THEOLOGICAL TRENDS

Theology of the Holy Spirit, II: Gathered in the Spirit

IN THE PREVIOUS issue I offered some reflections on the relation of Jesus and the Spirit. My goal in this essay is to continue with the theme of the Holy Spirit but I would like to turn here to the topic: Spirit and the Church. A danger, however, immediately presents itself. Thinking about the Church can easily become introspective, even narcissistic. With that in mind, I have carefully chosen the sub-title of this initial section: Spirit, mission and Church. I could have called it 'the mission of the Church'. But such a title immediately suggests a blurred focus. As Moltmann in his book *The Church in the power of the Spirit* puts it:

> What we have to learn . . . is not that the Church 'has' a mission but the reverse: that the mission of Christ creates its own Church. Mission does not come from the Church; it is from mission and in the light of mission that the Church has to be understood.[1]

Spirit, mission and Church

Moltmann's overriding concern is one that many theologians today accept, namely, that we can only understand the mission of the Church in the light of God's trinitarian dealings with the world. At the end of my previous article, I suggested that we could conceive of God's dealings with the world as a funnel. In creation God goes out of himself and relates himself to another. His Spirit is active in the creation, and in the history of Israel he pours out his Spirit on the prophets. Finally he sends his Son with the fulness of his Spirit. The climax of Jesus's life in the Spirit is the paschal mystery. In Jesus's passing to the Father in the cross-resurrection event, he bestows his Spirit so that from this event the universalizing work of the Spirit once again begins, leading the creation back to the Father, so that in the end God will be all in all.

In Moltmann's vision, God's being is essentially open — open to creation, to time and to history. From out of his being flow the two great sendings of our salvation history, the sending of the Son and the Spirit. Moltmann understands the nature of God's activity in terms of a two-fold love: God's sending and gathering love. The love of the Father, Son and Spirit is wide enough to embrace the whole world. God creates space in his life for us. And having created that space, God desires to unite us with himself. Thus we could say that it is the mission of Jesus and his Spirit to create that unity. This is all the more significant in that we live in a world in which God's plan for unity has been disrupted by sin. The unity of man

with himself, with his fellow men and women and with God has been torn asunder.

When we look at the mission of Jesus in the power of the Spirit, we are struck by how often he heals brokenness and overcomes division. Jesus creates wholeness. When John's disciples are sent to Jesus to ask if he is the one who is to come, he answers with a quotation from Isaiah (Mt 11,4-5).

A second aspect of Jesus's mission is the forgiveness of sins. He identifies with those who are cut off from God — the prostitute, the tax-collector, the leper, and he restores them to fellowship, not only with God but with the community.

If it is the mission of Jesus to liberate broken man, to restore communion among men and God, it is also true that this mission is inseparable from his person. In his very being he represents God's desire to reunite that which is estranged. The ultimate sign of this identity of mission and person is the paschal mystery. Here is God's unsurpassable deed of love. God can do no more to unite us to himself. He has no greater offer of love to hold out to us than this self-emptying even to the *kenosis* of the cross. This is why the Church has always seen the mission of Jesus as coming to its climax in the paschal mystery.[2] In the face of all our limited attempts at union, our broken promises, our faint glimpses of communion, here is the revelation of that which is unsurpassable. As John says, 'Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end' (Jn 13,1). St Paul grasped that in this deed of love a union had been established that could never be broken down (cf 2 Cor 5,18). He saw that because of the deed of Christ, all fundamental divisions between God and mankind, as well as all divisions on the human level, are dissolved. Hence his radical proclamation in Galatians 3,28 (cf Eph 2,14-16).

To summarize: Christ's mission is a mission of creating unity. In Moltmann's words, 'The mission of Christ achieves its purpose when men and creation are united with God'.[3]

But from the time of the death and resurrection of Christ, his mission is carried on by the Spirit. This is the time of God's gathering love. In this time the Spirit's role is primary, as the Spirit continues Christ's work of reconciliation and leads to the end-time when God will be all in all.[4] How then should we describe the mission of the Spirit? The Spirit's work is likewise the work of unification. And the community which God's Spirit seeks to create is nothing less than the universal fellowship of men and women with one another in the all-embracing fellowship of God's love.

This background prepares us to look specifically at the Church for the first time. Moltmann has said that we must understand the Church in the context of God's trinitarian dealings with the world and that we must understand the mission of the Church in the light of God's action in history. Accepting these insights, we can understand the being of the Church in this way. God's being as love has become historical in the

paschal mystery revealing what selfless love is really like. This deed has created a new possibility of spiritual community through the sending of the Spirit. Such a community exists to embody in its life the kind of selfless love revealed in the paschal mystery. In one sense the existence of such a community is its own justification. For in being the kind of community which living the paschal mystery creates, God's purposes for the world are being realized. God's community-forming love is taking shape. The community focuses God's purposes for the world and embodies those purposes, becoming, as it were a sacramental sign of God's presence in the world.

But from another point of view, the community must by its nature reach beyond itself. For God's community-forming love is universal. God wants to gather nothing less than the whole creation into fellowship with him. Thus mission is an essential dimension of such a community. Mission inevitably flows from such a Church's being.

If follows that, in the light of God's trinitarian dealings with the world, Church and world cannot be played off against one another. Church does not exist for the sake of world nor the world for the sake of the Church. God's purposes for the world and for the Church are the same: universal community. In the same way, community and mission cannot be played off against one another in the life of the Church. Mission is for the sake of the expanding community and community for the sake of expanding mission.

According to this vision, the Church, in the words of Robert Sears, has a two-fold task: 'to purify itself to become an embodiment of God's living Spirit, and to witness this (trinitarian) love in the world and call the world's own manifestations of the Spirit to the fulness of christian communal love'.[5] In the same way the ultimate goal of the world and the Church coincide in the universal community of God's eschatological Kingdom. The Church does not disappear and cease to exist with the coming of the Kingdom but rather the glorified Church, the Church in triumph, will stand at the very heart of the new creation.[6]

The Holy Spirit and the Mystical Body

In the last section, I spoke of the Church as the sacramental sign of God's presence in the world. We might define a sacrament as a finite, tangible reality which mediates God's presence to the world. From this perspective, the primordial sacrament is the person of Jesus himself. In his humanity, God's reality becomes visible. Hence in the fourth gospel, Jesus can say, 'He who sees me sees the Father' (Jn 14,9).

But if Jesus is the fundamental sacrament, the Church as sacramental sign is somehow meant to be an extension of Christ's reality. The question is how we are to understand the Church's sacramental reality in relation to Christ. In the Decree on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, the Council Fathers suggest that the key is the Holy Spirit. They write:

> In order that we might be unceasingly renewed in him, he has shared with us his Spirit who, being one and the same in head and members, gives life to, unifies and moves the whole body. Consequently, his work could be compared by the Fathers to the function that the principle of life, the soul, fulfils in the human body (Art 7, no 7; cf Art 48, no 2).

In a profound book on the Church, the german theologian Heribert Mühlen seeks to find a theological way to understand these hints given to us by the Council.[7] He suggests the following fundamental formula to understand the ultimate union of Christ and the Church: the Holy Spirit is One Person in many persons. With this formula Mühlen thinks that he is able to affirm a profound unity between Christ and his mystical body without speaking of the Church as a prolongation of the incarnation. To see the Church as an extension of the incarnation (a concept made popular in nineteenth century theology by Möhler) involves the danger of divinizing the Church. Such a formula does not safeguard the radical distinction between head and members. Moreover, the incarnation was a unique, once-for-all event in which the divine *Logos* was united with a human nature. In the Church, new hypostatic unions do not take place. Christ comes to dwell in already existing persons. This is made possible by the Holy Spirit. It is the role of the Spirit to mediate Christ's reality to the believer. The being of the Spirit is always relational and in fact precisely the relation of person to person. The Holy Spirit is the bond of union between the person of the Father and the person of the Son in the Trinity. In the incarnation, the Holy Spirit is the bond of union between Christ and his Father. In the Church, the Holy Spirit is the bond of union between Christ and the believer as well as the bond of union among believers themselves. So radical is this union that the Church can indeed be said to be one person in many persons.

But is there any way in which we can clarify how this is so? To answer this question, Mühlen appeals to the biblical notion of the corporate 'I'. We note that in the Old Testament the 'I' is often extended beyond itself, so that this extension can be said to be identified with the 'I'. In the book of Exodus, for example (34,10), there is an indentification between Moses and Israel. Mühlen comments:

> The first 'you' of the text refers to Moses as an individual 'I', for he is clearly singled out from the rest of the Israelites as living in their midst; but in the second 'you' of the text the entire people is meant. Moses not only represents the people; rather the entire people is summarized in him, so that J. de Fraine can say: 'In a certain sense Moses is the people for the national God'.[8]

This instance is by no means the only one which could be cited in the Old Testament. Among others one could mention the Son of Man or the Servant

of Yahweh. These figures are not merely individual or corporate but both.

Mühlen therefore understands the notion of the corporate 'I' in the following way.[9] The corporate 'I' is a primordial individual who extends himself so that he is identified with the community. The primordial 'I' is the origin of the community from which the reality of the community is derived. The community is the extension of the 'I'. The unity between the 'I' and the community is so deep that the 'I' and the community form one reality, so that there exists the possibility of a fluidity of reference between the 'I' and the community.

This notion helps, I believe, to illumine certain aspects of the new testament portrayal of the relation of Christ and his Church. Think, for example, of Paul's encounter with Jesus. Paul has been persecuting members of the infant Church. Being knocked off his horse on the road to Damascus, he experiences a revelation in which Jesus asks him: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' (Acts 9,4). Paul fails to comprehend how in any way he can be said to persecute Jesus but nevertheless the Lord declares, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting' (Acts 9,5). Jesus is so intimately identified with his community that persecution of Christians is persecution of Jesus. The same idea lies behind the account of the last judgment in Matthew's gospel (Mt 25,31-46). Feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and imprisoned, clothing the naked are acts done to Christ because they are done to his community. Mühlen comments:

> The poor 'represent' the Son of Man not only in a moral-juridical sense, so that he who feeds the poor ought to do it as if he performs this work 'in reality' for the Son of Man. The issue here is not a mere standing in the place of, or representation, but a very concrete and real identification.[10]

Another striking instance of this is in Galatians 3,16-29 where Paul shows that Christians are heirs to the promise, because they are one in Christ. Just as he has stressed that Christ is the single heir of the promise, the one offspring of Abraham, so because of our unity in Christ, he can say at the end of this chapter, 'And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring (note the singular), heirs according to promise' (v 29).

The climax of this identification of Christ and his Church come in 1 Corinthians 12 with the image of the mystical body (see also 1 Cor 10,16-17; Rom 12,3-8; Eph 1,22-23; Eph 5,22-23; Col 1,18). Christ is the head, we are the members of his body. Here again there is the notion of the corporate 'I'. Christ, the exalted Lord, is the origin of the Church. From him there arises the plurality of members. But there is a dialectical unity between both. This unity is so intense that Fathers of the Church can speak of the *totus Christus*. The complete Christ is the total reality of head and members, of the Lord united to his Church which exists in him.

I have been trying to outline an approach to the mystical body in which

the unity of Christ and his members is thought through as radically as possible. And I have suggested that the bond of unity is nothing less than the person of the Holy Spirit. As the Second Vatican Council suggests, the unity of the mystical body is so intense, because the Spirit which has been given to us is one and the same in Christ and in us. The difference between Christ and his members is this: by virtue of the incarnation, Christ possesses the fulness of the Spirit. As having the fulness of the Spirit, he is the origin of the Church. We, his members, have the Spirit by participation.

I suggested above that Mühlen does not want to say that the Church is the prolongation of the incarnation. But if we accept the Council's lead and accept the Holy Spirit as the soul of the Church and the ground of our unity in Christ, then we can say with Mühlen that the Church is the prolongation of Jesus' anointing with the Spirit.[11] Christ has been anointed with the fulness of the Spirit but the grace which Christ possesses as head of the Church is ordered to his members. We share in that fulness of the Spirit (see Jn 1,16), because, as the Council says, we are anointed by the same Spirit (see 1 Jn 2,20,27) and the Holy Spirit personally dwells in each one of us. This indwelling is the ground of the unity of the Church, so that indeed the Church is One Person in many persons.

Spirit and Institution

In recent years one has often heard the slogan: 'Jesus — Yes, the Church — No!' For many people the Church is not a sacramental sign mediating God's presence but rather a hindrance in men and women's search for God. Mühlen's understanding of the Church as one mystical person reveals that such a dichotomy between Christ and his Church is ultimately impossible. But is Mühlen's theory so 'spiritual' that it overlooks the concrete problems of belonging to the institutional Church with its complicated structure, laws, rituals, dogmas and hierarchy?

The question I want to raise here is whether the Church as institution also has its foundation in the Holy Spirit, or is it the case that Spirit and institution are radically opposed to one another, as some protestant theologians believe? Is the emergence of an institutional Church a degeneration from a Church of the Spirit and should we hold, as some marxist-inspired theologians do, that the institutional Church will gradually wither away just as the state is supposed to do according to marxist analysis?[12]

In what follows I shall generally be drawing from the profound ecclesiological vision of Hans Urs von Balthasar who has sought to ground both the Church of love and the institutional Church in the work of the Holy Spirit.[13] Von Balthasar's vision of the Church is rooted in the paschal mystery, in the cross of Christ as the ultimate expression of God's love. This love must be ultimately traced back to God's trinitarian life.[14] The life

of the Trinity is the supreme expression of love, the love of the Father and the Son. From this love proceeds the Holy Spirit as the bond of their love, their love in person. In this sense the Holy Spirit is objective. Everything which he is and has is the result of the mutual loving of Father and Son. A faint human analogy for this can be found in the marriage covenant. A man and a woman, two subjects, love one another and surrender themselves to one another. Their marriage covenant cannot come about except by their yes-word. Marriage is irreducibly personal. But at the same time the marriage contains an objective element. It is not my marriage or yours but ours. The concrete sign of this objectivity is the appearance of the child. He or she is the objective, incarnated prolongation of the love of the parents. Analogously the Holy Spirit is the objective bond of the love of Father and Son. He is, in von Balthasar's words, normed by their love. He has nothing of his own but is in the depths of his being wholly the fruit of their love. At the same time, the Holy Spirit is irreducibly subject. The love of Father and Son overflows itself. As we have seen, the Trinity is an open mystery. Through the open love of Father and Son, which is given form in the Spirit, God goes out of himself, opening himself to the world, to time and to history. Hence the Spirit is also subject, creative freedom, unpredictable. The Spirit is therefore paradoxically both object and subject. He is always normed, determined by the Father and Son. But as the ever-greater fruitfulness of their love, he is also freedom and in this sense the determining, shaping form of love.

Ultimately this means that the subjective and the objective in the Church of love and the institutional Church cannot be played off against another. Both are rooted in the same Holy Spirit. Both ultimately serve to promote love, for the Holy Spirit is always the bond of love. No doubt the objective and subjective will often be in tension but they can never be radically opposed to one another.

The clearest example of this for von Balthasar is in the life of Christ himself. In the inner-trinitarian life, Father and Son together breathe the Spirit. In this sense the Son is active and forming, but one notes in the life of Jesus what von Balthasar calls a soteriological reversal of roles. According to St Luke the incarnation itself takes place by the action of the Holy Spirit. The angel tells Mary, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you' (Lk 1,35). The Word allows himself to be disposed of by the Holy Spirit. This becomes the pattern of the whole life of Jesus. He submits himself to the impulses of the Spirit. Hence the whole earthly life of Jesus in characterized by obedience. Jesus does always the things that please his Father (Jn 9,29). Nevertheless this obedience is never an alien obedience. The will of the Father is not something 'other' but corresponds to Jesus' deepest desires as Son. Obedience and Sonship again are not contradictories but find their ultimate synthesis in the trinitarian mystery. This obedience of Sonship

reaches its climax in the paschal mystery. Here is the supreme revelation of the mutual penetration of obedience and love. This death is the cup which Jesus must drink (Mt 20,22; Lk 22,42). Jesus goes his way to the cross in surrender to the Father's will but at the same time no one takes his life from him. He lays it down of himself freely for the sake of his friends (Jn 10,18). The will of the Father is mediated in this objective command of the Father through the Spirit but it is a command which shows itself to be the form of love, for it is the expression of the Father's desire to save, a desire to which Jesus surrenders himself in the self-emptying love of the cross. This is eucharistic love, love poured out for others.

According to von Balthasar, what happens between Father and Son in the economy of salvation is the ground for what happens and is meant to happen in the Church. The eucharistic, kenotic deed of Christ on the cross is the norm for what we are called to be as Church. The Church is summoned to realize in her own life and self-emptying love of Christ. To draw upon the title of one of von Balthasar's smaller books, 'Love alone is credible'.[15] But a love rooted in the paschal mystery will not find obedience alien. In other words love will always have an objective, institutional component. According to von Balthasar, the reversal of roles in the economy of salvation by which the inner-trinitarian love objectivizes itself in the impulses of the Spirit, summoning the Son to obedience, is the ground of everything in the Church which could be designated 'institutional'.

We must therefore distinguish two aspects of the Church, the Church of love and the hierarchical Church. The Church of love is symbolized in the New Testament primarily by Mary but also by John. Mary is the real symbol of the Church, for she embodies the obedience of faith which is the vocation of the Church. Mary's being consists in saying yes to God's will to become incarnate. She too must follow the path of eucharistic love.

But within what von Balthasar calls the comprehensive femininity of the Church there is also the objective, institutional, hierarchical-masculine element. This objective dimension comes to expression in the word of scripture, also in the sacraments, but especially in the office-holder. The office-holder as a member of the Church is also feminine. He too must submit himself totally to the Word. But in virtue of his office he stands in the place of Christ with the authority of Christ vis-a-vis the community. In this sense he can require obedience of his community.

The tension between the Church of love and the hierarchical Church is represented in scripture by the figures of John and Peter. Von Balthasar loves to meditate especially upon John 20 and 21, which he reads in an allegorical way.[16] Thus in von Balthasar's vision one cannot say that love merges into office nor that office co-opts love for itself. Rather they stand in a dialectical tension. This Church will always be both a Church of love and a hierarchical Church, for these two sides of the Church are both rooted in the same Holy Spirit who is both objective norm formed by the Father and

the Son and their ever-greater fruitfulness, love-in-person, initiating subject of love.

Institution and charism

We have just seen how von Balthasar stresses the institutional hierarchical element in the Church and also emphasizes obedience as a primary response of the believer to God. We must be careful, however, not to over-emphasize the hierarchical. The Church is not divided into two classes, one active, the other passive. The reason for this is that the Holy Spirit is active in all the members of Christ's body. The Holy Spirit dwells in each person and as a result of this indwelling each person has his or her own gift of the Spirit. Von Balthasar speaks of every person as having a unique, irreplaceable sending from God.

This view of the Church almost seems obvious today and finds strong support in such biblical texts as 1 Corinthians 12, and Romans 12. Nevertheless, it is a view which only won official sanction in the Second Vatican Council.

In a famous passage in *Lumen Gentium*, the Council Fathers wrote:

> It is not only through the sacrament and official ministries that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the People of God and enriches it with virtues. Granting his gifts 'to each one as he chooses' (1 Cor 12,11), he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank, by which he makes them able and willing to undertake various tasks or services advantageous for the renewal and upbuilding of the Church. . . . These charisms, whether they be the more unusual or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation, for they are exceedingly suitable and useful for the needs of the Church (Art 12, no 3).

What is most striking about this statement is that these gifts or charisms are not seen as the privilege of a special class of people in the Church but are distributed among all Christians. They are gifts or graces which are given for the sake of service, so that Christians can undertake various tasks for the good of the community. Thus, Francis Sullivan defines a charism as 'a grace-given capacity and willingness for some kind of service that contributes to the renewal and upbuilding of the Church'.[17]

Here we notice an interesting manifestation of unity and diversity. The one Holy Spirit dwells in the multiplicity of the faithful. As we have seen, the Holy Spirit is One Person in many persons. But this unity is not contrary to the multiplicity of gifts. The many charisms do not fragment the unity of the Spirit. Rather this unity manifests itself precisely by creating diversity. We could say that the deeper the unity, the richer the diversity. Mühlen suggests that ultimately we must understand the relation of unity and diversity in this way: the unity is the ground of the diversity.[18]

The unity of the Holy Spirit lets the diversity be but at one and the same time unites the diversity with itself. This is analogous to the relationship between the unity and duality in Christ. The Person of the *Logos* lets the humanity of Jesus be, as diverse from itself but also as united to it. Just as the divinity and humanity of Jesus are always without mixture and without separation, so also are the Person of the Holy Spirit and the charisms. In the technical language of scholastic theology, the Holy Spirit is uncreated grace. The charisms are the created graces, the effects of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the multiplicity of believers. The uncreated grace is one and the same in all believers. The created graces, the effects of the presence of the Holy Spirit, are abundantly rich and varied in their diversity.

But how should we understand the relationship of the institutional and the charismatic in the Church? Avery Dulles in the article cited above suggests that the institutional and the charismatic must be understood to be related to one another in a dialectical way.[19] Both are necessary in the life of the Church. According to the catholic view Christ has endowed his Church with a *magisterium*, with sacraments and with a pastoral office. On the other hand, each person in the Church is called to some distinct service in the community. The Church can never exist without either of these elements. At the same time they do not exist in isolation from one another. In the first place, the institutional lives off the charismatic. A candidate for Orders, for example, is supposed to manifest signs of having been called by God. One must be spiritually attuned to the office to which one aspires. Moreover, as we saw above, the exercise of office is meant to be a crystallization of love. And in fact one of the duties of office in the Church is to stimulate and encourage the charisms and especially to co-ordinate the charisms so that the unity of the Church will be preserved. The office-holder is meant to be the source and the sign of unity in the community. On the other hand, the charismatic lives off the institutional. Charisms, for example, do not appear out of the blue. They are essentially linked to praying the scriptures and to the reception of the sacraments. And charisms are often connected with traditional institutional elements such as the laying on of hands, even when this is done by a non-ordained Christian. Thus the charismatic can help to prevent the institutional from becoming rigid, mechanical and routine. But the institutional can save the charismatic from excessive enthusiasm and from degenerating into factions and splinter groups. In short, as Dulles says, both are needed to preserve the sacramental character of the Church, to make the Church the visible sign of God's presence in the world. The institutional — the scriptures, the hierarchy, the sacraments, the creeds — is needed if the Church is to be visible. But the charismatic is needed if these visible realities are to be channels of grace.

Spirit, Church and Churches

The question of the unity and diversity of the Church is most important

when we consider the relation between the universal Church and the local Church. This is an especially important question, for it has significant ecumenical consequences. How we understand the relation between the universal Church and the local Church will affect our understanding of the relation between the one Church of Christ and those Churches or ecclesial communities separated from the Catholic Church.

In regard to this question, Vatican II develops its understanding of the Church in surprising new ways. Whereas in the past, catholic theology identified the Church almost exclusively with the universal Church, *Lumen Gentium* speaks of each diocesan Church with its bishop as a genuine Church (Art 23, no 1; Art 26, no 1). But the Council does not further explicitate how this is so. Mühlen suggests that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit which he has developed applies here as well. Just as the Holy Spirit is One Person in many persons, so the Holy Spirit is One Person in many Churches. According to Mühlen we cannot understand the relationship between the universal Church and the local Churches in either of two extreme ways. First of all, the universal Church is not a prior reality from which local Churches derive their being. Thus, for example, Rome is not the fulness of the Church in such a way that all other Churches are shadow realities existing only by virtue of Rome. Nor is the universal Church only the sum of all the local Churches. Rather the mystery of the universal Church and the local Church is the mystery of the one and the many. This is ultimately the mystery of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit who constitutes the unity of the Church brings about in the Church the unity of Christ himself, a unity which creates diversity and multiplicity without being fragmented. The Holy Spirit exists whole and entire in every Christian and in every local Church. In Mühlen's words 'The one and entire Spirit of Christ so exists in the individual local Churches, that the universal Church exists from them'.[20]

But if the relation of the universal Church and the local Churches can be understood in this way, then Mühlen suggests that we can understand the relation of the universal Church to the separated Churches in a similar way. We could say that there are two different ecclesiologies at work in the Council document.

One way which the Council uses to relate the separated Churches to the Catholic Church is what has been called an 'elements ecclesiology': that is, the Catholic Church possesses the 'fulness of grace and truth'! Nevertheless several important elements of the Catholic Church can be found in the separated Churches.

First of all, it is important to identify what is this 'fulness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church'. Mühlen believes that this can be nothing other than the Holy Spirit. The fulness of the Holy Spirit which Jesus possessed in his life-time has now been poured out upon the Catholic Church. But how relate that fulness to the separated Churches? Is the Holy

Spirit primarily at work in the Catholic Church and then only derivatively in the other Churches? According to Mühlen such a position would be intolerable hubris on the part of the Catholic Church. Rather Mühlen suggests that the answer must be found in relating the elements outside the Catholic Church to those inside that same Church. The Catholic Church has the visible fulness of those elements. We can understand the derivation of the true ecclesial elements outside the Roman Catholic Church in an historical rather than in an ontological way. At the time of the Reformation, through the sinfulness of Christians, that division of the Church came about which has resulted in Churches outside of communion with the Catholic Church. As a result, these Churches possess certain elements which are derived from the Roman Catholic Church but they no longer possess all the institutional, visible elements which the Roman Catholic Church possesses. In this sense the Decree on Ecumenism can say, 'It is through the Catholic Church alone, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the fulness of the means of salvation can be obtained' (Art 3, no 5). In other words, the fulness of Christ, the Holy Spirit, is at work in all the Churches. But the Holy Spirit becomes visible and temporal in the concrete, historical Churches. This visibility has its fulness in the Roman Catholic Church and from this institutional fulness are derived, via the Catholic Church, those other genuine ecclesial elements possessed by the separated Churches. Thus there is no disagreement among Catholics and Protestants that the Spirit is at work in both Churches. The disagreement is more about the visibility and institutional character of the working of the Holy Spirit. According to Mühlen, the Holy Spirit becomes temporal and visible in the concrete institution of the Church. The main difference between Catholics and Protestants is the embodied character of salvation. It is a question of whether the Holy Spirit binds himself to a concrete history, manifesting himself in such institutional elements as word, sacrament and office. Thus the ecumenical question today is not whether the Holy Spirit is at work in all the Churches, nor whether the separated Churches are real Churches. The ecumenical queston in regard to the unity of the Church is the embodied character of the Spirit's presence. To further the goal of this unity Mühlen advances the following principle: 'The unity of the one Church of Christ is achieved in the measure in which the concreteness of the historical existence of the meta-historical Spirit of Christ is acknowledged, believed and realized'.[21] Mühlen, then, hopes for a gradual reunification of the Churches as all the Churches strive to let the presence of the Spirit become visible and temporal, concrete and embodied.

Conclusion

In this essay we have looked at many dimensions of the Church such as mission and community, institution and charism, unity and diversity. As a mystery of faith the Church's being cannot be captured in rational cate-

gories. Hence the New Testament prefers images rather than concepts to speak of her. The Church is the People of God, the Mystical Body, the Bride of Christ. It has been the modest goal of this theological survey to show that it is impossible either to illumine these images or to adjudicate the almost intractable problems connected with the Church without a theology of the Holy Spirit. Only a pneumatological understanding of the Church opens up the richness of this mystery. Moreover, viewed from the perspective of the Spirit, the Church can be seen to be a mystery of faith in the deepest theological sense of the term.[22] For a Church in the power of the Spirit is our link to Christ, and Christ is our path to the Father. In this way the Church is indeed for us and for the world the sacrament of salvation.

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NOTES

[1] Moltmann J.: *The Church in the power of the Spirit* (London, 1977), p 10.

[2] For a fuller development of this point see Robert T. Sears' article 'Trinitarian love as ground of the Church', *Theological Studies* 37 (1976), pp 657-60.

[3] Moltmann, *op. cit.*, p 59.

[4] For an elucidation of this point, see Moltmann, *op. cit.*, pp 57-62, especially p 60.

[5] Sears, *art. cit.*, p 676.

[6] See Avery Dulles in *The resilient Church* (Dublin, 1978), p 18.

[7] Mühlen, Heribert: *Una Mystica Persona. Zweite wesentlich erweiterte Auflage* (München, Paderborn, Wien, 1967).

[8] *Ibid.*, p 83. [9] For a summary see *ibid.*, p 88. [10] *Ibid.*, p 95.

[11] Mühlen states this thesis on p 20 of *Una Mystica Persona* and develops it at length in no 8, pp 216-86.

[12] I am thinking of the position of Gotthold Hasenhüttl criticized by Avery Dulles in 'Earthen vessels: Institution and Charism in the Church', in *Above every name, the Lordship of Christ and social systems*, edited by Thomas E. Clark, S.J. (Ramsey, N.J., 1980). See note 17 pp 171-72. This essay is reprinted in Dulles's book *A Church to believe in* (New York, 1982).

[13] Unfortunately little of von Balthasar's work has been translated into English. A good introduction, *Hans Urs von Balthasar — Lesebuch* edited by Medard Kehl and Werner Löser (Basel, Freiburg, Wien, 1980) is soon to appear in English. In what follows I am drawing chiefly upon: *Spiritus Creator* (Einsiedeln, 1967), *Pneuma und Institution* (Einsiedeln, 1974) and 'Mysterium Paschale', in *Mysterium Salutis, Grundriss heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik*, edited by Johannes Feiner and Magnus Löhrer (Einsiedeln, Zürich, Köln, 1969), vol. III, 2, pp 133-39.

[14] This point, central to von Balthasar's theology, is developed by Sears, *art. cit.*, pp 657-68.

[15] *Glaubhaft ist nur Liebe*. 2nd edition (Einsiedeln, 1963). The english translation is *Love alone* edited by Alexander Dru (London, 1968).

[16] von Balthasar, *Church and world* (New York, 1966), p 27, also *Sponsa Verbi* (Einsiedeln, 1960), pp 331-35.

[17] Sullivan, Francis: *Charisms and charismatic renewal* (Dublin, 1982), p 13.

[18] See Mühlen, *op. cit.*, pp 207-16.

[19] In what follows I am borrowing from Dulles' article 'Earthen Vessels: institution and charism in the Church'. See above no 12. [20] Mühlen, *op. cit.*, p 523. [21] *Ibid.*, p 495.

[22] Mühlen specifically links the term 'mystical' in 'Mystical Body' with the notion of mystery in the sense of *mysterium fidei*.