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JOHN PAUL II'S IDEA OF TRINITARIAN ECCLESIOLOGY

The Church of the Second Vatican Council, in continuity with the witness of the Scriptures and of the Fathers, is the Church of the Trinity, *Ecclesia de Trinitate*. The Church is the fruit of the trinitarian God: from eternity it was thought of in the design of the Father, it was realized in the incarnation of the Son and edified and always renewed by the mission of the Spirit. The Church is the Church of the Father, who in his universal plan of salvation has willed it as a sign and instrument of unity of man among themselves and with him; it is the Church of the Son, who with his incarnation and passion has placed it in history as his Body; it is the Church of the Spirit, who makes present the Risen Lord in time among men and enriching the people of God with charisms and ministries leads it towards the promised future.

John Paul II asserts that the Church is founded on the Trinity, the Church is *oriens ex alto*, springing from high, from God¹. He relates the Church specifically to the Divine Persons through certain ecclesial images and aspects. The Pope explores his approach from a fundamentally Trinitarian perspective. Then it will look into the other aspects of the Church that can be gathered from the Pope's exposition of the specific relationships between the Church and each person of the Trinity². Our reflections are based above all on some papal encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, homilies and discourses to various audiences³.

¹ Cf. LG 3.

² See for example, his homily on June 12, 1984 at Lugano, entitled *The Church in its universal and local dimension is the environment of man's existence* (*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*) 1 (1984), VII, n. 2, p. 4: "The Church is *the People of God*: the nation whose God is the Lord, the People he has chosen for his heritage (Ps 32 [33], 12). The words of the Psalm in today's liturgy speak of Israel, which was the People of God in the Old Testament. At the same time they speak of *the new Israel*, of the Church which extends beyond the Old Testament limits of a single nation. The People of God is present to all the people of the earth, for it takes from all peoples its own citizens, citizens of a Kingdom which is not earthly but heavenly. For all the faithful, scattered through the world, are in communion, through the Holy Spirit, with the others, so that the one who is in Rome knows that those who are in the Indies are his members" (LG 13). The People: the community of

Reading the trinitarian history in the light of the paschal mystery, we can say that the paschal event reveals the history of the Father, the history of the Son and the history of the Spirit⁴. Corresponding to the history of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Pope in concordance with the Council, in presenting the origin of the Church speaks of the three ecclesiological terms of the People of God, the Church of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

THE CHURCH OF THE FATHER – THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The Church, as affirms *Lumen gentium*, is the result of the universal plan of salvation of God the Father. It is of the Father, as it was prepared by him in the mystery of the election of Israel. This people of alliance of the Old Testament is the image of the new people of God in Christ, the Church. The term *the People of God*, we can say that expresses the whole divine plan⁵.

After the term *Church* itself, the expression *People of God* is the most persistently used image to speak of the ecclesial reality in John Paul II's major documents. For example, in the encyclical *Redemptor hominis* (RH) the term *People of God* is cited – although a far second to 192 times of *Church* – at least twenty two times. While *Church* has fifty three instances, *People of God* appears eight times

living man whom God embraces, at one and the same time being concerned with all of them together and with *each one* of them in particular. He embraces them as Creator and Father, as Redeemer and Spirit who penetrates all”.

³ Cf. consulted sources: J. Bland (ed.), *The Pastoral Vision of John Paul II*, Chicago 1982; R. Buttiglione, *Il pensiero di Karol Wojtyła*, Milano 1982; F. Fuenmayor, E. Perez et al., *Tres dimensiones de la pastoral de Juan Pablo II*, Caracas 1986; J. M. McDermott, ed., *The Thought of Pope John Paul II*, Roma 1979; J. V. Schall, *The Church, the State and Society in the Thought of John Paul II*, Chicago 1982; A. Czaja, *Credo in Spiritum Vivificantem. Pneumatologiczna interpretacja Kościoła jako komunii w posoborowej teologii niemieckiej*, Lublin 2003, p. 67–98, especially 67–70; Ibid., *Udział Kościoła w komunii Trójjedynego. Przyczynek do rozumienia trynitarnego wymiaru współczesnej eklezjologii communio*, in: red. A. Czaja, P. Jaskóła, *Wokół Tajemnicy Trójcy Świętej. Materiały Seminarium wykładowców dogmatyki. Częstochowa 28–29.09.2000*, Opole 2000, p. 289–296; E. Ozorowski, *Trynitarna struktura chrześcijańskiego communio*, „Collectanea Theologica” 41 (1971), fasc. 4, p. 59–66; A. Fallico, *Eucaristia, communio trinitaria e comunione ecclesiale*, Torino 1986; G. Calabrese, *Per un'ecclesiologia trinitaria*, Bologna 1999; M. Volf, *Trinität und Gemeinschaft. Eine ökumenische Ekklesiologie*, Mainz–Neukirchen–Vluyn 1996; Z. Gaczyński, *L'ecclesiologia eucaristica di Yves Congar, di Joseph Ratzinger e di Bruno Forte*, Roma 1998, s. 151–199; St. Mangnus, *God as communio. The meaning of „communio” in contemporary trinitarian theology*, „Bijdragen”, International journal in Philosophy and Theology 64 (2003), p. 39–67.

⁴ See the papal trinitarian trilogy – three encyclicals: *Redemptor hominis*, *Dives in Misericordia*, *Dominum et Vivificantem*.

⁵ It is likely that people of God was the preferred image at Vatican II and has been ever since. This is somewhat strange, since people of God has not enjoyed consistent favor among theologians throughout the Church's history. Cf. M. Keller, *Volk Gottes als Kirchenbegriff*, Einsiedeln 1970.

in the encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*. It is not referred to in the encyclical *Laborem exercens* where only the term *Church* is used thirty eight times. *People of God* is employed again five times in the encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli* compared to sixty eight occurrences of *Church*. In the encyclic *Dominum et Vivificantem* (DetV), the term *People of God* ranks third, with only one instance (n. 66) after *Church* which has 125 occurrences, while *Church as sacrament or sign and instrument of the intimate union with God and the unity of the whole human race* has three. *People of God* returns to second place with seventeen citations in the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (RMa) where *Church* appears 183 times. *People of God* reappears in the encyclic *Redemptoris Missio* with seven citations although again a far third to 202 instances of *Church* and thirty seven of *Churches*.

The Pope commences his first encyclical letter by pointing to the “Church, the people of God spread, although unevenly, to the most distant limits of the earth” as the celebrant in the year 2000 of a great Jubilee of Christ’s work of redemption⁶. In addition, the association of the phrase *People of God* with the Church and a variety of its aspects is already manifest in *Redemptor hominis*. A case in point is in the section dealing with the Church’s mission and man’s destiny where he quotes the Apostle Paul as identifying *Christ Body* with the *Church*⁷. The rest of the references also connect *People of God* with the other aspects of the ecclesial reality: as a community⁸, as an integral whole⁹, as Church¹⁰.

What is in evidence here is the leaning towards the Vatican II¹¹ view of the Church as *People of God*, an image that also emphasizes the Church’s universal-

⁶ RH 1.

⁷ “This necessarily brief look at man's situation in the modern world makes us direct our thoughts and our hearts to Jesus Christ, and to the mystery of the Redemption, in which the question of man is inscribed with a special vigour of truth and love. If Christ <united himself with each man>, the Church lives more profoundly her own nature and mission by penetrating into the depths of this mystery and into its rich universal language. It was not without reason that the Apostle speaks of Christ's Body, the Church. If this Mystical Body of Christ is God's People – as the Second Vatican Council was to say later on the basis of the whole of the Biblical and patristic tradition – this means that in it each man receives within himself that breath of life that comes from Christ. In this way, turning to man and his real problems, his hopes and sufferings, his achievements and falls-this too also makes the Church as a body, an organism, a social unit perceive the same divine influences, the light and strength of the Spirit that come from the crucified and risen Christ, and it is for this very reason that she lives her life. The Church has only one life: that which is given her by her Spouse and Lord. Indeed, precisely because Christ united himself with her in his mystery of Redemption, the Church must be strongly united with each man” (RH 18).

⁸ RH 18; 20; 21.

⁹ RH 19; 20; 21; 22.

¹⁰ RH 18; 19; 20; 21; 22.

¹¹ See C. Pozo, *Juan Pablo II el Concilio Vaticano II*, „Scripta Theologica” 20 (1988/2–3), p. 405–437; G. Grasso, *Per una ricerca della filosofia soggiacente agli interventi di Karol Wojtyła al Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II*, “Sacra Doctrina” 24 (1979), p. 165–196.

ty and which the Pope had already stressed even as Karol Cardinal Wojtyła. All these figures appear to show that the term *People of God* occupies also a place of major significance in John Paul II's ecclesiology.

The Roman Pontiff focuses on Psalm 32, 12 to explain the notion of *People of God*. This term is based on the Old Testament, particularly in the Israelite community. Mentioned above this Psalm portrays Israel as a nation with a special reciprocal relationship with the Lord whom the community professes as its Lord who, in a prior act, had chosen Israel for his own. On the other hand, the Pope sees more than Israel in the image and draws out that of the Church whose composition both goes beyond the single-nation Old testament meaning and encompasses members from all the nations and peoples of the earth. The Church as *People of God*, therefore, carries in its meaning the profession of the God of Israel by the Church as the "New Israel".

Then, the Church cannot understand its proper identity and proper mission without situating itself in relation to Israel, because in the salvific plan of God the elected People, Israel, has a decisive and central role. Therefore the Church is in continuity with Israel. This continuity is manifest even at the level of language; the terms *church* and *People of God* have an Old Testament basis. The term *Church of God* with which the early Christian community was called is the same as *qahal Jhwh* which was used for Israel. It is however in the relation with the God of Covenant that John Paul II sees the element of continuity between the communities of the Old and New Covenant.

The original and primary emphasis of the Church as *People of God* is not even found in the word "people". This particular definition of the Church emphasizes precisely the Godliness of the people in question. They are God's possession – God is their origin, their sustainer, their goal. Indeed, properly taken, God is their owner, they are God's choice, chosen possession or "property" (Deut. 7, 6). This Godliness gives the people their identity and dignity. It establishes them in being. This theme is taken up in the New Testament and applied to the "new" people of God, whose identity is also explicitly related to Jesus Christ. Paul even applies it to the pagans who have been saved by the patient God's mercy in Jesus (Rom 9, 25). Peter uses it to emphasize the dignity and identity of Christians who, though scattered, form the one "spiritual house" which is the Church, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart" (1 Pet 2, 4–10). *People of God* emphasizes that the Church really become sinful. Such emphasis, of course, is not intended to encourage sin or indifference. Its goal is to console and encourage the people, who are the Church, to preserve in avoiding evil and doing good, in making their lives "spiritual sacrifices [...] acceptable to God". This text also emphasizes the common dignity of all believers. Thus, even though the primary purpose of people of God is to emphasize the Church's communion with God, it also simultaneously emphasizes the communion of the Church within itself.

The Pope's conception confirms the idea as embracing the universal dimension of the Church in its stress upon membership from all the peoples of the earth not into an earthly but a heavenly Kingdom. At the same time, it implies the local dimensions in acknowledging that these peoples are found in particular places or territories with their unique characteristics. For John Paul II it is God as Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit that embraces the Church as *People of God*. In a particular way, however, the link of *People of God* to the Old Testament leads to a revelation of God as *Father*, to the first Person of the Trinity.

In *Redemptoris Mater* the Roman Pontiff draws an idea from saint Augustine (in *De Civitate Dei* he declares that the "Church <like a pilgrim in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God>"¹²) and the Second Vatican Council which relates Israel to the Church and emphasizes its pilgrim character. John Paul II underlines: "Israel according to the flesh, which wandered as an exile in the desert, was already called the Church of God (cf. 2 Esd 13, 1; Num 20, 4; Dt 23, 1ff.). Likewise the new Israel... is called the Church of Christ (cf. Mt 16, 18). For he has bought it for himself with his blood (Acts 20, 28), has filled it with his Spirit, and provided it with those means which befit it as a visible and social unity. *God has gathered together as one all those who in faith look upon Jesus* as the author of salvation and the source of unity and peace, and has established them as the Church, that for each and all she may be the visible sacrament of this saving unity"¹³. The Pope's interpretation of this text zeroes in on the property of pilgrim as applied to the Church and what it signifies. "The Church <like a pilgrim in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God>, announcing the Cross and Death of the Lord until he comes (cf. 1 Cor 11, 26). [...] The Second Vatican Council speaks of the pilgrim Church, establishing an analogy with the Israel of the Old Covenant journeying through the desert. The journey also has an external character, visible in the time and space in which it historically takes place. For the Church <is destined to extend to all regions of the earth and so to enter into the history of mankind>, but at the same time <she transcends all limits of time and of space> (LG 9). And yet the essential character of her pilgrimage is interior: it is a question of a pilgrimage through faith, by <the power of the Risen Lord> (LG 8) a pilgrimage in the Holy Spirit, given to the Church as the invisible Comforter (parakletos) (cf. Jn 14, 26; 15, 26; 16, 7)"¹⁴.

The notion of pilgrim Church has therefore its basis in a comparison with the experience of Israel's journeying through the desert. The Roman Pontiff employs this biblical analogy to bring attention to the Church's own journeying which in his mind has two characters: the external character giving it a visible and histori-

¹² St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XVIII, 51 (CCL 48, 650).

¹³ LG 9; cf. RMa 25.

¹⁴ RMa 25.

cal dimension (in “time and space”), and interior character signifying the dimension of faith itself whereby the pilgrimage is undertaken by the Church and which is tied to, and sustained by, the resurrection and Pentecost. John Paul II characteristically insists this interior “pilgrimage through faith” as the essential character of the pilgrim Church and puts Mary into the picture. The Pope scribes that “It is precisely in this ecclesial journey or pilgrimage through space and time, and even more through the history of souls, that Mary is present, as the one who is ‹blessed because she believed›, as the one who advanced on the pilgrimage of faith, sharing unlike any other creature in the mystery of Christ. The Council further says that ‹Mary figured profoundly in the history of salvation and in a certain way unites and mirrors within herself the central truths of the faith› (LG 65). Among all believers she is like a ‹mirror› in which are reflected in the most profound and limpid way ‹the mighty works of God› (Acts 2, 11)”¹⁵.

To John Paul II the way the Church proceeds in her journey or pilgrimage is twofold: through space and time and through the history of souls. In both of the Mary’s presence is experienced as a unitive principle and a reflection, mirroring, as it were, the truths of faith. The reference to the truths of the faith that Mary unites and mirrors in herself as she stands at the center of the pilgrim Church militates against these truths being only abstract propositions since they are precisely realized in Mary. It follows that the Church in her pilgrimage as *People of God* must also, like Mary, endeavor to unite and mirror in herself the truths of faith, truths that include, for instance, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all mankind in unity, justice, peace, mercy and love.

Subsequently, the Pope declares: “As the Council says, ‹Mary figured profoundly in the history of salvation.... Hence when she is being preached and venerated, she summons the faithful to her Son and his sacrifice, and to love for the Father› (LG 65). For this reason, Mary’s faith, according to the Church’s apostolic witness, in some way continues to become the faith of the pilgrim People of God: the faith of individuals and communities, of places and gatherings, and of the various groups existing in the Church. It is a faith that is passed on simultaneously through both the mind and the heart. It is gained or regained continually through prayer. Therefore, ‹the Church in her apostolic work also rightly looks to her who brought forth Christ, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin, so that through the Church Christ may be born and increase in the hearts of the faithful also› (LG 65). Today, as on this pilgrimage of faith we draw near to the end of the second Christian Millennium, the Church, through the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, calls our attention to her vision of herself, as the ‹one People of God...among all the nations of the earth›. And she reminds us of that truth according to which all the faithful, though ‹scattered throughout the world, are in communion with each other in the Holy Spirit› (cf. LG 13). We can there-

¹⁵ RMa 25.

fore say that in this union the mystery of Pentecost is continually being accomplished. At the same time, the Lord's apostles and disciples, in all the nations of the earth, «devote themselves to prayer together with Mary, the mother of Jesus» (Acts 1, 14). As they constitute from generation to generation the «sign of the Kingdom» which is not of this world (cf. LG 13), they are also aware that in the midst of this world they must gather around that King to whom the nations have been given in heritage (cf. Ps 2, 8), to whom the Father has given «the throne of David his father», so that he «will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there will be no end». During this time of vigil, Mary, through the same faith which made her blessed, especially from the moment of the Annunciation, is present in the Church's mission, present in the Church's work of introducing into the world the Kingdom of her Son (cf. LG 13). [...] In the faith which Mary professed at the Annunciation as the «handmaid of the Lord» and in which she constantly «precedes» the pilgrim People of God throughout the earth, the Church «strives energetically and constantly to bring all humanity...back to Christ its Head in the unity of his Spirit» (LG 13)”¹⁶.

John Paul II, at the start of his pontificate, touches on the relationship between Christ's mission and the Church as *People of God*. He underlines that “The Second Vatican Council has reminded us of the mystery of this power [of Christ himself] and of the fact that Christ's mission as Priest, Prophet – teacher and King continues in the Church. Everyone, the whole People of God, shares in this threefold mission. Perhaps in the past, the tiara, this triple crown, was placed on the Pope's head in order to express by that symbol the Lord's plan for his Church, all «sacred power» exercised in the Church, is nothing other than service, service with a single purpose: to ensure that the whole People of God shares in this threefold mission of Christ and always remains under the power of the Lord: a power that has its source not in the power of this world but in the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection”¹⁷.

The Pope not only declares that it is in the Church that Christ's threefold mission as Priest, Prophet-Teacher and King continues but also apportions that mission to everyone in the whole *People of God*. The participation by all the members of the *People of God* in Christ's threefold mission is a conviction in John Paul II that also comes with the identification of Church with *People of God*. Saying of religious profession the Pope accents: “In this consecration determines your place in the vast community of the Church, the People of God. And at the same time this consecration introduces into the universal mission of this people a special source of spiritual and supernatural energy: a particular style of life, witness and apostolate, in fidelity to the mission of your institute and to its identity and spiritual heritage. The universal mission of the People of God is rooted in the

¹⁶ RMa 28.

¹⁷ John Paul II, Homily (22 October 1978), *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* I (1978), p. 40.

messianic mission of Christ Himself-Prophet, Priest and King—a mission in which all share in different ways”¹⁸.

John Paul II says of the Christological origins (that is, Christ as Priest, Prophet-Teacher and King) of the mission of the Church. It is reminiscent of his much earlier insistence upon the impossibility of any ecclesiology without Christology since the Church cannot explain her mission, much less her identity, outside of Christ. Furthermore, it is to ensure the sharing in this threefold mission by the whole *People of God* that for the Pope “all sacred power” is to be regarded and exercised as “service” in the Church.

For the Successor of Peter the community of the *People of God* not only has universal and local dimensions but also that these two are intimately related. This last point is brought out when he elaborates on the love for the Church that the Pope enjoins the religious to cultivate. He speaks of thinking and acting in conformity with the “Magisterium of Peter and of the pastors in communion with him”¹⁹, referring to the leadership proper to the Church-*People of God*, and to the pastors in communion with him, leaders of the local ecclesial communities or dioceses. That the testimony of consecrated persons to their love for Christ signifies simultaneously their love for the Church, not only as universal but especially as local, is most significant. The Pope says: “In the Jubilee Year of the Redemption the entire Church wishes to renew her love for Christ, the Redeemer of man and of the world, her Lord and also her divine Spouse. And so in this Holy Year the Church looks with special attention to you, dear brothers and sisters, who, as consecrated persons, occupy a special place both in the universal community of the People of God and in every local community”²⁰.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

The Roman Pontiff also relates the church specifically to the Second person of the Trinity. The centrality of Jesus Christ in the life of the Church is explicitly underscored in the Pope’s first encyclical letter, particularly in its third chapter entitled *Christ united himself with each man*, where we can write: “When we penetrate by means of the continually and rapidly increasing experience of the human family into the mystery of Jesus Christ, we understand with greater clarity that there is at the basis of all these ways that the Church of our time must follow, in accordance with the wisdom of Pope Paul VI, one single way: it is the way that has stood the test of centuries and it is also the way of the future. Christ the Lord indicated this way especially, when, as the Council teaches, ‘by his Incarnation,

¹⁸ John Paul II, Apostolic exhortation *Redemptionis Donum*, n. 7 (RD).

¹⁹ RD 14.

²⁰ RD 14.

he, the Son of God, in a certain way *united himself with each man* (GS 22). The Church therefore sees its fundamental task in enabling that union to be brought about and renewed continually. The Church wishes to serve this single end: that each person may be able to find Christ, in order that Christ may walk with each person the path of life, with the power of the truth about man and the world that is contained in the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption and with the power of the love that is radiated by that truth. [...] Jesus Christ is the chief way for the Church. He himself is our way *to the Father's house* (Jn 14, 1ff.) and is the way to each man. On this way leading from Christ to man, on this way on which Christ unites himself with each man, nobody can halt the Church. This is an exigency of man's temporal welfare and of his eternal welfare. Out of regard for Christ and in view of the mystery that constitutes the Church's own life, the Church cannot remain insensible to whatever serves man's true welfare, any more than she can remain indifferent to what threatens it"²¹.

At the background of the section is the John Paul II's reaffirmation of the Vatican II teaching of the Church as the sacrament of intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind²². The Church fulfills the demands of this her sacramentality, uniting both God and man, simply because Christ serves as her chief of way to both ends and makes such fulfillment possible. This is based on the logic of the Incarnation since Christ who comes from the Father "by his Incarnation [...] in a certain way united Himself with each man"²³. It is evident that in the

²¹ RH 13.

²² Cf. LG 1; RH 7: „Through the Church's consciousness, which the Council considerably developed, through all levels of this self-awareness, and through all the fields of activity in which the Church expresses, finds and confirms herself, we must constantly aim at him *who is the head*, *through whom are all things and through whom we exist*, who is both *the way, and the truth* and *the resurrection and the life*, seeing whom, we see the Father, and who had to go away from us—that is, by his death on the Cross and then by his Ascension into heaven—in order that the Counsellor should come to us and should keep coming to us as the Spirit of truth. In him are *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, and the Church is his Body. *By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind*, and the source of this is he, he himself, he the Redeemer. [...] The Church lives his mystery, draws unwearingly from it and continually seeks ways of bringing this mystery of her Master and Lord to humanity—to the peoples, the nations, the succeeding generations, and every individual human being—as if she were ever repeating, as the Apostle did: *For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified*. The Church stays within the sphere of the mystery of the Redemption, which has become the fundamental principle of her life and mission”.

²³ GS 22: “The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown. He Who is *the image of the invisible God* (Col. 1, 15), is Himself the perfect man. To the sons of Adam He restores the divine likeness which had been disfigured from the first sin onward. Since human nature as He assumed it was not annulled, by that very fact it has been raised up to a divine dignity in our respect too. For by

Pope's view this certain union of Christ with man becomes a ground for the Church's special concern for man and human affairs. The Church professes no extraneous motives behind such concern, except that she manifests it out of regard for Christ.

John Paul II insists that a man is the whole man who bears God's image and likeness and, hence, deserves the Church's care and attention. The Pope reminds that "Accordingly, what is in question here is man in all his truth, in his full magnitude. We are not dealing with the <abstract> man, but the real, <concrete>, <historical> man. We are dealing with <each> man, for each one is included in the mystery of the Redemption and with each one Christ has united himself for ever through this mystery. Every man comes into the world through being conceived in his mother's womb and being born of his mother, and precisely on account of the mystery of the Redemption is entrusted to the solicitude of the Church. Her solicitude is about the whole man and is focused on him in an altogether special manner. The object of her care is man in his unique unrepeatable human reality, which keeps intact the image and likeness of God himself. The Council points out this very fact when, speaking of that likeness, it recalls that <man is the only creature on earth that God willed for itself> (GS 24). Man as <willed> by God, as <chosen> by him from eternity and called, destined for grace and glory-this is <each> man, <the most concrete> man, <the most real>; this is man in all the fullness of the mystery in which he has become a sharer in Jesus Christ, the mystery in which each one of the four thousand million human beings living on our planet has become a sharer from the moment he is conceived beneath the heart of his mother"²⁴.

It is noteworthy that John Paul II combines here the imagery of human motherhood, apparently an allusion to the Church as Mother, with centrality of Christ and his work of Redemption in the Church's solicitude for man. In this way it is shown how the spiritual realities that he sees at work in the Church aren't disjointed and unrelated but lead to, and complement, one another.

The Church is to be understood in close relation with the Eucharistic body of Christ. The Last Supper was for Jesus an important moment. It was an anticipation of what was to come. As the supreme event of Jesus' life, the Last supper has an analogous importance for the life of the Church²⁵. It was the foundational event of the Church, the memory of the realization of the new and definitive covenant. The Successor of Peter indicates that in the understanding of the nature of the Church, the Last Supper plays an important role. It is the moment of the institution of the Eucharist. One must underline the indissoluble bond that exists be-

His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin".

²⁴ RH 13.

²⁵ Cf. John Paul II, Encyclic *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 2 (EE).

tween Eucharist and the Church²⁶. The faithful participating in the Holy Eucharist become the Body of Christ. Jesus Christ, who is present in the Eucharist, makes those who participate in the celebration of the Eucharist parts of his own body, and thus the ecclesial body. The Pope underlines: "The gift of Christ and his Spirit which we receive in Eucharistic communion superabundantly fulfils the yearning for fraternal unity deeply rooted in the human heart; at the same time it elevates the experience of fraternity already present in our common sharing at the same Eucharistic table to a degree which far surpasses that of the simple human experience of sharing a meal. Through her communion with the body of Christ the Church comes to be ever more profoundly *in Christ* in the nature of a sacrament, that is, a sign and instrument of intimate unity with God and of the unity of the whole human race *(LG 1)*"²⁷.

The Church is therefore a eucharistic community²⁸. This brings with a number of consequences. If the institution of the Eucharist is seen to reveal the will of Jesus for his Church, then the words spoken by him during the Last Supper: *Do this in memory of me*, are to be seen as the mission of the Church. It is the mission to celebrate the memory of his Paschal mystery, to gather together the Israel of the New Covenant. Therefore, underlines John Paul II, the Eucharist makes of the Church the community of the New Covenant. Consequently, the Church is born of the Eucharist: "The Church draws her life from the Eucharist. This truth does not simply express a daily experience of faith, but recapitulates *the heart of the mystery of the Church*. In a variety of ways she joyfully experiences the constant fulfillment of the promise: *«Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age» (Mt 28, 20)*, but in the Holy Eucharist, through the changing of bread and wine

²⁶ Cf. EE 3: "The Church was born of the paschal mystery. For this very reason the Eucharist, which is in an outstanding way the sacrament of the paschal mystery, *stands at the centre of the Church's life*. This is already clear from the earliest images of the Church found in the Acts of the Apostles: *«They devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers» (2, 42)*. The *«breaking of the bread»* refers to the Eucharist. Two thousand years later, we continue to relive that primordial image of the Church. At every celebration of the Eucharist, we are spiritually brought back to the paschal Triduum: to the events of the evening of Holy Thursday, to the Last Supper and to what followed it. The institution of the Eucharist sacramentally anticipated the events which were about to take place, beginning with the agony in Gethsemane. Once again we see Jesus as he leaves the Upper Room, descends with his disciples to the Kidron valley and goes to the Garden of Olives. Even today that Garden shelters some very ancient olive trees. Perhaps they witnessed what happened beneath their shade that evening, when Christ in prayer was filled with anguish "and his sweat became like drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (cf. *Lk 22, 44*). The blood which shortly before he had given to the Church as the drink of salvation in the sacrament of the Eucharist, *began to be shed*; its outpouring would then be completed on Golgotha to become the means of our redemption: *«Christ... as high priest of the good things to come..., entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption» (Heb 9, 11–12)*"; n. 21.

²⁷ EE 24.

²⁸ Cf. EE 1, 16

into the body and blood of the Lord, she rejoices in this presence with unique intensity. Ever since Pentecost, when the Church, the People of the New Covenant, began her pilgrim journey towards her heavenly homeland, the Divine Sacrament has continued to mark the passing of her days, filling them with confident hope”²⁹.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

The gift of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church is *the communion of the Spirit*, communion between the Holy Spirit and the faithful and also fraternal communion among the faithful. The communion of the Holy Spirit makes the faithful participate in the life of God.

John Paul II likewise reflects on the relationship between Church and the Holy Spirit in *Dominum et Vivificantem* and draws from the teachings of the Second Vatican Council his emphases on the subject. For example, from the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church he highlights the Spirit’s indwelling in the Church and in the faithful’s hearts as in a temple (cf. 1 Cor 3, 16; 6, 19); he underlines the Spirit’s guidance over the Church towards the fullness of truth (Jn 16, 13) and the unity of fellowship and service; he reminds of the Spirit’s role in the Church growth by the power of the Gospel, in her perpetual renewal and in perfecting her union with her Spouse³⁰. The Pope says: “Having accomplished the work that the Father had entrusted to the Son on earth (cf. Jn 17, 4), on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was sent to sanctify the Church forever, so that believers might have access to the Father through Christ in one Spirit (cf. Eph 2, 18). He is the Spirit of life, the fountain of water springing up to eternal life (cf. Jn 4, 14; 7, 38ff.), the One through whom the Father restores life to those who are dead through sin, until one day he will raise in Christ their mortal bodies (cf. Rom 8, 10f.). In this way the Second Vatican Council speaks of the Church’s birth on the day of Pente-

²⁹ EE 1.

³⁰ See LG 4: „When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that He might continually sanctify the Church, and thus, all those who believe would have access through Christ in one Spirit to the Father. He is the Spirit of Life, a fountain of water springing up to life eternal. To men, dead in sin, the Father gives life through Him, until, in Christ, He brings to life their mortal bodies. The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple. In them He prays on their behalf and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons. The Church, which the Spirit guides in way of all truth and which He unified in communion and in works of ministry, He both equips and directs with hierarchical and charismatic gifts and adorns with His fruits. By the power of the Gospel He makes the Church keep the freshness of youth. Uninterruptedly He renews it and leads it to perfect union with its Spouse. The Spirit and the Bride both say to Jesus, the Lord, «Come!». Thus, the Church has been seen as "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”.

cost. This event constitutes the definitive manifestation of what had already been accomplished in the same Upper Room on Easter Sunday. The Risen Christ came and ‹brought› to the Apostles the Holy Spirit. He gave him to them, saying ‹Receive the Holy Spirit›. What had then taken place inside the Upper Room, ‹the doors being shut› later, on the day of Pentecost is manifested also outside, in public. The doors of the Upper Room are opened and the Apostles go to the inhabitants and the pilgrims who had gathered in Jerusalem on the occasion of the feast, in order to bear witness to Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way the prediction is fulfilled: ‹He will bear witness to me: and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning›³¹.

The Pope interprets these above mentioned passages from Constitution *Lumen gentium* as referring not only to the Spirit's inauguration of the "era of the Church". In *Dominum et Vivificantem* we can read: "They also tell us that this era, the era of the Church, continues. It continues down the centuries and generations. In our own century, when humanity is already close to the end of the second Millennium after Christ, this era of the Church expressed itself in a special way through the Second Vatican Council, as the Council of our century. For we know that it was in a special way an ‹ecclesiological› Council: a Council on the theme of the Church. At the same time, the teaching of this Council is essentially ‹pneumatological›: it is permeated by the truth about the Holy Spirit, as the soul of the Church. We can say that in its rich variety of teaching the Second Vatican Council contains precisely all that ‹the Spirit says to the Churches› with regard to the present phase of the history of salvation"³².

John Paul II states that the "era of the church" began with the ‹coming›, that is to say the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles gathered in the Upper Room in Jerusalem, together with Mary, the Lord's Mother. The time of the Church began at the moment when promises and predictions that so explicitly referred to the Counselor, the Spirit of truth, began to be fulfilled in complete power and clarity upon the Apostles. The Roman Pontiff notes that on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was sent to sanctify the church, so that believers have access to the Father through Christ in the one Spirit³³.

The Holy Spirit is the author not only of the Church's coming to existence but, all the more so, of its continuation in history. The Second Vatican Council is cited as itself an expression of the era of the Church continuing into the present century since by taking on the theme of the Church as a pervading motif of its deliberations, the Council thus assumed an ecclesiological character. But another pervading motif, that is, the truth of the Holy Spirit, permeated the Council, even as the council itself may be regarded as a fruit of the Spirit speaking to the

³¹ DetV 25.

³² DetV 26.

³³ Cf. DetV 25.

Churches in the modern world. That there is an interlocking of both themes in the Council only reinforces the conviction, espoused especially by John Paul II, of the intimate relationship between the Church and the Spirit whom he considers “the soul of the Church”. The Pope states that “Following the guidance of the Spirit of truth and bearing witness together with him, the Council has given a special confirmation of the presence of the Holy Spirit-the Counselor. In a certain sense, the Council has made the Spirit newly <present> in our difficult age. In the light of this conviction one grasps more clearly the great importance of all the initiatives aimed at implementing the Second Vatican Council, its teaching and its pastoral and ecumenical thrust. In this sense also the subsequent Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops are to be carefully studied and evaluated, aiming as they do to ensure that the fruits of truth and love-the authentic fruits of the Holy Spirit-become a lasting treasure for the People of God in its earthly pilgrimage down the centuries. This work being done by the Church for the testing and bringing together of the salvific fruits of the Spirit bestowed in the Council is something indispensable. For this purpose one must learn how to <discern> them carefully from everything that may instead come originally from the <prince of this world>. This discernment in implementing the Council's work is especially necessary in view of the fact that the Council opened itself widely to the contemporary world”³⁴.

CONCLUSIONS

Vatican II is a basic source of Pope's theology. As we have noted in our exposition of the trinitarian ecclesiology of John Paul II, The Second Vatican Council has had a lasting influence on this Pope's theological, and especially his ecclesiological, thinking. We can say that Vatican II is the main source for Pope's trinitarian ecclesiology. Indeed, John Paul II describes the origin, structure and the future of the Church from the trinitarian ecclesiological orientation of the Council. The Pope therefore describes the Church in terms of the trinitarian images that the Council made use of.

The Church, having its origin in the mystery of the Trinity, coming “from above”, is the fruit of grace, a gift that is to be received. The trinitarian origin is presented as describing the divine plan of salvation. It is a plan oriented towards inviting humanity to participate in the life of the trinitarian communion. The Church is the fruit of the eternal divine plan of salvation. It comes out of the eternal and abundant love of the Father; this love is manifested and realized through the coming, death and resurrection of the Son and through the continuing and vivifying presence of the Holy Spirit. The Church is therefore the work of the Trinity.

³⁴ DetV 26.

In presenting this trinitarian ecclesiology, the Pope has taken up themes which were already prevalent. However, we also see some newness in the John Paul II's understanding of the Church. The newness lies in the Pope's non-preference for any single image of the Church. It is in the togetherness of the ecclesiological images that an adequate self-understanding of the Church can be found.

The Church as People of God which lives in and for the world is called to realize the mission assigned to it by the Father. According to the Pope's teaching one must underline that if the divine plan of salvation envisages the salvation of all through the mediation of the Son, then the fundamental duty of the Church in the divine plane of universal salvation is to mediate the incarnated World. As the universal sacrament of salvation, the Church serves the universal plan of salvation of the Father. In the concept of the Church as sacrament there coexist the unlimitedness of salvation and the indispensability of the Christ event and this brings us to speak of the Kingdom of God and the relation it has with the Church. The Church is not the kingdom but is its beginning. The Church is the visible, living sign of the Kingdom, inhabited by that reality even though the Kingdom is not yet totally present in it. Therefore the Kingdom transcends the Church. This transcendence of the Kingdom is identified with the action of the Spirit.

The Church taken in eucharistic perspective is an effective way to understand and develop theologically Jesus' Last Supper statement: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser (Jn 15, 1). In both cases, there is communion of many members or branches in one life. The source of the communion is the creator God-Father, the "place" of the communion is Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, henceforth part of this bodily cosmos and its history. Jesus promises the Spirit of truth, who will come from the Father and who, together with the disciples of Jesus, will become worldwide witnesses of Jesus. The end of Jesus' public life is a promise that its beginning will be continued: recall Mc 3, 13-19, where Jesus called disciples to be with him and to be sent out to exorcise evil and preach the good news. The Church is not only the vineyard and vine of the Father, the body of the Incarnate Son; it is also the temple of the holy Spirit.

In the ecclesial communion, which is the work of the Spirit, the trinitarian communion is reflected. The Spirit, in the richness and variety of his gifts, of which love is the greatest, sustains and makes grow the unity of the ecclesial body, in which is reflected the trinitarian unity. The Church, having its origin in the Trinity, reflects the trinitarian communion. It moves towards the final recapitulation of all things in Christ. In the meantime, it is the place of encounter between the history of the trinitarian God and the history of humanity. It is the presence of the Trinity in time and in a certain sense, of time in the Trinity.

We can say of the trinitarian justification of the unity. It is then God as love who is represented in the community of believers and who is experienced in the acceptance of one another. The doctrine of the Trinity constitutes the Church as

community free of dominion. The perichoretic understanding of the Church unity has important implication for ecclesiastical ministry and authority.

We can see that the various images of the Church are not mutually exclusive, but mutually inclusive. They complement and perfect each other as, one might dare to say, the divine Father, Son and Holy Spirit themselves do. This is fitting, of course, since the Church is the sacrament of this triune God.

JANA PAWŁA II IDEA EKLEZJOLOGII TRYNITARNEJ

Streszczenie

Poprzez ukazanie natury Kościoła w relacji do Trójcy Świętej oraz przywołanie odniesienia *communio* eklezjalnej do *communio* trynitarnej, Konstytucja dogmatyczna o Kościele *Lumen gentium* przyczyniła się do pogłębienia analizy trynitarного charakteru Kościoła. Relacja owa dotyczy nie tylko natury początku Kościoła, ale odnosi się również do jego permanentnej struktury, zgodnie z twierdzeniem patrystycznym *Ecclesia de Trinitate*. Oznacza to, że Kościół nie tylko rodzi się z tajemnicy trynitarnej, lecz również jest przeniknięty Trójcą; jego struktura jest *de unitate Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti plebs adunata*. Nauczanie Jana Pawła II wskazuje, że Kościół odbija w sobie *communio* trynitarą, kroczy w kierunku Trójcy. Jest miejscem spotkania historii trynitarnej Boga z historią człowieka. Kościół stanowi obecność Trójcy Świętej w czasie.