

THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ENCYCLICAL "MYSTICI CORPORIS"

There is, I feel, a certain fitness in this topic, for this occasion. "Theological significance" is the goal of our new learned society: to explore it wherever it appears, to achieve it in ourselves. And, since the prorogation of the Vatican Council, no document of greater theological significance has come to us from the magisterium, than this encyclical on the Mystical Body. The suggestion, therefore, that the *Mystici Corporis* be among the first subjects for our discussion would seem to be one more detail in which the committee on arrangements has done its work well, in laboring to make this first meeting of our society so fruitful.

I wish I could see the same fitness in their choice of a theologian to present this theme to you. I must simply hope that the importance of the subject itself will succeed in overshadowing the shortcomings of the hands to which it is entrusted.

The significance of the *Mystici Corporis* lies first in this: it marks the end of a whole era of the Church's life, the end of an era which has taken six hundred years to run its course.

The era which is closing—to name it for the central issue which distinguished it—has been an age of struggle for the dogma of the visibility of the Kingdom of God on earth. The era of that struggle dawned in the fourteenth century, with the *Defensor pacis* of Marsilius of Padua, denying the divine origin of the Primacy. It had its morning as Wyclif, and then Hus, fought to identify the Church with an invisible assembly of the predestined. The Reformation, repudiating the whole visible fabric of the Church, was its high noon. It is ending now, in the twilight of a Protestantism whose strength—insofar as that strength is specifically Protestant—is largely spent.

I do not mean, of course, that the struggle for the truth of the Church's visibility is completely over and won—perhaps that will never be, in this world. But a new issue has come to replace it at the central point of conflict. Naturalism and rationalism have suc-

ceeded in devastating non-Catholic religious thought from within. And today it is the supernaturalness of God's Kingdom on earth, once as dear to Protestants as to Catholics, which has become the central target of the assault on God's truth. The *Mystici Corporis* reveals the Church, radiant in her sufficiency for the new combat, redeploying, as it were, her armor—marshalling her timeless truths in a new array to meet the demands of the new times. The era dominated by struggle for the visibility of the Church is over. An era of struggle for the supernaturalness of God's Church has begun. The encyclical on the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ ushers in the new age and gives to theology its basic directives for the action ahead.

The express purpose of the encyclical is to give and explain a definition of the Church. Hence it is before all else an ecclesiastical document and its primary theological significance is for the treatise *De ecclesia*. In the concrete, however, its new presentation of the truths of ecclesiology is such as to make it pregnant with meaning for all the departments of scientific theology. Of these two things then we will speak: first, and at greater length, of its significance for *De ecclesia*; secondly, and more briefly, of its moment for theological science as a whole.

I

For ecclesiology the *Mystici Corporis* has a meaning which is so profound that it implies a real transformation of that department of theology. Its pages foreshadow a treatise *De Ecclesia* whose emphases and proportions will differ very widely from those we have known. Perhaps a glance at ecclesiology's past will clarify the extent and character of this transformation.

The age of struggle for the visibility of the Church was that in which ecclesiology was born and formed as a separate science. As ecclesiologists have been first to admit, their science, more than any other branch of theology, was powerfully influenced in its development by the nature of the positions which its non-Catholic adversaries assumed. Other aspects of theology, of course, also felt that influence, but it was overshadowed by the theological directives given them at Trent. Finally the Vatican Council planned such directives for

ecclesiology, but then Divine Providence saw fit to let the effort lapse before it was fairly begun.

And what was the result? Scientific ecclesiology became a treatise whose emphases and proportions were adjusted all too exactly to the needs of that one age, to refuting the specific errors of Gallicanism and the Reformation, rather than to portraying the timeless truth of the Church's objective nature in a balanced way which would transcend the conflicts of any single period. Its full efficiency depended upon the continuance of the central controversies to which it was so precisely geared. And now that these are no longer the central issues, the theologian whose special province is ecclesiology has been growing increasingly aware that his treatise, garbed in its traditional forms, could with at least some small justice be likened to those valiant defenders of the Holy See, the Swiss Guards—admirable in intrinsic merit, but dressed in the attire of an age that is gone. Historians of theology will point on some future day, I think, to the *Mystici Corporis* as the act of the magisterium which eventually did away with the basis of that comparison. For this encyclical at last gives to ecclesiology the positive theological directives which it has desiderated so long, and points the way to its transformation into a balanced and timeless exposition of the whole dogma of the nature of the Church.

We turn now to inspect this new presentation of the Church's nature. To examine it in anything like full detail is, of course, impossible in this paper. But we can review the three fundamental points around which it is built.

"The Mystical Body of Jesus Christ," says the encyclical, is the *best definition* of the Church—better, that is, than any of the more juridical definitions around which ecclesiology has traditionally revolved.¹ To the three elements of this definition it matches the three essential things which are described as the basic realities of the Church's constitution. These three things are: the human element in the Church; the Divinity which pervades that human element; and

¹ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XXXV, 199; English transl., New York: The America Press, 1943, n. 17. In all succeeding references to the text of the encyclical, the first number will indicate the page in the Latin text of the *AAS*, the second the paragraph number in the above translation.

the theandric factor which crowns and specifies every other feature of the Church's being and action. We will now look at each of these in turn and make, in the case of each, a few observations which may serve to accent their meaning.

(1) The human element in the Church corresponds to the word "Body" in its definition. In explaining this, the *Mystici Corporis* echoes all that ecclesiology has always taught about the Church as a visible and perfect society. The Church is a Body because it is the organized, visible part of a living whole. It is a moral Body because all of its parts are united by a common purpose, towards which all co-operate under a common authority.

For the historical reasons already alluded to, this phase of the Church's being became and has remained the central emphasis in ecclesiology. Its supernatural elements have by no means been ignored, but the major attention has centered on this element of social visibility. The *Mystici Corporis* now explicitly reverses this emphasis. The external social structure of the Church, it teaches, while "eloquent of its Divine Architect's wisdom, still remains something inferior, when compared" to the other elements which make up the Church.² And this new emphasis is faithfully reflected in the space which the encyclical devotes to each of the several elements. Only about twenty per cent of its doctrinal exposition is devoted to explaining the Church as a "Body."

Yet even in this brief compass the *Mystici Corporis* enriches an already familiar field. It proposes for instance, a clear-cut answer to the problem of the origin of Episcopal authority. "Although their jurisdiction is inherent in their office, yet they receive it directly from the Roman Pontiff."³ Again—and this is something much more far-reaching in its implications—it describes the organic structure of the Body of the Church in greater detail than has ever been officially done before.

"One must not think," says the Holy Father, "that this ordered or 'organic' structure of the Body of the Church contains only hierarchical elements and with them is complete." An organ, we may

² 223; 77.

³ 212; 52.

here interpose, is a part or group of parts, in the Body, which is distinguished by some specific function which it is to perform for the good of the whole Body. Thus the Episcopate forms one organ in the Body which is the Church, the Primacy another, and the Priesthood still another. Her members who are consecrated to the Religious life, the encyclical continues, form yet another such organ in the Body which is Christ's. And married people make up still another. We can underline this last point by drawing the conclusion that the Albigenses, with their repudiation of marriage, were therefore guilty of an *ecclesiological* heresy! The Body which is Christ's has, as yet other organs, those who dedicate their labors to spiritual or corporal works of mercy. In other words, the organic structure of this Body is one which extends down through the whole membership of the Church. When we behold the nun in the class-room, the father instructing his child, the nursing Sister at her work, or the Religious at prayer, we are seeing, no less than in the spectacle of a General Council or a priest at the altar or in the confessional, the whole organic Body in action, with each of its diversified *organs* contributing its own special action towards the well-being of the whole.

The *Mystici Corporis* goes on to bring out the sacramental and charismatic character of this organism. The sacramental system, it says, is essentially social in its entirety, not only in its administration but in its purpose. Even in such an intimately personal sacrament as Penance, the Pope tells us, the penitent receives the sacrament "not only to provide for his own health."⁴ He sketches the social purpose of each of the seven Sacraments and shows how, by their diversified instrumentalities, supplemented by the operation of those charisms which the Holy Spirit "divides to everyone according as He will," the membership of the Body is differentiated into distinct organs and the operation of these organs is divinely and perpetually sustained. In this, it might be remarked, there would seem to be food for much fruitful thought towards a more profound understanding of what "vocations" are.

Finally, the encyclical gives a clear-cut official answer to the question of who are members of the Body of Christ. The non-

⁴ 201; 25.

baptized, it says, are not members of that Body of Christ which Revelation describes. Neither, it continues, are any who are not Catholics. From a series of references to the Apostle's teachings, this conclusion is drawn: "It follows that those who are divided in faith or government cannot be living in one Body such as this."⁵ Such exact identification of Christ's members as all Catholics and only Catholics pervades the entire encyclical. On Calvary, we read, Christ "entered into possession of His Church, that is, *all* the members of His Mystical Body."⁶ Again, those who believe they can have Christ as their Head apart from communion with the Pope are said to be in a dangerous error, and one which contradicts the essential visibility of the Mystical Body.⁷ Because Christ made His Body visible, we read again, the "cooperation of *all* its members must also be externally manifest through their profession of the same faith, and their sharing of the same sacred rites, through participation in the same sacrifice, and practical observance of the same laws."⁸ Non-Catholics of good will are said to be only "related unsuspectingly in desire and resolution to the Mystical Body of the Redeemer (*in scio quodam desiderio ac voto ad mysticum Redemptoris Corpus ordinentur*)."⁹ In short, it is by participation in "the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church" that men are made members of the Mystical Body.¹⁰ Thus the encyclical makes it clear that there is no distinction and no difference between the Church of Christ and the Body of Christ.

It may be worthwhile to stress momentarily the fact that the Holy Father was not here departing in any way from the voice of tradition, save perhaps to bring out that voice in greater distinctness. Pius XI had said the same thing about the members of the Mystical Body in his *Mortalium animos*. It was implicit in the *Satis cognitum* of Leo XIII, in Trent's second chapter on the Sacrament of Penance, in the *Unam sanctam* of Boniface VIII. The Council of Florence

⁵ 203; 29.

⁶ 207; 37.

⁷ 211; 51.

⁸ 227; 84.

⁹ 243; 121.

¹⁰ 237; 107.

anathematized, as "alienos a Christi corpore," all whose beliefs should differ from its definitions.¹¹ The Fathers, for all their diversity in this matter, insisted that heretics and schismatics are not parts of Christ's Body. Finally, it is clear in the words of St. Paul—from which this encyclical has now taken it again.¹² Just as there is but one Spirit and one Body, the Apostle teaches, so there can be in that Body but one Lord and one Faith.

This does not represent, however, any limitation of the salvific will of Christ. The encyclical says that Christ's redemptive love embraced "the whole human race, without exception."¹³ It simply repeats again what the Church has always taught as of Divine Faith, namely, that Christ, who died for all, also made membership in His visible Church a requirement for the salvation which He offered.¹⁴

(2) We turn now to the second basic element of the Church, equally essential to the dogma of the Church's nature and of infinitely greater moment. The Body of the Church is not only a moral Body. It is also *Mystical*, and is so called because it is replete with indwelling Divinity at every moment of its existence, because it is formed and vitalized from within by that Divinity. It does not cease to be a moral Body, but the juridical bonds which make it such are, as our Holy Father puts it, "supplemented by a distinct internal principle"¹⁵ which is physical, and which is nothing less than the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity "who until the end of time penetrates every part of the Church's being and is active within it."¹⁶

From this indwelling Divine Spirit flow all the Church's organic forms and every phase of its unity and supernatural life. From Him comes the permanence and efficacy of the sacramental framework of the Body, as well as the stream of charisms—the *gratiae gratis datae*—by which all the organs of the Body, hierarchic and lay, are set apart and fitted to render their respective services to the common

¹¹ DB. 705.

¹² Cf. note 5, *supra*.

¹³ 239-40; 113.

¹⁴ DB. 714.

¹⁵ 222; 75.

¹⁶ 223; 77.

good. To sum it up as the encyclical does, "He is entire in the Head, entire in the Body, and entire in each of the members."¹⁷

Because all this is so like the action which a human soul achieves in the body to which God joins it, the *Mystici Corporis* echoes a terminology which goes back at least as far as St. Augustine, and calls the Holy Spirit the "Soul" of the Church. Several things, however, should be observed about this terminology.

First, the Holy Father is in no way condemning the practice which has been more usual in the theological manuals, whereby sanctifying grace and other gifts were identified as the Church's "soul." He is simply giving, I believe, more exact and better expression to the manuals' own meaning. He himself goes on to say: "If that vital principle by which the whole community of Christians is sustained . . . be considered not in itself, but in its created effects, it consists in those heavenly gifts which our Redeemer, together with His spirit bestows . . . and makes operative in the Church."¹⁸

Then there should be noted the two parallels to this position of the Holy Spirit within the Church, which the *Mystici Corporis* points out. In the first parallel, the temporal mission of the Holy Spirit is compared to the juridical mission of the Apostles. As Christ communicated to them the external aspects of the mission He received from His Father, so the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and Son to continue the internal, divine aspects of the one same mission.¹⁹ Thus the Divine Principle which makes the Church the Mystical Body parallels the created principle which makes it a moral Body.²⁰

In the second parallel, Christ Himself is pointed out as the Exemplar of the union between the Holy Spirit and the Body of the Church. It is important here not to be misled by the term "Soul" as applied to the Holy Spirit. The union in our Saviour Himself which is presented as an exemplar of the union between the Holy Spirit and the Body of the Church is not the union between Christ's

¹⁷ 219; 69.

¹⁸ 220; 70.

¹⁹ 227; 84.

²⁰ 224; 79.

physical Body and His adorable Soul. It is the union between Humanity and Divinity in Him, the hypostatic union itself.²¹ In other words, "Soul" is not used of the Holy Spirit in any strictly Aristotelian sense, but rather in the loose sense in which it was employed by the author of the famous "Quicumque" which we remember from Prime. There is no slightest suggestion of an incomplete substance, limited in operation to the confines of its Body. When this is borne in mind, the familiar difficulty about those who are not members of the Mystical Body and yet possess sanctifying grace, is shown to be without foundation.

One last detail will have to close our remarks about this divine element of the Church. The *Mystici Corporis* is at pains to represent the Divine Soul of the Church as present in all its members always, even those who are in mortal sin. He is "totus in singulis membris," personally present and actively dwelling even in sinful members.²² On this point, the encyclical goes counter to the familiar description of sinners as "dead members." They are not dead members, we are told, "neque ab iis omnis vita recedit."²³ They are, rather, "spiritually ill" members and the Holy Spirit dwells in all, these included, assisting all "in proportion to the greater or less grade of spiritual health which they enjoy."²⁴ The life of the Mystical Body, therefore, is not to be wholly identified with sanctifying grace. It is already real, though far short of perfect, in the virtues of Faith and Hope; and these, since they are habits, are the fruit of a true indwelling by the Divine Soul of the Church.

(3) So much for the purely human and the purely divine elements which enter into the constitution of the Church as its Body and its

²¹ 223; 78.

²² 219; 69 and 222; 75.

²³ 203; 30. Cf. 227-8; 86.

²⁴ 219-20; 69 and 225; 80-81. Divine indwelling, in its completeness, involves supernatural charity and is so defined in the encyclical (231; 95). The virtue of Faith is singled out and called a Divine indwelling (as in the text, 228; 86) inasmuch as it is effected by an abiding internal Divine presence and activity and not by a merely transient Divine visitation. It is the beginning, therefore, of a progressively more complete Divine indwelling which culminates in supernatural charity but is already actual, though incomplete, before the advent of that virtue.

Soul. We come now to the theandric element which crowns and specifies its being.

The Mystical Body we have described is Christ's by many titles. It is His because He made it, and again because He purchased it with His Blood. But most of all it is His Body because it is joined to Him as its Head. This Headship of the theandric Redeemer—for He is its Head "secundum utramque naturam una simul"²⁵—is the core, the central truth of ecclesiology. Apart from it, nothing else in the Church can be understood for what it really is.

The Holy Father tells us that Christ became Head of the Mystical Body "in the full and complete sense of the word" only at the moment of His death on the Cross.²⁶ At that moment He finished His work, and the Church came into existence. This is presented as "the unanimous teaching of the Holy Fathers."²⁷ Thus the *Mystical Corporis* quietly settles a question which has long been debated in ecclesiology—the question of the precise chronology of the Church's birth. In the Incarnation Christ "laid the first foundations"²⁸ of the Church. He began to build it in His Public Life. He finished it and it was complete at the moment He died. Pentecost was but the manifestation of the completed Church which had already been in existence for fifty days.²⁹

Let us glance at the way everything in the Church centers around that theandric Headship. First, each came into existence for the sake of the other. The Church was part of the essential purpose of the Incarnation. As the Pope says, "the Word of God took unto Himself a human nature liable to sufferings that He might consecrate in His Blood the visible society founded by Him."³⁰ And this society, in turn, was made for Him. As the Sacred Humanity of Christ was formed to be "the instrument" of the Word, so the Church was formed to be the "instrument of the Word Incarnate."³¹ The Mystical

²⁵ 236; 106.

²⁶ 206; 38.

²⁷ 205; 35.

²⁸ 241; 116.

²⁹ 204; 33.

³⁰ 224; 78.

³¹ 206-7; 39.

Body's vocation, in other words, is to continue and extend the instrumental causality to which the Sacred Humanity was consecrated by the Incarnation. The Sacred Humanity, because of the hypostatic union, was the *instrumentum coniunctum* of our redemption. The Mystical Body, because of its union with its Head, is the *instrumentum coniunctum* by which Christ distributes the graces of that redemption to all mankind.

Everything in the Mystical Body comes to it from its theandric Head, to fit it for this instrumentality. He fashioned its human element and, at the moment of His death, sent His divine Spirit into the Body to be its vital Principle. And on this combination of human and Divine He poured out a communication and a sharing of His own most personal prerogatives—"bona maxime sibi propria cum Ecclesia sua communicat"³²—so that there might be a real "communicatio idiomatum" between Head and Mystical Body, analogous to that between His own two Natures.

And He, as Head, sustains and directs all the operation of this instrumental causality by the Body. All the operation of the Holy Spirit as Soul must also be attributed to Christ, working through His Holy Spirit.³³ When the different organs of the Body operate sacramentally, it is Christ the Head who, through His Spirit, "produces their effect in souls."³⁴ He, says the Pope, "selects, determines, and distributes every single grace to every single person,"³⁵ and throughout the whole organic structure of the Body every salutary act "proceeds from Him as its supernatural cause."³⁶ Thus Christ's "divine power permeates His whole Body, and nourishes and sustains each of the members according to the place which they occupy in it."³⁷

And what is the goal of all this instrumental activity of the Body? What is the end of the Church? It is, of course, the sanctification of all mankind. The *Mystici Corporis* goes further, and indicates

³² 218; 67.

³³ 230; 92.

³⁴ 217; 63.

³⁵ 217; 64.

³⁶ 216; 63.

³⁷ 218; 67.

the precise character of the sanctification which flowers into eternal salvation. In the concrete, the goal of the Church's activity is the Church itself. Christ aims all the instrumentality of His Mystical Body precisely at the upbuilding of that Body itself, as He "brings it to live His own supernatural life."³⁸ His purpose is that "the whole Body of the Church, no less than the individual members, should bear resemblance" to Him,³⁹ that the entire Church "may portray in her whole life, both external and interior, a most faithful image of Christ."⁴⁰ Thus the sanctification for which the Church was born is precisely the sanctity of the Whole Christ, just as the Whole Christ in glory is to be its eternal consummation.

By the attaining of this purpose—which she does in substance by the very fact of her existence—the Church becomes what she is, the *pleroma Christi*, "the filling out and complement of our Redeemer,"⁴¹ and, according to "the unbroken tradition of the Fathers," as the encyclical says, "one mystical person" with her Head.⁴² There remains a real distinction of individuals. But their union is so intimate, so profoundly rooted in the physical bond of the Holy Spirit, that God calls the whole Church simply "Christ"⁴³ and the whole Church, no less than her most saintly members, can say in simple truth: "It is Christ that lives in me."⁴⁴ All her supernatural activity is a flowering into visibility of the same supernatural activity in her Head. She reveals, through the different organs of her social structure, the action of her Head, continuing forever the different aspects of His redemptive life.⁴⁵ Her supreme Pontiff makes visible Christ's unending governance of His Kingdom on earth.⁴⁶ Her priests are to make visible His presence at the altar,⁴⁷ to make audible His

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ 214; 59.

⁴⁰ 218; 67.

⁴¹ 230-1; 93.

⁴² 226; 82.

⁴³ 218; 66.

⁴⁴ 220; 70.

⁴⁵ 238; 110. "Christus . . . varie sese in variis suis socialibus membris manifestat."

⁴⁶ 210-11; 49-50.

⁴⁷ 232-3; 97.

words of forgiveness. Her Religious perpetuate a poverty, an obedience, and an utter purity which began at Bethlehem—the Redeemer's own complete giving of Himself to His Father.⁴⁸ Her mercies to the sick and sinners are His mercies, forever active and visible through her.⁴⁹ In her whole apostolate, to use the vivid words of the encyclical, "it is He who through the Church baptizes, teaches, rules, looses, binds, offers, sacrifices."⁵⁰

And thus the three-fold end which tradition has always assigned to the Church—the salvation of souls, the glory of Christ, and the glory of God⁵¹—is achieved, as it were, in one. We are made holy

⁵¹ 226; 51. 222; 74.

by incorporation into Christ's Body, into "His own supernatural life." Christ is glorified as the whole Kingdom of God on earth is transformed into an adoring image of Himself and becomes a visible manifestation of His wisdom and power and holiness, in the sight of all creation. And God is glorified as the same glory—the same "omnis honor et gloria"—which Christ offered to Him on earth continues to be offered "per Ipsum, et cum Ipso, et *in Ipso*" by all the redeemed forever.

II

There remains one last thing which must be said, since it is for scientific theology as a whole the most far-reaching implication of the entire encyclical.

The manner in which the Holy Father draws upon all the different fields of theology to bring out in detail the nature of the Church, is one of the striking features of the *Mystici Corporis*. Many instances of this have appeared in the foregoing remarks; their number is far greater in the original text itself. We find the Pope going to the theology of Man's Elevation and Fall for those truths which clarify the supernatural destiny of the Church's members. From the theology of the Trinity he takes its truths about the eternal Processions and their counterparts in the temporal missions of the

⁴⁸ 214-5; 59.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ 218; 67.

Son and the Holy Spirit, to explain the inner details of the Church's life, particularly to bring out the mutual relations between its Head and Soul. He takes from *De Verbo Incarnato* its theses on the purpose of the Incarnation, on the Beatific Vision of Christ, on the nature of our redemption, and relates all these to the nature of the Church.

Now the fact cannot be missed that, in doing this, the Holy Father is enriching not only ecclesiology but those other fields of theology as well. The theology of grace is itself richer for his use of its truths to explain the nature of the divine indwelling in the Church as a whole. Sacramental theology is richer for the contribution it makes to the explanation of the Church's organic life and structure, and the treatise on the virtues for its help in clarifying the Church's inner life. Finally—that we may make final what the encyclical itself does—the treatise *De Beata Maria Virgine* gained a firmer understanding of the universal motherhood of Mary when the Holy Father explained that spiritual motherhood as based on two titles, her Divine Maternity and her co-redemption on Calvary, and found in it a last exquisite detail of the Church's unity.

Now what is the implication of all this? The significant thing is this: the magisterium is presenting the dogma of the Mystical Body of Christ—the dogma of the nature of the Church—as the dogma in which all the branches of theology can find a common center. Catholic theology, as we all know well, is a living, ordered whole; and ecclesiology, in this new presentation of its truths, becomes a synthesis in which the organic unity of all the treatises is finally achieved.

There is a momentous conclusion to be drawn. If ecclesiology is to faithfully reflect, as it should, the magisterium's own official explanation of the definition of the Church, it can no longer go on regarding itself, and being regarded, as simply "fundamental theology." If I may make use of a phrase which Leo XIII once applied to ecclesiology and call the dogma of the nature of the Church the "caput et fundamentum" of all Christian truth, it will emphasize this relation of ecclesiology to theology as a whole, which the *Mystici Corporis* has made so vivid. Ecclesiology is the "fundamentum" because without its initial apologetic steps all dogmatic theology

would lack its logical basis. But it is also the "caput" of theological science, the crowning synthesis in which all theological truth achieves a final unity.

Here then is a task which the *Mystici Corporis* lays before our science—to accomplish and perfect, within the structure of our curriculum, the same sublime synthesis with which the magisterium has met the challenge of the new age in the world. It is not a matter of new truths, but of a new and better procedure, of a new orientation which will reflect more perfectly the inner relationships of the age-old truths themselves. To accomplish this task, ecclesiology will have to be largely re-written and divided into two parts, only one of which is fundamental and proper to the logical beginning of theology. To accomplish the task well, the contents of all the other treatises will require an increased emphasis on their relation to the central dogma of the nature of the Church, in explicit anticipation of the final synthesis towards which they are preparing. Then, at the end of the whole theological process, should come that synthesis itself, the dogmatic treatise on the Church, in which all dogmatic theology attains the crown which this encyclical on the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ has made for it.

This task will take effort and time. But this, I think, is the task towards which the Holy Spirit, who guided the Holy Father in directing the mind of the whole Church to this synthesis, is now guiding the professional theologians, who are set apart by their own special charism to train the minds of the priests who must carry the message of the *Mystici Corporis* to the world.

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