

Ecclesia et Pontifice: On Delivering on the Ecclesiological Implications of Evangelii Gaudium

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Abstract

This article analyses the ecclesiological implications of Pope Francis's 2013 Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* from the perspective of critical-constructive systematic ecclesiology. The analysis proceeds in three stages. The first, expository, section identifies the key sites of ecclesiological significance in *EG*. The second reflects on the broad implications of *EG* for the contemporary task of Catholic ecclesiology – and Catholic theology more generally – concerning how these tasks should appropriately be pursued. The third identifies something of the range of specific issues and potential ways ahead pertaining to the various sites of ecclesiological significance in *EG* and representing the focussed critical-constructive work now needing to be done.

Keywords

Catholic, Catholicism, ecclesiological, ecclesiology, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis, reform, systematic

Introduction

Whilst Pope Francis's 2013 Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*EG*)¹ may not have either the status or the sustained focus and political volatility of his 2015 encyclical *Laudato*

¹ Pope Francis, '*Evangelii Gaudium*. Apostolic Exhortation to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Person, and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World' (24th November 2013), henceforth *EG*, available at:

Si,² this somewhat odd exhortation – in terms of length and range of subject matter – will likely endure as the definitive articulation of the watershed nature of this papacy. Its game-changing nature was recognised immediately upon publication, engaging Catholic conversation on multiple fronts starved of oxygen throughout the two previous papacies, speaking into them with remarkable directness borne from pastoral concern to attend closely to lived realities.³

Too long for a manifesto, at times somewhat rambling, we are nevertheless presented here with the distillation of a lifetime’s reflections and convictions on the properly evangelical orientation of all aspects of Catholic life and structure. At multiple points the continuities of voice, perspective, and position with the writings of the former Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires are tangible,⁴ as also with the ‘Concluding Document’ of the Fifth General

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

² *Id.*, ‘*Laudato Si*’. Encyclical Letter on Care for Our Common Home’ (24th May 2015), available at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

³ See *EG*§82, §96 and §231-3.

⁴ E.g. see Jorge Mario Bergoglio and Abraham Skorcka, *On Heaven and Earth: Pope Francis on Faith, Family, and the Church in the Twenty-First Century* Diego Rosemberg (ed.), Alejandro Bermudez and Howard Goodman (trans.), (New York: Image, 2013 [2010]). Various useful in this regard are: Paul Vallely, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); and Austen Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope* (New York: Henry Holt, 2014), pursuing different lines on the extent to which

Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops (CELAM) at Aparecida in 2007, on which he had significant influence.⁵ But here we have far more than a compendium of Pope Francis's personal theological synthesis and spirituality. He is outlining a wide-ranging proposal for cultural change within Catholicism; one undoubtedly borne from his long experience in the local church in Argentina but which now needs to extend well beyond his own papacy if it is to come to fruition.⁶

Nor is this any detached bureaucratic presentation of a fully detailed programme and 'complete diagnosis' (EG§108) but an urgent plea to a renewal of mind, action, and priority throughout Catholicism, the implications of which are yet to be worked out in specific detail. He urges each individual and each community to discern how most appropriately to take the issues forwards in their own circumstances.⁷

Bergoglio, following his controversial years as Jesuit Provincial in Argentina, underwent a significant conversion and strategic and theological reorientation.

⁵ CELAM, 'Concluding Document' (Aparecida, 29 June 2007), available at: <http://www.celam.org/aparecida/Ingles.pdf>.

⁶ In EG§25 he writes, 'I want to emphasize that what I am trying to express here has a programmatic significance and important consequences. I hope that all communities will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are.' For a selection of other papal addresses outlining his vision, see *id.*, *The Church of Mercy: A Vision for the Church*, Giuliano Vigini (ed.), (Chicago: Loyola, 2014).

⁷ EG§108; also §17 and §33.

Approaching this exhortation from the perspective of a systematic theologian with interests in ecclesiology and ecumenical theology,⁸ my concern in this article is first to identify and then to analyse the specifically ecclesiological implications of the process of change that *EG* seeks to promote.⁹

From the outset it is worth noting that given that Pope Francis writes not as an academic theologian but as a wise pastor intent on promoting cultural change within Catholicism, we would look in vain in *EG* for anything approaching systematic ecclesiological analysis.

Theology is here put in its proper ecclesial context of emerging out of and addressing issues arising in the life of the church – what Richard Gaillardetz, borrowing from Christoph Theobald, refers to as ‘the pastorality of doctrine’.¹⁰ What *EG* does is to identify various sites

⁸ See Paul D. Murray, ‘Searching the Living Truth of the Church in Practice: On the Transformative Task of Systematic Ecclesiology’, *Modern Theology* 30 (2014), 251-81.

⁹ Significant here is Richard R. Gaillardetz, ‘The “Francis Moment”: A New Kairos for Catholic Ecclesiology. Presidential Address to the Catholic Theological Society of America’, *Proceedings of the CTSA* 69 (2014), 63-80, which focuses on Pope Francis’s ecclesial vision across five key themes. For a first book-length systematic analysis of the pastoral concerns of this papacy and its ecclesial context, see Walter Kasper, *Pope Francis’ Revolution of Tenderness and Love*, William Madges (trans.), (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2015).

Complementing each of these works, this article focuses less on the wider ecclesial vision and context of *EG* – although something of this is done in the second main section – and more on its specifically ecclesiological implications, in the formal, institutional and doctrinal sense.

¹⁰ See Gaillardetz, *op. cit.*; compare Christoph Theobald, ‘The Theological Options of Vatican II: Seeking an “Internal Principle of Interpretation”’, in *Vatican II: A Forgotten*

urgently requiring of sustained formal attention in Catholic ecclesiology, many of which have already received significant informal attention since Vatican II. But the actual work of formally and systematically attending to them is left outside the scope of *EG*. It follows that the work of seeking to deliver on the implications of these sites and the issues they raise is properly and necessarily an analytical and constructive exercise and not simply a descriptive one. Consequently the force of this article is about identifying what the Catholic community – Catholic ecclesiologists in particular – now need to do if we are to live into the ways of Catholic renewal that Francis advocates.

It pursues its diagnosis in three steps. The first, expository, section identifies the key sites of ecclesiological significance in *EG*. Here the concern is simply to let the force of the document speak as clearly as possible. Given that some key aspects of *EG* are yet to be received into the common sense of formal Catholic theology, this is a worthwhile exercise in its own right and not simply as set-up for the analysis that follows. The second section then offers some initial reflections on the broad implications of *EG* for the contemporary task of Catholic ecclesiology – and Catholic theology more generally – concerning the manner in which these tasks should appropriately be pursued. The third then identifies something of the range of specific issues and potential ways ahead pertaining to the various sites of ecclesiological significance in *EG* and representing the work now needing to be done.

The key sites of ecclesiological significance in *Evangelii Gaudium*

Future. Concilium (2005/4), Alberto Melloni and Christoph Theobald (eds.), (London: SCM, 2005), pp. 87-107.

Pope Francis's extended reflection on what it means for the whole life of the church to be rooted in and called to 'attractive witness'¹¹ to the 'joy of the Gospel' has implications for every member of the church and every facet of church life, placing mission as primary for both individual and institution alike. Echoing Aparecida, the leitmotiv is 'Throughout the world, let us be "permanently in a state of mission".'¹²

At the institutional level the church exists not for itself (*EG*§95), with only exceptional overflow into mission, but for the sake of and only as a result of such mission, so all the institutional dimensions of the church, even when recognised as divinely willed, need to be properly oriented to and placed in effective service of this mission.¹³ This is expressed most clearly in *EG*§27 where we find: 'I dream of a "missionary option", that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation.'

Correlatively, mission is not the calling of the exceptional few but the ordinary calling of every individual. 'No one', he tells us, 'should think that this invitation is not meant for him

¹¹ *EG*§99; also §15.

¹² *EG*§25, citing CELAM, 'Concluding Document' (Aparecida, 2007), §551.

¹³ In *EG*§17 we hear of the need for the 'reform of the Church in her missionary outreach' and in *EG*§26, citing both Paul VI and Vatican II's 'Decree on Ecumenism', *Unitatis Redintegratio*, of the need 'to make clear that renewal does not only concern individuals but the entire Church'.

or her' (EG§3). On the contrary, 'grounded in their baptism and confirmation'¹⁴ and the gifting of the Spirit therein, the call to 'missionary discipleship'¹⁵ and a sharing in the *sensus fidei*¹⁶ is normative for all. As such not only do lay people represent the 'majority of the people of God', their formation and the correlative 'evangelization of professional and intellectual life' represents the most pressing 'pastoral challenge' (EG§102). In this context he regards the parish as still the normal place of formation and training for most Catholics (EG§28), which is a little surprising given his global south perspective wherein parishes can be significantly larger geographical entities than many dioceses in the global north.

Rather than defining the church relative to the hierarchical ordering of the clergy, with the 'rest of the faithful' simply as 'passive recipients' (EG§120), the clergy should be defined in relation to the laity who they exist to serve.¹⁷ He makes clear acknowledgment of the potential pathology of an 'excessive clericalism' which can neglect to allow room for the laity 'to speak and to act' and which 'keeps them away from decision-making' (EG§102). Here particular emphasis, albeit in somewhat essentialist terms,¹⁸ is placed on the 'need to

¹⁴ EG§102 and §120.

¹⁵ EG§24, §50, §§119-21.

¹⁶ See 'As part of his mysterious love for humanity, God furnishes the totality of the faithful with an instinct of faith – *sensus fidei* – which helps them to discern what is truly of God. The presence of the Spirit gives Christians a certain connaturality with divine realities, and a wisdom which enables them to grasp those realities intuitively, even when they lack the wherewithal to give them precise expression.' EG§119; also §31, §139, §154, §198.

¹⁷ EG§102; also §104.

¹⁸ For further see the essay by Tina Beattie in this special edition.

create still broader opportunities for a more inclusive female presence in the Church’, acknowledging that ‘many women share pastoral responsibilities with priests, helping to guide people, families and groups and offering new contributions to theological reflection’ (EG§103).

Similarly, if the diocese, as a ‘particular ... portion of the Church under the leadership of its bishop’, is to fulfil its ‘missionary impulse’ it needs ‘to undertake a resolute process of discernment, purification and reform’ (EG§30). Episcopal leadership in ‘vision and hope needs also to allow the flock to strike out on new paths’, to include an ability ‘simply [to] be in their midst’, and ‘to encourage and develop the means of participation proposed in the Code of Canon Law, and other forms of pastoral dialogue, out of a desire to listen to everyone and not simply to those who would tell him what he would like to hear’ (EG§31).

In turn and with reference to Pope St John Paul II’s remarkable 1995 request of church leaders and theologians from other traditions to help with reimagining the ministry of the ‘Bishop of Rome’,¹⁹ Pope Francis frankly acknowledges the disappointing progress since *Ut Unum Sint* and reiterates that ‘The papacy and the central structures of the universal Church also need to hear the call to pastoral conversion’.²⁰ He continues, ‘Excessive centralization,

¹⁹ See Pope St John Paul II, ‘*Ut Unum Sint*. Encyclical Letter on Commitment to Ecumenism’, (25 May 1995), §§95-6, available at:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint_en.htm.

²⁰ EG§32. Amongst the welter of material stimulated in this regard by *Ut Unum Sint*, particularly useful is the series published by Herder & Herder: Michael J. Buckley, *Papal Primacy and the Episcopate: Towards a Relational Understanding* (New York: Crossroad,

rather than proving helpful, complicates the Church's life and her missionary outreach'.²¹

With reference to §23 of Vatican II's 'Dogmatic Constitution on the Church', *Lumen Gentium*, particular mention is made both of the potential role of episcopal conferences in off-setting this excessive centralism and of the way in which this potential has been hampered by the lack of any clear juridical support for their ordinary teaching authority.²² Surprisingly notable by omission, however, is any mention of the Synod of Bishops, particularly so given

1998); Hermann J. Pottmeyer, *Towards a Papacy in Communion: Perspectives from Vatican Councils I & II*, Matthew J. O'Connell (trans.), (New York: Crossroad, 1998); Phyllis Zagano and Terrence W. Tilley (eds.), *The Exercise of the Primacy: Continuing the Dialogue* (New York: Crossroad, 1998); John R. Quinn, *The Reform of the Papacy: The Costly Call to Christian Unity* (New York: Crossroad, 1999).

²¹ EG§32; also 'Nor do I believe that the papal magisterium should be expected to offer a definitive or complete word on every question which affects the Church and the world. It is not advisable for the Pope to take the place of local Bishops in the discernment of every issue which arises in their territory.' EG§16.

²² EG§32, with reference to John Paul II's Motu Proprio, *Apostolos Suos* (21 May 1998), available at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_22071998_apostolos-suos.html. It is significant that in EG Pope Francis frequently cites from the teaching documents of regional bishops' conferences, thereby *de facto* according them the status of authoritative teaching documents of the local church, see EG§51.

the significant steps that Pope Francis has already taken to reshape the culture and procedures of synodal processes.²³

Related also to the need to overcome this Catholic default to excessive centralism are a number of ways in which Pope Francis advocates for a full and proper catholicity. First are his reflections on there being a legitimate internal diversity of local expressions of Catholic life and structure around the world, each bringing diverse ‘facets of the inexhaustible riches of the Gospel’ to expression.²⁴ From this diversity the Spirit creates a unity ‘which is never uniformity but a multifaceted and inviting harmony’.²⁵ There needs, consequently, to be appropriate freedom to explore, without fear, what it means to discern and respond to the mystery of Christ in a given context and to ask what rethinking this may require.²⁶

²³ See Paul Vallely, ‘Tectonic Plates Are Shifting’, *The Tablet* (21 November 2015), 14-16 & *id.*, ‘The 2015 Synod and Beyond: Hitting the Reset Button’, *The Tablet* (28 November 2015), 14-16.

²⁴ *EG*§40; also n.44 & §§115-8, especially §116.

²⁵ *EG*§117. The resonance here with Johann Adam Möhler’s 1825 classic, *Die Einheit in der Kirche*, is notable. See *Unity in the Church or the Principle of Catholicism: Presented in the Spirit of the Church Fathers of the First Three Centuries*, ed. and trans. Peter C. Erb (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), e.g. §32 (pp. 157-60), §35 (pp. 167-8), §46 (pp. 194-8), §48 (pp. 201-5), also §70 (p. 262). In his own contribution to this special edition, Philip McCosker traces this to Bergoglio’s time in Germany in 1986 pursuing potential research into the work of Romano Guardini.

²⁶ E.g. in the context of inviting people ‘to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities’ he

The correlate follows that authentic catholicity is served neither by the eradication of legitimate ‘multiplicity’ in favour of a ‘monolithic uniformity’ nor by the absolutizing of diversity into a fragmented and fragmenting difference. Such situations require docility to the Holy Spirit, who ‘alone can raise up diversity, plurality and multiplicity while at the same time bringing about unity.’²⁷ He continues, ‘This is not to opt for a kind of syncretism, or for the absorption of one into the other, but rather for a resolution which takes place on a higher plane and preserves what is valid and useful on both sides.’²⁸ It is just such a ‘reconciled diversity’, borrowing a term from ecumenical discourse, that should be sought after within intra-Catholic situations of disagreement and dispute.²⁹

As this might suggest and as doubtless influenced by his reading of John Paul II’s aforementioned *Ut Unum Sint*, Pope Francis’s approach to inter-Christian ecumenical

emphasises ‘I encourage everyone to apply the guidelines found in this document generously and courageously, without inhibitions or fear.’ *EG*§33; also §49.

²⁷ *EG*§131; also §§226-30.

²⁸ *EG*§228.

²⁹ See ‘The message of peace is not about a negotiated settlement but rather the conviction that the unity brought by the Spirit can harmonize every diversity. It overcomes every conflict by creating a new and promising synthesis. Diversity is a beautiful thing when it can constantly enter into a process of reconciliation and seal a sort of cultural covenant resulting in a “reconciled diversity”.’ *EG*§230. For ‘reconciled diversity’ in ecumenical discourse, see Yves Congar, *Diversity and Communion*, John Bowden (trans.), (London: SCM, 1984 [1982]), p. 149.

engagement is in sympathy with the key principles of what in recent years has come to be developed as Receptive Ecumenism, which itself draws key inspiration from *Ut Unum Sint*.³⁰ As we find in EG§246: ‘If we really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, we can learn so much from one another! It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us.’³¹ He continues, ‘To give but one example, in the dialogue with our Orthodox brothers and sisters, we Catholics have the opportunity to learn more about the meaning of episcopal collegiality and their experience of synodality.’³²

³⁰ The essential principle at work in Receptive Ecumenism is that in the context of mature dialogues, the current moment requires primary emphasis to be placed not on what the ecumenical other needs to learn from one’s own tradition but on what one’s own tradition can and needs to learn with dynamic integrity from the other. See Paul D. Murray (ed.), *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), particularly Murray, ‘Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning: Establishing the Agenda’, pp. 5-25; also *id.*, ‘Receptive Ecumenism and Ecclesial Learning: Receiving Gifts for Our Needs’, *Louvain Studies*, 33 (2008), 30-45; and *id.*, ‘Introducing Receptive Ecumenism’, *The Ecumenist: A Journal of Theology, Culture, and Society* 51 (2014), 1-8.

³¹ Also ‘Let us ask for the grace to rejoice in the gifts of each, which belong to all’ EG§99; and ‘We must never forget that we are pilgrims journeying alongside one another’ EG§244.

³² EG§246. The clearest resonance of all with Receptive Ecumenism is to be found in Pope Francis’s 22 January General Audience Address during the 2014 Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity: ‘It is good ... to find in other Christians something of which we are in need, something that we can receive as a gift from our brothers and our sisters. The Canadian group

It is important, however, to be aware that appearances to the contrary based on *EG*'s irenic tone notwithstanding, none of these conversations in service of a full and diverse catholicity are envisaged as being conducted without either the checks of responsible discernment or the possibility of formal limits. In the latter regard it is notable if predictable, and no less a cause of disappointment to many on that account, that in *EG* the only such formal limit to Catholic conversation explicitly touched upon is that pertaining to discussion of women's ordination. In the context of appreciating women's contributions to pastoral ministry we nevertheless find the bald statement that: 'The reservation of the priesthood to males, as a sign of Christ the Spouse who gives himself in the Eucharist, is not a question open to discussion' (*EG*§104). The baldness of which is not reduced by his attempt to parse sacramental power from socio-political power.

As with each of the other key sites of ecclesiological significance here identified, this requires full analysis, development, and testing. Before turning, however, in the third part of the article to identify something of the range of relevant issues and constructive proposals needing to be considered here, it is fruitful to note some more fundamental implications for the nature of the Catholic ecclesiological task and how it should be conducted.

that prepared the prayers for this Week of Prayer has not invited the communities to think about what they can give their Christian neighbours, but has exhorted them to meet to understand what all can receive from time to time from the others.' Available at:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140122_udienza-generale_en.html.

Some fundamental implications of *EG* for the Catholic ecclesiological task

It is a commonplace that the twin papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI were marked by increased polarisation within Catholic life, most evident in North America, and frequently but unhelpfully referred to with the binary categories of ‘conservatives’ and ‘progressivists’.

Mapping quite how these categories play out in lived ecclesial reality is a complex matter, with many anomalies and cross-overs.³³ The most influential and most self-consciously theological construal of this basic polarity, at least in so far as it relates to mainstream Catholicism, employs a contrasting pair of ideal types with each pole representing the prioritisation of one of the twin streams of theological renewal that flowed, frequently intermingled and mutually supporting, into Vatican II.

On the one hand, the *aggiornamento* concern for renewal of the tradition in the light of contemporary questions came to be associated with the theological corpus of Karl Rahner, the journal *Concilium*, and a retrieved Thomistic view of graced nature. Here the world is regarded as *both* orientated towards the consummation of truth in Christ as known in the church *and* as being already engaged with aspects of this truth in ways from which the church

³³ E.g. someone with a preference for a highly traditional Catholic aesthetic and liturgy may nevertheless be in profound sympathy with the communion ecclesiology of Vatican II and its resituating of order within the body of the baptised, the pilgrim people of God; others who trenchantly maintain a hieratic understanding of the church and its teaching authority may be highly selective in their obedience to specific teachings around one or more of sexual ethics, the death penalty, or social justice, calmly considering the magisterium to be wrong and irrelevant on such matters.

can itself potentially learn, not least in relation to the church's own need for reform.³⁴ On the other hand, the *ressourcement* concern for the transformative retrieval of the full riches of the tradition came to be associated with Hans Urs von Balthasar, Henri de Lubac, S.J., and the journal *Communio*, of which Joseph Ratzinger was a founding editor in a break-away move from the *Concilium* Board. This perspective is frequently characterised by an Augustinian judgement on the world as in error and in need of the saving truth to be found within the church, together with a consequent dual emphasis on the need for mission and resistance to ecclesial criticism.³⁵

A properly Catholic theology arguably needs to hold both these voices in dialectical tension and it is notable that the respective greatness of Rahner and de Lubac enabled each of them so to do.³⁶ But given that official approval very definitely resided with the second – John Paul

³⁴ Note that whilst all the statements made here are descriptively accurate of Rahner's theology, they do not by themselves represent a sufficient or comprehensive description, which would show him as transcending the very binary of which his opponents claimed him to be an exemplar. To take just one example, he was as influenced by his close reading of St Bonaventure as he was by his reading of St Thomas. Again, his work on penance was precisely in the mode of *ressourcement*.

³⁵ For an earlier discussion of some of the tensions and options within Catholic theology since the Council, see Paul D. Murray, 'Roman Catholic Theology after Vatican II', in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology since 1918*, David F. Ford (ed.) with Rachel Muers, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 265-86, esp. pp. 265-70.

³⁶ On Rahner, see n.34 here. In the case of de Lubac, it is in turn notable that his work was shaped in key part through close engagement with and retrieval of St Thomas's theology of

II had referred to Balthasar as his favourite theologian and Joseph Ratzinger, as noted, was a founding member of the *Communio* Board of Editors – together with a mind-set given to perceiving all criticism as a dangerous act of disloyal dissent, an unhealthy balance of power and corresponding binary reduction of theological options frequently resulted. Whilst many supporters of the second set of sensibilities have tended towards being content to expound the perceived beauty and wisdom within formal Catholic theology, those committed to the first set of concerns sank into a slump of seemingly permanent opposition, manifesting the range of responses this might suggest.

Where some variously proceeded in modes of frustrated grumbling,³⁷ others mounted the barricades with prophetic counterblast, serving to keep alternative voices heard but also inevitably reinforcing the apparent binary divorce in the process.³⁸ Other minority options included attempts, on the one hand, to undermine and collapse the binary by patiently seeking

grace. Indeed, given how deeply Augustinian St Thomas himself was – with St Augustine's writings acting as a constant source of authoritative reference – the binary categories that have infected too much of Catholic ecclesial and theological sensibility since the 1970s represent a reductionist distortion of the authentic capacious richness of Catholic tradition.

³⁷ By the 1990s something of this mind-set was frequently in evidence in the pages of *Concilium* and is reflected also in the title given to the volume of late interviews with Karl Rahner, *Faith in a Wintry Season: Conversations and Interviews with Karl Rahner in the Last Years of His Life*, Paul Imhof and Hubert Biallowons (eds.), Harvey D. Egan (trans.), (New York: Crossroad, 1990).

³⁸ A particularly clear and entertaining example of this provocative genre is Tina Beattie, *New Catholic Feminism: Theology and Theory* (London: Routledge, 2006).

to show quite what room for movement is available within the existing system³⁹ and, on the other hand, to outflank the limits of court theology by articulating alternative theological visions unconstrained by any felt need even to engage the prevailing polarities.⁴⁰

This entrenched climate of theological divorce and dysfunction within post-conciliar Catholicism, long-prevailing by the time of Pope Francis's election, sets the watershed nature

³⁹ Perhaps the best example of this is Francis A. Sullivan, *Creative Fidelity: Weighing and Interpreting the Documents of the Magisterium* (Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1996). In fact this represents a strategy far closer to that which characterized the work of Rahner in the 1940s and 1950s than does the stance of oppositional counterblast which later frequently appealed to – or became pejoratively associated with – his legacy. Amongst the younger generations of Catholic theologians who have pursued versions of this strategy, Richard Gaillardetz stands out.

⁴⁰ One interesting example is James Alison, *Faith beyond Resentment: Fragments Catholic and Gay* (London: DLT, 2001). The work of Elizabeth A. Johnson, C.S.J. has also been exemplary. As with all such classifications of theological types, this four-fold sketch of diverse modes of theological resistance to the hegemony of court *Communio* theology under John Paul II and Benedict XVI is not a description of pure forms. In reality there is overlap and interrelationship between them, with a given theologian – as Rahner exemplifies – capable of adopting different modes on different occasions, in a context-specific way. Indeed, a proficient singer with range can switch keys even within the same song. Nevertheless, this four-fold sketch does articulate something of the range of fundamental stances and strategies characterizing the work of diverse theologians of resistance, at least at various points in their work.

of his papacy and the staggering freshness of *EG* in clearer perspective. A number of factors combine to show that this is all considerably more than just a change of mood music: his consistent encouragement of honest exploration and voicing of concerns – repeated also to the bishops of the world in preparation for the 2014 and 2015 dual Synod process; his clear advocacy of ecclesial reform; and his emphasis upon the need to learn both from experienced pastoral reality and the wisdom of other traditions and perspectives. At minimum it marks the end of the privileging of a chosen school of court theology and the welcoming back to formal Catholic conversation of those shaped by different theological instincts – literally so in the case of Leonardo Boff in relation to *Laudato Si*.

It would be wrongheaded, however, to see in this any straightforward reversal of the basic binary – the same game continued only with a different distribution of power and patronage. Whilst Bergoglio/Francis is primarily a wise pastor rather than a theological ideologue, he is nevertheless a man of profound theological instincts and these instincts defy easy categorisation within the prevailing Catholic binary.⁴¹

⁴¹ See Kasper, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-13, in particular: ‘He doesn’t fit into our scheme of progressive or conservative, which in the meantime has become somewhat worn-out and outdated’ p. 9; and ‘He is a conservative, but a conservative who, just like John XXIII and the subsequent popes down to Benedict XVI, knows that one can only preserve the heritage of tradition if one does not regard it like a dead coin that is passed on from hand to hand until, in the end, it is totally worn, or does not treat it like a beautiful museum piece stored in a glass case.’ (p. 13). For a superb relevant discussion, see Eamon Duffy, ‘Who Is the Pope?’, *The New York Review of Books* (19th February 2015), 11-13.

It is not that he comes down in favour of *ad-intra* ecclesial reform rather than *ad-extra* mission but that he refuses and transcends the supposed tension, viewing them as necessary correlates. It is the demands of mission which themselves require ecclesial reform: for the sake of missional effectiveness; for the sake of ecclesial vitality; and for the sake of the quality and integrity of Catholic witness – that we might be what we preach.⁴² In this perspective, the life of the church *ad intra*, including the church's structures and internal organisation, is not properly understood simply as the background against which the church engages the world. Rather, the life, practices and structures of the church *are* the primary statement the church makes to the world, prior to any specific initiatives or actions *ad extra*. This is the core principle in Boff's ground breaking 1981 work, *Igreja: Carisma e poder* (*Church: Charism and Power*).⁴³ Consequently, matters of ecclesial reform do not simply reduce to matters concerning the church's internal organisation and structures of authority. They relate directly to the sacramentality and sign-value of what the church is *before* God and *for* the world; and directly, therefore, to the church's witness and mission.⁴⁴

⁴² See EG§27; also *id.*, 'Address to the Leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America during the General Coordinating Committee' (28th July 2013), available at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-celam-rio.html.

⁴³ See Leonardo Boff, *Church: Charism and Power. Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church* John W. Diercksmeier (trans.), (London: SCM, 1985 [1981]).

⁴⁴ See Paul Murray, 'Redeeming Catholicity for a Globalising Age: The Sacramentality of the Church', in Natalie K. Watson and Stephen Burns (eds.), *Exchanges of Grace: Essays in Honour of Ann Loades*, (London: SCM, 2008), pp. 78-91.

Similarly it is not that he comes down in favour of theological challenge and criticism rather than doctrinal fidelity and ecclesial loyalty but that he again refuses and transcends the disjunction. It is precisely fidelity to what the church most deeply *is* that frees him to engage ecclesial difficulties with honesty and confidence, clear in his mind that none of the fundamental commitments of the faith can or need be compromised.⁴⁵ Indeed not only does he seek to avoid being caught between specific substantive expressions of the prevailing binary, he actively promotes, as earlier noted, the overcoming of this destructive binary in principle, which serves only to diminish the quality of the church's catholicity.⁴⁶ If the younger son has been brought in from the cold, then it is not a victory feast to which he has been called but to the communion table.

So prior to identifying the various substantive issues and proposals pertaining to the sites of ecclesiological significance in *EG* and beginning to reflect on how each might be approached, it is important to ask more fundamentally after *EG*'s broader implications for how the basic

⁴⁵ See Pope Francis, 'Introductory Remarks by the Holy Father at the First General Congregation of the 14th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops' (5 October 2015), available at:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151005_padri-sinodali.html.

⁴⁶ For the most sustained articulation of this, see Pope Francis, 'Address for the Conclusion of the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops' (18 October 2014), available at:

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/october/documents/papa-francesco_20141018_conclusione-sinodo-dei-vescovi.html.

task of Catholic ecclesiology is to be pursued. What does it mean for us to be called to lay down, or at least to recalibrate, our theological arms when a formal cease fire is encouraged in the Catholic culture wars?

Where for one, the ‘conservative’, it might mean learning that constructive articulation of the riches of the tradition is not incompatible with critical analysis of points of difficulty, for the other, the ‘progressivist’, it might mean learning to forego the voice of protest and to hear again the invitation to constructive contribution. For both it means the need to resist the common tendency to speak, effectively, only to our own in-group, those with whom we are already in agreement, simply reaffirming each other with already familiar tropes, commitments, and shared vision. By contrast each needs instead to learn to pursue a whole-church orientation in Catholic theology; to learn to speak – and prior even to that, to learn – in a cross-bench fashion.

For those of us concerned to contribute to the process of ecclesial reform, seeking to serve the process of conceiving change within Catholicism by ministering therapeutically to its wounds, this means being prepared to take the time patiently to test and to demonstrate how the options we have before us – even those which are novel and apparently discontinuous – can be appropriately integrated with received formal Catholic understanding.⁴⁷ It means being

⁴⁷ In his masterly, if demanding, work on the discernment of doctrinal development, John Thiel seeks to demonstrate *both* that the tradition provides good precedent for the discerning of the novel and the immediately, even persistently, discontinuous *and* that in such instances the instinct is ultimately to seek to integrate this with a reconfigured appreciation of the plain sense of the tradition, see John E. Thiel, *Senses of Tradition: Continuity and Development in*

prepared to take the time to show how any proposed changes to the sedimented deposits of the tradition are benign, even vital, rather than destructively invasive. This is a task requiring fine-detailed needlework and keyhole surgery rather than settling either for broad-brush painting of desirable directions of travel or sweeping polemic and posture.

In some respects it is a work of self-abnegation; of dusting off the prior work of others, the sheet music languishing in the ecclesial piano stool, and exploring how it might now be put to work in a discriminating way. Most of all this is to view the work of theology as a properly collective, ecclesial task and responsibility and not simply a personal endeavour. It is properly more about serving and building consensus and communion than it is about a virtuoso solo performance concerned to distinguish itself over against others. It is in this spirit of whole-church ecclesial theology, concerned to scrutinise and test how the web of Catholic belief and practice might be virtuously and appropriately rewoven, that we turn now in the third section to identify briefly the set of substantive issues pertaining to the sites of ecclesiological significance touched on in *EG*.

Specific issues and proposals pertaining to the key sites of ecclesiological significance in *EG*

The single largest site of ecclesiological significance within *EG* – largest in terms of its density and the number of issues pertaining to it – is that concerning the need to overcome excessive centralism and to deepen the relationship between the papacy and the College of Bishops. Here Pope Francis has already taken certain steps, including: 1) restructuring the

the Catholic Faith (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), particularly pp. 100-28 & 3-30.

current Synod process into a two-stage affair that allows for greater deliberation and local consultation;⁴⁸ 2) strongly encouraging the bishops to bring the concerns and perspectives of their particular and local churches to clear voice within the Synod process without fear of recrimination;⁴⁹ 3) identifying the need for the juridical status of national and regional Bishops' Conferences and their ordinary teaching authority to be strengthened;⁵⁰ 4) appointing eight senior cardinals from different regions of the world church, together with the Secretary of State, to advise on the governance of the church (the 'C9'); and 5) initiating a

⁴⁸ For Pope Francis's most developed comments at the time of writing on the place of the Synod in the life of the church, see 'Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops' (17 October 2015), available at:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html.

⁴⁹ See 'Greeting of Pope Francis to the Synod Fathers during the First General Congregation of the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops' (6 October 2014), available at:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/october/documents/papa-francesco_20141006_padri-sinodali.html.

⁵⁰ See EG§32. For initial discussion of some of the pertinent issues, literature, and historical precedent, see Michael J. Buckley, S.J., 'What Can We Learn from the Church in the First Millennium?', in *The Catholic Church in the 21st Century: Finding Hope for Its Future in the Wisdom of Its Past*, Michael J. Himes (ed.), (Liguori, MO: Liguori, 2004), pp. 11-28 (pp. 22-5); also Francis A. Sullivan, 'The Teaching Authority of Episcopal Conferences', *Theological Studies* 63 (2002), 472-93.

comprehensive review of the workings of the Roman Curia and seeking to eliminate career curialism.⁵¹ In each case, however, there is still further work to be done.

As regards the Synod of Bishops, quite apart from such practicalities as to how often the Synod should meet, in what format, and with what modes of prior consultation, the key issue that has yet to be addressed is whether it should move from being a purely consultative body to being a genuinely deliberative body.⁵² A number of related issues come into play here:

⁵¹ See Pope Francis, 'Presentation of the Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia' (22 December 2014), available at:

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141222_curia-romana.html. For a sobering assessment of the difficulties facing any attempts at effective curial reform, see Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, 'The Miseries of Roman Centralism', *ET Studies* 4 (2013), 253-62 (pp. 254-7), which concludes: 'It would require almost superhuman powers, very loyal collaborators, highly successful teamwork, and support from the universal church for a Pope to bring about real reform of the Curia, according to the principles of "good governance".'

⁵² See James Coriden, 'The Synod of Bishops: Episcopal Collegiality Still Seeks Adequate Expression', *The Jurist*, 64 (2004), 116-36. As regards such practicalities as to how often the Synod should meet and in what format, Gaillardetz proposes: 'The creation of a permanent synod of bishops with deliberative and not merely consultative authority, crafted according to the model of the synods of the eastern churches ... One possibility would be to have a permanent synod comprised of all the metropolitan archbishops in the universal Church that would meet twice a year to deliberate with their head, the bishop of Rome, over matters of concern for the universal Church.' Gaillardetz, 'What Can We Learn from Vatican II?', in Himes (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 80-95 (p. 93). A related issue provoked by the 2015 Ordinary Synod

does a deliberative function for the Synod already properly belong to it as an expression of the College of Bishops? Or must deliberative power be delegated to it by the papacy? If the latter, does this imply that such delegation could later be revoked? And behind this lies the crunch question of all: were the Synod to be accorded a fully deliberative function, how would this cohere with the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as Head of the College?

Would it imply the possibility both of limits being placed on the initiating function of the Bishop of Rome and of there being an appropriate mechanism for resistive pressure from the College of Bishops acting against the papacy's own limiting function?⁵³ Can formal Catholic theology and canon law, as currently configured, be shown to allow for such possibilities? Or would one or both have to be reconfigured and, if so, on what basis? Again, following Pope Francis's lead and the developed strategy of Receptive Ecumenism, what fruitful learning in transposition might Catholicism here pursue in relation to other traditions? Similar questions as have been provoked here by focussing on the Synod of Bishops could be asked throughout in relation to the C9 group of key cardinal advisors; and for its own part it should be noted

on the Family is as to who should be allowed to vote in synodal processes. Hitherto the determining factor had been assumed to be ordination. At the 2015 Synod, however, a consecrated religious brother was allowed to vote; thus appearing to open the way to non-ordained lay participants more generally also being able to vote. Unfortunately, whilst the religious brother was invited to share in the vote, none of the participating religious sisters were so invited; thus raising the worrying prospect that whilst ordination may no longer be the deciding criterion, maleness nevertheless is.

⁵³ See Patrick Granfield, *The Limits of the Papacy: Authority and Autonomy in the Church* (New York & London: Crossroad & DLT, 1987).

that the Receptive Ecumenical question is pertinent to practically every other question posed throughout this entire sub-section of the article.

In turn these questions about the relationship between papacy and collegiality arising out of a focus on the Synod could be pressed further in two directions. On the one hand is the question as to what models and mechanisms there might be for preserving a properly executive function for the papacy in a context in which genuine forms of deliberative power were to be operative within the College of Bishops. Could, for example, Catholic theology and canon law develop in such a direction as would allow the College (or the Synod, or any formally representative group of bishops on behalf of the College) to bring a proposal for consideration to a given pope as Head of the College on up to three occasions before that pope could rule it out of court for the duration of his papacy (or a shorter time if deemed appropriate)?⁵⁴ Similarly, might it develop in such a direction as would correlatively require the pope to bring any significant proposed innovation with bearing on the universal church for consideration by the College or its representatives?⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The inspiration for this proposal – requiring rigorous testing – lies in Church of England Anglican synodical practice wherein the House of Laity and the House of Clergy can bring a proposal to the House of Bishops up to three times within a given period even if it is rejected by the House of Bishops on the first two occasions. This allows for accountability and testing in each direction whilst preserving the executive function of the House of Bishops.

⁵⁵ This has some relevance for the 2015 Ordinary Synod on the Family, where the indications are that had a deliberative vote been taken then it would not have been in support of the innovation which Pope Francis appears to favour in relation to permitting divorced and remarried Catholics, in certain circumstances, to receive the Eucharist. Deliberative

On the other hand there is the question as to what voting system would be employed if a deliberative function were indeed to be associated with the Synod? Presumably in this day and age this would be an electronic system? If so, this could be extended to the entire episcopate, at least in relation to crucial matters. This would provide both a means for efficiently consulting the entire episcopate in relation to the mind of the Ordinary Magisterium – for which no mechanism currently exists – and an alternative to gathering the bishops in full Council, which is now almost certainly impractical with over 5,000 bishops in the world.

As regards the desire to enable the voices and concerns of the local churches to be heard more clearly at the level of the universal church: encouraging the bishops to speak with boldness and confidence is all well and good; as too is the prospect of strengthening the juridical status and teaching authority of bishops' conferences. But we need not be naïve about the differential power distribution between Rome and the local churches, nor blind to the further structural changes required before diocesan bishops and local bishops' conferences will feel confident in voicing criticism to Rome. This is particularly so in light of the history of reprisals that has been taken since the Council in situations in which Rome judged that the voice and initiative of the local church needed to be reined-in. This all comes to focus in the current system of centralised episcopal appointments, which acts as a highly effective mechanism for exerting centralised control over the local churches. What is required here is exploration and testing of appropriate means of returning episcopal appointments to mechanisms can themselves be viewed as moments within broader processes of ecclesial discernment.

the local churches whilst preserving appropriate Roman involvement and potential veto *in extremis*.⁵⁶

Let us move now beyond asking where the initiatives already set in train by Pope Francis might need to develop further and turn to consider some pertaining to the vitality of Catholic life at the level of diocese and parish alike which, whilst their desirability is highlighted in *EG*, are not yet on his implementation list. One nodal issue here – in some respects analogous to those pertaining to the papacy-College issue – relates to the decision-making structures that exist at parish and diocesan levels: their nature and status? Whether it is conceivable for laity to be accorded a genuinely deliberative role whilst preserving the appropriate executive functions of parish priest and bishop respectively? By what criteria and by whom should decisions be made as to whether a given member of the faithful is a reliable witness to the *sensus fidelium*? By what criteria and through what processes should the local church and parochial community seek to discern and make good judgements?

Also significant here, although in a more formal manner, is the question of appropriate structures and procedures for genuinely representative and whole-church theological

⁵⁶ For initial discussion again see Buckley, ‘What Can We Learn from the Church in the First Millennium?’, *op. cit.*, pp. 12- 19, which concludes: ‘... if the present system for the selection of bishops is not redressed, all other attempts at serious reform will founder’; and Catherine M. Mooney, ‘What Can We Learn from the Medieval Church?’, in Himes (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 29-55 (pp. 29-38); also useful is Quinn, ‘The Appointment of Bishops and Christian Unity’, in *The Reform of the Papacy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-39; and Gaillardetz and John Huels, ‘The Selection of Bishops: Recovering the Enduring Values of Our Tradition’, *The Jurist*, 59 (1999), 348-76.

consultation at the levels of dioceses (particular church), bishops' conferences (local church), and universal church.⁵⁷

In turn, another nodal point relates to ordained ministry and the range of issues involved here, such as the hot button questions of access to ordained ministry relative both to the ordinary requirement of celibacy within western rite Catholicism and to the restriction of ordination to men throughout the Catholic Church (as similarly throughout the Orthodox churches). As regards the former issue – essentially a disciplinary matter, supported by the theology, spirituality, and pastoral practice of ordained ministry which have grown-up around it – Pope Francis is reported as having already indicated his willingness, in conversation with a Brazilian bishop, to engage requests from bishops' conferences to reconsider the current discipline; indeed as encouraging such requests to be made.⁵⁸ By contrast, as earlier indicated, as regards the restriction of ordination to men, he follows in line with the two previous papacies in regarding this as closed to discussion (*EG*§104). Given, however, its relationship to some of the other issues already touched on here, this last point is worthy of brief comment.

⁵⁷ Compare 'These structures, like the present International Theological Commission, must represent a genuine diversity of theological perspectives, and allow for legitimate and respectful dissent from authoritative, non-infallible teaching.' Gaillardetz, 'What Can We Learn from Vatican II?', *op. cit.*, p. 94.

⁵⁸ See David Gibson, 'Are Married Priests Next?', *America* (25 April 2014), see <http://www.americamagazine.org/issue/are-married-priests-next?lite>.

The formal Catholic position currently rests with John Paul II's 1994 letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, where his argument essentially comes down to the church not judging herself authorised to introduce such innovation into the tradition.⁵⁹ This was underlined the following year with a letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF). Here it was maintained that whilst the issuing of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* was not itself intended as an act of papal infallibility, the teaching it articulates is nevertheless to be understood as coming under the infallibility pertaining to the ordinary magisterium of the universal teaching of the Catholic bishops and, as such, is to be held as absolutely binding and utterly closed.⁶⁰ It is not clear, however, that things are as straightforward here as this would suggest.

First, whilst it is certainly conceivable that this is indeed the universal teaching of the Catholic bishops in such a fashion as brings it under the infallibility of the ordinary magisterium, the earlier noted problem is that currently there is no way of knowing this with certainty given that there is no efficient and canonically authenticated means of ascertaining what the universal teaching of the bishops is on a given subject.⁶¹ Moreover, whilst it is clear

⁵⁹ See Pope St John Paul II, '*Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*. Apostolic Letter on Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone' (22 May 1994), available at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19940522_ordinatio-sacerdotalis.html.

⁶⁰ CDF, 'Concerning the Reply of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the Teaching Contained in the Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*' (28 October 1995), available at: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19951028_commento-dubium-ordinatio-sac_en.html.

⁶¹ See Sullivan, 'Guideposts from Catholic Tradition', *America* 173 (9 December 1995), 5-6.

that neither of the previous two papacies – nor, it would seem, the current papacy – has been prepared to countenance the ordination of women, the combination of the highly divisive nature of the issue, the depth of feeling it arouses, and the fact that thus far it has not been allowed full airing within Catholic conversation suggest that even were it possible to devise an appropriate means of ascertaining the universal teaching of the bishops, it would at this point be pastorally and theologically imprudent – even illegitimate – to push the matter through to infallible status. If from the perspective of the formal magisterium the point is to make clear that for the foreseeable future the church has no intention of doing other than reject the possibility of ordaining women then there are ways of doing this which stop short of binding the church to absolute closure in such a fashion as would make heretics of those who are of a different conviction and who are still exploring how this might in fact be done with Catholic integrity.

More generally, Catholicism would do well to seek to regain, strengthen, and further develop a broader set of strategies for classifying and handling disputed questions beyond a tendency to an overly bald polarity between the seemingly open and innocuous, on the one hand, and the absolutely closed, on the other hand. Inadequate in this regard is the overly-broad and under-defined yet now common appeal to the notion of ‘definitive teaching’. Whilst this is generally used by the CDF to refer to teaching that is judged as needing to be taken very seriously even though it is recognised that no infallible judgment has been pronounced in its regard, the CDF does not thereby intend to suggest that there is any legitimacy to continuing debate in such regards. On the contrary, the intention is to support and enforce the prevailing judgement of the CDF on given issues by moving them, even whilst full consideration is *de*

facto still in train, into apparent company with those matters already settled, seeking thereby to close down consideration prematurely.⁶²

Alongside these hot button questions concerning access to ordained ministry, other questions also exist, albeit at somewhat cooler temperatures, concerning existing patterns of ordained ministry within Catholicism and whether these might evolve to allow for the kinds of part-time non-stipendiary and local ordained ministry that we find in other traditions, such as Anglicanism. In such traditions a mixed economy prevails, with part-time non-stipendiary and local ordained ministers working alongside full-time salaried ordained ministers. Given the frequently parlous state of parochial and diocesan Catholic finances even in affluent countries such as the UK, this is an issue with direct practical bearing on the aforementioned possibility of an unexceptional married priesthood within western rite Catholicism.

Similarly there are questions as to whether there are also other ministerial models in other traditions, such as the formal office of Reader within Anglicanism and of Lay Preacher within Methodism, which could fruitfully be considered within Catholicism; thus allowing, for example, lay theologians and suitably qualified catechists and teachers of religious education to be commissioned and licensed to preach.

In turn, lying behind all such issues in Catholic culture and its default habits, structures, and practice of ministry, authority, and accountability, is the question of the lay-clerical relationship and the lack of an integrated theology of ministry in post-conciliar Catholicism. Here the question is whether Catholic understanding of the lay-clerical relationship can be

⁶² See Paul D. Murray, 'On Valuing Truth in Practice: Rome's Postmodern Challenge',

International Journal of Systematic Theology, 8 (2006), 163-83.

reconfigured in a way that does justice to the proper dignity of both whilst overcoming any suggestion of the destructive two-tier view of Christian existence that has so bedevilled Catholicism. The earlier noted binary tendencies in post-conciliar Catholicism have been characterised by diametrically opposed approaches in this regard: one maintaining the necessity of an ontological distinctiveness which appears to elevate the ordained to the detriment of the laity; the other tending to flatten ecclesial ministry and so fail to account for the sacramental distinctiveness of the ordained.

Given how fundamental it is to so much else within Catholic life and how fulcrum the response given, of all the sites of required ecclesiological investigation prompted by *EG*, this presents as the logical first and most pressing. The conviction here is that the route to an understanding capable of integrating relevant Catholic conviction around it lies in the overcoming of the artificial distinction between the ordained as *representatio Christi* and as *representatio ecclesiae* and the articulation of ordained ministry as the authenticated, public, and sacramentally representative performance of Christ's one pluriform ministry in the Spirit-filled, charism-endowed body of the church. But that is to bring us to the limits of one article and the anticipation of another.⁶³

⁶³ For an initial foray in this direction, now in process of full articulation, see Paul D. Murray, 'The Need for an Integrated Theology of Ministry within Contemporary Catholicism: A Global North Perspective', in *Ministries in the Church. Concilium* (2010/1), Susan Ross, Maria Clara Bingemer, Paul D. Murray (eds.), (London: SCM, 2010), 43-54.