

## ONE WHOLLY CATHOLIC: SAINTS AND SANCTITY IN THE POST-APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Good evening, or should I say, grace and peace to all of you here in San Jose, the beloved of God, called to be saints. I am honored by your presence and thank the CTSA Board for their invitation.

I have always been interested in saints, especially dead ones. My grammar school library had a whole section devoted to their biographies which I eagerly devoured. Like St. Teresa of Ávila imagining herself a martyr, I imagined myself undertaking saintly yet daring exploits like hers. While I have no aspirations to martyrdom, the fascination never ceased.

Every few years I teach hagiography, the study of the saints. The overriding question for the semester is always, “What does it mean to be holy?” Often it seems to mean different things in different times. In the past, extreme forms of mortification have been taken as possible indications of holiness: standing in mosquito-infested swamps and not batting away the insects, not eating except for the Eucharist, self-flagellation, wearing chains, bilocation, and flying through space. Perhaps those are no longer what diocesan postulators and the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints look for. A post-Freudian world might wonder at some of those phenomena but associate them more with mental illness than sanctity. A post-Newtonian world might be suspicious of flying saints and even post-communion levitation.<sup>1</sup> Since the reforms of the Council of Trent all of the people canonized are officially judged not only according to some perpetually unchanging standards of the pre-eminent exercise of the cardinal and theological virtues, but also according to the standards of holiness in the times in which they lived.<sup>2</sup> What that means for us today is that if a former pope was an inveterate cigar or

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<sup>1</sup>For a treatment of various extraordinary physical abilities, see Michael Murphy, *The Future of the Body: Explorations into the Further Evolution of Human Nature* (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1992), chapters 21 and 22.

<sup>2</sup>Sixtus V, Apostolic Constitution “*Immensa Aeterni Dei*”; cf. “Congregation for the Causes of Saints” at <[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/csaints/documents/rc\\_con\\_csaints\\_pro\\_20051996\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/csaints/documents/rc_con_csaints_pro_20051996_en.html)>, accessed April 11, 2011. For a full account of the history of changes in the canonization process, at least up to 1990, see Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990). More recent documentation is on the web pages of the Roman Curia, “*Documenta Latina exarata*” section on the Congregatio de causis sanctorum at <[http://www.vatican.va/latin/latin\\_curia.html#Congregatio\\_de\\_Causis\\_Sanctorum](http://www.vatican.va/latin/latin_curia.html#Congregatio_de_Causis_Sanctorum)>.

cigarette smoker, the postulator might not see it as a sign of a lack of virtue. However, a future postulator might see smoking as a lack of virtue for a present or future pope, now that problems for health caused by tobacco are well known. It might be judged imprudent or even a violation of the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” to begin smoking.

In preparation for my course, I once tried to trace the meanings of ‘holy’ through scripture and the early Church. The results were something of a surprise. For the early Church holiness was not so much a personal attribute as it was an institutionally based characteristic. It was intimately related to being in the holy Church that was one and catholic. In the Hebrew Bible, holiness was an attribute of a community in covenant with God. Whether it was levitical codes or the calls of prophets to holiness, holiness was not something one achieved or was gifted with as an individual for the sake of the individual. It was always in community and for community. Holiness is a function of the group in the New Testament too.<sup>3</sup> The predominant use of ‘holy’ concerns the Holy Spirit active in the united Christian community. The Spirit is the source of unity. So holiness is not an individual project but a communal one. It is the church and not individuals who are called holy in the New Testament.<sup>4</sup> One is holy not by individual effort but by belonging to and being the holy group and thus participating in its Spirit.

In the post-Apostolic era, Christians reflected on the holiness of the Church primarily in terms of un-holiness, in terms of evil individuals within and on the periphery of the holy Church. What I want to do this evening is to trace the post-Apostolic developments in order to provide a basis for reflection on contemporary approaches to un-holiness in the Church. I will speak of unity and holiness as cor-relatives and I will say a little about being catholic. I will not spend time on the attribute “apostolic” for two reasons. First, it was more univocally understood among most writers of antiquity than medievals and moderns. Second, the ancients saw it a function of catholicity, a sort of temporal catholicity.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, we find a saying closely paralleling those of Leviticus. Jesus says: “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” The same word τέλειος is used to the rich young man who desired to gain eternal life when he asked Jesus about being good or, as we might say, being a saint (Mt 19:16-22 and parallels: Mk 10:17-22 and Lk 18:18-23). That holiness and unity are intimately related is revealed in John 17:2 where Jesus uses the word τετελειωμένοι with same root to describe the unity he desired for his followers.

<sup>4</sup>Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 14:33b; Eph 5:27.

<sup>5</sup>E.g., Niceta of Remisiana, *Explanation of the Creed* §10, in *Niceta of Remisiana: Writings*, trans. by Gerald Walsh (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1949), p. 49; and Thomas Aquinas, *In symbolum apostolorum, opusculum VIII*, article 9, <<http://www.ewtn.com/library/SOURCES/TA-CAT-1.TXT>>; at <<http://dhsprory.org/thomas/Creed.htm#9>>, accessed May 11, 2011, cited also in Avery Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p. 87, along with others.

Before talking about unity, holiness, and catholicity, I want to make clear two methodological issues. First, by training I am more of a historian than a theologian, so my reflections are more oriented toward analyzing what has happened, i.e., what I say will be more descriptive than normative. Second, I do not believe that history repeats itself. It is not quite true that those who do not know history are condemned to repeat it.<sup>6</sup> However, those ignorant of the past may not recognize patterns that might assist their own analysis and decision-making. And that is where I will go later. But for now, let us go to the early Church.

For earliest Christians, being holy simply meant being a member of the community of the saints, those called by God, i.e., members of God's Church, the body of Christ.<sup>7</sup> It is the Church, not individuals, which is often called holy.<sup>8</sup> The holiness of individual saints came from being children of their holy Mother.<sup>9</sup>

Having a holy Church and being members of the holy Church, well, that is all fine and dandy, but what happens when we meet the reality of sin among members of the early Church, a question germane to the present with our clerical abuse and other scandals? Well, from the beginning there were persons within the Christian community whose claim to holiness was less than stellar, e.g., Ananias and Sapphira, and Simon Magus. Yet it seemed that if you had been baptized and not formally excluded, you could claim to be a member of the holy Church and thus, *ipso facto*, holy. You shared the same Spirit in the holy kiss.<sup>10</sup> You ate at the same table of the Eucharist. These were so much the signs of unity that refusing the kiss or the Eucharist to someone was a sign of their outsider, and therefore, unholy character.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, Vol. 1: *Reason in Common Sense* (NY: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1905; repr. NY: Dover, 1980), Chapter 10, unpaginated at <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15000/15000-h/vol1.html>>, accessed April 11, 2011; paraphrased elsewhere by Winston Churchill.

<sup>7</sup>Romans 1:7: To all who are at Rome, the beloved of God, called to be saints. Cf. Rom 8:28, 1 Cor. 1:2, 1:30; Phil 4:21; Heb 2:11.

<sup>8</sup>E.g., *Epistula apostolorum* 5 (ca. 140-150), available in English at <<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/apostolorum.html>>.

<sup>9</sup>Cyprian, *De lapsis* 2 (ACW 25.11); *Epp.* 15.2, 16.3 and 4 (ACW 43.91 and 94-95). The best English translations of the works of Cyprian are by G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of Cyprian of Carthage*. Ancient Christian Writers vols. 43, 44, 46, 47 (New York, NY and Ramsey, NJ: Newman Press, 1984-1989) and by Maurice Bévenot, *St. Cyprian: The Lapsed. The Unity of the Catholic Church* Ancient Christian Writers vol. 25 (New York, NY and Ramsey, NJ: Newman Press, 1957). References in this paper are to the volume and page numbers in this series. Cf. *De unitate* 5 (ACW 25.47-48) and Monnulus of Gerba and Felix of Uthina in *Sententiae LXX Episcoporum* (Council of Carthage in 256) 10 and 26, accessible in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* series at <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf05.html>>.

<sup>10</sup>1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26. Stephen Benko, "The Holy Kiss" in *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1986), 79-102.

<sup>11</sup>Michael Penn, "Ritual Kissing, Heresy and the Emergence of Early Christian Orthodoxy," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 54/5 (October 2003), 625-640, with substantial bibliography.

Especially important to a consideration of the holiness and unity of the church are contributions from Christianity in North Africa where the Church was first called holy Mother.<sup>12</sup> I am going to sketch four positions taken there to illustrate the relationship between the holiness of the Church as institution and the way that the Church dealt with evil in its midst. The four are

1. Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, in the first persecution he suffered,
2. Cyprian in the second persecution he suffered,
3. a Donatist theologian named Parmenian, and finally
4. Augustine.

In each case, we see a different idea of the Church and a different way of handling evil. In each instance, we will see a progression from a stronger to an eventually diminishing connection between the Church and the Holy Spirit and holiness or lack thereof.

The first we might call a traditional North African concept. It is that of St. Cyprian of Carthage, at least during the earliest persecution he endured in the early 250s.<sup>13</sup> For him, the Church was a pure and pristine entity that was dependent on the Holy Spirit. North African pneumatology was very literal. The bishop who himself possessed the Holy Spirit called down the Spirit on the baptismal water, the Eucharistic elements, and ordinands. Evil had no place in this church. Even those who were baptized and claimed to be Christians but committed some grave sin were not part of that Church the same way other Christians were. Clergy who had committed the sin of apostasy, for example, were estranged. The Spirit literally fled apostate bishops. Their sacraments conveyed not grace, only the contagion of sin.<sup>14</sup> By their sin they had transgressed the boundary and were outside the Church, where there was no salvation for them.<sup>15</sup> If they wanted to come back in, they needed to hoe the hard row of repentance so as not to sully and corrupt holy Mother Church.

From Cyprian one learns that there was a strong link between the primary holiness of the Church and the derivative holiness of its members. The sinful members needed to do penance for a long time to overcome their estrangement. During their period of penance, they could not eat from the same table: they were refused the Eucharist, some even to their deathbed. To signal the reincorporation,

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<sup>12</sup>For the development and use of the title, see Joseph Conrad Plumpe, *Mater ecclesia; an inquiry into the concept of the church as mother in early Christianity* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1943).

<sup>13</sup>For the difference between Cyprian's concepts of the Church in the Decian persecution and the persecution under Valerian, see J. Patout Burns, Jr., *Cyprian the Bishop* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>14</sup>Cyprian, *Ep.* 67.9 (ACW 47.27). Cf. *De lapsis* 16 (ACW 25.26).

<sup>15</sup>Cyprian, *Ep.* 73.21.2 (ACW 47.66).

rebaptism was often practiced; the Spirit once again came from the bishop to the baptismal water and thence to the sinner whom the Spirit had previously fled.

This stance was a response to an exterior threat that was attempting to weaken the boundaries of the Church by forcing Christians to defect in persecution.<sup>16</sup> The Christian response was a tight circling the wagons, so to speak. The emphasis here was on a holy Church of the saints against an evil world.

In a second wave of persecution in 256-258, Cyprian took a different stance. He saw persecution as presaging the eschaton. The Church was bigger and stronger than before the first persecution, but its boundaries had become more porous. Excommunicated Christians without the Eucharist, even those in the process of canonical penance, were seen less as outsiders than as wayward insiders, insiders in grave danger of moving outside by lapsing from the faith. Far from being an occasion of pollution for sinners, the Eucharist became the weapon for those who would battle temptation.<sup>17</sup> "We must," he said, "fortify them [the repenting sinners] with the body and blood of Christ."<sup>18</sup> They needed to be brought back to the Eucharist more quickly lest they fall into apostasy in a new persecution. A weak person might die a spiritual death separated as they were from the community. So the boundary around the Eucharistic table became weaker. Bishops were exhorted to feed their sheep or they would have to answer to God.<sup>19</sup> The larger church community had shown itself resilient; it could protect itself from the sins of the weak and it had to take care of them.

In the first, period, apostate Christians were a threat to the integrity of church boundaries. They threatened the holiness of the community. If evil was contagious, so was holiness, and holiness was harmful to the evil individual. Think of a person in mortal sin receiving the Eucharist. Evil is compounded by contact with holiness. In the second stage, the evil individuals were a threat not to the church community but to themselves. The Church helped them recover their spiritual health and helped arm them against evil. There was no circling of the wagons against the world. The Church was strong enough to take on the world, armed as it was with spiritual power. Persons in the state of mortal sin or even in danger of such would be strengthened by the bishop's care and swiftly brought back to the table of the Eucharist.

After half a century of peace, there was another round of persecution in the early 300s. In its aftermath, North African bishops relied on Cyprian's earlier theology. Holiness at that point was taken as the literal transmission of the Holy Spirit by a bishop in baptism and ordination, akin to the earlier understanding of the holy kiss and to the Spirit's literal descent on the Eucharistic elements. The bishop was holy due to the indwelling Spirit. Therefore, he could sanctify the bap-

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<sup>16</sup>See, e.g., *De lapsis* 16 (ACW 35.26); Burns, 25.

<sup>17</sup>Cyprian, *Ep.* 57 *passim*, 58.1.2 and 8.2-9.2 (ACW 46.55-59, 60 and 66-67).

<sup>18</sup>Cyprian, *Ep.* 57.2.2 (ACW 46.56).

<sup>19</sup>Cyprian, *Ep.* 57.5.1-2 (ACW 46.59).

tismal water and the chrism of anointing, as well as call the Spirit to the altar. However, as soon as the persecution was waning around 304, some North African bishops assembled for ordinations. Before they could ordain anyone, they had to deal with clergy who had defected in the persecution. Those who later identified with the early Donatist church tried to maintain the myth of the totally pure church, i.e., Cyprian's earlier ecclesiology. They wanted to refuse former apostates and maybe, but not for sure, murderers as ordaining bishops. The holy Church here was circling the wagons against evil in the world and treated sinners as outsiders. Eventually they realized that the myth of the spotless Church would not allow for the survival of the Church as an institution. Too many bishops have sinned in one way or another. So the assembled bishops decided that bishops who had committed grave sins could still transmit the Holy Spirit in baptisms and ordinations.<sup>20</sup> But they, like their Catholic colleagues of the time, developed no theological rationale for their practice. They could not explain how bishops whom the Holy Spirit has left could administer the sacraments.

Eventually Christians needed some way to explain how sinful clergy might administer sacraments and how the holiness of the Church could survive. In other words, how could men who did not possess the Holy Spirit transmit it? How could they remain in the Church and yet not taint the holiness of the Church?

Fifty years later, we can see the Donatist theologian Parmenian trying to find a theological rationale for this.<sup>21</sup> Later Augustine would join the effort. Parmenian attempted to distance the moral qualities of the ministers of the sacraments from their administration of the sacraments. His solution was to capitalize on a growing sense of the Church as a spiritual entity not identical to grouped individual members. He located the holiness of the Church in the institution rather than in its members or ministers. Ministers of the Church might not be holy but on the principle of *Ecclesia supplet*, their sacramental acts might be valid.<sup>22</sup> So the Holy Spirit operated through the one holy catholic Church. The Holy Spirit in the holy

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<sup>20</sup>See the proceedings of the Council of Cirta in Augustine, *Contra Cresconium* 3.27.30 in *Sancti Aureli [sic] Augustini Scripta contra Donatistas*, CSEL 51-53, ed. by M. Petschenig (Vienna: Tempsky; Leipzig: Freytag, 1908) at CSEL 52.435-437 (there is no English translation); and *Optatus—Against the Donatists*, trans. by Mark Edwards, *Translated Texts for Historians* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool, 1998), 12-15.

<sup>21</sup>While the writings of Parmenian do not survive on their own, his thought is largely recoverable from the writings of Optatus and Augustine. See Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, trans. by Mark Edwards (Liverpool: Liverpool University, 1997) and Augustine's various works against the Donatists, especially *Contra Epistulam Parmeniani*; CSEL 51 (there is no English translation). For a calculus to sift out the writings of Parmenian from his opponents, see Maureen A. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: the Donatist World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 4-5. On Donatist use of the word 'catholic', see Paola Marone, "The Use of the Term 'Catholic' in the Donatist Controversy," *Pomoerium* 6 (2007-2008): 81-91.

<sup>22</sup>On *Ecclesia supplet*, see *The Code of Canon Law*, canon 144, and the commentary by Richard A. Hill, "Title IX: Ecclesiastical Offices," in *The Code of Canon Law: A Text*

Church could bypass ministers and whatever evil they might have done. The Church that had been the visible communion of saints now became a more mystical communion beyond the visible.

Augustine's theology is the final step in the dissolution of the bonds between individual evil persons and the Church. Augustine went farther than Parmenian. He distanced evil individuals in the Church from the Church as institution and he separated the power of the sacraments from their ministers. He pushed back the donor of baptismal grace from the minister and even from the Church and placed it with Christ.

So we can see in the evolution of Western patristic thought a movement from a strictly bounded church with no place for evil to a church in which evil must be tolerated to some degree until the end of time for the sake of those whom God knows will repent before the Harvest at the end of the world.<sup>23</sup> Augustine's theology allows for the presence of evil ministers in the church with no harm done to the Church or to the grace of the sacraments.<sup>24</sup>

Augustine's response was perhaps a necessary one under the circumstances: Catholics and Donatists accused each other's bishops of grave sin yet welcomed people baptized in the other church.<sup>25</sup> The alternative, the Donatist view, in his eyes required that every person being baptized would have to search out the moral pedigree of the baptizer, not just his flagrant well-known sins, but also his secret ones. This was an impossible task, one that would vex the soul of the scrupulous person into madness.<sup>26</sup> The impossibility of this requirement showed the incoherence of Donatist belief.

We need to note what was gained and lost in Augustine's solution. What was gained was the modern ability of Christian churches to recognize each other's administration of Baptism. What was lost was a sense of unity like that of the early Cyprian, one that strictly intertwined holiness and unity. In addition, what was lost was one rationale for the Roman Catholic non-recognition of sacramental acts, other than baptism, in other denominations. It is difficult to recognize Baptism and to draw the line against other ritual acts without much more theologizing, something Christians did not get really serious about until the Reformation.

Augustine also distinguished and separated the validity of a sacrament from its effectiveness. A sacrament might be valid without being effective. Here is an example: a person might have believed that the Catholic Church was the true

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*and Commentary*, ed. by James Coriden, Thomas Green and Donald E. Heinstchel (New York and Mahwah: Paulist, 1985), 97-98; substantially the same in the 2000 commentary.

<sup>23</sup>Commentaries on Matthew 13 in Augustine's various works against the Donatists.

<sup>24</sup>*Inter alia*, *De baptismo* 5.18.24, most accessible in English in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* at <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf104.html>>.

<sup>25</sup>Not all Donatists rebaptized or reordained. See my article "Theologies of Penance in the Catholic-Donatist Controversy," *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001): 330-337.

<sup>26</sup>Augustine, *Contra Petilianum* 1.1.2-13.4 in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* at <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf104.html>>.



Church, but for whatever reason, was baptized among his Donatist opponents. The person was indeed baptized, no doubt about that. Nevertheless, the full effect and grace of the sacrament would only come about, according to Augustine, when the person joined the Catholic Church and was in unity with the one holy catholic Church. What was gained again was the ability to recognize baptism wherever it occurred. What was lost was an emphasis on the fruitfulness of the sacrament in two ways. First, the concentration on validity diminished interest in and teaching on effectiveness. There was less reason for the average Christian to be taught the idea that it was their duty to cooperate with the Spirit in the reception of the sacrament. Validity had greater weight. You could be confirmed by any bishop, even a grave sinner, with minimal preparation on your part. If he did it right, you were still confirmed. More importantly, it left the minister off the hook, so to speak, for the results of the administration of a rite because the validity of the rite depended on the proper execution of the rubrics while the effectiveness was placed solely on the shoulders of the recipient. If bishops were sinful or abusive, that did not matter at all. Again, the holiness of the individual minister administering the sacrament was divorced from the holiness of the ritual and of the Church. This means that you can be confirmed by a sinful bishop and still receive the grace of the sacrament. The distinction paid little or no attention to the role of the Holy Spirit in uniting Christians through the sacraments.

Something similar happened with the idea of catholicity: gain and loss. The use of 'catholic' for the Church is found as early as the second century.<sup>27</sup> But there is no explanation of the term until the mid-fourth century with Cyril of Jerusalem. The Church is catholic, he said, for five reasons: "it extends to the ends of the earth; it teaches all the doctrines needed for salvation; it brings every sort of human being under obedience; it cures every kind of sin; and it possesses every form of virtue."<sup>28</sup> Augustine and many Catholic historically emphasized only the first definition, universal spread.

What was gained in the Augustinian appropriation of Cyril's explanation of catholicity as universal spread was an empirical basis for a claim to catholicity, one that the Counter-Reformation exploited, and one that has lasted up to the present. There are still more Catholic Christians in more countries than any other denomination. What was lost for a long time was an emphasis on the other aspects, i.e., a depth of doctrine and the means to promote holiness and to discourage sin. These are the aspects which are most closely related to questions of evil in the Church. Restricting theological attention to a single definition of catholicity truncated the ability of the Church to recognize evil and blunted any imperative of 'catholicity' to deal with evil in its midst.

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<sup>27</sup>Ignatius, *To the Smyrneans* 8.2.

<sup>28</sup>Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses* 18:23, paraphrased by Avery Dulles in *The Catholicity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 14. Cyril does not address unity and holiness here.



In summary for this historical part, it seems that the patristic period saw a gradual decoupling of the members of the Church and their sins from the institution of the Church. In so doing, it lost an impetus for both unity and holiness. Gradually the individual sins of members of the Church ceased to matter to the issue of unity or holiness. Teaching on the indwelling and action of the Holy Spirit was what had held them together and that too was greatly diminished. Later the meaning of the term “communion of saints” saw a shift from “communion” to “saints.” Holiness became the purview of a select few: the martyrs, the ascetics, and those who exercised the cardinal and theological virtues to an eminent degree. What we lost in the process was the gift and challenge of sanctity for all members of the Church as constituting that Church. Greatly diminished too was attention to the Holy Spirit as fount of unity and holiness.

Now we turn to history that is more recent. The last century has seen some attempts at the recovery of the intimacy of the members of the Church with Christ. Pius X encouraged frequent communion, Pius XII’s encyclical on the Mystical Body, and Vatican II’s *Lumen gentium* reaffirmed the link between Christ and the members of his body, the Church.<sup>29</sup> The Council went on to link the holiness of the church and its members through the indwelling Spirit.<sup>30</sup> But there has been little attempt to deal directly with the problem of evil within the Church, at least in a focused fashion. Thus, we do not have the tools we need to deal with the religious, to say nothing of the legal, effects of such evils as scandals involving professed celibates who are sexually active or predators, embezzling parish staff, or unscrupulous administrators who systematically work to make the discovery of evil difficult.

In this next part of my remarks, I would like to look more closely at how the Catholic Church has been handling the evil of division of late, the lack of unity and consequent lack of holiness. St. Ignatius of Loyola said, “Nothing makes religious more contemptible in the world’s eyes than to see them divided into parties and sects among themselves.”<sup>31</sup> I want to use patterns we have seen in the early church to shed light on the events of the last few years. It behooves us to see if there is anything in our heritage that will help us deal with division and evil in the present. Using these patterns will reveal that there are multiple conceptions of the Church, all simultaneously active, one in some situations and others in other situations. Different conceptions of the Church, of unity and holiness, to say nothing of catholicity, make for different ways of dealing with evil.

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<sup>29</sup>Pius X, *Sacra Tridentina* (1905) in translation at <<http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDWFREQ.HTM>>, and *Lumen gentium* 4.

<sup>30</sup>*Unitatis Redintegratio* 2-3 and *Gaudium et spes* 21-22, 40. Some of these are cited in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* §813.

<sup>31</sup>From *Thoughts of St. Ignatius Loyola For Every Day of the Year*, from the *Scintillae Ignatianae*, compiled by Gabriel Hevenesi, S. J., ed. by Alan G. McDougall (NY: Fordham University, 2006), for July 5, p. 64.

In considering division in the Church, I will leave aside a number of current issues. I omit ecumenical dialogues and interreligious conversations, i.e., with those who are in some way considered outsiders to Catholicism. These are largely cordial and with few exceptions do not deal with evil. I leave aside structural evil as this was not part of the theological world of Roman Africa. My focus is on more neuralgic relations at the edges and within the Church: the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X (FSSPX) and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA), and later divisions among bishops and theologians. There is obviously a sense in which the divisions are evil and that this evil is in some way linked to the acts of specific persons.

The desire for unity for the first two cases, the FSSPX and CCPA, is very much like that of Cyprian's second period of persecution. The Church can take care of itself and the Church needs to be concerned with caring for the welfare of individual souls. The Church is in search of corporate, institutional, unity but, even more, caring for the salvation of individual souls. Disputes among bishops and theologians are very different.

In the case of the FSSPX, there has been some dialogue motivated on the part of the Vatican by a hope of reconciling its leaders. Rome treats the FSSPX bishops like Cyprian's sinful bishops, i.e., no *communicatio in sacris*, the usual penalty for schismatics and heretics. But the FSSPX claims they are not schismatics, much less heretics, and that the FSSPX operates, in fact, under a constitution approved by the Sacred Congregation for Religious.<sup>32</sup> Members of the FSSPX continue to publicize their adherence to a Vatican-approved constitution even though their leaders were excommunicated in 1998 for ordaining bishops without the permission of Rome. In condemning the ordinations of bishops not approved by the Vatican John Paul II blurred the lines between schism and heresy by stating that the root of their schismatic act of ordination was their misappropriation of the idea of Tradition, a denial of living character of Tradition informed by the action of the Holy Spirit operating in the Church to effect unity.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Fraternité sacerdotale de Saint-Pie X, "La Fraternité Sacerdotale Saint-Pie X et Rome – Conférence de Mgr Lefebvre, 1987," <<http://www.fsspx.org/fr/organisation/rerelations-avec-rome/la-fraternite-sacerdotale-saint-pie-x-et-rome-conference-de-mgr-lefebvre-1987>>, accessed May 10, 2011.

<sup>33</sup>John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Ecclesia Dei* §4 (July 2, 1988), <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/motu\\_proprio/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_motu-proprio\\_02071988\\_ecclesia-dei\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_02071988_ecclesia-dei_en.html)>, accessed May 10, 2011:

The *root* of this schismatic act can be discerned in an incomplete and contradictory notion of Tradition. Incomplete, because it does not take sufficiently into account the *living* character of Tradition, which, as the Second Vatican Council clearly taught, "comes from the apostles and progresses in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation

Yet, there seems to have been a constant desire to keep lines of dialogue open after the excommunications. There was ample provision made for the liturgical sensibilities of those attached to the liturgical usage of the FSSPX, including the controversial decision to permit the celebration of older forms of Holy Week rites, this perhaps with the desire to entice individual lay adherents of the FSSPX back to Rome. This might seem like a concern for institutional unity, yet close attention to Vatican rhetoric presents a different concern: the personal rather than the institutional. The withdrawal of the excommunication of four bishops in 2009 was presented as a “discrete gesture of mercy” according to the Pope,<sup>34</sup> as his “paternal concern for the spiritual distress” of the *individuals* who were excommunicated.<sup>35</sup> Benedict XVI withdrew the excommunication without any public acts of repentance on the part of the four men in hopes that this would alleviate their spiritual anguish. It would seem that with respect to the FSSPX, Benedict has concerns similar to Cyprian in the latter stages of his career: the Church can take care of itself, so one need not require full unity—or perhaps in this case, even repentance—to bring errant members back into the fold. Unity in this case is divorced from holiness and catholicity.

The Chinese case most closely parallels Donatist controversy of antiquity. One group, the CCPA is affiliated with the government, receiving government recognition and funding for the salaries of its clergy. The appointment of its bishops receives government approval. So too the Catholics of antiquity: their congregations in North Africa received government approval and subsidies. The other set of congregations, the underground church, claims to be affiliated with the larger Catholic world, to be affiliated with Catholics at Rome and to eschew government control. It suffers persecution, as did the Donatists. Both churches

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and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts. It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth” [Note 5: Vatican Council II. Const. *Dei Verbum*, n. 8. Cf. Vatican Council I, Const. *Dei Filius*, cap. 4: *DS* 3020].

But especially contradictory is a notion of Tradition which opposes the universal Magisterium of the Church possessed by the Bishop of Rome and the Body of Bishops. It is impossible to remain faithful to the Tradition while breaking the ecclesial bond with him to whom, in the person of the Apostle Peter, Christ himself entrusted the ministry of unity in his Church. (Note 6: Cf. Mt. 16:18; Lk. 10:16; Vatican Council I, Const. *Pastor Aeternus*, cap. 3: *DS* 3060).

<sup>34</sup>Letter of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops of the Catholic Church Concerning the Remission of the Excommunication of the Four Bishops Consecrated by Archbishop Lefebvre (March 10, 2009), at <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/letters/2009/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_let\\_20090310\\_remissione-scomunica\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20090310_remissione-scomunica_en.html)>, accessed May 31, 2011.

<sup>35</sup>Congregation for Bishops, Decree Remitting the Excommunication “*Latae Sententiae*” of the Bishops of the Society of St Pius X (January 21, 2009).

can claim apostolic succession. Their priests operate in the same cities and towns like Catholics and Donatists did. While the Vatican has condemned the Chinese government's interference in Catholic affairs, it has not deemed the CCPA to represent a schismatic church, despite some pressures to do so.<sup>36</sup> Repeatedly John Paul II and Benedict XVI have reached out to the Catholics of China, both CCPA members and the underground church, to encourage communication, even friendship between members of the underground church and of the CCPA.<sup>37</sup>

There have even been attempts to reconcile priests ordained by CCPA bishops without reordination with a view toward unity and providing for the pastoral care of all Chinese Catholics, something similar to the inclusion of Donatist clergy among Catholics in Augustine's Africa.<sup>38</sup>

In this case, too, institutional outreach does not require either the underground church or the CCPA to admit that any individual or group of individuals committed any wrong or evil acts. The Church is big enough, strong enough, and holy enough as an institution to overlook which, if either group, represents the true holy Mother, and whose members, if any, were sinful. This recalls the later Cyprian and the Church of Augustine.

Now on to the situation of bishops and theologians. For people who are not on the outside or even on the edges, for active Catholics, the Vatican response to their perceived evil of disunity is more like that of Cyprian in his early career and that of the early Donatists. Unity demands personal holiness which in turn is recognized, not in the sharing of the Spirit as it once did, but in adherence to orthopraxis elevated to the status of orthodoxy. More than in the cases of the FSSPX and the CCPA, we see a circling of the wagons. Witness the treatment of various Catholic bishops whose unity and personal holiness have been impugned for a variety of offenses, largely issues of liturgical practice, for questioning mandatory celibacy or the readmission of divorced and remarried Catholics to communion.

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<sup>36</sup>See the March 28, 2000 letter of Joseph Cardinal Kung of the Cardinal Kung Foundation to various members of the CDF, at <<http://www.cardinalkungfoundation.org/cpa/openletter.html>>, accessed May 30, 2011.

<sup>37</sup>Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China §4 (May 27, 2007), <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_let\\_20070527\\_china\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20070527_china_en.html)>, accessed May 10, 2011; cf. John Paul II, Message to the Participants in the International Conference Commemorating the Fourth Centenary of the Arrival in Beijing of Father Matteo Ricci (October 24, 2001) <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/2001/october/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20011024\\_matteo-ricci\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2001/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20011024_matteo-ricci_en.html)>, accessed May 30, 2011.

<sup>38</sup>See note 25.

1. 1985 A coadjutor was supplied to Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle. That coadjutor assumed all of Hunthausen's duties, effectively removing him from diocesan leadership.
2. 1995 Jacques Gaillot was demoted from bishop of Évreux, France, to titular bishop of Parthenia, a place of no Christians in Algeria.
3. Multiple bishops have been deposed from sees in the last few years in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>39</sup>
4. 2011 William Morris of Toowoomba, Australia was forced to resign.<sup>40</sup>
5. Multiple theologians have had their work deemed unacceptable to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, most recently Sobrino, Haight, and Dupuis, among others. There are also theologians whose teaching or publishing has been curtailed by doctrinal offices of bishops' conferences.

The response to these men and women has been different. Errant bishops now find themselves outside circles of power, or out of office, and theologians find their works condemned without a hearing.<sup>41</sup> The response to Catholic bishops and theologians has been different from that toward members of the FSSPX and the CCPA. There has not been the concern for individuals that characterized Cyprian's second phase. The wagons have circled in a manner akin to the early Cyprian or early Donatists who excluded apostate clergy and feared the contagion of their evil.

Is the Church less able to deal with bishops and theologians than with schismatics? Do the acts of bishops and theologians pose more of a threat to the unity, holiness, and catholicity of the Church than the FSSPX or the CCPA? According to Pope Benedict XVI, the answer is "Yes." He says that "[T]oday we are seeing

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<sup>39</sup>Included here are: Basile Tapsoba of Koudougou, Burkina Faso; Francois-Xavier Yombandje, Bosangoa, Central African Republic; and Paulin Pomodimo, Bangui, also Central African Republic.

<sup>40</sup>William Morris, "Advent Pastoral Letter, 2006," <[http://www.twb.catholic.org.au/documents/bishop\\_morris\\_pastoral\\_letter\\_2006.pdf](http://www.twb.catholic.org.au/documents/bishop_morris_pastoral_letter_2006.pdf)>, accessed May 10, 2011:

Given our deeply held belief in the primacy of Eucharist for the identity, continuity and life of each parish community, we may well need to be much more open towards other options for ensuring that Eucharist may be celebrated. As has been discussed internationally, nationally and locally the ideas of:

- ordaining married, single or widowed men who are chosen and endorsed by their local parish community;
- welcoming former priests, married or single, back to active ministry;
- ordaining women, married or single;
- recognising Anglican, Lutheran and Uniting Church Orders.

On May 2nd, 2011 the Vatican announced that Bishop Morris was forced to retire.

<sup>41</sup>A catalogue of methods and cases relative to particular theologians is found in Bradford Hinze, "A Decade of Disciplining Theologians," *Horizons* 37 (2010): 92-126.

it in a really terrifying way: that the greatest persecution of the Church comes not from her enemies without, but arises from sin within the Church.”<sup>42</sup>

What does all this mean? Overlaying the grid of African responses to evil in the Church on contemporary events reveals that two different ideas of the Church as one, holy, and catholic at work. One seems to be confident that the Church has what it takes to care for errant sinners and bring them back to the fold. The other is afraid that the evil world, outside the church and especially inside, is able to lure away the sheep.

One might suggest that simultaneously cultivating multiple models of the Church might indeed be a good thing. But I am not talking about anything like Avery Dulles’ models here.<sup>43</sup> I am talking not so much about models of the Church as how the Church views the evil that helps define the unity, holiness, and catholicity of the Church.

One might say, well, different problems require different solutions. That too might be true. But the different solutions themselves tend to reflect back on the conceptions of the Church and to engender, form and reinforce different concepts, kinds of churches, one confident and one fearful.

Who is to choose? The saints themselves. They are already choosing when they admit to communion divorced and remarried Catholics. They are already choosing in what they buy and read. Are they making good choices? Are they directed by the Holy Spirit? How are they—you—to make good choices?

Two short points. First, I have provided for you insights into the models offered by the early Church. You need to know what is in the cupboard of church history to help make choices. After all, as the gospel says, “[E]very scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old” (Mt. 13:52). So remember:

1. Early Cyprian: circle the wagons
2. Later Cyprian: care for the wavering sinners

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<sup>42</sup>“Apostolic Journey of Pope Benedict XVI to Portugal on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the Beatification of Jacinta and Francisco, Young Shepherds of Fátima: Interview of the Holy Father Benedict XVI with the Journalists During the Flight to Portugal. Papal Flight, Tuesday, 11 May 2010,” <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2010/may/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20100511\\_portogallo-interview\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2010/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100511_portogallo-interview_en.html)>, accessed June 5, 2011. While his interviewer asked specifically about sexual abuse, the pope kept the conversation general. Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* §§8-9, October 1, 1986, at <[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19861001\\_homosexual-persons\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_en.html)>, accessed June 5, 2011.

<sup>43</sup>See Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City, NY: Image, 1978, with revised and expanded editions in 1988 and 2002, respectively).

3. Parmenian: *Ecclesia supplet*
4. Augustine: take care of all saints and sinners in the Church until the Final Judgment

Second and last, there needs to be a recovery of respect, not merely lip service, for the role of the Holy Spirit in engendering unity and holiness in the Church. This coming Sunday's liturgy reminds us of what that meant for the early Church and what it continues to mean. "Suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind": it came suddenly and in a manner that no one could control beforehand. "There appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them": not on one, two, or even twelve. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim"<sup>44</sup>: all participated in unity, holiness and catholicity under the guidance of the Holy Spirit even as they spoke in different idioms. May we saints gathered in San Jose join all the saints to pray for nothing less: "Come, Holy Spirit."

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<sup>44</sup>Acts 1:2-4.