

ECCLESIOLOGY

Topic: A Eucharistic Ecclesiology: Issues in the Roman Synod 2005

Convener: Susan K. Wood, Marquette University

Presenters: David Power, The Catholic University of America

Peter Schonenbach, Former General Secretary,
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Peter Schonenbach presented a detailed review of the process used by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in the Roman Synod dealing with the Ministry of the Bishop held in 2001 and gave a description of the current Canadian practice relating to the forthcoming Roman Synod on the Eucharist.

The fundamental principle of the CCCB concerning Roman Synods was that delegate bishops are to speak in the name of their Conference colleagues and not exclusively in their own name. The Conference established a CCCB office in Rome for the duration of the Synod to be staffed by the General Secretary, two Canadian theologians, and one Conference Press Officer. Preparation for the 2001 Synod included meetings of the delegate bishops and theologian consultants to determine the topics to be developed and the interests of the delegate bishops. The delegate bishops shared their presentations with their fellow bishops at the Annual CCCB assembly in September 2001 and received feedback from them. In Rome, daily evening meetings between staff and bishops assessed the progress of the Synod. The theologians produced a tabulation of the major ideas made in the Aula and made this available to interested bishops.

Criticisms of the Synodal process by the participating bishops included the use of Latin for the basic texts, in particular amended propositions, the rule that only summaries of interventions could be published, the lack of transparency in the manner in which the final message was progressively emasculated, and some of the Press Conferences which gave the impression of stonewalling rather than transmitting information.

The process for the 2005 Synod will be significantly altered due to the \$500,000 cut in the budget of the Canadian Conference. There will be no on-site office or designated theologians. Consequently there will be a minimum of teamwork, with the result that the individual viewpoints of the bishops are taking a larger place in the choice of topics.

Schonenbach concluded by enumerating the advantages of the principle of delegates speaking on behalf of their Conference colleagues: (1) it brings to the Synod more views and enables each bishop to have greater ownership of the Synodal process; (2) greater synergy is possible and the team approach motivates toward a high degree of excellence; and (3) it allows greater collaboration with professional theologians.

David Power commented on the Synodal *Lineamenta* on Eucharist, first noting that they are an effort to outline the present state of Catholic practice and doctrine on the Eucharist as the source and summit of the life of the Church and of its

mission and to indicate those matters that need clarification or discussion. Thus the text is a mixture of the doctrinal, the mystagogical, and the disciplinary. The document has no magisterial weight and is meant to offer guidelines and suggestions for discussion.

After first noting the doctrinal resources used in the document, Power commented on the connection between the document's practical concerns, the connection between the theology of the Church and the sacrament of the Eucharist within the document, the understanding of the Church's mission, and what the document says of eucharistic mystagogy, especially how it presents memorial, what liturgies it evokes, what it says of the rite of eucharistic communion, and what it says of the action of the Spirit in sacrament and church. He concluded by summarizing points that need discussion and development. He noted the absence throughout of any ecumenical dialogue or concern, a discussion about the Eucharist as an ecclesial sacrament, and a discussion relating the Eucharist to the Church's mission and eschatological horizon.

Power suggested these concerns for an eventual *instrumentum laboris*: (1) a better elaboration of the points of practical concern for the celebration of the Eucharist in the Church such as issues of ministry, of local community; (2) more attention to ecumenical conversation and to the celebration of the Eucharist in other churches, East and West, as well as to the ecumenical goal of one common Eucharist; (3) a formulation of the Church's mission, to which the Eucharist is related, which takes the evolution of the Church's mission in the modern world and its theological formulation into account; (4) a better integration of ecclesial and sacramental pneumatology; (5) a formulation of the sacramentality of the Church as Body of Christ and people of God, which profits from developments in eschatology; and (6) a formulation of the relation between local and universal Church which attends to the growth and vitality of the Church in the global South.

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