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ECCLESIOLOGY MODULE AUTUMN 2011

PREPARATION FOR WEEK 3

Same time next week: WEDNESDAY 5th OCTOBER 2011

REQUIRED READING: [Lumen Gentium](#) 23-27

Section 2 (para. 19-39) of [Deus Caritas Est](#)

REQUIRED PREPARATION: On what issues are you aware of the Catholic Church's opinions being reported in local or national media (secular press, not religious)?

Suggested Further Reading from Session II:

Gaudium et Spes – or at least the abridged version at
http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/summary_gaudium.htm
PLUS paragraphs 2-3, 27-29, 36, 40-45, 76, 89-93

[Christus Dominus](#) on bishops

[Presbyterium Ordinis](#) on priests

[Perfectae Caritatis](#) on religious

[Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests](#) – Congregation for the Clergy

MODELS OF THE CHURCH

Before we look more closely at contemporary expressions of church, it will be useful to have in our minds a ‘framework’ on which to ‘hang’ these ideas and images. A framework which is as good as any, and with which many are already familiar, is Avery Cardinal Dulles’ *Models of the Church*.¹ Dulles identifies five ‘models’

1. The Church as Institution²

This sees the Church as a visible society, defined above all in terms of its visible structures. Dulles quotes St Robert Bellarmine who says that the Church is a society “as visible and palpable as the community of the Roman people, or the kingdom of France, or the Republic of Venice”³ One might observe that none of these three societies exist any more (in the sense that Bellarmine understood them)! Though this may seem at first to be a flippant observation, in fact it points out a weakness in this model - it too easily identifies the Church with a particular historical form.

2. The Church as Mystical Communion⁴

This model focuses on the interior communion rather than the exterior society. The emphasis is above all on the bond of love between the members of the church. A “supernatural organism vivified [brought to life] by the Holy Spirit”⁵ This image fits well with the ideas of the Church as ‘body of Christ’ or ‘People of God’. This model of the Church, on its own, underplays the value, indeed the necessity, of external structures.

Lumen Gentium seeks to harmonise this idea of the Church as communion- propounded above all in Chapters 1 and II (nn. 1-17) with the ‘institutional’ model in Ch.. III (nn. 18-29). This harmonisation is founded on the idea of incarnation.⁶ Kung observes that “The Church we believe in is *one* Church, visible and invisible”⁷

3. The Church as Sacrament⁸

Another way of harmonising the interior and exterior aspects of the Church is through the notion of sacrament. Dulles quotes De Lubac:

If Christ is the Sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ; she represents him, in the full and ancient meaning of the term, she really makes him present. She not only carries on his work, but she is his very continuation, in a sense far more real than that in which it can be said any human institution is its founder's continuation.⁹

Two common definitions of a sacrament are “a visible sign of an invisible reality” or “a symbol which really is that which it symbolises”. Both, it seems, could be applied to the Church. But the model has been criticised for focusing too much on the sacral side of the Church, at the expense of mission. This is counterbalanced by the next two models.

¹(Gill & Macmillan, Dublin 1976)

²*ibid.* pp. 31-42

³*De Controversiis* Tom. 2, lib. 3, cap. 2 (Naples: Giuliano, 1857), vol. 2, p.75. Quoted in DULLES *op. cit.* p. 31

⁴Dulles *op. cit.* pp. 43-57

⁵*ibid.* p. 46

⁶Cf.. LG 8

⁷*The Church* p. 38

⁸DULLES *op. cit.* p. 58-70

⁹*Catholicism* (Burns & Oates, London, 1950) p. 29 quoted in DULLES *op. cit.* p.58

4. The Church as Herald¹⁰

In this model the idea is not so much of sacrament as of word. The Church is the ‘receptacle’ of the Word of God and therefore has the primary responsibility of proclaiming that Word.

The Church is essentially a kerygmatic community which holds aloft, through the preached Word, the wonderful deeds of God in the past, particularly his mighty act in Jesus Christ.¹¹

On this model, wherever the local community is gathered and proclaims the Word, the Church is fully present. It also separates the idea of the Church (a present reality) and the Kingdom of God (a future reality). Kung argues that the Church is not the Kingdom of God, nor does she build that kingdom. Rather she is the witness to that Kingdom.¹² On its own, this model underplays the incarnational aspect (that the Word is made flesh) and disconnects God’s message from God’s community.

5. The Church as Servant¹³

A model perhaps most closely associated with *Gaudium et Spes*. It recognises and accepts that the world we live in is now ‘secular’ – that civil governments are not ruled by religious values, etc. – and sees the Church as not so much over against secular institutions, as servant of them. In some ways this model is opposed to the previous model, for it sees the Church as the Body of Christ working for the realisation of the Kingdom. Thus the church has the servant role of Christ. She seeks to reconcile, to heal. Hence the oft quoted adage of William Temple “The Church is the only organisation which exists for those who are not its members.” By “servant” we must be careful to observe that the Church is not at the beck and call of the World. She is obedient not to the world but to the Father.

This model, which seeks to counterbalance the confrontational aspect of previous models, can forget the mission of the Church to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the Church **does** have a message to proclaim, and the task she performs illustrates and realises that message.

MORE MODELS?

Dulles chose his models in order to give the sharpest contrast between the various different ways of understanding ‘church’. In 1987, he published a revised edition of *Models of the Church* in which he suggested that an idea which might bring together the different dimensions of church, was “the community of disciples.” As a community, this starts with Communion (Model 2) but readily builds bridges to other models: true disciples live under the authority of the institutional church (1), are a sign of Christ’s presence in the world (3), speak of the message of Jesus by their words and actions (4) and pour out their lives in service of others (5).

Notes above on “Models of the Church” adapted from the work of Revd Anthony Milner and used with permission.

¹⁰DULLES *op. cit.* pp. 71-82

¹¹R. MCBRIEN *Church, The Continuing Quest* (Newman, New York, 1970) p. 11. Quoted in DULLES *op. cit.* p.72

¹²Hans KUNG *The Church* (Search Press, Tunbridge Wells, 1968) pp. 92-96

¹³ DULLES *op. cit.* pp. 83-96

WORKSHEET A1

One of the five models defined by Avery Dulles as a way of understanding the Church is:

Model 1. The Church as Institution

This sees the Church as a visible society, defined above all in terms of its visible structures.

During the last session, you identified some ministries which are exercised during the Sunday Eucharistic Assembly (Mass) which you attend. During the last week, you have identified activities which take place in your parish apart from the Sunday Mass.

Which of these activities best fit the model above? Are there any which do not fit at all?

Is this a good model for describing the actual activities of your parish?

WORKSHEET A2

One of the five models defined by Avery Dulles as a way of understanding the Church is:

Model 2. The Church as Mystical Communion

This model focuses on the interior communion rather than the exterior society. The emphasis is above all on the bond of love between the members of the church. A “supernatural organism vivified by the Holy Spirit”. This image fits well with the ideas of the Church as ‘body of Christ’ or ‘People of God’.

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WORKSHEET A3

One of the five models defined by Avery Dulles as a way of understanding the Church is:

Model 3. The Church as Sacrament

Another way of harmonising the interior and exterior aspects of the Church is through the notion of sacrament. Dulles quotes De Lubac: “If Christ is the Sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ; she represents him, in the full and ancient meaning of the term, she really makes him present. She not only carries on his work, but she is his very continuation, in a sense far more real than that in which it can be said any human institution is its founder's continuation.”¹⁴ Two common definitions of a sacrament are “a visible sign of an invisible reality” or “a symbol which really is that which it symbolises”. Both, it seems, could be applied to the Church.

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WORKSHEET A4

One of the five models defined by Avery Dulles as a way of understanding the Church is:

Model 4. The Church as Herald

In this model the idea is not so much of sacrament as of word. The Church is the ‘receptacle’ of the Word of God and therefore has the primary responsibility of proclaiming that Word. “The Church is essentially a kerygmatic community which holds aloft, through the preached Word, the wonderful deeds of God in the past, particularly his mighty act in Jesus Christ.”¹⁵ On this model, wherever the local community is gathered and proclaims the Word, the Church is fully present. It also separates the idea of the Church - a present reality - and the Kingdom of God - a future reality.

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¹⁵R. MCBRIEN *Church, The Continuing Quest* (Newman, New York, 1970) p. 11. Quoted in DULLES *op. cit.* p.72

WORKSHEET A5

One of the five models defined by Avery Dulles as a way of understanding the Church is:

Model 5. The Church as Servant

A model perhaps most closely associated with *Gaudium et Spes* which recognises and accepts the ‘secularisation’ of the world in the sense of the autonomy of civil government etc., and sees the Church as not so much over against these as servant of them. In some ways it is opposed to the previous model, for it sees the Church as the Body of Christ working for the realisation of the Kingdom. Thus the church has the servant role of Christ. She seeks to reconcile, to heal. Thus the oft quoted adage of William Temple “The Church is the only organisation which exists for those who are not its members” By servant we must be careful to observe that the Church is not at the beck and call of the World. She is obedient not to the world but to the Father.

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ECCLESIOLOGY – Mid-Course Feedback

Please rate the provision of individual elements within the course:

Group exercises:

Far too many: Too many: About right: Too few: Far too few:

Individual exercises during the session:

Far too many: Too many: About right: Too few: Far too few:

Lecture-style material:

Far too much: Too much: About right: Too little: Far too little:

Reading Assignments between session:

Far too much: Too much: About right: Too little: Far too little:

Other Assignments between sessions:

Far too much: Too much: About right: Too little: Far too little:

Course handouts:

Far too much: Too much: About right: Too little: Far too little:

On-line course materials:

Far too much: Too much: About right: Too little: Far too little:

If you know your own personal learning style, which do you respond best to?

Spoken word (aural): Visual: Activities (kinaesthetic):

What prior understanding of the Church has this confirmed for you?

What have you learned so far, which has surprised you?

Is the course meeting your needs as a catechist or teacher? If not, please give an example.

What would you change in the manner of delivery, if anything?