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Schillebeeckx and the *Sensus Fidelium*

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Abstract

The article begins by making a connection between the theme of the *sensus fidelium* and theological hermeneutics, proposing the theology of Edward Schillebeeckx as a resource for weaving together the distinctive – and complementary – contributions to the development of doctrine made by the magisterium and by theologians. This helps to articulate an account of 'the faithful' that is inclusive, and can overcome the separation between the teaching Church and the learning Church that was so firmly in place between Vatican I and Vatican II. The ecclesiological image of the people of God is then explored, using two newly translated sources from Schillebeeckx's later works. This links the theological voice back to the magisterium and, drawing on the teaching of Pope Francis, the idea of 'integral ecclesiology' is proposed as part of the inclusive approach being recommended. Such an ecclesiology needs to draw the image of the people of God into a fruitful interaction with that of *communio*, and the article takes a pneumatological turn in order to do this. Using a metaphor from Pope Francis of the Holy Spirit as the source of harmony in the symphony of the church, a proposal is voiced that is retrospective and prospective at the same time, drawing the two hermeneutical strategies for the interpretation of Vatican II into a relational dialectic with each other. It also offers the possibility of a theological diversity that leads the church into greater union, and into ever deeper communion with the living God.

Keywords

Edward Schillebeeckx, Hermeneutics, Development of Doctrine, Magisterium and Theology, Holy Spirit

In his detailed study of the history of the *sensus fidelium* and its interpretation after Vatican II, Daniel Finucane persuasively argues that any 'contemporary attempt to understand the sense of the faithful . . . must interpret it in the light of the issue of the development of doctrine as well as the question of how to locate the *sensus*

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fidelium as a source in theological controversies.'[1] He notes that the hermeneutical approach taken by Edward Schillebeeckx can be of value in this endeavour, because it maintains a strong link between these two theological issues. The search for the *sensus fidelium* as a theological source is shaped by what Finucane calls the 'interpretative stance' of the theologian with regard to the development of tradition, and of the role in that development that can be played by the magisterium and by theologians. In turn, the 'systems that have been developed and taught both by the magisterium and by theologians are bound up with specific understandings of authority and doctrine.' This close correlation implies that a holistic approach to the search for and application of the *sensus fidelium* is to be preferred to one that is more piecemeal in character.[2]

The theme of development can also be found in the material published by the International Theological Commission on the subject. In its 2012 document, *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria*, the Commission avers that theology 'must speak the truth in love, so that the faithful may mature in faith, and not be "tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine"'.[3] So, although it is true to say that we are not *directly* concerned with the development of doctrine when we consider the *sensus fidelium*, we *are* concerned with the development of the faith that doctrine seeks to express. In Sensus Fidei *in the Life of the Church*, published in 2014, the Commission speaks of considering the 'prospective aspects of the *sensus fidei*' as well as its retrospective ones, as a way of dealing with this development theologically.[4] The *sensus fidei fidelium*,[5] it says:

> is not only reactive but also proactive and interactive, as the Church and all of its members make their pilgrim way in history. The *sensus fidei* is therefore not only retrospective but also prospective, and, though less familiar, the prospective and proactive aspects of the *sensus fidei* are highly important. The *sensus fidei* gives an intuition as to the right way forward amid the uncertainties and ambiguities of history, and a capacity to listen discerningly to what human culture and the progress

[1] Daniel J. Finucane, *Sensus Fidelium: The Use of a Concept in the Post-Vatican II Era* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996), p. 240.

[2] Finucane, pp. 240-41 (quote from p. 241).

[3] International Theological Commission, *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria* (2012), <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_doc_20111129_teologia-oggi_en.html>, § 36, citing Ephesians 4: 14-15.

[4] International Theological Commission, Sensus Fidei *in the Life of the Church* (2014), <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20140610_sensus-fidei_en.html>, Heading before § 68.

[5] The ITC uses the term *sensus fidei fidelis* with regard to the instinct of faith of the particular believer, *sensus fidei fidelium* to speak of that of all the faithful, and *sensus fidei* as a general term. (See ITC, Sensus Fidei, § 3.)

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> of the sciences are saying. It animates the life of faith and guides authentic Christian action.[6]

There are a number of motifs in this short excerpt that can easily be taken up in a treatment of the *sensus fidelium sequela* Schillebeeckx.[7] This way of speaking about the topic fits well with the priority of the future in what Bradford Hinze calls the 'prophetically oriented sacramental eschatology' found in Schillebeeckx's later work, which 'shifts Christianity's center of gravity from the past and present into the future.'[8] It tends to resonate somewhat more with *aggiornamento* than with *ressourcement* as a hermeneutic of and for Vatican II, as a result of this shift, but these two theological instincts need not necessarily be seen as competing interpretations of the Council, or of theology more generally. There is a hint, too, of the early Schillebeeckx's account of implicit intuition as the non-conceptual element of our understanding of faith, which works together with the conceptual element to guide believers towards the truth.[9] Finally, there is – not surprisingly – a strong suggestion of the benefits of interaction with the ideas and cultures in which the church is embedded, something that Schillebeeckx is well-known for, and an equally strong sense of the importance of linking orthodoxy with orthopraxis, through an interaction between theory and practice in which 'praxis is decisive.'[10]

Assessing the *sensus fidelium* retrospectively is also important, of course, and can, indeed, play an important role in assessing how to develop a richer understanding of this topic than that which seems to have been prevalent before Vatican II. Finucane points out that the ecclesiology that was dominant in the period between Vatican I and Vatican II 'was one that emphasized authority to such an extent that the sense of responsibility among the faithful was not developed. To the extent that teaching authority was reduced to

[6] ITC, Sensus Fidei, § 70.

[7] For an analysis of the theme of *sequela* in Schillebeeckx's account of following Jesus, and its links with his Dominican tradition, see Martin G. Poulsom, *The Dialectics of Creation* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), pp. 144-45.

[8] Bradford E. Hinze, 'Eschatology and Ethics', in in *The Praxis of the Reign of God: An Introduction to the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx*, ed. by Mary Catherine Hilkert and Robert J. Schreiter, 2nd edn (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), pp. 167-83 (p. 174).

[9] For an account of this early critique of the Maréchalian dynamism of the human spirit, and of Schillebeeckx's notion of implicit intuition, which was inspired by Dominic de Petter, see Poulsom, pp. 86-87.

[10] Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus in Our Western Culture: Mysticism, Ethics and Politics*, trans. by John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1987), p. 75. Cf. the excerpt from Edward Schillebeeckx, 'Jeruzalem of Benares? Nicaragua of de Berg Athos?' in *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, ed. by Robert J. Schreiter (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), pp. 272–74 (p. 274).

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juridical terms, response among the faithful was reduced to obedience.'[11] This shows how a hermeneutical approach can draw attention to the presuppositions directing the development of doctrine and of practice, highlighting how a shift in those presuppositions can make things possible that were not possible previously. In an expression of this shift that uses quite strong terminology, the ITC says that Vatican II responded by 'Banishing the caricature of an active hierarchy and a passive laity, and . . . the notion of a strict separation between the teaching Church (*Ecclesia docens*) and the learning Church (*Ecclesia discens*)'.[12]

The section of the Commission's document on the nineteenth century is particularly interesting for this hermeneutical approach. It shows, on the one hand, that the shift noted at Vatican II is starting to take place but, on the other hand, the presuppositions and the language available both to the magisterium and to theologians are making it difficult for the change to be expressed, because the tendency to separate is so strong. This is particularly noticeable in the way that the term 'the faithful' is used, which is something that still affects writing on this topic today. Indeed, as becomes clear when we look at this historical example, Finucane's own call for the development of a greater 'sense of responsibility among the faithful' is seen to have only partially made the shift that is required. The Commission gives as an example the definition of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Pius IX, who 'said that although he already knew the mind of the bishops on this matter, he had particularly asked the bishops to inform him of the piety and devotion of their faithful in this regard, and he concluded that "Holy Scripture, venerable Tradition, the constant mind of the Church [*perpetuus Ecclesiae sensus*], the remarkable agreement of Catholic bishops and the faithful [*singularis catholicorum Antistitum ac fidelium conspiratio*], and the memorable Acts and Constitutions of our predecessors" all wonderfully illustrated and proclaimed the doctrine.'[13]

Commenting on this apostolic constitution, the Commission notes that 'Newman highlighted the word *conspiratio* and commented: "the two, the Church teaching and the Church taught, are put together, as one twofold testimony, illustrating each other, and never to be divided"'. The voices of the magisterium and of theology are both seeking to draw the teaching church and the learning church together here – it might even be said that the use of at least some of the Chalcedonian adverbs would be helpful in stressing that there is no separation and no division between the two. However, the reigning ecclesiological (and probably also the dogmatic) backdrop is still

[11] Finucane, p. 241.
[12] ITC, Sensus Fidei, § 4.
[13] ITC, Sensus Fidei, § 38, citing the Apostolic Constitution.

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active in these expressions of faith. As the Commission continues in its consideration of the role that Newman played in the development of this new approach, it says that when he 'later wrote *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine* (1859), it was to demonstrate that the faithful (as distinct from their pastors) have their own, active role to play in conserving and transmitting the faith.'[14] A distinction may not always be a separation or an opposition, but it seems that the tendency of modernity to 'reify and serially order conceptual distinctions',[15] as Kathryn Tanner has helpfully expressed it, is at work in this period, hampering attempts to articulate matters in another way for the benefit of the development of faith in the church.

Talking about 'the faithful' in an inclusive manner continues to be a challenge, and what to replace the separation between the teaching and learning church with is not easy to articulate. However, if members of the hierarchy, theologians, clergy and laity are *all* the faithful together, as the ITC strongly suggests, following the lead of Vatican II (and that of the attempts to move towards that more inclusive way of speaking about the church that were already taking place in the nineteenth century), then a synergy is worth striving for. What might some guiding principles be for such a project – in what spirit could it be pursued? One aspect of that spirit could be generosity. Theologians are called today to put into practice the kind of synergy that constitutes the *sensus fidelium* at its best. This requires great humility and charity, because one of the things it requires is to find a way to avoid falling too easily into a 'two traditions of interpretation' approach that has been part of theological reflection on and after Vatican II.[16] Paul McPartlan, the Chair of the ITC during the period in which the document on the *sensus fidei* was written, makes a helpful suggestion here: 'to handle the notion of the *sensus fidei* . . . we need to adopt the council's two main ecclesiological ideas, namely of the Church as the people of God . . . and of the Church as communion.'[17]

[14] ITC, Sensus Fidei, § 39.

[15] Kathryn E. Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment?* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 143.

[16] See, for example, the way that Robert Schreiter seeks to draw what he calls 'two understandings of catholicity' into dialogue with each other in 'Pastoral Theology as Contextual: Forms of Catholic Pastoral Theology Today', in *Keeping Faith in Practice: Aspects of Catholic Pastoral Theology*, ed. by James Sweeney, Gemma Simmonds and David Lonsdale (London: SCM Press, 2010), pp. 64-79 (quote from p. 67).

[17] Paul McPartlan, 'Response to John J. Burkhard, O.F.M., Conv., "The *sensus fidelium*: Old Questions, New Challenges"', *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Association of America*, 70 (2015), 44-47 (p. 44).

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Ecclesiological Images

Exactly who makes up the people of God, and what relation pertains between it and the Roman Catholic Church, is a matter of some theological controversy, and it has been thus since very early in the church's history. However, when used as an ecclesiological image, it fosters a strong desire to be inclusive. As the ITC points out, *Lumen Gentium* starts its consideration of the church in a holistic manner, and in 'Chapter two [the Council] continues to deal with the Church as a whole, as the "People of God", prior to distinctions between lay and ordained.'[18] And yet, the language is not easy to maintain. In the very next paragraph, the Commission goes on to say that '*Lumen Gentium* subsequently describes, in chapters three and four, respectively, how Christ exercises his prophetic office not only through the Church's pastors, but also through the lay faithful.'[19] Admittedly, the term 'faithful' here is preceded by the adjective 'lay', but this tendency to associate the laity more strongly with the designation 'the faithful' shows how difficult it is to shake off the separation thesis that was prevalent between the two Vatican Councils.

A good example of the desire to maintain an inclusive vision is the way that the Commission speaks of the role of the magisterium with regard to the *sensus fidelium*: 'Being responsible for ensuring the fidelity of the Church as a whole to the word of God, and for keeping the people of God faithful to the Gospel, the magisterium is responsible for nurturing and educating the *sensus fidelium*. Of course, those who exercise the magisterium, namely the pope and the bishops, are themselves, first of all, baptised members of the people of God, who participate by that very fact in the *sensus fidelium*.'[20] So the magisterium does not guide the *sensus fidelium* – or the faithful as such – from without, but from within. This expression of priority is very much a theme in Schillebeeckx's thinking, too. Daniel Speed Thompson points out that 'Schillebeeckx locates the infallibility of the magisterium, particularly papal infallibility, within the general indefectibility and infallibility of the church. In this way, he consistently argues that the infallibility decree of the First Vatican Council can only be rightly understood in the light of the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, which more clearly spoke about the infallibility of the sensus fidei.' For Schillebeeckx, 'the indefectibility and infallibility of the church flow from God's promise to preserve

[18] ITC, Sensus Fidei, § 44.
[19] ITC, Sensus Fidei, § 45.
[20] ITC, Sensus Fidei, § 76.

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the church in truth; this promise in turn extends to the magisterial office in the church.'[21]

These ideas can be found in an article that Schillebeeckx wrote in 1973 for *Concilium*, and in two closely related pieces of writing published in Dutch in 1994, which have only recently been translated into English. In the 1973 article, he interprets *Lumen Gentium* in a similar way to the ITC, pointing out that what the Council says about the promise of God's help, and about the indefectibility that follows from it, 'is said of the Church as a whole, before any distinction is made between the community and its office-bearers; the promise applies to both.'[22] All the same, an order of treatment does not always indicate an order of priority, so later in the article, Schillebeeckx makes the order of priority clear: 'the Church's "remaining in the truth" is above all an interiorization of God's promise of grace in the Church . . . . The whole "body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief," the Second Vatican Council declared. The Holy Spirit is always present in the whole community's confession and practice of faith . . . and it is this fundamental form of the Church's infallibility that provides the key to all other forms, including the dogma as defined by the First Vatican Council'.[23]

The 1994 sources, which can reasonably be called two parallel texts,[24] can be found in the last volume of the 2014 *Collected Works of Edward Schillebeeckx*, which contains a number of sources that have never been translated into English before.[25] They expressly consider the issues of indefectibility and infallibility in the context of the development of doctrine, and look at the way in which these doctrines developed between Vatican I and Vatican II and how they might continue to develop today. When Schillebeeckx describes the doctrine of papal infallibility defined at Vatican I, he says that the 'critical point is that the infallibility of the church does not derive from papal infallibility. On the contrary: papal infallibility derives from the risen Christ's promise to his entire church that it will dwell in the truth to the end of time (albeit with ups and downs) and the truth will

[21] Daniel Speed Thompson, *The Language of Dissent: Edward Schillebeeckx on the Crisis of Authority in the Catholic Church* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), p. 129.

[22] Edward Schillebeeckx, 'The Problem of the Infallibility of the Church's Office', in *The Language of Faith: Essays on Jesus, Theology and the Church*, trans. by David Smith (London: SCM Press, 1995), pp. 55-69 (p. 57).

[23] Ibid., p. 64, citing *Lumen Gentium*, 12.

[24] See Ted Mark Schoof and Carl Sterkens, 'Introduction to Essays: Ongoing Theological Quests', in *Essays: Ongoing Theological Quests*, The Collected Works of Edward Schillebeeckx, Volume XI, trans. by Marcelle Manley (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), pp. xiii-xviii (p. xvii).

[25] Ibid., p. xiv.

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dwell in it.'[26] In the version of the text taken from his *Theological Testament*,[27] he drives the point home in the section on Vatican II that follows this statement, entitling it 'Papal infallibility imbedded in the infallibility of the church: Vatican II'.[28] As he says at the start of this section, the 'Second Vatican Council adopted Vatican I's definition of infallibility almost verbatim, but put it in a broader context.'[29]

The first point he makes about this broader context recapitulates what he said in 1973 about the order of the topics in *Lumen Gentium*:

> the council only deals with papal infallibility in chapter III, after first dwelling on the "mystery of the church" and "the people of God" (who share Jesus Christ's prophetic task), in which the "charism of truth" or "infallibility" already features. According to chapter III papal infallibility follows from that, not the other way round: it concerns a papal and episcopal service to the church's "infallible faith"; that, essentially, is its source![30]

In drawing attention to the setting of Chapter III of *Lumen Gentium* in the document as a whole, Schillebeeckx invites us to use the ecclesiological theme of the people of God as a hermeneutic for understanding the material about infallibility and indefectibility found in that chapter. He goes on to say that a 'second improvement on Vatican I is that episcopal collegiality in the proclamation of a papal dogma is strongly accentuated.'[31] It is important to stress that he does not think that this is a break with what Vatican I said – rather, it is a development of the doctrine that makes clearer what he takes to be the original intention and message. He says that *Lumen Gentium* contains 'a much more refined view of infallibility than Vatican I.' Using the hermeneutic that he has already suggested, he observes that, 'According to Vatican II the subject of infallibility is not the pope, but the college of bishops headed by the pope.... The fact

[26] Edward Schillebeeckx, 'Discontinuities in Christian Dogmas', in *Essays: Ongoing Theological Quests*, The Collected Works of Edward Schillebeeckx, Volume XI, trans. by Marcelle Manley (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), pp. 85-109 (p. 89); the parallel text, whose differences may well be purely the result of different choices being made by the translator, is found in Edward Schillebeeckx, 'Theological Quests', in *Essays: Ongoing Theological Quests*, The Collected Works of Edward Schillebeeckx, Volume XI, trans. by Marcelle Manley (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), pp. 111-61 (p. 116).

[27] See Schoof and Sterkens, 'Introduction', p. xvi.

[28] Schillebeeckx, 'Theological Quests', p. 118.

[29] Schillebeeckx, 'Theological Quests', p. 118; exact parallel Schillebeeckx, 'Discontinuities in Christian Dogmas', p. 91.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Schillebeeckx, 'Theological Quests', p. 118; exact parallel Schillebeeckx, 'Discontinuities in Christian Dogmas', p. 92.

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that he sometimes defines a dogma on his own and on other occasions in conjunction with all the bishops (i.e. in a council) does not imply two acts by two different subjects. It concerns two procedural routes of the same subject.'[32]

In a third step, he draws attention to the way in which 'Vatican II puts the matter into an even broader perspective, although it did not work out the details, namely – and here we quote the theologian Ratzinger before he started his career as bishop and cardinal – as follows: this view includes a moral commitment of the pope and the world episcopate to the voice of God's people.'[33] Ratzinger himself may well use the notion of *communio* to explore how this might happen,[34] but the fact that Schillebeeckx quotes him here indicates that the two streams of thought might not be as a far apart as they sometimes seem to be. Schillebeeckx, and the tradition of interpretation in which he is an important voice, emphasises certain themes, while other approaches might place their emphasis elsewhere, but this is not at all unusual in theology. As Tanner has helpfully pointed out, it is often the case that what is stressed in one theological approach does not need to be stressed in another, since it is taken for granted. This results in theologies that, while they look very different from each other, can be thought of as 'functional complements.'[35] Tanner uses this idea to very good effect in bringing a number of approaches that are often thought to be opposed to each other into constructive dialogue,[36] and recommends the notion of the community of argument as a way of describing such encounters.[37]

As Pope Francis said, in a response to a question that he had received from the residents of a shanty town in Buenos Aires in 2015, it is vital to listen to others: 'Even if you do not agree with them, they always, always give you something or they put you in a situation that forces you to rethink your position, and this enriches you.'[38] This statement powerfully expresses the spirit of generosity that is needed in dialogue, stressing the importance of the church

[32] Ibid.

[33] Schillebeeckx, 'Theological Quests', p. 119; exact parallel Schillebeeckx, 'Discontinuities in Christian Dogmas', p. 92.

[34] After all, as McPartlan points out, this is the other main ecclesiological idea of Vatican II, and the one that Ratzinger prefers (see McPartlan, p. 44).

[35] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 84. For an explanation of how this can help to bring diverse theological approaches into dialogue with each other, see Poulsom, pp. 33-35.

[36] See Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 56-80.

[37] Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press,1997), p. 123.

[38] See Thomas P. Rausch, 'A Listening Church', in *Go into the Streets! The Welcoming Church of Pope Francis* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2016), pp. 77-90 (p. 77).

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being a listening church.[39] It also harmonizes with one of Francis's most compelling ideas, found explicitly in *Evangelii Gaudium*, that the best approach to take to complex issues is one that not only refuses 'to be overly obsessed with limited and particular questions', but recognises that the whole 'is also greater than the sum of its parts.'[40] In such an approach, 'our model is not the sphere, which is no greater than the sum of its parts, where every part is equidistant from the centre and there are no differences between them. Instead, it is the polyhedron, which reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness.'[41] Such a multifaceted approach may well help the church as a whole to develop what might be called an 'integral ecclesiology', in a similar spirit to that which led Pope Francis to propose 'integral ecology' in *Laudato Si'*, and which gave birth to the integral approach to human development that can be traced back to Paul VI's *Populorum Progessio*.

Finally, Schillebeeckx offers a practical reflection, showing again how important the interplay of theory and practice is in his theological approach,[42] commenting that 'in order to embody this [moral commitment] concretely special representative organs of God's people will have to be created.'[43] The way that Pope Francis and the world episcopate sought to heed the voice of all the people of God in the period of preparation for the Extraordinary Synod on the Family in 2014 could be seen as an attempt to do this, though it seems fair to say that a good deal more development of such structures and processes is needed for them to operate as well as they might.

In the end, though (and, actually, right from the start), this ecclesiological search and development must be seen to be guided not just by *a* spirit, but by *the* Spirit – the Holy Spirit. After all, it is the Holy Spirit that guides the church, and therefore development of the *sensus fidelium*. Thompson observes that, for Schillebeeckx, 'the infallibility and indefectibility of the church rest on the Holy Spirit's continual renewing power working in and through it'.[44] McPartlan

[39] In addition to the article just mentioned by Rausch, also see Catherine E. Clifford, 'A Dialogic Church', in *Go into the Streets! The Welcoming Church of Pope Francis* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2016), pp. 91-107.

[40] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html>, § 235.

[41] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, § 236.

[42] For an analysis of how this interplay operates in Schillebeeckx's theology, and of the link between it and the notion of praxis, see Poulsom, pp. 112-21.

[43] Schillebeeckx, 'Theological Quests', p. 119; exact parallel Schillebeeckx, 'Discontinuities in Christian Dogmas', p. 92.

[44] Thompson, p. 129.

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avers that the ecclesial image of the people of God can be greatly enriched with a strong pneumatology. Responding to the paper given by John Burghard at the 2015 Conference of the Catholic Theological Society of America,[45] he agrees that 'one of the great benefits of the title, "people of God," for the Church is that it highlights the Church's historical existence, and that is what Jesus himself alluded to when he said to the twelve at the last supper: "the Spirit of truth . . . will guide you into all the truth" and "will declare to you the things that are to come" (Jn 16:13).' He goes on to say that 'The Spirit is the key to an understanding of the Church in which all of its members are gifted, active, and valued, and that is a *sine qua non* for dealing with the *sensus fidelium*.'[46] 'Yves Congar', he observes, 'happened to regard LG 12, where the council refers to the many charisms distributed by the Spirit after its teaching on the *sensus fidei* as one of the prime examples of the council's "pneumatological ecclesiology," "quite different," as he said, "from . . . the earlier pyramidal and clerical ecclesiology" that he tended to call "hierarchology."'[47] A particular image of the Holy Spirit used by Pope Francis can help here, offering both retrospective and prospective possibilities for thinking about the *sensus fidelium*, and the possibility of drawing the two main ecclesiological ideas of Vatican II into a relational dialectic with each other.[48] Such a relational dialectic could, on the one hand, help to draw the two main traditions of theological interpretation after Vatican II into more constructive dialogue with each other and, on the other, assist the further development of the *sensus fidelium* by encouraging theologians to work together in its service.

The Holy Spirit as Harmony and Symphony

Musical metaphors and similes are by no means infrequent in theology, and can help to express the kind of multifaceted and integral ecclesiology that this paper is arguing for. The ITC uses one to

[45] See John J. Burkhard, 'The Sensus Fidelium: Old Questions, New Challenges', *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Association of America*, 70 (2015), 27-43.

[46] McPartlan, p. 45.

[47] McPartlan, pp. 45-46. He cites 'Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, vol.1, trans. David Smith (New York/London: Seabury Press/Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), 170.' (p. 45, n.13). He also gives the following reference for the term 'hierarchology': 'See, e.g., Yves Congar, "The Church: The People of God," *Concilium*, 1.1 (1965): 7–19; at 18, note 13.' (McPartlan, p. 46, n. 14).

[48] For an account of how this kind of dialectic operates in Schillebeeckx, and how it can be distinguished from other kinds of dialectical approaches, see Poulsom, pp. 94-98.

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express how the *sensus fidei fidelis* helps the believer 'to perceive any disharmony, incoherence, or contradiction between a teaching or practice and the authentic Christian faith by which they live. They react as a music lover does to false notes in the performance of a piece of music.'[49] The imagery can also be useful for the whole church, and is not just applicable to the way that the *sensus fidei* guides each member of it. As Gerard Mannion points out, throughout *Evangelii Gaudium*, 'Francis prefers the image of the harmony of multiple voices – the plurality and diversity [of] all in service of the core messages and practices at the heart of the faith.'[50] Addressing the Thirty-seventh National Convocation of the Renewal in the Holy Spirit in Rome in 2013, he said: 'When I think of charismatics, I think of the Church herself, but in a particular way: I think of a great orchestra, where all the instruments and voices are different from one another, yet all are needed to create the harmony of the music.'[51]

A number of times since the beginning of his pontificate, Francis has spoken of the Holy Spirit as the source of this harmony. He often begins by pointing out that this is not immediately obvious. For example, in his homily in the Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Istanbul, during his Apostolic Visit to Turkey in 2014, he said:

> It is true that the Holy Spirit brings forth different charisms in the Church, which at first glance, may seem to create disorder. Under his guidance, however, they constitute an immense richness, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity, which is not the same thing as uniformity. Only the Holy Spirit is able to kindle diversity, multiplicity and, at the same time, bring about unity. When we try to create diversity, but are closed within our own particular and exclusive ways of seeing things, we create division. When we try to create unity through our own human designs, we end up with uniformity and homogenization. If we let ourselves be led by the Spirit, however, richness, variety and diversity will never create conflict, because the Spirit spurs us to experience variety in the communion of the Church.[52]

[49] ITC, Sensus Fidei, § 62.

[50] Gerard Mannion, 'Re-engaging the People of God', in *Go into the Streets! The Welcoming Church of Pope Francis* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2016), pp. 57-75 (p. 70).

[51] Pope Francis, Address to the Thirty-seventh National Convocation of the Renewal in the Holy Spirit in Rome, 1 June 2013, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/june/documents/papa-francesco_20140601_rinnovamento-spirito-santo.html

[52] Pope Francis, Homily in the Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Istanbul, 29 November 2014, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20141129_omelia-turchia.html

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In other uses of the imagery, he goes further still, saying that the Spirit 'creates all the differences among the Churches, almost as if he were an Apostle of Babel.'[53] In fact, at Pentecost, the 'gift of the Holy Spirit restores the linguistic harmony that was lost in Babel', as a result of which the door of the Upper Room, which was 'kept locked for fifty days is finally thrust open and the first Christian Community, no longer closed in upon itself, begins speaking to crowds of different origins about the mighty works that God has done'.[54]

Francis traces this understanding back to the Fathers of the Church, saying that, for them, it is the Spirit 'who brings harmony to the church. Saint Basil the Great's lovely expression comes to mind: "*Ipse harmonia est*", He himself is harmony.'[55] A good deal of virtual ink has been spilt searching in vain for the quote, but it is the imagery that is most important in what Francis is proposing, and that certainly can be traced back to Basil. According to Stanley M. Burgess, Basil's 'grasp of the full range of the Holy Spirit's work in the life of the believer is perhaps the most exceptional in the ancient world.' The Spirit, for Basil, 'is the conductor of the symphony of creation, [and is] also creator of the church (again a symphony operating in the harmony of the Spirit), which sanctifies all of creation through the work of the Spirit.' The Spirit is the source of the charismata which are assigned to particular believers, and 'life in the Spirit occurs when there is mutual cooperation of the individual charismata.'[56] Drawing on Basil in his account of the role of the Spirit in the church, John Meyendorff uses a lot of similar imagery, pointing out that 'One of the recurring themes in the Byzantine hymnography

[53] Pope Francis, Speech to the College of Cardinals, 15 March 2013, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/march/documents/papa-francesco_20130315_cardinali.html

[54] Pope Francis, Regina Caeli address in St Peter's Square on Pentecost Sunday, 24 May 2015, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2015/documents/papa-francesco_regina-coeli_20150524.html

[55] Pope Francis, Homily in the Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Istanbul, 29 November 2014. Cf. Pope Francis's Address to the Roman Curia, 22 December 2014, which also attributes the quote to Basil, though the Vatican website does not give a reference for the citation. (See Address to the Roman Curia, 22 December 2014, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141222_curia-romana.html#_ftnref18.) He also uses the expression, but does not attribute it to Basil, in his Homily for Pentecost in 2013. (see Pope Francis, Pentecost Homily at a Mass for Ecclesial Movements, 19 May 2013, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130519_omelia-pentecoste.html)

[56] Editorial comment introducing the excerpts from Basil's work by Stanley M. Burgess, in *Christian Peoples of the Spirit: A Documentary History of Pentecostal Spirituality from the Early Church to the Present*, ed. by Stanley M. Burgess (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2011), p. 63.

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of Pentecost is a parallel drawn between the "confusion" of Babel and the "union" and "symphony" effected by the descent of the Spirit in tongues of fire'. In his comments on the hymn he considers, he says that the 'Spirit does not suppress the pluralism and variety of creation [but] overcomes division, contradiction, and corruption. He Himself is the "symphony" of creation.'[57] He notes that, although it is true to say that the 'role of the Spirit in transforming a community of sinners into the "Church of God" is distinct' from the role that the Spirit plays in creation, it is 'not essentially different' from it.[58]

Like Schillebeeckx, it is also possible to draw on Ratzinger's thought here, in order to show how, in a theological approach following in Schillebeeckx's footsteps, listening to other voices who emphasize distinct – though complementary – themes can be mutually beneficial. Scott Hahn describes Benedict XVI as being 'less a systematic thinker than . . . a symphonic thinker [showing] a cast of mind that is more comparable to that of the Church Fathers than to that of traditional dogmatic and systematic theologians such as Thomas Aquinas'. One of the ways that Hahn substantiates his claim is that, in the Fathers of the Church, 'we find the notion that truth consists of a unity of diverse elements, much as a symphony brings into a single, harmonious whole the music played on a variety of instruments.'[59] As Hahn puts it elsewhere, commenting on the hermeneutic of continuity in the interpretation of Vatican II, the 'truths of Scripture and the faith are not monologic. Truth is *symphonic*, especially divine truth . . . . The unity of truth is not threatened or diminished by diverse readings or historical-critical interpretative methods. Rather it is deepened and enhanced.'[60] Although Hahn makes rather a strong distinction between the hermeneutic of continuity and that of discontinuity,[61] it seems reasonable to propose that, as long as the latter is not simply dismissed as a hermeneutic of rupture, it too can usefully be included in the symphony of which Ratzinger speaks. Such an approach, which attends to the possibility of interaction between diverse ways of doing theology, on the one hand, and of mutual enrichment between the magisterium and theologians on the other, is a way of doing theology informed by the spirit that this paper has proposed: a generous and listening spirit that seeks to cooperate with

[57] John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2nd edn, 1979), p. 174, quoting the *Kontakion* of Pentecost.

[58] Meyendorff, p. 175

[59] Scott Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), p. 16.

[60] Scott Hahn, 'Introduction', *The Hermeneutic of Continuity: Christ, Kingdom and Creation*, *Letter & Spirit* 3 (2007): 7-14 (p. 11).

[61] Hahn, 'Introduction', p. 10.

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the action of the Holy Spirit guiding the people of God into ever deeper communion with the living God.

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