerva G.m.b.H., 1963], 1:549) (translation mine). For rich analyses of the communion constitutive of the Church, see J.-M. R. Tillard, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion*, trans. R. C. De Peaux (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992); Jerome Hamer, *The Church is a Communion*, trans. G. Chapman (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964).

²⁵ Conscious of what is required for salutary union with Christ, the Council frequently stresses the continual need for conversion (unto deepened ecclesial communion) for the members of the Catholic Church; see, in particular, *Lumen gentium*, 11, 14–15, 35; all of c. 5; *Unitatis redintegratio*, 4 and 7. I realize that it is currently customary in ecumenism to avoid the expression “conversion,” which is viewed as applying more properly to the pagan world than to individual Christians or Christian communities, and that the prevailing preference is to speak of Christians rather in terms of being “received into full communion” (or fuller communion). Aside from the fact that the concept is markedly present in *Lumen gentium*, I employ it in the biblical sense of the term, implying a change of heart and the reorientation of one’s life, which carries with it a turning *away* from certain things (the things that hold us back from God) and a turning *toward* (or more fully toward) other things (God in Christ Jesus, the things that are one with him, and the fulfillment of his will). This “motion,” of course, rests entirely upon God’s mercy and his supernatural assistance. In the Old Testament it means: renewal of the covenant (and of the covenantal virtues); the abandonment of and repentance for idolatrous ways; turning to Yahweh; loving and seeking to do good and hating evil; obedience; returning to the Lord and to his People; and true worship. In the New Testament, it means all of the above, and in addition: an even deeper transformation; new life; incorporation in Christ and his mystical body; association with the parousia and participation in eschatological riches; and entry into the perfected worship of God. See Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer, and Roland Murphy eds., *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968), §19:18–20; 44:46; 45:22; 45:27; 48:15; 59:39; 77:134; Beverly R. Gaventa, “Conversion,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Freeman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:1131–1133. Every one of these aspects of conversion applies to the lifelong experience of every Christian and is not only relevant to, but a necessary dimension of the “turn”—and, indeed, “return”—that is, by definition, implied by the ecumenical *movement*.

²⁶ See *Lumen gentium*, 62; see John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 5; CDF, *Dominus Iesus*, 14.

²⁷ Opposite the extreme of indifferentism, however, the rigorist attitude is also incompatible with a right understanding of the Council, which, as we have seen, affirms the presence of elements of sanctification and truth in communions beside the Catholic Church, along with the possibility of salvation for those belonging to the Catholic Church tendentially, imperfectly, and *in voto*. For magisterial use of the latter concept, see especially Council of Trent, *Decree on Justification*, c. 4 (DH 1524); Pius XII, *Mystici corporis*

Christi, 103 (DH 3821); *Letter of the Holy Office to the Archbishop of Boston*, August 8, 1949 (DH 3870–3872).

- 28 See, for example, Paul Avis, “Are We Receiving ‘Receptive Ecumenism?’” *Ecclesiology* 8 (2012): 223–234; William G. Rusch, *Ecumenical Reception: Its Challenge and Opportunity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007); cf. Timothy Lim, “Recognition and Reception: Towards a Joint Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017,” *Ecclesiology* 12 (2016): 197–224; Lorelei F. Fuchs, *Koinonia and the Quest for an Ecumenical Ecclesiology: From Foundations through Dialogue to Symbolic Competence for Communionality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).
- 29 For another defense of this perspective, see C. Malloy, “Is Exclusive Identity Compatible with Ecumenism,” 176–177, 190–191, 199–202.
- 30 “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!” (Luke 12:49) (cf. Aquinas, *Catena in Lucam*, c. 12, v. 49: Cyril and Bede). One may fittingly transpose here a specific (sacramental) application of an analogy frequently employed by Aquinas in his metaphysics of causality: “Some approach thereto ... greater, some ... less.... And therefore some receive a greater, some a smaller share of the grace of newness; just as from the same fire, he receives more heat who approaches nearest to it, although the fire, as far as it is concerned, sends forth its heat equally to all” (Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 69, a. 8). The adaptation of the analogy also captures something of the *per se* independence, self-sufficiency and permanent character of the Catholic Church.
- 31 See chapter four, note 133.
- 32 One cannot rebut that these different Christian communities constitute many parts of one body, since they are not united in the manner required for bodily unity; they are separated not merely spatially or temporally, but with respect to essential features of the Church, and on the basis of diverse faith convictions, as a result of which the very specifying and animating and unifying principle of Christ’s mystical body is not integrally interior to any of them with the exception of the Catholic Church. These aspects of Christian division were explored and proof for the present claim was supplied (at multiple levels) in the first three chapters of this volume.
- 33 This directly responds to the first “ecumenical imperative” expressed by the Lutheran World Federation and Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in its conclusion to *From Conflict to Communion*: “Catholics and Lutherans should always begin from the perspective of unity and not from the point of view of division in order to strengthen what is held in common even though the differences are more easily seen and experienced” (*From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017* [Leipzig: Bonifatius, 2013], n. 239); cf. *Declaration on the Way*, 12–13.
- 34 See *Lumen gentium*, 13 and 17; *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3.
- 35 This completely opposes the fundamental presuppositions of the *Groupe des Dombes* regarding the concepts of Christian, ecclesial and confessional identity and the role of conversion in the ecumenical project. The Groupe’s document *For the Conversion of the Churches* (Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, 1993), represents a fundamental distortion of the relationship between Christian identity, ecclesial identity and confessional identity, and this distortion is rooted in an even deeper confusion about the relationships between Christ and his Church and between the latter and the Catholic Church. The idea set forth in the opening pages that all confessional identities must be converted in order to be faithful to themselves is true only in the sense that every Christian community is intrinsically propelled toward greater unity with Christ and the members of his Mystical Body, an itinerary that calls for continual

conversion within the hearts of all the faithful and which demands on the part of their communities the turning away from everything that distances them from Christ and the definitive, subsistent realization of his Church. Such a *telos*, however, has nothing to do with growing in appreciation for confessional divergences as such, which, contrary to the claims of the Dombes (3), are always injurious to communion in Christ. The idea of full communion among multiple confessions (see 29) is, moreover, intrinsically contradictory, since confessional otherness involves ecclesial differences at the essential level. Of course, we can agree that “Conversion is not simply at the source of the ecumenical movement. It represents its constant underlying motivation. When conversion flags, the ecumenical movement stagnates or even goes in reverse” (58). The ecumenical endeavor is all about conversion. But it is about conversion to Christ and to his Catholic Church. This is as true for Catholicism as it is for any other Christian faith. Indeed, the Catholic and the Catholic Church must also be faithful to themselves, to their ecclesial/Christian identity. To be faithful to oneself as a Catholic means fuller conversion to the Catholic Church; for the Catholic Church this faithfulness means, amongst other things, never compromising the message of salvation, and never placing her fullness of the means to sanctification and truth under a bushel. If conversion to God is conversion to Christ, and Christ is the Head of his Mystical Body, whom he has joined to himself as his Spouse, as one flesh, then conversion to God is conversion to Christ’s Church. But this Church is the Catholic Church, so conversion to God for all concerned, individuals and communities, and their faithfulness to themselves, means conversion to the Catholic Church. See General Conclusion and Ecumenical Implications, note 25.

³⁶ See Introduction, note 7, and chapter three, note 1.

³⁷ See Pius IX, *Letter to the Bishops of England* (“*The Unicity of the Church*”), September 16, 1864: “[The Society founded in London in the year 1857 for the promotion of Christian unity] expressly declares that the three communions, Roman Catholic, Greek-schismatic, and Anglican, however separated and divided from one another, nevertheless with equal right claim for themselves the name catholic.... the said three Christian communions ... it is alleged, together now constitute the catholic Church ... The foundation on which this society rests is such that it completely overturns the divine constitution of the Church.... for it supposes the true Church of Jesus Christ to be composed partly of the Roman Church, scattered and propagated throughout the world, partly, indeed, of the schism of Photius, and of the Anglican heresy, to which, as well as to the Roman Church, ‘there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism.’ ... But ... an intention profoundly polluted and infected as much ... can in no way be tolerated.... There is no other catholic Church except the one that, built on the one Peter, grows in the unity of faith and charity in the one body” (DH 2885–2888). The magisterial teaching cited in the first two chapters of this volume similarly reject the thesis that Christ’s Church admit of multiple concrete realizations or that it consist of a plurality of separated communities of faith. See also chapter three, note 82.

³⁸ “Our churches have grave need of development in our pastoral practice to justify occasional Eucharistic hospitality. Based on the present Ecumenical Directory and looking toward the general good, especially for those in Lutheran-Catholic marriages, Catholic communities might increase the opportunities for Catholics and Lutherans to receive Communion together. Already local Catholic bishops ... can develop their considerations of ‘grave and pressing need’ to receive the Eucharist.... The possibility of occasional admission of members of our churches to Eucharistic communion with the other side (*communicatio in sacris*) could be offered more clearly and regulated more compassionately” (*Declaration on the Way*, 112–113).

³⁹ See, with specific reference to this *Declaration*, Christian D. Washburn, “Doctrine, Ecumenical Progress, and Problems with *Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry, and Eucharist*,” *Pro Ecclesia* 26 (2017): 77–

- ⁴⁰ This is especially manifest in the fact that liturgical actions are testimonies of belief and expressions of communion, and inasmuch as they are, for better or for worse, instances of performative signification having a profound impact on the faith of a community (*lex orandi, lex credendi*). To outwardly express a form of communion where no such communion exists is falsehood, and it is not possible to be “liars in good faith.” As St. Paul states, “Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself” (1 Cor 11:29). On the entire Christian identity as unconditionally constituted in *truth*, see John 4:23; 8:32; 17:17 (with the finality of v. 21); 18:37; 1 John 3:19; 5:20; and numerous other places in the Johannine literature.
- ⁴¹ Beyond the issues of intercommunion and open communion, the ecumenical ramifications of this study similarly extend to questions regarding mixed marriages, including the possibility for spouses in that situation to share Eucharistic communion, and the educational responsibilities of parents in such circumstances, as well as to other areas of Christian life shaped by the intersection of different Christian faiths.
- ⁴² “Catholic ministers are able, in certain particular cases, to administer the sacraments of the Eucharist, Penance and Anointing of the Sick to Christians who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church but who greatly desire to receive these sacraments, freely request them and *manifest the faith which the Catholic Church professes* with regard to these sacraments. Conversely, in specific cases and in particular circumstances, Catholics too can request these same sacraments from ministers of Churches in which these sacraments are valid. These conditions, from which no dispensation can be given, must be carefully respected, even though they deal with specific individual cases, because *the denial of one or more truths of the faith regarding these sacraments* and, among these, the truth regarding the need of the ministerial priesthood for their validity, renders the person asking improperly disposed to legitimately receiving them. And the opposite is also true: Catholics may not receive communion in those communities which lack a valid sacrament of Orders” (John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 46, emphasis mine). The Eucharist is for this very reason, and intrinsically, a *sign* of unity of faith: “That very Eucharist ... our Savior left in his Church precisely as a symbol of the unity and charity with which he wished all Christians to be joined together and united with each other” (Council of Trent, *Decree on the Sacrament of the Eucharist*, preface [DH 1635]); see Christian D. Washburn, “Doctrine, Ecumenical Progress, and Problems with *Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry, and Eucharist*,” *Pro Ecclesia* 26 (2017): 78.
- ⁴³ See, for example, Paul Avis, “Are We Receiving ‘Receptive Ecumenism?’,” *Ecclesiology* 8 (2012): 223–234; Thomas P. Rausch, “Occasional Eucharistic Hospitality: Revisiting the Question,” *Theological Studies* 74 (2013): 399–419; see Siobhán Garrigan, “A New Model for Ecumenical Worship,” *Studia Liturgica* 43 (2013): 32–53.
- ⁴⁴ What I wish, therefore, to emphasize are the almost paradoxical implications of the strict identity ecclesiology of Vatican II, wherein the Catholic Church’s exclusive claim to being Christ’s Church carries with it (as a logical implication) the conviction that the Catholic Church is in unity with and interior to societies also separated from her, and that the individual believers among our separated brethren are, effectively, also interior to the Catholic Church, and that every authentic religious society throughout the world is bonded to and enjoys something of the exchange of supernatural gifts proper to the one institution of salvation. The very reality of “exclusive identity” thus ensures the Catholic Church’s inclusivity vis-à-vis her separated brothers.

- ⁴⁵ See Augustine, *De bono conjugali*, n. 27–28 (cf. Jerome, *Contra Helvidius*, n. 20–22). For similar extensions of the Augustinian (and Jeromian) comparison to contexts beyond ecclesial states of life, see Charles Journet, *The Meaning of Grace*, trans. G. Chapman (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1960), 98; Jacques Maritain, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, trans. E. Flannery (New York: Haddon Craftsman, 1955), n. 18.
- ⁴⁶ Rev 12:11; John 19:34; Rev 12:2; Mark 14:24; Gen 4:10; Matt 13:24–30; John 12:32; Matt 23:37; John 17:21–23; Col 1:27–28.

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