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# GANZ NOTES – TALK #1 – A HEART OF FLESH, NOT STONE

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Gregory Cowles on Louise Glück, Nobel Laureate: “To the uninitiated, Louise Glück – who died on Friday at the age of 80 – could feel like an intimidating or chilly poet, her range of references so lofty and seemingly private that her work could come off as stern, austere. But to read her that way was to miss both her cool clarity and her often puckish wit; her poems, which drew on mythology and nature to explore themes of love and loss **and disciplined engagement with the world**, were chilly only in the bracing manner of a good martini.”

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## A NEW HEART AND SPIRIT (JEREMIAH 31:33; EZEKIEL 36:26)

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**Ezekiel 36 (NAB)** – <sup>26 m</sup>I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.<sup>n 27</sup> I will put my spirit within you so that you walk in my statutes, observe my ordinances, and keep them.<sup>o 28</sup> You will live in the land I gave to your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.<sup>p1</sup>

**Jeremiah 31 (NAB) – The New Covenant.**<sup>\* 31</sup> See, days are coming – oracle of the Lord – when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house

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<sup>m</sup> Jer 31:33–34.

<sup>n</sup> cf. Rom 8:5–8.

<sup>o</sup> Ps 51:7–11.

<sup>p</sup> Jer 30:22; 31:33.

<sup>1</sup> [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Eze 36:26–28.

\* **The new covenant is an occasional prophetic theme, beginning with Hosea. According to Jeremiah, (a) it lasts forever; (b) its law (*torah*) is written in human hearts; (c) it gives everyone true**

of Judah.<sup>r</sup> <sup>32</sup> It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. They broke my covenant, though I was their master – oracle of the Lord.<sup>s</sup> <sup>33</sup> But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days – oracle of the Lord. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.<sup>t</sup> <sup>34</sup> They will no longer teach their friends and relatives, “Know the Lord!” Everyone, from least to greatest, shall know me – oracle of the Lord – for I will forgive their iniquity and no longer remember their sin.<sup>u</sup> <sup>2</sup>

**Verse 26** – The terms *heart* and *spirit* (26) also need careful understanding. They are not so much parts of man’s make-up as aspects of his total personality. **The heart includes the mind and the will, as well as the emotions; it is in fact the seat of the personality, the inmost nature of man. The spirit is the impulse which drives the man and regulates his desires, his thoughts and his conduct.** Both of these will be replaced and renewed: the heart that is stubborn, rebellious and insensitive (*a heart of stone*) by one that is soft, impressionable and responsive (*a heart of flesh*), and the spirit of disobedience by the Spirit of God. It goes without saying that there is nothing in the Hebrew word ‘flesh’ which suggests the corrupting tendency of the Greek *sarx*, as used in the New Testament and particularly by the apostle Paul in Romans 8. **The result of this psychological transplant will be that Israel will experience a real ‘change of heart’ and will become, by God’s gracious initiative, the kind of people that they have in the past so signally failed to be. The implanting of God’s Spirit within them will transform their motives and empower them to live according to God’s statutes and judgments (27).** Jeremiah, in the similar passage in his prophecy on which Ezekiel’s appears to be based (Jer. 31:31–34), makes no reference to the gift of the Spirit but his

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**knowledge of God, making additional instruction (*torah*) unnecessary.** The Dead Sea Scroll community claimed they were partners in a “new covenant.” The New Testament presents the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth as inaugurating a new covenant open to anyone who professes faith in Jesus the Christ. Cf. Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 8:8–12. *Know the LORD*: cf. note on 22:15–16.

<sup>r</sup> Jer 32:40; Heb 9:15.

<sup>s</sup> Ex 24:7–8; Dt 5:2.

<sup>t</sup> Jer 32:40; Ez 37:26; Heb 10:16.

<sup>u</sup> Is 54:13.

<sup>2</sup> [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Je 31:31–34.

reference to putting ‘my law within them’ and writing it ‘upon their hearts’ clearly produces the same results. **The enduement with the Spirit was a sign of the Messianic age (cf. Isa. 42:1; 44:3; 59:21; Joel 2:28f.), and Ezekiel was aware of this and mentioned it on later occasions (37:14; 39:29).** For him therefore the restoration of Israel was the beginning of the last days, the age of the Messiah. In keeping with that idea, therefore, the covenant relationship between God and Israel would be renewed (*you shall be my people, and I will be your God, 28*) and in addition to cleansing from the uncleanness of the past there would be the Canaan-like prospect of a superabundance of natural prosperity (29).<sup>3</sup>

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## BUCKLEY, SJ - THREE KINDS OF PERSONS

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In elaborating the criteria by which the authentic influence of the Spirit of Christ could be differentiated from its counterfeit, Paul distinguished three relationships possible between Christians or a Christian community and the promised Spirit of God: the absence of the Spirit; the presence of the Spirit; the guidance of the Spirit.

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### A PERSON OF UNCONTROLLED IMPULSES & OUTBURSTS

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**Galatians 5 (NAB)** – <sup>19</sup>\*Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness,<sup>o</sup> <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions,<sup>p</sup> <sup>21</sup>occasions of envy,\* drinking

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<sup>3</sup> John B. Taylor, *Ezekiel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 22 of *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1969), 225–226.

\* Such lists of vices and virtues (cf. Rom 1:29–31; 1 Cor 6:9–10) were common in the ancient world. Paul contrasts *works of the flesh* (Gal 5:19) with *fruit* (not “works”) of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). Not law, but the Spirit, leads to such traits.

<sup>o</sup> Rom 1:29–31; 1 Cor 6:9–10; Col 3:5–6, 8.

<sup>p</sup> Rev 22:15.

\* *Occasions of envy*: after the Greek word *phthonoi*, “envies,” some manuscripts add a similar sounding one, *phonois*, “murders.”

bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>4</sup>

The primitive and most basic criteria were those that indicated that **one's actions were determined in the absence of the Spirit and under the influence of the "flesh"**: "Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:19–21; cf. Rom 13:12). The criteria are clear (*phanera*) enough. Whatever the intensity of one's religious emotions and awareness, or whatever the seemingly charismatic experiences of the community, **these deeds or outbursts are evil, and they indicate the presence of the evil by which one is guided**. "While there is jealousy and rivalry among you, are you not of the flesh ...?" (1 Cor 3:3).

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## A PERSON BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH JESUS CHRIST

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**John 9 (NAB)** – <sup>35</sup> When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" <sup>36</sup> He answered and said, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" <sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, "You have seen him and the one speaking with you is he."<sup>q</sup> <sup>38</sup> He said, "I do believe, Lord," and he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup>\*Then Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind."<sup>r</sup> <sup>5</sup>

The second level, the presence of the Spirit, is disclosed by the commitment to the mystery of God as disclosed in Jesus Christ. "Nobody speaking by the spirit of God says, 'Jesus be accursed.' And no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3). The first Johannine letter repeats this same doctrine: "This is how you can know the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh

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<sup>4</sup> [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Ga 5:19–21.

<sup>q</sup> 4:26; Dn 7:13.

\* These verses spell out the symbolic meaning of the cure; the Pharisees are not the innocent blind, willing to accept the testimony of others.

<sup>r</sup> Mt 13:33–35.

<sup>5</sup> [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Jn 9:35–39.

belongs to God, and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus does not belong to God” (1 John 4:2-3). **Specifically, this spirit is “of Christ” if it so conforms human beings to Christ that they, like Jesus, are able to address God as “Abba, Father” (Rom 8:12-17; Gal 4:6).** But to be renewed, to be “justified,” through the presence of the transforming Spirit is still only to “have begun with the Spirit” (see Gal 3:3).

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## A PERSON ALWAYS GROWING IN DEVOTION

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**Galatians 5 (NAB)** – <sup>22</sup> In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,<sup>q</sup> <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.<sup>r</sup> <sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ [Jesus] have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires.<sup>s</sup> <sup>25</sup> If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.<sup>t</sup> <sup>26</sup> Let us not be conceited, provoking one another, envious of one another.<sup>u</sup> <sup>6</sup>

The third level of the gift of the Spirit is **the habitual direction by the Spirit**, a guidance which emerges organically from the second level, and which draws to itself the whole Christian life and development: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow [*stoichōmen*] the Spirit. Let us not be conceited, provoking one another, envious of one another” (Gal 5:25-26). This is to “live in the Spirit” or to be “guided by the Spirit” (Gal 5:16, 18), and it follows upon a fundamental understanding of the gospel: **“Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God” (Rom 8:14).**<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>q</sup> Eph 5:9 / 1 Cor 13:4-7; 2 Cor 6:6; 1 Tm 4:12; 2 Pt 1:6.

<sup>r</sup> 1 Tm 1:9.

<sup>s</sup> 2:19; Rom 6:6; 8:13.

<sup>t</sup> 5:16.

<sup>u</sup> Phil 2:3.

<sup>6</sup> [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Ga 5:22-26.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Downey, [The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 276-277.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

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“Holy Spirit” by M. John Farrelly, OSB in Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000).

The Holy Spirit is central to Christian spirituality and to any understanding of it. **In fact, the word *spirituality* reflects the realization that Christian life is led in the power and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit;** it does not primarily designate this life as dealing with the “spiritual,” in the sense of “immaterial.” Since Vatican II there has been among Catholics more consciousness of the Holy Spirit in relation to their lives than there was in the earlier modern period. The earlier widespread neglect of the Holy Spirit was due to such historical factors as the defensiveness of the Counter Reformation Church; its isolation from the riches of Eastern Orthodoxy, with its greater concentration on the Spirit; an excessive emphasis on reason in Western culture and Scholastic theology, and on institution in the Church’s life.<sup>8</sup>

The context of this reflection on the relation between Christian spirituality and the Holy Spirit is the post-Vatican II era. Here we relate this context briefly and specifically to our theme. **People today do not live in a traditional and static culture and society, but in one that is rapidly changing, one in which, at best, they seek to bring about conditions more fitting for the human dignity of all people.** These conditions include a greater equality among people, an opportunity for people to have a free and active role in shaping their lives and the societies that affect their lives, and a more positive evaluation of human growth, other Christian denominations, and world religions than the Church at times fostered in the past. **People are not *objects* of history but rather *subjects* of history, called to take an active role in shaping their individual and social futures, and to do this in the midst of the tensions and conflicts that divide our world (see GS 4-10).**<sup>9</sup>

Gradually a more interior empowerment of the person and community in reference to God was ascribed to the spirit of God. Isaiah predicts that the spirit of the Lord will not

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 492.

GS *Gaudium et spes*, Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World

<sup>9</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 492–493.

only come to but “rest upon” the Anointed One who is to save his people, and through this he will receive “a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord” (Isa 11:2). **At the time of the Exile, Ezekiel recognizes that the renewal of Israel to be a faithful people will depend upon God’s giving them a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:25–27).**<sup>10</sup>

Jesus was himself preeminently a person of the Spirit.<sup>11</sup>

**Jesus was anointed by the Spirit at his baptism (Luke 3:22) and was filled with the Holy Spirit and led by the Spirit into the desert (Luke 4:1). He returned from the desert in the Spirit and began his public ministry at Nazareth by quoting from Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor” (Luke 4:18; Isa 61:1).** In Luke’s Gospel Jesus ascribes his exorcisms to the “finger of God” (Luke 11:20); in Matthew’s Gospel, he ascribes them to “the Spirit of God” (Matt 12:28), showing that the early Church associated Jesus’ saving power with the Spirit. Luke speaks too of Jesus rejoicing “in the holy Spirit” (Luke 10:21). In short, the whole of Jesus’ person and ministry was animated, empowered, and led by the Spirit of the Lord.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, James Dunn writes: “[T]he Spirit is the future good which has become present for the man of faith – the power of the not yet which has already begun to be realized in his present experience” (Dunn, p. 310). **Through the gift of the Spirit, the power of the age to come, we are oriented toward Christ’s coming, and indeed “groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom 8:23).**<sup>13</sup>

In a preeminent sense the Holy Spirit is *the* gift of Christ to his disciples (Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; Heb 6:4).<sup>14</sup>

**The Spirit enables people to do what the law did not:** “For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law of sin and death. For what the law, weakened

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 493.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 494.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 494.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 495.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 496.



by the flesh, was powerless to do, this God has done” (Rom 8:2–3). **The law is an external principle; it does not give the power to do what it commands, and by telling people what to do, it almost evokes resistance that comes from pride. But the Spirit is an interior principle that gives a new heart; “the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom 5:5).** This love is God’s love for human beings rather than their love for God. **They are given this love by the Spirit, and by the Spirit they can sense the love God has for them. Believers can appreciate through the Spirit what Jesus has done for them:** he died for them when they were still sinners (Rom 5:5–8). And so, the gift of the Spirit calls people to a response of love to God who first loved them: “we love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).<sup>15</sup>

**The exercise of authority in the Church is to be in accord with this Spirit.** Paul did not use his naked authority as an apostle, but rather drew others to Christ by persuasion and gentleness (1 Thess 2:7–11). In the Church “the exclusive purpose of authority is *diakonia* or service” (Bermejo, p. 303). There was tension at times between authority and freedom even in churches established by Paul, but the Spirit is the source of each, and neither can be unlimited. In their freedom, Christians still need the precepts of the law and authority to help them detect the voice of the Spirit. But Paul in freedom also confronted authority (Gal 2:11–14). Christian freedom, then, is paradoxical, and it is a task that is given to all.<sup>16</sup>

Life and its sustenance are given also through the Eucharist, and traditionally the Holy Spirit has been invoked in it (the *epiclesis*) both to sanctify the bread and wine **and to enable the participant to have a full sacramental encounter with Christ.** And sins are forgiven by the Twelve, who have been empowered by Christ for this by the gift of the Spirit (John 20:21–23).<sup>17</sup>

One of these charisms, **discernment of spirits**, was discussed at length by writers on spirituality. And, particularly since Vatican II, charismatic gifts have been more widely accepted as normal in the Christian community; their presence has been the basis for

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 496.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 497.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 498.



one of the most prominent movements in spirituality after Vatican II, namely, the charismatic renewal.<sup>18</sup>

The personal character of the Holy Spirit is clearer in John's Gospel. There Jesus calls the Spirit "another Paraclete" or "another Advocate": "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17). **The Greek word *paraklētos*, usually translated as "Paraclete," means an advocate in Greek law, a mediator, comforter, helper, or intercessor.** Jesus is telling his disciples that though he, their present Paraclete, is leaving them, he will not leave them orphans; he will send them *another* Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. As Jesus was personal, so this other Paraclete is personal. The divinity of this Paraclete is thereby suggested because it is worthwhile for the disciples to have the substitution of this Paraclete for the visible presence of Jesus (John 16:7). The Father and Jesus will send the Paraclete (John 14:26; 16:7).

What John emphasizes is not so much the dynamism of the Spirit as the intimate presence of Father and Son **she mediates and the affective knowledge or knowledge by experience this presence gives.**<sup>19</sup>

**In the 20th century there has been an emerging consensus that the primary gift of grace is the uncreated gift that God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, make of themselves.** This uncreated gift is their *indwelling* as well as a proper relationship between the believer and each of the divine Persons. **Thus, they are made sons and daughters of the Father, not simply of the Trinity; they are given a filial relation to the Father that is a participation in that of Jesus Christ; and the sanctity or love that they are given is properly a share or participation in that of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.** Believers are given some consciousness of this. Through this gift and the created gift of grace *they are given a new disposition, a new attitude toward, and relationship to, God that changes them,* so that they enter into the Trinitarian family.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 498.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 499.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Downey, [\*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality\*](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 500.

## MODELS OF THE CHURCH

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The *Oxford English Dictionary* at “sectarian” – 3.b. – 1823 – A person who rigidly or zealously adheres to the doctrines, principles, etc., of a particular religious or political group; a person whose views, actions, or sympathies are determined by their allegiance to such a group, esp. in a way that precludes compromise or toleration.

Avery Dulles, *The Models of the Church*: The most distinctive feature of Catholicism, in my opinion, is not its insistence on the institutional but rather its wholeness or balance (and here one might indulge in some playing on the etymology of the word “catholic” as the Greek equivalent for “universal”). **I am of the opinion that the Catholic Church, in the name of its “catholicity,” must at all costs avoid falling into a sectarian mentality.** Being “catholic,” this Church must be open to all God’s truth, no matter who utters it.

## CHURCH AS INSTITUTION

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I have relied on the short summaries of Chris Castaldo.  
See: <https://chriscastaldo.com/five-models-of-the-church/>.

The institutional view “defines the Church primarily in terms of its visible structures, especially the rights and powers of its officers” (27). It is a hierarchical form of Church government, which the Jesuit, Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), described as a society “as visible and palpable as the community of the Roman people, or the Kingdom of France, or the Republic of Venice” (26). **Thus, authority is vested in the ruling class –clerics and church officers – whose jurisdiction is patterned after the secular state. As agents of God’s sacraments, the priesthood opens and shuts the valves of divine grace.** Because the institutional model maintains that its hierarchical structure belongs to the apostolic deposit passed down by Christ’s disciples, the authority of the ruling class is regarded as God-given and should therefore be unquestionably accepted by the faithful.

The strength of the Institutional model is in its public, visible manifestation of solidarity. It presents a tangible communion of faith. Unlike the other models, all tests

of membership are visible and demonstrable. The weaknesses of this model, however, are also significant. On its own, it may become “rigid, doctrinaire, and conformist; it could easily substitute the official Church for God, and this would be a form of idolatry (186). *Dulles goes on to explain that this is the only model that must not be paramount.* He writes, “One of the five models, I believe, cannot properly be taken as primary – and this is the institutional model. **Of their very nature, I believe, institutions are subordinate to persons, structures are subordinate to life**” (189).

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## THE CHURCH OF POPE FRANCIS & SYNODALITY

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### MASSIMO FAGGIOLI, WHAT IS SYNODALITY?<sup>21</sup>

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Massimo Faggioli is professor of theology and religious studies at Villanova University. His most recent book is *The Oxford Handbook of Vatican II*, coedited with Catherine Clifford (Oxford UP).

It’s a daring project, consisting of synods in every diocese in every country from October 2021 to April 2022, as well as meetings at the continental level from September 2022 to April 2023, before the culminating meeting in a little more than two years from now [starting in October 2023].

Models of synodality may differ, and it is not yet clear just what concept of the “people of God” applies here. But what these models have in common is *the aim of truly listening to all* to ensure the participation of all in the synodal process. **This necessarily means a rebalancing of power in the Church – not only between the clergy and the laity or between men and women, but also (for example) between the power of money and the contributions of the voiceless.** Therefore, even though the bishops are in charge, the synodal process requires a mobilization of the entire Church. Religious orders, lay movements, Catholic colleges and universities, associations of theologians all have the opportunity to play an important role during the next two years. **If everything is left to the vertical institution of the Church, this two-year “synodal process” will simply**

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<sup>21</sup> In *Commonweal* magazine, 15 June 2021.

perpetuate an ecclesiastical order that works only for an increasingly small number of people – that is, for clerics and the clericalized laity.

*Disintermediation* [the detaching of people from the Institutions that were founded to represent them, to express them] undermines the importance of personal relationships in terms of care, mercy, and compassion. **It attacks the very idea of tradition as it detaches us from the need for personal, real encounters that help make sense of tradition as something experienced in a community of real people including and especially those who do not look or think like us.**

Synodality is essential not only for recovering the legitimacy of ecclesial spaces. It's also vital in exposing the neo-traditionalist and neo-integralist understanding of tradition that's contrary to what Catholics believe about communal religious and liturgical experience. **Synodality counters a neo-traditionalist idea of Catholicism that is actually anti-traditional, hyper-modern, and incompatible with the theological foundations of the *ecclesia*.** A synodal event in ecclesial spaces where the people of God can meet would save the Catholic conversation from virtualization and expose the ideological extremism responsible for our current ecclesial polarization.

Before and in addition to the debates and the deliberative sessions, synods are spiritual and liturgical moments. There is an intimate relationship between the Eucharistic sacramental moment of the liturgical assembly and the synodal moment of ecclesial life; this was clear **even before Francis added the Jesuit element of "discernment" to the vocabulary of synodality.**

Synodality is crucial to making space for the paradoxical in Catholicism, for a Catholic way to include and sanctify the messiness of the Christian experience. Our Church is in cultural and political crisis, but there is also a crisis of the legitimacy of ecclesiastical structures, so that our encounter with the sacred in communal spaces is itself endangered. **That encounter must be *experienced*; otherwise, people leave, especially if they already sense that the hierarchy is governing access to the sacred through procedural means aimed at exclusion.**

## BIBLICAL TEXT – JOHN 14

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<sup>8</sup> Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, <sup>9</sup>'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me?

'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father,

so how can you say, "Show us the Father"?\*

<sup>10</sup> Do you not believe<sup>f</sup>

that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

**What I say to you I do not speak of my own accord:  
it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his works.\***

<sup>11</sup> You must believe me when I say

**that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;  
or at least believe it on the evidence of these works.\***

<sup>12</sup> In all truth I tell you,

whoever believes in me

**will perform the same works as I do myself,**

and will perform even greater works,

because I am going to the Father.<sup>g\*</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Whatever you ask in my name I will do,

so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.\*

<sup>14</sup> If you ask me anything in my name,

I will do it.\*

<sup>15</sup> If you love me, you will keep my commandments.<sup>h\*</sup>

<sup>16</sup> I shall ask the Father,

and he will give you another Paraclete<sup>i</sup>

to be with you for ever,

<sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth

whom the world can never accept

since it neither sees nor knows him;

**but you know him,**

**because he is with you, he is in you.<sup>j\*</sup> <sup>22</sup>**

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\* 1:18; 17:6g

\* 10:30p; 1:1a; 12:49; 2:11f

\* 10:38

\* Mt 8:10b; Mt 21:21

\* 15:16; 16:24, 26; Mt 7:7-11

\* Ac 3:16l

\* 15:10; Dt 6:4-9; 7:11; 11:1; Ws 6:18; 1 Jn 2:3; 5:3

\* 14:26r; 1:10g; 1 Co 2:12-14; 2 Jn 1-2

<sup>22</sup> [The New Jerusalem Bible](#) (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 1990), Jn 14:8-17.

To see Jesus is to see what God is like. A recent writer said that Luke in his gospel “domesticated God.” He meant that Luke shows us God in Jesus taking a share in the most intimate and homely things. When we see Jesus we can say: “This is God living our life.” That being so, we can say the most precious things about God.<sup>23</sup>

PARACLETE - But Jesus does not leave us to struggle with the Christian life alone. He would send us another *Helper*. The Greek word is the word *paraklētos* which is really untranslatable. The Authorized Version renders it *Comforter*, which, although hallowed by time and usage, is not a good translation. Moffatt translates it *Helper*. It is only when we examine this word *paraklētos* in detail that we catch something of the riches of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. **It really means someone who is called in; but it is the reason why the person is called in which gives the word its distinctive associations.** The Greeks used the word in a wide variety of ways. A *paraklētos* might be a person called in to give witness in a law court in someone’s favour; he might be an advocate called in to plead the cause of someone under a charge which would issue in serious penalty; he might be an expert called in to give advice in some difficult situation; he might be a person called in when, for example, a company of soldiers were depressed and dispirited to put new courage into their minds and hearts. **Always a *paraklētos* is someone called in to help in time of trouble or need.** *Comforter* was once a perfectly good translation. It actually goes back to Wycliffe, the first person to use it. But in his day, it meant much more than it means now. **The word comes from the Latin *fortis* which means brave; and a comforter was someone who enabled some dispirited creature to be brave.** Nowadays *comfort* has to do almost solely with sorrow; and a comforter is someone who sympathizes with us when we are sad. Beyond a doubt the Holy Spirit does that, but to limit his work to that function is sadly to belittle him. We often talk of being able to cope with things. That is precisely the work of the Holy Spirit. **He takes away our inadequacies and enables us to cope with life. The Holy Spirit substitutes victorious for defeated living.**<sup>24</sup>

Jesus went on to say that the world cannot recognize the Spirit. **By the world is meant that section of men who live as if there was no God.** The point of Jesus’s saying is: we can see only what we are fitted to see. An astronomer will see far more in the sky than an ordinary man. A botanist will see far more in a hedgerow than someone who knows no botany. Someone who knows about art will see far more in a picture than someone

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<sup>23</sup> William Barclay, ed., [The Gospel of John](#), vol. 2 of *The Daily Study Bible Series* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), 159–160.

<sup>24</sup> William Barclay, ed., [The Gospel of John](#), vol. 2 of *The Daily Study Bible Series* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), 166–167.

who is quite ignorant of art. Someone who understands a little about music will get far more out of a symphony than someone who understands nothing. Always what we see and experience depends on what we bring to the sight and the experience. A person who has eliminated God never listens for him; and we cannot receive the Holy Spirit unless we wait in expectation and in prayer for him to come to us.

**The Holy Spirit gate-crashes no man's heart; He waits to be received.** So, when we think of the wonderful things which the Holy Spirit can do, surely we will set apart some time amidst the bustle and the rush of life to wait in silence for his coming.<sup>25</sup>

**C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, Chapter 13 concerning the unseeing dwarves:**

Lucy led the way and soon they could all see the Dwarfs. They had a very odd look. They weren't strolling about or enjoying themselves (although the cords with which they had been tied seemed to have vanished) nor were they lying down and having a rest. They were sitting very close together in a little circle facing one another. They never looked round or took any notice of the humans till Lucy and Tirian were almost near enough to touch them. Then the Dwarfs all cocked their heads as if they couldn't see anyone but were listening hard and trying to guess by the sound what was happening. "Look out!" said one of them in a surly voice. "Mind where you're going. Don't walk into our faces!"

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<sup>25</sup> William Barclay, ed., [\*The Gospel of John\*](#), vol. 2 of *The Daily Study Bible Series* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), 167-168.