

The Holy Spirit and the Church

Reading

Yves Congar 'Forgetting the Spirit'

- Forgotten member of the Trinity
- Part due to an accident of dogmatic development – Christological controversies
- Part theological – the nameless one
- Partially a Western deficiency? Look at more later.

- Pneumatology as a discipline... linked with ecclesiology
- Orthodox observers at Vatican II
- Even in language, difference between Christology and pneumatology
- More prominent today.
- Look at the developments in the work of Yves Congar OP

- One of the great theologians of the twentieth century
- Made a Cardinal by John Paul II
- Probably the most influential theologian on Vatican II
- Wrote highly influential texts on the Holy Spirit
- Three volume 'I Believe in the Holy Spirit'



- Arrival of Russian émigré community in Paris
- Vladimir Lossky and the critique of the filioque
- They were symptomatic of an overly Christo-centric, filioqueist orientation.
- Subject elements associated with the Spirit (such as the unknowable, the spontaneous, the unpredictable, the mystical, and the apophatic), to those connected with the Word (such as logic, rationality, law, stability, and structure)

- For Lossky, ultramontane theology of the nineteenth century was simply downstream to an earlier subjugation of the Spirit to Christ
- Problems with his presentation...
- Overstated the discontinuity between the traditions of East and West and between the Patristic and the Latin medieval periods
- Overly polemical
- But not entirely without basis...

- Congar came to agree that the critiques of Christomonism were, at least to some degree, true
- Filioque did not necessarily lead to juridicism, in 1985 Congar noted there was 'a certain influence or at least a coherence' between them
- Aquinas had also seen a connection, but from the other side

- The Spirit, as he came to see, cannot be treated merely as an agent of Christ. Instead, Word and Spirit must be treated as fundamentally intertwined
- Emphasis can be seen in the difference between the title of his 1950s essay and the title of chapter three of his 1980s book *The Word and the Spirit*.
- ‘The Holy Spirit and the Apostolic Body, Continuators of the Work of Christ’
- ‘The Word and Spirit Jointly Operate the Work of God’

- Shifts focus from the Spirit as agent of Christ, to a more Trinitarian orientation whereby Christ and the Spirit both carry out the mission of the Father
- Irenaeus 'the two hands of God'
- Congar 'Truly, God works with his two hands conjointly'
- The Spirit does not just bring the church to life, but co-institutes it.

- Reflection on the names 'Word' and 'Breath'
- Congar 'There is no Word without Breath; it would remain in the throat and would address no one. There is no Breath without a Word: it would have no content and would transmit nothing to anyone'
- The idea that Christ gives the Spirit is well developed, the idea that the Spirit gives Christ, as is represented in this image, less so.
- Congar's famous axiom: 'no Christology without pneumatology and no pneumatology without Christology'

- Influence on Card. Marc Ouellet – explicit in some papers he has given, drawing from Congar's Pneumatology
- One of the key drafters of the document *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*.
- There are ecclesiological implications to this teaching...

Jesus Himself connects the fulfilment of his mission to the sending of the Spirit upon the community of believers. Through this, the Holy Spirit can in no way inaugurate an economy other than that of the divine incarnate Logos, crucified and risen. In truth, the whole sacramental economy of the Church is the pneumatological realization of the Incarnation: the Holy Spirit, therefore, comes to be considered by Tradition as the soul of the Church which is the Body of Christ. The action of God in history always implies the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit, who, in Irenaeus of Lyon's evocative words, are called "the two hands of the Father". (IE11)

Jesus Christ “is conceived by the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Mt 1:18; Lk 1:35); at the beginning of his public mission, on the banks of the Jordan, He sees the Spirit descend upon Him[self] in the form of a dove (cf. Mt 3:16 and parallels); He acts, speaks and rejoices in the Spirit (cf. Lk 10:21), and He can offer Himself in the Spirit (cf. Heb 9:14). In the so-called ‘farewell discourse’ reported by John, Jesus clearly relates the gift of his life in the Paschal Mystery to the gift of the Spirit to his own (cf. Jn 16:7). Once risen, bearing in his flesh the signs of the passion, He can pour out the Spirit upon them (cf. Jn 20:22), making them sharers in his own mission (cf. Jn 20:21). The Spirit would then teach the disciples all things and bring to their remembrance all that Christ had said (cf. Jn 14:26), since it falls to Him, as the Spirit of truth (cf. Jn 15:26), to guide the disciples into all truth (cf. Jn 16:13). In the account in Acts, the Spirit descends on the Apostles gathered in prayer with Mary on the day of Pentecost (cf. 2:1-4) and stirs them to undertake the mission of proclaiming the Good News to all peoples”.

- Perhaps key Pneumatological passage in Lumen Gentium was LG12
- Most developed passages where the Spirit was presented as active (rather than passive), as foundational (rather than assisting).
- The prophetic dimension
- Appropriate: ‘who has spoken through the prophets’
- The sensus fidei and the charisms

- Sensus fidei

The holy people of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office... The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief. They manifest this special property by means of the whole peoples' supernatural discernment in matters of faith when "from the Bishops down to the last of the lay faithful" they show universal agreement in matters of faith and morals. That discernment in matters of faith is aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth. It is exercised under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority, in faithful and respectful obedience to which the people of God accepts that which is not just the word of men but truly the word of God. Through it, the people of God adheres unwaveringly to the faith given once and for all to the saints, penetrates it more deeply with right thinking, and applies it more fully in its life. (LG12)

- Church historian John O'Malley prefers to translate it as 'the faithful's sense of the faith'

To these [dogmatic] definitions the assent of the Church can never be wanting, on account of the activity of that same Holy Spirit, by which the whole flock of Christ is preserved and progresses in unity of faith.

(LG44)

- An instinct which develops, and is formed, through Christian life (sign of the cross, liturgy, catechesis), but is fundamentally given by the Spirit

- ITC document *sensus fidei* in the life of the church:

The *sensus fidei fidelis* is a sort of spiritual instinct that enables the believer to judge spontaneously whether a particular teaching or practice is or is not in conformity with the Gospel and with apostolic faith. It is intrinsically linked to the virtue of faith itself; it flows from, and is a property of, faith. It is compared to an instinct because it is not primarily the result of rational deliberation, but is rather a form of spontaneous and natural knowledge, a sort of perception (*aisthesis*).

The *sensus fidei fidelis* enables individual believers: 1) to discern whether or not a particular teaching or practice that they actually encounter in the Church is coherent with the true faith by which they live in the communion of the Church... 2) to distinguish in what is preached between the essential and the secondary... and 3) to determine and put into practice the witness to Jesus Christ that they should give in the particular historical and cultural context in which they live

The whole Church, laity and hierarchy together, bears responsibility for and mediates in history the revelation which is contained in the holy Scriptures and in the living apostolic Tradition... The council clearly taught that the faithful are not merely passive recipients of what the hierarchy teaches and theologians explain; rather, they are living and active subjects within the Church... ‘the Tradition that comes from the apostles makes progress in the Church, with the help of the Holy Spirit’.

The *sensus fidei* is... not only retrospective but also prospective, and, though less familiar, the prospective and proactive aspects of the *sensus fidei* are highly important.

The *sensus fidei* gives an intuition as to the right way forward amid the uncertainties and ambiguities of history, and a capacity to listen discerningly to what human culture and the progress of the sciences are saying.

Sometimes the people of God, and in particular the laity, intuitively felt in which direction the development of doctrine would go, even when theologians and bishops were divided on the issue.

In matters of faith the baptised cannot be passive... the magisterium has to be attentive to the *sensus fidelium*, the living voice of the people of God. Not only do they have the right to be heard, but their reaction to what is proposed as belonging to the faith of the Apostles must be taken very seriously, because it is by the Church as a whole that the apostolic faith is borne in the power of the Spirit.

Banishing the caricature of an active hierarchy and a passive laity, and in particular the notion of a strict separation between the teaching Church (Ecclesia docens) and the learning Church (Ecclesia discens), the council taught that all the baptised participate in their own proper way in the three offices of Christ as prophet, priest and king... it taught that Christ fulfills his prophetic office not only by means of the hierarchy but also via the laity.

Vatican II was a new Pentecost, equipping the Church for the new evangelisation that popes since the council have called for. The council gave a renewed emphasis to the traditional idea that all of the baptised have a *sensus fidei*, and the *sensus fidei* constitutes a most important resource for the new evangelisation... One of the reasons why bishops and priests need to be close to their people on the journey and to walk with them is precisely so as to recognise ‘new ways’ as they are sensed by the people. The discernment of such new ways, opened up and illumined by the Holy Spirit, will be vital for the new evangelisation.

It is the instinct by which each and all ‘think with the Church’, sharing one faith and one purpose.

Discussion and short break

- Charisms
- Term either coined by Paul, or reinvented by him
- James Dunn: charism 'is God's grace itself coming to visible expression'
- Appear in St. Paul as diverse gifts distributed among the community and which usually contribute towards the building up of the Body of Christ.

- 1 Corinthians 12
- Subsequently theological reading appeared in Lumen Gentium and then, more recently, *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*
- Develop and systematize a theology of charisms

- Charisms are gifts of grace - 'special graces' (LG12 & IE1)
- They are 'powerful dynamic realities' (IE2)
- Given by the Holy Spirit as He wishes (IE12) and thus potentially 'unforeseeable' (IE17).
- Distributed among the faithful of every rank (LG12 & IE9)
- Distributed differently - unity through diversity

- Love is not a charism
- Thomas Aquinas: grace of sanctification distinguished from charisms.

Unlike the fundamental graces such as sanctifying grace, or the gifts of faith, of hope, and of charity, that are indispensable for every Christian, an individual charism need not be a gift given to all (cf. 1 Cor 12:30). The charisms are particular gifts that the Spirit distributes “as He wishes” (1 Cor 12:11). (IE4)

- Lumen Gentium and Iuvenescit Ecclesial linguistically distinguish charisms and hierarchical gifts.
- Difference in how they are given:
 1. the mode of giving
 2. the permanence of the gift.
- Hierarchical gifts = from sacramental ordination, spoken of as having an assured permanence.

- ‘These charisms, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused...’ (LG12) - Overtly supernatural not overtly supernatural
- You or someone you know may have experienced more overtly supernatural charism – healing etc.
- Not exclusively these gifts. More simple also.

- Charisms are not purely natural gifts or 'simply human capacities' (IE4).
- However, Paul includes teaching, giving, administration – at base a natural gift?
- Musician – raised by grace?
- Alternatively... Moses

- Almost certainly you have exercised a charism before, even if you were unaware.
- You could receive any charism at any time as a one off
- Some might manifest more regular (quasi-stable) = speak of someone as “having” this charism
- Can have multiple charisms all being given in a more ongoing way – example of St. Paul

- Some lead to canonically recognized ministries, such as newly established catechist:

Within the broader charismatic tradition of the New Testament, then, we can see that certain baptized persons exercised the ministry of transmitting in a more organic and stable form related to different situations in life the teaching of the apostles and evangelists. The Church wished to acknowledge this service as a concrete expression of a personal charism that contributed greatly to the exercise of her mission of evangelization.

(Francis, *Antiquum Ministerium*)

- Religious life – if you share the unique charism of the community

‘a community is marked by a particular charism because the persons who are a part of that community have each personally received that same charism from the Spirit’ (Pedlar, p.78)

- Deaconate:

By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church (LG12)

- These gifts have no assured permanence:

Now none can take to prophecy when he wills... Thus prophecy is not a lasting disposition [non est habitus]... prophetic light does not inhere in the mind of a prophet as a permanent form – for then the prophet would always have the faculty of prophesying, which is patently false... It remains then that prophetic light inheres in the soul of a prophet by way of a transient passion or impression.’ (Aquinas, pp.8-11)

- Charisms 'make the mystery of Christ present in the world' (IE10) building up of the Body of Christ the Church
- Both internal and external
- St. Paul (and LG) primarily understood them ad intra
- Aquinas primarily understood them ad extra

- Congar theology of ministries
- Modern evangelization tools and programs
- New Testament and official Catholic teaching
- Convergence...

The work of evangelization touches every dimension of the Church: from ordinary pastoral ministry, to her proclamation to those who have abandoned the Christian faith and, in particular, to those who do not know Jesus Christ or have always rejected Him. In the essential work of new evangelization, it is now more than ever necessary to recognize and value the numerous charisms capable of reawakening and nourishing the life of faith of the People of God. (IE 1)

Reading

Extract from “Iuvenescit Ecclesia”