

Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, tr. Lancelot C. Sheppard and Sr Elizabeth Englund, OCD (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988); Originally, *Catholicisme: les aspects sociaux du dogme* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1947): Chapters 2-3

Chapter 2: The Church

- 1) **The “*Catholica*”:** Catholicity as universality is an intrinsic feature of the Church, which is not dependent upon geography or sociology (48ff): the universality of the Church is not only an openness and acceptance of all peoples, but is also the bond of peace that unites them into one Whole. “Humanity is one, organically one by its divine structure; it is the Church’s mission to reveal to men that pristine unity that they have lost, to restore and complete it” (53). The Church is the mother who not only draws to herself those to be her children but keeps them united together in her womb (ibid).
- 2) ***Israel According to the Spirit*:** The Church has been universal ever since Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit manifested through the Apostles a mission of unity in which mutual comprehension is reestablished among humans (after it was lost, theologically, in Babel) (55). The twelve Apostles, just as the twelve tribes of Israel, signify universality in unity (56); this unity is so close that it is constantly personified, i.e. as the bride (57). Christianity received from Judaism an essentially social conception of salvation (61), a common destiny, not an individual one: “Thus, just as the Jews put all their trust for so long not in an individual reward beyond the grave but in their common destiny as a race and in the glory of their earthly Jerusalem, so for the Christian all his hopes must be bent on the coming of the Kingdom and the glory of the one Jerusalem; and as Yahweh bestowed adoption on no individual as such, but only insofar as he bestowed universal adoption on the people of the Jews, so the Christian obtains adoption only in proportion as he is a member of that social structure brought to life by the Spirit of Christ” (60).
- 3) ***Mater Ecclesia*:** the Church’s universalism is not a vague cosmopolitanism of the pagan mystery cults, but a true Catholicism, since the redeeming act and foundation of this religious society are but one act of Christ, which applies equally to the visible Church as to the invisible body of Christ. The idea of Church comes from the Hebrew concept of “Qahal,” translated in the Septuagint as Ἐκκλησία, which denotes not a merely empirical gathering, but the whole people of God, a concrete reality which, however small it may seem outwardly, is yet always far greater than it appears (63). The Greek is suitable too since it emphasizes the aspect of vocation intrinsic to the Church (64). *Convocatio* → *congregatio*. The Church calls human being as their mother in order that she may bring them forth to divine life and eternal light; and this part of her motherhood is indeed allotted to the visible Church (65).
- 4) ***The Church and Body of Christ*:** The difference between mystical and visible body, i.e. of the Church. Christianity ≠ Church; visible Church ≠ Kingdom or Mystical body. How do we understand these distinctions?
 - a) *Church as visible*: the Church is, in an objective sense, *the assembly of the human race*, the assembly which results from the reuniting of all peoples; she is baptized; she is the bride saved from prostitution at Christ’s incarnation; *corpus per mixtum*, mixed body of saints and sinners.
 - b) *Church as mystical body/ kingdom*: the Church is the one who summons all people and from whom they believe; she baptizes; she is the bride of the Lamb “coming out of heaven from God”; unspotted virgin, mother of saints.
 - c) *Synthesis*: relation of mystical analogy (72); Since the Church is the body of Christ, we cannot have any ecclesial monophysitism, but must have an ecclesial dyophysitism: “it is right to see in it in truth the Body of Christ, both in its actual and visible reality and in its invisible and final achievement”; “for between means and end there is not merely an extrinsic relationship” (73). “In the likeness of Christ who is her

founder and her head, she is at the same time both the way and the goal; at the same time visible and invisible; in time and in eternity; she is at once the bride and the widow, the sinner and the saint" (74). "If Christ is the sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ; she represents him, in the full and ancient meaning of the term; she really makes him present" (76).

- 5) **Rediscovered Unity:** This explains why early Christians regarded schism with such horror (77); since "schismatics or the provoker of dissention outrages what is dearest to Christ, for he commits a crime against the "spiritual body" for which Christ sacrificed his carnal body" (78). "[I]n the man in whom the grace of Christ triumphs over sin it will be seen that the most spiritual inwardness is coincident with the fullness of the Catholic spirit, a spirit, that is to say, of the broadest universality coupled with the strictest unity" (79); this means that the "churchman" is not sectarian, but has the love of peace and unity, the love of the Church scattered far and wide (79-81).

Chapter 3: The Sacraments

"Since the sacraments are the means of salvation they should be understood as instruments of unity. As they make real, renew or strengthen man's union with Christ, by that very fact they make real, renew or strengthen his union with the Christian community. And this second aspect of the sacraments, the social aspect, is so intimately bound up with the first that it can often be said, indeed in certain cases it must be said, that it is through his union with the community that the Christian is united to Christ" (82).

- 1) **Baptism and Penance:** (A) *Baptism:* The first effect of baptism is none other than this incorporation in the visible Church, which is essentially a social event; and the consequences of this are not solely juridical but also spiritual, mystical, since the Church is not a purely human society. But the Church not only effects the sacraments but the sacraments effect the Church. "The water and blood which flowed from the side of Jesus on the Cross, the water of baptism, the blood of the Eucharist, first fruits of the mystical union between Christ and the Church, are, at the same time, the streams at which that Church is nourished. As the water flows over our foreheads it does not merely effect a series of incorporations, but there takes place at the same time a "concorporation" of the whole Church in one mysterious unity" (84-5). (B) *Penance:* The efficacy of penance is explained like that of baptism regarding the relationship between sacramental forgiveness and the social reintegration of the sinner. The reconciliation of the sinner is "in the first place a reconciliation with the Church, this latter constituting an efficacious sign of reconciliation with God" (87). This is connected to the belief that only the whole Christ, the head upon his body and Christ with the Church, can remit sins (88).
- 2) **Eucharist:** The Eucharist is the sacrament of unity (*sacramentum unitatis ecclesiasticae*). We have oftentimes forgotten this dimension of the Eucharist and ill-advisedly regarded it as secondary. De Lubac offers a series of early Christian citations to support the centrality of the unitive force of the Eucharist.
- 3) **Communion with the Mystical Body:** There was a slow, historical atrophy of the unused mystical analogy between Christ's body *qua* head and Christ's body *qua* Church and Christ's body *qua* Eucharist: "Just as they would no longer see the spiritual reflected in the sensible or the universal and particular as reciprocally symbolical, so the idea of the relationship between the physical body of Christ and his Mystical Body came to be forgotten" (99). The threefold development in the 11th century pertaining to the Eucharist (*sacramentum tantum*; *sacramentum et res*; *res tantum*), even in all of its varieties, still discloses the strong correlation between Christ as head and Christ as body. Over time, there was a transposition between the predicates of *mysticum* and *verum*.
- 4) **The Sacrifice of Unity & Ancient Liturgies:** De Lubac points out that the Eucharist is the "sacrifice of the Church," and it is for the Church once more that it is offered, for a greater, more united Church" (102-3). True Eucharistic piety, therefore, is no devout individualism (109). The Epiclesis in the Eucharistic prayer shows

that it is the Holy Spirit – the very Spirit of Christ that united the Apostles in the “upper room” with a universal charity – that once more attempts to gather together the scattered children of God (111).