A New Way of Being Catholic

Proceedings of "Utrecht Sweet Utrecht"

A Gathering of Old/Independent Catholic Clergy and Laity

Austin, Texas

October 24-27, 2019

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Preface

To the ill and homebound of our parish community, I'm fond of saying: "If you can't come to church, the Church will come to you!" Those words came to mind in July, as I was riding a train from Utrecht to Amsterdam with Father Peter-Ben Smit, the director of the 2019 Utrecht Summer School, in which I had just participated. Rephrasing my dictum, I wondered: For our many sisters and brothers of the Independent Catholic Movement here in the United States, who might be unable to travel to the Netherlands, how might we bring Utrecht to them? How might we enable them to learn more about the rich history and theological tradition that sprang from "the Cradle of Independent Catholicism"? Thus, as I waited at the Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam for my return flight to Texas, the dream began for "Utrecht Sweet Utrecht," an interjurisdictional/non-jurisdictional, "all-are-welcomed" gathering of Old/Independent Catholic clergy and laity!

My goal for "Utrecht Sweet Utrecht" was to share with Old/Independent Catholic clergy and laity all that my classmates and I learned at the Utrecht Summer School. The magnanimous volunteers of our parish community here at Holy Family embraced the idea—and expressed their willingness to assist with the details of hospitality. Our Parochial Vicar, Father Roy Gomez, suggested that we keep the cost of this gathering low, to avoid any financial barriers for those desiring to travel to Austin.

I shared the dream of "Utrecht Sweet Utrecht" by email with 800 Independent Catholic clergy. Bishop Francis Krebs, the Presiding Bishop of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, responded with openness to the idea, suggesting that we invite Bishop Raphael Adams and Bishop Rosemary Ananis to help plan the event. In response to our concern that we balance the male energy of this gathering with the gifts of our many sisters, he also proposed that we invite Bishop Denise Donato to preside and preach at liturgies.

Father Kevin Przybylski graciously accepted our invitation to lead the music at one liturgy, to preach at another, and to share the "secret sauce" of Rabbouni Catholic Community, the vibrant parish community that he helps lead in Louisville, Kentucky. Father Kevin also deserves credit for the title of this work, which springs from a phrase of his homily in honor of those who have gone before us in the Old/Independent Catholic tradition.

Father Libardo Rocha enthusiastically responded, publishing a treatise for this gathering in his recent work, *Islands and Bridges.* He offered to lead all present in a reflection on the Amazon Synod of the Roman Catholic Church, which concluded as our encounter began.

We hosted 37 attendees from 16 states for "Utrecht Sweet Utrecht": 12 bishops, 13 priests, four deacons and eight members of the laity. Twenty-one attendees represented nine jurisdictions, with 11 being from the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, three from the Ascension Alliance, two from the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch, and one each from the Apostolic Celtic Church, the Communion of Christian United Churches, the *Eaglais Uilíoch Ársa Solas Críost*, the National Catholic Church of North America, and the Old Catholic Church Province of the United States. Sixteen attendees self-identified as not belonging to any jurisdiction (viz., those in attendance from Holy Family Catholic Church in Texas, Christ the Good Shepherd in Michigan, All Saints Priory in New York, and Rabbouni Catholic Community in Kentucky).

I wish to recognize the courage of those who attended this encounter: Not knowing entirely what to expect, they invested personal resources and came to Texas, likely with the hope that the experience would be valuable to them.

I also express my gratitude to our corps of selfless volunteers here at Holy Family Catholic Church, who worked behind the scenes during this experience. Rosa Gil coordinated meals and snacks, with the assistance of Mario and María Cruz, Janie Gomez, and Mary Raigosa. Becky Saenz, Terry Ann Caballero, Rafaela Leal and Christopher Leal prepared the details for our liturgies, staffed our welcome table, and pitched in with innumerable "go-for" tasks. Also assisting with numerous details were Parochial Vicar Father Roy Gomez, Associate Pastor Father Libardo Rocha, Deacon Johnny "Canica" Limon, Deacon Angelita Mendoza-Waterhouse, Seminarian Elsa Nelligan, and Aspirant Vincent Maldonado.

During our concluding session on Sunday morning, I sensed unanimous support for repeating an event like this in the future. May we together discern the promptings of the Spirit in this respect, for the sake of the Old/Independent Catholic traditions of which we are part. In the meantime, it is my great pleasure to share with you the following proceedings from "Utrecht Sweet Utrecht: A Gathering of Old/Independent Catholic Clergy in Austin, Texas"!

A Homily for the Mass of the Holy Spirit

Bishop Denise Donato
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Fairport, New York

Our encounter in Austin began with a Mass of the Holy Spirit on the evening of October 24, 2019. Bishop Francis Krebs, the Presiding Bishop of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, led us in prayer, and Bishop Denise Donato of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion broke open the Word of God for us. The text of her homily follows.

It is so very good to be with all of you, to gather together at this time, and to begin a journey that we don't know where it will lead. Today, as we begin, this really is the Mass of the Holy Spirit--and so, it is appropriate for us to hear the readings from Pentecost! And who doesn't love the story of the first Pentecost?

This motley group of Jesus' followers are up in the locked room. Now, this is the group that had argued over who would be at Jesus' right, and who would be at his left (Mk. 10:37). It's the same group that had denied him (Mt. 26:33-35; Mk. 14:29-31; Lk. 22:33-34; Jn. 13:36-38), and one of their number even betrayed him (Mt. 26:14-16; Mk. 14:10-11; Lk. 22:3-6; Jn. 6:70-71, 13:2, 13:27)!

At the foot of the cross, they had all abandoned him, save Mary Magdalene, a few of the other women, and John (Mt. 27:55-56; Mk. 15:40-41; Lk.23:49; Jn. 19:25-27). A few days later, when Mary Magdalene and the other women came to announce the resurrection and proclaim the good news that Jesus had risen (Mk. 16:9-11; Lk. 24:10-11; Jn. 20:18), they considered it an idol tale (Lk. 24:11)!

I've always envisioned Mary Magdalene—the first to experience the risen Christ—being among them in that locked room. Jesus stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you" (Jn. 20:19 & Jn. 20:21). And the story continues with today's gospel (Jn. 20:19-23).

In today's first reading (Acts 2:1-11), we hear the story of that first Pentecost and how the Holy Spirit appeared to that motley group of Jesus' followers. They were gathered together in Jerusalem for the Festival of Weeks (Acts 2:1). There were people from every nation

gathered there in Jerusalem for that very same reason (Acts 2:5). And Jesus' friends experienced this rushing wind, this wind that roared through their midst (Acts 2:2). And they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4)!

The Hebrew word for the Spirit is a feminine noun, and it really speaks of the breath of God. And that breath of God, that Holy Spirit, reminds us of the winds of creation (Gen. 1:2) and how it is that God, in the very beginning, breathed life into the first humans (Gen. 2:7).

This motley group of Jesus' followers now experienced that rushing wind in their midst as a sign of the Spirit of God at work again—and just as God breathed life into the first humans and brought life to our world, and just as God created from that Spirit the Word made flesh, Jesus, God was now refashioning a diverse world and bringing people together through that same Spirit!

We've all had our own experiences with the Holy Spirit, in ways that are beyond our ability to sometimes make sense of it. For myself, I will never forget taking a pilgrimage to Rome and to Assisi just less than a year ago. One of the reasons for that pilgrimage was to explore the places that contain archaeological evidence for the presence of women in the early Church. One of the places that we visited was the Catacombs of Priscilla. I previously had the very grandiose thought that perhaps we might be able to celebrate Mass—or at least a brief prayer service—in the catacombs. Instead, our Vatican guide rushed us through the catacombs and told us, "One minute. You may pray, but just one minute."

I had visited the catacombs before, so I knew of one area with a great opening, where early Christians are believed to have gathered to break bread—an celebration of early Eucharist. When the Vatican guide said we had one minute, I quickly led the group to that wide-open space, where I read the story from the Gospel of Mark of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet (Mk. 14:3-9). The disciples tried to speak poorly of her, and they were arguing over the cost of the money for the perfume (Mk. 14:4-5). Jesus supported her, saying, "Truly, I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her" (Mk. 14:9). And then, from that gospel, I began my prayer.

I called on the great cloud of witnesses. I said, "Loving God, as we stand before you in this catacomb, we are surrounded by many who have gone before us—many whose stories may no longer be

remembered, and some whose stories are." And then I spoke to that cloud of witnesses, and I said, "Thank you. Thank you for your journeys. Thank you for your faith, for your witness, for your courage, and that, even if your stories are not remembered, you have created a way. You have created a foundation. You have provided for us this Church that is still alive and breathing and moving!"

As I prayed, it felt like the room was electrically charged: The hair on my arms was standing up, and I could feel the same on the back of my neck. As I concluded that prayer, Gary, one of the gentlemen on pilgrimage with us came running over, and he exclaimed, "Denise, they were here! I saw them!"

I said, "What do you mean?"

Gary said, "I closed my eyes for a moment, and this room was filled with men and women in white robes, and they were all bowing and nodding in unison with your prayer!"

Others said it was electrifying, too. We could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit! (I still wonder what the Vatican guide experienced at that moment: Did he even notice, or was he looking at his watch instead?)

That's the thing about having an experience of the Holy Spirit: It's powerful! Gary explained it this way: "It was scary when I closed my eyes and saw them there—but in a good way."

Those powerful experiences of the Holy Spirit are a little scary—if we don't understand the Spirit—but they bring us to a new place. The Spirit is not meant to stay in locked rooms. It's not meant to stay in the catacombs. It is meant to change our hearts and to invite us into a new way of being!

As we gather this week, we invite the Holy Spirit into our midst, to move and to breathe and to ignite the fires within us and between us and around us.

Many, if not all, in this room have experienced the dismay, the alienation, the loneliness, the desperation of feeling exiled from what we sometimes call "the Mother Church." Some may have been forced out, and others may have chosen to break out into something new. That which is supposed to be a place to encounter the Divine at times is instead a harbinger of sectarianism and clericalism and narrowness, that has left many in its wake.

But, in that exile—and I don't believe I speak only for myself—we have found freedom. We have experienced joy. We have found our hearts moved. And we have found the freedom to be ourselves, to follow the call of our hearts—regardless of gender or sexual orientation. We have found a way where there appeared to be none.

And I'm not just speaking for the clergy in the room: Every one of us gathered here has found freedom and renewed energy and renewed spirit—the Breath of new life! Jesus said, "Peace be with you. As my Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn. 20:21)!

As we gather here now, we undoubtedly have differences in our expressions of faith, but we find ourselves serving the same God. I sometimes say that when the Holy Spirit creates a way where there is no way, it's much more like a firecracker, than it is a single path: The way is broken open, there are many paths that present themselves, and then there comes a time when it is important for us to come back together.

It's uncanny that earlier this very week, a group of 18 of us—primarily Independent or Old Catholic Bishops from different jurisdictions in the United States—also gathered. We planned that encounter not having known yet about this gathering—and I'm sure that Father Jayme didn't know about ours. But the Spirit brings things together in ways that we might not have expected.

In preparing for this time with you today, I looked to different theologians and authors. One that I discovered was Chung Hyun Kyung, a South Korean Presbyterian theologian. Why is she remembered? In 1991, Chung Hyun Kyung was asked to address the World Council of Churches in Canberra, Australia. She shared a powerful sermon about the power and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. She acknowledged the differences and the diversity that were present among all the churches gathered there. And she challenged people to come together in new ways. She said,

> The wild wind of God breaks down all divisions among us and around us. The wild wind of life calls us to be passionate lovers and workers of a new creation. And that Holy Spirit draws us into relationships of love and commitment, to search for visible unity and more effective ministry.

Shane Claiborne, who writes for *Sojourners*, shared an article, "Why I Love Fire, Pentecost, and the Beloved Community." He says that, at Pentecost, God united scattered peoples from different languages and different cultures and identities, and, in order for the Spirit to help the disciples be understood, the Spirit had two options: The Spirit could have made everyone understand Aramaic, or She could have given each the ability to hear and understand in his or her own language. The Spirit chose the second path (Acts 2:6-11), which is very significant, because, if She had chosen to help everyone understand the Aramaic of the time, it would have sent a message that there is one language, one culture, and one way of being—only one way to follow God! In enabling people to understand in their own languages and cultures, the Spirit gave value to the beauty of diversity—regardless of ethnicity, culture, race, creed and every other way that we are divided in our world.

The Holy Spirit united scattered people then, and perhaps the Holy Spirit unites scattered people now, into a new beloved community, not made by our own hands or by a shared, single language, but by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, reminds us that we can be diverse, but still be of one heart and mind through the Spirit. We're reminded that unity does not mean uniformity; it does not mean that we all homogenize into one. We're called to dream new ways of being!

I love the Canadian metaphor for diversity: Whereas the United States is a "melting pot," where we all become one, the Canadian metaphor is of a mosaic, where each individual brings a piece—a beautiful reflection of the Divine—and a beautiful picture is created by the coming together in that diversity! Perhaps that's an image for us today.

Our time together can be a time of dreaming. David Lose, who writes for *Working Preacher* and is the former President of Lutheran Theological Seminary, says, "All of us, through the power of the Holy Spirit, have been commissioned to be official Christian dreamers" (Acts 2:16-18). "Official Christian dreamers"! He reminds us that dreaming involves risks. If we dream, we might be disappointed—so sometimes we don't want to get our hopes up. Sometimes your dreams are different from mine: How do we settle that? Lose reminds us that it's neither *about* us, nor *up to* us. But it is up to God, who is the Creator, the Sustainer and the Redeemer of this cosmos. Only God

can bring about the connection we long for. Our job is to partner with God's work and to allow the Holy Spirit to breathe through us!

In order to feel the Holy Spirit, Chung Hyun Kyung says we have to turn ourselves to the direction of the winds of life, because that is the direction that the Holy Spirit blows. I add: We must allow ourselves to be open to that Spirit in our midst. Otherwise, like that Vatican guide, we might miss the wonder and the surprises that the Holy Spirit—who blows where She will—has for us!

I conclude with the prayer of Chung Hyun Kyung:

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, Teacher of the humble,
Judge of the arrogant.

Come, Hope of the poor,
Refreshment of the weary,
Rescuer of the shipwrecked.

Come, Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.

Imbue our loneliness with your power.

Meet our weakness with the fullness of your grace.

Come, Holy Spirit,
renew the whole creation!

Come, Giver of life,
sustain your creation!

Come, Spirit of truth,
set us free!

Come, Spirit of unity,
reconcile your people!

Come, Holy Spirit,
transform and sanctify us!

Amen.

The Greatest Joys for Old/Independent Catholic Clergy and Laity in the United States

As we gathered to begin this time together, we shared our greatest joys as Old/Independent Catholic clergy. Our responses included the following.

"What I love about Independent Catholicism is the ability to be pastoral, to be loving. I was with the Roman Catholic Church for a while, and it limits your ability to accept people for who they are and where they are in life. And the Old Catholic Church allows us to tell people that they're loved, that they're welcomed at the table of the Lord without exception. And so, for me, that's my inspiration for being an Old Catholic priest."

Father Harry Posner
Ferndale, Michigan

"What I most love about Independent Catholicism is that I can be my authentic self when I participate. I can be fully involved. I grew up in a Roman Catholic setting, and I always felt a sense of detachment and alienation as I became an adult—that I couldn't bring my authentic, full self into service. Here I can, and I can fully participate, and I can be actively involved. And I don't have to deny anything about who I am—which is just beautiful."

Jonathan Quirk
Berkley, Michigan

"What do I love about Independent Catholicism? I paraphrase the words of Bishop Kera Hamilton, who is from Norristown, Pennsylvania. She's got a wonderful catchphrase, that I just love: 'The tradition and the room to grow.'"

Bishop Alan Kemp
Gig Harbor, Washington

"Independent Catholicism offered a way for me to follow the call of my heart. As a Roman Catholic woman—and really feeling called within Catholicism—I never thought it would be possible to be called to ordained ministry. And so that's one of the things that I love about Independent Catholicism."

Bishop Denise Donato
Fairport, New York

"The thing I love about Independent Catholicism is that it allowed me to finally answer the call that I felt since my youth. As a small boy, going to church on my own and never having that voice, I grew up in the United Methodist system. I was finally invited into ministry—as long as I was the only minister in the state of Michigan who signed a celibacy pledge, because, as a gay man, I was viewed as 'flawed.' And I thank God every day that my dear friends, Monsignor Harry and Father Charles, invited me into the Old Catholic movement. I've been ordained as a priest for two years now. It's been a true blessing."

Father Michael Cadotte
Berkley, Michigan

"From the standpoint of a clergy person and former religious in the Roman church—and my colleagues who came from that same place will appreciate this—we no longer have to hide whatever we were hiding. Everybody's hiding and limiting themselves, or standing at the altar and…pretending—that's a better term. Here we don't have to pretend anymore. I love walking into church with my wife and my children. I love walking down the street with my collar, and hearing people say, 'Wow, look: A priest with a family!' Many of those who continue in the mainline traditions say, 'I can't leave because I'm stuck here,' but they look at us and still say, 'Man!' It's just the freedom—and my colleagues who come from the other side understand. We no longer have to pretend. And that's one of my greatest joys in this tradition. The pretending part hurt me the most when I was a religious in a mainline denomination, and now I feel very free and joyful."

Father Mike Lopez
Ridgewood, New York

"What I love about this movement is that we have a great entrepreneurial spirit: of people who build ministries from scratch. While that can be tough, it's worth it in the long run, when you see folks come together and see that you can think 'outside the box' and bring folks together."

Bishop David Strong
Tacoma, Washington

"What I love most about Independent Catholicism is the feeling of coming home. When I experienced this call, I thought, 'Well, God, if you want me to be ordained, I guess I can't stay Catholic!' And so, after a while—being a 'cradle Catholic' from New Orleans—I felt I was in exile within the Roman Catholic Church. And so I went over into the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, and I've done a lot of things—but that was the main experience that brought everything together. It does the same for many people: It provides that feeling of coming home."

Rev. Cynthia Drew
Aurora, Colorado

"What I love about Independent Catholicism is that I can be me. I can be accepted and loved for who I am. As a lay person, the [Roman Catholic] nuns trained me very well: I'm a Catholic, but with a lot of thoughts that go against what Rome says. Being a non-Roman Catholic seemed an oxymoron, and my friends would ask, 'Why are you still Catholic?' I'd reply, 'If I'm not Catholic, I'm not going to believe anything.' That was my comfort level. In the Independent Catholic Church, I can now be who I am. I find Independent Catholicism to be all the things I wished the Roman Catholic Church was: all-inclusive and accepting, not looking to discount people, but seeing how we can gather people in."

Joe Fedorczyk
Farmington Hills, Michigan

"I have a former Roman Catholic priest friend of mine, who's also a theologian, and so we spend a lot of time talking about the Independent Catholic movement. He's very traditional and probably isn't terribly supportive of the movement. But he says that one of the

things about Independent Catholics is that we're able to go places and to minister in ways that Roman Catholic priests and clergy cannot. We get calls from hospitals when a Roman Catholic priest won't come or can't come. We get calls when people want to celebrate their weddings outdoors in a beautiful setting, and they're not permitted to do that in the Roman Church. We've got the freedom to be. We've got the freedom to do it the way that we know it needs to be done, to be able to respond to the Holy Spirit, and to meet the pastoral needs—to feed God's sheep, and to do it in a creative, loving way. That's what I love the most about the Independent Movement."

Bishop Alan Kemp
Gig Harbor, Washington

"What I love most about Independent Catholicism is the authenticity, in all ways—that we're able to be authentic, but also that we're able to serve anyone in any way. There are no limitations on whom we serve and how we serve."

Bishop Leonard Walker
Kingman, Arizona

"What do I love about Independent Catholicism? It's not so much a *what*; it's a *who*. I swam the Tiber 45 years ago. I'm at that point where I know a lot more dead people, than live ones—but I've loved them all, because they have all been lovable people.

When I go around the Ecumenical Catholic Communion's Diocese of Mid-America, I get excited. I get excited knowing these people. I'm excited to know Fred and Sarah Ball—people who started with six people in their living room, and every time I go down there, I'm confirming five more people every year. It doesn't seem like a big number—unless you started with six, and now you're up to 40-something! I'm excited about their work with the homeless. I'm excited about the relationship they have with the Daughters of Charity, when Roman Catholics wouldn't go into places where they're willing to go. I'm excited about that opportunity to follow the Spirit. I'm excited about the folks in Oshkosh. I'm excited about Mary Hartjes and Mimi Maki. I'm excited by all the people that I've seen, because I see the Holy Spirit working, moving in each of those parishes, in each of those people in a unique way. And, guess what?

When I visit my Roman Catholic friends, I don't see that. I don't feel that. It's not alive. That's what I get excited about and enthused about. It's that 'Yea, God!' freedom.

I'll share the story. It goes back to Deacon Mary Sylvester, who was always doing strange things to me. When I'd get upset, she would say, 'Honey, you just gotta leave some of that sh** where Jesus flung it!' Years ago, one Sunday morning, out of nowhere, Mary just went, 'Yea, God!' I stopped and looked at her. And she said, 'What do you think *hallel yah* means?' Every Sunday after that, it was 'Yea, God!'

That's what Independent Catholicism is to me. It's that 'Yea, God!' freedom. It's freedom *from*, but it's also freedom *to*—freedom to respond to the Spirit in the way that the Spirit moves each one of us."

Bishop Raphael Adams
Chicago, Illinois

"I was telling Bishop Frank and Bishop Rafe today that life only keeps getting better. As a Roman Catholic priest, I thought I had reached the height of my life. The Roman Catholic Church greatly empowered me. The bishop here in Austin named me president of his high school at age 33. I thought I had come to the maximum expression of who I could ever be. After that, he named me pastor of his largest Spanish-language congregation here in Austin: We had nine Masses on a Sunday, only one of which was in English. I thought I had died and gone to heaven! After I left the church, over the issues of immigration and women's reproductive health, I admittedly felt somewhat crushed. I didn't think I'd reach those heights again. But life only keeps getting better, and I feel I've reached new heights. I wake up every day believing I'm the happiest man on earth—to be doing what I'm doing, shepherding the flock that we have here at Holy Family, and seeing how it is that we can help them to grow in their relationship with God and with all those people around us. So, I just love the freedom that I have in Independent Catholicism—to continue to minister and to proclaim Jesus' gospel of mercy and love to all people."

Father Jayme Mathias
Austin, Texas

"What I most love about Independent Catholicism is that we receive everyone and treat everyone equally. We don't discriminate against anyone, including women. And priests can be married."

Deacon Johnny H. Limon
Austin, Texas

"I love the inclusivity and welcoming, the lay involvement, the equality in and of ministries, that women and LGBT folks can be called to ordination, and that we're 'free to be.'"

Rev. Rosa Buffone
Newtonville, Massachusetts

"What I most love about Independent Catholicism is the full embrace of the Tradition, but also the ability to be authentic as a leader and as a praying person. What do I love about Independent Catholicism? Sacraments for all. Love of God for all. Community for all. The ability to follow God's call. And I enjoy more integrity as a theologian."

Rev. Trish Sullivan Vanni
Edina, Minnesota

"What I most love about Independent Catholicism is the true inclusivity and diversity. I can be my authentic self. I can be true to my call to the priesthood. As a former Roman lay person, I felt called to the priesthood. So, now, as an Independent Catholic, I love being a woman priest! I feel free from dogmatic constrictions that I found limiting. And I really enjoy the freedom to think theologically in more inclusive and more diverse ways. I'm free not to take things literally. I'm free to use non-canonical scripture. I'm free to read a wide range of theologians and other commentators. I really appreciate that. I also love that we provide sacraments for all—or, as Julie Byrne calls it, sacramental justice!"

Bishop Cathy Chalmers
Everett, Washington

"What I most love about Independent Catholicism is the freedom to be myself within the Catholic tradition—both as a gay man and theologically."

Bishop Theodore Feldmann
New Orleans, Louisiana

"What I most love about Independent Catholicism is it broadens my perspective of our Lord."

Deacon Angelita Mendoza-Waterhouse
Austin, Texas

"What I most love about Independent Catholicism is the freedom to worship where 'all are welcome.' We don't discriminate against those marginalized by the Roman church."

Greg Yonker
Aurora, Colorado

"What I most love about Independent Catholicism is the freedom from constricting legalism and the openness to differences and diversity."

Anonymous

"What I most love about Independent Catholicism is the allowance of ministers and communities to truly grow and to make the changes that the Spirit leads us to and through."

Anonymous

The Greatest Challenges for Old/Independent Catholic Clergy and Laity in the United States

As we gathered to begin this time together, we revealed our perspectives on the greatest challenges facing Old/Independent Catholicism. Our responses included the following.

"I was a Roman Catholic priest for 31 years. The challenge I find as an Independent Catholic is finding the same sense of rootedness, of knowing who we really are. That's what attracted me to Utrecht. The challenge for us here in the United States is to establish an authentic sense of deep rootedness as Independent Catholics, not in relationship to the Roman Catholic Church."

Bishop Leonard Walker
Kingman, Arizona

"The challenge for us as Independent Catholics in the United States is to find our voice as one—and our path forward is to allow that voice to be heard by others who need it."

Father Michael Cadotte
Berkley, Michigan

"One of the greatest challenges in Independent Catholicism comes from clergy themselves, who limit the possibilities of ministry in their own lives. I want to urge you all—since I took that damn four-and-a-half-hour 'plane ride from hell,' from New York to here—not to limit yourselves. Please, I beg you all: Don't limit yourselves in your ministries—because then we'd be just like everybody else. Go for it! Jump out the window! You already did! So just keep moving!"

Father Mike Lopez
Ridgewood, New York

"One of the biggest things that we have to worry about is aging clergy. A lot of our people are older in our communities, and they can't afford to get a Master of Divinity. Like me, I'm 69 years old. I can't afford to get an M.Div.—and yet I've wanted to be a priest since I was eight or nine years old. And, of course, I couldn't do that as a Roman Catholic. But I'm working toward that now, hoping that we can break down some barriers. So that's one of our biggest challenges: We have to have clergy, to be there for our younger people and to show them the way in Independent Catholicism."

Mary Hartjes
Combined Locks, Wisconsin

"There are two great challenges for us. One is our sustainability: How do we carry this message and this great story to people in a way they can hear it? We may have to learn evangelism from folks outside our tradition—a way of reaching people with the sacraments, with a message of community. The other challenge is diversity. If Black and Hispanic congregations are growing in the Roman church and the Episcopal church, then we should see the same in the Independent Catholic movement, because we have greater freedom and opportunity."

Bishop David Strong
Tacoma, Washington

"One of our greatest challenges is explaining who we are. It's tough trying to explain to people, 'You're what?' And unpack all that. It's not something you can do in a 30-second elevator spiel."

Father Dewayne Messenger
Sand Springs, Oklahoma

"Our greatest challenge is coming together interjurisdictionally. That's what I like about this gathering: that it's not just one jurisdiction, but it's interjurisdictional—or non-jurisdictional. At Rabbouni, we are totally independent. Holy Family here is now totally independent. We're not connected, but it's important for us to come together in some way, interjurisdictionally, and also with a variety of worship styles. Can we somehow come together? I find that a challenge. I also echo what has been said about formation and

education: They're a challenge. Financial concerns are a challenge, particularly for young people or middle-aged people or older people who want to have a good theological education—and that gives Independent Catholicism a sense of validity. But it's a financial challenge. When we educate young people, it costs money. It costs money to get an M.Div. Do we have the financial resources to support them when they get ordained? Those are challenges."

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"One of the challenges we face as Old Catholics is that we're fractured, that we're not a united church. It makes us an easy target for bullying by the Roman Catholic Church. In the Archdiocese of Detroit, they publish the names of priests in the Old Catholic movement as 'fake priests.' Fortunately, our church has not been part of that. I have a friend who was fired as a hospital chaplain because he's a priest outside the Roman church. And so, when we're divided and we don't speak with a common voice, we're an easy target for the Romans to bully us or suggest that we're excommunicated or no longer Catholic. And it's really unfortunate how they treat Independent Catholics—at least in the Archdiocese of Detroit. The archbishop was a professor of mine at the seminary, so Christ the Good Shepherd has been shielded from some of the attacks—but that isn't the case for other churches in our area. It's unfortunate."

Father Harry Posner
Ferndale, Michigan

"Our greatest challenges include small communities, growth, financial hardship, educating others about 'the Other Catholics,' aging clergy, lack of living wage for pastors, and sustainability."

Rev. Rosa Buffone
Newtonville, Massachusetts

"I'm thinking about the broad diversity of the people who come to us. Many are unchurched. Many have spouses of very diverse backgrounds. It's not like when I went to grammar or high school in the Catholic schools of New Orleans, where everybody had the same background, the same biblical knowledge and theological awareness.

So, it's hard to bring them together into one group. That's a challenge. I don't think people talk about that as much. It's nice to be able to come together as churches, but our congregations are very different."

Rev. Cynthia Drew
Aurora, Colorado

"Our greatest challenges include 'legitimacy'—whatever that means—and fractiousness. Sometimes we overuse our energy to be schismatic. As Father Harry says, let's be diverse without splitting."

Bishop Cathy Chalmers
Everett, Washington

"We have to really be cautious about being single-issue Catholics. In my inclusive and welcoming church, our slogan is 'Loving All of God's Wondrous Creation.' Period. One of the things that was concerning for me coming from the outside into the movement, was that I saw a lot of single-issue stuff from the movement as a whole. And I continue to be concerned about it, whatever the issue is. Please,—I don't want anyone to take this the wrong way—but when we become single-issue, we turn off people who might otherwise be welcomed into our church. In my parish, I have to really be careful, because I'm all about the poor. When I preach every Sunday, I always find a way to say that Jesus is telling us to love the poor more. Even I have to be careful with that single issue, because there are people—my wife, for instance—who is not in love with the poor the way I am. She wants to hear how she can be a better Christian mother. We need to be for *everybody*. We're all-inclusive. We're not just 'the Catholics who have gays.' We're not just 'the Catholics who have married priests.' We're not just 'the Catholics who…whatever.' There's a deep tradition that we demonstrate, and I'm so glad that Jayme put this together, to talk about our roots in Old Catholicism, as we speak of it coming from Europe. Do we understand what that means and the different theological pieces that make us Old or Independent Catholics? We're not Old or Independent Catholics simply because our priests can marry or because we accept gay people or because everybody can receive communion."

Father Mike Lopez
Ridgewood, New York

"The greatest challenge facing us is getting the word out to others and creating a sense of connectedness within and among us."

Bishop Denise Donato
Fairport, New York

"Our greatest challenges include the lack of training of our clergy, frivolous ordination based on whim or ego, and constant splits and morphing into new jurisdictions."

Bishop Theodore Feldmann
New Orleans, Louisiana

"Our greatest challenge is getting the word out about Independent Catholicism—that it's O.K. to be Catholic and loved for who we are."

Joe Fedorczyk
Farmington Hills, Michigan

"Our greatest challenge is not having greater recognition, as the Roman church has."

Deacon Angelita Mendoza-Waterhouse
Austin, Texas

"Our greatest challenges are establishing deep rootedness in the Independent Catholic tradition, finding our voice, and letting it be heard."

Jonathan Quirk
Berkley, Michigan

"Our greatest challenges include indifference to faith communities by current culture, disconnecting families from churches, and fragmentation of the Independent Catholic Movement."

Rev. Trish Sullivan Vanni
Edina, Minnesota

"Our greatest challenges include attracting young Catholics. We struggle to grow, and we have some bullying from the Roman Catholic Church."

Greg Yonker
Aurora, Colorado

"It's important for us to be more 'for,' rather than simply being 'against' or 'not Roman Catholic.'"

Anonymous

"Our greatest challenge is the bias against the Independent Church Movement and the lack of clarity around the Independent Catholic Movement. People think we don't want to be under structured leadership."

Anonymous

"Our greatest challenge is the lack of awareness that 'Catholic' isn't a term that belongs solely to the Roman church—which causes confusion for Independents and saddles us with many of the failures of the Roman church."

Anonymous

Our Hopes and Dreams for Old/Independent Catholicism in the United States

As we gathered to begin this time together, we shared our hopes and dreams for Old/Independent Catholicism. Our responses included the following.

"I hope this is the beginning. I keep discovering what I wasn't able to frame in language as 'the Independent Catholic Movement,' because if I don't know about it, it must be a well-kept secret. I told some people that I was coming to a conference of Independent Catholic communities, and their response was, 'What?' My friends have heard of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, because I never shut up, but I have to keep reminding my friends about Independent Catholicism. This is an enormously important start to what needs to be a strong PR marketing effort. Collectively, we can do it, as a federation, as a community of communities. There are a lot of people who've never heard of us, but who would love who we are and what we do."

Father Donald Sutton
Denver, Colorado

"There's power in sacramental evangelism and there's power in being church in places like coffee houses, where we can invite people to just come and have a cup of coffee with us as a group. My group does 'Beers, Brews and the Bible,' where we go on Wednesday nights to a coffee shop. There are people who ask, 'You drink beer at a Bible study?' Yeah. People who would never come to church on Sunday show up to that. That kind of imagination for us is a way and a vision for us."

Bishop David Strong
Tacoma, Washington

"One of my dreams is already coming to fruition: There is a growing movement in this country of Independent Catholics, and we are slowly coming together. My dream is that we continue to do that."

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"For the most part, with very few exceptions, look around this group: We are 'old Catholics'! What keeps me awake at night is that I want to see younger people. I want somebody to be here and to carry on when we're gone. We're past the day when we can say, 'If we build it, they will come.' I go back to Erasmus, who said if Christians really were the people they claim to be, then people would see that we really do care about this world and the poor and the environment and all those things that the gospel challenges us to care about. Until we show people that and abandon moralism, they're not going to hear us. So, to me, that's the biggest challenge that we face."

Bishop Raphael Adams
Chicago, Illinois

"I hope that we can get to a space where we no longer have to keep comparing ourselves to other traditions. That's the biggest bullsh** that happens in this movement. It hinders us. I never talk about it. We work collectively with a Roman Catholic soup kitchen, where we operate with them. I've been called by priests in other traditions, to celebrate their liturgies at their altars. When we keep acting 'lesser,' we hurt ourselves. It's so important that we understand the theological differences and not just say that we are 'Roman Catholic lite.' We should stop comparing. We just spent two hours comparing ourselves, making mention of Rome. I did. We do it all the time. I want to get to the place where we don't have to do that. That's my biggest dream. And when we do the work, nobody cares. I've never had a homeless dude or a couple that wants to get married on the beach say to me, 'Let's talk about the Immaculate Conception.' It doesn't happen when you're doing the work. And, if we don't do the work, then we have to compare and play catch-up and play games. But, if you're 'in the field,' doing the grunt work, it just happens."

Father Mike Lopez
Ridgewood, New York

"My hope is for the Holy Spirit to continue to inspire and help others to find their way to us—and for there to be ways to come together as a movement."

Bishop Denise Donato
Fairport, New York

"I hope we find a language. I certainly agree with Father Mike. When I saw the Holy Family Facebook page, it was all on the theme of 'We're Catholic, but not Roman Catholic.' It felt so defensive. I was thinking of St. Francis: 'Preach the gospel at all times, and use words if you must.' The language we've been using is limiting. There are lots of studies on millennials: They want intimate relationships, they want to include everybody, and they love creation. We have to find a way to be out there with them and to 'do the gospel'—and then they'll want to be with us."

Rev. Cynthia Drew
Aurora, Colorado

"My wife is a new thought minister in a Unity Church, and 'new thought' doesn't mean that they've figured out something new. It means 'to change your own thought,' to think a new thought. That's what new thought and metaphysical Christianity is about. And even the Buddha said, 'Our thoughts become who we are.' And so, if we can pray together a new vision for Independent Catholicism, even if we're praying for different pieces in the mosaic, if we can create that mosaic of what it means to be Catholic—without the comparison to the silverback—we will make that happen. So, it kind of is, 'If you build it, they will come'—but it's from the inside-out, not the outside-in. We have to do it from the interior landscape of our contemplation and our prayer. And we have to remake ourselves before we can do anything manifesting externally. If we can be of one mosaic mind, we will create a thing of beauty: a stained-glass window that really is translucent and colorful and lets in all that divine light and reflects and projects who we are."

Bishop Cathy Chalmers
Everett, Washington

"My dreams include improvement in education and training, and also an umbrella organization that would allow for freedom but provide support and dialogue without the 'Roman' hierarchical power structure and control."

Bishop Theodore Feldmann
New Orleans, Louisiana

"I don't have a hope or a dream, but one of the things that occurs to me is that schools of theology and ministry are busting at the seams, but they're busting at the seams with people who are middle-aged and beyond—people who are doing spiritual searching. So, what is it that we're trying to do? We need young priests if this movement is going to survive. Maybe it's going to be different than the old schools of theology and ministry that we've had up until now. Maybe there needs to be something new. So mine is less a hope or a dream, and more of a reflection on what we're doing."

Bishop Alan Kemp
Gig Harbor, Washington

"My hopes and dreams for the future include representing Christ-consciousness and wisdom much more than *ekklesia*, creating parishes and robust seminaries and formation programs, communion with each other, and possibly communion with Utrecht."

Bishop Cathy Chalmers
Everett, Washington

"My dream is that all Catholics might acknowledge Independent Catholicism."

Deacon Angelita Mendoza-Waterhouse
Austin, Texas

"My vision is for the love of God to be experienced fully by the people who discover us!"

Rev. Trish Sullivan Vanni
Edina, Minnesota

"My hopes and dreams for the future include growth, more youth, sharing what we have, and the creation of seminaries."

Greg Yonker
Aurora, Colorado

"My vision is for us to form a federation of Independent Catholic Churches, which speaks with charity and unity."

Anonymous

Reflections on the First Evening of "Utrecht Sweet Utrecht"

As the first full day of our time together dawned, we shared subsequent reflections on the conversations of the previous evening. The following remarks were shared.

"I was struck by the many common themes in our individual lives—and, subsequently, the fact that we still earnestly desire to be Catholic. What I was hearing last night was an expression of that desire, a desire that greatly overrides any anger, hostility or disappointment with the tradition that raised us. And I think that's really important."

Father Donald Sutton
Denver, Colorado

"I woke up this morning thinking about the idea that the Church has always been in turmoil. And I'm grateful that we still are. The epistles were written in the midst of turmoil. It's very clear that we shouldn't be dismayed by the current swaying of the sea—to refer to the title of the next presentation. It helps us continue to be where we need to be."

Father Mike Lopez
Ridgewood, New York

"I woke up this morning thinking of homecoming and the joy of the Spirit, which is very alive. There's turmoil on the surface, but there is a deep, abiding spirit of joy and fellowship, and we connected last night on that heart level. And that's something that doesn't happen every day."

Rev. Cynthia Drew
Aurora, Colorado

Old Catholicism and Independent Catholicism: Vessels in the Catholic Sea

Rev. Dr. Jayme Mathias
Holy Family Catholic Church
Austin, Texas

I begin with a question: When a person walks up to you and asks who you are or what you do as an Independent Catholic—as a bishop, priest, deacon or lay person in the Independent Catholic tradition—how do *you* respond? What do you tell them? To use a phrase that we heard last night, do you have an "elevator speech," a brief way of describing who we are, for those who've never heard of Independent Catholicism? My own Independent Catholic "elevator speech" goes something like this:

> We all know that there are various Catholic churches in the world. The largest is the Roman Catholic Church, with more than a billion people. We've all heard of that one, right? The second largest is the Orthodox—or "right-believing"—Catholic Church, which excommunicated the Roman church in 1054 A.D. It's a fascinating history! That's right: The Greek Orthodox Church is a Catholic church, led by the Patriarch of Constantinople, and it has over three-hundred million people. And there are all sorts of smaller Catholic churches that split from the Roman church on other issues—like purported 'papal infallibility' and the universal jurisdiction of the pope, which resulted in the Old Catholic Church. You might say that Independent Catholicism is a form of Old Catholicism here in the United States. We identify with that Old Catholic tradition, and we, like the Old Catholic Church, are independent from Rome. We are, as I like to say, "Catholic, but not Roman Catholic." Most importantly, like the Roman church, we possess apostolic succession and valid sacraments!

That last point is important. Here in Austin, I dare anyone to say that my sacraments aren't valid. I tell people here at Holy Family that, if any priest doesn't accept our sacramental certificates or suggests that our sacraments are not valid, I will visit him the very next day.

I'm always happy to school our brothers on the things that not even I learned during my years of study in the Roman church!

But setting that "elevator speech" aside for the moment, I'm going to attempt today another description of the various Catholic churches, but this time with a much more visual image. Jesus of Nazareth preached in a way that was highly visual. He spoke of seeds and weeds, of flour and fish, of birds and bowls and boats. Yes, Jesus spoke of some very concrete things! So, in the spirit of the very visual Jesus of Nazareth, I'd like to talk today about the various "vessels"—the "boats"—on the "waters" of Catholicism.

On the "waters" of Catholicism, you'll find various "boats"—which is appropriate, since Jesus himself lived in a world of boats. Jesus found his first followers among the boats (Mt. 4:18-22; Mk. 1:16-20; Lk 5:1-11). He preached in boats (Lk 5:3). He slept in boats (Mt. 8:24). He calmed storms and made for smoother sailing (Mt. 8:23-27; Mk. 4:35-41; Lk. 8:22-25). He even invited people to literally step out of their boats, to show them what they were capable of (Mt. 14:22-33). Jesus invited people to trust him, to take risks, and, yes, according to one story, he invited Peter to "jump ship" and to come to him on the water!

It's hardly surprising that above the entrance to the Old Saint Peter's Basilica, there is the image of a boat. It's a mosaic by Giotto di Bondone, called the *Navicella*, the barque of Peter—Peter's boat! The barque of Peter is an ancient symbol of the Church: If you're in the "boat" of the Church, you're saved, and, if you dare leave the safety of the "boat," you'll perish. *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, right? "Outside the Church, no one is saved," we used to say.

In the 1960's, the bishops who gathered at the Second Vatican Council returned to that image of Peter's barque in *Lumen gentium*, saying that "whoever, therefore, knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or to remain in it, could not be saved" (*LG*, 14). They also stirred our imagine with a renewed liturgy that fostered the "full and active participation by all the people" (*SC*, 14). They left us with the image that, in this boat that is the Church, we all have to "row" together each time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist. There are no spectators on the "boat" of the post-Vatican II liturgy: Pick up your oar, and help us row!

Because the ancient Church—the first "Old Catholic Church"—imagined the Church as a boat, let's do the same: Let's recast my "elevator speech" in terms of boats!

The Roman Catholic Church, as we said, is the largest of the Catholic churches: To what type of boat shall we liken it? Well, what's the largest class of boats in this world? Supertankers! Are we all familiar with supertankers? They transport large quantities of petroleum for thousands of miles at a time. It's largely because of supertankers that we can do all the gas-powered things we do in this nation! Supertankers are huge. They're long and wide, and they displace a lot of water, which is how they stay afloat. So, in the waters of Catholicism, the Roman Catholic Church is the supertanker, and, if you're disappointed that the Roman Church hasn't changed its stance on various issues, just remember: You can't turn such a large ship on a dime. It's going to take time.

We love our sisters and brothers of the Roman Church. In fact, I served that church as a priest for over ten years. But we all know that there wasn't a "Roman Catholic Church" for the first thousand years after Christ. For the first millennium after Jesus' birth, the Church was building up steam—but we didn't call it the "Roman Catholic Church" yet. The Roman church wasn't branded in the same way then, as it is today. That happened after the first group of Catholics decided to "jump ship." Have you heard the story?

At the end of the first millennium, there were captains and commanders on Peter's Barque, who were displeased with the direction in which the Church seemed to be heading. In their estimation, the Church had veered off course. For centuries, the Church was guided by the "North Star" of its creed, and now some captains were beginning to slightly adjust the course of the ship. They tampered with the creed, thus charting a new course for the Church.

We like to think of the Church as holy and divine, but the Church is also very human and contains many sinners. (In fact, some might suggest that the Church is comprised entirely of sinners!) And so the human beings on Peter's Barque began to fight. Ultimately, they fought over three things.

First, they fought over the creed, with some defending the innovation of a new word, *filioque* ("and with the Son"), and with others staunchly opposing it and choosing to hold instead to the faith of the Old Catholic Church.

Second, the innovators suggested that, in our celebrations of the Eucharist, we should eat unleavened bread—just like the ancient Israelite. I don't know what you use in your church, but we use unleavened bread—we use hosts—here at Holy Family. That was a Western innovation at the end of the first millennium, and those who wanted to maintain the course of the Old Catholic Church found no reason to deviate from the leavened bread they had been using for over a thousand years.

Finally, the innovators suggested that all clergy should be celibate—that we shouldn't have wives or kids, to whom our property might be passed. Say, what? That's right: It's a lot easier to support a single guy—and I apologize, but women had been definitively excluded from the ministries of the Church by the Second Council of Orange in 529—rather than having to support guys with their wives and children. That's right: Mandated clerical celibacy was an unheard-of innovation! Sure, celibacy was esteemed by those who eschewed the goodness of the body and of sex—for those with Manichaean tendencies—but would we let the Church legislate celibacy as being mandatory for *all* clergy? The innovators aspired to a celibate ideal, all the while knowing that their repressed sexuality found—and would continue to find—expressions in other ways. Those who wanted to maintain the course of the Old Catholic Church opposed the innovation of mandated clerical celibacy.

So, the sinful human beings on Peter's Barque had their differences, largely owing to the sins of human nature. Divorce was imminent, and some decided to "jump ship." Here at Holy Family, we say that divorce is sometimes the most faithful response to a broken relationship. This was certainly the case here: Two roads were diverging in a yellow wood, and, as is the case in any divorce, both sides invented their own stories to explain the split, with each side saying it excommunicated the other.

It appeared that the innovators lost the marketing battle, though, since those who clung to the faith of the Old Catholic Church and gathered around the Patriarch of Constantinople labeled themselves as "Orthodox" (or "right-believing"), in contrast to the innovators who, due to their allegiance to the Patriarch of Rome, were labeled as Roman (or Roman Catholic).

To their credit, the Roman Catholic innovators knew the two secrets to power and influence in this world. They're the principles of

community organizing. My "sole mate," Bishop Frank, mentioned last night that I serve on the local school board here in Austin. I represent a district of 55,000 voters, and, in order to represent 55,000 voters, you have to organize two things: You have to organize *people*—you have to get them to the polls—and you have to organize *money*, which helps to get them to the polls. Those are the two secrets to power and influence in this world: organizing people and organizing resources. (And yes, this helps to explain why Independent Catholicism doesn't enjoy more power and influence in this world at present!)

The innovators lost the marketing battle, but they knew that if they could use fear and guilt to get enough people to their churches—"if you don't go to church, you'll go to hell!"—and if they passed around the collection basket at each gathering, there was a chance that their power and influence could eclipse that of the "right-believing" Catholics who had excommunicated them. And that is exactly what happened.

So, each boat went its own way, with the Roman church charting a new course while the Orthodox church attempted to steer back in the direction of the Old Catholic Church. The Roman church picked up steam and eventually came to be the supertanker of Catholic churches, while the Orthodox churches together came to resemble, let's say, a somewhat smaller—though still large—container ship.

An important event in the history of the supertanker of the Roman church would occur in the early sixteenth century, when a revolt of crew members led to a mass exodus from the Roman church. I refer to it as the Halloween Mutiny of 1517. It was a strike, purportedly launched on Halloween of 1517 and led by Martin Luther, a low-ranking crew member, whose followers, hoping to reform or adjust the direction of the ship, would assume his chant and his name. Martin Luther was an Augustinian canon and Roman Catholic priest who had 95 questions for his church. Chief among them were his concerns for the church's fundraising tactics: The Roman church avariciously dreamed of building the largest church in the entire world, and how were they going to finance it? With the sale of indulgences—of time out of Purgatory! Imagine that for a moment: that I, a human being, could sell you—depending on the size of your donation—time out of Purgatory! Straight from the Roman playbook of fear and guilt, it was ingenious, but some crew members had a

problem with it. They chose to jump ship—or were made to walk the plank, depending on who's telling the story. Those remaining on the ship labeled them as protesters or "Protestants." And, because of the very low rank of these crew members, the admirals, captains and commanders reorganized life on the supertanker during the Council of Trent (1545-1563), quickly formulating and disseminating the necessary justification for the course they had set for themselves—the course that resulted in the Halloween Mutiny of 1517.

The supertanker of Roman Catholicism powered on until the next mutiny: the Dutch Mutiny of 1724. At the dawn of the 18th century, many cathedral chapters in Europe enjoyed the papal privilege of electing their own bishops. This was true for the Cathedral Chapter of Utrecht, in the Netherlands. There was a controversy, though: The Jesuits claimed that the Netherlands had been downgraded to a mission territory, such that the Chapter of Utrecht had lost its ability to elect its own bishop. The Dutch clergy begged to differ, saying, in essence: The Church is still alive and well in the Netherlands, and we will elect our own bishop! And they did. They elected a candidate, Cornelius van Steenoven, and prayed that they might find a sympathetic bishop willing to consecrate him. In 1724, they found the bishop for whom they had prayed, Dominique-Marie Varlet, the Roman Catholic bishop of Babylon, who shared valid lines of apostolic succession with four Dutch men. On the Roman Catholic supertanker, they and their followers were made to "walk the plank." This was different from the Halloween Mutiny of 1517: This was no ordinary uprising of crew members. Instead, the Dutch Mutiny of 1724 included captains and commanders now ousted from the supertanker. They might have been lost from history had it not been that several other persons on the supertanker would also soon come to realize that their ship was headed in the wrong direction.

That brings us to the next mutiny, the famous Vatican Mutiny of 1870. In 1856, the admiral of the Roman supertanker made a statement that split his crew: Though nearly 1,900 years after the purported event, he affirmed the longstanding tradition that Mary of Nazareth was conceived without original sin. The church was split, and it was again clear that there were two roads leading into the yellow wood. The crisis came to a boil, and the First Vatican Council was convened to justify the pope's assertion 14 years earlier. His assertion was deemed "infallible." We know it today as the "dogma" of the Immaculate Conception. It was the pope's way of saying, "What I said

14 years ago, I said infallibly!" And, as if that weren't enough to rend the Roman church, the bishops who gathered at the Vatican Council decided to further deviate from the belief of the ancient Church and to now cede universal jurisdiction to the bishop of Rome. Those two issues—purported papal infallibility and the universal jurisdiction of the pope—culminated in a mass exodus of Dutch, German and Swiss clergy, and the resulting Old Catholic Church—named for their desire to steer the ship back in the direction of the ancient Church—might be likened to a cruise ship, to a real party boat!

In the waters of Catholicism, then, the Old Catholic Church is hardly the supertanker that Roman Catholicism is, and it is hardly the container ship that the Orthodox Church is, but it is sizeable. Perhaps more importantly, because it possesses bishops with valid lines of apostolic succession, its sacraments are recognized as valid by the Roman Church.

Now that we've discussed the Roman Catholic "supertanker," the Orthodox "container ship," and the Old Catholic "cruise ship," to what might we liken Independent Catholicism in the United States? Four images come to mind.

A dingey? No, not necessarily, though there is some humor in that. A kayak? Well, some might be likened to kayaks, but that's not the image that most immediately comes to mind for me.

First, let's take a look at some data. When Bishop Frank arrived yesterday, I shared with him a spreadsheet that I've been compiling of all the clergy and communities in the Independent Sacramental Movement in the English-speaking world. Holy Family parishioners have long asked me where they might worship if traveling outside of Austin, so I've amassed a spreadsheet of all Independent Catholic clergy and communities in the English-speaking world. It now includes 1,436 clergy who might self-identify as part of the Independent Sacramental Movement in the English-speaking world:

- 647 of us identify as Catholic.
- 349 are marked "TBD" for now, since, short of making nearly 350 phone calls, I'm not sure how they might self-identify.
- 261 are Independent Anglicans.
- 92 are Independent Orthodox.
- 75 are Celtic.
- Seven are Gnostic.
- And five are Johannine.

This helped to address some questions that I've had since joining the Independent Sacramental Movement in 2012: How many Independent Catholic bishops and priests and deacons are there in the world? And how many communities and lay persons are there in the Independent Catholic Movement? While I'm not yet able to estimate the number of Independent Catholic laity, I believe I have a fairly good estimate of the Independent Catholic clergy who are readily discoverable through the internet.

Of those 1,436 clergy, some 1,163 of us are here in the United States. That's a huge number, considering the fact that there are other English-speaking countries, like Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. The countries of 200+ clergy are still to be determined. How do we compare to other countries? I've been able to find 17 Independent clergy in the United Kingdom, 14 in Canada, nine in Australia, five in South Africa, and five in Brazil.

So, how are we going to describe ourselves as Independent Catholic "vessels"? I'll sidestep the suggestion of describing us as kayaks and dingies. Kayaks are a little too slow for my liking—though they may adequately describe some Independent Catholic clergy in some places. Instead, I'll draw on a few other images.

Let's begin with the image of the jet ski! Most jet skis are one- or two-seaters—so I use this image for the lone rangers who self-identify as Old or Independent Catholics and jet around on the fringes of the Catholic sea. I'm particularly fond of the image of those who dress up—like Santa Claus or other characters—on their jet skis. As we all know, a number of those on their Old and Independent Catholic jet skis enjoy dressing in character as well.

Instead of the image of dingies, let's go with the image of the small fishing boats that we see on rivers and reservoirs. These boats typically hold some two to six people. These boats might be a more fitting image for those very small communities that some Old and Independent Catholic clergy gathered around themselves. They're not jetting alone on their jet skis; they're providing a different expression and experience of Catholicism than the lone rangers.

There are, of course, several classes of smaller boats. I might liken a community like Holy Family here in Austin—with the 200 to 300 people that we draw together on any given Sunday—to a slightly larger vessel. Perhaps you might say that our community is more like a whale-watching boat. On Labor Day weekend, my husband and I

traveled to the Pacific Northwest and enjoyed a day of whale watching. Being on that boat is a different experience from being on a small, three- or four-seat fishing boat. And those who step aboard the whale-watching boats are looking for a certain experience. How interesting that so many people hop aboard the similar boats of this world—literally and, yes, in this instance, figuratively.

I'm not sure I would classify any vessels in the waters of Independent Catholicism as being any larger than a whale-watching boat—but I would be remiss if I didn't make a final nautical analogy. Within the Old/Independent Catholic world in the United States, we have various jet skis and small fishing boats and larger vessels coming together to form what I might call fleets. In church terminology, we call them jurisdictions. So, think for a moment of these jurisdictions as fleets, as vessels that band together.

Ready for more data? Here are some numbers on the largest "fleets" on the Old/Independent Catholic seas here at present. These data are gleaned from my own research of the publicly-available information on current websites beginning in June 2018.

In my research, the largest "fleet" on the seas of Independent Catholicism in the English-speaking world is the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, with some 54 clergy. A number of you here today represent the ECC. That tells us something. Thank you for representing your "fleet"—and thank you for bringing resources to this gathering. I give credit where credit is due: It was Bishop Francis Krebs who was the first to respond to our invitation, saying, "We're having a gathering of bishops the same week, but is there some way for us to support this?" A lot of the talent that we'll enjoy today and tomorrow is a result of that call: Bishop Frank suggested that we invite Bishop Raphael and Bishop Rosemary and Bishop Denise. That's the power of a "fleet"—and I like Bishop Frank's analogy of "fleets" doing "maneuvers" together: Maybe we need to do more maneuvers together as vessels in the Independent Catholic sea!

The second-largest "fleet" at this time is the Ascension Alliance, with Archbishop Alan Kemp, who is here with us. They have some 52 clergy.

The clergy comprising these "fleets" seem to be constantly in flux, and I share here an estimate of how those numbers have changed over the course of 16 months, according to publicly available information.

The reasons for these changes are unknown, but the actual numbers likely approximate these estimates.

Jurisdiction	Est. Clergy in June 2018	Est. Clergy in October 2019
Ecumenical Catholic Communion	54	54
Ascension Alliance	41	52
Communion of Synodal Churches	43	31
American National Catholic Church	29	29*
CACINA	30	25
Old Catholic Churches, International	20	25
Liberal Catholic Church (U.S. Province)	38	22
Old Catholic Confederation	20	20*
Reformed Catholic Churches International	18	18*
TOCCUSA	17	17*
Progressive Catholic Church	16	16*
American Catholic Church in the U.S.	20	14

** Recent estimates are not available for some jurisdictions*

Let's return to the analogy of supertankers, container ships, cruise ships, and the various vessels in the in the Catholic "sea." At this point, we begin to compare and contrast various vessels.

We look first at the ability for each vessel to change course. As you can imagine, the jet ski and all smaller vessels are going to turn much more quickly than the supertanker or the container ship. If you're dissatisfied with the Roman Catholic Church's apparent inability to quickly adapt to the world around it, just remember that it takes fifteen minutes and a body of water at least 1.2 miles wide for a supertanker to turn around. In contrast, Independent Catholic jet skis can turn with little notice—and they often do. A member of the clergy in the Independent Catholic tradition can change his/her creed or liturgy in a way that crew members on the supertanker cannot. Because of their size, Independent Catholic vessels are able to more nimbly respond to the needs of those whom they serve. We "turn" more quickly on issues like the acceptance of women into the ordained ministries of the Church, of our sisters and brothers of the LGBTQIA+ community, and those who are divorced and remarried. I'll never forget: When we formed this community in 2012, there were married couples who hadn't received communion in 20 or 25 years—because the vessel on which they previously found themselves

forbade it to them. Here at Holy Family, we created a community that quickly "turned" on that issue.

This ties back to an old saying that begins, "If you want to go fast, go alone." Think about this for a moment: the larger your vessel, the slower you go. A supertanker can reach a maximum speed of 19 miles per hour, a container ship can go 20.5 mph, a cruise ship can reach 23 mph—but you can drive a jet ski up to 65 mph!

The saying concludes, "If you want to go far, go with others." Sure, you can go fast on a jet ski, but you'll only go for as long as you have energy; your jet ski certainly doesn't carry the same amount of fuel as any larger vessel, and you'll likely head ashore in stormy weather. Not so with larger vessels, where several people help pilot the ship, where there are more plentiful resources, and where their size allows them to more gracefully weather storms. Jet skis are "one, fun and done," while supertankers are able to cross the ocean.

Here at Holy Family, we've realized our desire to go far, to leave a legacy. If the Lord calls me home—if the Lord calls me off this "ship"—I want it to continue forward. As pastor, I recognize that I need to form and empower others to sail this ship in my absence. None of us is getting younger; what I heard last evening was a concern that we need to be providing a "hand-up" to those who follow behind us, that we need to be equipping others with the necessary knowledge and skills to do what we do and to lead our communities and our Church into the future. Otherwise, what will happen when the Lord calls each of us home? Our boats will sink! This is a historical challenge for the Independent Catholic movement in the United States.

Here at Holy Family, we also recognize that we're stronger with others. In Spanish, we say, *la unión hace la fuerza*, "there's strength in unity." I think it's fair to say that we're interested in learning more about the "fleets" that fill the Catholic "sea." We're aware of the strength and resources that we might enjoy if we were to work with others and pool our resources.

All of us, it seems, should reflect long and hard on these two questions: How will we go far? And how will we weather the storms ahead?

Earlier this summer, I had the opportunity to check out one of those larger vessels, the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht. I toured the "cruise ship," if you will. Without hesitation, I recommend the Utrecht Summer School: It's an opportunity to see "the Cradle of

Independent Catholicism" and to trace our roots back to the Dutch Mutiny of 1724. It's a chance to connect with others from throughout the world, to learn the history of Old Catholicism—a history much, much longer than the history of any of our congregations. You can learn of their structures, their theology and ecclesiology, and of the unity they enjoy as national churches. They have the Dutch Old Catholic Church, the German Old Catholic Church, the Swiss Old Catholic Church, *et cetera*. Here in the United States, we have nothing that resembles a national church. They have theological faculties at recognized universities. They have peer-reviewed journals, where they can get feedback from other experts in their fields. They have a bibliography. What steps might we take today, to more closely resemble this "Mother Church" in the future?

Finally, I was struck by their sense of ecumenism in Utrecht. On the last day of the Utrecht Summer School, Archbishop Joris Vercammen shared a lecture at St. Gertrude's Church on ecumenism, and, as you can imagine, all of us, the Americans in the room, looked at one another and wondered: What might we do to raise our eyes from the very small, myopic visions we have of "Church," to a more universal—indeed, a more catholic—vision of the universal Church to which we all belong? What will it take for all of us to see one another as the sisters and brothers we are? And what will it take to bring us all together to see if there is any possibility for the unity-in-diversity that we might one day enjoy?

That inspired the genesis of this gathering.

Before we turn it over to Bishop Frank, who is here to speak with us about ecumenism in the Old and Independent Catholic traditions, take a moment to imagine yourself as a commander or crew member on the "cruise ship" of Old Catholicism. If you were in that role, what relationship, if any, would you want with all those little "jet skis," "fishing boats" and "whale-watching boats" near the shore? How would you respond to the suggestion of any "fleet" that it tie its "vessels" to yours? That, for me, is the challenge we face with Utrecht and with Rome—indeed, with any larger, more-organized vessel that enjoys more history and structure than we do. It's understandable that they would have little, if any, interest in what's happening on our side of the "sea."

I conclude. Here in the United States, as Bishop Denise pointed out in her homily last night, we've often turned to that image of our nation as a melting pot. Many have eschewed that image, suggesting

that the United States is less like a melting pot, and more like a mixed salad. Independent Catholicism is indeed a mixed salad! Look around the room, we are the "mixed greens" and the varieties of "tomatoes"; we're the "onions" and "carrots" and "artichoke hearts" of the great salad that is Old/Independent Catholicism in the United States!

Bishop Denise suggested that we think instead of the Canadian depiction of who we are, which brings us back to di Bondone's *Navicella*—his depiction of Peter's barque. Look carefully: It's not a painting; it's a mosaic. Di Bondone brought together all those small pieces to form a single, very beautiful work of art! Will we allow ourselves to be part of such a work of beauty, for the sake of our communities, our movement and our world?

Or, to use the imagery suggested by Bishop Cathy last night, will we allow ourselves to be part of the beautiful stained-glass window we are called to be. Yes, that single piece of colored glass is beautiful. It's magnificent. But it's when we bring together all those magnificent pieces of all those magnificent colors, that we begin to form the magnificent stained-glass window of Peter's Barque in the Old and Independent Catholic tradition!

Reflections on "Vessels in the Catholic Sea"

"My parish initially belonged to a jurisdiction with a bishop. We quickly planted a parish and grew, and then our bishop went berserk and tried to pull rank. It was really absurd and highly frustrating. He didn't provide anything for our ministry, and he eventually 'excommunicated' us—which I thought was great.

Because I really believe in episcopal presence in the church, particularly for the faithful, we hooked up with another bishop. Catholics like bishops, and Latinos love visuals: They love the pointy hat and the stick. So we really tried to maintain an episcopal presence in our life as a parish. But the second bishop went berserk, too.

It comes down to formation: The first guy wasn't really formed, and the second guy was super-formed as a Roman priest for many years. Interestingly, many large Independent Catholic parishes, like Holy Family here in Austin and Rabbouni in Louisville and St. Stan's in St. Louis—and I'd like to say All Saints is in that group—are independent. None of us belongs to a jurisdiction! I have to wonder: What does it say that these large parishes that are doing great aren't attached to a jurisdiction? As a priest, my only desire is to serve a parish. I was a Vincentian. The Vincentians were diocesan priests who got together and lived together to serve the poor. So, for me, the parish life is the reason for my priesthood. Is there any other reason for us to be priests, outside of the sacramentality of our priesthood? All that to say I am highly disappointed in the people in this movement who call themselves 'bishops' but don't provide the fullness of the priesthood to the people they serve. They don't exercise care of the faithful. People need parish priests. As Old and Independent Catholics, we need to stop playing games—and I don't say this to offend anyone. Our movement needs parishes. The only way we'll grow is if people see a true presence of us. I want to belong to a group. I want to belong to a diocese on a larger scale. I want to do all those things because that brings some normalcy, particularly to people who come from the Roman Catholic tradition—but how the hell do we do it when it's so crazy?"

Father Mike Lopez
Ridgewood, New York

"Part of the problem, in response to that, is that so many of the smaller 'vessels' try to become another Rome. They keep taking the Roman way of doing things, instead of the Old Catholic way of doing things, and they end up becoming 'big chiefs,' telling you what to do and how to do it, versus being more organic and allowing the local churches to do the things they need to do."

Father Dewayne Messenger
Sand Springs, Oklahoma

"Thank you for putting this together in a way that really resonates with me. Thinking of the Roman Catholic Church as the 'supertanker' is really freeing for me. I understand why so many people stay on the supertanker: It's comforting. You're not going to worry about that thing capsizing! If there's a storm, you go below deck. At the same time, I understand why this resonates for me: As safe as that is, there's very little risk. Somebody will tell you what to do. 'You go down below. You're going to be taken care of.' But I'd much rather be out on the choppy seas where maybe there is a risk of capsizing. It's going to be more challenging—but there's also more opportunity for growth. That distinction is just really inspiring to me."

Jonathan Quirk
Berkley, Michigan

"The thing that surprised me about Utrecht is how regional they are. There are only two dioceses, rather than a multiplication of bishops. So they can be a national church. And the Philippine Independent Church, which is probably the largest Independent Catholic church in the world, is a national church. It makes me think about how that applies here in the United States. My own jurisdiction has the most pretentious of all names: *the*—and I emphasize *the*—National Catholic Church of North America. That's anathema to the Old Catholic tradition, at least according to Utrecht. I don't think we could ever come to the kind of unity that they have in the Netherlands or the Philippines. But what can we come to? It's a challenge to reflect on: Utrecht's focus is regional, small, and how parishes and ministries can relate to their bishop. There's an intimacy between bishop and community. That was a real revelation, that they're very focused on relationship and intimacy between the bishop and the laity."

Bishop Leonard Walker
Kingman, Arizona

"I love the image of the stained glass window. I wonder if there's a way to create that. I think we're giving birth to something here—kind of like the early Church. We don't quite know the way, we don't know how, and we may have struggles, but I really feel that we're giving birth to something here. The crazy thing I want to say is: Is there a way for us to come together without coming together? That's why I'm excited about this gathering: It's interjurisdictional. As a member of a community in Louisville that is totally independent—like you here at Holy Family—we're very leery of joining a jurisdiction. Much like Mike's experience, we were burned. So, is there a way of coming together without coming together? Is there a way for us to come together interjurisdictionally or non-jurisidictionally?"

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"I like being independent, and I love being 'illicit.' However, the seas are rough in religion these days—all the way across the board and not just for Independent and Roman Catholics. One of the places they're rough is in mainline Protestantism. When I pastored an Independent parish in inner-city Baltimore, we worked with the Lutherans, as you do here at Holy Family, and they were very eager to work with us. So I really hold up this ecumenical approach and think that we can work together without homogenizing. I'll share one quick anecdote: Right after I was ordained a priest, I was in a Cajun museum in heavily-Catholic South Louisiana. I was dressed in shorts and a T-shirt, and this woman came up to me, and she asked, 'You're a priest, aren't you?' And I started in: 'Well, we're not Roman Catholic…' And she said, 'I don't want to hear all that stuff. You're a priest, and I want a blessing. That's all I'm interested in. I want your blessing.' Before I knew it, there were five people lined up, all wanting my blessing. And they didn't care about these things. They wanted to be touched."

Bishop Theodore Feldmann
New Orleans, Louisiana

Ways to Think About Unity Together: Old/Independent Catholic Ecumenism

Bishop Francis Krebs
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
St. Louis, Missouri

Jayme's presentation points to the scandal of unity, of how it is that Old Catholics in this country don't have a good track record of coming together. We don't know how to solve this problem, and it's hard to get our arms around this. It seems too vexing to us. This presentation is an attempt to formulate helpful ways to think about unity that come out of the Old Catholic tradition.

There's a long history of conferences like this, of Old Catholics trying to get together—and of it not working. It's almost like we're somehow allergic to unity. So, let's look at how the Old Catholics of the Union of Utrecht do it.

We begin with a very famous phrase: "In essentials, unity. In doubtful matter, liberty. In all things, charity." This 17th-century phrase has been attributed to a lot of different people, and Pope John XXIII quoted it in his very first encyclical, *Ad Petri cathedram* (1959). It's a phrase that everyone gloms to. It rings true and makes sense. When we hear the phrase, we're left thinking, "It really seems that this could possibly work." What if we decided that the way to get our arms around unity was to say, "In essentials, unity. In doubtful matter, liberty. In all things, charity"? The problem with this phrase is that it's just a good slogan. It might look good on a Hallmark® card, but it doesn't tell you how to go about achieving unity. That's really the problem.

Let's start first with the last part of the phrase: "In all things, charity." That's the way that Old Catholics do ecumenism: It's always through relationship. When they say, "In all things, charity," they mean that relationships are everything. They see relationships as the heart of the gospel and the heart of the Trinity. The Trinity is relationship. It's community. It's God being communal. And, if we enjoy God's life, we are communal—which means we're in relationship. Bishop John Zizioulas of the Greek Orthodox Church says that even the word "person" means someone who's in

relationship. An "individual" is an individual, but if you're a human person, you're defined by being in relationship.

This is the heart of our faith: that we are able to interact with each other and participate in each other's lives. Just as the Father participates in the Son, and the Son participates in the Spirit, we participate in each other's lives, and there's something flowing between us, which is divine. That's the gospel. That's where we start.

And so, for the Old Catholics of Utrecht, when they wrote their full communion agreement with the Church of Sweden at Uppsala, it started off with relationship. They gathered, they got to know each other, and it was always about relationship. For them, relationships were so important. So, if we're going to talk about unity, it's got to begin with relationship, with getting together—like we're doing here.

Right before this, some of us—Denise, Rosemary, Rafe, Mark, Scott and I—were at a bishops gathering where we had 14 bishops from seven jurisdictions. We prayed. More importantly, it was an experience of relationship. We weren't going to try to build anything yet; we aren't in the fleet-building business yet. We were just trying to get together. And, by the time it was over, we were laughing, joking, slapping each other on the back, and just feeling like friends. And it feels like that's happening here, too.

That's absolutely essential. I can't stress that enough. It pertains to the heart of Christianity, which is divinity pulling us together in relationship, in *koinonia*. That's what it's all about—and that is salvation. And that's how Utrecht talks about salvation now: They talk about salvation in terms of coming into the communion of God and enjoying relationship with each other. Soteriology flows from our ecclesiology.

"In essentials, unity." The phrase used to say, "In non-essentials, liberty." Perhaps you've seen that before. The challenge with that is, if you say that there are "essentials" and "non-essentials," it sounds like these are somehow objectively known—that we know what's essential and what isn't. Well, we don't. These are things people have to agree on. So, moving it to a more personal level, you have to talk with each other and dialogue, to see what you both view as essential.

Then we have to find a different way to connect with each other on things that are doubtfully essential—the things that we don't agree are essential. Can we have liberty in that? This is key in looking at how we do unity, but it still doesn't tell us how to go about unifying.

The way we move down to the level of praxis is through differentiated consensus, a term borrowed by Old Catholics from European, Protestant denominations that have worked on ecumenism for many years. You can see beautiful expressions of this in the full communion agreements and in the ecumenical dialogues of the Old Catholic Church.

I like the example of differentiated consensus that we see in the Old Catholic/Roman Catholic dialogue. You can find it on the Vatican website. Look at the way they talk about the ordination of women, where each side presents exactly how it sees the issue.

Let's think of differentiated consensus in a more down-to-earth way. If you're trying to decide if you're united with someone, start by listing all the things you have in common, then list the things you don't have in common. Like a cooking show, put all the things you have in common off to the side, and focus on the things you don't have in common. Explore them a little bit further. Look at them more deeply. Do you really see them differently, or is it just a matter of semantics? Hear the other's perspective, and see if there's not more unity there than you thought. If so, move those things over into the column of things you actually agree on.

When you come up with a certain number of things that you don't agree on, you have to ask each other, "Is this okay? Are we okay with this? Can we not disturb our unity, by allowing some liberty in these things?" Consider this example: If the Armenians are going to have pointy hats—that may look really funny and weird to us—is that okay with us? Or, will their pointy hats be an obstacle to unity? Or, to use a domestic example: If your partner wants to load the dishwasher one way, in a way that's different from your way of loading the dishwasher, is that okay?

Our problem is often that we just react to each other, reloading the dishwasher, rather than having a conversation and saying, "I don't understand what you're doing," or "I don't like what you're doing." If we were much more reflective, we'd ask ourselves, "What's really important?" "Are these things really essential?" "What if we just love each other?" "What if we just make each other laugh before we go to bed, so that our hearts are light?" "What if we concentrate on that?" If we're doing the things that are essential, who cares how the dishwasher is loaded? It's okay if you don't make the bed the same way that I make the bed. That's really what we're getting at here.

Lutherans have an understanding that Christ is present in the eucharistic elements, but that, after the Eucharist, Christ is no longer present. This becomes problematic when Catholics and Lutherans are in the same space together: Catholics see Lutherans taking the elements after the liturgy and treating them like any other thing, even throwing them in the trash. Catholics will ask, "How could you do that? How could you throw them in the trash?" It's visceral. We find ourselves saying, "That's awful! Why would you do that?" Lutherans and Catholics both believe that Christ is really present in the eucharistic elements—but even Catholics have to step back and realize that they believe that Christ is only present sacramentally, that Christ is present only as long as the bread is really bread, or the wine is really wine. If the wine turns into vinegar, it's no longer considered the sacrament! If the bread gets moldy, it's no longer the sacrament! We've always believed that. I like that example, because it has come up in our churches where we're witnessing with Lutheran churches, and it's actually been something we have to think through. It's good for Catholics to realize deep down that we, too, have a temporal understanding of how long the sacrament lasts. It's just that we believe it lasts a little longer. That should help us come to some understanding here.

The question then becomes: "What are the areas in which we don't have unity—and can we live with those?" Here in this room, we might ask ourselves, "What would it mean for jurisdictions to interact and to be in communion with each other, but not have to do everything the exact same way?" "What would it mean for us to achieve some level of unity, without uniformity?" This is what unity is about! This is how we want human relationships to be. For this to work, we've got to be able to clearly explain our consensus about what's essential, and then spell out the things in which we don't have unity, but are fine with. And that's perfectly okay. "You love reggae, and I like bluegrass: It's really fine. I don't need to convert you. We're just going to be married anyway. If that's where you're at, it's going to be okay." Can we do that on an ecclesial level?

One of the first people to attempt in modern times what we now call "ecumenism" was Dr. Ignaz von Döllinger. He was one of the founders of Old Catholicism—perhaps even *the* founder of Old Catholicism. Shortly after he was excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church for his participation in Old Catholicism, he shared a vision of churches coming together. The end of the 1800's saw a new

age of confessionalism, and denominations very strongly and staunchly tried to show how they were different from each other. They were proud of their differences, and they wanted to be separate. Even in the middle of this, von Döllinger argued that there is nothing more scandalous than a Christianity where members of the Christian church don't even talk to each other—and perhaps even hate each other! They wouldn't let each other in each other's churches! How could this possibly be the same church of which Tertullian said, "See how they love one another"? Or, how could this possibly be what Jesus had in mind? And von Döllinger was so motivated by this scandal that he wanted to find a way for Christians to come together. He was a brilliant theologian and was able to command people coming together, so, on his own authority, he hosted several unity conferences, as he called them. He invited Orthodox, Anglicans, Old Catholics, those of the Reformed tradition, and they came together to work on the issues of unity. He believed the essentials—the things all Christians could agree on—were to be found in the early Church. Jayme spoke about the things that the Orthodox wanted to preserve from the early Church, how they didn't want to deviate from the essentials of the early Church. These eventually became the same essentials for Old Catholics.

For von Döllinger, the essentials included scripture, the creeds, the apostolic ministry, and the sacraments. He knew we needed to achieve unity on these things, which are generally considered the essentials of the Christian tradition. I don't know anyone who doesn't say that the sacred scriptures are at the heart of Christianity, and, though we might argue over whether to include certain books—like the beautiful deutero-canonical books—we agree that the sacred scriptures are at the heart of Christianity.

The creeds can be somewhat more challenging: The large, historic churches won't vary on the creeds, but some people will argue over the creeds, particularly those who read them in a *prima facie* way, rather than look at them in a more scholarly way. If we read the scriptures like that, we're fundamentalists. In the same way, we shouldn't be fundamentalists when it comes to creeds. We should look at creeds in their context. We should study them as things that are hermeneutically inflected and reflect on how we interpret them.

For Old Catholics, it's very clear that the Nicaean creed means two things. First, the creed suggests we believe in the Trinity, that we believe that God is communal, and that God invites us into communal

life. Second, the creed speaks to the dual nature of Christ—that if humanity is going to be raised above itself, it has to participate in divinity. This is true of Jesus—and of everyone who follows Jesus into a place where divinity raises us up, so that we can experience life on a different level. In the creed, we assert our own divinization! It's important for us to say that we believe the same thing, which is why Old Catholics say, "Don't mess with the creed." Belief in the Trinity and in the dual nature of Christ are important. They're at the heart of Christianity, our sacramental tradition, and our liturgical life—even if we celebrate the sacraments in different ways from church to church. The creed is a common language that we have.

The threefold ministry of the Church—how the early Church was ordered with bishops, presbyters and deacons—is also important to historic churches.

Jayme suggested that jet-ski clergy go in different directions when it comes to liturgy. Our liturgy is like a language, and, if we're going to get together and celebrate the liturgy with Lutherans, it's helpful for all of us to know what the liturgy is and what we can expect—so that we can do it together. It's either gumbo, or it's not. We have to know whether this is a Eucharist. We have to have an understood level of commonality with each other.

If you're familiar with ecumenism, you might say that our "top four" are like the "top four" of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, the four things that Episcopalians and the whole Anglican Communion came up with, that have to be agreed to for ecumenism.

What Old Catholics add to the conversation on ecumenism is synodality—the fact that we don't want to have a church that's just made up of clergy. For Old Catholics, Church means including *all* the people—not just welcoming them to our churches, but inviting them to participate in decision-making and in the mission of the Church. This is extremely important to Old Catholics, and, even though they know that the significant role of lay people developed over time, they believe that synodality was incipiently present in the scripture, in Acts 15, where "the apostles and elders, with the whole church" (Acts 15:22) were in agreement at the so-called "Council of Jerusalem." They see this as a symbol of how the Church might go forward.

We can disagree about other things, but, in our 30,000-foot view of ecumenism in the Old Catholic tradition, those are the five "hinges" of what it means to be Church. Those five things are absolutely essential, and I would recommend that we take advantage of this

wisdom for our own thinking about how we might be united here in the United States.

Think of Old Catholics on a personal level, not as an ideation or on a theoretical level. Think of them as a people who were hurt by being excommunicated in 1724. It took them a long time to even realize that this had happened. You've got to imagine that they believed "Oh, we're excommunicated, but people get excommunicated all the time—and the next time there's an ecumenical council, we'll sit down and work it all out!" Then years went by, and Rome was suddenly setting up a parallel church in the Netherlands! The Old Catholics must have thought, "You're acting like we don't even exist! You're setting up a parallel church!"

A few years later, while Old Catholics still clung to the hope that they'd work it out at the next council, the Roman church sent out invitations for the First Vatican Council—and the Old Catholics didn't get an invitation! Think of that on a personal level. They must have felt shunned and cut off. It must have been horribly scarring, and it took them a long time to shake it off.

When they were finally able to get beyond the pain of that separation—like someone grieving and getting over a death or a separation, they bounced back by drawing on their internal resources. They did so by considering what is important. And what was important for them? Connection! They could no longer be connected to the Roman Church, so they looked around and wondered how they might be connected to the Orthodox and to the Anglicans.

Significantly, the Old Catholics and the Anglicans were the first to form a full communion agreement between any two churches since the split of 1054 A.D. Thanks to von Döllinger, who set them up for success, these two churches had the imagination and the energy to make this work. They finally pulled it off in 1931, and, ever since then, Old Catholics have been in full communion with the Anglican Communion.

Old Catholics were also a very significant contributing force in the founding of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948. They worked on this before World War II and finally pulled it together after the war. Perhaps you're familiar with the World Council of Churches' 1982 BEM document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, or its 2005 symposium on the future of ecumenism. Old Catholics had a really big hand, a really big influence, on the creation of those documents.

The communion of Uppsala and Utrecht in January 2018, between Old Catholic churches and the Church of Sweden, was a huge step forward for Old Catholics: It was the first time that a Catholic church ever entered into a full communion agreement with a Protestant church. That never happened before—but Old Catholics did it, with the Church of Sweden, which is a Lutheran church. I highly recommend that you read the very inspiring communion agreement between Uppsala and Utrecht.

The Old Catholic Church, the church that many of us say we want to emulate, is very "on fire" with ecumenism—and has been from the very beginning. They really care about ecumenism, and they've learned to do it in a way that concentrates on essentials first, then on the non-essentials for which they're willing to allow liberty. Old Catholics don't have any need for the Church of Sweden to look like them. They don't have any need for Mar Thoma to dress like them or to celebrate the Eucharist like them. They celebrate together the essentials, but they recognize that they're very different churches that go about things in different ways. The same is true of the Old Catholic churches' relationship with the Independent Church in the Philippines.

Earlier this week, we convened a gathering of 14 bishops representing seven Independent Catholic jurisdictions in the United States. We told Bishop Mike Klusmeyer, the ecumenical officer for the Episcopal Church and the point person between the Episcopal Church and the Union of Utrecht, that we were going to gather, and he said, "We would like to be there." He and Margaret Rose, the Episcopal Church's Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Collaboration, joined us. You can identify Mike in this photo because he's the one wearing khakis—but khakis are a non-essential. We didn't kick him out because he was wearing khakis!

The focus of our gathering was relationships. It was on getting to know each other. And if you start there, good things will come from it and soon you'll have friends who are Lutherans and friends who are Episcopalians. Trust builds slowly over time. Friendships grow as you continue to meet with each other—and, before you know it, they're willing to "go to bat" for you! Before you know it, they're interested in helping you connect with and unite with others. Friendship is very, very important. Indeed, it's essential.

I'm so glad that gathering happened earlier this week—and I'm so glad that this gathering is happening. Friends make us more. In my

experience, our ecumenical partners help us to become more. People ask me, "Why do you want to be a member of the National Council of Churches?" I respond: "My whole experience gets bigger by connecting with others. When I sit down with Lutherans, and when we talk about gender-inclusive language in the liturgy, they've got half a dozen women scholars working on that right now!" It's the same with Episcopalians. It's the same with other Independent Catholic jurisdictions. In less than 24 hours here, I've already learned a lot, just from connecting with all of you here. That's the way that we'll grow: by being open to each other and by being friends!

Reflections on Old/Independent Catholic Ecumenism

"I really liked your emphasis on relationship, on 'friends first.' That's what I'll take away from everything that you said. I think, for example, of ECC's hospitality toward Rabbouni. Even though we're not part of you, you have invited us to your synod, and I know that other churches have been invited, too. It's about building those relationships. That's ground zero. And, if we continue to do that, and if we continue to gather, then something will come to birth."

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"When I was a part of founding the Ecumenical Catholic Communion 17 years ago, I formed a new community. Because of the fear resulting from experiences with previous bishops, my new community did not want to join the ECC right away.

Bishop Tom Altepeter wrote a document called 'Here I am among you, as one who serves.' Available on our ECC website, it reflects on the role and the function of diocesan bishops within the ECC. This document was instrumental in my community's understanding of the ECC and its decision to become part of the ECC.

We have found that being a part of something greater is so important. It's foundational to who we are, but it's also extremely important that we have some autonomy and know that our connections are not hierarchical and juridical. It's important for us to talk about ecumenism because it's part of who we are. It's a part of being in relationship. The role of bishop is a pastoral/relational role, not a juridical role, and it's a key element in determining how to move forward from here—because we're not all called to be part of the ECC or any single jurisdiction. It's healthy to have different expressions and different ways of being, but with the ability to come together in a bigger sense, and under some umbrella that unites us. For me, that's part of why this experience, with this particular group of people, was so very exciting, because it's really about how we are in relationship with one another. We share so many of the important essentials, so how can we come together in a way that also acknowledges the significance of our differences—without seeing one another as less?"

Bishop Denise Donato
Fairport, New York

"At Christ the Good Shepherd, we are an unaffiliated church right now. We have episcopal coverage, but we haven't found a jurisdiction. We've just begun the search as a parish community. In our short history, we've had two bishops. Our original bishop provided some episcopal coverage, but no oversight or jurisdictional coverage. The bishop we just withdrew from was a little more hands-on, so I can understand what Father Mike was talking about: Sometimes, as pastors, we need to be a firewall between our bishop and our community. We're pulled in two directions. In our search, I really appreciate the metaphor of 'friends first.' It's about developing that relationship, walking this journey together, and, if we can agree on a number of things, yet remain our unique parish—since each community has its own identity, and people come together for a reason. In the search for that greater connectedness, what our parish longs for is to have a greater connectedness in the larger community, while maintaining our uniqueness and our independence. It's a struggle, and it's something that a lot more communities out there are looking for. As we grow, people want to be connected. And, as we grow older, we want to have the understanding that there is going to be something more when we end our journey, that someone's going to step up and continue that walk as a community."

Father Harry Posner
Ferndale, Michigan

"At our parish in New York, we work with all the other churches around us. In 'Holy Mother Church,' in a large diocese like Brooklyn, there are priests who don't know each other, which is uncommon in other smaller dioceses. In our neighborhood, in Ridgewood, we have five Roman churches, and those priests don't work together. So, we shouldn't be alarmed by Independent Catholics not working together all the time. Our relationship with the Coptic Orthodox Church has helped us tremendously to grow in our identity as a parish, particularly for the laity. They have the largest church in our community, with 1,000 families, but they perform less service. When they want to do service, they call us. The second thing to remember is that we aren't the only ones with challenges: Other churches are suffering, and the mainline churches are suffering, so don't be dismayed if you have 15 to 20 people in your community. Your 15 or 20 is more than a lot of Presbyterian and Lutheran churches. We were kicked out of a Presbyterian church, because they told us that our

work with the poor was not the mission of their church—and our community was ten times larger than theirs! We're currently housed at a Lutheran Church, and our community is five times larger than that community. We work with those people all the time. We've been fortunate to get a contract from the city for a million dollars. We run homeless shelters in New York City, and we operate out of an Episcopal Church and a Lutheran Church. They have opened their doors and, in turn, we have made amazing strides in those churches. I just put $30,000 of renovations into a Lutheran church that doesn't belong to me. Everybody thinks I'm nuts, but I fixed up that church. Now, the Lutheran pastor is saying, 'I'm going to rebuild my congregation!' He's been there for forty years, and now he wants to rebuild his congregation!

When we talk about ecumenism, I don't think any of us can show up at a church for communion and not be able to receive. Three years ago, when I came to Austin for my brother-in-law's wedding, I came to the barn church that Jayme had. He made me vest and get on the altar and share a word with the people, and I thought, 'What the hell is this guy doing?' But that's also the beauty of what we have. I hope that we can continue to understand that we all practice the same thing, even with our brothers and sisters in Rome and with the Lutherans and with the Anglicans. I have a giant family, and we're really screwed up—but when we get together and party, we all dance. Hopefully, we won't break our heads trying to create a national church. If we can continue to talk to each other, maybe even put a web page together—so that we can all be listed as doing what we do—that'll be helpful for us."

Father Mike Lopez
Ridgewood, New York

"We can't emphasize enough the core of what you started with: relationship. The relationship with the Trinity. The relationship that we have when we're at communion at the altar. Our relationship with God and one another. That's the defining thing about Utrecht. We are a local church and are synodal. Relationship, relationship, relationship: That's what defines us from the Roman church or the Latin church, in terms of universality. We're not into universality; we're into local church. And it doesn't make sense to be a bishop without relationship to priests and parishes. Relationship defines ministry.

You can't have ministry without relationship to others. Those Independents who claim to be priests and just celebrate Mass alone—that's incomprehensible in terms of what we're supposed to be about. My local parish is blessed: The Episcopal Church hosts us for Mass and community. The pastor and the laity are welcoming, and that relationship is now expanding into an interfaith relationship: In a very small 'Trump' community, we publicly witness alongside Muslims, the Jewish community, and even the Latter Day Saints. We just brought a bunch of donations down for refugees at the border. And our communities are starving for the public dialogues we host."

Bishop Leonard Walker
Kingman, Arizona

"I'd like to underline and put in bold that relationship is what God is teaching us. It's the heart of the gospel. And the gospel tells us over and over again that Jesus had no problem finding faith outside his own faith tradition. He connected and dialogued with the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn. 4:4-42). To the Syrophoenician woman, he said, 'I've never seen faith like this in Israel' (Mt. 15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30). You all know the examples. So, yes, when we're connected with interfaith circles, we are very much in a spiritual mode of allowing God to build relationships among us. Absolutely. And the world is hungry for it. They love it when we show that we're working together."

Bishop Francis Krebs
St. Louis, Missouri

"Emmaus in Oshkosh floundered a while and bounced around a bit between churches, but a couple of years ago we approached a United Church of Christ congregation in Oshkosh, and they invited us in. It's been a slow relationship, and it's really been a very, very good one for us. Our communities do things together. We just put a bunch of homeless kits together for the UCC world church. They only have a temporary pastor right now, so Father Mike fills in at some of their services. We've really become a very closely-knit group, combining the two churches."

Mary Hartjes
Combined Locks, Wisconsin

"I love what I'm hearing, but I have to present a minority viewpoint, because I work as a professional healthcare chaplain, and that is my 'tentmaking' occupation. At the end of my work week, I do not have time or energy for parish ministry, because hospital chaplaincy is exhausting. As a bishop in the Ascension Alliance, my episcopal role is different. I don't do much parish ministry. I say Mass quarterly, in an interfaith capacity, at a Unity church. I do have a relationship with other bishops and priests and deacons, and I teach in our seminary, but my pastoral ministry is in the hospital. My parish *is* the hospital. I rarely do sacramental ministry, but I'm still a bishop, and I'm still doing ministry. I'm very much a less-ecclesial bishop, but I'm still legitimately, 'illicitly' a bishop (although Rome would argue that the matter is insufficient, since I lack a Y chromosome). I'm still a bishop, and, through the Ascension Alliance and other Independent colleagues, we have an energetic, contemplative, metaphysical component to orders and sacraments. That's part of what happens when you lay hands on somebody; it's not just an empty ritual."

Bishop Cathy Chalmers
Everett, Washington

"This is an opportunity for us to dialogue with each other, and to learn from each other, and to listen empathetically to each other, and to allow each other to explain our stories and what it means to us. If I'm French and I go to Germany, you'll get my French interpretation of the German culture. But if I go to Germany saying, 'I'm going to learn a new culture, and I really want to explain to you what it's like,' then we have a better chance of communion with each other. I've actually been thinking a lot about churches that are more into ministry than into building Eucharistic communities. There's something to be said for the example of religious orders in the Roman Catholic Church, where they celebrate the Eucharist with each other and then go out and teach in schools or minister in hospitals. There's something already there in the history of the Church that we could look at, and maybe it would help us understand each other—and still appreciate the centrality of a Eucharistic community with lots of lay disciples. I don't know why it can't be 'both/and.' It's something we should explore."

Bishop Francis Krebs
St. Louis, Missouri

The Foundations for Ultrajectine Ecclesiology

Bishop Raphael Adams
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Chicago, Illinois

Bishop Francis was talking this morning about von Döllinger and his focus on the early Church as the model for the Old Catholic Church. Before everything started getting convoluted, contradictory and sectarian, there really was a consensus way back in the beginning, at least throughout certain parts of the Church, about what Church is, what Church does, and how it does it. I want to start with that earliest model of Church, and, when you look at that earliest model, two people in particular stand out: Ignatius of Antioch and Cyprian of Carthage. They are the two principal bishops from the ancient Church who are mentioned by the Old Catholic Church today. They are the bedrock on which we construct our ecclesiology.

Ignatius of Antioch: Bishop, Church, and Catholicity

We begin with Ignatius of Antioch. Ignatius is important because it was the Ignatian church, the church of Antioch, which really became the seat of diasporic catholicity. It was Ignatius who gave us the word "catholic."

To understand what the first Church *was*, we must do some parsing of the language: "Church" did not mean what we mean by "church" today. "Bishop" did not mean what we mean by "bishop" today. "Presbyter" did not mean what we mean by "presbyter" today. All of these concepts have had 2,000 years to coalesce—or sometimes to get bent and twisted. So, let's go all the way back to the start. Let's go back to our roots. Let's be "radical"—and we all know the root of that word, "radical." Let's really see where we came from. This was a big deal for the first Old Catholics, for von Döllinger, and for those who embraced the ideals of the early Church. We're part of that legacy. So, let's connect with the early Church!

Some important voices in this journey of discovery include Allen Brent, who did a really exhaustive analysis on the history of the period and the theology of Ignatius; scripture scholar John Meier;

Francis Sullivan, who did a very extensive study on the origin of the episcopate; John Zizioulas; and Edward Schillebeeckx.

What are the first three rules of real estate? "Location, location, location." Similarly, the first three rules of interpreting history are: "context, context, context." So, let's begin by unpacking the context of Antioch. The third-largest city in the Roman Empire, Antioch had well over 200,000 people between 95 and 115 A.D., the period when we first went beyond scripture, to other written records. Part of the scriptures, in all probability, came out of Antioch. The city is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (chapters 11 & 13-18), after the execution of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60).

Everyone has the idea that Stephen and the other six (Acts 6:5) were called to a ministry of feeding widows who were neglected in the distribution of food (Acts 6:1). We have to realize that that phrase "of food" was likely an interpolation back into the text, which wasn't there in the first place, but that someone later thought that deacons should be distributing food. The word "distribute" is also a word that's used in reference to the apostles: It's the parsing of something, the packaging of it. While the apostles weren't "distributing food," they were distributing the gospel, the story of Jesus of Nazareth.

Because the apostles were teaching—presumably in Aramaic—"in the temple" (Acts 5:42), there was the perception that Greek-speaking widows were being neglected in the distribution of the Word. Those widows would have gotten nothing from listening to the apostles, and, because women couldn't go about unescorted in that culture, the Greek-speaking widows were deprived of the opportunity to participate in the apostles' teaching. The apostles needed a group of bilingual, Aramaic/Greek-speaking people who could proclaim the gospel of Jesus to the Greek speakers who didn't understand Aramaic. For this reason, some people hypothesize that there was tension between the Hellenist Jews and the Aramaic-speaking Jews. The Acts of the Apostles speak of a persecution (Acts 8:1)—and it wasn't just directed at Stephen. Stephen became the icon, the person caught in the crossfire, for proclaiming the gospel in Greek. As a friend of mine once said, the idea that Stephen was a deacon doesn't make sense: No one gets stoned to death for delivering food to old ladies! There was obviously something else going on there.

Let's draw it back to Antioch: After the persecution of Stephen, those who had been scattered by the persecution traveled "as far as

Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews" (Acts 11:19). The story continues:

> Some of them, however, from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11:20-22).

"Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul" (Acts 11:25). Why would Barnabas go to Antioch on behalf of the apostles and try to find Saul? Because half these people are speaking Greek—and Barnabas didn't! In contrast, Saul was bilingual. That's why it was important for Barnabas to bring Saul—who was not yet Paul—to Antioch. Saul is a Jewish name; Paul is a Roman name: Saul/Paul had that dual identity! Saul could move freely throughout the Empire as a Roman citizen and Greek speaker, since Greek was largely the common language throughout the empire. "And when [Barnabas] found [Saul], he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

Depending on which translation you're reading, how many times does the word "Christian" occur in the Bible? Twice. And neither of them is nice. "Christian" is a label—and not a complimentary one. The other time it occurs is in the first letter of Peter, where the author, writing in Peter's name and spirit, says, "If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed" (1Pet. 4:16). The author is basically saying, if any of you is the victim of violent abuse because of the Christian label applied to you, you're doing it out of your love for God! Being Christian was an increasingly dangerous "occupation." In a real sense, Christians were considered atheists, because they didn't worship the gods of the Empire. There was only one group of people who were exempt from the requirement of worshipping the gods—mostly because the Romans were just tired of fighting them. They were the Jews, and their insurrections every 10 to 15 years were wearing down the Romans. So the Jews got away with not worshiping the gods, and the Christians in Antioch got away with it, too, because they were identified as being a sect of Judaism, at least in the beginning.

This presented a challenge: Gentiles were coming into the *ekklesia* without first becoming Jews or having to observe Judaic practices. We've all read in Acts of how there was a council, and the decision was made that Gentiles could come in without observing the entirety of the Law (Acts 15:28-29). Prophets of the church in Antioch imposed hands on Barnabas and Saul, and sent them out to proclaim the Word of God (Acts 13:1-3). This is significant. In the churches, there were prophets, apostles and teachers. According to Acts, the prophets made Barnabas and Saul apostles—those who were sent out to proclaim the Word. The Church in Antioch was either large enough, visible enough, controversial enough, or socially-prominent enough to be noted and labeled (Acts 13:1).

On another note, Antioch is most likely the place where Matthew's gospel was first written. There are traditions that are unique to Matthew, so we can assume that those traditions were unique to the church in Antioch. One of the unique Matthean elements is the confrontation with the Pharisees, the "blind guides" (Mt. 15:14, 23:16 & 23:24). Matthew is also the only gospel that uses the word "church"; none of the other gospels employs it. Matthew also has one of the most controversial passages in all of the gospels, one that people would fight over for 2,000 years: "You are Cephas, and on this rock I will build my church" (Mt. 16:18). That passage is found only in Matthew's gospel, which was likely written in Antioch around 85 to 90 A.D.—so there was a strong Matthean tradition in Antioch.

Why did the gospel of Matthew take the form it did? John Meier suggests that we look at the constituency of the church in Antioch: The Acts of the Apostles tells us it was a community of (1) Aramaic-speaking Jews, (2) Greek-speaking, Hellenist Jews, and (3) Gentiles. We had a potentially-volatile situation with these three communities. So Meier's understanding of Matthew's gospel was that it was an attempt to integrate three disparate perspectives of three communities. Analogously, what might that say to us today? We have people who come from disparate perspectives, and yet there's a commonality that we share. One of the messages of Matthew's gospel for subsequent generations is that we all come from different perspectives, from different points of view, but that we can find a common denominator that pulls us all together without undoing our backgrounds, perspectives, histories and heritages. Peter is an important part of that history and is an icon in the gospel of Matthew.

Ignatius became a bishop in Antioch somewhere around the end of the first century. I don't want to be glib, but there's a chance that Ignatius knew the author of Matthew—whoever he or they may have been—because only one generation, if that, separated them.

Most historians believe that Ignatius was the first bishop in Antioch, though some legends suggest he was the second, after Evodius, or even the third, if we believe that Peter established the Church in Antioch and served as the city's first "bishop." Suggesting that Ignatius was trying to "sell" his authority and his role, Allen Brent notes that Ignatius doesn't mention having a predecessor. If Ignatius' predecessor had been John the Apostle, Ignatius certainly would have mentioned him. Instead, in the seven letters he wrote on his way to execution in Rome, Ignatius mentions no predecessor.

There were other significant places in the early Church that didn't have bishops, in the sense in which Ignatius understood bishops. The *ekklesia* in Rome, for instance, was still governed—and I use that word very loosely—by a council of presbyters, of elders. It was a system of governance likely inherited from the synagogue, where, through the diaspora, a council of elders ordinarily presided within the synagogue. A presbyteral structure was widespread in the early Church.

Ignatius called himself an *episkopos* (ἐπίσκοπος), a word we translate as "bishop." This is where we really need to start unpacking that word *episkopos*. It's often translated as "overseer." I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, and the word "overseer" has an unpleasant meaning there. If you ever saw "Roots," you know that "overseer" is not a good word. Other legitimate translations include "guardian" or "the one who watches over." And how you translate words makes a big difference. The author of the first letter of Peter uses the word *episkopos*, referring to Jesus as "the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls" (1Pet. 2:25). Here we see *episkopos* used in the context of a shepherd "guarding" or "watching over" a flock.

We find the word *episkopos* in Matthew's gospel as well, in the separation of the goats from the sheep: "I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me" (Mt. 25:43). The Greek root translated as "look after" (ἐπεσκέψασθέ) is the root for the English word "bishop." We translate it as "you visited me" or "you reached out to me," but another translation might say "you came looking after me."

In that original sense of the word, a bishop is not a boss. The bishop is the one who recognizes that, from the flock of a hundred sheep, one is missing. The bishop is the one who goes looking for the lost. For Ignatius, that's what the bishop of the church of Antioch was to be. In Ignatius' letters, the bishop certainly exercises authority, but he exercises authority *within* the presbytery, not *over* it. This is an important distinction.

As his understanding of the *episkopos* evolved and developed, Ignatius viewed the bishop as a chief presbyter within the body of the presbyters. The bishop doesn't stop being a presbyter! The bishop remains one with the presbytery, which possessed the authority "to bind and to loose." This has nothing to do with the forgiveness of sins. "Binding and loosing" was a Rabbinical term—and the early Church was a *synagoga* before it was an *ekklesia*. That rabbinical term meant for elders to sit together and attempt to parse the Word of God in order to use the word of scripture to understand its relevance here and now. So "binding and loosing" is all about trying to understand what God's will is for us in this situation. There's a similar rabbinical phrase that finds an echo in the New Testament: "When three eat at one table and speak the words of Torah there, it is as though they have eaten from the table of God" (*Mishnah Avot* 3:4). Do you hear an echo with that in Matthew? "Where two or three come together in my name, I am in their midst" (Mt. 18:20). We sometimes interpret that as meaning the Eucharist. In context, though, this literally means a coming together for binding and loosing, for trying to understand the will of God, as we encounter it in the scripture we've received. This "binding and loosing" is the holy conversation that takes place within the presbytery and within the entire *ekklesia*. It's the role of the presbyters to engage in this conversation, and it's the role of the bishop to kindle that conversation among the presbytery.

This is why the bishop holds the keys to the kingdom: to open and close, to open the forum, to begin the conversation! Why the bishop? Because the bishop, at least in this Ignatian model, is also a prophet—which is a difficult idea for us to grasp. Ignatius identified himself as a prophet. He described one occasion when suddenly he was caught up in the Spirit, and the Spirit spoke through him, "The word is not mine, but God's" (Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians, VII).

Ignatius' contemporary, Polycarp of Smyrna, was described by his own *ekklesia* as "having in our own times been an apostolic and

prophetic teacher and bishop of the catholic church which is in Smyrna. For every word that went out from his mouth either has been or shall yet be accomplished" (Martyrdom of Polycarp, XVI). This may seem an odd idea for us—that the bishops were not just successors to the apostles, but also successors to the prophets. So one prerequisite for being a bishop was the gift of prophecy (1Tim. 4:14). That's still relevant. The question is: What does it mean in our day to be a prophetic voice within the community, the prophetic voice that reads the signs of the times and challenges—not in a confrontational way, but in a growth-oriented and encouraging way? For Ignatius, prophecy was an important part of what it meant to be a bishop.

Now, let's use redaction criticism to examine Peter in Matthew's gospel. We know that the gospel of Matthew was written somewhere between 85 and 95 A.D.—just shortly before the time that Ignatius referred to himself as the *episkopos ekklesiae*. Ignatius says—and Cyprian of Carthage will say as well—that within the presbytery, the bishop occupies the place of Peter in the midst of the apostles. Cyprian of Carthage will say that each bishop is a successor to Peter, and the First Letter of Clement says that presbyters stand "in apostolic succession" (1Clem. 44:1-2). For Ignatius and for the people in Antioch, Peter was the person upon whom the *ekklesia* was built, and each bishop stands in Petrine succession. Now, does that mean that each bishop is infallible? No, that's not implied here.

In the church in Antioch, there was always the tradition that Peter had presided in the Antiochian *ekklesia*. For them, Peter was a very real, historical presence, a living memory, a representative of the bishop within the local *ekklesia*. Jayme brought up the schism between East and West in 1054 A.D., when the patriarchs of the East excommunicated Rome, and Rome excommunicated them back. Not to be glib, I pose a potential conundrum: If we grant that Peter resided in Antioch, and that the Antiochian church regarded its bishop and later patriarch as the successor to St. Peter, does that mean that he was infallible and that he infallibly excommunicated Rome? Just sayin'.

Let's look at the conversation in Matthew 16:18. Imagine Jesus saying: "You are Peter. You're not the Rock of Gibraltar; you're a little, bitty pebble, but on this, I will build my *ekklesia*—and by *ekklesia*, I'm not talking about a universal institution. I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Now here's where it gets tricky: "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and

whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The sentence structure is confusing. I'm not a linguist—52 years ago, Father Emmanuel told me that I was a Latin comedy and a Greek tragedy—but if we're going to transliterate word-by-word from Greek to English, it might best be translated, "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall having been bound in heaven. Whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall having been loosed in heaven." You immediately see why we restructure these words into normal English sentence structure—into simple English! How do we know that this sentence has nothing to do with infallibility? Because of what happens next! The time has come: The Son of Man will go up to Jerusalem and there he will be handed over to his enemies (Mt. 16:21). And what is Peter's reaction? "This shall never happen to you" (Mt. 16:22). And what is Jesus' reaction? "Get behind me, Satan, because now your words are the words of a human being, and are not the inspired Word of God"(Mt. 16:23). If the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus is a matter of faith—Peter just blew it! From the perspective of redaction criticism, this is an implicit warning to the Antiochian *ekklesia*. It's a warning to its presbytery. It's a warning to whoever is Peter in their midst: You'll get it right when you parse the scriptures, which is your job, and you'll get it wrong when you're not binding and loosing according to the mind of God. You'll get it wrong when you let all these distracting human considerations—like fear, anxiety, anger, apprehension or aggravation—get in the way of the process you're supposed to be engaged in! That's the message to the Church. The power to "bind and loose" is not the bestowal of some Voodoo ability to always be right.

The words *dynamis* (*δύναμις*) and *exousia* (*ἐξουσία*)—power and authority—occur over and over again in the New Testament and in the patristic writings. What's the difference between *dynamis* and *exousia*? Those who are episcopo-phobic and who've experienced autocratic bishops inevitably say, "bishops have too much power!" Ideally, bishops have *no* power; bishops have *authority*. The person with power is unaccountable and owes no explanation to anyone. The person in authority—and the root is *exousia*, "that which has been allowed," "that which is permitted"—the authority has been commissioned for a particular task by those in power. We see a good example in the gospel of Luke: When the disciples were sent out, they were given *δύναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν*—power and authority (Lk. 9:1-6). They received the power *and* the authority to drive out demons and

to cure diseases. In order to heal diseases—the exercise of their designated *authority*—it was necessary for the disciples to have the *power* to cast out demons. Whenever this power/authority relationship occurs in the New Testament, the power that is given and the authority that is delegated are solely and specifically to get the job done. The specific power bestowed is limited to that which is necessary to accomplish the task. This is in no sense a universal power *over* people or individuals. Power in this sense is a grace bestowed by the Spirit—the power that God gives us to accomplish the task that's been set before us. For him, the bishop presides in the *ekklesia*—and the word "preside" literally means "to stand in front of" somebody and get their attention. That was his word to describe how the bishop interacted with the congregation. Incidentally, it's also the same word that was used to describe the way that prostitutes got the attention of their clients in the town square—not that there's any correlation!

In the early Church, the bishop was a prophetic voice, and the bishop was the person bent on unity. This keeps coming back over and over again in Ignatius' letters. The primary job of the bishop is unity. The word is *henosis*. Literally, it's a "one-ing." It's a corollary to the term *koinonia*. It's the establishment of interrelatedness, intimacy, care and concern.

Ignatius shared a beautiful image for what results from the unity of the local church: that the presbytery "is fitted as exactly to the bishop, as the strings are to the harp" (Letter to the Ephesians, 4). The bishop is the harp, and the presbyters are the strings. That's where the music is made, when all of the people of the *ekklesia* raise their voices in tremendous harmony. What a beautiful metaphor of the symphony of the Spirit-infused Church praising God!

The bishop was a *tupos*, a type, a representation of God the Father. And this is a tough one for us: We think of the bishop or the priest standing at the altar as the representative of *Christ*, whereas in Ignatius' model, the bishop is the representative of *God the Father*. The deacon was the representative of Christ, going out from the Father, receiving the gifts and bringing them back, and then returning them transformed. The presbytery represented the college of the apostles. It's metaphor, not a divine mystery, but it's one that people could relate to then—of Peter, in the midst of the apostles, and of the Petrine office being the *ekklesia's* source of unity.

What was the Church—the *ekklesia*? The word "church" originally applied to the public assembly in a city of those who were invited to come out. So "church," for Christians, when they took over that same term, literally meant an event, an activity, not a group of people, not an institution, not even a community, in the sense we use that word. *Ekklesia* was the coming-together for an activity in which people participated, and, for the *ekklesia*, that activity was the Eucharist! That's what "church" meant to Ignatius and the followers of "the Way" in Antioch.

Dom Gregory Dix writes,

> Until the third century, the word "church" (*ekklesia*) means invariably *not* the building for Christian worship, but the solemn assembly for the liturgy, and, by extension, those who have a right to take part in this….The phrase is constant from St. Paul onwards, that the *ekklesia* is a "coming together" *epi to auto*, (or *eis to hen*) not merely "in one place," but almost in a technical sense, of the "general assembly" (*The Shape of the Liturgy*, pp. 19-20).

Similarly, Hans Küng writes,

> In the New Testament, *kahal-ekklesia* means both the process of assembling and the assembled community itself. That means that, **without assembling, there is no community, no church**….That provides the norm once and for all: *ekklesia* originally in no way meant an abstract and remote hyper-organization of functionaries set above the concrete assembly, but in origin a community gathered at a particular time, engaged in a particular action (*Christianity: Essence, History & Future*, p. 79).

Or, in the language of contemporary *resourcement* theologians—particularly among Orthodox theologians and the Roman Catholic theologians following them—the Church does *not* make the Eucharist; Eucharist creates the Church! It is in the act of participating in Eucharist that we become Church!

Ignatius provided this definition of "church:"

> Take care, therefore, to participate in the one Eucharist—for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup which leads to unity through his blood; there is one altar; just as there is one bishop together with the presbytery and

> the deacons, my fellow servants—in order that whatever you do, you do in accordance with God (Letter to the Philadelphians, 4).

Contemporary Old Catholic literature will describe the Church as a gathering of people, a communion of people around their bishop, with their presbytery, with the Eucharist at its center. Within the Ultrajectine ecclesiological tradition, this is still the meaning of Church. So, should we translate Matthew 16:18 to say, "You are Cephas, and on this rock I will build my…universal institution"? Ignatius might suggest that we understand "my *ekklesia*" as a participatory process: as "my *henosis*," "my one-ing," "my coming-together of people as the body of Christ." That's the difference.

Ignatius described his *ekklesia* as being a "catholic" assembly. This adjective specifically described the Eucharistic assembly, *not* the individual people who participated in it. A helpful way to understand what Ignatius meant by "catholic" is to employ the metaphor of the "catholic duck." There *is* such a thing as a catholic duck! *Kath' olou*, a term borrowed from Aristotelian philosophy, denoted what is full, whole, general or common in relation to a particular entity (cf. Zizioulas). It means that if something has and does everything it needs, to be whatever it is, it is that thing. Or, in simpler terms, if it walks like a duck, if it talks like a duck, if it flies like a duck—it's a duck! And sometimes we have to get more specific: It's not a goose, and it's not a swan. If it has whatever it needs to be a duck—and not a goose or a swan—then it's a catholic duck. That was the origin of the term *kath' olou,* catholic. That's what *kath' olou* meant to Ignatius, and he's the first Christian author in the written record to use that term. It's the term he used to describe the *ekklesia*, in the sense in which he defined it.

The *local* church, according to Ignatius, is the Church of God—the eternal, full and whole church. It is the concrete form in space of time of the whole body of Christ, of the generic *kath' olou* church. Each individual church is the whole Church in itself, by itself, if it has and does everything it needs to be Church. Each local church is complete in itself!

For Ignatius, the Church is *kath' olou*. He would never think to apply the word "catholic" to an individual person. For Ignatius, the only thing that is catholic is the *ekklesia* itself, the coming-together. The *ekklesia* is the people of God, coming together as the Body of Christ, to

receive and become one with Christ—which is what makes us the Body of Christ—so that, empowered by that, we go out into and transform the world. In Pauline ecclesial language, we are the People of God, the Body of Christ (1Cor. 12:27), and the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 6:19). In Ignatian terms, we go out from the *ekklesia* as "God bearers," "Christ bearers," and "temple bearers."

Hans Küng provides a definition of a "catholic church," consistent with the Ignatian understanding of ecclesial catholicity:

> This is no isolated, self-satisfied religious association, but a community which forms a comprehensive community with others….Each local church fully represents the whole church. To it is given all that it needs in its place for human salvation: the proclamation of the gospel, baptism, the Lord's Supper, the different charisms and services….Each individual community and all its members may understand itself as the people of God, the body of Christ, a spiritual building (*Christianity: Essence, History & Future*, p. 79).

The church—the Eucharistic community—in Antioch was therefore a catholic church, indeed *the* catholic church in that place, as was the church in Rome, the church in Smyrna, *et cetera*. Every genuine and authentic church that has and does everything it needs to be genuine, whole, and complete is *kath' olou*.

For Ignatius, though, not every church was "catholic." Ignatius had to contend with two opposing "Christianities": Docetism and Judaic Christianity. The Docetists were a subtype of Gnostics. They believed that Jesus was not really "in the flesh." There were a couple of schools of Docetism. One of them was that the divine Spirit came down and inhabited Jesus' human body, but before all the tough stuff started—the scourging, the crucifixion, the death—the divine Spirit left Jesus. Another idea was that Jesus was never corporeal in the first place, that he was an image, a kind of divine hologram that walked around doing miracles. Ignatius had to avoid having his *ekklesia* confused with a Docetist Christian assembly, and to address Docetist influences on Gentiles in his own *ekklesia*.

Ignatius also had to deal with the tension that existed between Aramaic-speaking Jews and those now known as Christians. The *Birkat haMinim*, the twelfth of the Eighteen Benedictions, excommunicated the "Nazoreans" from Judaism. Cursed as heretics,

the Jewish Christians were now cut off from the synagogue. Imagine the effect this had on Jewish Christians in the *ekklesia* in Antioch! They now had to make a choice: They couldn't go to the synagogue at sunset on Friday and then show up at the *ekklesia* on Sunday morning; they had to choose one or the other. Whatever tenuous claim the *ekklesia* had on Jewish identity was now severed. The early Christians lost their cover, and this had catastrophic consequences: Officially cut off from Judaism, they no longer had a tenuous claim to legitimate existence inside the Roman Empire, and this made them subject to persecution as "atheists."

Given these internal tensions and external threats, Ignatius formulated an agenda to safeguard the integrity of his *ekklesia* and preserve the unity of his flock. He determined to create an association of catholic churches that ultimately would be called a synodal association, a "walking-together." On his way to execution in Rome, Ignatius was obsessed with the idea of bringing together contiguous *catholic* churches—but *not* to form a single "megachurch." This idea would have been incompatible with and contrary to their catholic ecclesiology. Instead, Ignatius' goal was to bring them into a "walking-together" of catholic churches (Brent, 2006, 2009). Ignatius imagined a fellowship, a union of catholic churches, not a big, honkin' Catholic Church, with hundreds of little, itty-bitty pieces that in and of themselves would otherwise be incomplete. This essential distinction still influences the Old Catholic understanding of Church.

Each local church is whole and entire in and of itself. So, what constitutes each church? The people of God, gathered together with their presbytery and their bishop, with the Eucharist at the heart of the community. That's church!

Ignatius had the chance to write seven letters on his way to Rome, to a very humiliating execution, but, as Allen Brent suggests, he took advantage of that last journey to push his agenda of *synodos*, of churches "walking together." According to Brent, Ignatius realized that this would be the only way for catholic churches to survive and to flourish and to develop their own identities as real, individual churches. In light of all the opposition, the only way for "the real Church" to survive would be by coming together in mutual support. That was the origin of this whole idea of synods of catholic churches.

Cyprian of Carthage:
Democratic Processes in the Churches of North Africa

Cyprian of Carthage was born around 210 A.D. and converted to Christianity at about 35 years of age. He was ordained deacon then presbyter, then elected bishop in 249, some four years after his baptism. Cyprian's election was problematic, because his election had to be ratified among the people of God, the *laos tou theou*, who were the primary electors of their bishops. We can legitimately conclude that he enjoyed unanimous support of the *laos tou theou*, who remembered and appreciated his patronage when he first became a Christian. His election then had to be affirmed within the presbytery, where he found resistance, then by the neighboring bishops During Cyprian's election, the younger presbyters supported him, but some older presbyters opposed him, largely due to his popularity and the assumption that their seniority made them more qualified than their younger colleague. The old farts were stuck, and they appear to have been strong believers in the perquisites of the seniority system.

The matter was probably resolved by the synodal bishops overriding the deadlock in the presbytery, in favor of the lay consensus. We can conclude a few things about the Church at that time. The *laos tou theou*—the laity—were not a "leftover" class of people. In fact, when a person became a deacon or presbyter or bishop, that person didn't stop being a *laos*. Those in the ordained ministries of the Church weren't "above" or separate from others in the *ekklesia*; they served a role within the *ekklesia*. That's an important distinction. In fact, in the early Church and ideally in the contemporary Church—as our Orthodox confreres point out—there were four orders of ministry in the Church: the bishop, the presbyters, the deacons, and the laity, whose ministry was reconciliation and evangelism. They were the evangelists in the world. Vatican II did its best to recapture this idea that the people of God—and not bishops or priests—are the primary missionaries to the world.

You'll notice that I don't use the word "priest." That word is problematic. It's the result of over 2,000 years of linguistic deterioration: *presbyteros* (Greek), *presbyter* (Late Latin), *prester* (Vulgate Latin), *prestere* (Old Frisian), *prestar* (Old Saxon and Old High German), *preost* (Old English), *priest* (modern English). "Priest" is simply the result of 2,000 years of getting sloppy with how we say "presbyter." As a result, we start confusing the presbyters of the

Church with the Old Testament priests of the Temple, or with pagan priests. But isn't there a *priesthood* of all believers? Absolutely. But there's no *presbytery* of all believers! And that's the distinction. The presbytery is an order of ministry within the *ekklesia* —which is not to say that the laity are not priests. We are all priests. Being a priest has nothing to do with presiding. Being a priest implies the offering of ministry, the offering of service, and the conversion of this world. It implies sacrifice of self, for the sake of the gospel and for the sake of bringing good news into this world. That's the ministry to which *everyone* is called—and the ordained ministries of the church exist for only one purpose: to facilitate the ministry of those who possess the universal priesthood.

The whole purpose of bishops, presbyters, and deacons—each in their own way—supports, encourages and enhances the ministry of the people of God. And their ministry comes down to actualizing two parallel occupations: discipleship and evangelization. That's it. The bishops speak with a prophetic voice and focus on the unity and integrity of the diocese—the local church. The presbyters are ministers of Word and sacrament. The deacons are the agents—the eyes and ears—of the bishop and the bishop's *hyperetai* (executives, the ones who get things done). They interpret the world to the Church and facilitate the ministry of evangelization of the *laos tou theou.*

At that time, there was a three-step process of election. Cyprian described it and suggested that it was normative throughout all the *ekklesiae* in the middle of the third century. First was *testimonium*, the testimony, discussion or discernment process that resulted in nominations. The second step was *sufragium*—forming a consensus. This went fine for Cyprian, at least among the laity and the younger presbyters. But the final decision was made during the third step, the *judicium*, when, based on the testimony of the people and the presbytery, the neighboring bishops consented to consecrate.

So, in Cyprian's case, who overrode the divided presbytery? Obviously, the neighboring bishops, in this case, overruled the senior presbyters. Nothing is written about this, but how else could his consecration have happened? This *judicium* of the bishops of the local synod was an aspect of the synodality, or "walking together," of contiguous churches. Had the church of Carthage not in been in union with other churches, there would have been no agreed-upon vehicle for the resolution of that conflict.

Cyprian ran into a little trouble: When the Decian persecution began in 250 A.D., Cyprian went into voluntary exile—or, as some people would say, he "cut bait and ran." He had trouble living that down. He believed that a church without a bishop would have been in severe trouble, and that it was better for him to work through proxies among the presbyters than to leave the church orphaned. Although any people retrospectively agreed with that assessment and course of action, there was already resistance to Cyprian—and sabotage by the dissenting senior presbyters. This gave them ammunition. The next crisis came right after the persecution: There was a question about what to do about the "lapsed." If you think "lapsed" Catholics are in trouble now, lapsed Catholics were in real trouble then! "Lapsed" meant that you had broken down and publicly burned your few grains of incense and acknowledged Caesar as God. It's hard to come back to church after that—at least without a lot of people talking!

The community split on the issue, things got nasty, and the presbytery in Carthage went into schism. There were three factions—not just in Carthage, but in Rome and other *ekklesiae* as well. There were the laxists, who, in essence, said, "What the hell, all is forgiven: Come on back!" On the other end of the spectrum were those who said, "When hell freezes over, you apostate scum!" And in the middle were people like Cyprian who said, off the record, "Yeah, they are apostate scum, but there are degrees of scuminess. Some people are dirtier than others." To a great extent, the degree of culpability was determined by an individual's motivation.

Some type of penance had to be done, and this very often was determined by discussion within the *ekklesia*. Remember Matthew's gospel? "If your brother or sister has sinned against you" (Mt. 18:15), there was an evangelical schema for how to deal with it. By the third century, churches were familiar with the synoptic gospels and John. Cyprian was in favor of looking at each case individually. Some people, for instance, made sacrifices to the gods because they didn't want to lose their estates, since the property of those who didn't sacrifice to the gods was often confiscated. As a result, those with resources—those with something to lose—often became the target of enforcement. If a person knuckled under and acknowledged the pantheon of official gods and the divinity of Caesar, that was one less potential insurrectionist that the government had to worry about. The question arose: Did some people sacrifice to the gods simply because

they didn't want to endanger their assets? Did they do it because they were concerned about what would happen to their spouses or children or Christian slaves. You had people who cared about the members of their households and what would happen to them. So there was a realization that not all cases were the same; there was a "middle ground" in the churches of Rome and Carthage—and some people just stopped talking to each other on the basis of whether they were hardliners or laxists or somewhere in the middle.

How did Cyprian deal with this? He wrote a number of letters that finally became a treatise, *De lapsis*, "On the Lapsed." It was a sort of letter-writing campaign by Cyprian, to the bishops of North Africa, who numbered some 67 at one point, since every single *ekklesia* had its own *episkopos*.

How did those bishops resolve situations? They called a meeting of the *synodos*, a council, and that's where they had discussions. They realized that they couldn't solve everything in a single council. They met three times and nailed down a common agreement among themselves, but then the Valerian persecution began in 256 A.D. This time, Cyprian did not run. He was imprisoned, then tried and executed in 258 A.D.

There's another part of Cyprian's lasting legacy that must be mentioned. In Rome, there were folks who decided that Cornelius, the bishop of Rome, was too soft on the lapsed and too much of a centrist. They elected Novatian, who, in turn, set up a rival bishop in Carthage. The still-angry contingent of Cyprian's presbytery also put forward a candidate—so now they had multiple bishops in Carthage! The African bishops rallied with Cyprian, who might appropriately be the patron saint of survivors of church politics and infighting! They put together their own letter-writing campaign, engaged the presbytery of the church in Rome, and ultimately brought about an agreement that restored Cornelius as the legitimate bishop of Rome. Do you remember the canon of saints in the old Roman rite? "Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius": They were all bishops of Rome. Who comes next? Cyprian, the North African who saved their bacon!

Let's turn now to Cyprian's ecclesiology. In response to Stephen I's assertion that there should be an *episkopos episkopoi*, a bishop of bishops—and that he should be it—Cyprian and the North African bishops responded that there is no hierarchy among the churches. In contrast to Stephen's proposed ecclesiastical innovation, the

Cyprianic model of Church was collegial, not hierarchical, allowing for greater diversity-in-unity.

Cyprian described the process of discernment of a bishop within a community. He describes a democratic process, where there's a consensus, an ultimate coming-together, with a common perception of who is best qualified to serve us as bishop—as the prophetic voice among us. It's a process that begins by asking, "Who really challenges us to be who and what we're supposed to be?" And it's a process that doesn't alienate anyone, but begins a conversation and pulls everybody into it.

The chosen bishop has authority, but no power. The only power this person has is the power given by the Spirit to exercise legitimate authority. It is power to do a thing for the good of the Church, but not a power *over* anybody. Prepositions are really important here.

I believe it was the late Father Donald Curry who coined the phrase, "You guys are the 'lowerarchy.'" Think of that for a moment: We don't do hierarchy; we do "lowerarchy"! The servants of the servants of God aren't adorned with a triple crown or carried in on a dais by others. The apocryphal story is told of the Episcopal bishop who visited Rome and saw the pope—perhaps Pius XII—decked out, carried in, and blessing the people, as was customarily done. And everyone bowed before the pope—including the bishops who accompanied this Episcopal bishop. Being a bit hard of hearing, this bishop, unaware of his vocal volume, looked down and tapped the shoulder of another bishop, and asked, "Who the hell does he think he is, the Blessed Sacrament?" That's not a servant of the servants of God. To use Father Donald's phrase, that's not a member of the "lowerarchy"—and any bishop who is not the "lowerarchy" has the wrong understanding of what the job description of bishop is. That's part of the Ignatian and Cyprianic legacy.

We do have to consider the consequences of the "peace of the church," and how it affected ecclesiastical polity throughout the Roman empire. Constantine did one really big thing for the church: In 315 A.D., he was the great liberator of the Church. He passed a bill that we've always called "The Peace of the Church." It literally said, "Christians may exist." This was an improvement. Before that, being a Christian was technically a capital offense—even if, in practice, it would have been a terrible waste of time and resources to go after every Christian, rather than merely the wealthy and influential ones.

Emperor Constantine was baptized by an Arian priest, so why was he so sympathetic to Christians? His mother was a Christian!

"The Peace of the Church" allowed the bishops to come out of the shadows, and Constantine gathered them together at Nicaea. From that gathering, we received the Nicene creed, later the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed. And what do we hear shouted from that creed? The voice of Ignatius is loud and clear: "*one*, holy, catholic and apostolic *ekklesia*." The ordering of those words is likely not a coincidence: The only way for the Church to be one, to be henotic, is for the Church to be holy—understood as being in *koinonia* with Christ. And the only way for the Church to be holy is by being *kath' olou*, to be a place where Christ in-dwells and the Spirit brings life. And the only way for the Church to be *kath' olou* is to stand within the teaching of the apostles, to stand within the "apostolic succession."

A few years ago, a great ecclesiologist, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (who would later become Benedict XVI) addressed the idea of apostolic succession and pointed out that, in the beginning, the words "succession" and "tradition"—*successio* and *traditio*—were pretty much interchangeable. To stand in the apostolic *succession* was to stand in the apostolic *tradition*. For the integrity of any local church, it was necessary that the church and its *episkopos* stand firmly within that tradition (the good news of and about the Lord Jesus Christ). What mattered was not whether the tradition/succession was passed on by the hands of an apostle, but by the lips of an apostle. That was Ratzinger.

We might also fall back on Don Gregory Dix. Before Constantine, Christians couldn't publicly exist, and the *ekklesiae* had just seen 10 to 12 years of the bloodiest persecution in their history. For this reason, most of the bishops at Nicaea were "baby bishops," since the bishops who had preceded them had either died or had apostatized. Another thing worth noting about the Council of Nicaea was that there was an inordinate overrepresentation of Syrian bishops, due to the geographic location of the council. This was, in effect, a Syrian council, with many bishops who stood firmly within the Ignatian tradition. That's likely why we can hear Ignatius speaking in this creed.

But now, a legitimate question: What does each word of that phrase, "one, holy, catholic and apostolic," mean to the bishops at Nicaea? Were these terms meant to describe a great mega-organization, a "universal church"? This was not possible, since no

such entity even existed at the time of the council! The assembled bishops understood *ekklesia* in the sense in which Ignatius and Cyprian had understood it: "one altar; one bread and one cup, the Body and Blood of Christ; one body of the faithful; one bishop, together with the *presbyterium* and the deacons." The word "church" has admittedly undergone some change over the last couple of thousand years—and its definition always depends on context. In one place, in a single paragraph, Irenaeus used the word "church" in three different ways, with three different meanings—and the context is critical for understanding each one. In each case, the sense that's implied is closer to Ignatius' idea of Church, than Trent's idea of Church.

Then came the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. With the establishment of five patriarchates now, we have the beginning of a hierarchy for the Church—one that approximates the government of the Empire's provinces. Note that the Roman patriarchate encompassed central and southern Italy, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica. The patriarch of Rome oversaw only the lower part of the Italian peninsula and the three contiguous islands! That was the extent of the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome. The patriarchate of Rome did not include Milan, Cyprus, Carthage, Gaul, Spain or Britain. More importantly, no Council has ever reversed or expanded this. From a juridical sense, then, the idea of universal jurisdiction is an inherent conciliar contradiction.

It's important to note a few other key dates. In 380 A.D., Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of the Empire. Thirty years later, in 410 A.D., Alaric I and the Visigoths sacked Rome. The next attack on Rome was by the Vandals in 455. In 476, Odoacer deposed the last of the Roman emperors, Flavius Romulus Augustus, and became the first German ruler of Rome. He claimed the West, and the Vandals laid claim to North Africa.

Schillebeeckx writes, "After the barbarian invasions, the bishops were the only authorities anywhere in the land who seemed to be in a position to rebuild and reorganize the cities. The city magistrature had disappeared and there was a complete power vacuum" (*The Church with a Human Face*, p. 150). The idea of the bishop administrator was thus a Theodosian creation, and the monarchical bishop arose as a result of the worst cultural collapse in Western history. The modern role of the bishop didn't flow directly or

indirectly from the tradition of the Church! And that's how "power bishops" came to be: administration of cities was forced on them—and once they possessed that power, it was difficult for them to let it go.

It is necessary to say a word about the Donation of Constantine, part of the "pseudo-Isidoran decretals" long cited by the Roman church as the basis for a good number of its claims to sovereignty that turned out to be an eighth-century forgery. The decretals document was attributed to St. Isidore of Seville—if you're going to blame somebody for something, always blame a dead guy! The Donation of Constantine stated that Emperor Constantine had written a document giving the pope temporal jurisdiction of all the West. It was fake history. It was the real "fake news." The Donation of Constantine was written in an era when nearly nobody could read, except in the monasteries, so you could tell anybody anything. Cathedral schools and monasteries were the real "light in the darkness" during this period, during this time of the "Dark Ages." They preserved knowledge during a real low point in the Roman Empire, when maybe 5% of the population could read or write.

Universities later arose in the 11th century, with their curricula of the *trivium* and the *quadraticum*—the seven liberal arts. Most universities started as cathedral or abbey schools. Oxford was a small priory, the cathedral schools of Paris and Bologna developed into universities, and, within 100 years, 90 universities were established throughout Europe. This began the Renaissance, the "Great Awakening" from that long period of darkness. People learned to read and write. They could go back to and rediscover literary sources. They begin digging up old stuff, and it was intellectual and cultural party!

We would be remiss if we didn't note the role of women in this Renaissance. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) spent her life acquiring knowledge and writing it down. The ultimate herbalist, she spoke with the wise women of her day and gave us an exhaustive, two-volume, small-print pharmacopeia of natural remedies. Abbess Herrad of Landsberg (1130-1195) of the Mont St. Odile Abbey in Hohenburg created the first female-authored encyclopedia, which was widely copied. She was an incredible artist and philosopher who strongly believed in education, and her abbey school was a tremendous center of learning. A colleague of happy memory once

said the big difference between wise women in certain parts of Europe and in the Low Countries was that the farther south you went, the more these wise women tended to be burned as witches, and, as you went north, they became the powerful abbesses of large monasteries.

With that, we come to the end of the Dark Ages—which is when the headaches will begin for the Donation of Constantine and the primacy of the papacy.

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Reflections on The Foundations for Ultrajectine Ecclesiology

"As I see it, the implications of this early history for who we are and what we're about is pretty significant. We're not a big mega-organization, but a 'coming-together' of churches. And that's what I see happening here this weekend."

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"This presentation underlines the great mistake we all make when we attempt to do theology or ecclesiology outside the context of history and what's going on in any given age. Our theology and ecclesiology are often products of the politics of the time. Our early theology and ecclesiology were products of the Diaspora Judaism of the day. Later, in the Roman Empire, the Christian community lost cover when they were no longer seen as sitting within a wisdom tradition that had been largely left alone until that time. That lack of historical consciousness really cripples the contemporary Church. We tend to think that everything gets reified based on an earlier context. One of the things I love about Ecumenical Catholicism is its ability to be in dialogue with the day and to consider that maybe the Holy Spirit is still unfolding and revealing and reworking this project."

Rev. Trish Sullivan Vanni
Edina, Minnesota

Ultrajectine Ecclesiology

Bishop Raphael Adams
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Chicago, Illinois

What's the difference between Ultrajectinism & Ultramontanism? It all comes down to questions of authority: What limits authority? Who has it? Who has a right to have it?

The simplest translation of Ultramontanism is "the other side of the mountains," the other side of the Alps. The term was popularized by Johann Nikolaus von Hontheim, a.k.a., Febronius.

Ultrajectinism is the older of the two ecclesiologies. What does "ultra" mean? What is ultra-light beer? It's water with food coloring! "Ultra" literally meant "beyond," or "on the other side." And "jectine" comes from *iacio, iacere*, "to throw." A loose translation of "Ultrajectine" might be "as far as you can throw it," or "way out there." *Traiectum* was the name of the Roman frontier garrison located at a ford on the Rhine River, in modern-day Utrecht. It was located at a place where you could get across the river without dying. At that Roman garrison in Utrecht, you could literally throw a stone to the other side of the river! The name of the city of Utrecht derives from that Latin root, *ultrajectensis*.

This presentation examines the developmental sequence of Ultrajectinism, the ecclesiological thought of the Low Countries of the Rhineland, which included the Netherlands and northern Germany. And we'll talk about all the important "-isms": Conciliarism, Gallicanism, Febronianism, Erasmianism, Jansenism, and Modernism. We'll see how these are related. Conciliarism, for instance, would be the battle cry of Gallicanism, which would, in turn, influence Jansenism.

Conciliarism: William of Ockham & Marsiglio of Padua

Let's begin with Conciliarism and William of Ockham (1285-1349). Have you seen the 1986 movie, "The Name of the Rose"? It's based on Umberto Eco's 1980 novel of the same name. Sean Connery is the protagonist, a Franciscan friar named William of Baskerville. When the novel was published, people noted that this sleuthing tale was

actually about William of Ockham. When you hear Baskerville, you think of Sherlock Holmes. Do you remember Detective Holmes' aphorism? "Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth." It's a lot like "Ockham's razor"!

William of Ockham came from Oxford, where Greyfriars College gave the world all sorts of incredible people, like Alexander of Hales, William of Ockham, Robert Grosseteste, Roger Bacon, John Duns Scotus, and John of Peckham, the Archbishop of Canterbury. How did Greyfriars come to be? It all started at the Chapter of Mats, a large assembly of Friars Minor in 1224, when Brother Richard of England suggested to Francis of Assisi that the friars establish a community in England. Francis, always ready to interpret subtle hints as direct messages from God, thought it was a great idea. So, Francis sent Brother Agnellus of Pisa, a deacon in his late 20's and recently received into the order by St. Francis, to start a new community in England. Due to the generosity of a Benedictine abbot who paid their passage, nine or ten friars crossed the English Channel and presented themselves to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who offered them a house at Oxenfordia, a place where oxen could safely cross or ford the river, which would ultimately become known as Oxford. Brother Agnellus engaged Robert Grosseteste, one of the foremost theologians in England, to teach theology to the friars and to other students as well. That was the beginning of Greyfriars College at Oxford.

An alumnus of Oxford, William of Ockham formulated Conciliarism, one aspect of which was the separation of church and state, where the pope would have no temporal authority and the emperor would have no religious authority. William of Ockham essentially told the pope and the emperor, "Go to your separate corners!" He suggested that the pope should be subject to the emperor in temporal matters.

William of Ockham also believed that the pope was not exempt from criticism. As C.B. Moss pointed out, past popes have fallen into heresy: Pope Liberius signed an Arian form (367 A.D.), Pope Zosimus was suspected of Pelagianism (417-418 A.D.), and Honorius was convicted of heresy by the sixth ecumenical council (680-681 A.D.). William of Ockham said that, if the pope falls into error, a general council may be convened without the pope's consent. He also advanced the notion that the pope be subject in ecclesiastical matters

to the general councils of the Church, which should include not only the bishops and presbyters of the Church, but lay people as well, "even women."

As though William of Ockham hadn't pushed matters far enough, Marsiglio of Padua (1280-1343) rejected the idea of exclusive Petrine succession by the bishop of Rome--the assumption that the bishop of Rome is the direct successor of Saint Peter. He maintained that Christ is the only head of the Church and that the Donation of Constantine and the Isidoran decretals were "fake news." He advanced the idea that only a general council has the right to define heresy and to excommunicate. He also believed in the sovereignty of the people—that people have a right to elect their clergy and temporal leaders—which was remarkable for the 14th century.

William of Ockham and Marsiglio of Padua attempted to elude the grasp of the pope, and they sought refuge with the emperor. Whereas it was more usual for people to flee to the temple authorities for sanctuary, William and Marsiglio did the exact opposite: They ran from the Church and found sanctuary with the emperor.

The Council of Constance: Jean Gerson & Peter d'Ailly

Conciliarism gave birth to Gallicanism, where the "rubber" of Conciliarism hit the "road" of a now-divided Church. The Roman church was divided by the Great Western Schism of 1378 A.D., with two men—and three by 1410—claiming to be pope. We had a pope in Rome and a pope in Avignon, each claiming to be the lawful pope. Which pope should people listen to? More importantly, how could this conflict be brought to resolution? Jean Gerson and Peter d'Ailly of the University of Paris thought through various options. Plan A: Ask both popes to resign. It sounds easy and seemed like a good idea—but neither pope went along with it. Plan B: Hold a council to decide this. The only challenge: Only a pope could convene a council! In 1409, the College of Cardinals convened the Council of Pisa, deposed both popes, and elected a new pope. It was a classic failure: The two previous popes still refused to go away, so we now had three popes!

"Third time's a charm." It was time for Plan C: Gregory XII resigned, and the Council of Constance convened in 1414 to depose both John XXIII of Rome and Benedict XIII of Avignon. With the election of Martin V, we had a single pope for the first time in 70 years.

An important source for ecclesial Conciliarism, the decree *Haec sancta synodus* (1415) gave primacy to the councils of the Church, saying:

> This Holy Synod of Constance, being a General Council lawfully assembled in the name of the Holy Spirit…has received immediately from Jesus Christ a power to which all persons of whatever rank and dignity, not excepting the pope himself, are bound to submit in those matters which concern the faith, the extirpation of the existing schism, and the reformation of the church in head and members.

Of course, the papacy would later object to this.

This was a great triumph for the University of Paris. Jean Gerson and Peter d'Ailly did their job, the council elected Otto Colonna, who took the name Martin V, and the council concluded with the idea that a general council would be called roughly every five years so that all the bishops and delegates of different dioceses could come together, consult and deal with problems. That was the plan: recurring general councils for the Western church! Unfortunately, Martin V, despite what may or may not have been discussed beforehand, was not really inclined to do this. C.B. Moss writes,

> In spite of this great triumph for the University of Paris and its divines, the council of Constance committed two fatal mistakes…They elected Otto Colonna pope, as Martin V, and he and his successors took care that the opportunity of reforming the Church and setting limits to the growth of the papal claims should never recur. From that day the Reformation became inevitable.

The Council of Constance made a tragic mistake in its treatment of Jan Hus (1369-1415), the Czech priest, theologian, philosopher and church reformer who was a seminal figure in the Bohemian Reformation. Hus was granted safe passage to the council by Emperor Sigismund—but the council had opined that one need not keep a promise to a heretic! Hus advocated for consubstantiation over transubstantiation, and he spoke out against the crusades and the sale of indulgences. He suggested that villainous priests would grab "the very last penny" of people eager to pay for Mass, confession, sacraments, indulgences, blessings, burials, funeral services, and prayers. He preached that Christ, not the pope, is the head of the Church, and that the Church is not the clerical hierarchy, but is the

entire body of those predestined for salvation, and that people had a right to read the scriptures in their own languages. He refused to recant at the Council of Constance and was burned at the stake as a heretic, thus provoking what would come to be known as the Hussite Wars.

Gallicanism: Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet & the Gallican Articles

We now come to Gallicanism and the Gallican Articles of 1682. In essence, Gallicanism was the belief by the French church that the pope's jurisdiction was limited and could not trump the existing tradition of the Gallican church. This tiff between Rome and France went back at least to the fifth century, when Pope Celestine I (+432) thought it was silly for bishops in Gaul to wear a particular insignia to designate their role in the Eucharist. It was the first recorded instance of episcopal drag.

There was also a tiff between King Philip the Fair (1268-1314) and Pope Boniface VIII (1230-1303), when the pope insisted that God had given him temporal jurisdiction over every human being, including the French. Philip sent troops to attack the pope's residence, and to capture and beat him. After the pope died a month later, Philip pressured Clement V to stage a posthumous trial of Boniface on charges of heresy and sodomy. It was as if tension between France and Rome was built into the ecclesiastical DNA.

In 1682, Bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet presided over a synod of clergy in Paris, where they formulated and approved the four Gallican Articles. One article stated that the pope has supreme spiritual power, but no temporal power. This was a reiteration of the position of William of Ockham and Marsiglio of Padua. Another article declared that the pope is subject to the general councils of the Church. This was stated by William of Ockham, Marsiglio of Padua, and the Council of Constance. The third article: The pope must accept as inviolable the long-standing customs of the French Church. The French were clearly getting touchy here. And the fourth article: Papal infallibility in doctrinal matters presupposes confirmation by the whole Church. The French didn't deny the possibility of papal infallibility, but they did significantly qualify it: to have any validity, papal decisions and pronouncements must be approved and ratified by local synods throughout the entire Church.

Febronianism: Johann von Hontheim

That was not the end of Gallicanism. A little more than a half century later came Febronianism, which I often refer to as "Gallicanism on steroids." Febronianism is Gallicanism gone global. In 1740, the electors of the German states met to choose a new emperor; three of the electors were prince archbishops. Prior to the election, the papal nuncio had asked the electors to annul two constitutional requirements in the emperor's job description: opposing papal encroachments and recognizing the rights of Protestants in Catholic states. The electors replied that the pope should first respond to the *Gravamina nationis germanicae*, the ten longstanding complaints of the German people against the pope. The electors appointed Johann von Hontheim, a priest and professor, to assess the current validity of the grievances, since they were now several hundred years old, and "specifically to investigate how far the church in Germany was in accordance with the civil law." (Moss, pp142-143). His investigation slowed after he was named auxiliary bishop of Trier and was responsible for the administration of the prince archbishop's diocese. In 1763, 23 years after the initial request, Johann von Hontheim finally got around to publishing the results of his investigation. He was smart enough not to use his own name. He pseudonymously published it under the name of Justinus Febronius. His work had taken on a life of its own, and he called it "On the State of the Church and the Legitimate Power of the Roman Pontiff." The subtitle of the work expressed its second purpose: "To Reunite Christians Who Differ in Religion." He was trying to bring about an ecumenical settlement between Protestants and Catholics, who, in his estimation, were not so far apart. The big obstacle to reunification, he thought, was the pope. Ever the optimist, von Hontheim defended the rights of bishops and the rights of the state against papal claims. In effect, von Hontheim debunked the pseudo-Isidoran decretals, said the *Gravamina* were still valid, and asserted that the pope had no right to insert himself into certain areas. While affirming that the pope is *primus inter pares*, the first among equals, von Hontheim denied that the "*Tu es Petrus*" passage in Matthew (Mt. 16:18) had anything to do with the papacy. He also asserted that the pope's primacy is conferred by the Church, and not by God. It's the distinction between order and office: No one is ordained pope. Instead, the pope is elected to an office. The pope is not infallible, nor is the papacy a divinely instituted order; it's an office meant to preserve the unity of the Church, through

the facilitation of collaboration among bishops, presbyters and the people of God. Like Erasmus, von Hontheim proposed a return to the practices of the Church of the first four centuries—a return to Ignatius, Cyprian and Augustine—as a means to unite all Christians. He also reaffirmed that bishops are successors to the apostles, that they govern the church collegially, that national councils of bishops should meet regularly, and, when warranted, they should meet in general councils, which represent the whole Church. Hearkening to Cyprian, who said that each bishop is Peter in his own diocese, von Hontheim said that all bishops were the successors to the apostles in the sense that no single bishop could claim apostolic succession as personal property. Each bishop participates in apostolic succession which has both an internally focused ecclesial role and an externally focused collaborative and collegial role in relation to other bishops. Apostolic succession is participation in the apostolic *collegium*, and von Hontheim affirmed this primitive Cyprianic assertion.

So, what was the difference between the Gallicanism of Bossuet and the Febronianism of von Hontheim? C.B. Moss says it well: "The Gallicanism of Bossuet was a claim for special privileges that had survived in one country. The Gallicanism of Febronius was a demand for ecclesiastical revolution in all countries" (*The Old Catholic Movement*, pp. 144-145). As I'm fond of saying: Febronianism was Gallicanism on steroids. It was galloping Gallicanism! Under the pseudonym Febronius, von Hontheim was not just advocating for the rights of France; he was advocating for the rights that belong to the whole Church!

Devotio Moderna: Geert Groote, the Sisters & Brothers of the Common Life, and the Canons Regular of the Windesheim Confederation

Now, let's step back in time a few centuries, to the *Devotio Moderna* of the Netherlands, to the Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life, founded by Geert Groote (1340-1384). Groote was a reformer, preacher, teacher, and deacon of the Diocese of Utrecht. He preached all sorts of reforms, to the point that he was censured by Pope Urban VI. And as one commentator suggests: It was a good thing that the Church was split between a couple of popes; otherwise, one of them would really have come after Groote!

The Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life constituted a different type of association: a pietist quasi-religious community that lived a simple life of devotion to Jesus. The first community was a community of sisters, and the brothers came later. They banded together in communities, without vows, to live strictly-regulated lives in common houses and devote every waking hour to attending divine service, reading and preaching, working, and eating common meals accompanied by the reading of scripture. Their two missions were discipleship and evangelization, and they believed in the reciprocal relationship of being and becoming: What we do shapes who we become, and who we are motivates what we now do. And, once you reach a certain level, you spontaneously do things that would go under the heading of evangelization. Conversion, for Groot, meant becoming Christlike, the *imitatio Christi*, the imitation of Christ.

The story is told of a certain young Brother of the Common Life and who would later enter the Windesheim Congregation of Canons Regular. It's suggested that he may have been the only survivor of the Black Death in his *frater* house. The brothers had the custom of *riparia*, of journaling, to clarify and build upon their thoughts. One theory is that, after the Black Death struck, the sole survivor in the *frater* house collected all of the *riparia* of the brothers—the priests and laymen alike—and published them under the name of Brother Thomas à Kempis. We know it today as the *Imitatio Christi* (*The Imitation of Christ*). Some readers of the book have noted that sometimes the writer gives the impression of being a layman, and at other times a priest. This legend could provide an explanation for the apparent disparity of perceptions and plurality of voices. We'll never know but I think it has some merit.

The *Devotio Moderna* was a school of practical spirituality, with its own curriculum, reading assignments, practical exercises, and problem-based experiential learning. They wouldn't have called it that, but retrospectively that's what it was. A large part of the discipline—and note how "discipline" and "discipleship" are closely-related term—was reflection on scripture, especially the gospels, with the practice of immersion and projection, where you choose a gospel story and become one of the characters. You become part of the experience. That was Groote's way of immersing people in the gospel—and it appealed to clergy and laity alike. Groote was not the originator of this method; it was part and parcel of Low Country

mysticism—but he used it as a tool for bringing the laity into the life of the gospel.

The Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life would parse the gospel, engage in exegesis of it, then invite listeners to immerse themselves in the story—and it's a great way to pull together a homily when you're in a hurry! Where did Ignatius of Loyola get the images for his retreats? From a copy of exercises of the Brothers of the Common Life that he received while on retreat at a Benedictine Abbey! There's a reason for the similarity of his retreat experience that of the Common Life; and why both the Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life and Ignatius Loyola both use a methodological approach involving "spiritual exercises."

There were other practical elements to this school of practical spirituality. You begin your day by affirming the resolutions you made the night before, through *riparia*, while reflecting on the events of the day and engaging in your own examination of conscience. You also seek correction and admonition as a way to know your "unknown faults" (Ps. 19:12). We'd all benefit from that: monthly going to another sister or brother and asking, "What do I do that's really irritating? Where am I falling down? What do I need to work on?" And the flip side is giving others an honest answer, speaking the truth to others in love (Eph. 4:15), which is one of the hardest things for human beings to do. We're usually good at one or the other—either veracity or empathy. Doing both at the same time can be a challenge. Ephesians 4:15 is a scriptural reference turns up again in our discussion of Jansenism and Port-Royal.

The Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life had several apostolates. They hosted colloquia, where they parsed the scripture, explained it, and invited people to reflect on it. They celebrated scripturally-based paraliturgies, like *lectio divina* and other spiritual exercises that brought people closer to God. They also preached in the vernacular on street corners—and this is what got them into trouble. While this type of public preaching in the vernacular was happening throughout the Mediterranean, particularly by the likes of the Franciscans, this was new in the Low Countries. They educated the children of the poor, even providing food, paper, and lodging for them. They also provided books. Gutenberg trained more than 50 brothers throughout the Low Countries in printing and metallurgy,

so that they could create the casts for printing. The brother houses shared five printing presses and often published their own works.

The Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life were unique in that they were a third-order community—largely a lay community—that created its own first-order for those who wanted to graduate to a stricter religious life as clergy. The first order was known as the Canons Regular of St. Augustine of the Windesheim Congregation, which numbered almost 100 houses.

Who were some of the students of the Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life and of the Windesheim Congregation? Perhaps the most well-known was Martin Luther (1483-1546). Another "graduate" of the Brothers was Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464).

Erasmianism: Erasmus of Rotterdam, the *Philosophia Christi*, and Irenic Ecclesiology

Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) was also an important product of the Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life. Germain Marc'hadour wrote of him:

> Erasmus was a different priest, less clerical, indeed somewhat anticlerical, perhaps even a congenital bachelor before he also became a committed celibate. One of his major tasks would be to complete that emergence of an enlightened laity which had begun so vigorously in his own native land with the *Devotio Moderna (Erasmus' Vision of the Church*, p. 115).

It is said that you can know a person by his or her friends. Erasmus' circle of friends included the likes of Thomas More, John Colet, and St. John Fisher. Erasmus referred to More as "a man for all seasons" and as "my best disputant"—the guy I enjoy arguing with. In 1516, Erasmus published More's *Utopia*. John Colet was the founder and dean of St. Paul's Cathedral School in London, which has been in continual operation ever since; he called for a general council to consider Church reform and the education, formation and spiritual integrity of clergy. Fisher was the bishop of Rochester who enjoyed a lifetime appointment as Chancellor of Cambridge University, where he hosted a visit by Erasmus.

Erasmus espoused a certain Christocentrism, which developed into his *philosophia Christi*, his philosophy of Christ—that the only

philosophy we need is Christ and the gospel. He took seriously the assertation that Christ is "the way, the truth and the life" (Jn. 14:6) and "the power and the wisdom of God" (1Cor. 1:24). He eschewed classical Scholastic theology, which he considered a plague on theology, in favor of a return to scripture and the Church Fathers, which predated Scholastic theology by centuries. Erasmus suggested that the goal of every Christian is to be "Christ-like," since Christ alone is the "great exemplar," the pattern of piety and a life fully lived in God. Piety, in Erasmus' estimation, was not expressed through "ceremonialism," but through an internal, relational experience of a living faith, experienced through word, sacrament, prayer, and communion. He knew that rote prayers don't change hearts or necessarily bring a person closer to God. Genuine piety, he said, is characterized by gospel peace, a real and active love of God expressed in deeds, and in "otherworldliness"—living in this world, but as citizens of another world whose values and norms we live. For Erasmus, "the Church is the communion of love," where love of neighbor is to be esteemed above class distinctions and social privilege. "The sum and substance of our religion is peace and concord," he wrote, suggesting there is no "just war" for Christians, who are called to live in peace. Erasmus believed that these characteristics of his *philosophia Christi* should serve as the charter of the Church, as well as the guiding principle for all its members.

Because Erasmus believed the Church was a radical entity rooted in scriptures and the Church Fathers and Mothers, he wrote an authoritative Greek New Testament and translated such Church Fathers as Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, and Jerome.

Erasmus' liturgical theology is also worthy of note. He believed that the sacraments are vehicles of grace and salvation, and signs of and means for creating unity and peace in Christ's Body, the Church. He called the sacraments "the special symbol of the closest union between Christians." He saw Baptism and Eucharist as the common denominator, as the essential sacraments of the Church. He wrote, "Baptism is what everyone has in common. We are all reborn in Christ and separated from the world. We are each included as a member of Christ. How can we be more united with one another than by being members of the same body?" (Pabel, p. 67). Baptism brings us all into the Body of Christ, where "there is no Jew or Gentile, slave or free, woman or man" (Gal. 3:28). It was as if Erasmus was saying, "Stop all

this highfalutin, 'I'm-better-than-you' stuff!" Believing that the Eucharist preserves the Church's unity, he wrote,

> You are one with the Spirit of Christ, one with the Body of Christ, a living member of the Church, if you love nothing except in Christ: sharing what you possess with others, sharing their misfortune as though it were your own.

It's clear, then, that for Erasmus, the sacraments are not simply "Jesus and me"; the sacraments are "Jesus and us," because we're all incorporated into the Body of Christ!

Erasmus' ecclesiology is characterized by a belief that the Church is comprised of all Christians, and that ordained ministries exist to build up the Body of Christ, to preserve its unity, and to equip Christians to live as citizens of God's (otherworldly) kingdom, to be agents of Christ's love, and to be peacemakers. The "dignity" of the priesthood, he said, comes from service, and not from the possession of some supposed "power." Priests should be respected "for the quality of their learning and their outstanding virtue, for their integrity and strict way of life," (Pabel, p. 71) "for the counsel that leads to salvation, for fatherly consolation, and for a pattern by which to live." (Pabel, p. 71). Bishops are the vicars of Christ: Their "dignity" flows from their service to the Body of Christ and their work to preserve its unity, and not from the exercise of "power."

Erasmus wrote on consensus in the Church—what he called the *consensus fidelium*, "the consensus of Christian people throughout the whole world." Pabel writes that the *consensus fidelium* "embodies the people of Christ in harmonious agreement on matters of doctrine" (Pabel, p.78). This approximates what we would now call the doctrine of reception, but neither majority rule nor the doctrine of reception are adequate in and of themselves. For Erasmus, "the Church as consensus is a reality that transcends the present moment and reaches back into its past" (Pabel, p. 79). Though not explicitly stated, this position appears to be firmly rooted in the "Rule of Faith."

Erasmus' possessed an aversion to the "dogmatization of doctrine" and to "the multiplication of the articles of faith and the bitter disputes this multiplication engenders" (Pabel, p. 77). Erasmus wrote, "It seems to me that the substance of our religion is peace and concord. This can hardly be the case unless we define as few matters as possible and leave each person's judgement free on many questions" (Pabel, p. 77). He concluded that many people would be

reconciled to the Roman church "if everything were not indiscriminately defined as an article of faith. The number of such articles should be kept small" (Pabel, p. 77).

Jansenism: Right versus Fact

This brings us to Jansenism, a theological movement, primarily in France, that originated from the posthumously-published work of the Dutch theologian Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638). Jansen's work was first popularized by his friend, Abbot Jean du Vergier de Hauranne, of Saint-Cyran-en-Brenne Abbey (1581-1643), and by Antoine Arnauld (1616-1698), who would become the prominent voice of Jansenism after du Vergier's death. The theological center of the movement was the convent of Port-Royal-des-Champs Abbey, which was a haven for such writers as du Vergier, Arnauld, Pierre Nicole, Blaise Pascal and Jean Racine.

I like to imagine a conversation between Innocent X and Antoine. I share here a glib paraphrase of what seems to have been at the heart of Arnauld's disagreement with the pope.

Innocent X: There are five heretical propositions in Jansen's *Augustinus*!

Arnauld: Yes, those propositions are heretical, but they're not in the book! I've read it.

Innocent X: I'm the pope. If I say they're in the book, they're in the book!

Arnauld: With all due respect, Your Holiness, you have the right to define something as "heretical," but you're insisting that this stuff is in the book, when it's not. That's just a fact, and you don't have the right to your own "alternative facts"!

Over time, the conflict about "right" versus "fact" escalated. Pope Alexander VII required the clergy and religious to sign a "formulary" condemning five heretical propositions in the *Augustinus*. The formulary required the signers to affirm not only that the propositions were heretical, but that they were indeed contained in the book, and that Jansen had intended these propositions to be understood in the sense in which the pope interpreted and condemned them.

Professor Sean Blanchard writes, "Jansenism plays such a major part in the story of 18th-century Catholic reform that one cannot

understand reform in this period without understanding Jansenism" (Blanchard, 2019).

Jansenism as a "Woman Problem"

Increasingly scholars have begun to recognize that in the ecclesiastical culture of its day, Jansenism was largely considered to be "a woman problem." Much of the ecclesiastical agitation around Jansenism was focused on Antoine Arnauld's sisters and other nuns at the Cistercian Abbey of Port-Royal of the Fields. Hierarchical acrimony directed at the nuns was generally more persistent, more intense, and even more violent than that aimed at their male counterparts.

Antoine's sister, Jacqueline-Marie-Angélique Arnauld (1591-1661), was received into the abbey as an oblation—with a substantial dowry—at age 12. Later, as abbess, she initiated a sweeping reform and effected the removal of the abbey from the jurisdiction of the abbot of Clairvaux. After all, why should an abbess require the oversight of an abbot? Angélique wrote a constitution for the abbey, doing away with oblations and with pension nuns—widows who were pensioned out to an abbey after the death of their wealthy husbands. She defined the role of the abbess as a spiritual director and teacher, and she limited the term of the abbess to three years at a time. She encouraged her sisters to read and reflect on scripture, patristics, Bernard of Clairvaux and Teresa of Avila.

Angélique's sister, Jeanne-Catherine-Agnès Arnauld (1593-1672) succeeded her as abbess of Port-Royal in 1658. Agnès championed the freedom of women: their spiritual freedom, vocational freedom, their freedom to pursue education, their freedom to hold opinions on disputed theological questions, and freedom in their exercise of authority as religious superiors. Agnès said that there are two columns supporting the Church: truth and love (cf. Eph 4:15). According to this perspective, to deny the truth—for instance, in the signing of the Formulary condemning Jansen and his *Augustinus*, or to suggest that Jansen wrote various heresies not contained in his book—would not only be dishonesty, it would be a sin against charity. She accordingly constructed guidelines for resistance to abuses of power, discussing the conditions under which cooperation with illegitimate commands of civil or ecclesiastical authority should be either tolerated or rejected.

Jacqueline Pascal (1625-1661), the sister of Blaise Pascal, was also a nun at Port-Royal. When ordered to sign the Formulary, she refused. She declared, "I know the reverence I owe the bishops, but my conscience does not permit me to attest by my signature that something is in a book I have never seen" (Conley, 2013). She also wrote, "We do not believe that [bishops] have the right to demand on this issue a justification of their faith by persons who have never given any reason to doubt it" (Conley, 2013). And my favorite quote by Jacqueline: "I know very well that it is not up to women to defend the truth, although on the basis of the recent, sad events, that since the bishops currently have the cowardice of women, women must have the courage of bishops" (Conley, 2013).

Angélique de Saint-Jean Arnauld d'Andilly (1624-1684), the niece of Angélique and Agnès and of Bishop Henri Arnauld, entered the Port-Royal school at age five and professed vows at age 19. Talk about "all in the family" at Port-Royal: Angélique de Saint-Jean had four sisters, four aunts and one grandmother at the convent; her father, one brother, and three cousins were also solitaires at Port-Royal. Angélique served as headmistress, novice mistress and subprioress. She was fluent in Latin and Greek and knew the writings of St. Augustine. At age 37, when ordered by the Archbishop of Paris to sign the formulary the Formulary condemning Jansen and the *Augustinus*, she did so, but with a postscript that detailed her reservations. When Pope Alexander VII demanded that Angélique sign the Formulary without a postscript, she signed it and added a preface! Angélique was arrested and held at another convent for a year, before being returned to Port-Royal, where she was placed under armed guard and denied the sacraments.

Angélique wrote various works on the abuse of the nuns of Port-Royal by the hierarchy of the Roman church, of the power imbalance between men and women, and about how her nuns might respond to this. Their only faithful response—and it wasn't an easy choice—was to refuse to cooperate. The staunch resistance of the Port-Royal nuns based on "conscientious objection" over and against hierarchical intimidation and abuse of power is why Jansenism is described as "a woman problem. "

Latter Day Jansenism: the Bull *Unigenitus* & the Synod of Pistoia

The next significant censure by the Roman church occurred with the papal bull *Unigenitus* (1713) and its condemnation of *The Gospels: With Moral Reflections on Each Verse* by Pasquier Quesnel (1634-1719). After a complaint to the pope by Louis XIV that Quesnel's book smacked of Jansenism, Pope Clement XI appointed 16 theologians to examine the matter. Only one of these theologians spoke French—and he was soon dispatched on a far distant assignment; the remaining theologians worked from a Latin translation. *Unigenitus* condemned 101 propositions in the Latin translation of Quesnel's work, and it soon replaced the Formulary as the Ultramontane "litmus test" of fidelity to the pope. It was said at the time that the King's Jesuit confessor had assured Louis that there were "more than a hundred heretical statements" in the *Moral Reflections*; hence the need to come up with 101 condemned statements.

Recognizing that Jansenism is no longer considered by some a heresy so much as it is a reform movement within the Roman church, we turn now to the more-immediate antecedents of the "so-called Jansenist Church of Holland." First, we examine the 1786 Synod of Pistoia, a diocesan synod convened under the presidency of Scipione de' Ricci (1741–1810), the bishop of Pistoia, with the patronage of Leopold, grand-duke of Tuscany, for the sake of preparing the ground for the reform of the Tuscan church. Two hundred fifty clergy participated in the synod, which was later condemned by Pius VI in the bull, *Auctorem fidei (*1794), particularly because of the synod's recognition and reaffirmation of the Gallican Articles, but for other actions of the synod as well. *Auctorem fidei* condemned the following statements from the Synod of Pistoia:

- The distinction between right and fact is valid.
- Bishops can govern their own dioceses.
- Bishop and priests act together as judges in matters of faith.
- It is *contrary* to apostolic practice that the people should *not* participate verbally (in the vernacular) in public worship.
- Nothing but inability excuses anyone from reading the Bible.
- The papacy is an office, and the pope receives his authority from the Church—not directly from Christ.
- We should read the works of Quesnel.
- The "treasury of the merits of the saints" is an invention; merits can't be applied to the dead.

When you read these, you get the sense that the Synod of Pistoia was, in a real sense, a precursor to the Second Vatican Council. C.B. Moss would later write that the Synod of Pistoia established

> a link between the Jansenist and Gallican movements of the 17th century and the Old Catholic movement of the 19th. In the Declaration of Utrecht, the Old Catholic doctrinal manifesto, the Bull *Auctorem fidei,* which condemned the Synod of Pistoia, is rejected, along with the *Unigenitus* (p. 149).

Less than 75 years after *Auctorem fidei*, a real parting of the ways occurred in the Roman Church over the issue of infallibility. It would be a seemingly irrevocable breach because one can't disagree with someone who, by definition, could not be wrong; with someone like Pius IX who declared, "I *am* the Church!"

Modernism: A Response to the *Syllabus of Errors*, the First Vatican Council, and the Ecclesiastical Culture of Medievalism— Johann Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger & George Tyrrell

This brings us to Johann Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger (1799-1890). Frank spoke of him this morning. Döllinger was a German priest and Europe's foremost theologian around the time of the First Vatican Council. Döllinger was critical of the pope's possession of "the papal states" and the pontiff's increasingly unyielding ultramontane stance. Disturbed by the entrenchment of the papacy in a medievalist ecclesiastical culture and polity, Döllinger gathered 100 theologians to discuss the past and future of Catholic theology, particularly the Roman church's attitude to modern ideas. Pius IX had issued a statement called the "Syllabus of Errors," that condemned certain "modern ideas." The syllabus gave the impression that the only legitimate form of government was monarchy, and the only legitimate monarchy was a Catholic one that deferred to the papacy. Pius IX was also suspicious of newer approaches to the study of Scripture. The First Vatican Council pretty much solidified the Roman Church's medieval identity and ultramontane agenda by declaring the "dogmas" of papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction (shades of Boniface VIII!). Döllinger opposed the declaration of papal infallibility, asserting that "as a Christian, as a theologian, as an

historian, and as a citizen, I cannot accept this doctrine!" Döllinger's protégé, Lord Acton, coined the oft-quoted aphorism, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" in reference to the papal claim of infallibility and universal jurisdiction. After being excommunicated in 1871, Döllinger was elected rector of the University of Munich.

In 1874 to 1875, Döllinger presided at the Union Conferences at Bonn, which were attended by Anglicans, Greek/Russian Orthodox and Lutherans, as well as those who would become known as Old Catholics. The mission of Old Catholic churches, as he saw it, was to protest the Vatican "dogmas" of papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction, to support a catholicity free from error, and to work for the restoration of Christian unity. Those were the three Old Catholic "hinge pins."

We conclude this presentation with one of my patron saints: George Tyrrell (1861-1909), an Irish Jesuit priest and modernist scholar. He illuminated pious medievalism and advocated for Catholic modernism. If you read nothing else in your life, read Tyrrell's *Medievalism*. In 1899, the Jesuit superior general said that Tyrrell's writings were "offensive to pious ears." In 1906, Tyrrell declined to retract his work and was expelled from the Society of Jesus. He went on to write two editorials in *The Times* critiquing Pius X's condemnation of modernism. This, of course, got him excommunicated.

Conclusion

This, in a nutshell, is the trajectory of Ultrajectinism. Notice the thread of continuity in it. It's a progression, a reincarnation generation-by-generation of elements from the early Church. That's the point I want to emphasize: Ultrajectine catholicity didn't come into existence in 1870; it stretches back to the early Church. It began with Ignatius and Cyprian. It's a wellspring that has continued to flow, despite what was happening on the other side of the Alps.

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Homily in Honor of Those Who've Gone Before Us in the Old/Independent Catholic Traditions

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I want to thank Father Jayme for this opportunity to preach. I really appreciate that. I've known Jayme for a long time, since he was 16 years old—when he was sweet and innocent. He's still sweet. My first assignment as a Franciscan priest was at a retreat center near Jayme's hometown of Carey, Ohio, and Jayme came—reluctantly, as I remember—for a youth retreat that I was in charge of. And somehow, we got to know each other, and he ended up joining the friars. And we were in the same community for a number of years. We haven't seen each other for more than 15 years, and who would have thought—the Spirit moves in mysterious ways—that we would both end up in this crazy and wonderful adventure of Independent Catholicism. So, it's great to be with you, Jayme, as a brother in this journey.

As we celebrate those who've gone before us in the Old and Independent Catholic traditions, and as we prepare to celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints next week, it's appropriate that we celebrate all of our sisters and brothers on whose shoulders we stand, who have gone before us in the Old and Independent Catholic movement.

The Solemnity of All Saints is a powerful feast for me, because it's an opportunity for me to think back on some of those saints, some of those mentors, some of those people throughout the ages whom we hold up as mentors, whom we hold up as examples of the faith, whom we hold up as courageous people who did really courageous things in our world. It also gives me the opportunity to think of those saints and mentors in my own life, and to give thanks for those mentors who have formed me in the way that they did.

I would like to tell you about one such mentor in my life. His name is Jerry Austin. I did my graduate work at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and, in addition to my Master of Divinity work, I thought I'd go ahead and get a master's degree in Liturgical Studies. At the time, Catholic University had a very good

program, with a master's and doctoral program in Liturgical Studies, and, since I was a church musician since I was a little boy, I was always interested in liturgy.

At that time, Jerry Austin was Dean of the School of Theology at The Catholic University, and he was in charge of the Liturgical Studies program. Jerry was also a professor, and one of the courses that we absolutely dreaded was his course in Liturgical Sources.

Even before having him as a professor, Jerry was my advisor. He was one of those professors who was very interested in getting to know his students and what was going on in our hearts and in our lives. As advisees, we met with Jerry at the end of each semester, to review what was going on, and to register for the next semester, and, at the end of each conversation, Jerry would always close your file and put it on the coffee table, and sit back and say, "Kevin, how are you doing? What's going on in your life? How is this theology stuff relating to your life?" Jerry wanted to make sure that the theology we were learning was not just something intellectual, but something within our hearts. He wanted to know who we were, as human beings, with our joys and struggles.

Jerry was like a superhuman God figure to me. I looked up to him so much. Well, in one of those meetings, when he closed the file, we went through all the pleasantries, and then Jerry looked at me and said, "You know what, Kevin? You frustrate me."

I was devastated. This was my mentor, telling me that I frustrated him.

He said, "Not only that, but you frustrate a lot of professors here at Catholic University. We talk about you."

"Oh my god," I thought. I asked, "What am I doing?"

"That's the problem," he said. "You don't do anything."

I said, "What do you mean, I don't do anything? I get good grades, and stuff like that."

He said, "Kevin, our frustration with you is that you sit in class, and you're so intelligent—but you sit there, and you never raise your hand. You never ask a question. You never make a comment. You just sit there."

I was devastated.

Jerry looked at me, and he said, "Kevin, I don't think you realize how smart you are." He continued, "When I grew up, my dad would always tell me, 'Jerry, when you grow up, you can do and be anything

you want, if you just put your mind to it.' My dad was just so affirming to me in that journey." And Jerry said, "Do you know what I did? I put my mind to it. I went to school. I went to seminary. I went to *l'Institut Catholique de Paris*. And I got a doctorate in liturgical studies. And now, here I am, Dean of The Catholic University of America!"

I looked at Jerry, and I said, "Well, Jerry, maybe that's the difference between you and me. My father was an abusive, raging alcoholic, who told me that I would never amount to anything. All the time, he told me how stupid I was."

And Jerry was silent.

He looked at me and said, "I am so, so sorry that was your experience."

There was a knock on the door. It was Jerry's next advisee. Jerry bid me well, and I went on my way. We didn't say another word about it.

A year later, I was in Jerry's dreaded course on Liturgical Sources. We dreaded that course because the main text was thick, and it was in French. At that time, there was no English translation of it. And, because a lot of the liturgical sources were written in Latin, we had to know Latin, too. As if that weren't enough, the entire grade for that course was based on the final project. Don't you hate those courses, when the grade is based on a single, final project? So, Jerry based our entire grade on the final project, and the final project was this: We each had to do a historical, critical and theological development of one of the rites in the Church.

One day, a bunch of us students were sitting in the coffee shop below the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. We used to call that coffee shop the Theological Student Union. We were just dreading the final project, thinking, "Oh my God, how are we going to do this?" You couldn't use any secondary sources; you couldn't read what others have written about those rites. You had to go through all the lectionaries and sacramentaries and antiphonals and graduals, most of which were in Latin, from the scriptures to the present day, to do a theological and historical progression of that rite throughout history. We were all nervous. Then, one of our classmates said, "Wait a minute: We know the rites of the Church. We know the rite of Marriage. We know that rites of Ordination, Baptism and Eucharist. We know the rite of Penance. All we have to do is look at Latin

documents and extrapolate back, and we should be able to piece it together pretty well."

The challenge was that Jerry picked the topic for each of us. And, when Jerry handed out the topics, it was like the Academy Awards. He passed out envelopes with our names on them, and we would open them one-by-one. One student would open his envelope and say, "I have the rite of Ordination of Deacons!" And another would say, "I got the rite of Eucharist!" And another would say, "I got the rite of Ordination of Priests!" And another would say, "I got the rite of Baptism!" or "I got the rite of Penance!" I was the last student in the class to open his envelope.

Jerry said, "Kevin, open your envelope!"

I opened my envelope, I looked at the paper inside, and I'm sure my face turned white.

Jerry asked, "What's your topic?"

I said, "the rite of Coronation of Queens, Kings and Emperors?"

I didn't even know there was such a rite! All my classmates were silent. I was so mad at Jerry.

I said to myself, "This is not fair. This is not fair!"

When the class finished and everyone left, I stayed behind. I said, "Jerry, you have got to change this topic. This is not fair. You know that. I didn't even know this rite existed!"

Jerry replied, "Kevin, don't waste your breath. I'm not changing my mind."

I said, "Jerry, this is not fair!"

And he said, "I told you: Don't waste your breath. I'm not changing my mind, and your grade is depending on this. So, get your butt to the library, and start xeroxing all those manuscripts, and I guarantee you: You're going to love it."

I slammed the door so hard it probably shook the plaster from the wall. I was so angry at Jerry. I went to the library, and I started looking through every sacramentary and book throughout the centuries, searching indices for anything that said, *rex*, *regina*, whatever. I started xeroxing all sorts of manuscripts, and I ended up with about 400 pages that I had to translate.

What started happening as I translated those Latin texts? They came to life for me, and I actually did get into them, and I was fascinated by the way in which the rite of Coronation was like the rite

of Ordination. At one point in the Church history, coronation was even considered a sacrament!

The day came for our final class presentations. Jerry was on the edge of his seat, just chomping at the bit. I made my presentation, and, after all the students had left, Jerry said to me, "Absolutely wonderful! A+!" And he said, "Believe it or not, Kevin, there's no one on this planet who's done the work you did! You have the basis of your doctoral dissertation!" It was clear he wanted me to go to *l'Institut Catholique de Paris* for a doctorate in liturgy. I looked at Jerry, and I thanked him.

He said, "Kevin, I know you were angry with me, but, of all the students in this class, you were the most capable of doing this work. I remember what you said a year ago: Your dad may not have believed in you, but I want you to know that I do."

I just wept.

Jerry didn't even seem to blink the day I told him that, but he carried it in his heart the entire year. In essence, he took me by the hand and taught me confidence in my own intelligence. From that day forward, he's been a father figure for me. So, as we celebrate all who've gone before us, on whose shoulders we stand, I think of mentors like Jerry. I think of my moral theology professor, Charlie Curran, who was later thrown out by the Roman Church. I think of my Christology professor, Elizabeth Johnson, who wrote *She Who Is*. I think of all those mentors who formed me to be the person I am today.

You have mentors in your lives, too. You have those people who formed you—inside and outside the Old and Independent Catholic traditions. You have those people who taught you to think critically and historically, who taught you to question everything and to never take anything at face value. Those are likely the people who inadvertently planted the seeds that led us to Independent Catholicism. They are the ones who planted the seeds for us to have the courage when God would call us beyond the Roman Church, to Independent Catholicism. It is precisely because of these mentors that we are here today.

As we celebrate those who've gone before us, let us reflect on those mentors and teachers and spiritual directors who taught us to be courageous, who taught us to question and to dream a new dream, and who encouraged us to take a step in a new direction. That's what

we celebrate today in this gathering: We celebrate those saints who, through the ages, thought critically and "outside the box." We celebrate those people who continue to think critically and "outside the box," including the saints in this very room!

We are at the beginning of a new dawn. Yes, we stumble at times, but we are the building blocks of something new and dynamic, something that the people in our communities and our ministries are yearning for and are hungry for. Sadly, many of them don't know that we're even here. They don't even know that there's a different way, a new way of being Catholic.

We're planting seeds of a new dream in our world—and we may not see the fruit of our labors. We may be long gone before we begin seeing huge congregations in Old or Independent Catholicism. And, if we're honest, this dream, which is ultimately God's dream, may not even end up looking anything like it is today.

I'm thinking of Greg Boyle, a Jesuit who has worked for about 25 years with gang members in the roughest neighborhoods of Los Angeles. If you've never read his book, *Tattoos on the Heart*, get it. It's powerful. In it, Greg, who has worked with gang members and has seen a lot, talks about believing in the slow work of God. And he says, "I'm passionate about these gang members, and I love seeing them move beyond this into a new life, but when I get discouraged that, for the hundredth time a person goes back to the gang, or goes back to the street, or goes back to selling drugs, or get murdered, or even worse, goes back to prison for murdering somebody else, I have to believe in the slow work of God—that, even though I can't always see the fruit of my labor, it does not mean that the Spirit is not working in Her way. We must believe in the slow work of God, who will continue to bless us and form us in ways that we may not even be able to dream or imagine." How wonderful it is for us to gather in this way, believing in the slow work of God!

So, who are the saints, the mentors who have taught *you* to think "outside the box," who gave *you* the courage to step "outside the box" and to be and to create something new, something that the world so desperately needs? Perhaps this occasion would be a good time for us to contact those mentors, to thank them, and to let them know we stand on their shoulders. We stand on the shoulders of women and men who have been doing this for centuries, and how great it is that God continues this work in you and me!

I invite you to briefly pause, to close your eyes, and to think of some of those saints—some of those women and men that Rafe spoke about this afternoon—and to say a prayer of thanks to them.

A few months ago, I tracked Jerry Austin down. I found out that he's still kicking; he's still alive, in his late 80's at this point. I found his email address, and I wrote him a long message, thanking him and telling him what a wonderful mentor and father figure he was to me in my life, and what a powerful influence he had in my life.

And Jerry responded to my email.

He wrote,

> Dear Kevin,
>
> First of all, please excuse my slowness in getting back to you. My health issues of late are not what I'd like them to be.
>
> I was so pleased to get your email. It gave me a good, old-fashioned cry that's good for both body and soul.
>
> Of course, I remember you well. My body isn't what it used to be, but, thank God, my mind is fine.
>
> Thank you for taking the time to share this with me. Your homiletic skills are terrific, and it sounds like you're doing just great. I suspect you've had an interesting—to say the least—journey, to get to where you are today.
>
> I pray that you will continue to thrive and grow and grow.
>
> Yes, Kevin, I always believed in you. And I still do.
>
> And, thank God, you seem at peace with God and yourself.
>
> We live in hope.
>
> —Jerry Austin, O.P.

Sisters and brothers, we live in hope. Being here with you, my hope is renewed. Being here with you, I live in hope again. And I pray that you are living in hope. Sisters and brothers, may we live in hope now, and, as we walk boldly into whatever future God is calling us to, may we never forget that we are standing on the firm shoulders of those men and women who have gone before us.

The History and Future of the Relationship of Old/Independent Catholicism in the English-speaking World, with the Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches

Bishop Rosemary Ananis

I start with a true story.

Ann and Edna were a couple for over 20 years when Ann, who grew up in Maine, decided she had to go home and tell her parents about herself, her life, and her sexuality.

Edna said, "I'll go with you, but I'm going to bring a book and be in another room. This is a conversation you need to have with your parents."

Ann shares the story: "I sat my parents down at the kitchen table, because that's where all the important talks take place. And I said 'Mom, Dad, I'm homosexual.'"

Silence.

Her father finally said, "Well, that's not something we can change or do anything about, is it?"

Ann said, "Nope. It isn't."

There was another long silence.

Then her Dad asked, "Well, does Edna know about it?"

This is a true story about someone who was trying to be real, about someone who was trying to be authentic and honest and to act with integrity. That's why I tell you this story.

I'd like to tell you another story, about Old Catholics, about people who are trying to be honest and authentic and to act with integrity. That's what Old Catholicism is about!

To tell the history of any church is like having to tell the whole history of Western civilization: It cannot be done in an hour or two. So I'm going to follow a couple of very thin threads through the history, threads that are able to tie up this package that I call Old Catholicism: (1) the thread of local authority, (2) the thread of synodality, and (3) the thread of a communionistic people. That's what we are. We don't do things alone!

So let's begin, and, in order to begin, we go to the beginning. We have to go back to the ancient Church, to see the very foundations of

our current ecclesiology, along with the events and the trends that culminated in a separation from the Roman Church.

It's important to see how the practices of the very first apostles became distorted by the institutional organization that became known as the Church. Let me say it very simply: the Church was a network of Christians in relationships, who were bound by the common purpose of spreading the story of Jesus. Their mission was twofold: to radically prepare their followers for the return of Christ, which they thought was imminent, and to bring as many as they could into "the Way"—the way of knowing about God's kingdom.

These ideas spread rather quickly because of the urgency: If Christ was coming back soon; we had better do something now! So, the disciples spread out doing missionary work. Paul was sailing all around the Mediterranean and bringing a very powerful message to people who really needed to hear it. The early Christians formed communities, congregations that became networks of independent local churches.

Now, due to the autonomy of each local church, there were differences: differences in liturgy, differences in church order, and also in the texts available for worship and catechesis. As a result—and we know this from reading Paul's letters to numerous communities—there was a large plurality of churches, a lot of differences! This wasn't seen as a problem, because they were united in faith. They respected each other as churches standing all in the one, apostolic tradition. They lived a real communion of faith. They had three orders that were based in scripture: They had deacons, presbyters, and bishops, and no order was more important than the others; they just had different jobs to do. They were involved in intense community life, probably just like what we all experience in our own faith communities.

As communities grew and spread out, the bishop remained at the center of each church, with presbyters who went out to do the work that the bishop alone couldn't do. They spread out in the smaller communities that surrounded the bishop. There was no church without a bishop, and no bishop without a church—an important thing to remember.

In order to preserve the unity of the communion, the churches and their bishops would gather in synods or councils, to conduct the business of the churches and, maybe even more importantly, to remain connected to one another. The decisions made at these synods

led to the development of more common practices, and we began to see their unity becoming stronger and stronger.

The focus of the primitive Church is conveyed in scripture and in other historical documents: to share the mission of the Way of Jesus. What the primitive Church was all about was reflected many years later in the first statute of the Declaration of Utrecht: to pass on the faith, worship and essential structure of the undivided Church of the first millennium.

In a nutshell, the earliest Christian churches were marked by a strong plurality, and they were relational because of their small size and also because they were made up mainly of family and friends—people who already knew one another. These communities grew by word of mouth. The early Church was also marked by diversity: diversity within and between communities, as evidenced by the Acts of the Apostles. This diversity began to really manifest itself when early Christian began to include slaves, Gentiles, and anyone else who was willing to follow the Way of Jesus—anyone who was wanting to build the kingdom!

In the primitive Church, the authority of the bishop did not extend beyond the limits of his congregation. This corresponds with contemporary Old Catholic ecclesiology.

Eventually, it became customary to rank bishops according to the cities where they lived, and, pretty early on, the bishop of Rome had some stature because Rome was, after all, the heart of the Roman Empire.

As things grew, a complex pattern of collaborative episcopal governance began to develop. This stood out as a defining feature of the early Church. It was the conciliar model of the ancient Church. It was the collaborative exercise of governance, where each bishop was the head of a local group of congregations, where the bishops gathered to discuss matters of faith and to steer the Church, and where there was collegiality and equality among them. This model flourished during the first century. It's probably most magnificently illustrated in the Council of Nicaea.

There were ongoing battles for jurisdiction of all kind. The city-states were constantly in turmoil, fighting for power and control. In 410 A.D., Rome was invaded by the Visigoths. When they were finished, Rome, for the first time in nearly a millennium, was in the hands of someone other than the Romans. Strangely enough, the

overthrow of the Empire contributed to the further elevation of the bishop of Rome. It took the Caesars out of the way, and it made room many years later for the restoration of papal power. Popes could now fall back on their position of eminence: They had rank as supposed successors of Peter, putting themselves sometimes even above the throne of the king.

Following the overthrow of Rome, the Church, in an attempt to regain its power, called the fourth ecumenical council, the Council of Chalcedon. Emperor Marcian II convoked the council in 451 A.D., and 520 bishops or their representatives attended. It was the largest and best-documented of the early councils.

It was at the Council of Chalcedon that the power and the ecclesiastical influence of the bishop of Rome was established. Canon 28 of that council reads,

> For the fathers rightly granted privileges to the throne of old Rome, because it was the royal city, the city honored with sovereignty and the senate, and enjoys equal privileges with the old Imperial Rome, and should, in ecclesiastical matters also be magnified as She is.

The decline of imperial power in Rome accelerated the rise of ecclesial power. Having established the superiority of the Roman see at the Council of Chalcedon, popes began exercising more-than-intermittent judicial authority and governmental power over the entire universal Church. Put someone in power—and you know what happens all too often!

In 1096 A.D., the Church flexed its muscles, launching the Crusades to check the spread of Islam, retake control of the Holy Land, and recapture Christian territories. The crusaders were really emissaries for the Church: Rome was making claims to jurisdictional superiority that distinguished it even from the secular states within which it often functioned. Really flexing its muscles, it claimed itself juridically self-sufficient and governmentally autonomous.

By this time, the New Testament understanding of the office of bishop—as ministerial and grounded in the love of God—was pushed aside, and a new model emerged for the office of bishop. The Church was claiming, with increasing frequency and growing elaboration, that the pope was not only superior in jurisdiction, but was, in fact, the source of all jurisdictional power! This new, political language was drawn from Roman law and represented the type of relationship

that was prevalent in the world at the time: the world of rulers and the ruled. It very much aligned with military and Roman law.

This obviously resulted in a decrease of local authority—what we talked about as one of the hallmarks of the ancient Church, where every bishop was originally thought to be a successor of Peter. Jesus' sharing of the keys with Peter (Matthew 16) was now reinterpreted to suggest that only the bishop of Rome possessed such authority. Local bishops lost out and, despite their enduring bonds with their local churches, no longer enjoyed an authoritative voice in their own communities.

With that context in mind, I want to introduce you to St. Willibrord (658-739 A.D.). St. Willibrord was born in England. He studied at the Abbey of Ripon and was sent in 690 as a missionary to Frisia—the present-day Netherlands—a very inaccessible part of Europe. After some time there, he returned to England. During a visit to Rome in 692, Pope Sergius I blessed Willibrord and gave him oversight of Frisia. Pepin, the ruler of the Franks, then invaded Frisia, sending Willibrord to Rome. In 695, Pope Sergius I consecrated him bishop of the Frisians and granted him a very special privilege: the special right to elect his episcopal successors without the permission or authority of the pope!

Willibrord returned to the fortress of Utrecht, grew the church, and appointed suffragan bishops to assist him. In spite of the growing power of Rome, these bishops maintained ecclesial autonomy—the same ecclesial autonomy that the ancient Church enjoyed. Utrecht soon became the ecclesial capital of Frisia.

In 1145 A.D., Pope Eugene III granted the petition of Holy Roman Emperor Conrad II and confirmed the autonomy granted to Willibrord and the church of Utrecht through Willibrord's successor, Bishop Heribert of Utrecht. With this, the cathedral chapter of Utrecht retained its right to elect its bishop. Beginning in Utrecht in 1145, the notion of independent churches moved forward!

At the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 A.D., Innocent III reinforced the promise made to Willibrord and the autonomy granted to Utrecht. The council recognized the jurisdiction and autonomy of cathedral churches to independently select their own bishops!

Rome's authority continued to grow stronger, even if contested by national churches, which is how the Church in Europe was structured.

In 1520 A.D., when the Protestant Reformation was in full swing, Pope Leo X once again affirmed the autonomous nature of the church of the Netherlands through his bull *Debitum pastoralis,* addressed to Philip of Burgundy, the 57th bishop of Utrecht. He affirmed the promise to Willibrord that, unlike anywhere else in the Roman Catholic Church, the archbishop of Utrecht could consecrate bishops without the pope's approval. This critical decree sealed independence for the archbishopric of Utrecht, which now possessed six dioceses, and it aided the churches in the Netherlands, which could tell local authorities that they weren't aligned with Rome in the same way as other Roman Catholic churches. As a consequence, the church of the Netherlands maintained an informal relationship with the state and felt no need to go underground.

Having met Willibrord, let's now turn to the thread of Conciliarism. In his book, *The Conciliarist Tradition*, Francis Oakley highlights the Council of Constance and notes that the Conciliarist tradition was the way of the ancient Church. The synodal nature of our churches is not a new thing, but stretches back to the ancient Church! Oakley maintains that "ecclesiological forgetting" occurs when tradition overrides scripture, when we create traditions that cause us to forget what we've learned from scripture. Oakley argues that Conciliarism was the way of Jesus, who pulled people together in community and got them talking.

Consider the example of the tradition that arose of interpreting Matthew 16:19 to mean that Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter and his purported successors, the bishops of Rome. Two chapters later, scripture clearly states that Jesus shared the power of binding and loosing with *all* his disciples (Mt. 18:18)! Jesus concludes, "If two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them" (Mt. 18:19). So, where's the authority? It's with *all* the disciples! This perspective of tradition eclipsing scripture is also shared in Michael Crosby's *Repair My House*, which notes how the mystical community stresses Christ's continued presence, while the institution emphasizes Petrine authority.

Though threatened by the rising power of Rome, Conciliarism never died. It remained alive during intermittent claims of papal primacy throughout the Middle Ages, and it played a pivotal role in solving the 40-year, politically-motivated papal schism at the Council of Constance. Aside from resolving the pesky problem caused by

three rival popes, the council forwarded a model of governance that focused on synodal authority, versus the Ultramontane model of papal authority. Two decrees resulted: *Sacrosancta* (1415) and *Frequens* (1417). *Sacrosancta* said that the whole Christian community was superior to any prelate, however exalted—that the pope was the servant of the Church, rather than its master! It also advanced that the divine right of the Church is not found in the papacy alone, but in the body of Christ gathered in general council—which was the only way the schism could be resolved. In plain English, these decrees challenged the claim that the papacy possessed sole authority over the Church! *Frequens* called for the frequent convoking of future councils, to continue to reform the Church. Utrecht would later appeal to these two decrees in its petitions to Rome.

In 1517, the priest and scholar Martin Luther also objected to papal authority. In his condemnation of the excesses of the Roman Church, which he purported nailed to the doors of the Wittenberg Cathedral, Luther hoped to reform the church he loved. He didn't want to start another church or splinter Catholic Europe. He wanted to renew the Church from within and draw attention to the fact that no single person possesses the authority to define all Christian practice!

A number of reformers stood with Luther, hoping to empower churches at the local level. They wanted to enhance the concept of the priesthood of *all* believers—that each person has direct access to God, and that you don't have to go through the Church to commune with our Creator God. Luther referred to First Peter: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession" (1Pet. 2:9), and he really emphasized the inclusion of *all* people. You don't need to be ordained to be a vibrant and important part of the Church!

The Reformation eventually decimated the Roman Catholic Church in Holland, forcing Roman Catholics to practice their faith underground. Frederik Schenck, the archbishop of Utrecht from 1559 to 1580, tried to unite Catholics and combat the growing Protestantism, but his efforts were sorely tested by the persecution of Catholics by the civil authorities. Protestants now ruled Holland and put the hammer down on Catholics, who continued to gather despite the illegality of practicing their faith. Catholics created "hidden churches," magnificent sanctuaries inside buildings with exteriors that looked like surrounding buildings.

Not wanting to be outdone by the events of the Reformation, the Roman Church formulated its own "counter-reformation," embodied in the Council of Trent. The council's several sweeping decrees revitalized European Catholicism with a new missal, a new catechism, and a revised version of the Bible. Many bishops at the council demanded a reconsideration of the previous decrees of all councils—including the Church's position on councils possessing superior authority to the pope. You can guess how that turned out: The pope's agenda came to the forefront, and Conciliarism never had a fair shot at revival.

Old Catholics would later reject the Council of Trent—and all subsequent councils—because it reneged on the promise made to Willibrord. Only 31 of 700 bishops attended the beginning of the Council of Trent. By the council's conclusion in 1563, a total of 270 bishops had attended, the vast majority of whom were Italian. This benefited the pope, who exercises control over his clergy and determined who would rise up in the ranks. Rather than vote as national churches, the bishops at Trent insisted on voting as individuals. Again, this gave the Italians the upper hand, since there were 187 bishops from Italy, 32 from Spain, 28 from France, and two from Germany. There were more Italians than all the other countries put together! As a result, the pope was easily able to orchestrate the outcome of the council.

The Council of Trent condemned Protestantism, established the Church as the ultimate interpreter of scripture, affirmed the relationship between faith and good works, and reaffirmed the practices of indulgences, pilgrimages, and the veneration of saints.

By the end of the 16th century, many of the abuses that motivated the Protestant Reformation had indeed been addressed, and the Roman Church had reclaimed many of its followers in Europe. The Council, however, failed to do anything to resolve the fact that the European Church was now divided between Catholics and Protestants.

By 1592 A.D., Rome sent its guard dogs, the Jesuits, to vehemently promote the pope's agenda in the Netherlands. Rome said it was an attempt to reestablish Catholicism there, but guess what: The Church in the Netherlands was still there! The Jesuits, with their message of papal authority, refused to acknowledge the churches already there. This was the *de facto* split of the Church of the Netherlands from

Rome, with two Catholic churches emerging: the churches that were there from the time of Willibrord, and the pope's new churches.

The church of the Netherlands demanded a council to resolve this and to reaffirm the claim given to them at the Council of Constance. Rome rebuffed their requests and refused to convene a council for 150 years.

The real break occurred when Cornelius van Steenoven was elected and consecrated bishop of Utrecht in 1724. The Dutch, who always let Rome know what they were doing, sent a letter to the pope—and the pope excommunicated van Steenoven! The Dutch wrote more letters to Rome, demanding a council and noting the repeated reaffirmation by Rome of their privilege to elect their own bishops.

The Roman Church convoked Vatican I (1868-1870) to address the rising influence of rationalism, liberalism and materialism. The council promulgated two decrees: *Dei filius*, an outline of the Catholic faith, and *Pastor aeternus*, which addressed the authority of the pope. The latter advanced papal infallibility, that the promise of Jesus to Peter preserves the pope from the possibility of error. The pope can't make a mistake when exercising his authority in the Chair of Peter! The pope defines a doctrine, and everybody has to agree to it. *Pastor aeternus* also shared the controversial dogma of universal jurisdiction—that "the pope enjoys, by divine institution, supreme, full, and immediate universal power in the care of souls" and is pastor of the *whole* Church! *Pastor aeternus* left no question about the pope's unhindered exercise of power.

The context of the political and military upheaval surrounding the First Vatican Council is important. The Franco-Prussian war had broken out, and the French troops protecting the Vatican withdrew, leaving the bishops a little edgy. Several bishops ducked for cover and departed before the votes on *Dei filius* and *Pastor aeternus*. Who stayed? The Italians! The majority of those who disagreed with the pope left before the vote! Because of the war, the pope disbanded the council.

Because Vatican I never officially closed, clergy from throughout Europe peacefully petitioned the Vatican to correct its impositions on the Church. Summarily excommunicated, they formed communities to carry on—the way they always carried on. These independent churches were just starting to "feel their oats." It's as if they were saying, "You can't keep doing this to us!"

One of the leaders of this movement was Ignaz von Döllinger, a German priest and professor of theology at the University of Munich. He greatly contributed to the doctrine, growth and development of the Old Catholic Church. For some time, von Döllinger spoke out in favor of the Church's freedom to manage its affairs without interference from the state. In 1857, well before Vatican I, he traveled to Rome and returned completely disenchanted with the direction Pius IX was taking the papacy and his claim to be not only head of the universal Church, but also a head of state—the papal states. In 1861, von Döllinger declared that the maintenance of the Roman Catholic Church did not depend on the temporal sovereignty of the pope. In 1870, after Vatican I was disbanded, von Döllinger launched a protest, gathered allies at a congress in Munich, and together they issued a declaration opposing the Vatican's declarations.

The archbishop of Munich begged von Döllinger to reconsider. In March 1871, von Döllinger addressed a memorable letter to the archbishop, refusing to do so. He noted how the novelties of the Roman Church were opposed to scripture, to the traditions of the ancient Church, to all historical evidence, and to the decrees of previous councils. He concluded, "As a Christian, as a theologian, as a historian, [and] as a citizen, I cannot accept this doctrine."

That same year, 1871, clergy and laity across Europe began to convene congresses to formulate how they would move forward now that Rome, as von Döllinger maintained, had created a new church. They came together from different countries, from different cultures, and from different traditions to form an association of churches that would practice the faith of the once-undivided church. They were doing what Jesus wanted us to do: They were becoming one (Jn. 17:21)!

The Old Catholic Church still holds congresses to this day, every four years. Anyone can attend. Those congresses are pretty amazing. I went to one five years ago, with a delegation from TOCCUSA—The Old Catholic Church Province of the U.S. We enjoyed an enthusiastic reception by the laity. Thrilled, they said, "There are Old Catholics in the United States? Wow, that's great!" They saw their church as expanding in the U.S. Their bishops were less enthusiastic—but we'll get to that later.

After Vatican I, it took Old Catholics 19 years to create the necessary relationships and alliances to come together a make a

declaration. On September 24, 1889, they signed the Declaration of Utrecht and became the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht. The Convention of Utrecht affirmed three foundational documents:

1. The Declaration of Utrecht (1889), consisting of principles based on the early Church,
2. The Rules, or the procedures for the bishops' conference, and
3. The Order, or the Utrecht Agreement, which focuses on maintaining communion within the Union and on communion with external churches.

The key concepts of that Convention included:

1. The maintenance and profession of the doctrine of Jesus Christ,
2. The Eucharist as the central point of our vernacular worship,
3. Rejection of the Council of Trent and Vatican I, since the Roman Church no longer practiced Conciliarism, and
4. Rejection of the purported dogma of the Immaculate Conception—not because they disagreed with the idea, but because it was promulgated after Trent.

In the early 1900's, the Old Catholic Churches began to send missionaries to the United States. This would have been a cause for celebration—except that those missions were never terribly successful. They lacked a sense of unity, a cohesive episcopal structure, and many priests leaned toward the Episcopal Church in the U.S. or were consecrated bishops and started their own independent churches. Jurisdictional confusion ensued and still persists. Conflicts erupted, splits occurred, and the 1900's were a century of schisms in the Old Catholic Church in the United States. This gave Utrecht real pause. Peter Anson's book, *Bishops At Large*, discusses this scandal: Bishops went around consecrating other bishops and making a mess!

Meanwhile in Europe, Anglicans supported the efforts of those who protested the decrees of Vatican I. Having broken from Rome nearly four centuries earlier, Anglicans remained in conversation with Old Catholics. In 1925, the Old Catholic Communion formally recognized Anglican ordinations. In 1931, the Bonn Agreement effected full communion between the Church of England and the Old Catholic Churches in Europe. After that, members of each church

could participate in one another's pastoral and sacramental life, and they recognized as valid the orders of one another's church.

The Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht once possessed a presence here in the U.S., with the Polish National Catholic Church (PNCC). The PNCC, however, withdrew from communion with the Union of Utrecht, after Utrecht's decision in 1998 to ordain women. After the PNCC dropped out, there has been no Old Catholic presence in the United States, and no one in the U.S. is in union with Utrecht.

Because of its relationship with the Anglican Church through the Bonn Agreement, the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht have invited a representative from the Episcopal Church in the U.S., a member of the Anglican Communion, to attend the International Conference of Bishops, the ruling board of Utrecht. That Episcopal bishop, Mike Klusmeyer of West Virginia, is the official liaison to Utrecht. He joined us at our bishops' forum earlier this week in St. Louis, and he'll report back to Utrecht on what's going on here in the U.S. Rev. Margaret Rose, Deputy to the Presiding Episcopal Bishop for Ecumenical Relationships, also joined us in St. Louis.

For years, Utrecht has been flooded with requests from churches in the U.S. wanting to be seen as legitimately Old Catholic. In 2004, Utrecht, through the Episcopal Church, shared a survey with U.S. bishops who self-identified as "Old Catholic." Six U.S. bishops responded that they would attend a meeting with representatives of Utrecht and the Episcopal Church.

Utrecht hosted the meeting in 2006. Utrecht sent Bishop Mike Klusmeyer, Rev. Dr. Günter Esser, and Rev. Björn Marcusen. Esser is a German Old Catholic priest who served as director of Old Catholic Studies at the University of Bonn. Marcusen, an Old Catholic priest who moved to Europe and incardinated into the Episcopal Church in California, attended as an observer.

Four U.S. bishops attended, including Bishop Robert Fuentes, the moderator of TOCCUSA. They formulated the Council of North American Old Catholic Bishops (CNAOCB) to form an Old Catholic Church in the United States. They invited other bishops, who came and went—often for reasons of personality or pushback to Utrecht's Rule and Order. Utrecht interpreted the fluctuation in membership as an inability of American bishops to create unity. At that time, my diocese, the American Catholic Church of New England, joined the CNAOCB.

Five U.S. bishops came together in Washington, D.C. in February 2008. We were heartbroken: The day before we gathered, Bishop Robert Fuentes received a letter from Bishop Klusmeyer, notifying us that Utrecht had essentially backed out because we couldn't keep it together!

Despite the fact that our hearts were grieving, we formed an alliance: the Holy Cross Diocese of Minnesota, the Diocese of St. John the Beloved in Washington, D.C., the American Catholic Church of New England, and the Diocese of Napa in California. Perhaps defiantly, we decided that we didn't need Utrecht to recognize us. We were going to follow the Rule and Order of Utrecht!

For three years, we educated our clergy and laity, knowing that a union would only happen through the unanimous approval of each jurisdiction's synod choosing to be Old Catholic.

On September 24, 2010, we convened at a retreat center in Minnesota, where we dissolved the Conference of North American Old Catholic Bishops and formed The Old Catholic Church Province of the United States (TOCCUSA). On that day, on the 121st anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Utrecht, five jurisdictions came together to form a new church!

For us, the event was historic: After 100 years of division in the U.S., we were finally coming together. Rev. Dr. Günter Esser attended the event, came to our annual national assembly for the next five years, and continues to serve as the advisor to our House of Bishops. He has shared with us four courses of eight lectures each, including "A History of Old Catholicism," "A History of Old Catholic Sacraments," "Old Catholic Ecclesiology" and "Ecumenism." Those lectures are the backbone of our Institute of Old Catholic Studies, for the continuing education our clergy and laity.

In 2013, Bishop Robert and I traveled to Utrecht and participated in the summer course in Old Catholic theology at the University of Utrecht. It's there that we met Bishop Mark Newman and Bishop Frank Krebs. We've become good friends, asking ourselves in what ways we're the same, how we're different, and whether our differences are rooted in style, tradition or matters of faith.

During that Old Catholic summer school, Archbishop Joris Vercammen presented a lecture, in which he mentioned the failed "experiment in the United States." I remember Bishop Fuentes stood

up and said, "Excuse me, but we're still here—and we're still going strong!"

After that class, we were invited to the following year's Old Catholic Congress, which was incredibly exciting: Old Catholics came from all over Europe and from the Philippines! The laity were tickled that we were there. We enjoyed individual conversations with Old Catholic bishops, and Archbishop Vercammen himself said to us, "Keep doing what you're doing—only do it more!"

We maintain loose communication with Utrecht. They want to know what's going on here in the U.S., and they want to see growth, stability and communion. Utrecht has emphasized that their four ecclesiological points must be followed:

1. **The fullness of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church resides in the local church**. They define "local church" as a bishop with surrounding communities. So, I'm the bishop of the Church of New England. That's my church—with my communities in New England. And the fullness of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church resides in our church—not in me, but in the community that is formed around me.
2. **The Old Catholic understanding of the role of the bishop is important**. The authority of the bishop does not reside in any person, but comes from the community. Bishops are elected. If there's no church, there is no bishop, and there should never be a bishop without a church. No church, no bishop; no bishop, no church. Apostolic succession is important and is the handing on of the faith to a person who serves a leader of a community; it's not something that's given to a person. Bishops without communities fall—who haven't been vetted, elected or chosen by the people—fall outside of apostolic succession.
3. **Old Catholics espouse a theology of communion**. No church stands alone. Jesus, aside from his time on cross, was never really alone. He had his disciples, and he preached, "Come together!" Old Catholic churches come together in communion.
4. **Old Catholics possess synodal governance**. We value synodality at all levels of the church: in the parish, in the diocese, and in the greater church. We strive for consensus, which is difficult and time-consuming—but it's worth it, since it creates buy-in and prevents schisms. The people are in charge

> and make the decisions about how to implement the mission, the pastoral care, and the finances of the community. They elect their pastor from qualified candidates—hopefully from within the community. The community supports emerging leaders and ensure they receive the education and training they need to lead a local community. They elect a committee to govern the temporal affairs of the faith community and to minister side-by-side with the pastor: the priesthood of all people! They send representatives to the diocesan synod, and the diocese sends representatives to the national assembly.

So, where do we go from here? For Old Catholics, it's unity or bust! We come together, or we don't make it!

I don't know how to talk to clergy who don't want to identify as Old Catholics, who prefer to remain in that category of "Independent Catholics." I don't know what to say to you.

A Pew report came out just last week. Older people who identify as Christian—the older generation—are very rapidly being displaced by a younger generation, who don't claim any sort of Christianity. The number of people who consider themselves to be "nones," who don't belong to any church, is now at 26%—up from 17% a decade ago. The 'silent generation'—people born from the 1920's to the mid-1940's—now comprise 84% of the people who call themselves Christian. Of millennials, only 49% consider themselves Christian. We need to pay attention to these trends.

At a retreat for our TOCCUSA bishops, following our Bishops Forum this week, one of our bishops admonished us: "Look ahead 35 years: Where are you going to be in 35 years? What is your community going to look like in 35 years?" The majority of us are going to be in the ground with me! What are we going to do? How are we going to keep alive these threads that began in the ancient Church? How are we going to make them relevant to people today? We need to focus on sustainability and stability. Hence, the question: What do we need to do to ensure that our faith communities are not one-generational faith communities?

We've got to be relevant in this world. Young people are looking for that. Look at Greta Thunberg and what she's done with young people in regard to our climate crisis. She is setting them on fire about something that is really important to them! How are we going to make *our message* important to them? How are we going to get them to

march alongside us, to pray with us, to worship with us, to take our message out into the world? How are we going to get them to keep this idea alive of building the kingdom?

At our TOCCUSA retreat, we diligently worked for two days on a plan of succession. We know we've got to pay attention to succession: training and grooming those who will be here in 35 years, and letting them know how important it is to be with others.

Yesterday, Fr. Jayme said, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others." Let's go far. Let's go with one another. Let's do this!

I went to college in the town where Emily Dickinson composed her poetry and essays. She wrote, "Action is redemption." That sentiment strikes something deep inside me. I've made it my life's philosophy. My mother died when I was young, but I have a memory of her standing in front of the kitchen stove, with a wooden spoon in her hand. She meant business. She wasn't the poet Emily was, but she recognized that action is redemption. Nike® recognizes this, too. They've made a bajillion dollars with their slogan, "Just Do It." Let's "just do it," folks. Let's make it happen!

A Conversation on
the History and Future of the Relationship of
Old/Independent Catholicism in the English-speaking World,
with the Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches

"How does Utrecht feel about TOCCUSA using the name 'Old Catholic'? Are they cool with it?"

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"They haven't said anything."

Bishop Rosemary Ananis
Wells, Maine

"Is there, by any chance, a way for us to get a hold of these courses by Günter Esser?"

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"We've used them for several years now at the Institute of Old Catholic Studies. We've come to the conclusion that they're really very Eurocentric. So, right now, the Institute of Old Catholic Studies is revamping these courses."

Bishop Rosemary Ananis
Wells, Maine

"Are there other jurisdictions in the United States looking into TOCCUSA?"

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"We're going to welcome a new diocese at our next national assembly in Florida, which is pretty exciting for us! If you're interested in TOCCUSA, contact Bishop Robert Fuentes. You can also go to the TOCCUSA website: toccusa.org. And I'll tell you: Joining TOCCUSA isn't quick or easy. We're going slowly. This is our model of Old Catholicism. We've been in dialogue with the Ecumenical Catholic

Communion (ECC) a lot. Bishop Fuentes and Bishop Frank have been meeting monthly for at least the past year. I went to the last ECC synod. We're hoping that some of you will attend our national assembly next year in Ohio. TOCCUSA and the ECC signed an agreement last year, that when either has an ordination, we should notify one another. I attended the consecration of one of the ECC's new bishops, Kedda Keough in Washington. It was fantastic. If we're in the vicinity of one of your communities, we'll stop in, and we hope you do likewise with us. I know Rev. Rosa Buffone is close to me, down in Massachusetts, and she's promised that she's coming up to Maine. Building relationships: That has to come first."

Bishop Rosemary Ananis
Wells, Maine

"I appreciate the pitch for joining TOCCUSA. Yesterday, one of the presentations contained a listing of the larger jurisdictions in the United States, and TOCCUSA was toward the bottom of the list. This is my question, and it springs from a desire to know. On the one hand, what I'm understanding is that—if I understand you correctly—there is no Old Catholic presence in the United States, other than Bishop Klusmeyer in West Virginia. On the other hand, I heard some confusion about an Old Catholic Congress five years ago, where lay people asked, 'There are Old Catholics in the United States?' My question is: What should we call ourselves? I'm tempted to think that we are 'Independent Catholics'—until the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht recognize us as Old Catholic. If I were to call myself 'Roman Catholic,' there are people who would have a problem with that. Personally, I wouldn't presume to call myself 'Old Catholic.' I suspect there are people who should have a problem with that. The question is one of terminology: What right does anyone have to call him or herself Old Catholic? Can I call myself Old Catholic? Can you call yourself Old Catholic? Can any of us call ourselves Old Catholic—until we're in union with Utrecht?"

Father Jayme Mathias
Austin, Texas

"We call ourselves Old Catholic because we adhere to the Rule and Order, as set forth by Utrecht. We believe that we follow the Rule and the Order of Old Catholicism, that we're not doing anything that they're not doing. Do we need their permission to be Old Catholic?"

Bishop Rosemary Ananis
Wells, Maine

"I say we have an Old Catholic heritage. We can't call ourselves Old Catholic, but we have an Old Catholic heritage."

Father Dewayne Messenger
Sand Springs, Oklahoma

"When I was in Utrecht, we had a similar conversation with the faculty there. As the Union of Utrecht came together from national churches, they understood the Anglican Church as the Old Catholic Church of England. So, the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht frown upon splinter 'Old Catholic' movements alongside the Anglican Church. That's the precedent. When the PNCC came to the United States, they were here to promote the Polish Old Catholic Church. Eventually, in the climate of the United States, there was an increasing understanding that the way for the Old Catholic Church to receive folks like us, who are drawn out of the Roman corner of the tent, is for us to become Episcopalian. The Episcopal Church is essentially the Old Catholic Church in the United States! They wonder, Why don't you just get ordained in the Episcopal Church? That was very much what the Episcopal Church said, according to Margaret Rose. My first contact with Frank Krebs came out of a conversation with Margaret Rose at the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA). Margaret told me that, when people call and ask about Old Catholicism, they are immediately steered in the direction of becoming an Episcopal priest. That becomes a sticking point for us. The tradition of praying the Roman rite—and other elements of Catholicism—are more resonant for me than to go to my local ECUSA bishop and say, 'I'd like to be one of your priests.'"

Rev. Trish Sullivan Vanni
Edina, Minnesota

"A lot of times, [Episcopalians] say, 'You have to give up your orders, in order to be received into the Episcopal Church, and then go through their process and be re-ordained.'"

Father Dewayne Messenger
Sand Springs, Oklahoma

"When people have asked me, 'Why don't you just become Episcopalian?' I say, 'Because I'm Catholic.' It's an ethos. It's in our DNA. It's in our bones."

Bishop Rosemary Ananis
Wells, Maine

"In Colorado, we're part of a Lutheran/Roman Catholic community of faith. The Lutheran bishop of our community has said to me and to us, 'Why don't you just become Lutheran?' And our answer is, 'because we're not Lutheran.' And the diversity enriches us. I want to point something out—and I want to do it as gently as I personally can. Many of us come from the Roman church. It has indelibly stamped its model on us. When I hear the question, 'Do we have permission to use the term Old Catholic?' I say, 'Who cares?' If it ties us to a larger tradition with which we identify—either they'll think that's an honor, or we don't care."

Father Donald Sutton
Denver, Colorado

"Remember our conversation yesterday and ask yourself, 'Are you an Old Catholic duck?' That's the bottom line. That's the point of departure. That's where you begin this ecclesiology: Once you are Old Catholic in your mind and heart, that's where unification begins. It's that conversion process. If it quacks like an old Catholic duck, it's probably an Old Catholic duck!"

Bishop Raphael Adams
Chicago, Illinois

"Years ago, TOCCUSA put out a lecture from Günter: 'The Old Catholic Way.' I have a copy of it. It's profoundly spiritual. It's an evangelical way of talking about this in the world we live in. It's wonderful. I have always operated from Robert Caruso's book and your stuff, Bishop Rosemary: That if Independent Catholics begin to

operate on the principles that Old Catholics have, it would change us dynamically. We have a theology and a ministry, and I love how you point out that it took them 19 years to build relationships so many years ago."

Bishop David Strong
Tacoma, Washington

"As a parish that identifies as a Catholic parish, there are things that are Roman, which we will *not* allow—such as the feast of the Immaculate Conception, which is not celebrated at our parish. We celebrate the dormition and the birthday of the *Theotokos*, things that are historically Old Catholic by praxis. In order to play in the bigger realm—and if anybody wants to play, I suggest you play in this way—I abhor the term 'Independent Catholic,' because there is no such thing. It's impossible to be an 'Independent Catholic.' Whenever I hear 'Independent Catholic,' I cringe. I would never call our parish an 'independent' parish. Also, we're in New York City, in the second-largest Roman Catholic diocese in the country. Ecumenically, running a soup kitchen in a Roman Catholic parish, we have to be very clear about who we are. And so, for guys like Jayme and Lawman, who came out of Roman Catholic parishes and were able to bring parishioners with them into the 'Independent' realm, the terminology of 'Independent' may make some sense. But, in order for us to be something viable and strong in this country, we should look toward our understanding of ourselves as Old Catholics. Second, I also really think that we need to stop [caring] what other people think of us. If you're validly practicing the faith, you don't need to justify who you are. We need to get over this already. It's gross that we constantly feel like we have to prove to other people who the hell we are. Do the work. The reading of this morning's office was so profound: 'You have been called and chosen: Work all the harder to justify it. If you do all these things, there is no danger that you will ever fall' (1Pet. 1:10). If you're doing the work, then everything is going to fall into line. Just do it."

Father Mike Lopez
Ridgewood, New York

"I think 'outside the box.' I'm an aspiring deacon, and I've enjoyed these last few days. I was lost a few years ago: I was Roman Catholic, but then someone told me that I couldn't take communion anymore. So, I went to another religion, and I was lost. I came back, and I found Father Jayme. So, where do we go? Do we recruit more of me, to come back to the Catholic Church? How do we go back into that 'box' and try to recruit those who go to the Roman Church and who don't receive communion because Father tells us that we can't receive communion? How do we all together make our parishes grow?"

Vincent Maldonado
Austin, Texas

"It's not about going 'back into the box'; it's about getting 'out of the box.' It's about not being church in a building; it's about being church in the world. It's about taking our joy, taking our love of God, taking our way of building the kingdom out into a world that needs us so very much. At the end of every Mass, I say, 'Take what you have received here; become what you have received here, and take it to the world! You are dismissed. Go!' Our mandate is to go, to be sent, and to be attractive. Jesus never beat on doors. He never tried to recruit anyone. He just was. So when we live the gospel out in the world, people are going to say, 'Wow, how do they do it?' How do we do it? It's our faith!"

Bishop Rosemary Ananis
Wells, Maine

"Millennials are deeply spiritual. They don't go to four-walled churches. Their 'church' is going to the border and supporting the immigrant. They're about action. That's their faith. It's action. So, if we want them with us, we have to go to them!"

Virginia-Michele "Mimi" Maki
Oshkosh, Wisconsin

"In my community, we were excommunicated [by the Roman Church], and there was a whole church that followed us. And we began to gather people together. I'll never forget Father Jim Callan, who, at a staff meeting six months after we were pushed out of the Roman church, said, 'Now, we have to think about who we are. Yes, we're mourning, and people are still in pain over what has

happened—but are we going to be about the pain and the place we've left, or are we going to live into what we want to become?' And that is a part of everything we do. Thinking about sustaining an intergenerational community can't begin when the pastor is ready to retire. It has to begin from the very beginning, by empowering the community to have a voice, empowering them into leadership, calling forth lay ministry teams. That's how we move ourselves into our future. It has to begin in the beginning. It has to be how we live. Remember: We're all here because we believe the Church needs to be more than it is. We have to live that new way of being Church, and we have to actualize it. And yes, we do have to go where the youth are, and we have to reach out in new ways, but it's all part of that. And connection is extremely important, because we are Catholic. 'Independent' doesn't go with Catholic. Connection: That's why this encounter brings so much life to us, and we find ourselves saying, 'Wow, look at what's happening here! Look at these communities!' It's not about going back. It's about going forward!"

Bishop Denise Donate
Fairport, New York

"I've been an Independent Catholic for 24 years. But, Bishop Rosemary, you said that you have nothing to say to me. So, how can we have a dialogue. How can we discuss? How can we get to know one another, if you have nothing to say to me?"

Bishop Alan Kemp
Gig Harbor, Washington

"There's already a church that allows the divorced to commune, that receives women priests, and that's in the Western rite: It's the Old Catholic Church! It already exists, so we're not reinventing anything. I really believe in you, Rosemary, and what you've sharing with us here today, but I'm not sold on joining any jurisdiction—for anybody. I really believe that, in order for us to be a viable, Western rite presence in the United States, 'Old Catholic' is the way to best define ourselves—if, like you said, we follow the Old Catholic Rules and tradition. All the Pew studies are showing that millennials in the Church want a resurgence of orthodoxy in liturgy. The churches that are growing are churches that have good liturgical practice. The 'pizza Mass,' the 'folk Mass,' the 'kumbaya mass'—they're done. If

you want younger people to come, look at the example of the Evangelical Church. I just preached at a conference three weeks ago in Chicago, with over 1,000 evangelical youth, and the only thing those young people could talk about was the liturgy. I was there to present on homelessness, but they wanted to learn about the liturgy! They wanted to understand why I was wearing a cassock. They were so amazed by that. So, if you want young people to come to your church, please start practicing good liturgy. Good liturgy is important. So many priests in this movement have no damn idea what they're doing on the altar—and it's the biggest sin of the Independent Sacramental Movement. People come to church first and foremost to have a liturgical experience, and that liturgical experience translates to a spiritual one. We know this. This is what the Church has told us. This is what we learned in seminary. This is why you're never going to find a Roman priest who doesn't know how to say Mass. So please, if you want the young people to come, formation is important. When I first started, we sent out 5,000 flyers saying 'Rethink Catholic' and 'A New Catholic Experience' and all the stuff that we all say. It didn't work. Nobody came. Do you know what I started doing? I said, 'I'm never inviting anybody to church again!' I invited them to serve with us in the soup kitchen. I invited them to help us with coat collections. I invited them to get on our food truck, 'The Hungry Monk,' with us. And our church grew overnight, because people started saying, 'These guys are not full-of-sh** Christians; they're doing actual good work with the poor. I want to visit their church!' It was a reversal. It wasn't, 'Come to church.' It was, 'Come to serve, and, if you want, we're here on Sundays.' And we had a dramatic increase in people. So, please, that 70's and 80's mentality of the kumbaya, all-in, hippie Mass is not working for Catholics. One last point. A good example of what we're experiencing has been experienced by the Eastern Orthodox in the United States since the late 1800's. Starting in Alaska, the Russian Orthodox were the ones who evangelized the United States. Shortly after that, the Greeks came. The Russians and Greeks both have Eastern rite churches, even though they're separate. They fought about jurisdictional orthodoxy in the United States. Today, the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) is a great example: The OCA is an Eastern Rite Orthodox church, loosely sponsored by Russia, but granted autonomy. And so the Orthodox step on each other in New York City: You'll see a Greek cathedral, an Armenian cathedral, and technically, according to their ecclesiology of Orthodoxy, they should

be one jurisdiction under one patriarch in the United States. And they are not. We talk about all the jurisdictions in this movement. This is the answer: We create an association, we get together once a year, or every other year, and we all do our own thing. There's a billion bishops I can borrow for my ordinations, my confirmations, and anything else. Let's work together. Let's be human with each other. Let's unify ourselves in act and deed. But at the same time, let's retain our autonomy. Please, please, please, let's form the association. Let's stop talking about it. We obviously all want to be friends. We're doing really good together. Let's make an association. Let's continue to do what we do. Let's help each other grow. And let's help each other serve and work. And then, that's it. The thought of being united is really grandiose, because there are too many egos, and nobody's going to be subject to another. So, unless we're going to have our own American 'pope,' which I don't think is going to happen, let's just keep doing what we do!"

Father Mike Lopez
Ridgewood, New York

"In the Old Catholic model, no one is ever subject to anyone, except Christ. We're all equal. You might think that coming together as an Old Catholic Church in the United States is grandiose, but, we talk about local authority! No one is subject to anyone else. It's about getting all those bishops together, to make sure there is unity in our faith. We welcome the diversity for the tremendous flavor that it brings—but there has to be a unity of faith. How do we achieve that? With proper education and training. That has to be there."

Bishop Rosemary Ananis
Wells, Maine

"I would like to propose that we stop disparaging our forebears, whatever has gone down. We know that it's been fractious. We know there have been *episcopoi vaganti,* who probably didn't exercise the best judgment. But I don't think it serves us to come together as family in pursuit of unity and diversity disparaging others."

Bishop Cathy Chalmers
Everett, Washington

The Creation of Community and Experience in the Old/Independent Catholic Tradition

Father Kevin Przybylski
Rabbouni Catholic Community
Louisville, Kentucky

I left the Conventual Franciscans and the Roman Catholic priesthood in 1998. After that, I worked 15 years as a music director at a large, suburban Roman Catholic parish in Louisville. The archbishop welcomed me. I had worked in his diocese as a priest. He wrote me a lovely, personal note, saying, "Hey, Kevin, I hear you're back, but as a music director. I want you to know that you are welcome in any capacity." I was very touched by that.

In my youth choir at that parish, I had this one young woman, Mandy. She's now grown up and married, with three children, but I would always tease her and say, "Mandy, you would be such a good priest! Have you ever thought about being a priest?" And she would just smile and say, "Oh, Kevin!" Of course, she couldn't be a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. I absolutely love the fact that I can now go up to a young woman and say, "Have you ever thought about being a priest?" It's so exciting for me, now that I don't have to joke about it. It's a reality, and I just love it!

In my homily yesterday, I didn't mention any Old Catholic saints on whose shoulders we stand. Frankly, it's because I didn't know any, until this gathering. With Rafe and Rosemary here, I have been introduced to our saints, and this history is very exciting and very encouraging, because what we're doing is not new. It's as if we're going back. Some people talk about being "traditionalists." In a way, we're more traditional than anyone! We're going back to the early roots of the Church! And I find it very exciting that, in this journey, in this dream that you and I are about, this has been going on, and we stand on a firm foundation—even if we sometimes stumble along in this country. We're standing on a firm foundation, and I love that!

In my talk, I'm going to bring us to the present. When Jayme invited me to give this talk, he said, "Can you talk about your 'secret sauce'?" And I was like, "the secret sauce"? He asked, "What's the 'secret sauce' at Rabbouni Catholic Community? What have you and

Father Lawman Chibundi done, to go from where you were, to where you are today?"

At Rabbouni, we just celebrated our 10th anniversary as a community. Frankly, we have no "secret sauce." I'll share with you some things that have worked in our community, and then I would like to open up a discussion, so that we can learn from one another. And I am certainly no expert in this at all.

I want to use a phrase that twelve-step groups use: "Take what you like, and leave the rest." You may agree, you may disagree. It may not affect your work, in your community. But, "take what you like, and leave the rest"!

At Rabbouni, we started with ten or fifteen people on a good Sunday. We have a sister parish 60 miles away. We're not only in Louisville, Kentucky, but, because Lawman was an associate pastor in Lebanon, Kentucky, after about a year in Louisville, they called him and said, "We want you to be down here as well!" So every Sunday, Lawman and I drive down to Lebanon, to celebrate Mass with them. Between the two communities, we've grown to an average attendance on a weekend of 80 to 90 people.

Lawman and I have discussed what might grow a community, and that's what Jayme asked me to reflect on with you. Hopefully, at the end of this talk, we can come together and share what we're doing in our own local communities—and I would love to hear what you're doing.

Archbishop Thomas Kelly, who wrote me that kind note welcoming me as the music director, once told a story. When he was appointed archbishop in Louisville, he walked into the cathedral and looked around and thought, "Oh my God!" The cathedral was in disrepair: The roof was leaking, and the carpet was old and rippling. Kelly celebrated three Masses that weekend, to introduce himself as the archbishop to the cathedral parish, and he had a total of some 100 people. It was dead as a doornail. And he said, "I sat there after the third Mass in the cathedral, and I looked around, and I thought about how dead this congregation was." And he said, "The very next day, I started calling around to priests, and I said, 'I want you to share with me who you think is the best preacher in this diocese. Who's the best preacher?'" A lot of the priests recommended a guy by the name of Ron Knott, so Kelly appointed Ron as rector of the cathedral.

I was a Franciscan, and our provincial house was just cross the river from Louisville—at Mount St. Francis, Indiana—so Ron and I became friends. By that time, he had built up the congregation, and he would eventually raise millions of dollars to restore it, and it's absolutely beautiful today.

Ron once told me the first thing he needed to do as rector was not to think about renovating the cathedral, but building up the body of Christ. So, two things come to my mind as the "secret sauce" for growing any dead or dying community: good preaching and good music! Ron said "We were a dying community, and we didn't have many financial resources, but I scraped together every penny that I could find, and I hired good musicians, because I wanted good music and good preaching." It worked. Ten years later, the cathedral was packed. "Good preaching, good music" is what Ron said, and that's how their transformation as a community began.

It became, at least under Archbishop Kelly, a center of spirituality in Louisville—not only for Roman Catholics, but for Protestants, Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims, among others. Ron formed the Cathedral Heritage Foundation, and they began the Festival of Faiths. Other cities have picked up on it. A few years ago, they invited the Dalai Lama as part of the Festival of Faiths. At that time, the cathedral created a structure where people from all different religions and backgrounds could come together.

When I met Lawman, I was music director at St. Edward's Roman Catholic Parish. When one pastoral associate found out that Lawman had left the archdiocese and was starting a church, she came into my office, closed the door, and whispered to me, "Lawman is starting his own church!"

I asked, "Really? Are you sure?"

"Yeah. And I think he already has a website!"

I looked up his website. Sure enough, his contact information was there. I emailed him that very day. I didn't know him at all, but I introduced myself. I told him a little bit about my history, and I said, "I just want you to know that I so support what you're doing."

Lawman emailed me that evening and said, "Kevin, I cannot thank you enough for emailing me, because you would not believe the hate mail I'm getting. It's so refreshing to find someone in the archdiocese saying, 'Thank you for doing this.'"

We agreed to have lunch the next day. When he discovered that I'm a musician, he said, "I need music, and I'd love to ask you, but the archdiocese could fire you for providing music for us."

I said, "Lawman, I don't care."

I felt the Spirit calling me, and he was willing to pay! You know what? Lawman paid me out of his own pocket. Rabbouni didn't have any money, so Lawman invested some $10,000 or $15,000 of his own savings, to start that church: to buy vestments, sacramentaries, lectionaries, candles and a cross, and to pay rent to the church where we celebrated. Lawman invested his own resources in this, not knowing at all whether it was going to be dead in a month. But he did it, and I will forever be grateful for that.

I started playing for the Sunday evening Mass, which attracted some ten people to the little Unitarian Church where we were. I started playing, and a guy came up to me and said, "I used to sing in a choir." I said, "Come on, join me!" And it grew from there. We eventually hired a flute player and an oboist. I function as music director and associate pastor at Rabbouni: On three weekends a month, I'm at the piano and leading the music, and one weekend a month, I preach and preside.

When I left St. Edward's, I had 65 people in my choir. Now, I have five people in my choir, but I love it, and I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. We had all sorts of financial resources at St. Edward's: We had all sorts of instruments, we had 65 people in the choir, and 20 paid instrumentalists. We don't have that at Rabbouni, but I wouldn't trade it for the world! Yes, music is important.

Preaching is important, too. Lawman was known in the archdiocese as an excellent preacher and as a man of integrity and prayer. Unfortunately, he was demonized by the priests of the diocese; he was absolutely ripped to shreds. But what I love about him, and what I love about working with him, is that he's so affirming. Affirming our ministers—whether they're lay or clergy—is so important.

Prayer is also important. Lawman doesn't "say" the Mass; he *prays* the Mass. It's not a performance. It's not "playing church." He and I seek to pray, to have a genuine love for our people—the people we serve and seek to lead. And our deepest joy is to join them in an exciting journey together of deepening our spiritual journeys! There's an authenticity that people feel when they pray with us. People can

tell—and I don't want to denigrate anyone—whether you're merely about "playing church" or really *being* church. There is a sense of authenticity that attracts people to Rabbouni.

It's also important to listen to the voice within—especially in the midst of great opposition. I'm sure we could all tell stories of the opposition that we may have encountered on our journeys. I'll share with you Lawman's story: He was demonized. He was harassed. He received a lot of hate mail. He couldn't sleep at night. He was skin-and-bones, because he suffered so much anxiety, but, in the midst of it, he was so rooted in prayer that he could hear the promptings of the Spirit in the midst of great opposition. Lawman was excommunicated not once, but three times. For whatever reason, the archbishop who followed Kelly sent Lawman three different letters of excommunication. I guess the first one and the second one didn't take!

All of us here are doing Church in a different way. We're thinking "outside the box." What excites me about being with you during this time is that we're people of courage, who have, perhaps in the midst of great opposition, gotten quiet enough to listen to the voice of the Spirit, and we stand together to say, "There's got to be another way!" And I don't want to wait for the dream; I want to create the dream!

Lawman and I both knew that we were risking our livelihoods. I'm a "lifer." I went to a minor seminary, and all I knew was the Roman Catholic Church—through my music ministry and priestly ministry. There are other people in this room who were involved in the Roman Catholic Church, and who took great risks. Denise was fired. Many of us took great criticism for what we've done. That's why I believe it is so important for us to come together like this. In you, I am lifted up, and I am given hope and support.

One of the things I miss about the Roman Church and about being a Franciscan is the sense of connection to something larger than myself. I appreciate you, Jayme, for calling this gathering, and I appreciate the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (ECC) for welcoming me. We've been "dating" the ECC—that's what Frank calls it—while Rafe says, "That's enough of the dating: Let's go to first base!" I learned about the ECC when I was the music director at St. Edward's. I called then-Presiding Bishop Peter Hickman and learned how the ECC was doing Church in a new way. He was so compassionate and welcoming. I told him, "Peter, I'm struggling: I feel I'm still a priest, and I want to minister in that way, but I'm stuck.

I don't know what to do." I'm so appreciative that the ECC invited me to their synod. I've probably been to three or four synods now. It's important for us to be around other laity and clergy who are doing Church. When Jayme talked about this interjurisdictional, non-jurisdictional gathering, it excited me, and it has been such a pleasure to meet people from various jurisdictions and to learn from one another. And I hope this continues. I need to be around other people who are doing Church like we're doing Church. I'm so nourished by it. I'm so excited by it!

Back to my story. I knew that I was taking a risk by playing music at Rabbouni. I had been providing music for the Sunday evening Mass at Rabbouni for nearly five years, and I was falling in love with that community and what they stood for. I yearned to be more than the music guy on Sunday evenings.

The day came when the pastoral associate of the Roman Catholic parish where I worked, said, "I need to talk to you. Now."

I went to her office. She closed the door and burst into tears.

I said, "Oh, my God. What's wrong?"

She said, "We got a call from the chancery, and someone from the parish has reported you for being involved at Rabbouni."

The pastor was on sabbatical at the time, so she had to deal with this. We were friends, she knew I was providing music at Rabbouni, and she couldn't have cared less.

I was a nervous wreck. Lawman felt personally responsible and couldn't sleep at night because his music minister might get fired. I assured him, "It's not your fault. I knew the risk I was taking."

As I prayed, I heard my heart saying, "Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid!" I loved my ministry in the Roman Church, but I kept hearing, "Don't be afraid!" I tell you: I *was* afraid! It scared the hell out of me: If I chose Rabbouni, I would be cutting off my livelihood and would never be employed by the Roman Catholic Church for the rest of my life! If Rabbouni didn't work out, what the hell was I going to do?

The pastoral associate called to ask if I had made a decision. I said,

> It's a really hard decision, but when I think of being in this [Roman Catholic] parish, there is absolutely nothing within me that wants to invite anyone to be a part of this. But when I think of Rabbouni and churches like it, I want to

shout it from the rooftops! I want to invite everyone into that.

She again burst into tears.

I asked, "Why are you crying?"

She said, "If you want to shout it from the rooftops, I think you just made your decision."

I told her what I was hearing in prayer: "Don't be afraid!" And that's when it clicked: I had to choose Rabbouni!

A long story made short, I resigned. The board at Rabbouni called an emergency meeting, and they asked, "Can we at least help pay your bills?" They said, "You don't need to come here, but your back is against the wall—and we want to at least offer you something, so that you can discern in freedom." I was so incredibly touched that they chose to do that. They also called various people who had some financial resources in the community, and they directly asked them if they would commit an extra number of dollars every month, to help support me for one year. Everybody said yes, and I will be forever grateful.

What strikes me even more is that, when Lawman asked me if I had made a decision, I told him about the words I heard in my heart: "Don't be afraid!"

Lawman teared up and said, "You're kidding."

I said, "No."

He said, "Kevin, I have been agonizing, and I have been praying, and what I heard in my heart was, 'Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid!'"

That was all the confirmation I needed.

To put the frosting on the cake, I didn't attend Rabbouni's board meetings, but I was told that, after the board agreed to take me on as their "child," after that meeting was all over, one of the board members raised his hand and said, "Okay, now that we've done this, and now that Lawman has married a really nice woman, we've got to find a good husband for Kevin!" You have no idea what that meant to me, to hear that from the board. It meant so much to me that he said that, and that apparently everybody on the board just roared with laughter!

I've shared that story with a friend who's a Roman Catholic bishop. About a year ago, he visited me at my condo. He was wearing his pectoral cross, and I said, "You're looking really bishopy today."

He replied, "I had a meeting with *your* archbishop."

I said, "He isn't my archbishop anymore!"

We visited for a few hours, and this Roman Catholic bishop asked me about my experiences as an Independent Catholic priest.

I said, "Well, I'll tell you what: On two different occasions, after I celebrated Mass, two different parishioners on two different occasions came up to me and said, 'Father, are you dating anybody these days? There's this guy that I'd love to hook you up with!'"

My friend, the Roman Catholic bishop, rolled his eyes and laughed! He said, "That's certainly not something you'd hear at a parish council meeting!"

So, yes, there are Roman Catholic bishops out there who support us. They're not all demons, nor do they all demonize us.

One of the things that we notice on our parish's website tracker is that one of most popular pages on our website is "Meet Our Pastors." People want to know who we are, our background, our education and our pastoral experience. They want to see pictures and videos. They want to see that we have a life and a community. They don't want to see pictures of a priest alone, celebrating at an altar. They want to see activity. They want to see social activity. At Rabbouni, we put our homilies online as well. That's an important thing that can help grow a community

Another thing we've talked about is good education. Everyone in ministry needs a good, solid education We've talked about some of the strains of that, including the fact that we don't have a lot of financial resources, so how can we pay for someone's education? It's important that we do this. All jurisdictions are grappling with this.

A lot of our communities are small, so how can we afford to put somebody through an M.Div. program? It's a struggle.

Psychological testing and background checks are important for ministers. That goes without saying. We all need to be doing that, certainly for anybody who's feeling called to ordination, but anybody who works with children must have a background check before they begin to work with our children. It goes without saying.

Over time, our board has created a manual of policies and procedures, so that we have policies in place, in case something happens. One policy we have is that our clergy never have anything to do with counting the collection. The collection should be counted by trusted church members—and at least two or three at the same

time. I don't think the clergy should be counting the collection at all. As a pastor, I would never want to know who's giving what: In my human weakness, those who give the fat checks might otherwise get more of our attention than those who give smaller checks.

Financial transparency is another important thing. We try to publish a quarterly report in our bulletin: how much we're taking in and what we're spending it on. People appreciate that, and they want to know that. People are excited to give when they buy into your mission, and who wouldn't? Why wouldn't they buy into what we're doing? When they buy into our mission, they're willing to give of their time and talent and treasure.

Another important thing for us in this movement is that we be clearly transparent that we are *not* Roman Catholic. I've been to Independent Catholic communities where it was my impression that some, if not a lot, of the parishioners didn't realize it was *not* Roman Catholic. So, get some women priests, and make it obvious that you're not Roman Catholic. At Rabbouni, we are clear on our website and on our literature that we are not Roman Catholic, so that people are not confused.

We also have to be careful not to be anti-Roman Catholic. We don't want to build our communities by being angry or grinding an ax. Anger-centered communities won't grow. Create a new reality that is fun and exciting and is a wonderful thing to celebrate! Positive energy attracts people: Don't create negative energy!

A good reputation is also important. Prior to doing this, Lawman and I had a good reputation in the archdiocese, as good preachers with a certain authenticity. That contributed to our growth.

Humility is important. From the Latin root *humus*, "earth," humility means being earthy or "down-to-earth." Rafe suggested that we need to be the "lowerarchy." I love that. I was a Franciscan, and St. Francis called his brothers the friars minor. He said we were to be "minor," lower than others, closer to the earth—not higher than other people.

We need to be driven by vision, not by success. Instead of thinking, "Their church has more members," we need to be driven by a vision of being an open, inclusive, loving community of faith that is most concerned about helping people deepen their spiritual lives. Period. Twelve-step groups put it well: They're about attraction, not promotion. If people experience an authenticity about us, they're

going to come. If you're not ego-driven, they're going to come. Some of the priests in the archdiocese demonized Lawman—and continue to demonize him—as an egomaniac. "Who does he think he is, starting his own church?" Ironically, some of those same priests yearn to do what he's done. Lawman isn't ego-driven at all. He's a charismatic figure who's just trying to be authentic. Here at Holy Family, Jayme is a charismatic figure. It's not about ego. Lawman welcomed me with open arms and didn't feel threatened in the least by my presence. He was delighted when the community called me forth as a priest again. That makes for a good team.

I'll share with you the story of how I was called forth. I didn't know it was going to happen. It was two months after I joined Rabbouni full-time. It was our anniversary mass, and they called me to the middle aisle after communion. A board member went to the pulpit, and she read the most beautiful reflection on priesthood. And, as she was doing that, another board member put a stole over my shoulders, and she said, "Kevin, 'once a priest, always a priest.' We want to call you our priest!" I wept. There was a standing ovation. It was a dream that I never dreamt, and that moment meant more to me than my priestly ordination—much more, because it was a call from the people, fully knowing me. I still tear up when I think about that.

Diversity is important in our communities. It goes without saying: diversity in race, age, sexual orientation, and political affiliation. We are not "this church" or "that church." We sometimes run into that—but we're not the only ones: Roman churches, Lutherans; it's across the board. We're not the church of the Democratic party or the Republican party. We're simply Church. Yes, we have avid Democrats and avid Republicans: Lawman and I preach, and we allow people to draw their own political conclusions.

You might not think about this, but a parking lot is very important for growth. It is. We started at a tiny Unitarian church in the city, and it had no parking at all. As soon as we moved to a Presbyterian church with a parking lot, we immediately began to see growth—because people could park. I hate to be that miniscule, but we saw immediate growth after we got a church with a parking lot.

Outreach is important. If we focus on ourselves, our growth will be stymied. At Rabbouni, we are altruistic. We are reaching out. We have a monthly opportunity for giving. We're involved with helping nonprofits in the city—financially and through our volunteer service.

We get out into the community. People see us, they get to know us, and the question inevitably arises: "Who are you?" I love that. I have my elevator speech ready, so that I can quickly describe who we are. And people are really curious.

What is my elevator speech? Basically, that we are catholic with a small 'c.' We include everyone. We're catholic, but without the rules! That's my elevator speech. People are really excited when they hear that. People are excited when they see Lawman and his wife and his son. People love to see a priest with a family.

Advertisement can grow our communities, especially early on. Our city paper, the *Courier-Journal*, interviewed Lawman on the front of the religion section one Sunday. That was great, free advertising for us. We've also tried to put some money into advertising: We even ran a TV ad for a year, and we really saw an uptick in our growth. Just recently, our board agreed to take the risk of investing a lot of money in advertising with our local National Public Radio station, to create a blitz advertising campaign on NPR for one year. Hopefully, it'll bear some fruit. Social media is also a tool: On Facebook, you can boost an event and reach 5,000 to 10,000 people for 30 bucks. When you advertise on Facebook, you can choose the demographics, the geographic area, the ages you want to reach, the keywords, like "Independent Catholic" or "inclusive" or "LGBTQ" or "divorced and remarried," and Facebook will channel you to people's pages. Thirty bucks is not a lot to reach that many people.

Independent Catholicism—or whatever we want to call it—is the best-kept secret. I cannot tell you how many people I run into who say it's the best-kept secret. So, get people inviting others! Ask people in your congregation to personally invite someone: a co-worker, a friend, a family member. Personal invitations have certainly helped our community to grow.

The bottom line: attraction rather than promotion. Let's go where the youth are. I'm going to work on that at Rabbouni. Let's go where they are: to the protests where they're supporting immigrants or collecting things.

Another extremely exciting thing is the real sense of humanism we feel when sharing a worship space with another denomination. I love that. I have gotten to know the Presbyterians well, and I love learning about their tradition. Before this, I never hobnobbed with any Protestant ministers, but now I feel a real sense of humanism, and I

love that we can have "pulpit swaps": I've been asked to lead the Presbyterian service, and they are welcomed to celebrate with us. We do things together. We get to know one another's tradition. We share resources, like speakers and talks, retreats and social events. People aren't as threatened to come to a talk, as they are by the thought of coming to Mass. And sometimes, when they come to a talk, that translates into seeing them in the pew the following Sunday.

A board-run church is very important, that people feel ownership. Lawman and I answer to the board, and, as clergy, we don't have a vote on the board; we only have passive voice. It's the board that ultimately makes decisions.

Our parish has a strategic planning ministry. We have an outreach ministry. We have hospitality, bereavement, and social justice ministries. We have fun together, celebrating who we are at anniversaries, picnics, meetings and retreats—gathering and sharing the talents that are in the community.

We're doing church in a way that makes sense to people today. Priests can marry. Communion is open for those who are divorced and remarried. Women enjoy full ministry in the church. All that stuff makes sense to people.

I knew a young couple who wanted to get married. They were struggling with the question of whether to get married in their liberal Roman Catholic parish, or ours. They talked to me and finally decided to join Rabbouni. Why? Because even at their liberal Roman Catholic parish, women can't be ordained, and our LGBTQ sisters and brothers can't be married. They said, "We prayed together, and we discerned that we want to be part of a community where we can celebrate all of that." So, they joined us. As a result of joining us, some of their friends are beginning to show up now, and that's really exciting.

It also goes without saying that we must be people of prayer. As Rafe said yesterday, piety is not a matter of ritual, but an interior journey of the heart. That's where we need to start, and where we always need to stay rooted.

Reflections on The Creation of Community and Experience in the Old/Independent Catholic Tradition

"Some years ago, I was where you were, as the pastor of an Independent Catholic parish and as a full-time musician in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. They were so screwed up about child abuse that I was the least of their problems.

In terms of clergy training, the Ascension Alliance has a theological college. Mark Newman has a similar program. And it's not going to cost you a lot of money. We have good people teaching courses. So, let's stay 'in-house.' You don't have to spend a fortune for a quality education.

With all due respect to Mike, a lot of Roman Catholic priests aren't good at saying Mass. They know what the rules are, but, when you sit in the balcony as an organist, and you look down and see what goes on in a lot Roman Catholic churches, it's not pretty. It really is not. And, frankly, we can do better than that. There are places within the Roman Catholic Church where they really shine, where they do things very well, but frankly, several others don't. And when I see a lot of Old and Independent Catholic clergy presiding at liturgy, they're bringing some of the worst habits of the Roman Catholic Church into what they're doing. We can do better.

In terms of the music, I find that a lot of people are afraid of music. They think they can't sing. So I'm just recommending: Don't be afraid to keep it simple and honest, and try to stay away from playing CDs all the time. If it's real people singing, that's honest, and that's powerful. I had a parish in Baltimore, and we ended up with a small community of eight or ten, including a lot of somewhat disaffected church musicians, and we ended up having four-part singing in the congregation.

My final thought is: Don't simply count numbers."

Bishop Theodore Feldmann
New Orleans, Louisiana

"Another thing that comes to mind, in terms of music, is inculturation. I'm sure Jayme has had that experience here, with the Hispanic community. David, we talked about that in terms of the African-American community in your parish. And I couldn't believe, David, that you've had some people criticize Protestant African music

as not being appropriate for Catholic worship. Many of us, in our communities, think that the inculturation of music is a good thing."

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"Because we're small, we're able to have dialogue homilies. I keep my words short, and then I sit down, and everyone gets to say what they heard in the readings and homily, and how it relates to their lives. They use real-life examples, which really freshens it up for a lot of people. And we have dialogue Eucharistic prayers. I say, 'Liturgy means the work of the people, so, if you're not working at this, too, it's not liturgy!' We have fellowship and breakfast every single Sunday, with a quiche or something like that. We call it 'the eighth sacrament.' Once a quarter, we have an *agape* Mass, where I'm not up at the altar. The tables are all in a great, big square, and we begin by sitting around the table and eating breakfast. We pray, and then someone stands up and shares the readings as we're eating, and, in the middle of the meal, we have a discussion about the readings. Then we pull out the bread and the wine. We consecrate the Eucharist as we're all sitting at the table, so Mass becomes something that *they* do. People love that!"

Bishop Rosemary Ananis
Wells, Maine

"We come together for a monthly meal after Mass, and, because we're in the downtown area, homeless people sometimes come off the street. We encourage them, saying, 'If you don't want to come to church, come and eat with us!' That's been very powerful for us."

Bishop David Strong
Tacoma, Washington

"One of the things I'm always curious about is this concept of changing what has already been set for us. It happens a lot in the Independent Sacramental Movement. David Martins always says, 'Read the black, and do the read.' The missal is there for us. As Western Rite Christians, we're operating in a tradition that is liturgically set for us. So I'm just always curious about what has worked in the things people change in the liturgy. I find that very interesting, and I want to know why we do that, and has that been

favored? In my parish, it's never been favored. At times we've tried, or another presider has come and done something, and people say, 'What the hell was that?' And they hate it. So, I'm just wondering: Is it a cultural thing? We're a predominantly Latino church, which tends to be more conservative, and we like things more set to a standard."

Father Mike Lopez
Ridgewood, New York

"I think it's a matter of diversity and listening to the local community. One local community may be much more into inclusive language. Another community may be down the middle with that. As someone who has a degree in liturgy, one of the things that was impressed on me in the Roman system is that the Latin *editio typica* often says 'in these or similar words.' Prior to the new missal, adaptations were allowed. There was some flexibility. A lot of it is just being attentive to your local community. At Rabbouni, we pretty much stick to the 'old' [second edition] Roman Sacramentary. I personally clean up a lot of the exclusive language. Lawman does some of that. Mike Seeger from the ECC wrote a beautiful Eucharistic prayer. It's absolutely gorgeous. I sometimes use that. I love the fact that we can still sing the Eucharistic prayer. In the new missal of the Roman Church, they're not allowed to do that anymore. We can have a certain amount of creativity and flexibility."

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"My parish is Anglican rite, so we'll sometimes borrow from different Anglican rites, like the Church of Canada or the Church of England, to give my parishioners a broader view of Anglicanism, especially some that might be a little more catholic-oriented. Some of our folks have gone to Utrecht and asked, 'What missal would you recommend?' And they've said, 'Our partners in America are the Episcopal Church, so theirs is a good missal.' And a lot of their new prayers actually came from the Church of Canada."

Father Dewayne Messenger
Sand Springs, Oklahoma

"One of the things I like to do is use the prayers of the 1998 Roman Missal, that was promulgated by the U.S. Catholic bishops but then summarily dismissed in Rome. You can buy it online. I love using it. It has beautifully-poetic prayers for all three years."

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"It's important for us to engage the community in some form of public service. We serve at a soup kitchen once a month, and we get involved in ecumenical and interfaith groups. The laity really appreciate seeing that kind of engagement. It's a definite commitment. And I have a prejudice for using the old [second edition] missal, because I like using a book, rather than a notebook. There's something about the solidity of the missal."

Bishop Leonard Walker
Kingman, Arizona

"Emmaus started book club groups last Lent. Mary led one. I led one. Father Jake led one. We understand that, for a lot of folks from the Roman tradition, their education stopped after they were confirmed, so they've gone through their adult life with no formation. They haven't grown. They haven't been challenged. We've learned from it as facilitators, and it has generated interest among people."

Virginia-Michele "Mimi" Maki
Oshkosh, Wisconsin

"At Rabbouni, we don't have a formal formation process. When I see new faces at Rabbouni, I always welcome them, especially those who are praying with us for the first time. I thank them, and I tell them that we are honored that they have chosen to pray with us—because I know that some people are scared to walk through our doors. It also alerts people in our community to look around for those new faces, to introduce themselves. It's a natural process. I always say, 'For those of you who are new, I invite you to pray with us for a while, and, if who we are and what we do resonates with you and helps you in your journey, please continue to come back.' From then on, formation is a one-on-one thing, either with Lawman or me, or a lot of our folks will gather around a new people and welcome them and answer their questions. We did RCIA one year because one of our

non-Catholic musicians fell in love with our community and wanted to become Catholic. So, that one time, we had a formal process. Other than that, it's a very informal process. For young people, we have a youth minister. We don't have any high school students yet, but we have 'tweens, so our youth minister works with them. Also, we're big on service with youth. They really respond to that. For some reason, the teenagers show up when we have a service project. So, we do have a regular youth formation and outreach."

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

El Sínodo Amazónico del 6 al 27 de octubre del 2019

Father Libardo Rocha
Holy Family Catholic Church
Austin, Texas

Father Libardo Rocha composed a reflection in Spanish on the Roman Catholic Church's Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon region (a.k.a., the Amazon Synod), which concluded on the same day as our time together in Austin. He wished to share the following reflection with all who attended this gathering. An English translation follows.

Cuando pienso en todo el polvorín que está levantando el famoso sínodo pan amazónico con respecto a temas de gran actualidad en la Iglesia Católica Romana, y en todos los católicos atentos a lo que sucede en Roma, y que el Papa Francisco ha hecho desempolvar y puesto en el centro de la discusión tales temas como los famosos *viri probati*, el tema del diaconado para las mujeres, los ritos amazónicos, y la ecología—este último muy en el corazón del actual pontífice—quisiera detenerme por un momento en uno de los que más ha hecho correr tinta en el papel en estos días, y es el de los famosos *viri probati*, para aportar algo que, a mi parecer, nos puede ayudar en la reflexión y entrar en el ruedo de la discusión.

Partamos con un primer punto tratando de entender qué quiere decir exactamente *viri probati*. El origen de esta frase evidentemente es latino, porque en la Iglesia Católica somos especialistas en usar raíces latinas en nuestros escritos o cuando hablamos. El común de las personas no entiende ese idioma, y se puede decir, sin ofender la sensibilidad intelectual de los que aman el latín, que estos son términos que casi nadie logra entender, y eso hace que no logremos prestarles toda la atención que se merecen por estar escritos en latín.

¿Qué son los *viri probati*? Este término no es nuevo. No lo han sacado los padres sinodales en estos días en Roma de la manga mágica que usan los magos para impresionar a la gente, o para despistar a los que no entienden esa terminología de alto discurso teológico. El término fue usado muchos años atrás, en la primera epístola de Clemente, el Padre Apostólico, dirigida a los cristianos de

la ciudad de Corinto. De finales del siglo primero o comienzos del siglo segundo, se usó el término *viri probati*. Muchos años más tarde, apareció de nuevo en el Concilio Vaticano II (1962-1965), con la que la Iglesia Católica Romana se refiere a los hombres casados de vida cristiana madura y contrastada a los que, de modo extraordinario, se admite conferirles la ordenación sacerdotal.

Pero el problema va más allá, porque lo que se está debatiendo en este momento es el celibato sacerdotal en la Iglesia Católica Romana. Abrir una ventana en la Iglesia Católica Romana para que puedan entrar y para que tengan asiento en el sanedrín de la Iglesia los famosos *viri probati,* tiene dos riesgos, a mi parecer: Crear sacerdotes de primera y de segunda clase, que sería regresar a la época medieval cuando existía el alto clero y el bajo clero "evidentemente todos célibes". El otro riesgo es que se le está abriendo ya, no la ventana de la Iglesia, sino la puerta a la posibilidad de abolir el celibato, que, por muchos años, grandes e importantes jerarcas de la Iglesia han defendido con toda clase de argumentos.

Retrocedamos en el tiempo, si es que queremos tener una visión más amplia del celibato sacerdotal en la Iglesia. No es original en el cristianismo y particularmente en los sacerdotes de la Iglesia Católica ser célibes y comportarse como célibes. En otras culturas milenarias que preceden el cristianismo, encontramos la figura de hombres y mujeres consagrados y célibes. En el hinduismo en la India y en el budismo, surgen estos personajes, los ascetas y anacoretas que se alejaban del mundo material para encontrar respuestas de lo trascendental a través de la contemplación.

El budismo precede al cristianismo, y en él encontramos hombres y mujeres que, tratando de liberarse de lo material del mundo, encuentran una filosofía de vida que, según ellos, los proyecta a la plena realización de ser. En el ejercicio de este modo de vida, no está contemplado el vivir como parejas o casados, porque también renuncian a apegarse a otras personas. Emociones, deseos y sentimientos vienen puesto a parte, para alcanzar el Nirvana, estado de liberación del sufrimiento, mediante diferentes práctica y técnicas espirituales. Eso es celibato con otras motivaciones, pero con connotaciones religiosas que evidentemente no tiene nada que ver con Cristo.

No podemos ignorar algunos grandes maestros de las escuelas filosóficas griegas—Sócrates, Platón y Aristóteles, entre otros—que

preferían vivir célibes para dedicarse completamente al estudio de las ciencias.

También leemos de las famosas Vestales en el Imperio Romano, sacerdotisas consagradas a Vesta, la diosa del hogar, para mantener el fuego encendido de seguridad y protección que traía al Imperio. Eran consagradas, vírgenes y célibes.

Regresemos a las fuentes de inspiración divina, a las cuales podemos pedirles una respuesta cuando se trata del celibato en el judaísmo, resulta paradójico el escaso valor que, en el Antiguo Testamento, le da al celibato. Al contrario, en el judaísmo bíblico, el celibato y la imposibilidad de procrear (o la esterilidad) eran más bien vistos como una maldición divina. Poblar la tierra viene considerado como un mandato divino, tal como está expresado en la antropología del libro del Génesis. Me llama la atención que, en el paraíso que Dios creó para la humanidad, en donde todo estaba bien hecho porque era fruto de la mano divina antes de la caída, Dios los bendice, y les dice: "Sean fecundos y multiplíquense. Llenen la tierra" (Gén. 1,28). "Por esta razón, un hombre dejará a su madre y a su padre, y se unirá a su esposa, y se convertirán en una sola carne" (Gén. 2,24). Éste es el clásico texto bíblico que usamos en las celebraciones de los matrimonios para darle fundamento bíblico al sacramento. Nuevamente después del relato del diluvio universal, Dios bendice a Noé y a sus hijos, y les dice: "Crezcan, multiplíquense y pueblen la tierra" (Gén. 9,1). Otro pasaje bíblico en donde se demuestra el deber de procrearse lo encontramos en Sara, la esposa de Abram. "Ya que Yavé me ha hecho estéril, toma a mi esclava, y únete a ella, a ver si yo tendré algún día hijo por medio de ella" (Gén. 16,1-2). Otro de los relatos interesantes es el que tiene que ver con la vida de Jacob, el padre de las doce tribus de Israel (Gén. 29,30), en donde encontramos un panorama rico de deseos de procrear considerado como una bendición de Dios.

Estas citas son sólo el comienzo de todo el Antiguo Testamento que parece estar bañado con un rocío de muchas bendiciones cuando son numerosos en una familia y en la que no tiene lugar el celibato. Otros ejemplos de este rocío son la promesa hecha por Dios a Abraham (Gén. 22,17) y la promesa a los hijos de Israel (Is. 48,19). Seguir más el elenco de las citas bíblicas, de donde tener numerosos hijos es una grande riqueza y bendición, demuestra que en todo el Antiguo Testamento no hay espacio para el celibato, con algunas excepciones.

No podemos tampoco, en una carrera ciega para demostrar que en el Antiguo Testamento el celibato no era bien visto y que no tenía mucha importancia, negar que también hubo sus excepciones en donde algunos profetas o personajes del Antiguo Testamento fueron célibes: Elías, Eliseo, y, es más, al profeta Jeremías Dios le prohíbe casarse (Jer. 16,2).

Ahora bien, abramos despacio la puerta del Nuevo Testamento. Jesús sana a la suegra de Pedro, que quiere decir que Pedro era casado (Mt. 8,14). Llama al apóstol Mateo y se aloja en su casa: con grande probabilidad también era casado (Mt. 9,9-10). Jesús llama a sus discípulos (Mc. 3,13-19; Lc. 6,12-16) entre los cuales no hay duda que algunos de ellos no eran célibes. Eso demuestra que no era indispensable para seguir a Jesús el celibato. Yo le llamaría al grupo de los discípulos de Jesús una comunidad mixta de hombres casados y no casados que se convirtieron en sus discípulos cuando él los llamó, pero que siguieron manteniendo contacto con sus familias de origen.

Ahora vamos a la famosa frase de los eunucos por el Reino de Dios, célebre porque es la que siempre nos muestran para decirnos que, si queremos consagrarnos enteramente a Dios, el mismo Cristo lo dijo, "eunucos". "Y hay eunucos que se hicieron tales a sí mismos por el Reino de los cielos" (Mt. 19,12). Tengamos en cuenta un detalle: que este pasaje bíblico sólo lo encontramos en Mateo, que está en el contexto de la pregunta sobre el divorcio, y que no fue una pregunta hecha por los fariseos para referirse al celibato. Por tanto, vale la pena hacer hermenéutica de este texto. "Quien pueda entender, que entienda" (Mt. 11,15; 13,9 y 13:43; Mc. 4,9; Lc. 8,8 y 14,35). Primero que todo, a mi parecer, no existe una exigencia absoluta en estas palabras, que el celibato sea necesario para seguir a Jesús y consagrarse totalmente a él.

"Hay hombres que han nacido eunucos. Otros que fueron mutilados por los hombres" (Mt. 19,12). Diría que la analogía con los dos tipos de eunucos inclina a creer que no se trata tan sólo del celibato, sino de una incapacidad absoluta de ser célibes. Tengamos en cuenta que la auto-castración estaba severamente prohibida en el judaísmo (Dt. 23,2-9). A mi parecer, la consagración total a Cristo no excluye ser casados y ser consagrados a Él, ya que en el grupo de los doce había discípulos que tenían familia, y eso Cristo lo sabía.

Otro detalle que valdría la pena tener en cuenta es que, en la cultura hebraica al tiempo de Jesús, el celibato no era bien visto, creaba

sospechas, y los que se decidían por el celibato se les consideraba fuera de lo normal. En la comunidad primitiva, el celibato no era ningún ideal. Había corrientes célibes en grupos judíos. Pienso en este momento en los famosos Esenios de Qumrán, descubiertos en 1947. Pero, en el judaísmo, por norma general, se rechazaba el celibato.

En el Nuevo Testamento, fuera de Mateo 19,12, la palabra "eunuco" sólo la encontramos en el pasaje del dignatario de la reina etíope, convertido y bautizado por Felipe (Hch. 8,27).

Pero entonces vayamos a las preguntas claves. ¿Por qué el Cristo histórico fue célibe, cuando se encontraba en un terreno hostil a ese estilo de vida? ¿Por qué en ninguna parte de los evangelios, Jesús no se autodenomina "célibe" y más aún no se enorgullece de serlo? ¿Por qué en ninguna parte de los evangelios, Jesús es explícito, diciendo claramente que, para seguirlo a él, es necesario ser célibe?

El Reino de Dios, como razón de su celibato, debe entenderse como una metáfora de su vida divina, su relación íntima y peculiar con el Padre, que lo motivó a una forma de vida inusual y chocante. Subrayando la divinidad y la humanidad de Cristo (Concilio de Calcedonia, 451 d.C.), el Reino de Dios como objetivo del celibato de Jesús se manifiesta en la importancia de su predicación, en su orientación apostólica, y, con cierta incompatibilidad, con la urgencia de su misión, ya que necesariamente tendría que regresar al Padre por su divinidad (Mc. 16,19; Lc. 24,50-53). Pero su humanidad no excluía la posibilidad de una esposa y de una vida de familia.

No aparece en el Nuevo Testamento la importancia del celibato de Cristo explícitamente, pero tampoco aparece que se niega rotundamente la posibilidad de un Cristo con esposa y con hijos.

En cambio, en los evangelios encontramos muchísimos textos que hacen apología a la familia.

- El evangelio de Mateo inicia con la genealogía de Jesús (Mt. 1,1-17).
- Dios elige una familia para que su hijo Jesús entre en la historia (Mt. 1,18).
- El hombre abandona a su padre y a su madre para conformar una familia (Mt. 19,5).
- Jesús compara el Reino de Dios como un banquete de bodas (Mt. 22,1).
- Lo que Dios unió, no lo separe el hombre (Mc. 10,1-12).

- El nacimiento de Juan el Bautista en una familia donde la madre era estéril y el padre era de edad avanzada (Lc. 1,5-14).
- Jesús nace en una familia (Lc. 2,1-7).
- Jesús viene presentado en el templo por su familia (Lc. 2:21-40).
- La genealogía de Jesús como miembro a todos los efectos de una familia (Lc. 3:23-38).
- Jesús amaba visitar y alojarse en familia (Lc.10,38-42 y 19,1-10).
- El primer milagro de Jesús ocurrió en una fiesta de familia (Jn. 2,1-12).
- Resucita a un amigo de una familia muy unida a él (Jn. 11,1-44).
- Jesús amaba compartir y cenar con sus amigos en familia (Jn. 12,1-8).

Por tanto, en los evangelios, cuando se trata de familia y todo lo que se requiere para llevar una vida normal, Jesús siempre está ahí. Entonces, ¿cuál sería el problema si él hubiera conformado una familia?

Yendo más allá de los evangelios, encontramos la figura muy especial de Pablo (o Saulo) de Tarso, el famoso "apóstol de los gentiles" o "el apóstol de las naciones". La figura de este personaje a mi parecer es muy ambigua con respecto al tema del celibato. Vivió célibe en la misma cultura, tiempo y espacio en donde vivió el Cristo histórico, pero hay algunas notas de su vida que me llaman la atención. Siendo un conocedor de las escrituras y de la ley, prefiere vivir célibe en el mismo contexto de sospechas y no bien visto, en que vivió Jesús.

Pablo es el personaje del Nuevo Testamento que más se ocupa en sus escritos del tema de la sexualidad, y con él inicia un cambio total en todo lo que respecta a este argumento, ya que hace entrar el demonio en la cuestión de la sexualidad. La sexualidad con Pablo adquiere matices no de bendiciones, como se veía en el Antiguo Testamento, sino que viene considerada en algunos de sus escritos como algo peligroso, que puede ser usada por el demonio para tentarnos y distraernos. Pablo habla de la tiranía del sexo (1Cor. 7). En este texto, en donde habla del matrimonio y de la virginidad, él manifiesta claramente que está bien viviendo su celibato y lo aconseja, subrayando la nobleza de vivir célibe (1Cor. 7,32-35). A mi parecer, en este capítulo siete de la primera carta a los corintios, es donde Pablo justifica su vivir célibe, pero, ojo con el versículo 25: "No tengo

mandato del Señor, pero les aconsejo"; diría un consejo santo que no excluye la vida en familia para una consagración al Señor.

Pero pienso que me he quedado corto con respecto al tema de sexualidad en la teología Paulina, y que merece un estudio mucho más profundo. Prometo que seré más ubérrimo en mi próximo libro, en donde el tema será el celibato.

Vamos a un segundo punto, tratando de entender todo el enredo que, entorno a la sexualidad, se ha dado y toda la literatura que existe con respecto al tema del celibato: Si bien es cierto en el recorrido que hemos hecho hasta aquí, subrayo una vez más, a mi parecer, no existe incompatibilidad en una consagración sacerdotal siendo casados y teniendo una familia. Entonces, ¿en dónde se armó todo el problema?

Me resisto a creer que, en las comunidades cristianas primitivas, el tema de la sexualidad fuera asociado fuertemente al pecado, aunque en Pablo ya encontramos inicios de esa tendencia. Hay que tener en cuenta que las comunidades cristianas vivían en un estado de asedio y persecución constante. Por tanto, no creo que fuera el tema fundamental de la meditación diaria o semanal cuando se reunían para celebrar la fracción del pan o día del Señor.

Yo creo que el problema viene cuando pasaron las persecuciones con el Edicto de Milán (313 d.C.) y, bajo la aceptación del impero, comienzan a establecerse doctrinas y se crean corrientes y al mismo tiempo luchas intestinas para establecer líneas de espiritualidad. Es en donde, de alguna forma u otra, prevalece la idea griega que valora el espíritu por encima del cuerpo. Y es donde aparece la figura del gran San Agustín (354-430 d.C.), padre y doctor de la Iglesia, "Doctor de Gracia" y obispo de Hipona. A este gran genio de la humanidad, le debemos el favor de haberle puesto cachos y vestido de demonio nuestra sexualidad. A él, le debemos la afirmación que el acto sexual va mucho más allá del pecado, ya que el placer sexual es un acto impuro y vergonzoso. El deseo sexual fue lo que empujó a Adán a dejarse embrollar por la compañera que Dios le había dado asociando por primera vez el deseo sexual con los orígenes del pecado. Por casi dos mil años, la doctrina agustiniana del pecado ha hecho escuela asociando la sexualidad a todo lo que es impuro, pecaminoso y sucio. Me pregunto, ¿qué problemas tendría San Agustín con su sexualidad, al punto de despreciarla y catalogarla entre los más bajos instintos de la humanidad? El santo, con respecto a este tema, tiene una deuda con

las ciencias psicológicas y psiquiátricas. Y fue entonces cuando el problema comenzó.

Luego aparece otro personaje no menos importante: Martín Lutero (1483-1546), teólogo, monje alemán, agustiniano de la Iglesia Católica Romana. De este personaje, tendríamos mucho que decir, y al mismo tiempo tenemos muchos que agradecerle. Esta frase hará decir a algunos de mis críticos que, de grande defensor del catolicismo romano, me he convertido en luterano; en realidad, no es así. "Den al César lo que es del César, y a Dios lo que es de Dios" (Mt. 22,15-21). En el año 1517, con la publicación de las 95 tesis en la puerta de la Iglesia de Todos los Santos de Wittenberg, en Alemania, Martín Lutero rechaza rotundamente, entre otras cosas, el monstruo de doctrina que creó San Agustín—que el sexo era algo sucio, despreciable y pecaminoso—rompiendo, gracias a Dios, el vínculo que el obispo de Hipona había creado entre sexo y pecado original. Lutero declaró que el sexo es un don de Dios. Es algo bello y bueno, y que hace parte intrínseca de nuestra persona. Pero los efectos colaterales de la teología de San Agustín sobre el sexo siguen vigentes en la Iglesia, que no se desprende de la idea de asociarlo con el pecado original. Esto hace que el sexo fuera del matrimonio y el sexo por placer no es aceptado por la Iglesia Católica Romana.

Ahora escuchemos lo que dicen eminentes jerarcas de la Iglesia Católica Romana en defensa del celibato y en oposición al matrimonio de los sacerdotes.

El cardenal alemán Gerhard Ludwig Müller, ex prefecto de la Congregación de la Fe dice, "Creo que es equivocado los *viri probati*. Ya hay diáconos casados. Si lo introducimos, deben respetar las costumbres de la Iglesia antigua: Deben vivir en castidad". "Ningún papa, ni la mayoría de los obispos, pueden cambiar los dogmas o las leyes de derecho divino de acuerdo a sus propios placeres". Me permito recordarle al señor cardenal que la ley del celibato no es dogma de fe, y no es una regla o norma de derecho divino.

Veamos qué dice el cardenal Robert Sarah, Prefecto de la Congregación para el Culto Divino y de la Disciplina de los Sacramentos: "Destruir el celibato es herir a la Iglesia y el sacerdocio de Jesús." "Me provoca desconcierto que algunos quieran fabricar un nuevo sacerdocio a escala humana. Estoy convencido de que ordenar hombres casados no resolverá el problema de la falta de sacerdotes. Ya no han sido llamados por Dios al sacerdocio, sino a la vida

conyugal". Me permito recordarle al señor cardenal guineano de origen africano, y que me desmienta si el primer "papa" de la Iglesia Católica, Pedro, no era casado. ¿No tenía suegra, y por consiguiente esposa? También una de las existencias del Sacramento del Matrimonio ¿no es la búsqueda de la santidad?

Nos dice el señor cardenal arzobispo emérito de Caracas, Venezuela, Jorge Liberato Urosa Savino: "Ordenar sacerdotes casados es una solución problemática". "¿Por qué debilitar la disciplina y el valor del celibato sacerdotal con una solución imperfecta y problemática para las poblaciones indígenas de la Amazonia y para la Iglesia universal?" "Repito, hay muchos interrogantes serios sobre la ordenación de esos buenos ancianos casados. Y no resolvería los problemas de la situación actual. Yo no lo veo conveniente ni útil". Y le diría yo al señor cardenal venezolano: A Jesús, no le pareció problemático cuando hizo descender el Espíritu Santo sobre los apóstoles, en donde algunos eran casados. Entonces, ¿Jesús se equivocó? Tengamos en cuenta que siglos más adelante, la misma Iglesia contradijo a Jesús, inventándose un sistema que ahora nos presentan como mejor: "el celibato".

Éstas son las voces que resuenan en estos momentos en Roma, entre otros, en defensa del celibato, y que valdría la pena profundizar más el tema digno de una tesis doctoral.

Hago síntesis del problema que genera el sacerdocio de los hombres casados y en este caso de los famosos *viri probati*. Pueda que la desaparición de la norma disciplinaria del celibato en la Iglesia Católica Romana no solucione el problema de la escasez de sacerdotes, como lo plantea el cardenal Urosa. Pero, a mi parecer, cambiaría la visión antropológica, y el modo como siempre se ha tratado el tema, ya que estoy convencido que siempre se ha estudiado desconociendo la integridad humana de la persona y proyectándola sólo a la dimensión espiritual. Resuenan siempre en mi memoria las frases del seminario que no se pueden olvidar: "El sacerdote se configura con Cristo pastor-célibe" (Is. 40,11; Jn. 10,11; Heb. 13,20; 1Ped. 5,4).

El problema es que casi nadie habla de la doctrina. Aquí me voy a convertir en un escándalo que me puede llevar a la hoguera de la Santa Inquisición, no la antigua, que parece que se extinguió, sino la moderna, que sigue vigente: El celibato tiene como base, quizás inconsciente, el desprecio tradicional de la mujer y en consecuencia

de la vida sana familiar y de las relaciones sexuales. Vuelven los cachos y el demonio con los cuales vistió el gran San Agustín nuestra sexualidad.

¿Cómo es posible que la condición de padre de familia o, para ir más allá, la condición de madre de familia sea incompatible con tan sublime ministerio del Orden Sacerdotal?

El debate en la Iglesia Católica Romana sobre el celibato, parece hoy por hoy un debate bizantino, porque encuentro en este argumento una desviación de donde se manifiesta el desprecio de lo humano, del sexo, de la mujer, del que tiene inclinaciones sexuales diferentes, lo cual coloca a los sacerdotes de la Iglesia Católica Romana en un puesto arrogante de superioridad, en aras del celibato, configurándose con Cristo, pasando casi que por divinos y propietarios con ese "don" de una segura santidad, poniendo en tela de juicio a los sacerdotes que no son célibes, y por tanto difícilmente santos.

Gracias a Dios, en la Iglesia Católica Independiente, encontramos la posibilidad de optar, y no sólo en nuestra Iglesia; también esa opción existe en la Iglesia Católica Ortodoxa.

El objetivo de este artículo es llamar a la reflexión, creando puentes de comunión con miembros de la Iglesia Católica Independiente, y que a todos los efectos nos sentimos católicos en virtud del bautismo. No estamos y no queremos estar bajo la jurisdicción de Roma a no restar en silencio y alzar la voz en lo que respecta a temas que nos hacen diferente de la Iglesia Católica Romana, pero, que subrayo una vez más, somos y nos sentimos verdaderos católicos. Y si nos quedamos como simples islas rodeadas de aguas putrefactas y sin oxígeno, y mucho menos sin puentes robustos de comunión. Sostenidos con la gracia del Espíritu Santo, tenemos el riesgo de que cualquier huracán pueda borrarnos de la faz de la tierra.

Dios nos tenga de su mano.

The Amazon Synod of October 6-27, 2019

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Father Libardo Rocha composed a reflection in Spanish on the Roman Catholic Church's Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon region (a.k.a., the Amazon Synod), which concluded on the same day that this gathering commenced. He wished to share this following reflection with all who attended. Below is an English translation of his reflection.

When I think of all the dust that the famous Amazon Synod is raising regarding issues of great relevance in the Roman Catholic Church, with all Catholics watching what's happening in Rome, and with Pope Francis dusting off such topics as the famous *viri probati*, the diaconate for women, Amazonian rites, and ecology—the latter being very much in the heart of the current pontiff—I pause to reflect on one of the issues for which they're spilling the most ink during these days of the synod: the issue of the famous *viri probati*. I hope to contribute to the reflection and conversation on this topic.

Let's begin by trying to understand what exactly the *viri probati* are. The origin of this phrase is evidently Latin, because, in the Catholic Church, we are specialists in using Latin roots in our discourses and writings. Most people don't understand Latin, and, without wanting to offend the intellectual sensibility of those who love Latin, the fact that people don't understand these Latin words leads to these terms not receiving the attention they deserve.

What are *viri probati*? The term is not new. The bishops at this synod in Rome didn't pull this phrase from their sleeves, like magicians hoping to impress their audiences, nor did they use it in an attempt to mislead those who don't understand the terminology of high theological discourse. This term has been used for centuries, since at least the First Letter of Clement, the apostolic father who addressed his letter to the Christians of the city of Corinth. The phrase *viri probati* has been used at least since the end of the first century or the beginning of the second century. Centuries later, the phrase appeared at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), as the Roman Catholic

Church's way to refer to mature, married men of extraordinary life, who were admitted to the sacrament of Holy Orders.

But the problem goes further, because what is being debated at the moment is priestly celibacy in the Roman Catholic Church. In my opinion, opening a window in the Roman Catholic Church, so that the famous *viri probati* can enter and have a seat in the Sanhedrin of the Church, involves two risks. The first risk is the creation of first-class and second-class priests, which would be a return to medieval times when there were high clergy and low clergy, "obviously all celibate." The other risk is that this conversation is already opening, not merely a window of the Church, but the door to the possibility of abolishing celibacy, which, for many years, has been defended with all kinds of arguments from great and important Church leaders.

If we want to possess a broader vision of priestly celibacy in the Church, we need to go back in time. Being celibate or behaving in a celibate way is not original to Christianity or to priests of the Roman Catholic Church. We find consecrated and celibate men and women in other ancient cultures that preceded Christianity. In Buddhism and in the Hinduism of India, we find ascetics and anchorites who left behind the material world to seek answers to transcendental questions through contemplation.

Buddhism precedes Christianity and contains men and women who, trying to free themselves from the material world, encounter a philosophy of life that, according to them, projects them to the full realization of being. Because they renounce attachment to other persons, coupled and married life aren't contemplated in the exercise of the Buddhist way of life. In an attempt to attain Nirvana, a state of liberation from suffering, all emotions, desires and feelings are set aside through a variety of spiritual practices and techniques. It is a type of celibacy with religious connotations, but obviously with no relation to Christ.

We cannot ignore the great teachers of the Greek philosophical schools—Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, among others—who preferred to live a celibate life in order to devote themselves fully to the acquisition of knowledge.

We also read of the famous Vestals, or Vestal Virgins, in the Roman Empire. They were priestesses consecrated to Vesta, the goddess of the home, and were dedicated to securing and protecting fire for the Empire. As consecrated virgins, they were celibate.

We return to sources of divine inspiration, to see what we might learn of celibacy in Judaism, which paradoxically assigns very little value to celibacy in the Hebrew scriptures. On the contrary, in biblical Judaism, celibacy and the inability to procreate (or sterility) were viewed as a divine curse. Populating the earth was a divine mandate, as expressed in the anthropology of the book of Genesis. When God created the human person in paradise, where everything was deemed good prior to the Fall, God blesses the first human persons and instructed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28). "For this reason, a man will leave his mother and father, and cleave to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). This is a classic biblical text at wedding celebrations, providing the sacrament a biblical foundation. Again, after the story of the universal flood, God blessed Noah and his children, and said: "Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1). Another biblical passage demonstrating the duty to procreate is found in the story of Sara, who told her husband, Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her" (Gen. 16:1-2). Another interesting story pertains to Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen. 29:30), whose rich panorama of desires to procreate was considered a blessing from God.

These quotes are only the beginning of the entire Hebrew scriptures, which seems to be bathed in a dew of many blessings when a family is comprised of many members and in which celibacy has no place. Other examples of this "dew" are the promise made by God to Abraham (Gen. 22:17) and the promise to the children of Israel (Is. 48:19). We could easily follow this thread of biblical quotations, where having numerous children is considered a source of great wealth and blessing, to prove that, with few exceptions, the Hebrew scriptures have little room for celibacy.

We cannot blindly race to the conclusion that the Hebrew scriptures didn't value celibacy, nor can we deny that there were also exceptions, with such celibate prophets as Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah, who was forbidden to marry by God (Jer. 16,2).

Now, let us slowly open the door of the Christian scriptures. Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law, which means that Peter was married (Mt. 8:14). Jesus calls the apostle Matthew and stays in his house, which suggests with high probability that Matthew was also married (Mt. 9:9-10). Jesus calls his disciples (Mk 3:13-19; Lk 6:12-16) among whom

there is no doubt that some of them were married. This tells us that celibacy was not a prerequisite for following Christ. I would suggest that Jesus' disciples were a mixed community of married and unmarried people who became his disciples and who continued to maintain contact with their families of origin.

Now we turn to the famous phrase of the "eunuchs for the Kingdom of God." It's famous because it's used to suggest that those who want to devote themselves entirely to God must be "eunuchs." "There are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 19:12). Consider one detail: This biblical passage is found only in Matthew and in the context of a question about divorce, and the Pharisees were not even asking a question that related to celibacy. It's worth engaging in hermeneutics on the text. "Let the one who has ears listen" (Mt. 11:15, 13:9 & 13:43, Mk. 4:9, Lk. 8:8 & 14:35). In my opinion, these words suggest no absolute requirement for celibacy to follow Jesus or to devote one's self totally to him.

"There are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others"(Mt. 19:12). Jesus speaks of two types of eunuchs, leading us to believe he's not merely speaking of celibacy, but also of an absolute inability to procreate. We recall that self-castration was severely prohibited in Judaism (Dt. 23:1-8). Total consecration to Christ does not exclude the possibility of simultaneously being married and being consecrated to Him, since, among the Twelve, there were disciples who had families, and Christ knew this.

Another detail that would be worth bearing in mind is that, in the Hebrew culture at the time of Jesus, celibacy was not well regarded. It created suspicion, and those who chose celibacy for themselves were considered out of the ordinary. In Jesus' time, celibacy was no ideal. There were currents of celibacy in some Jewish groups, like those who wrote the famous Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947, but, as a general rule, celibacy was rejected in Judaism.

In the New Testament, outside Matthew 19:12, the word "eunuch" is found only in the passage of the Ethiopian queen's dignitary, who was converted and baptized by Philip (Acts 8:27).

Let's return to our key questions. Why would the historical Christ have been celibate, when he lived in a land hostile to that lifestyle? Why does Jesus not call himself "celibate" in the gospels, or share any

pride in being celibate? Why does Jesus not explicitly say in the gospels that one must be celibate in order to follow him?

The Kingdom of God, as the reason for Jesus' celibacy, should be understood as a metaphor for his divine life and his intimate relationship with the Father, which would have moved him to live an unusual and shocking way of life, if indeed he did. Underlining the divinity and humanity of Christ (Council of Chalcedon, 451 AD), if the Kingdom of God was the objective of Jesus' celibacy, this Kingdom manifested itself in the importance of his preaching, in his apostolic orientation, and perhaps somewhat incompatibly in the urgency of his mission, since, due to his divinity, he would need to return to the Father (Mk. 16:19, Lk. 24:50-53). Jesus' humanity, though, did not exclude the possibility of his having a wife and family.

The importance of Jesus' celibacy does not explicitly appear in Christian scriptures, but neither do the scriptures strongly deny the possibility that he had a wife and children. Instead, the gospels contain many texts that engage in apologetics for family life.

- The Gospel of Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus (Mt. 1:1-17).
- Jesus enters human history through a family (Mt. 1:18).
- We are called to abandon our parents, in order to create a family (Mt. 19:5).
- Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a wedding feast (Mt. 22:1).
- What God unites, no one should divide (Mk. 10:1-12).
- John the Baptist was born into a family where his mother was sterile and his father was elderly (Lk. 1:5-14).
- Jesus is born into a family (Lk. 2:1-7).
- Jesus is presented in the temple by his family (Lk. 2:21-40).
- The genealogy of Jesus suggests, for all purposes, that Jesus was a member of a family (Lk. 3:23-38).
- Jesus loved visiting and staying with his family (Lk. 10:38-42 & 19:1-10).
- Jesus' first miracle occurred at a family gathering (Jn. 2:1-12).
- Jesus raised a close, family friend from the dead (Jn. 11:1-44).
- Jesus enjoyed sharing family meals with friends (Jn. 12:1-8).

The gospels consistently place Jesus in the context of normal family life. Why should there be a problem imagining that he created his own family?

Going beyond the gospels, we find the very special figure of Paul (or Saul) of Tarsus, the famous "Apostle to the Gentiles" or the "Apostle to the Nations." In my opinion, Paul is a very ambiguous figure with respect to the issue of celibacy. He seemingly lived a celibate life in the same culture, time and space as the historical Jesus, but with a few intriguing notes that draw my attention. Knowing the scriptures and the Law, Paul preferred to live a celibate life in the same context of suspicion, where celibacy was not esteemed.

Paul is the character of the New Testament who deals most with sexuality in his writings, and he initiates a total change in the argument, associating sexuality with the devil. For Paul, sexuality is not a source of blessing, as it was in the Hebrew scriptures; it's considered dangerous, as something that can be used by the devil to tempt and distract us. Paul speaks of the tyranny of sex (1Cor. 7), and, in a long discourse on marriage and virginity, he clearly states that he is living a celibate life, and he highlights the nobility of celibate life (1Cor. 7:32-35). Paul justifies his celibate life, but note verse 25: "I have no command from the Lord, but I give my opinion." I would suggest that Paul's holy "opinion" does not exclude the possibility of family life for those who wish to consecrate themselves to the Lord.

My own exploration of sexuality in Pauline theology obviously falls short in this brief essay. The topic deserves a much deeper study, and I promise that I will be more loquacious in my next book on celibacy.

We proceed to a second point, in an attempt to understand all the issues that get wrapped up with sexuality and the issue of celibacy. Again, in my opinion, there is no incompatibility between priestly consecration and being married and having a family. So, where did the whole problem come from?

I refuse to believe that the issue of sexuality was strongly associated with sin in the early Christian communities, though we do begin to see tendencies toward this in Paul. We recall that early Christian communities lived in a state of constant siege and persecution. I find no reason to believe that sexuality was a fundamental theme of their weekly meditations, when they gathered to celebrate the breaking of bread on the Lord's day.

I believe that the problem arose when persecutions subsided after the Edict of Milan (A.D. 313). This new reality allowed for the establishment of doctrine amid various currents of thought, which

resulted in conflicting spiritualities. In one way or another, the Greek idea prevailed that the spirit is to be valued above the body. In this context, the figure of the great Saint Augustine (354-430 A.D.) appeared—the Father and Doctor of the Church, the "Doctor of Grace" and Bishop of Hippo. We credit this great genius of humankind with putting "horns" on human sexuality and dressing it up as something evil. We credit him for stating that sexual acts go far beyond sin, since sexual pleasure is an impure and shameful act. Sexual desire was what prompted Adam to be tempted by the partner God had given him, St. Augustine said, for the first time associating sexual desire with the origin of sin. For nearly two-thousand years, the Augustinian doctrine of sin has associated sexuality with everything that is impure, sinful and unclean. This makes me wonder: What problems did St. Augustine have with his own sexuality, which caused him to despise and catalog it among the lowest instincts of humanity? With respect to this matter, it seems the saint could have greatly benefited from the psychological and psychiatric sciences. And that was when the problem began.

Another no-less important character appears: Martin Luther (1483-1546), a German theologian and Augustinian of the Roman Catholic Church. There's much that we might say about him, and much for which we should be grateful to him. My critics will misconstrue that last phrase to suggest that this great defender of Roman Catholicism has become a Lutheran; it's not like that at all. "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God" (Mt. 22:21). In 1517, with the publication of his 95 theses on the doors of All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany, Martin Luther flatly rejected, among other things, the monstrous doctrine created by St. Augustine: that sex is unclean, despicable and sinful. Thankfully, he broke the bond that the bishop of Hippo had created between sex and original sin. Luther declared that sex is a gift from God. It is something beautiful and good. It's an intrinsic part of who we are. The side effects of St. Augustine's theology of sex, however, remain entrenched in the Roman church, which refuses to disassociate sex from original sin. For this reason, the Roman Catholic Church refuses to accept the possibility of sex outside of wedlock or for pleasure.

Let's listen to what contemporary leaders of the Roman Catholic Church say in defense of celibacy and in opposition to the marriage of priests.

German Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, former Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, says, "It would be wrong to introduce *viri probati*. We already have married deacons. If we were to introduce *viri probati*, they would have to respect the customs of the ancient Church and live in chastity." "Neither the pope, nor a majority of bishops can change dogmas or laws of divine right to suit their pleasure." May I remind the cardinal that the "law" of celibacy is hardly a dogma of faith, nor is it divine law.

Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, says:

> To destroy celibacy is to harm the Church and the priesthood of Jesus….I'm embarrassed that some want to create a new priesthood on a human scale. I'm convinced that ordaining married men will not solve our problem of a lack of priests. Married men are called by God to the conjugal life, not to the priesthood.

May I remind this Guinean cardinal of African origin that Peter, the Church's first "pope," was married. Doesn't his having a mother-in-law imply that he also had a wife? And isn't the quest for holiness an end of the sacrament of Marriage?

Cardinal Jorge Liberato Urosa Savino, Archbishop Emeritus of Caracas, Venezuela, tells us: "Ordaining married priests is a problematic solution." "Why weaken the discipline and value of priestly celibacy with an imperfect and problematic solution for the indigenous populations of the Amazon and for the universal Church?" "I repeat, there are many serious questions about the ordination of these good, married elders, and this would not solve the problems of the current situation. I don't see them as convenient or useful." I would say to the Venezuelan cardinal: Jesus did not find it problematic to bring down the Holy Spirit on the apostles, some of whom were married. So, was Jesus wrong? Centuries later, the Church itself contradicted Jesus, by inventing a "better" system: "celibacy."

Among others, these are some of the voices that echo in Rome this week in defense of clerical celibacy. A deeper exploration of this topic is certainly worthy of a doctoral dissertation.

I summarize the problem generated by the priesthood of married men, and, in this case, of the famous *viri probati*. As Cardinal Urosa suggests, it may be true that relaxing the Roman Catholic Church's

discipline of celibacy might not solve its problem of a shortage of priests. In my opinion, we might do well to adjust our anthropological vision and the way in which we've always spoken of this subject, because I'm convinced that we have ignored the integrity of the human person and projected it to a solely spiritual dimension. In the seminary, it was impressed on us that "the priest is configured to Christ, the celibate shepherd."

The problem is that almost nobody speaks of the discipline of clerical celibacy. Some fear creating scandal and being "burned at the stake" by the Church's Holy Inquisition—not the Inquisition of centuries ago, but the "Inquisition" that continues today through the perhaps-unconscious, traditional contempt of women and the unhealthy views of sexual relations and family life that result from clerical celibacy. Here we can see the return of the "horns" with which the great Saint Augustine dressed our sexuality.

How is it possible that being a father or mother could be incompatible with the sublime ministry of the priestly order?

The Roman Catholic Church's debate on celibacy seems quite Byzantine today, leading us toward contempt of the human body, of sex, of women, and of sexual inclinations. This places the priests of the Roman Catholic Church in an arrogant position of superiority for configuring themselves, through celibacy, to Christ. They come off as divine owners of a "gift" that leads to sure holiness, thus calling into question all who are not celibate, and therefore are hardly holy.

In the Independent Catholic Church, we have the possibility of opting out of clerical celibacy. This option also exists in the Orthodox Catholic Church. The objective of this essay is to invite us to reflection and to create bridges of communion with members of the Independent Catholic Church. By virtue of baptism, we are Catholic, but we are not—and do not want to be—under the jurisdiction of Rome. Rather than remain silent, we do well to raise our voices with respect to the issues that make us different from the Roman Catholic Church, and, in this way, we create robust bridges of communion among ourselves, which, sustained with the grace of the Holy Spirit, might help us to survive the hurricanes that might erase us from the face of the earth.

May God take us by the hand.

A Theological Reflection on the Future toward which God is Calling Us

Father Libardo Rocha
Holy Family Catholic Church
Austin, Texas

Father Libardo Rocha shared the following reflection, and Father Jayme Mathias provided simultaneous interpretation.

Llega la voz del español en este santo sínodo. Yo no hablo muy bien el inglés y no pretendo decir burradas en inglés. ¡Prefiero decirles en español!

The Spanish language now arrives at this holy synod. I don't speak English, and I don't want to say things that don't make sense in English. I prefer to say things that don't make sense in Spanish!

Hace 30 años, cuando estaba terminando mis estudios teológicos en Roma, siempre me venía una pregunta a mi mente cuando tenía que celebrar algunas veces la Misa con el Papa en la Basílica Vaticana: ¿En dónde están las mujeres? Y durante 30 años, esta pregunta siempre resonó en mi cabeza. ¿En dónde están las mujeres en la Iglesia Católica Romana y, sobre todo, en el corazón de la Iglesia, que es la Basílica Vaticana? Y nunca las encontré. Parecían desconocidas o fantasmas, como el famoso fantasma de la Iglesia de Notre Dame de París, que existía, pero nunca nadie lo vio.

30 years ago, when I was finishing my theological studies in Rome, I would wonder when I concelebrated Mass with the Pope in the Vatican Basilica: Where are the women? For 30 years, this question has resonated in my head. Where are the women in the Roman Catholic Church, and, above all, in the heart of the Church, which is the Vatican Basilica? I never saw them. They were like the famous ghost of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, which purportedly exists, even though no one has seen it.

De tal manera que siempre en mi mente, tenía esa pregunta: ¿En dónde están las mujeres? Pero

So, I've always had that question on my mind: Where are the women? There's an

había una figura que nos la han hecho pasar como la máxima expresión del catolicismo hacia las mujeres, y es la estatua de la Virgen María. Y alguien me dijo, "Padre, nosotros los católicos amamos a las mujeres, porque tenemos a la Virgen María siempre en nuestros altares". No es una excepción: También el Padre Jayme tiene a María en su altar. Ahí está. Pero las mujeres de carne y hueso, ¿en dónde están? En la iglesia romana, nunca estuvieron, y nunca estarán.

Otra pregunta que me hice siempre en Roma es, ¿En dónde está el Espíritu Santo? En cambio, hoy, desde hace dos días en que estamos reunidos aquí entre hermanos, se siente la presencia del Espíritu Santo. En cambio, en Roma, creo que nunca ha ido. Creo que no conoce la ciudad de Roma el Espíritu Santo.

Es así, la historia de la Iglesia es llena de sombras y también de cosas buenas. No se puede negar. Porque diría que todos somos hijos de una misma Madre.

En el Concilio de Jerusalén, en el año 49, cuando los apóstoles se reunieron por primera vez, discutían el problema de los hebreos en la nueva Iglesia. Y es lo que, a partir de la separación de la Iglesia Oriental con la Iglesia Occidental, siempre se ha discutido el mismo problema. Pero tengan en

image that has been passed down to us as the maximum expression of Catholicism towards women: the image of the Virgin Mary. Someone once told me, "Father, we, Catholics, love women: Look, we have the Blessed Virgin Mary on all our altars!" Even here, Father Jayme has an image of Mary on our altar. There it is. But where are the real women of flesh and blood at the altar? In the Roman church, they've never been there, and never will be.

There's another question I've asked myself in Rome: Where is the Holy Spirit? In contrast, during the two days that we've been gathered here, we feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. I'm not sure the Spirit has ever visited Rome. I'm of the belief that the Holy Spirit doesn't know the city of Rome!

The history of the Church is full of shadows—but also of some good things. That can't be denied. We are all children of the same Mother.

When the apostles met at the Council of Jerusalem, in 49 A.D., they discussed the problem of the Jews in the new Church. The Church has always discussed the same problem, since from the separation of the Eastern Church from the Western Church. Keep in mind

cuenta un detalle: La Iglesia Oriental siempre es considerada Iglesia, y se considera hermana de la Iglesia Católica Romana.

Nosotros, en cambio, ni siquiera sé qué nos consideramos. ¿Qué somos? ¿Cuál es la razón de ser? Y si realmente nuestro ministerio genera lo que debería generar el germen de la salvación, ¿somos sacerdotes? La pregunta es importante hacerla, porque si no estamos convencidos de lo que somos y de lo que generamos, no tiene razón de ser nuestro sacerdocio, según la teología dogmática.

Acudo siempre a este recurso porque fue lo que me enseñaron, y fue lo que enseñé por casi 20 años, pero terminando este encuentro bellísimo de hermanos, con el cual siempre había soñado – y gracias a Dios y al Espíritu Santo y al Padre Jayme – hoy podemos decir que es necesario que nos configuremos primero que todo como historia, como eclesiología y cómo teología.

Hace tres años, llegué a los Estados Unidos, expatriado de la Iglesia Católica Romana, expulsado de la Iglesia Católica Romana, y aplastado como una cucaracha. Y encontré en esta Iglesia no solamente espíritu de fraternidad y de comunión, sino el deseo de continuar siendo sacerdote y viviendo al servicio de los demás.

one detail: The Eastern Church has always been considered a Church, and is a sister of the Roman Catholic Church.

But I'm not sure we even know what we consider ourselves. What are we? Why do we exist? If our ministry really generates what it should generate—the seeds of salvation—are we not priests? It's an important question since, if we are not convinced of who we are and what we generate, there is no reason for our priesthood, according to dogmatic theology.

I always return to dogmatic theology since that's what I was taught, and it's what I taught for almost 20 years. I return to it now as we end this beautiful encounter of sisters & brothers that I've been dreaming of—now realized thanks to God, the Holy Spirit, and Fr. Jayme. Today we can say that it's necessary to write our history, ecclesiology and theology.

Three years ago, I arrived in the United States, expatriated and expelled from the Roman Catholic Church and crushed like a cockroach. I've found in Independent Catholicism a spirit of fraternity and communion, and I've rediscovered my desire to serve others as a priest.

Por eso inmediatamente pensé, ¿Qué es la Iglesia Católica Independiente en los Estados Unidos? ¿Quiénes son los Católicos Independientes en los Estados Unidos, o los que se llaman "Viejos Católicos"? El título de "Viejo" no me gusta mucho, porque las cosas viejas pertenecen al museo de arqueología. Y la Iglesia, teológicamente hablando, no puede ser vieja. Es un principio y nota teológica: ¡No puede ser vieja! En la teología paulina, la Iglesia es el cuerpo místico de Cristo. Y Cristo es alfa y omega. Por tanto, no puede ser viejo. Conclusión: Eso de "Viejos Católicos" me da alergia. Perdónenme algunos, pero es lo que pienso. Y en esta realidad, podemos decir lo que pensamos.

Cuando enseñaba teología en Roma, más de una vez me llamaron la atención, porque los estudiantes les hacen preguntas a los profesores, pero ellos ya saben la respuesta. Solamente es para ponernos trampas. Es la formación que recibimos en el seminario los futuros sacerdotes. Ponemos trampas entre nosotros para ver cómo también los podemos aplastar como cucarachas. Y eso que se habla tanto de la fraternidad sacerdotal, y eso que se habla tanto de que somos hermanos, ¡mentira! ¡Falso! Porque cada uno vive allí en su isla, con sus miedos y, peor todavía, sus ambiciones.

That's why I immediately wondered: What is the Independent Catholic Church in the United States? Who are Independent Catholics in the U.S., and what are "Old Catholics"? I don't like that word, "Old." Old things belong in archaeological museums. The Church, theologically speaking, cannot be "old." It's a theological principle: The Church can't be old! In Pauline theology, the Church is the mystical body of Christ, who is alpha and omega. Thus, the Church doesn't age. I conclude: I'm allergic to the phrase "Old Catholics." Some of you will have to forgive me, but that's what I think, and, in this reality, we can say what we think.

When I taught theology in Rome, our students would occasionally ask of their professors questions to which the students already knew the answers. They were simply trying to trap us. It's the formation we receive in the seminary as future priests. We try to trap and crush others like cockroaches. We speak at length of priestly fraternity, and how we're all brothers. What a lie! Everyone lives on his own "island," with his fears and, worse still, his ambitions. In the seminary, we learn to wear masks, to lie and be ambitious,

Aprendemos en el seminario a ser falsos, mentirosos y ambiciosos, y nunca mostramos lo que realmente somos. Nos tapamos con nuestros paramentos sagrados y religiosos, que son frutos del transcurso de la historia en la Iglesia.

Por tanto, considero que tengo una gran misión, y será escribir y escribir, porque vale la pena dejar huellas de lo que somos y para qué estamos. Y si un día fuimos llamados a ser sacerdotes, mi misión por ahora será escribir y sobre todo investigar la belleza de la Iglesia Católica Independiente en los Estados Unidos.

Qué alegría sentí cuando vi mujeres obispas. Como se dice en italiano: ¡Mamma mia! *Ésta, sí, es la Iglesia. Porque la Iglesia tiene un padre, el Padre Creador, pero ese Padre también es Madre, como dijo en una ocasión el Papa Juan Pablo I.*

Por tanto, gracias por la presencia de ustedes, aquí entre nosotros. Y tengo la plena seguridad que no va a ser la última: Vamos a tomar una foto para ver quiénes son los que faltan el próximo año.

No podría no cerrar y terminar este santo encuentro pensando en lo que está sucediendo en estos momentos en Roma. Porque no pudiendo negar todavía, tengo nostalgia de Roma. La Roma es

and we never reveal who we really are. We religiously cover ourselves with holy vestments—the fruits of historical developments in the Church.

For this reason, I believe I have a great mission: of writing. It's worth leaving traces of who we are and what we stand for. Assuming we were all called to be priests, I see my new call to research and write of the beauty of the Independent Catholic Church in the United States.

What joy I felt when I saw women bishops at this gathering. As we say in Italian: *Mamma mia!* Yes, this is the Church! And the Church has a father, God the Creator, but, as Pope John I used to say: God is also our Mother!

So, thank you for your presence here among us. I don't think that this will be our last encounter: Let's take a photo while we're here, so that we'll know who's missing next year!

I can't bring this holy encounter to a close without reflecting on what's happening right now in Rome. I can't deny that I have a certain nostalgia for Rome. Rome is our *mater et magistra [mother and teacher].*

mater et magistra. *¿Y qué está sucediendo en Roma?*

Del 6 al 26 de octubre, se está celebrando el Sínodo de la Amazonía. El Papa Francisco, en sus seis años de pontificado muy ambiguo – y diría uno de los pontificados más desastrosos en la historia de la Iglesia moderna por su ambigüedad – no ha mostrado la valentía para pensar y para decir lo que piensa.

Cuando pienso en el polvorín que está levantando este famoso sínodo con respecto a temas de gran actualidad de la Iglesia Católica Romana, y en todos los católicos, evidentemente los temas son importantísimos. Y este Papa ha hecho desempolvar, por ejemplo, los famosos viri probati*, el tema del diaconado para las mujeres, los ritos amazónicos, y la ecología – este tema muy al corazón del actual pontífice. Pero aportaré algo importante sobre el tema del celibato en el sacerdocio, para entrar en el ruedo de la discusión.*

Evidentemente, para no alargarme mucho, tendrán que leer mi próximo libro sobre el desastre del celibato en los sacerdotes. Se pueden ustedes imaginar que, para ser sacerdotes en la Iglesia Romana, tenemos que castrarnos, y, no solamente eso, esconder nuestras inclinaciones sexuales – porque así es como Dios nos ama.

And what's happening in Rome?

On October 6-26, the Amazonian Synod is being convened by Pope Francis, who's now in the sixth year of a very ambiguous pontificate—perhaps the most disastrous pontificate in modern Church history due to his ambiguity. Francis has failed to display the courage to think and to say what he thinks.

When I reflect on the powder keg that has led to this famous synod, it includes issues of great relevance to the Roman church, and of particularly great importance to Catholics throughout the world. This pope, for example, has dusted off the famous *viri probati*, the topic of the diaconate for women, Amazonian rites, and ecology—an issue very dear to the heart of the current pontiff. To spur discussion, I'll contribute to the subject of clerical celibacy.

Obviously, so as to not draw out this discussion now, you'll have to read my next book on the disaster of clerical celibacy. As you can imagine, to be priests in the Roman church, we have to "castrate" ourselves and hide our sexual inclinations—even though God loves us just as we are. It's

Eso es absurdo, cruel e inhumano. Pero ésa es la Iglesia Católica Romana, la que llama a los célibes a esconder sus inclinaciones sexuales en aras de una consagración, imitando a Cristo, que es y era y será sumo y eterno sacerdote, y que "evidentemente no se casó". Eso lo dicen del Jesús histórico. Pero no tengo certeza absoluta de esa realidad. ¡Cuánto me hubiera gustado que hubiera tenido mujer o hubiera tenido hijos!

Los primeros concilios no se debatieron porque querían manifestar realmente que Cristo era humano. Entonces si era humano, ¿Cristo no era sexuado? ¿No tenía inclinaciones sexuales? Y entonces, ¿por qué nosotros tenemos que esconderlas, o, peor todavía, prohibirnos de ese placer que es santo y sagrado, diría delicioso?

El reino de Dios comienza con razón de su celibato, y debe entenderse como una metáfora. Subrayando la divinidad y la humanidad de Cristo en el Concilio de Calcedonia 451, el Reino de Dios como objetivo del celibato de Jesús se manifiesta en la importancia de su predicación, en su orientación apostólica, y, a mi parecer, con cierta incompatibilidad, con la urgencia de su misión, ya que necesariamente tendría que regresar al Padre por su divinidad.

absurd, cruel and inhuman. But that's the Roman church, which calls "celibates" to hide their sexual inclinations for the sake of ministry, imitating Christ, who was, is and will be eternal high priest, and who "clearly didn't marry." That's what they say about the historical Jesus. I'm not absolutely certain of that reality, but how I like to think that Jesus had a wife and children!

This wasn't discussed at the first councils, since they wanted to state that Christ was really human. So, if he was human, did he not have his own sexual inclinations? And, if so, why should those who follow him have to hide them, or, even worse, forbid ourselves from that holy, sacred—and I might dare say, delicious—pleasure?

The kingdom of God is cited as the reason for Jesus' celibacy; this must be understood as a metaphor. Underlining the divinity and humanity of Christ, the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. cited the Kingdom of God as the objective of Jesus' celibacy, as manifested in his preaching, in his apostolic orientation, and—in my opinion, with some incongruence—in the urgency of his mission, since, due to his divinity, he would necessarily have to return to the Father.

La divinidad de Cristo nunca hoy como hoy es contradictoria con su humanidad. Pero la pregunta del millón es, ¿por qué no se casó? La respuesta la encuentro en su misma humanidad: En su grande responsabilidad, y sabiendo que estaría poco tiempo entre nosotros, no le permitía desarrollarse como un buen padre o como un buen marido.

En cambio, en los evangelios encontramos muchísimos textos que nos hacen apología de la familia.

- *El evangelio de Mateo inicia con la genealogía de Jesús (Mt. 1,1-17).*
- *Dios elige una familia para que su hijo Jesús entre en la historia (Mt. 1,18).*
- *El hombre abandona a su padre y a su madre para conformar una familia (Mt. 19,5).*
- *Jesús compara el Reino de Dios como un banquete de bodas (Mt. 22,1).*
- *Lo que Dios unió, no lo separe el hombre (Mc. 10,1-12).*
- *El nacimiento de Juan el Bautista en una familia donde la madre era estéril y el padre era de edad avanzada (Lc. 1,5-14).*
- *Jesús nace en una familia (Lc. 2,1-7).*
- *Jesús viene presentado en el templo por su familia (Lc. 2:21-40).*

The divinity of Christ never contradicts his humanity. So, the million-dollar question is: Why didn't Jesus marry? I find the answer in his humanity: It was due to the great responsibility he possessed. Knowing he had such little time among us, he was not able to develop as a good father or as a good husband.

Instead, the gospels contain many texts that engage in apologetics for family life.

- The Gospel of Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus (Mt. 1:1-17).
- Jesus enters human history through a family (Mt. 1:18).
- We are called to abandon our parents, in order to create a family (Mt. 19:5).
- Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a wedding feast (Mt. 22:1).
- What God unites, no one should divide (Mk. 10:1-12).
- John the Baptist was born into a family where his mother was sterile and his father was elderly (Lk. 1:5-14).
- Jesus is born into a family (Lk. 2:1-7).
- Jesus is presented in the temple by his family (Lk. 2:21-40).

- *La genealogía de Jesús como miembro a todos los efectos de una familia (Lc. 3:23-38).*
- *Jesús amaba visitar y alojarse en familia (Lc.10,38-42 y 19,1-10).*
- *El primer milagro de Jesús ocurrió en una fiesta de familia (Jn. 2,1-12).*
- *Resucita a un amigo de una familia muy unida a él (Jn. 11,1-44).*
- *Jesús amaba compartir y cenar con sus amigos en familia (Jn. 12,1-8).*

Y entonces, ¿por qué nos quitan a nosotros la familia? ¿Por qué se usa siempre el sofisma de cancelar en nosotros la posibilidad de que también nos constituyamos en familia?

Yendo más allá de los evangelios, encontramos la figura muy especial de Pablo (o Saulo) de Tarso, el famoso "apóstol a los gentiles" o "el apóstol a las naciones". La figura de este personaje a mi parecer es muy ambigua con respecto al tema del celibato. Tengo la impresión, después de haberlo estudiado por más de 20 años, que detestaba a las mujeres, pero no estoy muy seguro si amaba a los hombres. ¡Me hubiera gustado confesarlo!

Vivió célibe en la misma cultura, tiempo y espacio en donde vivió el Cristo histórico, pero era

- The genealogy of Jesus suggests, for all purposes, that Jesus was a member of a family (Lk. 3:23-38).
- Jesus loved visiting and staying with his family (Lk. 10:38-42 & 19:1-10).
- Jesus' first miracle occurred at a family gathering (Jn. 2:1-12).
- Jesus raised a close, family friend from the dead (Jn. 11:1-44).
- Jesus enjoyed sharing family meals with friends (Jn. 12:1-8).

So, why do they take away from priests the possibility of having a family? Why do they engage in sophisms to deny priests the possibility of becoming a family?

Going beyond the gospels, we find the very special figure of Paul (or Saul) of Tarsus, the famous "Apostle to the Gentiles" or the "Apostle to the Nations." He's an ambiguous figure when it comes to the issue of celibacy. Having studied him for more than 20 years, I have the impression that he detested women—though I'm also not sure that he loved men. I would have enjoyed hearing his confession!

Paul was celibate in the same culture, time and space as Jesus, and he knew the Law. He knew

conocedor de la ley, y sabía que siendo célibe creaba muchas sospechas. Pablo es el personaje del Nuevo Testamento que más se ocupa en sus escritos del tema de la sexualidad, y con él inicia un cambio total en todo lo que respecta a este argumento, ya que hace entrar el demonio en la cuestión de la sexualidad. La sexualidad con Pablo adquiere matices no de bendiciones, como se veía en el Antiguo Testamento, sino que viene considerada en algunos de sus escritos como algo peligroso. Es una bomba. Es un volcán. Es algo sucio. Es algo que debemos alejarnos. Es algo que no pertenece a la divinidad de Cristo. Es algo que no pertenece a tu divinidad y a mi divinidad, según la antropología del libro del Génesis. A mi parecer, el pobre Pablo tenía grandes problemas con su sexualidad. Tendría que visitar el psicólogo.

Vamos a un segundo punto, tratando de entender el enredo en torno a la sexualidad que la Iglesia Católica Romana siempre ha tenido. Si bien es cierto en el recorrido que hemos hecho para subrayar la incompatibilidad del celibato con el sacerdocio. No lo he leído todo porque el tiempo no nos favorece, pero una vez más los invito a que lean mi libro cuando venga editado.

Me resisto creer que en las comunidades cristianas primitivas that being celibate created many suspicions. Paul is the New Testament writer who most deals with the subject of sexuality in his writings. With him, we see a total change in everything that concerns the argument. Paul brings the devil into the question of sexuality. For Paul, sexuality acquires a nuance not of blessings, as seen in the Old Testament, but is considered to be something dangerous. It's a timebomb. It's a volcano. It's dirty. It's something from which we should run. It's something that doesn't belong to the divinity of Christ. It's something that doesn't belong to your divinity or to my divinity, according to the anthropology of Genesis. In my opinion, poor Paul had major problems with his sexuality. He would have done well to visit a psychologist.

We go to a second point, in an attempt to understand the entanglement of the Roman Catholic Church with sexuality. The incompatibility of celibacy and the priesthood underlines this journey. I haven't read everything, since time hasn't allowed it, but, once again, I invite you to read my book, when it's published.

I find it hard to believe that early Christian communities

el tema de la sexualidad fuera asociado con el problema del pecado. Creo que las primeras comunidades nunca se pusieron el problema. Y creo que ese problema no fuera fundamental en ellos cuando celebraban la fracción del pan.

Yo creo que el problema viene cuando pasaron las persecuciones con el Edicto de Milán en el año 313 d.C. y, bajo la aceptación del imperio, comienzan a establecerse doctrinas y se crean corrientes y al mismo tiempo luchas intestinas dentro de la Iglesia para establecer líneas de espiritualidad. Y es en donde que, de alguna forma u otra, prevalece la idea griega que valora el espíritu por encima del cuerpo. El espíritu es más importante que el cuerpo. Es el cuerpo es sucio. El cuerpo es la cárcel del alma. El cuerpo me impide configurarme con Cristo. El cuerpo me impide ir al cielo. Mamma mia!

Y es cuando aparece la figura del gran Doctor y Padre de la Iglesia, San Agustín (354-430 d.C.). A este gran genio de la humanidad y de la teología, le debemos el favor de haberle puesto cachos y vestido de demonio a nuestra sexualidad. A él le debemos la afirmación de que el acto sexual va mucho más allá: Es impuro y vergonzoso. El deseo sexual fue lo que empujó a Adán a dejarse embrollar por la compañera que Dios le había dado, asociando la

associated sexuality with the problem of sin. I'm not sure the issue arose in those first communities. It doesn't seem that this was a fundamental issue when they gathered to celebrate the breaking of the bread.

I believe that the problem arose after the persecutions subsided, with the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. Once Christianity was allowed in the empire, doctrines and currents of thought were established, and internal struggles within the Church resulted in different schools of spirituality. The Greek idea prevailed of valuing the spirit over the body. The body is dirty. It's the prison of the soul. The body prevents us from configuring ourselves with Christ. The body prevents us from going to heaven. *Mamma mia!*

That's when the figure of the great Doctor and Father of the Church, Saint Augustine appears (354-430A.D.). We credit this great genius of humanity and of theology with putting horns on sexuality and dressing it up like a devil. To him, we owe the belief that sexual acts are impure and shameful, and that sexual desire was what prompted Adam to be embroiled by the partner God had given him, associating

sexualidad y el deseo sexual al origen del pecado original. ¡Falso! ¡Mentira! Eso no ha sido nunca así. (No porque yo estaba en ese momento ahí, evidentemente.)

Y casi por dos mil años, la doctrina agustiniana del pecado ha hecho escuela, asociándose a la sexualidad todo lo que es impuro, pecaminoso y sucio. Me pregunto, ¿qué problemas tendría San Agustín con su sexualidad, al punto de despreciarla y catalogarla entre los más bajos instintos de la humanidad? El santo con respecto a este tema tiene una deuda con las ciencias psicológicas y con la psiquiatría. Pobre hombre, ¿verdad?

Luego aparece la figura de otro gran personaje no menos importante, el grande Martín Lutero, teólogo y agustiniano alemán de la Iglesia Católica Romana. Y de este personaje, tendríamos mucho que decir, y al mismo tiempo tenemos mucho que agradecerle. Esta frase hará decir a algunos de mis críticos que, de grande defensor del catolicismo romano, me he convertido en luterano; en realidad, no es así. "Den al César lo que es del César, y a Dios lo que es de Dios" (Mt. 22,15-21).

En el año 1517, con la publicación de las 95 tesis en una de las puertas de la Iglesia de Todos los Santos de Wittenberg en

sexuality and sexual desire with the birth of original sin. What a lie! It's never been that way—and, clearly, I don't say that because I was there at the time.

For almost 2,000 years, the Augustinian doctrine of sin has found acceptance, associating sexuality with everything that is impure, sinful and dirty. I wonder what problems St. Augustine had with his sexuality, to the point that he despised and catalogued it among the lowest instincts of humanity. On this subject, the saint might benefit from the sciences of psychology and psychiatry. The poor guy, right?

Another great and no-less-important character then arose: the great Martin Luther, the German Augustinian and Roman Catholic theologian. We could say a lot about him, and there's much for which we might express our gratitude to him. That phrase will likely spur my critics to say that this once-great defender of Roman Catholicism has become a Lutheran. That's not so. "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God" (Mt. 22:15-21).

In 1517, with the posting of his 95 theses on the doors of All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany, Martin Luther flatly

Alemania, Martín Lutero rechaza rotundamente, entre otras cosas, el monstruo de doctrina que creó San Agustín – que el sexo era algo sucio, despreciable y pecaminoso – rompiendo, gracias a Dios, el vínculo que el obispo de Hipona había creado entre sexo y pecado original. Lutero declaró que el sexo es un don de Dios. Es algo bello y bueno, y que hace parte intrínseca de nuestra persona. Pero los efectos colaterales de la teología de San Agustín sobre el sexo siguen vigentes en la Iglesia, que no se desprende de la idea de asociarlo con el pecado original.

Ahora escuchemos lo que dicen eminentes jerarcas de la Iglesia Católica Romana en defensa del celibato en estos días en que se celebra el Sínodo de la Amazona, y en que está proponiendo la posibilidad de que los sacerdotes se puedan casar, y en que se está proponiendo la posibilidad de que las mujeres sean diáconas al menos en la Iglesia Romana.

El cardenal alemán Gerhard Ludwig Müller, ex prefecto de la Congregación de la Fe dice, "Creo que es equivocado los viri probati. Ya hay diáconos casados. Si lo introducimos, deben respetar las costumbres de la Iglesia antigua: Deben vivir en castidad". Tremendo monstro y tremenda farsa que propone el cardenal alemán. Se ve que estudió en un seminario en donde también

rejected, among other things, the monstrous doctrine created by St. Augustine—that sex is dirty, despicable and sinful—and fortunately breaking the bond that the Bishop of Hippo had created between sex and original sin. Luther declared that sex is a gift from God. It's beautiful and good, and it's an intrinsic part of our humanity. The side effects of Augustine's theology on sex, though, would remain in force in the Roman Church, which remains unable to disassociate it from original sin.

Now let's listen to what eminent leaders of the Roman Catholic Church say in defense of celibacy during these days in which the Amazonian Synod is being celebrated and is proposing the possibility that priests might be married and that women might minimally be deacons in the Roman Church.

German Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, former Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith says, "It would be wrong to introduce *viri probati*. We already have married deacons. If we were to introduce *viri probati*, they would have to respect the customs of the ancient Church and live in chastity." What a tremendous, monstrous farce

nosotros estudiamos. Continúa, "Ningún papa, ni la mayoría de los obispos, pueden cambiar los dogmas o las leyes de derecho divino de acuerdo a sus propios placeres". Me permito recordarle al señor cardenal que la ley del celibato no es dogma de fe, y no es una regla o norma de derecho divino.

the German cardinal proposes. It seems he studied in the same seminary in which so many of us studied. He continues, "Neither the pope, nor a majority of bishops can change dogmas or laws of divine right to suit their pleasure." May I remind the cardinal that the "law" of celibacy is hardly a dogma of faith, nor is it divine law.

Veamos qué dice el cardenal Robert Sarah, Prefecto de la Congregación para el Culto Divino y de la Disciplina de los Sacramentos: "Destruir el celibato es herir a la Iglesia y el sacerdocio de Jesús." ¿Cómo les parece? Absurdo, ¿verdad? Mamma mia. *Parece que esos santos cardenales viven fuera de la atmósfera terrestre. También dice el cardenal, "Me provoca desconcierto que algunos quieran fabricar un nuevo sacerdocio a escala humana." Les hago la pregunta a ustedes: Entonces, ¿no somos humanos? Entonces los sacerdotes de la Iglesia Católica, ¿no son humanos? Otra grande farsa haciéndonos pasar a nosotros de día como divinos, pero de noche como humanos.*

Let's see what Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, says: "To destroy celibacy is to harm the Church and the priesthood of Jesus." What do you think of that? It's absurd, right? *Mamma mia.* It seems that these holy cardinals are from another planet. The cardinal also says, "I'm embarrassed that some want to create a new priesthood on a human scale." I ask you: Aren't we human? Aren't the priests of the Roman Church, human? It's another great farce that the clergy of the Roman Church are gods by day and humans by night.

Nos dice el señor cardenal arzobispo emérito de Caracas, Venezuela, Jorge Liberato Urosa Savino: "Ordenar sacerdotes casados es una solución problemática". "¿Por qué debilitar

Cardinal Jorge Liberato Urosa Savino, Archbishop Emeritus of Caracas, Venezuela, tells us: "Ordaining married priests is a problematic solution." "Why weaken the

la disciplina y el valor del celibato sacerdotal con una solución imperfecta y problemática, y que no es la que está de acuerdo con nuestro sacerdocio?" Terrible, ¿verdad? Eso es el sacerdocio de la Iglesia Católica Romana. Agradezco a Dios que me ha permitido aterrizar en la Iglesia Católica Independiente.

Desde Roma, me hacen la pregunta, ¿Son católicos? Y yo les respondo, "Sí, lo somos, en virtud del Bautismo." Y si mi Bautismo es en nombre de la Trinidad (Mt. 28), soy católico, al modo de la Iglesia Independiente. Por tanto, somos católicos, y somos orgullosos de sentirnos católicos, aunque si no bajo las normas que impone Roma, sobre todo la del celibato y la de la falta del sacerdocio de las mujeres—porque eso sí, se llama discriminar al género más bello que Dios pudo cultivar en su paraíso: las mujeres.

Queridos hermanos, estoy muy feliz de estar junto con ustedes, y, en la barca en donde estamos, tratemos de escribir nuestra historia, tratemos de escribir nuestra eclesiología, y tratemos de escribir nuestra teología, porque un pueblo que escribe su historia permanece para siempre. No desaparece.

No seamos islas independientes, rodeadas a veces de aguas

discipline and value of priestly celibacy with an imperfect and problematic solution that doesn't agree with our priesthood?" How terrible, right? That's the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church. I thank God that God has allowed me to land in the Independent Catholic Church.

Those in Rome ask, "Are you Catholic?" I respond, "Yes, we are, by virtue of our Baptism." If my Baptism is in the name of the Trinity (Mt. 28), I'm Catholic—in our case, in the mode of Independent Catholicism. We are Catholic, we are proud to be Catholic, and we are proud not to be under the rules imposed by Rome, including clerical celibacy and the denial of the priesthood to women—clear discrimination against the most beautiful gender that God cultivated in paradise: women.

Dear sisters and brothers, I'm very happy to be with you, and to be in the "boat" in which we find ourselves. Let's endeavor to write our history. Let's endeavor to write our ecclesiology. And let's endeavor to write our theology. Those who write their history remain forever and do not disappear.

Let's not be independent islands, sometimes surrounded

putrefactas. Creamos puentes, cada uno con su propia identidad, pero sintiéndonos verdaderos hermanos. La teología que les propongo es la teología de los puentes. Es la teología que, en una ocasión, meditando por las calles de la famosa ciudad de Venecia en Italia, me preguntaba cómo se convirtió esta ciudad bellísima en una gran república marinara. ¡Porque sus habitantes tuvieron la inteligencia de crear puentes!

Y ustedes son inteligentes. Ustedes son imagen de Dios. Ustedes tienen la divinidad de Dios y la gracia del Espíritu Santo por el sacramento del Orden. Por tanto, ¡creamos puentes y seamos hermanos!

Hermanos, Islas y puentes *sólo es el primer libro. Después vendrá el libro del celibato. Y después vendrá el libro del sacerdocio de las mujeres, en donde me permitiré visitar a todas las obispas de los Estados Unidos, para que me digan por qué son sacerdotes, y si realmente se sienten sacerdotes.*

Espero que una vez más, en un tiempo no muy largo, volvamos a vernos – porque la Iglesia es eterna, y lo que escribamos quedará para siempre – y a sentir que las manos de ustedes tocan las mías, como el famoso cuadro de la Sixtina de la

by putrefied waters. Instead, let's build bridges, maintaining our own identity, but connecting as true sisters and brothers. The theology I propose is the theology of bridges. It's a theology that was born on one occasion when I meditated on the streets of the famous city of Venice in Italy, wondering how this beautiful city became a great maritime republic. It's because its inhabitants had the intelligence to build bridges!

All of you are intelligent, too. You are the image of God. You possess the divinity of God—and the grace of the Holy Spirit through the sacrament of Holy Orders. So, let's build bridges and be sisters and brothers!

Sisters and brothers, *Islands and Bridges* is just the first book. Next will be my book on celibacy, then my book on the ordination of women, when I'll visit our sisters who are bishops here in the U.S., to listen to why they are priests, and whether they really feel like the priests they are.

I hope that, before long, we might see one another again—since the Church is eternal, and what we write will remain forever—and I look forward to feeling your hand touch mine, like that famous fresco of the

Creación, que hará de nosotros una Iglesia santa, católica y apostólica forever and ever. Amen.

Creation in the Sistine Chapel, which will make us one holy, catholic and apostolic Church forever and ever. Amen.

Reflections on A Theological Reflection on the Future toward which God is Calling Us

"What a great resource Padre Libardo is for our jurisdictions, as a theologian who's taught in seminary. What a great resource for our formation!"

Father Kevin Przybylski
Louisville, Kentucky

"I've had conversations with Father Libardo. Our first few years here at Holy Family were focused on Holy Family—but now that we've come to realize that we have sisters and brothers throughout the nation and throughout the world, our question becomes: How can we share the gifts we have here locally, like Father Libardo? How can we share our resources, to 'help all boats rise'? That's our focus now at Holy Family: How do we 'help all boats rise'?"

Father Jayme Mathias
Austin, Texas

"That was extremely brilliant. I want to know when your next book comes out!"

Deacon Marianne Melchiori
Ridgewood, New York

"You talked about Independent Catholicism and the 'island syndrome' we have. I'd be interested to know your suggestions for concrete ways that we might 'build bridges.'"

Bishop David Strong
Tacoma, Washington

"There are many oriental churches that are in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church, and they have married priests. It makes me wonder why the Roman Catholic Church continues to speak so negatively about married clergy."

Bishop Mark Newman
Phoenix, Arizona

A Homily for Reformation Sunday

Father Dewayne Messenger
Parish Church of St. Jerome
Tulsa, Oklahoma

I bring you greetings from the Parish Church of St. Jerome in Tulsa. We are an Anglican rite parish of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. Our parish is a little bit older: We've been in the Independent Catholic milieu—or "boat," as Father Jayme talked about—for 24 years. And, like your parish, we are now bilingual. We began a bilingual outreach some two years ago. So, you guys could be a great resource for me and my parish. And I hope that we will become friends.

If you grew up in a church, you probably have experienced all kinds of Pharisees. Usually, whenever we hear about Pharisees, we want to hiss. They're always painted as those uptight villains, the religious fundamentalists who are always a little too critical, a little sneaky, always trying to thwart Jesus' ministry. While that may be a somewhat-accurate picture of them, they were also known as being very dependable, very upright, very dedicated folks. If you agreed with their understanding of scripture, they would be great to have in your parish!

In Judaism, there were three practices that were considered to be of central importance: fasting, almsgiving and prayer (Mt. 6:1-18). We are told that this particular Pharisee had those practices down pat: He fasted twice a week, he tithed on everything he earned, and he was a Jew among Jews, a pillar of the synagogue, an example for everyone to follow (Lk. 18:11-12).

The tax collector, on the other hand, had nothing of merit to offer. One might say that his whole life was a disappointment. If you think the Pharisees were bad, tax collectors were even worse! They were the people we wanted to avoid. They were seen as traitors, because they were ingratiated with the Roman government. They were known for skimming off the taxes that they collected from the Jews, so they were considered dishonest. They were about as welcome as a cockroach on a buffet table!

That's why this tax collector stood far off, perhaps in the very back corner of the temple (Lk. 18:13). He knew how he was perceived. He knew what other people thought about him. That's why he beat his breast as he prayed (Lk. 18:13)—a gesture associated with a grieving and wailing widow (Lk. 23:48).

Jesus paints a stark contrast between these two individuals (Lk. 18:11-13). The righteous man stood up, raising his hands in prayer; the sinful man looked down, with tears in his eyes. The Pharisee prayed loudly with eloquent words; the tax collector was so overcome with shame, he could barely pray at all. The Pharisee puffed out of his chest with pride; the publican beat his breast in sorrow.

The Pharisee was smug and haughty, to the point that he looked down on other people. In his mind, there were two kinds of people: the upright and the immoral. He had a reputation to uphold. He took great pains to make sure that he moved in the "right circles." His spiritual practices were on display, for all to see, as if it were a status symbol.

I know some people who are like that. Perhaps you do, too.

But this is where Jesus' parable gets interesting. You see it's so very easy to pass judgment on folks, just like this Pharisee did. It can be so easy to see them as being nothing more than as self-righteous snobs. We might even subconsciously think, "Whew, I am so glad that I am not like that hypocritical, over-pious, self-righteous, uptight, religious Pharisee. Thank God I'm not like you!"

We might even look at other Christians—perhaps even our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters—and say,

> Whew, thank God I'm not self-righteous like that! Thank God I've left all that behind me! I'm so glad we're the ones who welcome everyone to communion. I'm so glad that we invite women to ordination. We're the good guys. We've got this Catholic thing all straightened out!

But you know what? That's the hook in this story! That's where we get in trouble. That's where this becomes a trap. And Jesus was good at setting traps. When we adopt that attitude, we're adopting the attitude that the Pharisee had. He thought he was doing everything that would prove his righteousness. We do the same when we start talking about the "Pharisees" around us. And we miss the point.

Any time we fall prey to the temptation to divide humanity into any kind of group—right versus wrong, more progressive versus stuck in the past—then we have separated ourselves from one another, and we have aligned ourselves squarely with the Pharisee. Any time we draw a line between who deserves grace and who does not, we are doomed. Whenever we make a division between brothers and sisters, we're likely to find God on the other side of the equation.

This parable is not really about the Pharisee or the publican—the tax collector. Really, it is ultimately about God. Taking a cue from the Reformation, God alone is the one who is qualified to judge the human heart. God alone is the one who justifies. As Luther would say, God alone saves us!

At the end of this story, the Pharisees left the temple, and he returned home just like he had left it. His status had not changed. He was pious when he went up to the temple, and he was pious when he came down.

The tax collector, though, went up to the temple broken, and went home a changed man. He was deemed justified (Lk. 18:14), not by his own merits, not because he had done something spectacular in the temple, but because he had encountered the Holy One of Israel. God's grace is what made up what was lacking in that man's life.

Ultimately, the Pharisee and the tax collector were in the very same "boat": They were both in need of God's love. The difference between them was that the tax collector recognized it. And that's what made all the difference.

Sisters and brothers, this parable reminds us that sometimes we need to get real. We should never try to out-Pharisee the Pharisees. Our work is not based on our piety or our ability to recite eloquent prayers, or how others think about us. Someone at our gathering this week said, "piety is not about rituals. It's about an attitude." Our inherent value is based on God's goodness.

My prayer for you folks, here at Holy Family, and for my own folks, back home in Tulsa, is that we may recognize our own unique needs, whatever they might be, so that, like the tax collector, we, too, can leave this worship justified.

A Homily for Reformation Sunday

Bishop David Strong
Communion of Christian United Churches
Tacoma, Washington

On January 25, 1997, my great grandmother went home to be with the Lord on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. She was 101 years old. She looked at all of us, her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, and we knew that she had finished her race, fought the good fight, and that she was going to receive the crown of righteousness.

In today's scriptures, the author of the Second Letter to Timothy talks about how we are all in a race (2Tim. 4:7). Some of us are great athletes, and we run. Some of us walk. And some of us just stumble along. In this race, that is life, we need God to get us through.

In today's gospel lesson (Lk. 18:9-14), the Pharisee stood up and said "Oh God, I'm not like those other people. I am so much better than that. I pray. I go to church" (Lk. 18:11-12). Have you ever met anyone like that? The Pharisees are often made to look bad, but the truth is he was fulfilling his religious obligation.

The tax collector was someone that society did not like. We don't care for the tax man ourselves these days. The tax collector would take money, and, if you had extra, he would take some of your "extra." So, the tax collector was not liked or loved by folks. And he was considered a sinner, which is why he said, "Oh God, have mercy on me, a sinner!" (Lk. 18:13). And it would look as though he was the worst one off.

But, actually, both were in need of God's mercy and God's love.

The scriptures say that he went home justified (Lk. 18:14)—and "justified," on this Reformation Sunday, means that he was made right with God.

The Pharisee was also made right with God. The Pharisee had to look at himself in his self-righteousness and say, "Hmm, maybe I am bragging too much about all that I have and what I've done. Maybe I am so religious that I'm not good for people." There's a saying that some people are "so heavenly-bound that they're no earthly good." That means that they are so focused on God and getting to heaven,

that they can't even love God's people around them. And it seems sometimes the people who go to church can be the harshest on other folks. So, the Pharisee, like the tax collector, needed God's grace, too.

And one of the things I love about being Catholic is that, on the race of life, we are all at different points. Some of us pray and say the rosary every day, and we feel very spiritually connected. Some of us go to Mass maybe once a month and are not so sure that we're so religious or spiritual. But if you are trying to compete in the race of life and grow in holiness, God's love and mercy is there for you!

God never judges us for our lack of attempt. God judges us for our faithfulness, however hard that might be sometimes. I try to pray every day. I'm not always successful at that. I try to treat people right and be nice to everyone, but some mornings I wake up and I don't really feel that nice. So, some days I have to ask forgiveness about 100 times a day! But that's the joy that we have: that we can always go to God, for our God is merciful, our God is good, and our God loves us.

And so, as we run the race of life, we hope that, like my great grandmother, we might receive the crown. I don't know if you watch Oprah: She gives everyone something. So, I'm going to give you a crown and a trophy, to pass around.

Life is the race, and the church is the gym in which we train. We come here each week, not because it's an obligation, or because we're afraid of going to hell. We come each week because we love God, we want to give God thanks, and we want to get some exercise in here to sustain us through the week, so that, when we come to the end our lives and meet our Creator face-to-face, we can say: "I have fought the good fight. I have run the race. And now I go forward with my crown of righteousness!"

Next Steps

Those who gathered on Sunday morning, September 27, debriefed this event. The following are some of their conclusions.

- The Episcopalian liaison at the bishops' gathering earlier in the week suggested his willingness to invite an Old Catholic theologian to the United States on behalf of the Episcopalian Church. This would likely be a large gathering. Representatives of the Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches would likely express reticence at the thought of being part of a non-jurisdictional Old/Independent Catholic gathering like this.
- The question is raised by some Old/Independent Catholic clergy in the United States: Must we become Episcopalian to be recognized as Old Catholic by the Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches? Is there a way for one to be in communion with the Episcopal Church while maintaining one's Catholic identity, worship, etc.?
- We recognize how the Episcopal Church might perceive themselves as being "burned" by Old/Independent Catholic clergy in the United States on a number of occasions.
- Unlike the Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches, we have no Old/Independent Catholic faculty here in the United States, no peer-reviewed journals, no codified formation system.
- There is some interest to dedicate a future encounter to learning more about the American experience of the Old/Independent Catholic experience.
- Questions arises: Do we want to create a unified body that might one day enjoy union with Utrecht, or is our goal to provide opportunities of fellowship and community for Old/Independent Catholic clergy and laity? Is coming together sufficient? Do we want to have a parallel structure in the United States that meets the needs and ethos of the American experience? Should initial efforts be anything more than being more unified and collaborative?
- For some at these events, having someone pull us together has been invaluable. How might we keep this momentum going? How might we communicate news, say, on a quarterly basis? How

can we know where one another is, so that we can visit and connect with one another when traveling?

- What Old/Independent Catholic groups exists on social media?
- Might we develop an app or database for Old/Independent Catholic clergy and communities in the United States, to share the data that Father Jayme has compiled? It seems such an app might give a "flavor" of the community (e.g., size, location, creeds professed, rites celebrated, to match people's spiritual needs with clergy and communities), with information on such important issues as apostolic succession.
- Holy Family is willing to host a gathering like this as often as semi-annually. Are there other communities that might be willing to host a gathering like this, that we might see other communities and ministries in action?
- Possible topics for future presentations and conversations might include:
    - Presentations by clergy from large Old/Independent Catholic communities throughout the U.S. (e.g., Bishop Armando Leyva, Bishop Jim St. George, Father Lawman Chibundi, Father Jayme Mathias, Father Marek Božek);
    - A workshop for those interested in writing, publishing and adding to the Old/Independent Catholic *corpus* (e.g., Bishop Gregory Godsey, Bishop David Oliver Kling, Father Jayme Mathias, Father Kerry Walters);
    - An overview of Old/Independent Catholic saints, particularly those from the U.S. (e.g., Mathew, Vilatte);
    - Issues related to Old/Independent Catholic theology, ecclesiology, etc., including a possible compare-and-contrast of our similarities and differences with other churches, like the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—all without making exclusionary statements that might cast aspersions on those who might not believe certain things that we believe (Bishop Francis Krebs, Father Libardo Rocha, Rev. Trish Sullivan Vanni);
    - Theological issues, on which we might dialogue with Roman Catholic authors and canonists who are in good standing with their church (e.g., Father James Martin, or Georgetown Jesuit

Father John O'Malley, who has written on Vatican I, or Father Donald Sutton's friend who teaches at Notre Dame and has written on the letters of Ignatius);

- Issues related to psychology (Rev. Patrice Cheasty-Miller, Father Donald Sutton, Dr. Sean Horan, Dr. Gary Yorke);
- Definition of the "essentials" that hold us together, as well as the "incidentals" that should not impede collaboration;
- Fly in someone from Utrecht (though we recognize the reticence that will likely be expressed to such an invitation), or, as Holy Family is considering, host a pilgrimage to Utrecht for those who might be interested;
- Fly in someone from the Independent Church of the Philippines, to build relationship with and learn from them;
- Fly in someone from the Polish National Catholic Church, to discuss why they chose not to remain in union with Utrecht;
- Fly in those who've written on Old/Independent Catholicism (e.g., Bishop John Plummer, Father Robert Caruso, Julie Byrne).

- This gathering was focused on Old/Independent Catholic clergy and laity: What relationship do we desire with the larger Independent Sacramental Movement?
- How might we gather resources, particularly online resources, that might be useful in the formation of clergy and laity?
- We are grateful to Holy Family for keeping the cost of this gathering low, so that we could attend.
- Father Jayme will email all attendees a directory from this gathering as well as a conference call number for those who are interested to meet, perhaps on a monthly basis, to discuss future endeavors and encounters. He will also share his research on the largest Old/Independent presences on social media.

Concluding Words

Before concluding this gathering, Father Jayme invited all present at the final session to share a "check-out." Here are some thoughts that were shared.

"We literally flew here from the bishops' conference in St. Louis, and this gathering shares some strong similarities. It seems there are two tracks going on here, which, I think, is very good. Part of it is the 'big picture,' the dream. Whip out your St. Jude medals: It's unlikely that we're all going to get subsumed whole into the Union of Utrecht, or that we're all going to come together in this one, big, beautiful, 'we-all-believe-the-same-thing' outfit. But I'm not saying that it's not a project worth working on. There is an overall push toward as much unification as possible, with all those people who are capable of coming together, joining together in a more formal way. Great! We want to support that! Let's run with that. But let's also remember that not everyone will. Some people will want to retain their own identities, and perhaps Utrecht is right in thinking that maybe we're not so committed to 'unity or bust.'

But there's a second track, next to the St. Jude track: Now that we're here, and, with the idea that we are all 'in the same boat' together, in the same 'seas' together, how can we continue to grow closer in our connections to each other? And how can we continue to provide resources to each other? So, this seems a parallel process to the bishops' conference, with two tracks: 'This is an ideal thing and something that a lot of people really want to commit to, no matter what' and 'No matter what happens, this is a beautiful thing that's unfolding, and we can all continue, even if the first track never goes anywhere.'"

Father Scott Carter
Ashland, Oregon

"I was just shocked and surprised at how well everyone worked together. It got a little tense at times, and there are a lot of different perspectives, but it still worked well—much better than in my previous experiences."

Bishop Brendan Rumph
Cedar Park, Texas

"This is not a bad thing."

Father Donald Sutton
Denver, Colorado

"I'm very grateful that I was able to attend. For me, everything that was shared was very informative and educational and spiritual. Everything was useful, especially the history [of Old/Independent Catholicism]. Now I'd like to learn more about Independent Catholicism in the United States. I'm so grateful that you're here, to share your experiences, and I would love visit you all someday."

Elsa Y. Nelligan
Austin, Texas

"For me, this has been remarkable. Plus, we have a new friend in New York, who's going to send us a food truck! I loved the educational piece. That's what I was starving for. People often search their genealogy because they're looking for something that's missing, and that helps explain things and bring comfort. That's what I found here, and that's why I was looking forward to this."

Greg Yonker
Aurora, Colorado

"The word on my heart is 'gratitude.' Thank y'all for taking the risk to come to Austin, Texas, not knowing what this experience would be like, but trusting that something good might come of it!"

Father Jayme Mathias
Austin, Texas

Appendix A

Participants in "Utrecht Sweet Utrecht"

Bishop Raphael Adams
Epiphany Ecumenical Catholic Community
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Chicago, Illinois

Bishop Rosemary Ananis
St. Francis of Assisi Faith Community
The Old Catholic Church Province of the United States (TOCCUSA)
Wells, Maine

Rev. Rosa Buffone
Holy Spirit Catholic Community
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Newtonville, Massachusetts

Father Michael Cadotte
Christ the Good Shepherd
Berkley, Michigan

Father Scott Carter
Pilgrim Chapel of Contemplative Conscience
Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch
Ashland, Oregon

Bishop Cathy Chalmers
Ascension Alliance
Everett, Washington

Bishop Denise Donato
Mary Magdalene Church
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Fairport, New York

Rev. Cynthia Drew
Church of the Holy Family
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Aurora, Colorado

Joe Fedorczyk
Christ the Good Shepherd
Farmington Hills, Michigan

Bishop Theodore Feldmann
Ascension Alliance
New Orleans, Louisiana

Father Roy Gomez
Holy Family Catholic Church
Austin, Texas

Mary Hartjes
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Combined Locks, Wisconsin

Bishop Alan Kemp
Ascension Alliance
Gig Harbor, Washington

Chris Kitzman
Christ the Good Shepherd
Berkley, Michigan

Bishop Francis Krebs
Saints Clare & Francis
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
St. Louis, Missouri

Deacon Johnny H. "Canica" Limon
Holy Family Catholic Church
Austin, Texas

Father Mike Lopez
Missionary Benedictines of the Poor
All Saints Priory
Ridgewood, New York

Virginia-Michele "Mimi" Maki
Emmaus Ecumenical Catholic Community
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Vincent Maldonado
Holy Family Catholic Church
Austin, Texas

Father Jayme Mathias
Holy Family Catholic Church
Austin, Texas

Deacon Marianne Melchiori
All Saints Priory
Ridgewood, New York

Deacon Angelita Mendoza-Waterhouse
Holy Family Catholic Church
Austin, Texas

Father Dewayne Messenger
The Parish Church of St. Jerome
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Sand Springs, Oklahoma

Elsa Y. Nelligan
Holy Family Catholic Church
Austin, Texas

Bishop Mark Elliott Newman
Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch
Phoenix, Arizona

Father Harry Posner
Christ the Good Shepherd, OCC
Ferndale, Michigan

Deacon Kevin Powell
All Saints Priory
Ridgewood, New York

Father Kevin Przybylski
Rabbouni Catholic Community
Louisville, Kentucky

Jonathan Quirk
Christ the Good Shepherd
Berkley, Michigan

Father Libardo Rocha
Holy Family Catholic Church
Austin, Texas

Bishop Brendan Rumph
Saint Dymphna's Hermitage of the Holy Name
Eaglais Uilíoch Ársa Solas Críost (EUASC)
Cedar Park, Texas

Bishop David Strong
Spirit of Christ Synodal Catholic Community
Apostolic Catholic Church in America
Tacoma, Washington

Rev. Trish Sullivan Vanni
Charis Ecumenical Catholic Community
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Edina, Minnesota

Father Donald Sutton
St. Paul Lutheran & Catholic Community
Ecumenical Catholic Communion
Denver, Colorado

Bishop Leonard Walker
The National Catholic Church of North America
Kingman, Arizona

Bishop Lyle Wilson
Apostolic Celtic Church
Winchester, Virginia

Gregory "Greg" Yonker
St. Paul Lutheran & Catholic Community
Aurora, Colorado

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