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Baptism and Eucharist in an Ecumenical Perspective:

For the 40th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council as an event of the Church is a part of that living Tradition which interprets Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection since the days of the apostles. In the Council the Roman Catholic church wished to answer the present challenges by converting to this Tradition's sources and renewing herself.

This renewal appears in the doctrine and pastoral work interpreted in the framework of the Church as community. In the documents of the Council the main characteristic of this community-principled image of the Church is the unity, which finds expression in the intention of the restoration of unity; in other words, in ecumenical endeavours.

In the following, we will present an overview of the teachings on baptism and Eucharist in the conciliar documents of Lumen Gentium and Unitatis Redintegratio that contribute to the shape of an ecumenical image of the Church.

I. The Council as the Basis of Ecumenical Commitment in the Roman Catholic Church

In the XXth century, connections among Christian communities have been transformed significantly. From an ecumenical point of view, two events rise above the others: the *World Council of*

Churches (WCC) was established in 1948 in Amsterdam, and the *Second Vatican Council* gathered between 1962 and 1965 in Rome.

In regard to the Roman Catholic church, public conversations with non-Catholics were still prohibited, or bound to permission by the *Code of Canon Law* issued in 1917 (can. 1325). In 1949, the *Ecclesia Sancta* pontifical instruction already encouraged serious consideration of the efforts towards unity. At the end of the last century, Pope JOHN PAUL II spoke explicitly about the irrevocable ecumenical commitment of the Roman Catholic church. The most radical change, however, in the Roman Catholic ecclesial self-understanding happened at the Second Vatican Council.

It recognized that "in some real way they [the non-Catholic Christians] are joined with us in the Holy Spirit, for to them too She gives Her gifts and graces whereby She is operative among them with Her sanctifying power. Some indeed She has strengthened to the extent of the shedding of their blood" (LG 15). The Council interpreted and displayed this "joining in the Holy Spirit" first of all in the sacrament of *baptism* and confessing the common faith. As a consequence, the Council prepared the way for recognition of all baptized persons as belonging to the mystical Body of Christ, and their baptism "must be regarded as capable of giving access to the community of salvation" (UR 3).

In addition, the Council affirmed that "baptism itself is only a beginning, an inauguration wholly directed towards the fullness of life in Christ. Baptism, therefore, envisages a complete profession of faith, complete incorporation in the system of salvation such as Christ willed it to be, and finally complete engrafting in *Eucharistic* communion" (UR 22).

Nevertheless, the Council did not produce ecumenical unity of the Church, but rather expressed that these sacraments have special roles toward the One Church. Thus, seeking its identity and self-interpretation, the Roman Catholic church must regard how the Second Vatican Council determined the way of unity in its documents.

There are several ecumenical-minded insights in these documents; for instance, "Many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of her [the Roman Catholic church's] visible structure" (LG 8); "hierarchy of truths" (UR 11); emphasizing variety (eg. UR 4); noting the "teaching office is not

above the word of God, but serves it” (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* 10).¹

Within this narrow framework, however, we can only deal with the most important documents that reflect on baptism and Eucharist in an ecumenical perspective. The *Lumen Gentium* (LG) dogmatic constitution on the Church, and the related decree on ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* (UR), have largely contributed the notion that *ecumenical commitment has been a* (sometimes lifeless) *part of the Roman Catholic identity* since the Second Vatican Council.²

Before having a look at these documents, we have to make an oft-used notion clear. “Ecclesiology” as a reflection starts from the Christian experience that the Church is the “place” of this experience and, in a sense, “matter” at the same time. In another way, Christians find themselves in the community of believers from the beginning, by virtue of their faith; nevertheless faith in God relates to the Church as well, since it is part of the activity and means of God.³

II. Baptism as the Bond of Unity

The letter to the Galatians, which emphasizes that from one Gospel comes one faith, also stresses one baptism as the source of unity. “For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (...) For you are all one in Christ Jesus”(Gal 3,26–28).

Christ forms his Church “by washing of water with the word” (Eph 5,26). The meaning and significance of baptism have been key questions in ecumenical dialogues from the beginning. Nevertheless, requests of the Orthodox in the ’50s and especially the Second Vatican Council in the ’60s gave a new impulse to study this question.

The main reason for this is that they placed it in an ecclesiological framework.⁴ Below, we will have an overview on the contribution

¹ The wording of the conciliar documents may seem cautious, so it is worth to read them in the light of earlier Roman Catholic church documents to recognize their novelty. Or they may seem as self-evident; then it is worth to read them in the light of ecumenical documents.

² Although the theological genre of UR is “decree,” which does not have the same authority as LG, according to the intent of the conciliar fathers and Pope PAUL VI, the interpretation of the doctrine of the Church in LG must be done in the ecumenical sense expounded in UR. Correlative interpretation of these documents is strongly emphasized by Walter KASPER, prefect of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, in his study *Council Clearly Makes Ecumenism Binding as the Work of the Spirit*.

³ Cf. WIEDENHOFER Siegfried, *Ekklesiologie*. In SCHNEIDER Theodor (ed.), *Handbuch der Dogmatik*. Düsseldorf, 1992. 54–55.

⁴ Cf. GASSMANN Günther (ed.), *Documentary History of Faith and Order 1963–1993*. Genève, 1993. 23.

of *Lumen Gentium* and *Unitatis Redintegratio* to the better understanding of the ecclesiological significance of baptism.⁵

1. The *Lumen Gentium* on Baptism

Writing on the mystery of the Church, LG 7 speaks about Christ’s Mystical Body, with which Christians are united through baptism. The basis of this unity is that through baptism Christians die and rise again, similar to Jesus Christ.

In the chapter of the Church as the People of God, LG 10–11 in the first place speaks about common priesthood on the basis of baptism, through which Christians are born again and are “consecrated as a holy priesthood.” Dealing with practising the common priesthood—through which believers become members of the Church—in reference to baptism, LG speaks on a commitment to take part in the liturgical service and confession of faith given through the Church.⁶

The same chapter, after explaining the catholicity (universality) of the People of God, to which both the Roman Catholic faithful and all who believe in Jesus Christ (LG 13) belong or are related to in various ways, in LG 14—primarily addressing the Roman Catholic faithful—Jesus Christ appears as the way of salvation in his Body, which is the Church, “for through baptism as through a door people enter the Church.” The LG declares baptism as a condition of salvation *for those explicitly knowing* that God has given the Church as an instrument of salvation.

After these, in relation to the non-Catholic Christians, with whom the Roman Catholic church is “in many ways linked,” LG 15 puts emphasis on baptism already in the very first line. From these many ways of relating, the significance of baptism is that “they are united with Christ” through it. Baptism is also an instrument for the disciples of Christ to “be peacefully united (...) as one flock under one Shepherd,” who is Jesus Christ himself.

The fourth chapter of LG is about the laity, who are “by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God” (LG 31). Talking about dignity and referring to the

⁵ On baptism see also other conciliar documents: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) 6–7, 64–71.; Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (AA) 3.; Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church *Ad Gentes* (AG) 7.

⁶ This article does not deal with the “essential difference” (originating from ordination), but at the same time mutual “interrelation” (originating from true equality with regard to the dignity through baptism) between common and ministerial priesthood, which is so important from an ecumenical and ecclesiological point of view (LG 10, 32).

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pictures of the “Body of Christ” and the “People of God,” LG 32 speaks about the unity of the Church originating from baptism. This dignity originating from common baptism demolishes the racial, national, social or gender discriminations within the Church. The unifying frame of the “wonderful diversity” appearing in the structure and government of the Church is the “true equality with regard to the dignity” won in baptism.

Speaking about the apostolic activity of lay believers, LG 33 points out that through baptism (and confirmation) they participate “in the salvific mission of the Church herself.” Lay women and men, partially through baptism, become able to be “at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church herself,” to whom “every opportunity may be given”.

In the sixth chapter about nuns and monks, LG 44 expounds the basis of life for those who bind themselves to the three evangelical counsels by vows, in the grace gained by baptism. The religious participate in the Church by dying for sins and dedicating their life to God by living out Jesus Christ’s poverty, chastity and obedience.

2. The *Unitatis Redintegratio* on Baptism

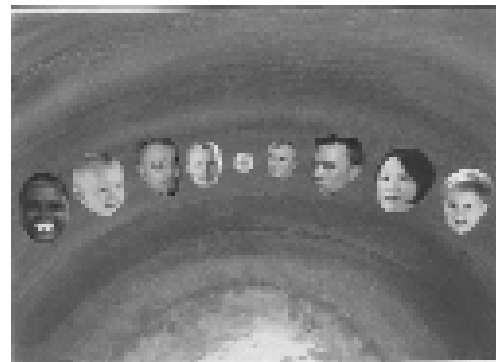
Let us have a look at the UR’s statements on baptism. In the first chapter about Roman Catholic principles on ecumenism, UR 2—as a foundation of the unity of the Church—cites Galatians 3,27–28: “All you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Analyzing the relationship of the Roman Catholic church to the “separated brethren,” UR 3 confirms that despite existing divisions, because of the faith in Jesus Christ and true baptism,⁷ non-Catholic Christians “cannot be accused of the sin involved in the separation, and the Catholic church embraces them as sisters and brothers, with respect and affection.”

This statement, together with LG 14, is an extremely important step forward in the understanding of the Roman Catholic church in respect to gaining salvation. In spite of all the serious obstacles to full and visible ecclesiastical communion, “all who have been justified by faith in baptism are members of Christ’s body.”

The text of the document of the Council proceeds when it expresses that all baptized “are correctly accepted as sisters and

⁷ In the Council’s context, “being truly baptized” means baptism using water and the Trinitarian formula.



brothers by the children of the Catholic church,” since it means that through baptism Christians are already in one Church. Although, some of the differences affect or break the visible unity of this one Church.

Since the UR also says “the brethren divided from us also use many liturgical actions of the Christian religion,” which means the true baptism as well, baptisms made by other communities also “must be regarded as capable of giving access to the community of salvation.”

After speaking about the churches of the East and recognizing their “true sacraments” (UR 15), UR 22 declares about separated Western communities that through their baptism members are “truly incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ,” that is, into the one Church.

It is an extremely important teaching of the Council that among Roman Catholics and the separated Eastern and Western churches baptism “establishes a sacramental bond of unity, which links all who have been reborn by it.” At the same time, by the complete profession of faith as Jesus Christ willed it to be, this bond raises the desire and lays a charge on them to become “finally complete, engrafting in Eucharistic communion.”

At the end, speaking about the separated Western Christians but with an evident significance for the Eastern Christians, UR 23 declares that also their Christian life is strengthened by the grace of baptism.

From the understanding of the Council, it is clear that baptism is an outstanding element of the unity of the Church. The Second Vatican Council has recognized the conception of the royal priesthood of all believers. And, it has placed pastoral ministry into the context of the ministry of the whole People of God. The Council has put much ecclesiological emphasis on baptism, which has brought a big change in ecumenical dialogue; though, of course, there are still unanswered questions in this field. As the BEM says:⁸

“The inability of the churches mutually to recognize their various practices of baptism as sharing in the one baptism, and their actual dividedness in spite of mutual baptismal recognition, have given dramatic visibility to the broken witness of the Church. The readiness of the churches in some places and times to allow differences of sex, race, or social status to divide the Body of Christ has further called into question genuine baptismal unity of the Christian community (Gal 3,27–28) and has seriously compromised her witness. The need to recover baptismal unity is at the heart of the ecumenical task as it is central for the realization of genuine partnership within the Christian communities.”

III. Eucharist Expressing and Bringing about the Unity of the Church

Like baptism, the Eucharist has had a significant role in ecumenical dialogue since its very beginning. Since the Second Vatican Council deepened the ecclesiological correlation of Eucharist, also the ecumenical documents has been dealing more with it since then. In the following we will examine two Council documents, *Lumen Gentium* and *Unitatis Redintegratio*.⁹

⁸ World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)*, Baptism 6. The BEM has been the most important ecumenical document issued by the WCC since it was formed. It is also referred to as *Lima Document* (1982). “Those who know how widely the churches have differed in doctrine and practice on baptism, Eucharist and ministry, will appreciate the importance of the large measure of agreement registered here.” (Preface)

⁹ On Eucharist see also other conciliar documents: Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (OE) 26–27.; SC 2., 6–10., 12., 15–20., 27., 33., 38., 41–42., 47–101.; DV 10., 21., 24.; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (PO) 2., 4–5., 13., 18.; Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life *Perfectae Caritatis* 6.; AG 9., 14., 39.; AA 3., 8.

1. The *Lumen Gentium* on Eucharist

In the first chapter of LG, which is about the mystery of the Church, speaking about Jesus Christ’s mission in LG 3, the Church as “the Kingdom of Christ now present in mystery” appears in correlation with the sacrifice of the cross. This work of our redemption is carried on in Eucharist and “the unity of all believers who form one body in Christ is both expressed and brought about.”¹⁰ The text opens an “ecumenical” perspective in an original and universal sense, since “all people are called to this union with Christ.”

After reading about the “royal priesthood” in the second chapter which is about the People of God, LG 10 speaks about the sacrifice again in relation with the common priesthood. In baptism, believers are consecrated as a holy priesthood and together “present themselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.”

In the balanced approach of the text, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood (which makes the Eucharistic sacrifice present) are destined for each other, since the ministerial priest offers the Eucharistic sacrifice to God “in the name of all the people.” The faithful, on the other hand, “in virtue of their royal priesthood, join in the offering of the Eucharist” and they likewise exercise that priesthood in self-giving.

Dealing with exercising common priesthood, LG 11 speaks about “the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community” (that is the Church). It is brought into operation through the sacraments (and the exercise of the virtues) when the members create, express, restore, take part in and serve the unity of this community. “All in the same way, but each in that way which is proper to her- or himself,” on the one hand, they all take part in the work of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The Eucharist is in the framework of the Church, the font and summit of the whole Christian life. On the other hand, with this participation they “manifest in a concrete way that unity of the people of God.”

From an ecclesiological and ecumenical point of view, it makes us think that in connection with the Eucharist the text is about the unity of the People of God, to which “belong or are related to in various ways both the Catholic faithful and all who believe in Christ” (LG 13) and this unity is “suitably signified and wondrously brought about.”

¹⁰ See the aim of baptism, since we are incorporated through baptism in the Body of Christ.

Also in this chapter on the People of God, in relation with the mission character of the Church, LG 17 formulates that building Christ's Body happens by the Eucharist. On the other hand, it confirms that "the priest alone can complete the building up of the Body in the Eucharistic sacrifice."¹¹

In the third chapter on the hierarchical structure of the Church, and in particular on the episcopate, conciliar fathers affirm: "Those ministers, who are endowed with sacred power, serve their brethren, so that all who are of the People of God, and therefore enjoy a true Christian dignity, working towards a common goal freely and in an orderly way, may arrive at salvation" (LG 18).¹²

In relation with the consecrating duty of the Church, LG 26 connects tightly the service of the bishops offering the Eucharist, since beside the collegial tasks, bishops are servants responsible for the local churches, where "the faithful are gathered together by the preaching of the Gospel." It is the local church, where "the mystery of the Lord's Supper is celebrated, that by the food and blood of the Lord's Body the whole brotherhood may be joined together."

This paragraph illuminates the service of the bishops with an Eucharistic argumentation due to the unity of the Church: "The partaking of the body and blood of Christ does nothing other than make us be transformed into that which we consume"; that is, Christian community takes form in the one Body of Christ. In relation to the order of the Church, the bishops are responsible for the legal celebration of the Eucharist.

In the seventh chapter on the eschatological nature of the pilgrim Church and her union with the Church in Heaven, speaking about the community of the whole mystical Body, LG 50 claims that in the pilgrim Church "we are inspired with a new reason for seeking the City that is to come and at the same time we are shown a most safe path, by which among the vicissitudes of this world, in keeping with the state in life and condition proper to each of us, we will be able to arrive at perfect union with Christ, that is, perfect holiness." The summit of this seeking is the celebration of those redeemed by offering the Eucharistic sacrifice.

¹¹ See also LG 34 on laity.

¹² Since non-Catholics in various ways "belong or are related to" the People of God (LG 13), this sentence put an extremely great responsibility on the episcopate. In accordance with that, the *Code of Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church* § 755. and the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* confirm: "the bishops (...) are responsible for ecumenical policy and practice" (Directory 4).

2. The *Unitatis Redintegratio* on Eucharist

After the review of the dogmatic constitution LG, let us examine the paragraphs about the Eucharist of the tightly dependent UR decree on ecumenism. After declaring its teaching on the Church by the Council in *Lumen Gentium*, the Decree affirms its aim:

"Moved by a desire for the restoration of unity among all the followers of Christ, it wishes to set before all Catholics the ways and means by which they too can respond to this grace and to this Divine call" (UR 1). It is worth noticing that the text calls the wish to restore to unity a Divine call and grace. So ecumenical endeavours—which are from a moral point of view compulsorily continuous—are the answers to this call.

It is extremely important that in the first chapter which is about the Catholic principles on ecumenism talking about the unity of the church, the first paragraph of UR 2 co-ordinates its first statement on Eucharist into the Trinitarian foundation, into the words of Christ praying for unity: „in His Church He instituted the wonderful sacrament of the Eucharist by which the unity of His Church is both signified and made a reality."

Here we can clearly recognize that from a theological point of view, the Eucharistic unity of the Church cannot be emphasized more than binding it closely to the one communion of the Holy Trinity. Namely, the text connects the visible unity of the Church realized in Eucharist (as a sign and a means) directly to the central truth of the Christian faith. It is connected to the summit of the hierarchy of truths.

After confirming the doctrine of apostolic and Petrine ministry, to fix this foundation the text closes with the following definite and indicative sentences: "This is the sacred mystery of the unity of the Church, in Christ and through Christ, and the Holy Spirit is energizing its various functions. It is a mystery that finds its highest exemplar and source in the unity of the Persons of the Trinity: the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit, one God."

In the third chapter on churches and ecclesial communities separated from the Roman Apostolic See, we can read about the Eucharist in regard with Eastern Churches. UR 15 pays tribute to the Eucharist celebrated in the Eastern liturgy as the source of the life of the Church. The text uses the language of the Eastern tradition: through the Eucharist, Christians of the East "enter into

communion with the most holy Trinity, being made sharers of the Divine nature.” It determines that by the celebration of Eucharist in the Eastern churches, “the Church of God is built up and grows in stature.” In relation to Eucharist (and ministry), it derives the verity of these sacraments from apostolic succession.¹³

In the same chapter, in relation with separated Western churches and ecclesial communities, and admitting the witnessing power of these communities and their reverence to the Holy Scripture, UR 22 appoints the complete engrafting in Eucharistic communion as a destination of baptism.

Thereafter, confirming again the significance of the being or absence of the sacrament of ministry, UR 22 puts the standpoint (“we believe”) of the Roman Catholic church in a very balanced way, saying that though these communities “have not retained the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness (...), nevertheless when they commemorate his death and resurrection in the Lord’s Supper, they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ.” According to the conclusion of the Council document, “Therefore the teaching concerning the Lord’s Supper (...) must be the subject of the dialogue.”

To sum it up, the Second Vatican Council displays an extremely close connection between Eucharist and Church. This brought a significant change in the course of ecumenical dialogue, especially as regards the question of the singularity of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice and his Eucharistic presence at the same time.

Nevertheless, there are many open questions in ecumenical dialogue. Today it is already clarified that the double reality of the singular sacrifice of Jesus Christ and its commemoration is not only a Roman Catholic characteristic. As the BEM says:¹⁴

“The Eucharist is the memorial of the crucified and risen Christ, i.e. the living and effective sign of his sacrifice, accomplished once and for all on the cross and still operative on behalf of all humankind. The Biblical idea of memorial as applied to the Eucharist refers to this present efficacy of God’s work when it is celebrated by God’s people in a liturgy. Christ himself with all that he has accomplished for us and for all creation (in his incarnation, servanthood, ministry, teaching, suffering, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension and sending of the Spirit) is present in this anamnesis, granting us communion with himself. The Eucharist is also the foretaste of his *parousia* and of the final kingdom.”

IV. Dialogue Restores Time

The stake of the ecumenical question is the unity of the Church as the sign and means of salvation. The *Lumen Gentium* and the *Unitatis Redintegratio*, each time they talk about baptism and Eucharist as the sacrament of the incorporation into the People of God and the entrance to the community of the Holy Trinity, highlight the unity of these People. After the Council, Roman Catholic theology and practice—as parts of the reception process—must seek this ecumenical dimension.

This change and converting to the *Spirit of Dialogue* affect in several ways the self-understanding of ecclesial communities in contrast to past interdenominational controversies. An implicit assumption is emerging in the ecumenical movement: we can (or should) create an ecclesiology which points beyond divisions. Since Canberra (1991), the World Council of Churches declared it has been seeking the possibility of this “ecumenical ecclesiology.”¹⁵

Largely owing to recent ecumenical insights, the visible unity of the Church is one of the most burning questions for contemporary theology.¹⁶ This new impetus may contribute to overcoming the crisis of the ecumenical movement, which comes from keeping away the *application of ecumenical results*.

From a Roman Catholic point of view, the significance of the ecumenical dimension in the self-understanding and practice of the Church has been expressed deeply and in a wider sense by Ghislain LAFONT OSB,¹⁷ a Benedictine monk and theologian:

“In the Roman Catholic church, relations today called ecumenical were born together with the liturgical movement and in the same time of opening toward historical reflection and politics.

“This conformity in time is by no means an accidental circumstance: if the Church gradually discovers herself as spiritual and structured community, then—as a natural way—she opens towards other communities.

¹³ The text encourages us to have “some worship in common (communicatio in sacris)” with this argument.

¹⁴ BEM. *Eucharist* 5–6.

¹⁵ Cf. GASSMANN 3., 20–22., 25–29.; GROS Jeffrey FSC – MEYER Harding – RUSCH William G. (eds.), *Growth in Agreement II. Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982–1998*. Genève, 2000. 937.; WAINWRIGHT Geoffrey, *Church*. In LOSSKY Nicholas – BONINO José Míguez – POORE John S. – STRANSKY Tom F. – WAINWRIGHT Geoffrey – WEBB Pauline (eds.), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*. Genève, 1991. 184–185.

¹⁶ Cf. WIEDENHOFER 84–89.

¹⁷ LAFONT Ghislain OSB, *Histoire Théologique de l’Église Catholique*. Paris, 1994. 408–409. The author remarks in a footnote: “What I am telling here briefly on ecumenism, *mutatis mutandis*, holds true of interreligious dialogue as well.” In LAFONT 408–409.; see also 31–35.

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“The style of this opening is revealed by the fact that ecumenical relations took shape in dialogue. Dialogue, at least methodologically and temporarily, means the equality of the partners in the spirit of common revision of memory, shared responsibility and endeavour, which aims to overcome obstacles originated in divisions.

“In other words, dialogue restores time. This common intention aims at establishing the future together and making it speak; at the same time probing into the past of language, in favour of discernment and banishment of evil hidden in it.

“In the course of ecumenical dialogue, there is a new emphasis on participants themselves: dialogue implies the mutual recognition of the partners; therefore—at least partly—they give up the standpoint of exclusionary unity and self-defence. This was a characteristic of the Roman Catholic church in the subsequent period of the Council of Trent [i.e. after 1545-63].

“Finally, dialogue raises the question: who is speaking? On behalf of whom? Dialogue touches the essence of the ecclesiology of ecumenical partners—especially of the Roman Catholic church.”

Forty years after the Second Vatican Council, in Central Europe where there are many hindrances coming from political and historical circumstances, Roman Catholics should apply the ecumenical results of this Council.

Suggested Reading

BÉKÉS Gellért OSB, *Krisztusban mindnyójan egy. Keresztények egysége: Utópia?* (In Christ all one – Unity of Christians: Utopia?) Pannonhalma, 1993.

GASSMANN Günther (ed.), *Documentary History of Faith and Order 1963–1993*. Genève, 1993.

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[docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20031110_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20031110_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html)

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SCHNEIDER Theodor (ed.), *Handbuch der Dogmatik*. Düsseldorf, 1992.

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Peter ŠAJDA

Religious Neoromanticism as Substrate for Monocultures

Religious neoromanticism is characterised by mistrust towards the present moment. It fears the “temporary, escaping, accidental” (Charles BAUDELAIRE) and drowns in fantasies of the future, legends of the past, and the security of dream-worlds.

It tends to mythologise the past and daydream about the future, often in exciting apocalyptic terms. To continue with Charles BAUDELAIRE’s terms—flânerie is considered by the neoromantic paradigm to be the only counter-alternative to neoromanticism.

Escape from the Present Moment as Serum Against Immediacy

Flânerie and its sacralisation of the escaping molecules of time is a powerful referential tool, from which neoromanticism draws its negative identity. It perceives the reckless *sans-souci* mentality of *flânerie* as the embodiment of levity par excellence and attempts to counter it with its serious, rigid and romantic life-attitude.

Religious neoromanticism sees its raison d’être in pointing out to believers the danger of living in immediacy. It recognizes the thinness of the veneer of immediacy and draws the conclusion that the arbitrary and unpredictable nature of the present moment requires sound defense mechanisms.

The believer is therefore called to become rooted in the events of the past in order to be prepared for the events to come, which implicitly means becoming rooted in a specific blend of a retrograde-eschatological mentality.