

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

The Church as the Bride of Christ in Magisterial Teaching from Leo XIII to John Paul II

A DISSERTATION

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By  
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# The Church as the Bride of Christ in Magisterial Teaching from Leo XIII to John Paul II

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The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ is a long-standing and preeminent ecclesial image that continues to offer insights and provoke questions for ecclesiology. Interest in ecclesial bridal imagery reemerged with particular intensity in the Catholic Church in the first half of the twentieth century through the *ressourcement*. While the magisterium of Pope John Paul II is particularly well-known for its use of spousal imagery, there was a significant trajectory of teaching on the Church as the Bride of Christ in preceding papal and conciliar teaching. This dissertation investigates (1) the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in twentieth-century papal and conciliar teaching from Leo XIII to John Paul II, and (2) the significance and implications of such usage for ecclesiology.

The study first surveys the historical use of ecclesial bridal imagery, illustrating the image's traditional application in various areas of theology. It then discusses the notion of metaphor in preparation for the subsequent analysis of the nature and use of ecclesial bridal imagery. An exposition of the papal and conciliar teaching follows, wherein key themes and patterns of use of bridal imagery are identified. In particular, the study finds with Pius XII's teaching a clear shift and intensification in the use of bridal imagery. John Paul II's use of the imagery is therefore contextualized within a broader range of previous teaching. Finally, the study evaluates the span of this usage found in twentieth-century teaching and considers its

relevance for ongoing questions concerning the personhood of the Church, the relation of bodily and bridal imagery, men and women in the Church, and the Church's identity and eschatological fulfillment.

The study concludes by considering the enduring and prophetic value of ecclesial bridal imagery. As an emblematic and irreducible metaphor, the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ offers a unique window to the mystery of the Church and discloses a dynamic and dramatic ecclesial identity meant to be lived and realized by every member of the Church.

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Rev. Msgr. Paul McPartlan, S.T.L., D.Phil., Director

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Michael Root, Ph.D., Reader

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Christopher Ruddy, Ph.D., Reader

To my beloved and patient wife, Kristen

Thank you

*In memoriam*

Walter M. Ebarb (1974-2010)

Colleague and friend

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## Abbreviations

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i> . Vols. 1-98. Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1909-2006. <a href="http://www.vatican.va/archive/aas/index_en.htm">http://www.vatican.va/archive/aas/index_en.htm</a> .
AH	Irenaeus. <i>Adversus haereses</i> .
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> . 2nd ed. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference—Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000.
CCCM	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis</i> . Vol. 56b. Edited by Bedae Paulus. Turnholt: Brepols, 1984.
CF	<i>The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux</i> . Cistercian Fathers Series. 4 vols. (nos. 4, 7, 31 and 40). Translated by Kilian Walsh and Irene M. Edmonds. Spencer-Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1971-1980.
DMC	John XXIII. <i>Discorsi Messaggi Colloqui del Santo Padre Giovanni XXIII</i> . Vols. 1-5 (1958-1963) and index. Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1963.
DR	Pius XII. <i>Discorsi e radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII</i> . Vols. 1-20 (1939-1958) and index. Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1955-1959.
DP	Pius XI. <i>Discorsi di Pio XI</i> . Vols. 1-3 (1922-1939). 2nd ed. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1985.
<i>Exp. Ps.</i>	Augustine. <i>Expositions of the Psalms 1-150</i> . Pt. 3, vols. 15-20 of <i>The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i> . Edited by John E. Rotelle (vols. 15-18) and Boniface Ramsey (vols. 19-20). Translated by Maria Boulding. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2000-2004.
IBC	<i>The International Biblical Commentary: A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century</i> . Edited by William R. Farmer et al. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998.
IGP	John Paul II. <i>Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II</i> . Vols. 1-28 (1978-2005). Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979-2005.
IP	Paul VI. <i>Insegnamenti di Paolo VI</i> . Vols. 1-16 (1963-1978) and index. Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1965-1979.
<i>JP-Church</i>	John Paul II. <i>The Church: Mystery, Sacrament, Community</i> . A Catechesis on the Creed: Vol. 4. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1998.

- JP-*Jesus* John Paul II. *Jesus: Son and Savior*. A Catechesis on the Creed: Vol. 2. Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1996.
- JP-*Lauds* John Paul II. *Psalms and Canticles: Meditations and Catechesis on the Psalms and Canticles of Morning Prayer*. London: Catholic Truth Society, 2004.
- JP-*Spirit* John Paul II. *The Spirit: Giver of Life and Love*. A Catechesis on the Creed: Vol. 3. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1996.
- JP- *Theotokós* John Paul II. *Theotokós: Woman, Mother, Disciple*. A Catechesis on Mary, Mother of God. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2000.
- JP-*Trinity* John Paul II. *The Trinity's Embrace: God's Saving Plan*. A Catechesis on Salvation History. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2002.
- JP-*Vespers* John Paul II and Benedict XVI. *Psalms and Canticles: Meditations and Catechesis on the Psalms and Canticles of Evening Prayer*. London: Catholic Truth Society, 2006.
- LA Leo XIII. *Leonis XIII. Pontificis Maximi Acta*. Vols. 1-23 (1878-1903). Rome: Typographia Vaticana, 1881-1905.
- NJBC *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Edited by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990.
- PA Pius X. *Pii X. Pontificis Maximi Acta*. Vols. 1-5 (1903-1908). Rome: Typographia Vaticana, 1905-1914.
- PG J.-P. Migne. *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*. Paris: 1857-1866.
- PL J.-P. Migne. *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*. Paris: 1844-1855.
- SS Thomas Aquinas. *Scriptum super Sententiis*. Latin available at [www.corpusthomisticum.org](http://www.corpusthomisticum.org).
- ST Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*. Latin available at [www.corpusthomisticum.org](http://www.corpusthomisticum.org). English translation based on edition prepared by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province originally published in 1911. 5 vols. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981.
- TOB John Paul II. *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*. Translated with introduction by Michael Waldstein. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006.

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Lastly, the Lord deserves all praise and glory for His goodness, grace, patience, providence, and mercy.



## Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to research the question of bridal imagery in relation to the Church by examining: (1) the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in late nineteenth and twentieth-century papal and conciliar teaching from Leo XIII to John Paul II; and (2) the significance and implications of such usage for ecclesiology.

Historically, although the image of the Church as Bride of Christ has scriptural roots which blossomed in different ways during the patristic and medieval periods, the precise significance of ecclesial bridal imagery has remained elusive for many. Particularly through the work of Johann Adam Möhler and Matthias Joseph Scheeben in the nineteenth century and Henri de Lubac, Louis Bouyer, and Hans Urs von Balthasar among others in the twentieth century, however, as well as through the influence of eastern Sophiology, ecclesial bridal imagery has recently made its presence more felt in Catholic theological circles. For instance, Cardinals Angelo Scola and Marc Ouellet have explored anew some of the implications of a nuptial hermeneutic for theology, both giving a prominent place to ecclesial bridal imagery. In spite of this on-going interest in nuptiality as a theological category—a category that some see as encapsulating the very core of ecclesial reality itself—theologians such as Balthasar and Yves Congar have acknowledged difficulties in understanding what it means to call the Church the Bride of Christ. More recently, Paul McPartlan has reflected upon the question of ecclesial bridal imagery in his comparative studies of de Lubac and John Zizioulas as well as Balthasar and Zizioulas, noting the absence of such imagery in Zizioulas' ecclesiology.<sup>1</sup> McPartlan

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1. See *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (1993; 2nd ed. repr., Fairfax, VA: Eastern Christian Publications, 2006) and “Who is the Church? Zizioulas and von Balthasar on the Church's Identity,” *Ecclesiology* 4 (2008): 271-88.

interprets the absence as Zizioulas' intentional avoidance of any suggestion that the Church has a personhood distinct from that of Christ himself.

Turning to the teaching of the magisterium, it is well known that, against the background of strong developments in Catholic biblical studies, the images of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ and the People of God garnered special attention in the teaching of Pius XII and the Second Vatican Council, respectively, with the image of the People of God and then the concept of *communio* providing a major key for much of post-conciliar ecclesiology. Bridal imagery, on the other hand, while seemingly not enjoying the same initial currency, received considerable affirmation and articulation during the pontificate of John Paul II, whose teaching gave the strongest impetus in the papal magisterium to date for the continued exploration of the category of nuptiality in Catholic theology.

In addition to various positive assessments, questions and criticisms have also surfaced with regard to John Paul II's frequent use of nuptial imagery and the justification and purpose of such usage. Fergus Kerr's observation about the Pope's Wednesday audience addresses on the "theology of the body" which strongly employed the idea of nuptiality is to the point: "Many are baffled by such reflections."<sup>2</sup> Others like Michael Waldstein note deeper implications at work in John Paul's teaching: "[T]he full greatness of John Paul II's vision only emerges when one sees his concern for spousal love in the larger context of his concern about our age, above all for the question of scientific knowledge and power over nature, that is, the characteristically modern question of 'progress.'"<sup>3</sup>

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2. Fergus Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians: From Neoscholasticism to Nuptial Mysticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 179.

3. Michael Waldstein, Introduction to TOB, 3.

John Paul II's teaching therefore serves as a particular catalyst for this study, which partly aims to contextualize and reinforce aspects of John Paul II's magisterium within the broader magisterial context of the twentieth century. Although it is true that John Paul II reflected much more extensively than previous popes and the Second Vatican Council did on ecclesial bridal imagery, this imagery was not absent from the teaching of his predecessors. From Leo XIII to Paul VI, the magisterium employed bridal imagery in varying degrees with reference to the Church, and Pope Benedict XVI has continued to do so. In light of ongoing questions concerning the meaning of the Church as the Bride of Christ as well as the particular contribution of John Paul II, this use of ecclesial bridal imagery in recent magisterial teaching deserves closer examination.

This dissertation proceeds as follows. The first two chapters provide the context and method for the examination of magisterial teaching. As background, chapter one surveys the use of bridal imagery in individual thinkers from the Old Testament to the twentieth century. Chapter two sets forth the method and hermeneutic employed in this study's examination of ecclesial metaphor in theology and magisterial teaching.

The next four chapters, chapters three through six, serve as an exposition of the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in magisterial teaching. Chapter three treats the teaching of Pope Leo XIII, Pope Pius X, Pope Benedict XV, and Pope Pius XI, wherein the use of ecclesial bridal imagery was more routine and also conveyed an earlier ecclesiological style. Chapter four focuses on the teaching of Pope Pius XII, who incorporated significant instances of ecclesial bridal imagery and anticipated much of what would follow in subsequent magisterial teaching. Chapter five examines the teaching of Pope John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council, and Pope Paul VI,

wherein ecclesial bridal imagery was developed and contextualized within a renewed emphasis on the mystery of the Church. And finally, chapter six focuses on Pope John Paul II's teaching, in which ecclesial bridal imagery was located within a broader nuptial thematic that largely characterized John Paul's magisterium as a whole.

The final chapter, chapter seven, serves as a synthesis and evaluation of the use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor in magisterial teaching. In this chapter, levels of continuity and discontinuity/newness in magisterial teaching are assessed, in addition to relevant theological questions and issues regarding the use of ecclesial metaphors. Ultimately, beyond its specific exposition and analysis of magisterial teaching, this study seeks to contribute toward a renewed appreciation of ecclesial metaphors and images and particularly to highlight the enduring value and significance of the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ.

Finally, a note on translation use and document citation is called for. Unless otherwise indicated, English translations of papal and conciliar teaching follow the translations available on the Vatican's website, *www.vatican.va*. A major exception to this rule concerns Pope John Paul II's Wednesday audience addresses known as the "theology of the body"—this study follows the recent critical English edition and translation of Michael Waldstein.<sup>4</sup> Any modifications in the translation made to reflect more precisely the original language (most often Latin or Italian) are noted.

Because of the extensive nature of documentary citation in this dissertation, the relevant footnotes follow Claudia Carlen's style,<sup>5</sup> wherein even homilies and addresses are entitled by the

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4. See TOB.

5. See Claudia Carlen, *Papal Pronouncements, A Guide: 1740-1978*, vols. 1-2 (Ann Arbor, MI: The Pieran Press, 1990).

initial words or phrase of the document in its original language. This style assists in maintaining brevity and clarity in the footnotes. For those interested in referring directly to the original source, the appropriate *Acta* or *Insegnamenti* volume and page(s) are cited in each instance. (Though unavailable during the majority of the research phase of this study, both the *Acta Sanctae Sedis* and the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* are now available electronically in PDF format on the Vatican website.)

References to Pope John Paul II's Wednesday audience addresses, inclusive of John Paul's "theology of the body" and later catecheses, are an exception to the general citation style, particularly because of the large volume of citations and the availability of the audience addresses in English. The "theology of the body" addresses are cited primarily in reference to the Waldstein edition (e.g., TOB 12:3) and then to the *Insegnamenti* volume. Other general audience addresses are cited primarily by date and then in reference to the proper *Insegnamenti* volume. English volumes of these audience addresses are also cited, following the *Insegnamenti* volume.

Unless otherwise noted, it should be presumed that all emphases or italics in quotations reflect the original style. The use of italics was a common element of Pope John Paul II's teaching and style.

Lastly, the numbering of paragraphs or sections in papal documents can vary. Whereas the English translation may offer section numbers, the original Latin or Italian may not, or vice versa. Encyclical letters are the most consistent in terms of numbering, though there are still exceptions. Where a numbering schema is present, the relevant paragraph or section numbers are cited. Where no paragraph or section numbers are cited but only page numbers to the *Acta*

or *Insegnamenti*, it can be presumed that paragraph or section numbers within the document are unavailable.

## Chapter One

### An Historical Overview of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery: Old Testament to Twentieth Century

This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church.

—Ephesians 5:32<sup>1</sup>

Few, and only with difficulty, have understood how Christ can be called spouse and the Church his wife and bride.

—Paschasius Radbertus (ca. 865)<sup>2</sup>

A long history predates twentieth-century magisterial references to the Church as the Bride of Christ. This history is rich and varied in its contexts, sources, and questions. As Paschasius acknowledged, the challenge in understanding ecclesial bridal imagery was linked to the fact that such imagery was being used to convey a “great mystery” (*magnum sacramentum*).<sup>3</sup> This chapter will survey in brief the scriptural roots and later theological developments of ecclesial bridal imagery through the twentieth century. It will highlight various themes and patterns of usage associated with bridal imagery for the Church, and thus offer a clearer vantage point from which to engage ecclesial bridal imagery in twentieth-century magisterial teaching. The survey will necessarily be broad and selective in order to accentuate particular thinkers and sources influential for later magisterial teaching and exemplary of their period. The bridal or spousal image, an image disclosed in the language of Scripture, has persisted in varying degrees

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1. Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

2. “Ergo difficile et a paucis cognoscitur quomodo Christus sponsus et ecclesia uxor et sponsa vocetur.” *Expositio in Matheo*, Book 11, 25.10 (CCCM, 1222, ll. 2388-89). With reference to this statement by Paschasius, see Angelo Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, trans. Michelle K. Borras (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 290, and Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard and Elizabeth Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 74n100.

3. See *Expositio in Matheo*, Book 11, 25.10 (CCCM, 1222-23, ll. 2389-2402).

and contexts throughout the Christian tradition, remaining a longstanding and preeminent image for the Church, with multiple meanings and connotations.

## I. Old Testament

The Old Testament contains various threads of bridal imagery and nuptial references stemming from the earliest traditions. Both Exodus and Leviticus include references to a nuptial understanding of the covenant which is made explicit by the prophets.<sup>4</sup> Forms of idolatry were seen as prostitution or adultery.<sup>5</sup> From an early stage of the Israelite tradition, covenant infidelity was characterized in negative spousal terms that would later be transferred in a positive sense to covenant faithfulness.

The spousal imagery of the Old Testament found its beating heart in the prophetic tradition of Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah (Deutero- and Trito-). Hosea (ca. 750-722 BC) was the first to employ such imagery in an explicit and developed way (see Hos 1–3).<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah (ca. 627-587 BC) and Ezekiel (ca. 593-571 BC) built upon Hosea's use of spousal imagery. Both likened the covenant between God and the people of Israel to marriage through the use of spousal imagery, and both also described Israel's (and Judah/Jerusalem's) infidelity in terms of

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4. "The theme of the Covenant as a marriage between God and his people was alive in Israel long before Hosea." Hans Urs von Balthasar, "*Casta Meretrix*," trans. John Saward, in *Spouse of the Word*, vol. 2 of *Explorations in Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1991), 198.

5. For example, see Ex 34:14-16; Lv 17:7, 20:5-7. See also Karl Delahaye, *Ecclesia Mater chez les pères des trois premiers siècles; pour un renouvellement de la pastorale d'aujourd'hui* (hereafter *Ecclesia Mater*), trans. from the German by P. Vergiete and É. Bouis (Paris: Cerf, 1964), 53-54. Delahaye also cites Num 25:1; Jgs 8:27, 33, 20:5; and 1 Chr 5:25. See also Balthasar's *Spouse of the Word*, 199. Balthasar cites the additional non-prophetic references: Dt 31:16; Jgs 2:17; 2 Chr 21:11, 21:13; and Ps 72:27, 105:39.

6. See Gilberte Baril, *The Feminine Face of the People of God: Biblical Symbols of the Church as Bride and Mother*, trans. Florestine Audette (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 39, and Claude Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ: An Enquiry into the Nuptial Element in Early Christianity* (London: Faber and Faber, 1940), 28. Spousal allusions are also possibly present in the book of Amos (see Amos 5:2). See Richard Batey, *New Testament Nuptial Imagery* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 4n2, and Michael L. Barré, "Amos," NJBC, 213.



harlotry and adultery committed after the marital covenant was made with the Lord (see Jer 2:2, 3:1; Ez 16:1-63). Ezekiel's imagery was particularly vivid (see Ez 16:8-34). Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah advanced the use of the spousal metaphor by focusing on the positive aspects of the fulfillment of the Lord's promise. The bride is promised a new maternal fruitfulness (see Is 49:18, 20-23; 54:1, 4) by the Lord who is both husband and redeemer (see Is 54:5-10). Post-exilic themes of restoration, joy, and the beauty of the new Zion were prominent (see Is 61:10; 62:3-5).

A dialectic between faithfulness and infidelity characterized the prophetic use of nuptial imagery. In general, themes of faithful love and promise, just punishment, tender care, and ultimate joy and delight characterized the Lord's relationship to Israel as bridegroom and husband. On the other hand, themes of infidelity (harlotry and adultery), abandonment, redemption and restoration, ultimate faithfulness and holiness, beauty, and joy characterized the people's relationship with the Lord as bride and wife. The prophetic use of nuptial imagery was characteristically bent to the future. The full realization of the marriage was contained in a promise: *And I will take you for my wife forever* (Hos 2:19a).

Although the prophetic tradition did not depict the covenant exclusively in nuptial terms, the repeated strand of spousal interpretation laid the groundwork for the description of the Church as the Bride of Christ. Other books in the Old Testament would also play an important role for subsequent ecclesial bridal imagery due to their use of spousal or feminine imagery and categories in general (for example, see Ps 45:10-15, the princess decked in robes for the king; Prov 2:16-19, 7:4-5, and 8-9, the figure of the loose woman, feminine personification of wisdom; Wis 6-10, feminine personification of wisdom; Gen 2:18-25, the creation of woman), as would various women later seen as types of the Church (for example, Eve, Sarah,

Rachel, Moses' wife, Tamar, Hannah, Rahab, Manoah's wife, and Bathsheba, among others). The most influential Old Testament text was the Song of Songs, commentaries upon which generated much reflection especially in the patristic and medieval eras and again in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

Two points summarize the essential contribution of the Old Testament with regard to ecclesial bridal imagery. First, in various texts the people of Israel and God were identified as bride and bridegroom, respectively, and thus the covenant was viewed through the lens of betrothal or marriage. Both covenant and marriage mutually condition each other: the covenant relationship is portrayed by spousal imagery on the one hand and contributes to a deepening sense of human marriage on the other. Second, the Old Testament, especially the prophetic writings, bequeathed to posterity a bridal image full of vulnerability and promise. The tension between fidelity and infidelity marked Israel's experience of the covenant, and yet the Lord's promise of restoration—of a renewed marriage—persisted in the midst of continual failings on the part of the people.

## II. New Testament

Various strata of New Testament writings contain spousal imagery and allusions, from synoptic sayings with likely historical origin in Jesus to Paul and Ephesians, the Gospel of John, Revelation, and the second letter of John.<sup>8</sup> As Richard Batey has observed, the array of sources

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7. See Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 81-83 and 201. On the early allegorical interpretation of the Song, see M. Timothea Elliott, "Song of Songs," IBC, 897. Elliot quotes Rabbi Akiba from the 1st century A.D., "All the world is not worth the day that the Song of Songs was given to Israel. All the writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is the holy of holies" (IBC, 893).

8. See Joachim Jeremias, "νύμφη, νυμφίος," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 4, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 1099-1106 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967). On the distinctiveness of the New Testament imagery in comparison to the gnostic understandings, see H. U. von

“demonstrates [bridal imagery’s] currency in the early church and the readiness with which it was appropriated.”<sup>9</sup> New Testament usage of spousal imagery would shape decisively the later understanding of the Church as the Bride of Christ.

Although the synoptic Gospels contain various uses of spousal imagery, a bridal view of the Church remains largely implicit. Instead, the focus is on Christ as the Bridegroom. In all three synoptic Gospels, Jesus alludes to his identity as the bridegroom (νυμφίος, *sponsus*) to distinguish his disciples from the disciples of John the Baptist and from the Pharisees, as well as to posit an important claim about his own identity, namely his divinity (see Mk 2:19-20; Mt 9:14-15; Lk 5:33-35).<sup>10</sup> The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids contains an allusion to Jesus as the Bridegroom (see Mt 25:1-13; Lk 12:35-38) and also refers to the wedding banquet or feast (γάμος, *nuptiae*), an image used to refer to the Kingdom of God, the central message of Jesus’ proclamation (see Mt 22:1-14; Lk 13:29, 14:7-24). Whereas in the Old Testament the images of the feast in God’s kingdom and the wedding were separate, the two were united in Jesus’ parables.<sup>11</sup>

Saint Paul explicitly identified the Christian community or *ecclesia* as Christ’s spouse. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul describes himself as the one presenting the community to Christ in marriage: “I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I promised you in marriage to one

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Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 7: *Theology: The New Covenant*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989), 482-84.

9. Batey, *New Testament Nuptial Imagery*, 1.

10. On Jesus’ claim of divine identity, see Roch Kereszty, *Jesus Christ: Fundamentals of Christology*, rev. and updated (Staten Island, NY: St. Paul’s/Alba House, 2002), 142-43, and Benedict T. Viviano, “The Gospel According to Matthew,” NJBC, 650. For a partial commentary on Mt 9:15, see Lanfranco M. Fedrigotti, *Jesus of Nazareth, The Bridegroom of “My Church”, the Bride: An Exegetical Study of Matt 9,15 and Its Nuptial Symbolism* (Ph.D. diss. extract; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 2004). The complete study is available as *An Exegetical Study of the Nuptial Symbolism in Matthew 9:15* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).

11. Cf. Is 25:6ff. See Baril, *The Feminine Face of the People of God*, 81, and Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ*, 53ff.

husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor 11:2). He then draws a negative comparison between Eve who was deceived by the serpent and the community in danger of being tempted away from Christ, a comparison that perhaps contains an implicit reference to the Church as a “second Eve” (see 2 Cor 11:3).<sup>12</sup> In his letter to the Romans, Paul uses the relationship between husband and wife to convey the relationship between the community and Christ (see Rom 7:4).<sup>13</sup> Spousal undertones may also be present in other instances of Paul’s teaching (for example, see Rom 9:25-26, citation of Hosea, the beloved people; Gal 4:21–5:1, allegory of Hagar and Sarah; and 1 Cor 12:12-27, image of the body).<sup>14</sup>

The most well-known Pauline (or deutero-Pauline) reference to nuptial imagery, and the *locus classicus* of Scriptural references for ecclesial bridal imagery, is Ephesians 5:21-33. Because of its importance for later tradition, it is cited here in full:

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives [γυναῖκες, *mulieres*], be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife [γυναικὸς, *mulieris*] just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives [γυναῖκες, *mulieres*] ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives [γυναῖκας, *uxores*], just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives [γυναῖκας, *uxores*] as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to [ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω, *ego autem dico*] Christ and the church. Each one of you, however, should love his wife [γυναῖκας, *uxorem*] as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

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12. Compare Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ*, 70, with Batey, *New Testament Nuptial Imagery*, 12-13n4.

13. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “The Letter to the Romans,” NJBC, 850. Cf. Joseph C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia: An Inquiry into the Concept of the Church as Mother in Early Christianity* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1943), 6; Baril, *The Feminine Face of the People of God*, 87; and Batey, *New Testament Nuptial Imagery*, 18-19.

14. On 1 Cor 12:12-27 as containing implicit spousal allusions, see Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ*, 66.

The influence this passage has exerted in tradition and still holds today is considerable. Various themes and patterns of use associated with ecclesial bridal imagery are drawn from this passage, including the bridal Church's immaculate holiness, the allusion to Christ's baptismal cleansing of his Church, Christ's love for the bridal Church, the Church as both body and bride, the bridal Church as being on the way toward perfection, the typological significance of Genesis 2:24 (the one-flesh union), and the sacramental sign-value of Christian marriage in relation to the union of Christ and the Church. With reference to Eph 5:32, however, the exact nature of the parallel between marriage and the union between Christ and the Church remains a point of contention among exegetes and theologians today in light of the different possible meanings of *ὁ*.<sup>15</sup> Does the "great mystery" refer strictly and solely to husband and wife or does it also include Christ and the Church? As will be seen below, important representatives from both East and West have acknowledged some form of analogical linkage between the husband-wife pair and the Christ-Church pair, while also recognizing that the Christ-Church relationship serves as the exemplar to which the husband-wife relationship should correspond. In light of the fluidity and manifold dimensions of Eph 5:21-33, various aspects of this decisive passage have proven to be fertile ground for later reflection and development of ecclesial bridal imagery.

The Johannine writings, encompassing the Gospel of John, the letters of John, and Revelation, include important examples of spousal imagery. In the Gospel of John, John the Baptist identifies himself as the "friend of the bridegroom [*ὑμφοῦ, sponsi*]" (*shoshebin*), the bridegroom being Christ (see Jn 3:28-30). This reference may reflect one of the earliest spousal references to Christ retained and passed down through oral tradition, thus making John the

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15. See Paul McPartlan, "Who is the Church?" 282-83n41.

Baptist a pivotal figure for introducing spousal imagery within a Christian context.<sup>16</sup> The story of Jesus' first miracle at the wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1-11), as well as Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well (Jn 4:1-42) and Jesus' crucifixion (Jn 19:1-37), have been interpreted in spousal terms, even from the perspective of historical and literary criticism.<sup>17</sup> The reference to the blood and water flowing from the pierced side of Christ on the cross (Jn 19:31-37) became a central text in speaking of the origin and birth of the Church after the likeness of Eve's formation from the rib of Adam (see Gen 2:21).<sup>18</sup> Others have noted that the persons of Mary, the Samaritan woman, and Mary Magdalene function in John as feminine types that refer to the espoused community.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, it is plausible that the "Lady" in the second letter of John is in fact a reference to the local Church (see 2 Jn 1:1, 5).

The Book of Revelation includes significant references to the Church as the Lord's Bride and is the capstone of spousal imagery in Scripture. John's vision includes the marriage (γάμος, *nuptiae*) of the Lamb with his bride and the invitation to the wedding feast (γάμος, *cena nuptiarum*) of the Lamb (see Rev 19:6-9). The New Jerusalem is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband and is described as both the bride (νύμφη, *sponsa*) and wife (γυνή, *uxor*) of the Lamb (see Rev 21:1-2, 9-11).<sup>20</sup> The themes of joy, beauty, and holiness found in both the Old Testament and other New Testament writings are present in Revelation, and the distinct images of feasting

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16. See Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ*, 49ff., and Batey, *New Testament Nuptial Imagery*, 49-50. In this way, John the Baptist is a key exegete of the Scriptures (i.e., the Old Testament).

17. See Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ*, 58-65. See also PHEME PERKINS, "The Gospel According to John," NJBC, 954.

18. See Henri de Lubac, *The Splendor of the Church*, trans. Michael Mason (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 54n16; Sebastian Tromp, "De Nativitate Ecclesiae e Corde Jesu Cruce," *Gregorianum* 13 (1932): 482-527.

19. See Baril, *The Feminine Face of the People of God*, 95-96; Perkins, "The Gospel According to John," 957.

20. See Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans/Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2002), 263-64.

and marriage are fused in the portrayal of the eschatological wedding feast. The restoration promised in the prophets (see Hos 2:16-23; Ez 16:59-63; Is 62:3-5) is now visible in the new Jerusalem, the Church in her perfection.<sup>21</sup> Finally, near the end of Revelation is the well-known invitation within what is undoubtedly a liturgical milieu: “The Spirit and the bride (νύμφη, *sponsa*) say, ‘Come’” (Rev 22:17). Revelation’s key contribution to ecclesial bridal imagery is the transference of the nuptial-covenantal language found in the prophets to the ecclesial reality brought about through Jesus.

The New Testament thus carries forward the spousal imagery found in the prophetic tradition and latent in other Old Testament writings such as the Song of Songs, and tends to focus it on Christ and the Church. There is continuity with the Old Testament imagery and also a critical newness. Christ himself is Lord and Bridegroom. Something of the marriage promised by YHWH through the prophets has begun through Christ in the Church. The transference of spousal imagery to Christ and the Church in the New Testament as well as the particular fluidity of the imagery lay the groundwork for centuries of further reflection on this imagery that would be simultaneously profound, obscure, and pregnant with possibilities.

### III. Patristic Developments

Patristic theology was inextricably linked to scriptural exegesis. Scriptural images for the Church played a significant role in shaping the early Church’s thinking on the nature of ecclesial life. The feminine categories of woman, bride, wife, virgin, and mother, already present to varying degrees in Scripture, became a staple of the patristic ecclesial imagination. Many patristic thinkers contributed to the interpretation of the Church as the Bride of Christ, including

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21. See Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Apocalypse [Revelation],” NIBC, 1016.

Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Cyprian, Methodius, the Cappadocians, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Leo the Great, Gregory the Great, Maximus the Confessor, and John Damascene.<sup>22</sup> Irenaeus, Origen, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, and Augustine will be singled out below because of their particular significance for the tradition and for later magisterial teaching, as well as their being representative of both East and West.

St. Irenaeus (ca. 125-200) contributed to the development of ecclesial bridal imagery in at least a twofold way. First, he was well aware of Gnostic exaggerations that either over-literalized or over-allegorized various spousal texts in Scripture. Book One of the *Adversus haereses* is a sustained description of Gnostic views of reality and the Gnostic (mis)interpretation of Scripture, including the misuse of spousal imagery to sexualize the divine and the origin of beings.<sup>23</sup> Second, Irenaeus referenced many of the relevant Scriptural passages from both Old and New Testaments and was comfortable speaking of the Church as the Bride of Christ, despite the Gnostic confusion. For example, Hosea's prophecies were fulfilled in the Church—what was done typically (*typice factum*) by the prophet was done truly (*vere factum*) by Christ in the Church.<sup>24</sup> Christ's parable of the Wedding Banquet (Mt 22:1-14) revealed that God the Father prepared the marriage for his Son from the very beginning.<sup>25</sup> Further, the Book of Revelation's image of the heavenly Jerusalem adorned as a bride was not fiction or mere allegory but will truly

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22. See S. Tromp, "Ecclesia Sponsa Virgo Mater" (hereafter "Ecclesia Sponsa"), *Gregorianum* 18 (1937): 3-29; Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ*; Delahaye, *Ecclesia Mater*; and Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia*.

23. See AH I, 1.2 [PG 7a, 449-450]; AH I, 7.1 [PG 7a, 511-512]; and AH I, 21.3 [PG 7a, 661-662]. An English translation of AH is available in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1: *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 309-567.

24. See AH IV, 20.12 [PG 7a, 1042]. On the typological significance of Moses and Rahab, see AH IV, 20.12 [PG 7a, 1042: "...per nuptias (γάμου) Moysi nuptiae Verbi ostendebantur, et per Aethiopissam coniugem (νύμφης), ea quae ex gentibus est Ecclesia manifestabatur..."].

25. See AH IV, 36.5-6 [PG 7a, 1094-97]. See also AH IV, 39.3. [PG 7a, 1110-11].



be fulfilled.<sup>26</sup> Irenaeus' interpretation of spousal imagery supported a unified vision of the covenant across both Old and New Testaments. His exegesis and arguments solidified the use of ecclesial bridal imagery within an ambiguous environment comparable with that of the prophets, and in this way Irenaeus advanced ecclesial bridal imagery into the theological sphere.

Origen (ca. 184-254) made a decisive impact on the use of spousal imagery.<sup>27</sup> His *Commentary on the Song of Songs* set a standard for Christian exegesis of the Song by identifying the bridegroom as Christ, the Word of God, and the bride as both the Church and the soul.<sup>28</sup> For Origen, soul and Church are intertwined: the salvation of the bridal soul is interconnected with the fruitfulness of the bridal Church in union with Christ her Bridegroom, and the Church's salvation is realized through each soul's salvation.<sup>29</sup>

Various themes and patterns were present in Origen's use of ecclesial bridal imagery. He referenced Ephesians 5 and the holiness of the bridal Church,<sup>30</sup> and he noted the beauty of the

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26. See AH V, 35.2. [PG 7b, 1219-21.]

27. On Origen's influence particularly in the Latin West through his translators Jerome and Rufinus, see Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 1: *The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. Mark Sebanc (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 142-224. See also Aidan Nichols, *Lovely Like Jerusalem* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007), 235. On Origen and his role in the development of spiritual exegesis, see Henri de Lubac, *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture According to Origen*, trans. Anne Englund Nash with Greek and Latin trans. Juvenal Merriell (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007).

28. See the Prologue to his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* in *Origen: The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, trans. and annotated R. P. Lawson, vol. 26 of *Ancient Christian Writers*, eds. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe, (New York: The Newman Press, 1957), 21 [PG 13, 61-62]; see also Nichols, *Lovely Like Jerusalem*, 236. Significant thinkers who continued Origen's nuptial mysticism of the soul included Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose of Milan, Bernard of Clairvaux, and later Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. On the return of Origen's ideas in the twentieth century, see Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 80-84, 101-2, 122, 136 and 201. For a recent treatment of Origen's commentary on the Song, see J. Christopher King, *Origen on the Song of Songs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

29. *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Prologue, 2 (p. 38) [PG 13, 72]. See also R. P. Lawson's Introduction to Origen's *Commentary and Homilies*, 10-18.

30. *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, bk. 1, 3 (p. 71) [PG 13, 91].

bridal Church of the Gentiles who is “black but beautiful.”<sup>31</sup> Origen also described the bridal Church as the “whole assembly of the saints”<sup>32</sup> and “as if all are one person” (*quasi omnium una persona*).<sup>33</sup> He noted various scriptural women as figures exemplifying the bridal Church,<sup>34</sup> and he used spousal imagery to refer to the continuity between Israel and the Church.<sup>35</sup> He also explained that the Church’s union with her Bridegroom depends upon her passage from the letter (Old Testament) to the spirit (New Testament).<sup>36</sup> Origen’s theology contained an overlapping of various images, multiple referents for the bridal image, and an attempt to think critically about their interrelationship in an integrated way. His exegesis of the Song of Songs provided a significant source for continual reflection.<sup>37</sup>

Saint Ambrose (ca. 337-397) and Saint John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407), outstanding patristic representatives of the West and East, respectively, both used ecclesial bridal imagery in various ways. Ambrose continued the nuptial mysticism found in Origen, particularly identifying the soul as the Bride who must be joined to Christ her Bridegroom. For Ambrose as for Origen, the context of such a union was an ecclesial one (the soul is bride insofar as it is located within

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31. *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, bk. 2, 1 (p. 91ff.) [PG 13, 101ff.].

32. *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, bk. 1, 1 (p. 59) [PG 13, 84: “coetum omnium...sanctorum”].

33. *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, bk. 1, 1 (p. 59) [PG 13, 84]. See also *Commentary on the Song*, bk. 2, 1 (p. 94) [PG 13, 104]. Elsewhere, when the Church appears as a single person, Origen clarifies that this one person is really many churches: “We must understand, therefore, that a single character appears (*quia una quidem persona videtur*), yet there are countless churches scattered all over the world...” *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, bk. 2, 1 (p. 106) [PG 13, 110].

34. For example, see *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, bk. 2, 9 (p. 160).

35. See *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, bk. 2, 1-2 (pp. 58-70). See also *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, bk. 3 [4], 15 (p. 252).

36. See *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, bk. 3, 13 (p. 235).

37. Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory the Great are two important thinkers who continued this line of reflection on the Song of Songs. For a brief summary of Gregory of Nyssa’s ecclesiology based on the Song of Songs, see Paula Jean Miller, *Members of One Body: Prophets, Priests and Kings* (New York: Alba House, 1999), 33-39.

the bridal Church).<sup>38</sup> In addition, under the inspiration of the Song of Songs, Ambrose interpreted the Eucharist as a nuptial reality. In eucharistic communion, the soul receives the kiss of Christ, and the Eucharist itself is a bridal chamber wherein the body of Christ is received.<sup>39</sup> Finally, Ambrose was “the first Christian author to call Mary the type and image of the Church,”<sup>40</sup> though he did not refer to Mary explicitly as the bride of Christ but rather as the bride of the Holy Spirit.<sup>41</sup>

John Chrysostom’s *Baptismal Instructions* (catechetical homilies to catechumens) were replete with bridal imagery.<sup>42</sup> Baptism is the nuptial bath through which the soul is espoused to Christ.<sup>43</sup> Chrysostom urged the catechumens to be ready to meet the Bridegroom and to live the life of holiness which is proper to being a bride.<sup>44</sup> He understood this spiritual marriage between the soul and Christ as ultimately grounded in the reality of the “great mystery” of the bridal Church united to her Bridegroom,<sup>45</sup> and he interpreted the “great mystery” to refer to both the

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38. See Russell DeSimone, *The Bride and Bridegroom in the Fathers: An Anthology of Patristic Interpretations of the Song of Songs* (Rome: Istituto Patristico Augustinianum, 2000), 81.

39. See Roch Kereszty, *Wedding Feast of the Lamb* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), 120-21. Kereszty describes this aspect of Ambrose’s thought on the Eucharist, namely “the eucharistic interpretation of the Song of Songs in reference to a mystical union between Christ and the Church, as well as between Christ and the individual soul,” as one which is lesser known among historians of the Eucharist (120). Kereszty cites Ambrose’s *De sacramentis* 5:5-6, 9, and 12 [PL 16, 445ff.].

40. Luigi Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought*, trans. Thomas Buffer (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), 198. Gambero cites Ambrose’s *Expositio in Lucam* 2, 7 [PL 15, 1635-36]. See also R. DeSimone, *The Bride and Bridegroom in the Fathers*, 77.

41. See DeSimone, *The Bride and Bridegroom in the Fathers*, 80, who cites a passage from Ambrose’s *Expositio in Lucam* [PL 15, 1555].

42. John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Instructions*, trans. Paul W. Harkins, vol. 31 of *Ancient Christian Writers*, eds. Johannes Quasten and Joseph Plumpe, (New York: Newman, 1963).

43. See *Baptismal Instructions*, Book I, 1-4 and 17 (pp. 23-24 and 29).

44. See *Baptismal Instructions*, Book XI, 1-2 and 6-18 (pp. 161-64); Book XII, 42-47 (pp. 185-87).

45. See *Baptismal Instructions*, Book III, 17 (p. 62). This understanding is supported and explained by Paul Harkins, who notes that Chrysostom’s emphasis on the individual as bride seems to be found mainly in his catechesis on initiation into the Christian mysteries (*ibid.*, p. 206n6).

marriage of husband and wife and the union of Christ and the Church.<sup>46</sup> Elsewhere, Chrysostom noted that the “greater mystery” refers to Christ and the Church, yet without diminishment of the mystery of the two-in-one-flesh union of marriage.<sup>47</sup>

Saint Augustine’s (354-430) use of ecclesial bridal imagery encompassed multiple themes and patterns and captured virtually the whole landscape of patristic bridal imagery.<sup>48</sup> For Augustine, the initial realization of the nuptial bond (*coniunctio nuptiales*) between Christ and the Church took place in the virginal womb of Mary, the bridal chamber (*thalamus*), where Christ the bridegroom (*sponsus*) wedded to himself human nature or flesh as his bride (*sponsa*).<sup>49</sup> This bond between the Word and human flesh, as well as that of Christ and the Church, was repeatedly likened by Augustine to the two-in-one-flesh (*duo in carne una*) union of husband and wife (see Gn 2:24; Mt 19:6; and Eph 5:31).<sup>50</sup> The Church was present since the creation of humanity (in figure), because the marriage of Christ and the Church was prefigured in the one-flesh union of

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46. See *Baptismal Instructions*, Book I, 11-14 (pp. 26-28).

47. See his Homily on Ephesians 5:22-33, in St. John Chrysostom, *On Marriage and Family Life*, trans. Catherine P. Roth and David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary, 1986), 52 and 55 [PG 62, 140-42].

48. “The Marriage of Christ and the Church is the core of St. Augustine’s thought.” Chavassee, *The Bride of Christ*, 135-36. The treatment of Augustine below will focus on his *Expositions of the Psalms* (*Enarrationes in Psalmos*) with minor reference to other writings. Augustine viewed the Psalms as representing, to a large extent, the words of the *Christus totus*, the fulfilled and realized unity of the Church in Christ. See Michael Fiedrowicz’s “General Introduction,” in *Exp. Ps.*, vol. 15, 56-57. The English translations provided here are taken from *Exp. Ps.*, with volume and page numbers cited in parentheses as such: (volume, page[s]). Where there is more than one commentary on a particular Psalm, this study follows the style of *Exp. Ps.* in parenthetically citing the commentary number after the number of the Psalm (for example, see note below). For additional background, see Amy Germaine Oden, “Dominant Images for the Church in Augustine’s *Enarrationes in Psalmos*: A Study in Augustine’s Ecclesiology” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Methodist University, 1990).

49. See *Exp. Ps.* 18 (2), 6 (15, 209) [PL 36, 161]; *Exp. Ps.* 44, 3 (16, 282) [PL 36, 495]; *Exp. Ps.* 90 (2), 5 (18, 335) [PL 37, 1163].

50. See *Exp. Ps.* 44, 3 (16, 282) [PL 36, 495]; *Exp. Ps.* 90 (2), 5 (18, 335) [PL 37, 1163]. See also First Homily on 1 John 1:2, in *Homilies on the First Letter of John*, pt. 1, vol. 14 of *The Works of Saint Augustine*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, eds. Daniel E. Doyle and Thomas Martin (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2008), 22 [PL 35, 1979].

the first husband and wife (see Gn 2:24).<sup>51</sup> At the same time, the Church was definitively born from the side of Christ on the Cross; the creation of Eve from Adam's side prefigured the creation of the Church from Christ's side.<sup>52</sup>

Like Origen and Ambrose, Augustine applied bridal imagery to souls, and he spoke of consecrated virginity in nuptial terms as well.<sup>53</sup> The relation between the Church and Christian souls was an intimate one: "A tremendous mystery.... We, as well as being invited [to the wedding], are also ourselves the bride. We are, after all, the Church, and we have been invited in the Church."<sup>54</sup> Augustine employed bridal imagery to encourage individual Christians to live up to their identity and calling within the Church: "Be the bride..." (*Sponsa estote...*).<sup>55</sup> The bridal image was a call to members of the Church to live out their Christian vocation in holiness, to love Christ the Bridegroom more ardently, and to cast away sinfulness and seek the purity and beauty of being the Bride of Christ: "Let us long for him and love him, if we are his bride [*sponsa sumus*]."<sup>56</sup> When Christians show respect for Christ the Bridegroom and the Church his Bride, they are then true sons and daughters (of Christ and the Church).<sup>57</sup>

51. See *Exp. Ps.* 118 (29), 9 (19, 484) [PL 37, 1589]; *Exp. Ps.* 138, 2 (20, 257) [PL 37, 1784].

52. *Exp. Ps.* 138, 2 (20, 257). [PL 37, 1785.] See also *Exp. Ps.* 126, 7, and 127, 11.

53. See *Exp. Ps.* 72, 33: "Already the soul loves its bridegroom..." (17, 491) [PL 36, 929]; *Holy Virginity*, in *Marriage and Virginity*, pt. 1, vol. 9 of *The Works of Saint Augustine*, trans. Ray Kearney, ed. David G. Hunter, 64-107 (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999) [PL 40, 395-428].

54. Sermon 265E (fragment), 5, in *Sermons (230-272B)*, pt. 3, vol. 7 of *The Works of Saint Augustine*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rochelle (New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1993), 262-263. See also *Exp. Ps.* 44, 3 (16, 282) [PL 36, 494]. Similar reference is made in a homily on the First Letter of John. See Second Homily, 2, in *Homilies on the First Letter of John*, 38-39 [PL 35, 1990].

55. Sermon 265, 6, in *Sermons (230-272B)*, 239 [PL 38, 1221].

56. *Exp. Ps.* 90 (2), 13 (18, 343-44) [PL 37, 1170]. See Sermon 265, 6, in *Sermons (230-272B)*, 239: "Be the bride, and wait for the bridegroom without anxiety. The Church is the bride." [PL 38, 1221: *Sponsa estote, et sponsum securi expectate. Sponsa Ecclesia est.*] See also *Exp. Ps.* 18 (1), 10 (15, 201) [PL 36, 155]; *Exp. Ps.* 103 (1), 6 (19, 113) [PL 37, 1339-40]; *Exp. Ps.* 147, 10 [PL 37, 1920-21]; and Sermon 90, 6 [PL 38, 563]: *Sermons (51-94)*, pt. 3, vol. 3 of *The Works of Saint Augustine*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rochelle (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1991), 451-52.

57. See Sermon 90, 6, in *Sermons (51-94)*, 451-52 [PL 38, 563]; *Exp. Ps.* 84, 2 (18, 205) [PL 37, 1069-70].

Augustine also explored how Christ the Bridegroom and the Church his Bride can be seen as truly “one” while also remaining “two.” He repeatedly acknowledged that Christ and the Church are united “as if” or “like” they are one man (*tanquam unus homo, vir perfectus*) or one person (*tanquam una persona*)—a description that signifies the closeness of the spousal union achieved in the “two in one flesh.”<sup>58</sup> In this context, Augustine integrated bodily and bridal imagery to such an extent that he described the unity of the Head and Body as a “marriage” (*coniugium*) like the two-in-one-flesh union referred in Scripture (Gn 2:24 and Eph 5:31).<sup>59</sup> Augustine also maintained an important distinction between Christ and the Church: “Christ and the Church, two in one flesh. The fact that they are *two* points to the distance between us and the majesty of God. They are two, undeniably, [*Duo plane*] for we are not the Word, we were not with God in the beginning....”<sup>60</sup> Other aspects of Augustine’s consideration included the virginal integrity and maternal fruitfulness of the Church as the Bride of Christ in imitation of Mary.<sup>61</sup> In

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58. See *Exp. Ps.* 55, 3 (17, 84) [PL 36, 648]. See also Augustine’s First Homily on 1 John, 2, in *Homilies on the First Letter of John*, 22: “Et Isaias optime meminit unum esse ipsos duos: loquitur enim ex persona Christi... Unus videtur loqui, et sponsum se fecit et sponsam se fecit; quia *non duo, sed una caro*: quia *Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis*. Illi carni adjungitur Ecclesia, et fit Christus totus, caput et corpus” [PL 35, 1979]; *Exp. Ps.* 18 (2), 10 (15, 210-11) [PL 36, 161]; Sermon 183, 11, in *Sermons on the New Testament (148-183)*, pt. 3, vol. 5 of *The Works of Saint Augustine*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle (New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1992), 341 [PL 38, 991-92]; *Exp. Ps.* 138, 2 (20, 257) [PL 37, 1784]; *Exp. Ps.* 40, 1 (16, 224) [PL 36, 453]; *Exp. Ps.* 142, 3 (20, 347) [PL 37, 1847].

59. *Exp. Ps.* 40, 1 (16, 224) [PL 36, 453]. See *Exp. Ps.* 18 (2), 10 (15, 210-11) [PL 36, 161]; Sermon 183, 11, in *Sermons on the New Testament (148-183)*, 341 [PL 38, 991-92]; *Exp. Ps.* 138, 2 (20, 257) [PL 37, 1784]; *Exp. Ps.* 40, 1 (16, 224) [PL 36, 453]; and *Exp. Ps.* 142, 3 (20, 347) [PL 37, 1847].

60. *Exp. Ps.* 142, 3 (20, 347) [PL 37, 1847]. See also *Exp. Ps.* 74, 4 (18, 42), [PL 36, 949]: “To make it perfectly clear that there are in some sense two persons involved (*has duas quodammodo esse personas*), but that these two are one through being joined in wedlock (*unam copulatione conjugii*), they speak as one person through Isaiah .... The head is the bridegroom, the body is the bride; and they speak as one.”

61. See his *Holy Virginity*, 2, in *Marriage and Virginity*, 68 [PL 40, 397]. For more on patristic reflection on Mary and the Church, see Hugo Rahner, *Our Lady and the Church*, trans. Sebastian Bullough (Bethesda, MD: Zaccheus Press, 2004). Originally published as *Maria und die Kirche* in 1961.

addition, he used bridal imagery to convey the oneness and unity of the Church, particularly as she faced heretical opposition.<sup>62</sup>

Augustine thus offered a virtually complete sampling of the variety of patristic uses of ecclesial bridal imagery. His vocabulary reflected the fluidity of Scripture in his use of the terms “bride” (*sponsa*) and “wife” (*uxor*),<sup>63</sup> or at times even “woman/wife” (*mulier*) or “consort” (*coniux*).<sup>64</sup> Augustine was also aware of the sometimes paradoxical and seemingly contradictory use of multiple images.<sup>65</sup> Ultimately, Augustine acknowledged a tension within the bridal image. Although the Church is already the Bride of Christ in one sense, the Church must always live up to that reality and *be the Bride*. Augustine later conceded that the Church would only be spotless and without wrinkle (see Eph 5:27) in her “final glory.”<sup>66</sup>

In summary of the teaching of the Fathers noted above, it can be said that there are four distinct yet related contexts in which bridal imagery was used. First, there was the focus on the Church herself as the Bride of Christ, and a use of various themes, patterns, associations, and even other images (such as Mother and Body) explicitly related to the bridal Church. In general,

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62. Sermon 183, 11, in *Sermons on the New Testament (148-183)*, 341 [PL 38, 992]: “So if you say Christ is the bridegroom of the party of Donatus, I read the documents, and I find that Christ is the bridegroom of the Church spread throughout the whole wide world (*sponsum Ecclesiae diffusae toto orbe terrarum*).” See also *Exp. Ps.* 147, 18 (20, 462-63) [PL 37, 1927-38]; Ninth Homily on 1 John, 11, in *Homilies on the First Letter of John*, 144 [PL 35, 2053].

63. For example, see *Exp. Ps.* 127, 11 (20, 108-9) [PL 37, 1684: “*Uxor tua: Christo dicitur. Ergo uxor ejus, Ecclesia ejus; Ecclesia ejus, uxor ejus, nos ipsi. Sicut vinea fertilis.*”].

64. *Coniux* has a variety of nuptial meanings, including spouse, wife, bride, and fiancée.

65. See *Exp. Ps.* 127, 12 (20, 109-11) [PL 37, 1684-85: “*Ergo ipsa coniux, et ipsi filii. Mirum dico, fratres mei. In verbis Domini invenimus Ecclesiam et fratres ipsius esse, et sorores ipsius esse, et matrem ipsius esse.*”].

66. *Revisions (Retractationes)* 2, 18, in pt. 1, vol. 2 of *The Works of Saint Augustine*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, ed. Roland Teske (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2010), 126 [PL 32, 637-38: “*Ecclesiam non habentem maculam aut rugam (Eph 5:27); non sic accipiendum est quasi jam sit, sed quae praeparatur ut sit, quando apparebit etiam gloriosa. Nunc enim propter quasdam ignorantias et infirmitates membrorum suorum, habet unde quotidie tota dicat: Dimitte nobis debita nostra (Mt 6:12).*”]. See DeSimone, *The Bride and Bridegroom in the Fathers*, 95.

the Fathers did not simply use various images but also attempted to relate or explain them.<sup>67</sup> Second, bridal imagery was used in reference to individual Christian souls. The ease of transposing the bridal image from the Church to the Christian soul illustrates the patristic insight into the nexus between the Church and the individual human person in the Church, who was made an ecclesiastical soul, not only partaking in but also instantiating the Church.<sup>68</sup> Third, bridal imagery was used in the context of the Incarnation, where the Word was seen to have united human nature/flesh to himself as his Bride, thus wedding all humanity. In this way, all humanity was made for the Church and made to be the Bride of Christ.<sup>69</sup> Finally, bridal imagery was applied with reference to Mary, mirroring the developing parallel between Mary and the Church found in the Fathers. Although St. Ephrem (d. ca. 373) referred to Mary as the spouse of Christ, such explicit usage would not become common until the medieval commentaries on the Song of Songs.

#### IV. Medieval Elaboration

Various medieval thinkers contributed to the use of ecclesial bridal imagery, including the Venerable Bede, Paschasius Radbertus, Anselm, the Victorines, Abelard, Bernard, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Catherine of Siena, Duns Scotus, Gregory Palamas, William of Ockham, and Meister Eckhart. Below, Anselm, Bernard, Thomas, and Bonaventure will be treated because of their importance for later tradition and their particular use of bridal imagery.

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67. For example, see Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, bk. 2, 3 (pp. 113-18). See also Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia*, 80.

68. See Nichols, *Lovely Like Jerusalem*, 236.

69. See H. de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 25-33, 48-81 and 217-45; *The Splendor of the Church*, 58-68.



Saint Anselm of Canterbury's (ca. 1033-1109) importance for this study lies in the fact that he exemplified two significant developments in medieval theology. First, Anselm's carefully crafted prayers to Mary demonstrated not only the growing devotion towards Mary during this period but also a certain theological centering upon Mary that was not explicitly found in the Fathers' reflections on the Church.<sup>70</sup> Second, as Yves Congar observed, Anselm's use of bridal imagery was located within a largely juridical context.<sup>71</sup> In his letters, Anselm at times dealt with concerns over the Church's proper domain and liberty in relation to secular powers. He used the image of *sponsa* in order to defend the Church's liberty and to convey the distinct dignity and role of the Church who, as Bride of Christ or more generally *sponsa Dei*, should not be subject to the temporal power of a king in ecclesial concerns and matters of spiritual welfare.<sup>72</sup> The Church, as Bride of God, belonged solely to God and not to the world.<sup>73</sup> Congar drew from Anselm and others when he observed that particular images for the Church had undergone a transformation in the second millennium under the influence of more juridically-focused concerns.<sup>74</sup>

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70. See Anselm's three prayers to Mary in *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm*, trans. Benedicta Ward (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 107-26; see in particular Prayer to St. Mary (3) (*ibid.*, 121). See also H. U. von Balthasar, *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church*, trans. Andr  e Emery (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986), 201.

71. Yves Congar, "L'Eglise chez saint Anselme," in *Etudes d'eccl  siologie m  di  vale*, chap. 6, 371-99 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1983) [Article originally published in *Spicilegium Beccense I. Congr  s international du IXe centenaire de l'arriv  e d'Anselme au Bec* (Le Bec-Hellouin: Abbaye Notre-Dame du Bec/Paris: Libraire J. Vrin, 1959)]. The context was not exclusively juridical. In his meditation on lost virginity, Anselm echoed the tradition of referring to the soul as bride, made clean in Baptism, and to sin as fornication and adultery. See Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm*, 225-29.

72. Congar, "L'Eglise chez S. Anselme," 390-91. In notes 97-100, Congar cites Anselm's letter nos. 235, 243, 249 and 262 as found in Anselm's *Opera* edited by F. S. Schmitt.

73. See Congar, "L'Eglise chez S. Anselme," 390.

74. See Congar's preface in Karl Delahaye, *Ecclesia Mater*, 9-10.

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) was one of the most notable medieval exponents of bridal imagery.<sup>75</sup> His homilies on the Song of Songs, in the tradition of Origen, considered the nuptial drama of the Bride and the Bridegroom as played out in the Song. An initial glance at Bernard's commentary on the Song seems to indicate that he had little to say about the *Church* as the Bride of Christ. His exegesis seems to focus rather on the soul as bride.<sup>76</sup> Although it is true that Bernard spoke more frequently of the relationship between the individual soul and the Divine Word,<sup>77</sup> this emphasis was not separated from the spousal relationship (*connubium spirituale*) between Christ and the Church.<sup>78</sup> Bernard in fact drew a close parallel between the bridal soul and the bridal Church.<sup>79</sup> As Roch Kereszty has noted, the measurement of an individual's spiritual growth for Bernard was only "in proportion to his or her becoming the one Church-Bride."<sup>80</sup>

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75. Chavasse describes him as "...by far the most important of the Nuptial writers after St. Augustine..." (*The Bride of Christ*, 198).

76. See Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ*, 203-4. H. de Lubac acknowledged Bernard's piety as "not without its traces of individualism" (*Catholicism*, 128). De Lubac cited Emile Mersch's observation that the doctrine of the Mystical Body cannot be found in Bernard (*Catholicism*, 128n72).

77. See Sermon 7, no. 2 (CF 4, 38). English translations of Bernard's sermons on the Song are taken from CF. Latin terms come from the critical edition *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, vols. 1-8, eds. J. Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, and H. M. Rochais (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957).

78. See Bernard's penultimate Sermon 85, no. 12 (CF 40, 208-9). See also Sermon 14, no. 7 (CF 4, 103): "I have already said that the bride [*sponsa*] is the Church." See also Sermon 21 on "The Love of the Bride, the Church, for Christ." Yves Congar remarks that Bernard's references to the Church as the Bride of Christ are not limited to his homilies on the Song of Songs but span various other writings as well. See Congar's "L'Ecclésiologie de S. Bernard," 136, in *Etudes d'ecclésiologie médiévale*, ch. 7 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1983). This article was originally published in 1953.

79. See Sermon 12, no. 11 (CF 4, 86); Sermon 68, no. 4 (CF 40, 20-21). Note also that the majority of Bernard's sermons end with a reference to Christ as "Bridegroom of the Church [*sponsus Ecclesiae*]," revealing the importance of the identity of the Church as Bride in Bernard's thought.

80. Roch Kereszty, "'Bride' and 'Mother' in the *Super Cantica* of St. Bernard: An Ecclesiology for Our Time?" (hereafter "Bride and Mother"), *Communio* 20 (Summer 1993): 423. Even Chavasse concedes that for all of Bernard's emphasis on the bridal soul, such a bridal reality is contingent upon one's being a member of the Church (Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ*, 199-201).

Multiple themes and patterns were present in Bernard's use of bridal imagery. Yves Congar observed that certain of these themes were dependent upon Augustine, for instance Bernard's descriptions of the Word as the Bridegroom, of Christ as both Bridegroom and Bride,<sup>81</sup> of the Church as the true Bride, and of the bridal soul within the bridal Church.<sup>82</sup> For Bernard, the Incarnation was the foundational mystery at the heart of the Song of Songs and also at the heart of the Church.<sup>83</sup> Bernard also noted that all of humanity is called to become the one Bride of Christ;<sup>84</sup> every soul is encouraged to reach for the Word who is Spouse.<sup>85</sup> The bridal Church is also on the way to her perfection as the heavenly Jerusalem,<sup>86</sup> and both the bridal soul and the bridal Church are called to become a spiritually fruitful Mother.<sup>87</sup> Bernard also understood the Church as both body and bride,<sup>88</sup> and he paralleled Mary and the Church, seeing similar traits in each.<sup>89</sup>

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81. On this peculiar theme, see note 181 below.

82. This is essentially a paraphrase of Congar from his "Ecclesiologie de S. Bernard," 175. Congar also noted that Bernard did not develop the image of the Church as the Body of Christ in the way that Augustine did (*ibid.*, 175f.).

83. See Bernard's *On the Song of Songs*, Sermon 2, nos. 3 and 7 (CF 4, 9-10 and 12).

84. See Kereszty, "Bride and Mother," 418.

85. See Sermon 83, no. 1 (CF 40, 180-81). This essentially was an extension of the patristic insight that all of humanity is created for the Church, bound up with the Church, and gathered up and saved through her. For the latter point, see H. de Lubac, *The Splendor of the Church*, 58-68.

86. See Sermon 27, nos. 6-7 and Sermon 28, no. 11-12 (CF 7, 78-81 and 97-99). See also Kereszty, "Bride and Mother," 424.

87. See Kereszty, "Bride and Mother," 423-25.

88. See Sermon 27, no. 7 (CF 7, 80).

89. See Russell J. DeSimone, *Mary the Bride of the Song: Medieval and Modern Interpretations of the Song of Songs, with the Commentary of St. Thomas of Villanova* (n.p. and n.d.), 41. Ann W. Astell writes: "Although Bernard of Clairvaux did not write a specifically Marian commentary, he contributed greatly to the popularity of the Marian understanding of the Song through his sermons." Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 44. See also Bernard's Sermon for the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, in *St. Bernard's Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, trans. by a priest of Mount Melleray (Devon: Augustine Publishing Company, 1987), 85 [see Bernard's *Opera*, vol. 5]; Sermon for the Sunday within the Octave of the Assumption, *ibid.*, 214 and 228.

Bernard's consideration of Mary reflected the growing medieval emphasis on Mary, in particular as the Bride in the Song of Songs.<sup>90</sup> Rupert of Deutz (ca. 1075-1130), an elder contemporary of Bernard, interpreted the entire Song of Songs through a Marian lens.<sup>91</sup> Bernard's disciple Isaac of Stella (ca. 1100-1169) later offered a hermeneutic formula, no doubt influenced by Bernard himself, which would serve as an integrating key for Marian exegesis: "[W]hat is said by the very wisdom of God, which is the Word of the Father, is said in a universal sense in reference to the Church, in a special sense in reference to Mary, and in an individual sense in reference to the faithful soul."<sup>92</sup>

In vivid fashion, Bernard's use of spousal imagery for the relationship between Christ and the Church conveyed a radical "equality" and delight between the Bride and Bridegroom who share everything with each other and enjoy each other even to the point of "eating one another."<sup>93</sup> The imagery here was and is quite bold, derived from the experience of contemplation<sup>94</sup> and linked to the patristic insight of the *admirabile commercium*, the wonderful exchange wherein God the Son became man so that human persons, male and female, might share in his divine nature and become "gods."<sup>95</sup> Although Bernard perhaps pushed the ecclesial bridal image and corresponding vocabulary to new and somewhat daring heights, he was aware

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90. See DeSimone, *Mary the Bride of the Song*, and Luigi Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, trans. Thomas Buffer (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005).

91. See Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, 124ff.

92. *Sermo 51 in Assumptione* (PL 194) quoted in Gambero, 175. See H. de Lubac, *The Splendor of the Church*, 347-53. See also Congar, "Ecclésiologie de S. Bernard," 138.

93. Kereszty, "Bride and Mother," 427-29.

94. On the nature of this contemplation most often described in nuptial terms by Bernard, see John R. Sommerfeldt, *The Spiritual Teachings of Bernard of Clairvaux: An Intellectual History of the Early Cistercian Order* (Kalamazoo, MI: 1991), 215-27.

95. See Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 54, 3 [PG 25, 192B]. On Gregory of Nyssa's understanding of the "kiss" as divinization, see Martin Laird, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Grasp of Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 139.

that he was portraying an ultimately spiritual and divine reality with human imagery—imagery that was nonetheless worthy of manifesting such “a mystery of love.”<sup>96</sup>

Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), in his commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, demonstrated his awareness of the tradition of spousal imagery in its various forms, recognizing the Church as Bride, the soul as bride, and the Incarnation as the marriage between the Son and human nature. A developed treatment of spousal imagery is found within the section of Thomas’ commentary dealing with the “last things,” on the specific and somewhat obscure topic of the gifts or more precisely “dowries” [*dotes*] of those who have reached final beatitude.<sup>97</sup> Thomas used Eph 5:32 as the foundation on which to claim that spiritual marriage or beatitude (i.e., the union between the soul and Christ) is signified by fleshly marriage, and that it is fitting for the blessed of heaven to receive dowries.<sup>98</sup> He explained that this was not a matter of arbitrarily transferring words and equivocating.<sup>99</sup> Thomas considered these dowries as adornments of the Bride (see Is 61:10) in beatitude, and the Bride was “the Church in her members.”<sup>100</sup>

Thomas offered a nuanced and discerning use of spousal imagery. For example, the union of human nature to the Word in the Incarnation is not properly [*non proprie*] considered a marriage since there is no distinction of persons [*distinctio personarum*] and no likeness of nature

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96. Congar, “Ecclésiologie de S. Bernard,” 139.

97. See SS IV, d. 49, q. 4 (see ST Suppl., q. 95). Unless noted otherwise, the English translation is taken from the edition prepared by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province originally published in 1911.

98. See SS IV, d. 49, q. 4, art. 1, s. c. (see ST Suppl., q. 95, art. 1, s. c.): *...quod spirituale matrimonium per carnale significatur*. See also SS IV, d. 49, q. 4, art. 2, ad 2 (see ST Suppl., q. 95, art. 2, ad 2): beatitude is the union (*coniunctio*) of the soul with Christ.

99. See SS IV, d. 49, q. 4, art. 1, resp. (see ST Suppl., q. 95, art. 1, resp.).

100. SS IV, d. 49, q. 4, art. 1, ad 1 (ST Suppl., q. 95, art. 1, ad 1): *...qui sponsae spirituali dantur, scilicet Ecclesiae in membris suis...*

[*conformitas naturae*].<sup>101</sup> The fact that human nature is “sometimes” (*quandoque*) called bride rests on its sharing in part of the bridal act which involves both an inseparable union (*inseparabiliter coniungitur*) with the Bridegroom and a relationship of subjection.<sup>102</sup> Thomas also noted that “Christ espoused [*desponsavit*] the Church by his Incarnation and Passion” and confirmed that there is a conformity of nature between Christ and the Church in that Christ assumed human nature unto himself.<sup>103</sup> Thus, the implication is that the marriage between Christ and the Church, fulfilled at the end of time, is a perfect spiritual marriage because it includes the distinction of persons, likeness of nature, an inseparable union, and a relational subjection.<sup>104</sup>

Although bridal imagery was not particularly widespread throughout Thomas’ work, neither was he adverse to it.<sup>105</sup> He employed Ephesians 5 in various places to speak of the sacrament of marriage as a figure or sign of the union (*coniunctio*) between Christ and the Church.<sup>106</sup> He also intimated the special sense of union that marriage conveys as “the greatest of all joinings [*coniunctio...maxima*]” since it concerns both the soul and the body of both spouses, and thus marriage is fittingly called a *coniugium* (conjugal union).<sup>107</sup> Thomas further drew a parallel

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101. SS IV, d. 49, q. 4, art. 3, resp. & ad 2 (ST Suppl., q. 95, art. 3, resp. & ad 2).

102. SS IV, d. 49, q. 4, art. 3, ad 2 (ST Suppl., q. 95, art. 3, ad 2).

103. SS IV, d. 49, q. 4, art. 4, s. c. & resp. (ST Suppl., q. 95, art. 4, s. c. & resp.).

104. This is virtually explicit in Thomas’ presentation though he does not spell it out concisely.

105. Thomas did not leave behind any commentary on the Song of Songs, though a commentary is noted on an early list of his writings and it has been said that he was commenting on the Song on his death bed (see Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 82).

106. See Thomas’ *Commentary on Ephesians*, chap. 5, lect. 10 (trans. and intro. Matthew L. Lamb [Albany, NY: Magi Books, Inc., 1966], 225). Thomas described Paul’s interpretation of the “two in one flesh” as follows: “He [Paul] goes on to interpret this mystically, and he says *This is a great sacrament*, it is the symbol of a sacred reality, namely, the union of Christ and the Church. ‘I will not hide from you the mysteries of God’ (Wis 6:24).” See also SS IV, d. 26, q. 2, art. 1 (Suppl., q. 42, art. 1); *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 123, & bk. 4, ch. 78; and ST I, q. 92, art. 2.

107. SS IV, d. 27, q. 1, art. 1, qc. 2, ad 3 (ST Suppl., q. 44, art. 2, ad 3). See also *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 4, ch. 78.

between the Genesis account of the creation of woman and the origin of the Church from Christ,<sup>108</sup> and he spoke of Mary the espoused virgin as a type of the Church who is virgin and yet espoused to the one Christ.<sup>109</sup> Thomas demonstrated an awareness of the fragility, flexibility, and significance of bridal imagery.

Saint Bonaventure (1221-1274) incorporated the spiritual-nuptial insights of Bernard within a scholastic style and spirit, and spousal imagery and themes were quite prominent in Bonaventure's theology.<sup>110</sup> Bonaventure applied bridal imagery to the soul's union (*coniunctio*) with God, the Church's union with Christ, and the union of natures in the Person of Christ.<sup>111</sup> Marriage from the beginning of creation was "a symbol [*significare*] of the union of God with the soul."<sup>112</sup> It was then raised to the status of a sacrament by Christ, fully signifying (*plene significat*) the union between Christ and the Church.<sup>113</sup> For Bonaventure, the soul is bride insofar as she is linked to the one and only Bride of Christ, the Church.<sup>114</sup> The Bride of Christ is "the whole Church [*totam Ecclesiam*] and in a certain sense [*quamlibet*] every sanctified soul."<sup>115</sup> According to

108. ST I, q. 92, arts. 2-3.

109. ST III, q. 29, art. 1.

110. "[Bonaventure's] sole concern is with the movement of love in the nuptial kiss of the cross between the God who has become poor and the man who has become poor.... The entire descent of God is nuptial ...." H. U. von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 2: *Studies in Theological Styles: Clerical Styles*, trans. Andrew Louth, Francis McDonagh, and Brian McNeil, ed. John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius: 1984), 357-58.

111. *Breviloquium*, VI, chap. 13, no. 1: "...prius significabat coniunctionem Dei ad animae, nunc autem praeter hoc significat coniunctionem Christi et Ecclesiae et duarum naturarum in unitate personae." English translation taken from *The Breviloquium*, vol. 2 of *The Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild, 1963). The Latin is taken from vol. 5 of the Quaracchi edition *Sanctae Bonaventurae Opera Omnia* (1891). For more on Bonaventure's thought on the sacramentality and important sign-value of marriage, see Miller's *Members of One Body*, 42-52, and *Marriage: The Sacrament of Divine-Human Communion; A Commentary on St. Bonaventure's Theology of Marriage*, vol. 1 (Quincy, IL: Franciscan, 1996).

112. *Breviloquium*, VI, chap. 13, no. 1.

113. *Breviloquium*, VI, chap. 13, no. 3.

114. *Breviloquium*, VI, chap. 5, no. 4.

115. *Itinerarium*, chap. 4, no. 5. English translation taken from *The Journey of the Mind to God*, trans. Philotheus Boehner, ed. Stephen F. Brown (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1993). Translation modified.

Bonaventure, with the reception of sanctifying grace in Baptism, every soul “is perfected and transformed into the bride of Christ [*sponsa Christi*], the daughter of the eternal Father, and the temple of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>116</sup> Spousal imagery conveys the mutual and reciprocal possession and love between the soul and God, joined “as if matrimonially [*quasi matrimonialiter*] by the bond of love and grace.”<sup>117</sup> Eventually, the soul which has passed through the way of perfection reaches its end in peace and rest, wherein what remains is “the vision and embrace of bridegroom and bride [*sponsi et sponsae*].”<sup>118</sup> The image of spousal love thus conveys what is ultimately unspeakable about the final beauty and delight experienced in the “mystical darkness and ecstasy” which is also a “delightful light.”<sup>119</sup> Bonaventure left a unique mark by his blend of scholastic precision and Franciscan-inspired mysticism.

As with patristic reflection, medieval theology offered neither a systematic ecclesiology per se nor an intentional, focused, and systematic treatment of the Church as Bride of Christ.<sup>120</sup> The bridal image was employed in various genres and contexts, leaving certain questions unanswered and advancing new emphases based on shifting concerns, such as the liberty of the bridal Church in the face of pressures from the state (see Anselm).

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116. *Breviloquium*, V, chap. 1, no. 2.

117. *Breviloquium*, V, chap. 1, no. 5.

118. *Breviloquium*, V, chap. 6, no. 5.

119. *Breviloquium*, V, chap. 6, nos. 5 & 7. Compare with the *Itinerarium*, chap. 7, no. 6: “If you wish to know how these things may come about, ask grace, not learning; desire, not understanding; the groaning of prayer, not diligence in reading; the Bridegroom, not the teacher; God, not man; darkness, not clarity; not light, but the fire that wholly inflames and carries one into God through transporting unctions and consuming affections. [...] Let us, then, die and enter into this darkness. Let us silence all our cares, our desires, and our imaginings. With Christ crucified, let us pass *out of this world to the Father...*” See Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 2, 320-22 and also 269: “Bonaventure...always understands the *ablatio* of this experience of ecstasy in a nuptial sense.”

120. However, Kereszty, in “Bride and Mother,” gives a helpful summary of Bernard’s vision and argues for a coherence that could inspire contemporary ecclesiology to reassess the images of Bride and Mother.



## V. The Nineteenth Century and the Roots of Renewal

Between high scholasticism and the nineteenth century, various cultural changes and developments occurred, as evidenced in the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment. Catholic theology largely became reactive to the crises of the day manifest in the Protestant Reformation and Enlightenment rationalism and empiricism. During these centuries a distinctive thread of spousal discourse was preserved and developed in the spousal mysticism exemplified by Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) and John of the Cross (1542-1591).<sup>121</sup> In addition, both Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1564) made use of ecclesial bridal imagery in significant ways worthy of further consideration.<sup>122</sup> The Council of Trent (1545-1563) and the

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121. For examples of the use of spousal imagery in the writings of Teresa of Avila, see *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vols. 1-2, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1976-1980; rev. ed. of vol. 1, 1987). In particular, see *Spiritual Testimonies*, nos. 31 and 46 (vol. 1, pp. 402 and 412); *The Way of Perfection*, chap. 13, no. 3, chap. 22, no. 8, chap. 23, no. 2, and chap. 26, nos. 3-10 (vol. 2, pp. 86, 124-26, and 134-37); *Meditations on the Song of Songs*, throughout (vol. 2, pp. 215-60); and *The Interior Castle*, bk. 5, chap. 2, nos. 2 and 12, and chap. 4; bk. 6, chap. 4, and ch. 9, no. 6; bk. 7 (vol. 2, pp. 342, 346, 354-58, 378-85, 412 and 427-50). For examples of the use of spousal imagery in the writings of John of the Cross, see *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1991). In particular, see *Sayings of Light and Love*, nos. 68, 93-94, 105, 121, 124 and 153 (pp. 90 and 92-96); *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk. 1, chap. 14 (pp. 151-52); *The Dark Night*, bk. 1, explanation, and bk. 2, chaps. 13-25 (pp. 360-61 and 426-57); *The Spiritual Canticle*, throughout (pp. 469-630); *The Living Flame of Love*, throughout (pp. 638-715). Finally, on the interpretation of the Song of Songs by St. Thomas Villanova (1486-1555), John of the Cross, St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622), and Louis Chardon (1595-1651), see DeSimone, *Mary the Bride of the Song*, 55-125.

122. For various examples of the use of spousal imagery in Martin Luther's thought, of his rejection of Christian marriage as a sacrament and "great mystery," and of his view of allegory, see *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, in *Martin Luther: Three Treatises*, trans. A.T.W. Steinhäuser, rev. Frederick C. Ahrens and Abdel Ross Wentz, 113-260 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 223-24; *The Freedom of a Christian*, in *Martin Luther: Three Treatises*, trans. W. A. Lambert, rev. Harold J. Grimm, 261-316 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 286-87; *Lectures on the Song of Solomon*, in vol. 15 of *Luther's Works*, trans. Ian Siggins, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1972), 193-95; *Lectures on Genesis, chs. 1-5*, in vol. 1 of *Luther's Works*, trans. George V. Schick, ed. J. Pelikan, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1958), 233; *Commentary on Psalm 45*, in vol. 12 of *Luther's Works*, trans. E. B. Koenker, ed. J. Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1955), 198 and 262-63; and *Against Hanswurst*, in vol. 41 of *Luther's Works*, trans. and ed. Eric W. Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 205 and 227. For the following examples in Calvin's thought, which include significant examples of ecclesial maternal imagery, the English translation of the *Institutes* consulted here is the two volume edition of *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960). Citations take the following form: book, chapter, section (page[s]). See *Institutes* II, 8, 18 (385); II, 12, 2 and 7 (465 and 473); III, 1, 3 (541); IV, 1, 1-17 (1011-31); IV, 12, 24 (1251); IV, 17, 9 (1369-70); and IV, 19, 34-36 (1480-83).

Catechism which was issued soon afterwards also employed ecclesial bridal imagery.<sup>123</sup> The nineteenth century, however, saw the resurgence of theological creativity and interest in the Fathers that would provide a decisive foundation for the developments of the twentieth century in this regard. As examples of the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in the nineteenth century, two bright lights from Germany, Johann Adam Möhler of Tübingen and Matthias Joseph Scheeben, will be considered.

Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838) anticipated the twentieth-century renewal of ecclesiology in significant ways. For Möhler, the Church is essentially a mystery of love, and her institutional characteristics are at the service of the unity of love achieved in Christ.<sup>124</sup> Möhler also emphasized the importance of symbolism for theology: “Symbols [*Symbole*], like the word, mediate inner movement. They are not only the unifying point of all but are also the organ through which the interiority of the one flows out into totality and back from it again.”<sup>125</sup> His use of ecclesial bridal imagery was limited, but, combined with his overall approach to the Church, Möhler helped pave the way toward Scheeben and later thinkers.

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123. See Council of Trent, Sessions 22 and 24 (September 17, 1562 and November 11, 1563), in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2, ed. Norman P. Tanner (London: Sheed & Ward; Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 733 and 754. See *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, pt. 1, art. 9, and pt. 2, in the edition trans. J. Dovovan (New York: Catholic School Book Co., 1829), 71, 74-77, 230 and 233-34.

124. See *Unity in the Church, or, the Principle of Catholicism Presented in the Spirit of the Church Fathers of the First Three Centuries*, ed. and trans. Peter C. Erb (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1996), 209, 217-29, 238 and 246-47. For the original German, see *Die Einheit in der Kirche, oder das Princip des Katholicismus, dargestellt im Geiste der Kirchenväter der drei ersten Jahrhunderte* (Tübingen: Heinrich Laupp, 1825).

125. *Unity in the Church*, 200. See also his *Symbolism* on the need for the visible and for images and signs, e.g., p. 265ff: “Man is so much a creature of sense, that the interior world—the world of ideas—must be presented to him in the form of an image...” *Symbolism: Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences Between Catholics and Protestants as Evidenced by Their Symbolical Writings*, trans. James Burton Robertson (New York: Crossroad, 1997). For the original German, see *Symbolik oder Darstellung der dogmatischen Gegensätze der Katholiken und Protestanten nach ihren öffentlichen Bekenntnisschriften* (Germany: Köln & Olten, 1958). Möhler’s argument here has more to do with the need for a visible Church, but his basic reasoning is applicable to various means of signification, including metaphors, images, and symbols.

Various themes and patterns of use of ecclesial bridal imagery are found in Möhler. The bridal image conveys the Church's dependence upon and receptivity to Christ and his gifts.<sup>126</sup> It also portrays the oneness of Christ and the Church as head and body, bridegroom and bride (see Eph 5:21-33),<sup>127</sup> and Möhler also alluded to the unity of the Church's members with one another in nuptial terms.<sup>128</sup> Möhler referred to the bishop as the bridegroom of the Church,<sup>129</sup> and he saw the Church as Mother.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, Möhler understood love as involving a mutual giving and receiving, and his reflections on love at the heart of the Church could be connected with his reference to the bridal Church as the receiver and Christ as the giver.<sup>131</sup> In many ways, Möhler anticipated the recovery of the importance of ecclesial imagery and symbolism that characterized the work of twentieth-century thinkers.

Matthias Joseph Scheeben (1835-1888), in *The Mysteries of Christianity*, accorded to spousal imagery a significant place and scope within his systematic treatment.<sup>132</sup> Scheeben incorporated ecclesial bridal imagery in various ways, but he also took nuptial categories to a new level by valorizing spousal union as a key analogue not only for the relationship between Christ and the Church but also for other relations such as those between nature and grace as well as between

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126. See *Unity in the Church*, 82-83 and note (f). Möhler cited Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, Augustine, and Optatus of Milevius.

127. *Unity in the Church*, 155, note (a), and 215. Möhler cited Augustine. See also *Symbolism*, 261.

128. See *Unity in the Church*, 215

129. *Unity in the Church*, 220, note (l). Möhler cited Ambrose.

130. See *Unity in the Church*, 84 and 88, and *Symbolism*, 263. Möhler cited Irenaeus and Cyprian.

131. See *Unity in the Church*, 238. On pp. 87-89, Möhler refers to the communication and reception of the Holy Spirit as foundational to the Church. He then highlights Ignatius of Antioch and his conception of the essence of Christianity found in his letters: "[H]e describes one thing: only love arising out of the womb of the Church and embracing believers teaches what Christ and Christianity is. One can sum up all his letters as follows: *Christ is love; by loving you will find Christ*" (88).

132. *The Mysteries of Christianity* (hereafter *Mysteries*), trans. Cyril Vollert (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1946). The original German is *Die Mysterien des Christenthums* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1898). See also Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 136-37.

reason and faith (philosophy and theology).<sup>133</sup> In Scheeben's understanding, nuptial or spousal union involved the subordination of one (bride) to the other (bridegroom), the mutuality of the two, and the "preservation, enhancement, and elevation" of the one (bride) through union with the other (bridegroom).<sup>134</sup> The *connubium* became for Scheeben a hermeneutical key that assisted his understanding of various theological realities within a systematic perspective of the whole.<sup>135</sup>

Scheeben's use of spousal imagery was critical and attentive to different meanings and nuances. For instance, he viewed the hypostatic union in non-nuptial terms, because an important aspect of marriage, namely "the free union between the parties," was not present there,<sup>136</sup> and the analogy of marriage could not explain the "complete unity of the hypostasis."<sup>137</sup> For Scheeben, Mary is the Bride of the Holy Spirit and represents the highest realization of the nuptials of nature and grace, reason and faith.<sup>138</sup> Scheeben interwove and ordered his use of the images of body, bride, and mother for the Church.<sup>139</sup> The bridal Church is a fruitful Mother who participates in the saving work of Christ, especially through the Eucharist.<sup>140</sup> Scheeben also preferred a rather circumscribed view of the maternity of the Church, considering the latter as

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133. See *Mysteries*, § 109, 783-85.

134. See *Mysteries*, § 109, 783-84.

135. See Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 136.

136. *Mysteries*, § 109, 787.

137. *Mysteries*, § 56, 373.

138. *Mysteries*, § 109, 785: "Like the nuptials of nature with grace, the yoking of reason with faith in the theological sphere has its fairest and most sublime ideal in the espousals of the noblest of purely human beings, the Virgin of virgins, with the Holy Spirit, whereby she became the mother of Him who is personal Wisdom incarnate."

139. *Mysteries*, § 77, 541-43, § 79, 546, and § 85, 601-3.

140. *Mysteries*, § 77, 541-42. Scheeben is a forerunner of the "Eucharistic ecclesiology" of the 20th century: "If the mystical nature of the Church, as the fellowship of men with the God-man, culminates and receives its fullest expression in the Eucharist, we cannot better study the Church than by regarding it from the standpoint of the Eucharist, its very heart" (ibid., § 78, 542). See Paul McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995).

most properly ascribed to priestly ministry.<sup>141</sup> For Scheeben, the Incarnation is a virtual marriage with the human race that is only fully realized in the Church, wherein the soul becomes a bride of Christ initially through faith and baptism (justification) and completely in the one-flesh union brought about by the Eucharist.<sup>142</sup> The Holy Spirit transforms the bridal Church into a real and not simply “moral” union with Christ.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, Scheeben understood Christian marriage as the “great mystery” (Eph 5:32), and as having a “real, essential, and intrinsic reference to the mystery of Christ’s union with His Church” because it “not only symbolizes the mystery but really represents it.”<sup>144</sup> He also explained that Christian marriage is ordered toward the same end as that of Christ’s nuptial union with his Church, namely, the growth and development of the Body of Christ.<sup>145</sup> Indeed, the important place of ecclesial bridal imagery in Scheeben’s theology is perhaps captured best in his view of Christian marriage: “Christian marriage is inextricably interwoven with the supernatural fabric of the Church; the greatest damage one can inflict on both is to tear them apart.”<sup>146</sup>

Scheeben easily takes his place alongside Origen, Augustine, Bernard, and Bonaventure as one of the great contributors in the history of the Church to the use of ecclesial bridal imagery. Both Möhler and Scheeben anticipated various theological developments to come, and their emphasis on personal, communal, and symbolic categories embodied a shift away from

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141. Despite this particular and more limited understanding of the Church’s motherhood, Scheeben did allow for an analogous use of “mother” to refer to all members of the Church, speaking of the two types of motherhood as resting on each other and even grounding the more general motherhood (i.e., the capacity of all the members of the Church to bear fruit in response to the gift of grace) on the fact that all the members of the Church are brides. See *Mysteries*, § 80, 555-56n5.

142. *Mysteries*, § 78, 543-44. See also *Mysteries*, §§ 88-89 and 91, pp. 633, 637 and 648.

143. *Mysteries*, § 78, 544. See also *Mysteries*, § 56, 372.

144. *Mysteries*, § 85, 601-3.

145. See *Mysteries*, § 85, 602.

146. *Mysteries*, § 85, 610.

more juridical and institutionally-centered approaches to the Church and paved the way for the renewed use of ecclesial imagery that would emerge in force in the early decades of the twentieth century.

## VI. Twentieth-Century Ecclesiology

The twentieth century was described within its first decades as the “century of the Church.”<sup>147</sup> Explicit and developed consideration of the Church *qua* Church occurred with a frequency unseen in prior centuries. In the sections below, what might be described as the key shift in ecclesiological style that marked the mid-twentieth century will be briefly introduced, and then the survey of ecclesial bridal imagery will be continued.

### A. *Remnants of an Earlier Ecclesiological Style*

Yves Congar, in his description of the transition from patristic to medieval ecclesiology, noted that the developing rivalry between the “two powers” of the spiritual and the temporal (Church and state) led to a shift in emphasis in the understanding of the Church as Bride of Christ and Mother. In particular, Congar observed how the maternal (and bridal) image, instead of conveying the theological meanings of spiritual generation and formation commonly found in the Fathers, was used instead to defend the authority of the Church.<sup>148</sup> The growing concern with the authority and liberty of the Church was a significant fact of ecclesiological history. According to Congar, the shift in focus “represents ... the most important fact of [the] history of ecclesiological doctrine [and] marks the line of cleavage between an ecclesiology of a patristic

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147. See Otto Dibelius, *Das Jahrhundert der Kirche* (Berlin: Furche, 1926).

148. See Congar’s preface in Karl Delahaye, *Ecclesia Mater*, 9.

style and spirit and an ecclesiology of juridical type, which has, in fact, dominated the modern epoch, at least in clerical teaching.”<sup>149</sup>

The twentieth century inherited a largely juridical ecclesiology, focused on the institutional aspects of the Church and papal authority in particular.<sup>150</sup> “The aspects of history and eschatology are absent, and therefore also absent is the dialectic between the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet.’ [This ecclesiology] corresponds to an implicit anthropology of submission and obedience.”<sup>151</sup> The theological manuals nurtured a “pyramidal view of the Church,” and Congar coined the term ‘hierarchology’ to refer to this juridical type of ecclesiology.<sup>152</sup>

In particular, a protective stance characterized much of magisterial teaching on issues involving Church, state, and society in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>153</sup> This protective or defensive posture was in large part a reaction to the challenges the Church was facing with nations becoming secularized, the loss of the papal states, and threats to the Church’s freedom.<sup>154</sup> The posture led to what has been described as modern Roman

149. In Delahaye, *Ecclesia Mater*, 10. See also Congar, “The Historical Development of Authority in the Church: Points for Christian Reflection,” in John M. Todd, ed., *Problems of Authority*, 119-56 (Baltimore: Helicon, 1962), 136ff; Komonchak, *Who are the Church?* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2008), 46ff.

150. See Dulles, *Models of the Church*, expanded ed. (New York: Image Books, 2002), 26-38; Congar, *L’Église: De saint Augustin à l’époque moderne* (hereafter *L’Église*) (Paris: Cerf, 1970), 425.

151. Congar, *L’Église*, 425. See Congar, “Moving Towards a Pilgrim Church,” in *Vatican II Revisited: By Those Who Were There*, ed. Alberic Stacpoole (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1986), 143.

152. Congar, “Moving Towards a Pilgrim Church,” 133-34. Congar notes that he coined the term in 1947. See also Congar, “The Historical Development of Authority,” 144; Paul McPartlan, “Vatican I, Council of,” in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, ed. Adrian Hastings, 737-38 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

153. See John W. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard, 2008), 53ff. See also Giacomo Martina, “The Historical Context in Which the Idea of a New Ecumenical Council Was Born” (hereafter “The Historical Context”), in René Latourelle, ed., *Vatican II: Assessment & Perspectives Twenty-Five Years After*, vol. 1, 3-73 (New York: Paulist, 1988), 15. Martina maintains that this perspective, that is, “the situation of a Church on the defensive, immobile, in the face of a rapidly changing world,” persisted to the end of Pius XII’s pontificate in 1958.

154. Patrick Granfield describes the unfolding confrontation during the 17th-19th centuries between the Church and various counter-movements. See “The Rise and Fall of *Societas Perfecta*” (hereafter “The Rise and Fall”),

Catholicism's expression as a kind of "counter-society" and "sub-culture," a mode of existence that remained largely intact until the Second Vatican Council.<sup>155</sup>

This idea of a "counter-society" was illustrated in the use of the term *societas perfecta* in reference to the Church.<sup>156</sup> As Patrick Granfield explains, the modern use of the term arose during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries within a context where the Church found herself struggling with various nationalist movements, some of which threatened the authority of the Holy See and the local bishops and hence the *libertas ecclesiae*.<sup>157</sup> The concept of the Church as *societas perfecta* was meant to portray the Church as a society "that is complete and independent in itself and possesses all the means necessary to attain its proposed end."<sup>158</sup> Because of the juridical overtones of the notion of *societas perfecta*, a consideration of the Church in view of such a concept emphasized the Church's hierarchical structure and organs of authority.<sup>159</sup> *Ad intra*, the

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*Concilium* 157: *May Church Ministers Be Politicians?* eds. Peter Huizing and Knut Walf (New York: Seabury, 1982): 4-5. See also Joseph A. Komonchak, "Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism" (hereafter "Modernity"), *Cristianesimo nella storia* 18 (1997): 358-63; J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 5: *Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture (since 1700)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 221.

155. Komonchak, "Modernity," 356 and 377ff.

156. See Congar, "Moving Towards a Pilgrim Church," 132-33; Patrick Granfield, "The Church as 'Societas Perfecta' in the Schemata of Vatican I," *Church History* 48 (December, 1979): 431-46; Granfield, "The Rise and Fall of *Societas Perfecta*," 3-8; Komonchak, "Modernity," 377; and also John J. Markey, *Creating Communion: The Theology of the Constitutions of the Church* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2003), 32-35. *Pace* Granfield in "The Rise and Fall," the use of the concept *societas perfecta* is also found in John XXIII and Paul VI.

157. See Granfield, "The Rise and Fall," 3-6. See also Congar, "Moving Towards a Pilgrim Church," 132-33.

158. Granfield, "The Rise and Fall," 3. See Congar, "Moving Towards a Pilgrim Church," 129-35.

159. See Congar, "Moving Towards a Pilgrim Church," 130-35; Granfield, "The Rise and Fall," 6.



Church was a pyramidal and ordered body with the pope as head, at the apex.<sup>160</sup> *Ad extra*, the Church was a society distinct and self-sufficient, in a way over and against the world.<sup>161</sup>

### ***B. The Beginnings of Renewal***

By the time of Pope Pius XI's pontificate, three important ecclesial movements were well underway: a movement of spiritual renewal grounded in the liturgy, the Catholic social movement as exemplified by Catholic Action, and the ecumenical movement.<sup>162</sup> As Louis Bouyer described, these movements "were nourished by a threefold renewal, which might be called a 'return to sources': a liturgical, biblical, and patristic renewal which was closely interconnected."<sup>163</sup> An important aspect of these movements was a more integrated vision of the Church, where spiritual life was recognized as most vibrant when linked to the life and liturgy of the Mystical Body of Christ, and where it was recognized that the laity had a true mission to undertake based on being a real part of the Church. The return to the sources or *ressourcement* was decisive for the recovery of the scriptural imagery and insights of patristic exegesis.

The liturgical movement and in particular a renewed appreciation of the relationship between the Eucharist and the Church were primary contributors toward a renewal of ecclesiology. The Church was not simply a society (analogous with the state) but rather a mystery

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160. See Congar, "Moving Towards a Pilgrim Church," 133; McPartlan, "Vatican I, Council of," 737-38.

161. See Rembert Weakland, "Images of the Church: From 'Perfect Society' to 'God's People on Pilgrimage'," in *Unfinished Journey: The Church 40 Years after Vatican II (Essays for John Wilkins)*, ed. Austen Ivereigh (New York: Continuum, 2004), 80.

162. See Bouyer, *The Church of God, Body of Christ and Temple of the Holy Spirit* (hereafter *The Church of God*), trans. Charles Underhill Quinn (Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1982), 150.

163. Bouyer, *The Church of God*, 151.

best illuminated by images, particularly that of the Mystical Body of Christ,<sup>164</sup> an emphasis which in turn opened the way to subsequent development of the idea of the Church as a mystery of communion.<sup>165</sup> A gradual shift in ecclesiological style was taking place, from a juridical ecclesiology to what might be called a personalist ecclesiology in broad terms—an ecclesiology of communion.<sup>166</sup>

### ***C. Ecclesial Bridal Imagery: Select Thinkers from 1930 to 2000***

Various studies within the first three decades of the twentieth century demonstrated an awareness of and growing emphasis on a range of different images for the Church, including an increasing interest in bridal and maternal imagery for the Church.<sup>167</sup> In a particular way, the decade of the 1930s virtually exploded with considerable theological renewal, development, and

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164. See Emile Mersch, *Le Corps Mystique du Christ*, 1933. The English translation, based on the 2nd French edition (1936), is entitled *The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition*, trans. John R. Kelly (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1938). On the unique significance of the image of the Mystical Body according to Mersch, see especially *The Whole Christ*, 583.

165. See Congar, *L'Église*, 461-62; Bouyer, *The Church of God*, 150-53; McPartlan, "Eucharistic Ecclesiology," *One in Christ* (1986): 316.

166. For example, see Congar, "The Historical Development of Authority in the Church" and "Moving Toward a Pilgrim Church"; Bouyer, *The Church of God*, 145-155; Komonchak, "Returning from Exile" and his "Theology and Culture at Mid-Century: The Example of Henri de Lubac," *Theological Studies* 51 (1990): 579-602; and Joseph Ratzinger, "The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council," in *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics: New Endeavors in Ecclesiology*, trans. Michael J. Miller et al. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2008), 17. See also Jérôme Hamer, *The Church is a Communion*, trans. Ronald Matthews (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964). French original entitled *L'Église est une communion* (Paris: Cerf, 1962).

167. For example, see Humbert Clérissac's *Le Mystère de l'Église*, originally published in 1917 (*The Mystery of the Church*, trans. n.a. [New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937], esp. chaps. 2, 4, 6 and 8); Karl Adam's *Das Wesen des Katholizismus*, originally published in 1924 (*The Spirit of Catholicism*, trans. Justin McCann [New York: Macmillan, 1930], esp. 15-16); Romano Guardini's *Vom Geist der Liturgie*, originally published in 1918 (*The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. Ada Lane [New York: Crossroad, 1998]); and Odo Casel, "Die Taufe als Brautbad der Kirche," *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* 5 (1925): 144-47. For an earlier work on ecclesial images, Congar (see *L'Église*, 462) cites Ernst Commer, *Die Kirche in ihrem Wesen und Leben*, vol. 1 (Vienna: Mayer, 1904). For a list of various works from the late nineteenth century to the 1940s concerning the Church as the Body of Christ, see Tromp, *Corpus Christi Quod est Ecclesia*, vol. 1, rev. and aug. ed. (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1946 [1st ed., 1937]), 218-29. For studies on the maternal image of the Church, see Delahaye, *Ecclesia Mater*, 36n1. Delahaye cites P. Lobstein's "La maternité de l'Église," *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuse* 1 (1921): 65-71. H. de Lubac's *Catholicism*, which originally appeared in 1938, was a significant capstone of these early studies.

output, and studies of ecclesial imagery began to appear with great regularity.<sup>168</sup> Various works emerged that treated the relationship between Mary and the Church,<sup>169</sup> the Church as Mother,<sup>170</sup> and nuptial and ecclesial imagery in Scripture,<sup>171</sup> some of which studies were indicative of an ecumenical interest in ecclesial bridal imagery.<sup>172</sup> Below will be surveyed select theologians and studies from 1930 through the end of the twentieth century that contributed to reflection on the Church as the Bride of Christ and that will inform this study's examination of papal and conciliar teaching.

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168. See Komonchak, "Returning from Exile." See also Joseph J. Bluet, "Current Theology – The Mystical Body of Christ: 1890-1940," *Theological Studies* 3.2 (1942): 261-89.

169. In 1951 (2nd ed., 1955), Alois Müller published a study on the unity of Mary and the Church from Ignatius to Augustine (A. Müller, *Ecclesia – Maria: Die Einheit Marias und der Kirche*, 2nd ed. [Schweiz: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1955]). Müller's bibliography cites other articles and works related to the topic and indicates the range of interest. Hugo Rahner, who would also contribute significantly to a renewed appreciation of the role of imagery and symbolism in the Fathers (see *Symbole der Kirche* [1964]), offered a more meditative work in 1961 on Mary and the Church in the Fathers (H. Rahner, *Maria und die Kirche*; English translation entitled *Our Lady and the Church*).

170. See Joseph Plumpe, "Ecclesia Mater," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 70 (1939): 535-55; and *Mater Ecclesia*, esp. 5, 25, 61, 64, 67, 71-75, 90, 101-6 and 111-14 for references to bridal imagery. Karl Delahaye's study of patristic ecclesiology focused on the image of the Church as Mother. This was reflected in the French translation published in 1964, entitled *Ecclesia Mater chez les Pères des trois premiers siècles*. The German original appeared in 1958 and was entitled *Erneuerung der Seelsorgsformen aus der Sicht der Frühen Patristik* (Fribourg: Herder).

171. Two studies in English illustrated the ecumenical interest in both bridal imagery and ecclesial imagery in general during this time. The first is the classic exposition on ecclesial imagery by Paul S. Minear, entitled *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (1960; repr., Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2007). Second, Richard A. Batey completed in 1961 a dissertation on nuptial imagery in the New Testament (Vanderbilt), which he later condensed and revised into a monograph (R. Batey, *New Testament Nuptial Imagery* [1971]). On the first page of the latter, Batey's footnote refers to scholarship which reveals the broader interest in nuptial imagery beyond Catholic circles.

172. Particularly noteworthy is Anglican theologian Claude Chavasse's monograph *The Bride of Christ: An Enquiry into the Nuptial Element in Early Christianity*, published in 1940. Chavasse exalted Augustine and was critical of the tradition that applied bridal imagery to individual souls (cf. Origen and Bernard). Until recently, his study was the lengthiest and most sustained and developed monograph on ecclesial bridal imagery and its significance for theology and Christian life. For examples of other significant contributions related to anthropology and ecclesiology, see Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 3.1, trans. J. W. Edwards et al. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), 288-329; *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 3.4, trans. A. T. Mackay (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961), 116-240; and Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, originally published posthumously in 1945.

### 1. Sebastian Tromp: “De Nativitate Ecclesiae” (1932), “Ecclesia Sponsa” (1937)

The Jesuit Sebastian Tromp (1889-1975), likely the principal drafter of Pius XII’s encyclical *Mystici corporis*,<sup>173</sup> considered the image of the Church as Bride in two significant articles composed in the 1930s. In his article entitled “De Nativitate Ecclesiae ex Corde Iesu in Cruce,”<sup>174</sup> Tromp traced references to the birth of the Church from Christ’s heart in sources from patristic to modern times, and he highlighted multiple references to the Church as Bride, some of which included a close coupling of both bodily and bridal imagery and recognition of the important role of the Holy Spirit in bringing about the union of Bridegroom and Bride and making the Bride fruitful.<sup>175</sup>

Tromp’s article “Ecclesia Sponsa Virgo Mater” was a succinct survey of the basic themes found in the Fathers’ treatment of ecclesial bridal imagery and examination of the related images of virgin and mother.<sup>176</sup> Tromp acknowledged the Church to be a mystery and therefore to be fittingly approached through a variety of images, the principal image being “the figure of the Body of Christ,” though next in line was the imagery of Bridegroom and Bride, wherein the whole of ecclesiology was in some way contained.<sup>177</sup>

In his study, Tromp identified ten different themes related to the spousal imagery found in the Fathers.<sup>178</sup> First, the Incarnation is a spousal union between the divine and human natures

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173. See O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 113; Martina, “The Historical Context,” 16.

174. See *Gregorianum* 13 (1932): 489-527.

175. For example, see Tromp, “De Nativitate Ecclesiae ex Corde Iesu Cruce,” 491-92, 494-96, 515n7, 520n16 and 521n20.

176. See *Gregorianum* 18 (1937): 3-29. This article was later adapted and integrated as a chapter in the first volume of Tromp’s *Corpus Christi Quod est Ecclesia*, 26-53. See English translation available under the same title, trans. Ann Condit, 32-63.

177. See Tromp, “Ecclesia Sponsa,” 3.

178. Tromp, “Ecclesia Sponsa,” 5-27.

of Christ. Second, the Incarnation can also be considered as a spousal union between the Word incarnate and mankind or, more specifically, believers. Third, the spousal union between the Church and Christ began with Christ's preaching and public ministry, whereby the Church is "juridically constituted." Fourth, the Church herself is the Bride, united with Christ on the cross, who as the New Eve is born from the pierced side of Christ. Fifth, the Church is constituted as a holy and living Mother through Christ's death. Sixth, the bridal and maternal Church is simultaneously a Virgin. Seventh, the Blessed Virgin Mary is herself a special image of the Church as Bride and Mother. Eighth, the images of the strong Woman in Proverbs (see Prov 31:10-31) and the Woman of the Apocalypse (see Rev 12:1-17) are associated with the Church as Bride and Mother. Ninth, the different referents of the image of the bridal Church include the Church hierarchy strictly considered (*Ecclesia docens*), the Church faithful who receive the teaching (*Ecclesia discens*), and the Church "simply" (*Ecclesia simpliciter*), namely hierarchy and faithful. Finally, tenth, the Church is the Bride without spot or stain (see Eph 5:27) and is fully perfect only in heaven (see Rev 21:2-9 and 22:17). On the latter point, Tromp underscored the distinction between the sinful Bride (in her members on earth) and the sinless Bride: *Etiam distinctio Sponsae adhuc maculatae et Sponsae sine macula est primi ordinis.*<sup>179</sup>

In *Corpus Christi* (2nd ed., 1946), Tromp added three other themes: the bridal Church's origin from Christ on the Cross as the new Mother of the living; the bridal Church's reception of dowry gifts (*dotes*) from God the Father or from Christ (see Thomas Aquinas above);<sup>180</sup> and how, in an obscure point, it is to be understood that Christ himself can be called "Bride" just as the

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179. "Ecclesia Sponsa," 27.

180. See p. 29 above.

Church can be called “Christ.”<sup>181</sup> Tromp captured in summary form much of the breadth and richness of the patristic use of nuptial imagery. As he described it, the Church as the Bride of Christ is “a concept [*conceptum*] of various colors and multiple forms.”<sup>182</sup>

## 2. Anscar Vonier: *The Spirit and the Bride* (1935)

Benedictine abbot Anscar Vonier’s (1876-1938) work entitled *The Spirit and the Bride* identified ecclesial bridal imagery as one of the “great metaphors” for the Church.<sup>183</sup> For Vonier, the bridal image was unique and irreplaceable as a metaphor and name:

To give the Church the name of Bride is more than literature. It is theological necessity. Without such a name or its equivalent we could never know the true relationship between the Church and Christ, we could not express the special operation of the Spirit who came down at Pentecost.<sup>184</sup>

Vonier held that figurative language was necessary to convey certain aspects predicated of the Church as a real society. Although metaphorical descriptions were to be seen in second place to the reality of the Church,<sup>185</sup> ecclesial metaphors transcend and encompass every definition for the Church. “[T]he metaphors of which we speak ... cover the whole definition of the Church, in fact they are vaster than any possible definition.”<sup>186</sup> On the relationship between theological language and metaphor, Vonier remarked:

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181. See Tromp, *Corpus Christi*, 38-41, 44-45 and 52-53. See also p. 27 above. In order to understand the obscure reference to Christ as “bride” (Tromp cites an example from Gregory the Great), Tromp distinguished three terms, *Christus-simpliciter*, *Christus-totus*, and *Christus-alter*. As *Christus-simpliciter* (Christ simply), Christ is the Bridegroom. As *Christus-totus* (the whole Christ, Head and Body), Christ can be called “bride” insofar as the Body of Christ is united as one person with Christ the Head. The term *Christus-alter* (another Christ) refers to the Church herself and therefore ‘bride’ can be predicated simply.

182. Tromp, *Corpus Christi*, 53.

183. Anscar Vonier, *The Spirit and the Bride* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1935), 34ff.

184. *The Spirit and the Bride*, viii-ix.

185. See *The Spirit and the Bride*, 38-39.

186. *The Spirit and the Bride*, 44.

When we are told that the Church is the Body of the glorified Christ, that she is the Bride of Christ, we hardly need more. We know that nothing greater could be said, that the supreme point of intimacy has been reached. We realize that whatever theology may say in more precise language will not be deeper or holier than the contents of the metaphor.<sup>187</sup>

Vonier thus argued for the value of ecclesial metaphors. In addition, many of the themes associated with his use of ecclesial bridal imagery emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit. For Vonier, the bridal image uniquely conveys the union between Christ and the Church in the Holy Spirit.<sup>188</sup> The bridal Church is also a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence on earth.<sup>189</sup> The Holy Spirit makes the Church a "fit" Bride,<sup>190</sup> and the Holy Spirit is the "author" of the Church's "mystical personality," a personality characterized by the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love.<sup>191</sup> The "spiritual fruitfulness" of the bridal Church is effected by the Holy Spirit's action.<sup>192</sup> In addition, the beauty, holiness, innocence, and whiteness of the Bride of Christ persists despite the sins of her members and children,<sup>193</sup> even though the "persecutions, temporal misfortunes, [and] the sins of the Church's individual members are the sackcloth in which the Wife of the Lamb sits and mourns as if she were not the Queen she really is."<sup>194</sup>

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187. *The Spirit and the Bride*, 41.

188. See *The Spirit and the Bride*, viii-ix.

189. See *The Spirit and the Bride*, 27-33.

190. *The Spirit and the Bride*, 47.

191. See *The Spirit and the Bride*, 99-131, esp. 103 and 178.

192. *The Spirit and the Bride*, 137.

193. See *The Spirit and the Bride*, 85-98, 103, 215 and 222ff.

194. *The Spirit and the Bride*, 257.

### 3. Odo Casel: “Die Kirche als Braut Christi” (1936)

Benedictine monk Odo Casel (1886-1948) considered bridal and feminine imagery for the Church on numerous occasions from the 1920s to the 1940s.<sup>195</sup> In his article entitled “Die Kirche als Braut Christi nach Schrift, Väterlehre und Liturgie,”<sup>196</sup> Casel treated a variety of themes associated with ecclesial bridal imagery. According to Casel, the bridal Church is a “mystery of love” (*Mysterium der Liebe*) and therefore filled with joy.<sup>197</sup> The name “Bride of Christ” conveys more than any other expression the distinct nature and particularity (*Eigenart*) of the Church.<sup>198</sup> Casel affirmed the central place of Genesis 1–2 in relation to ecclesial bridal imagery, particularly in the comparison of the Church born from Christ’s side and the woman formed from the man’s rib.<sup>199</sup> He also acknowledged the close bond and complementarity between the images of body and bride, wherein the bridal image especially portrays the “full freedom of love” (*die volle Freiheit der Agape*) between Christ and the Church as well as the Bride’s creaturely character and unique union with Christ.<sup>200</sup> Like Vonier, Casel noted the key role of the Holy Spirit and described the Church as the “pneumatic Bride.”<sup>201</sup> He also saw the “whole Church” as the “Bride of Christ,”<sup>202</sup> and he recognized the bridal Church to be both virgin and mother.

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195. Various selections of related pieces can be found in Odo Casel, *Mysterium der Ekklesia: Von der Gemeinschaft aller Erlösten in Christus Jesus* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1961).

196. Originally published in *Theologie der Zeit* 2.3 (1936): 91-111. The abridged version cited here is taken from *Mysterium der Ekklesia*, 59-87.

197. Casel, “Die Kirche als Braut Christi,” 60-62.

198. “Die Kirche als Braut Christi,” 61.

199. “Die Kirche als Braut Christi,” 62 and 65.

200. “Die Kirche als Braut Christi,” 65-66.

201. “Die Kirche als Braut Christi,” 66, 72 and 80-81.

202. Casel, “Die Frau als Symbol der Ekklesia,” in *Mysterium der Ekklesia*, 321.



As a summary, Casel highlighted seven aspects of what he considered to be the value of the teaching (*Lehre*) on the Church as the Bride of Christ for the life of Christians.<sup>203</sup> First, the teaching fosters a “respect” for the holy Church who shares in the perfection of the heavenly Jerusalem. Second, it enflames Christians with “love” towards the holy Church, who herself mediates the very love (*Agape*) of Christ. Third, the doctrine of the Church as the Bride of Christ provides a “profound notion” of Christians’ “most intimate *relation to the Church*” (emphasis in original). The Church is not simply the hierarchy. “We ourselves are really the Church, insofar as we are members of Christ, but not from our own being, but rather from the Spirit of God living in us.”<sup>204</sup> The remaining aspects are: fourth, a greater appreciation of the “hierarchy” as representatives of Christ the Bridegroom; fifth, a more profound understanding of the “sacraments,” especially the Eucharist as the Bridegroom’s offering for his Bride;<sup>205</sup> sixth, a deeper understanding of the “saints,” in particular Mary as the type of the Church; and seventh, the ability to see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ particularly through an appreciation of the sexes in their respective representative capacity, one as a type of Christ and the other as a type of the Church.

#### 4. Henri de Lubac: Select Writings (1938-1971)

[O]ur faith should never make separate what God from the beginning has joined together: *sacramentum magnum in Christo et in ecclesia*. Nor do we claim to prove this union by an explanation of it, for the mystery of the Church is deeper still, if that were possible,

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203. For the seven aspects cited below, see Casel, “Die Kirche als Braut Christi,” 84-87.

204. Casel, “Die Kirche als Braut Christi,” 85.

205. See also “Die Einigung von Bräutigam und Braut in der Eucharistie,” in *Mysterium der Ekklesia*, 200-2.

[more “difficult to believe”] than the mystery of Christ, just as that mystery was more difficult to believe than the mystery of God...”<sup>206</sup>

French Jesuit Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) considered the mystery of the Church in numerous writings and made frequent use of ecclesial imagery and symbolism.<sup>207</sup> The key images found in de Lubac’s work are those of the Church as the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, and Mother.<sup>208</sup> His special love for the image of the Church as Mother, his favorite image in fact, was apparent throughout his work.<sup>209</sup> This is “the first of all words: the Church is my mother.”<sup>210</sup> “*Ecclesia mater* ... these two words express a reality, the very reality of Christian life.”<sup>211</sup> In close connection to maternal imagery, de Lubac also highly esteemed the bridal image.

Various applications of ecclesial bridal imagery can be found in de Lubac’s thought, influenced as it was by his study of patristic and medieval theology. The bride of Christ is the whole human race.<sup>212</sup> The bridal image conveys the close union of Christ and the Church,<sup>213</sup> but

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206. H. de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 74. The square bracket indicates a phrase omitted in the English translation. See de Lubac, *Catholicism: Les aspects sociaux du dogme*, 7th ed., vol. 7 of *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1983), 48-49.

207. See *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, trans. from the 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. of the French Gemma Simmonds with Richard Price, ed. Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons (London: SCM Press, 2006), 225ff. and 244ff. See also *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, trans. James R. Dunne (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1969), 2-3. French original published in 1967. De Lubac’s work was to be bedside reading for Pope Paul VI and would prove influential for the Second Vatican Council’s treatment of the Church as well as for John Paul II. See Martina, “The Historical Context,” 36; H. de Lubac, *At the Service of the Church*, trans. Anne Elizabeth Englund (San Francisco: Communio Books/Ignatius, 1993), 75.

208. See Susan K. Wood, *Spiritual Exegesis and the Church in the Theology of Henri de Lubac* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 93; and Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 81-85.

209. For example, see *Catholicism*, 62-67; *The Splendor of the Church* (translation of 1953 French edition *Méditation sur l’Église*), 10, 13 and 236-78; *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, 4-9 and 56; and *The Motherhood of the Church*, trans. Sergia Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 39-168. The latter was originally published as *Les églises particulières dans l’Église universelle* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1971).

210. *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, 4.

211. *The Motherhood of the Church*, 119.

212. See *Catholicism*, 27; *The Splendor of the Church*, 184.

213. *Catholicism*, 57-58.

it also expresses the contradiction between the sinful harlot and the victorious Bride.<sup>214</sup> Indeed, the bridal Church is a mystery that will be brought to perfection only at the end of time.<sup>215</sup> The bridal Church is not only a means to salvation but also “the end, that is to say, that union in its consummation.”<sup>216</sup> Christ’s marriage to his Church is foreshadowed from the beginning of the history of salvation and mysteriously encompasses the whole story of humanity.<sup>217</sup> De Lubac acknowledged the various referents of bridal imagery in the tradition, including the Church, the soul, and Mary.<sup>218</sup> He also used bodily and bridal imagery together, particularly in connection to the Eucharist and in reference to the union of Bridegroom and Bride as “one flesh.”<sup>219</sup> The bridal image expresses the paradox of the Church who is in and not of the world,<sup>220</sup> and it functions for all Christians as a call to holiness and fruitfulness and as an identity to be lived.<sup>221</sup>

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214. *Catholicism*, 68-69.

215. *Catholicism*, 70 and 273.

216. *Catholicism*, 70-71.

217. *Catholicism*, 190-91.

218. *Catholicism*, 187-93 and 210-16; *The Splendor of the Church*, 339 and 369; and “Mysticism and Mystery,” in H. de Lubac, *Theological Fragments*, trans. Rebecca Howell Balinski, 35-69 (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989). An initial version of this essay originally appeared in 1965. On de Lubac’s treatment of the close relationship between Mary and the Church, see his study of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in *The Eternal Feminine*, trans. René Hague (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 26, 28-29, 38 and 117-29. See also P. McPartlan, “Mary for Teilhard and de Lubac” (paper delivered to the Oxford branch of The Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, November 18, 1987). On de Lubac’s study of Origen and other commentators on the Song of Songs, see de Lubac, *History and Spirit*, and *Medieval Exegesis*, vols. 1-3 (vol. 4 in English is forthcoming).

219. *The Splendor of the Church*, 158 and 209. See *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, 103-104, 123n1, 181 and 184; see also *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, trans. James R. Dunne (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1969), 55-56. The first edition of *Corpus Mysticum* was completed between 1938 and 1939, though it was not published until 1944 (2nd edition in 1949). In this work, which traced the use and understanding of ‘*corpus mysticum*,’ bridal imagery surfaces sporadically. When it does, the context is most often dealing with the relation between ‘body’ and ‘flesh’ in the history of eucharistic theology. The ‘one flesh’ had clear connections with nuptial symbolism in light of Genesis 2 and Ephesians 5. Thus, de Lubac was readily aware of a tradition which connected ecclesial bridal imagery with the Eucharist, and he would refer back to it in later works (see *The Splendor of the Church*, 158).

220. See *The Splendor of the Church*, 161. De Lubac had a penchant for the category of paradox. See H. de Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, trans. Paule Simon, Sadie Kreilkamp, and Ernest Beaumont (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987) and *More Paradoxes*, trans. Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002). The former combines de

For de Lubac, bridal imagery has a privileged place. It is “one of the most important [images], for it reminds us of what the Church was in the thought of the Fathers and of the breadth of their vision.”<sup>222</sup> The spousal symbolism of Scripture is a crucial, integrating symbol:

It is clear, then, that we have not here just one symbol among many others, characterized merely by the frequency with which it occurs and its preponderant interest. All the others are more or less directly related to it. It is the central symbol, the guiding spirit, as it were, of the whole interpretation of the Old Testament.<sup>223</sup>

De Lubac even critiqued the Council for not considering sufficiently, as he thought, the Church as the Bride of Christ.<sup>224</sup> Spousal symbolism conveys an “unsurpassable feature of Christian mysticism,” where there is “union” not “absorption,” “unification” and not “identification.”<sup>225</sup> At the same time, de Lubac emphasized the need for many images to complete each other in their function of communicating specific aspects of the mystery of the Church, a mystery that is beyond one definition.<sup>226</sup>

## 5. Charles Journet: *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vols. 2-3 (1951-1969)

Over the course of three decades, the eminent ecclesiologist Charles Journet (1891-1975) produced his three-volume magnum opus on the Church, entitled *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*.<sup>227</sup>

Lubac's *Paradoxes* (1945) and *Nouveaux Paradoxes* (1955), and the latter is a posthumous publication of writings which followed after the Second Vatican Council (*Autres paradoxes*, 1994).

221. *The Splendor of the Church*, 232 and 289. See also *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, 10-11 and 27.

222. *Catholicism*, 190. See also *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, 55-56.

223. *Catholicism*, 191-92.

224. *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, 56.

225. “Mysticism and Mystery,” 60.

226. See *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, 18, 21 and 24.

227. The first volume, on “The Apostolic Hierarchy,” appeared in 1943 and treated the juridical elements and various “powers” of the Church within her hierarchical structure. Journet included a section on the “maternal function of the hierarchy,” a function which comprised the fruitfulness of the power of order (the sacerdotal ministry) and the teaching mission attached to the power of jurisdiction. See Charles Journet, *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 1 – La Hiérarchie Apostolique, 3rd ed. (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1962 [1st ed., 1943; 2nd ed., 1955]),

The second and third volumes incorporated ecclesial bridal imagery in a variety of ways.<sup>228</sup> For Journet, the mystery of the Church could not be expressed by one single concept and name, and the bridal image was one of the key names for the Church.<sup>229</sup>

In particular, Journet treated the two images of body and bride (*corps et épouse*) closely together and emphasized the importance of their distinct meanings.<sup>230</sup> In his treatment of the “major definitions of the Church,” Journet referred to the image of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ as one “major definition” with “three distinct scriptural meanings.”<sup>231</sup> The first of these meanings is the “nuptial meaning” (*la signification nuptiale*), wherein the Church and Christ are united as two persons, being “two in one flesh” (see Eph 5:29).<sup>232</sup> The bridal image expresses the distinction of the Church from Christ and conveys a sort of distinct moral personhood to the Church.<sup>233</sup> The Bride of Christ is chosen by the Lord and, as distinct from him, has particular dignity.<sup>234</sup> According to Journet, bridal imagery was a necessary complement to bodily imagery: “[I]t is as the Bride of Christ that the Church is called the Body of Christ.”<sup>235</sup> The “nuptial comparison” (*la comparaison nuptiale*) was one of the two major comparisons used by Scripture—

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118-125. For further background on Journet’s ecclesiology, see Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), 40-46.

228. See Journet, *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2 – Sa structure interne et son unité Catholique, 2nd ed. (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1962 [1st ed., 1951]) and *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 3 – Essai de théologie de l’histoire du salut (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1969). Journet’s *Théologie de l’Église* (1958) is an abridgement of the first two volumes of *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*.

229. See *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 49-50.

230. See *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 52-57.

231. *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 581.

232. *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 581-82. The two other meanings that Journet identified were the “biological meaning” (582-83: including an emphasis on Christ as Head of his Body, the Church) and the “personal meaning” (583-86: including an emphasis on Christ and the Church as one mystical person, the fullness of Christ).

233. Journet discussed the meaning of the Church as a “real supernatural person” within a larger treatment of the Holy Spirit as the “efficient personality of the Church” (see Journet, *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 481ff.).

234. *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 55-56 and 582.

235. *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 582.

the other being that of head and body—to convey the union between the Word made flesh and humanity.<sup>236</sup>

Journet's use of ecclesial bridal imagery incorporated other themes and patterns as well. He considered respectively the meaning of the image of *fiancée* and that of *épouse* (both of which lead to *mère*),<sup>237</sup> and he noted the bridal Church as waiting for the return of her Bridegroom.<sup>238</sup> Journet allowed that the Incarnation itself is capable of being described as a “marriage,” though with Thomas Aquinas he preferred to reserve such description to the union between Christ and the Church specifically.<sup>239</sup> In a way that mirrored Scheeben's broad use of spousal categories, Journet spoke of “the nuptial character of Christic grace.”<sup>240</sup> He also affirmed the tradition of referring to individual souls as brides of Christ.<sup>241</sup> Journet emphasized the call and duty of the bridal Church to mirror Christ's love, according to the model of nuptial love which is mutual,<sup>242</sup> and he described the nuptial love of souls “consumed by charity” as “the essence of the heart of the Church.”<sup>243</sup> The whole Church is the Bride,<sup>244</sup> yet there is also such a close relationship between Mary and the Church wherein Mary herself can be called the Bride of Christ “even more than the Church” due to the Holy Spirit's special overshadowing.<sup>245</sup> In Journet's

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236. *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 112.

237. *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 66.

238. See *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 3, 683-684 ; see also *ibid.*, 19 and vol. 2, 84. Cf. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 49-50 and 52-53.

239. *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 112-13.

240. *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 334ff. See p. 34ff. above.

241. *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 334-35.

242. See *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 334.

243. *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 335-37. See also vol. 3, 195-99.

244. See *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 337. See also Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 42-43

245. *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 426. See also p. 427: “When one says that Mary is the prototype of the Church, one therefore means that Mary is, in the Church, more Mother than the Church, more Bride than the

understanding, the Holy Spirit is the “animating personality” of the Church and makes the Church the Bride of Christ.<sup>246</sup> Journet’s use of spousal imagery exemplified familiarity with traditional usage while it also was situated within a more rigorous and integrated systematic framework.

## 6. Yves Congar: Select Writings (1952-1968)

The great Dominican ecclesologist Yves Congar’s (1904-1995) use of bridal imagery was distinctive in that it was located within a framework of historical-theological investigation. As has been noted, Congar described a shift in ecclesiological styles that had occurred over the centuries.<sup>247</sup> In particular, Congar found that when the word “Church” referred only to the hierarchy, this usage and juridical style had a significant effect on the meaning of various ecclesial images, especially maternal and bridal imagery.<sup>248</sup> In such instances, the imagery often became separated from its original anthropological connection and groundedness in the mysteries of the faith.<sup>249</sup> Mystical and spiritual meanings became overshadowed by legal and

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Church, and, since she is free from original sin, more Virgin than the Church. This means that Mary is Mother, Bride, and Virgin *before* the Church and *for* the Church; that it is *in* Mary above all, and *by* Mary that the Church is Mother, Bride, and Virgin. It is by a mysterious momentum which comes from Mary, a mysterious excellence which diffuses itself from Mary, that the Church can be, in her turn, so truly Mother, Bride, and Virgin.” On the relation between Mary and the Church, see Journet, *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 382-453, especially 392-92, 397, 423-28 and 432-33, and vol. 3, 636 and 639.

246. *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 426.

247. See p. 38ff. above. See also See Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, rev. ed., trans. Donald Attwater (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1965), 38. Hereafter referred to as *Lay People*. Originally published as *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1952; 2nd ed., 1964).

248. For example, see *Laity, Church and World*, trans. Donal Attwater (Baltimore, MD: Helicon Press, 1960) 39. See also “L’ecclésiologie de S. Bernard” (1953): 176-77; “The Historical Development,” 124-25, 132-36, 140-41 and 155; Congar’s preface to K. Delahaye’s *Ecclesia Mater*.

249. For example, see “L’Église chez saint Anselme” (1959), esp. 371; *Laity, Church and World*, 42-43; “The Historical Development,” 146; Congar’s preface to K. Delahaye’s *Ecclesia Mater*; Congar, *Power and Poverty in the Church*, trans. Jennifer Nicholson (Baltimore: Helicon, 1965), 105-6.

juridical concerns, as when the Church's motherhood was "invoked only to support her authority."<sup>250</sup>

In addition to his attentiveness to the changing meanings of ecclesial imagery, Congar recognized a special place for bridal imagery. He observed that the distinction between Christ and the Church conveyed by bridal imagery was a necessary complement and even corrective to bodily imagery and contributed to a realistic sense of the authority of the Church (as not absolutely divine).<sup>251</sup> He proposed that the theology of liturgy "must learn from an ecclesiology of the Church as bride."<sup>252</sup> Congar also commented on the "great mystery" of marriage as well as the idea of the family as a domestic church as arising out of the spousal comparisons found in St. Paul's writings (see 1 Cor and Eph).<sup>253</sup>

In general, Congar acknowledged the fundamental place held by the images or "notions" of Bride, Mother, and Body in the history of ecclesiology.<sup>254</sup> In particular, "[t]he title of bride ... held a primacy in the ecclesiological consciousness" of the middle ages.<sup>255</sup> The "images" of body, bride, temple, and city were "more than metaphors" for medieval thinkers and were actually more like "concepts proper."<sup>256</sup> Ultimately, like Journet and others, Congar argued that no one

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250. Congar, *Power and Poverty in the Church*, 105. The quote is taken from part of a presentation given in 1962 entitled "The Invasion of Legalism."

251. See Congar, "The Historical Development," 146.

252. See Congar, *Lay People*, 209.

253. See Congar, *Lay People*, 201-5.

254. Congar, *L'ecclésiologie du haut moyen age: De Saint Grégoire le Grand à la désunion entre Byzance et Rome* (Paris: Cerf, 1968), 77.

255. Congar, *L'ecclésiologie du haut moyen age*, 77.

256. Congar, *L'ecclésiologie du haut moyen age*, 99.



concept suffices to capture the essence of the Church.<sup>257</sup> Since the Church is a mystery in the strict sense and is supernatural, she cannot be defined *essentially* but rather only *descriptively*. Concepts and various images complement each other, some being necessary for the proper understanding of others.<sup>258</sup>

## 7. Louis Bouyer: Select Writings (1957-1976)

Oratorian Louis Bouyer's (1913-2004) work included profound use and application of spousal imagery. Bouyer's theology included significant consideration of the place of Mary as well as of femininity in the history of salvation, and he was influenced by the Orthodox theology of the Divine Sophia (Wisdom), known as sophiology.<sup>259</sup> According to Bouyer, Mary can be rightfully called the bride of her Son, Jesus, because the Church as bride and mother not only looks to Mary but comes to perfection in her.<sup>260</sup> The "great mystery" itself is brought about in the womb of Mary, wherein the "two in one flesh" of Genesis is fully realized.<sup>261</sup> The whole Church is the Bride of Christ, but the spousal grace (*grâce sponsale*) given to the Church "has its supreme and yet initial blossoming in maternal grace [*la grâce maternelle*]" which is unique to Mary

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257. See his "Peut-on définir l'Église? Destin et valeur de quatre notions qui s'offrent à le faire," in Congar, *Sainte Église*, 21-44 (Paris: Cerf, 1964).

258. The notion of a complementarity of ecclesial images was common. For example, see Jerome Hamer, *The Church is a Communion*, 63-64.

259. Sophiology developed out of the thought of Vladimir Soloviev (1853-1900). For examples of sophiological thought, see Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, and *The Lamb of God*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008). See also Paul Evdokimov, *Woman and the Salvation of the World*, trans. Anthony P. Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994). In his monograph on Mary, Bouyer referenced Bulgakov's *The Wisdom of God: A Brief Summary of Sophiology* (New York: The Paisley Press; London: Williams and Norgate, 1937) in various places. See Bouyer, *Woman and Man with God: An Essay on the Place of the Virgin Mary in Christian Theology and its Significance for Humanity*, trans. A. V. Littledale (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1960), viii. The original edition is entitled *Le trône de la Sagesse* (Paris: Cerf, 1957).

260. See *The Church of God, Body of Christ and Temple of the Holy Spirit* (hereafter *The Church of God*), trans. Charles Underhill Quinn (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982), 543-44. Originally published as *L'Église de Dieu, corps du Christ et temple de l'Esprit* in 1970.

261. See Bouyer, *Woman and Man with God*, viii.

even though the Church “is wholly associated in this grace.”<sup>262</sup> In more general terms, the feminine (i.e., woman) has ultimate and irreplaceable value in revealing and realizing the spousal vocation to which every creature is called.<sup>263</sup> Bouyer in fact presented the role and mission of women in strong and sometimes absolute terms but with an eye toward incorporating the significance of sexual difference within theology.<sup>264</sup> Such lines of thought indicated the suggestive ease and comprehensive scope of Bouyer’s use of nuptial and feminine categories.

Bouyer also incorporated various other themes and patterns of use of ecclesial bridal imagery. For Bouyer, the bridal image conveys “the distinction in unity between the Church and Christ,” wherein these “remain *two*” while being united in one flesh.<sup>265</sup> The bridal Church is also Mother, called to fruitful holiness.<sup>266</sup> For Bouyer, the earthly Church is only the betrothed and remains on the way to becoming fully the Bride of Christ.<sup>267</sup> Bouyer also recognized the Holy Spirit’s key role in the union of Bride and Bridegroom and in the preservation of the “personality” of the Bride which is only realized in real human persons who have been perfected

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262. *Woman and Man with God*, viii. Translation modified.

263. L. Bouyer, *Woman in the Church*, trans. Marilyn Teichert (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1979), 88. See also pp. 56, 58, 60 and 63-64. The 1976 French original is entitled *Mystère et ministères de la femme dans l’église*.

264. For example, see Bouyer, *Woman in the Church*, 56: “The masculine being can therefore be said to be essentially intermediary, and by this fact indefinitely polymorphous, but also fundamentally unstable. The feminine being, on the contrary, represents, in the realm of the created, the goal, the achievement, the totality.” See also p. 58: “She [woman] is revealed as the only place where he [man] becomes himself by being completely human .... Man needs woman in order to encounter God.” See also p. 63: “... Only by and in woman does humanity become complete.”

265. See Bouyer, *The Church of God*, 163 and 491.

266. *The Church of God*, 543-44.

267. *The Church of God*, 163.

in the Spirit.<sup>268</sup> Bouyer emphasized that the perfection of every person is contingent upon entering into the personality of the eschatological Bride.<sup>269</sup>

## 8. Hans Urs von Balthasar: Select Writings (1961-1978)

Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) did not limit himself to a narrowly defined consideration of ecclesial bridal imagery and nuptial imagery in only certain parts of his work but rather embedded the imagery throughout his writings and let it play a considerable role in his theology as a whole. For Balthasar, marriage was a privileged symbol indeed, “a symbol of the redemption,” capable of illuminating in an analogous way “the nuptial union between Christ and the Church.”<sup>270</sup> The bridal image itself was a pivotal image that illuminates the Church’s inner mystery and her participation within the drama of redemption.<sup>271</sup> Indeed, it conveys something essential of the Church’s mystery. “The Church, insofar as she is the bride of Christ, remains enshrouded in mystery. [...] The Church is a mystery of love, to be approached only with reverence.”<sup>272</sup>

Balthasar’s essay entitled “Who is the Church?” was a systematic attempt to consider the meaning of the Church’s spousal union with and distinction from Christ, evidencing the

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268. *The Church of God*, 492.

269. *Woman in the Church*, 64.

270. See Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word*, 188 and 184. See also p. 440: “Between the Christ-Church relationship and the man-woman relationship in marriage, however, there is no identity, only the analogy between carnal ‘image’ (*Vor-bild*) and the ‘original likeness’ (*Ur-Bild*), which attains to fulfillment at a higher stage.” See also Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 1: *Seeing the Form*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, ed. Joseph Fessio and John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1982), 27-28.

271. See Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 3: *Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992), 423, 425, and 429.

272. Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word*, 7 and 21.

fundamental place of spousal and Marian categories in Balthasar's ecclesiology.<sup>273</sup> While the Church's institution and the sacraments will pass away, "[w]hat never falls away is the nuptial encounter between God and the creature, for whose sake the framework of the structures is now set up and will later be dismantled. This encounter, therefore, must be the real core of the Church."<sup>274</sup> Indeed, the bridal image was more than one image among others for Balthasar; it touched the inner mystery of God himself.<sup>275</sup>

Balthasar's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was extensive. According to Balthasar, a fundamental nuptial relationship and covenant between God and the world has existed from the beginning of creation,<sup>276</sup> and the Incarnation (the union of the two natures in Christ) is the realization of the *connubium* between God and man.<sup>277</sup> The bridal image is also uniquely disclosive of the mystery of the Church.<sup>278</sup> The Church has an "inner dramatic tension" as Bride and Institution,<sup>279</sup> and the bridal image is accompanied by its dialectical counterpart in the image of the unfaithful wife or harlot.<sup>280</sup> The bridal image expresses the Church as constituted by real

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273. See Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word*, 143-91. See also Balthasar, *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church* (hereafter *The Office of Peter*), 183-84. The title of the 1974 German original is *Der antirömische Affekt*.

274. Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word*, 158.

275. "The 'bride' who, issuing from the wounded side of the new Adam, is at the same time his 'body' (and only for that reason his 'people') is both the one (with Christ) and the other (over against him), in a relation at once of independence and freedom for which there is no analogy in the created sphere but only in the Trinity [*für deren Zusammensein es schlechthin keine geschöpfliche, nur eine trinitarische Analogie gibt*]." Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word*, 21 [*Skizzen zur Theologie II: Sponsa Verbi* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1961), 22]. See also Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, 577, and his treatment of Scheeben (*ibid.*, 104-17).

276. See Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, 577.

277. See Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word*, 163 and 315.

278. Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word*, 188.

279. Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 353-60.

280. See Balthasar's essay "*Casta Meretrix*" in *Spouse of the Word*, 193-288.

subjects in Christ through the unique subjectivity of Mary,<sup>281</sup> and Mary is the fullest actualization of the bridal identity of the Church.<sup>282</sup> Balthasar was attentive to the image of the motherhood of the Church as a fading image needing to be recovered in connection with Mary.<sup>283</sup> He also noted the role of the Holy Spirit in the union and distinction of the Bride with Christ.<sup>284</sup> Balthasar acknowledged the significance of human sexual difference in light of the mystery of Christ and the Church, with particular emphasis on the place of Mary as Woman, who uniquely participates in the work of salvation in response to the initiative of God.<sup>285</sup> At the same time, he described the relationship between Christ and the Church as “suprasexual (but not sexless),” wherein consecrated virginity and celibacy uniquely participate in this fruitful relationship and witness to the “nuptial aspect of God’s love.”<sup>286</sup> Feminine imagery for the Church protects the Church from reduction to sociological categories.<sup>287</sup> For Balthasar, both images of body and bride are needed to understand the Church as a people.<sup>288</sup>

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281. See Balthasar’s essay “Who is the Church?” in *Spouse of the Word*, 143-91. See also Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, 562-65, and Balthasar, *The Office of Peter*, 208.

282. See Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word*, 161 and 179. In “*Casta Meretrix*,” Balthasar notes “that the great symbol and embodiment of this responsive bridal love is the all-sustaining love of Mary” (ibid., 282). See also Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 318, 339, and 352.

283. See Balthasar, *The Office of Peter*, 186-204.

284. See Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word*, 188 and 191.

285. See Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 2: *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990), 365-82, and *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 283-360. Volume 2 was originally published in 1976.

286. Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 2, 413-14. See also Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 433 and Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word*, 22.

287. Balthasar, *The Office of Peter*, 183-84.

288. See Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 423.

## 9. Karl Rahner: Select Writings (1963-1966)

Jesuit Karl Rahner (1904-1984) applied ecclesial bridal imagery in his consideration of the Church and of the sacrament of marriage and in reflection on the question of the sinfulness of the Church. In his 1963 study entitled *The Church and the Sacraments*, Rahner's treatment of the sacrament of marriage was grounded in Ephesians 5 and described how the sacrament of marriage contains within it "a definite characteristic which fits it for the function of symbol," namely the capacity of marriage to image the relation between Christ and the Church.<sup>289</sup> The union and love between husband and wife is neither a simile nor a mere metaphor of the union between Christ and the Church but "objectively represents this love of God in Christ for the Church."<sup>290</sup> Rahner then sketched the intrinsic, anthropological ground that would provide a foundation to appreciate marriage as a symbol (i.e., as a sacrament), and he suggested that an approach to the sacrament of marriage include consideration of the following aspects: the unique place of conjugal love within human love; marriage's intrinsic capacity to mirror Christ's love for the Church; the significance of the human person as male and female in Christ; and the role of each member of the Church in showing the Church to be the Bride of Christ. "Such symbolism of a fundamental kind [i.e., the sacrament of marriage], established in the very essence of the Church, is truly a fundamental act in which the Church fulfills her very nature..."<sup>291</sup>

According to Rahner, "marriage itself contributes to" the union between Christ and the Church, and "the visible Church even in its historical reality appears as the bride of Christ,

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289. K. Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, trans. W. J. O'Hara (Freiburg: Herder; London: Burns & Oates, 1963), 108.

290. *The Church and the Sacraments*, 107.

291. *The Church and the Sacraments*, 110.

through her existence and characteristics bearing witness that in the Church, Christ has espoused humanity irrevocably to himself.”<sup>292</sup> The Church’s presence in every Christian marriage (compare the notion of domestic church) is also a model for appreciating the relationship between the local Church and the Church universal.<sup>293</sup>

Rahner also explored the question of sin and the Church and sought a proper understanding of the *Ecclesia peccatorum* or “Church of sinners.”<sup>294</sup> Through constant renewal, the Church “is and remains the faithful bride worthy of the Lord. But the Church cannot be the *subject* of her *own* renewal and purification if she was or is not in the first place and in a certain sense the subject of sin and guilt.”<sup>295</sup> According to Rahner it was therefore appropriate to consider the bridal Church herself (and not only her particular members) as sinful and in need of purification. Still, the pilgrim Bride on earth, while subjectively sinful, is also subjectively holy by God’s grace, as evidenced in Mary as well as in the fact that the grace of God keeps the Church as a whole from falling away from Christ.<sup>296</sup> The bridal image is thus a dynamic one—the

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292. *The Church and the Sacraments*, 111.

293. *The Church and the Sacraments*, 111-12.

294. An essay of the same name was published in 1947, later to reappear in Rahner’s sixth volume of his *Theological Investigations* in 1965. The English edition first appeared in 1969. See “The Church of Sinners,” in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6: Concerning Vatican Council II, trans. Karl-H. and Boniface Kruger, 253-69 (New York: Seabury, 1974). See also “The Sinful Church in the Decrees of Vatican II” (hereafter “The Sinful Church”), in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6: Concerning Vatican Council II, trans. Karl-H. and Boniface Kruger, 270-94 (New York: Seabury, 1974). This essay originated with Rahner’s “Le péché dans l’Église,” in *L’Église de Vatican II*, ed. Guilhaume Baraúna (French edition edited by Y. Congar), 373-91 (Paris: Cerf, 1966), a work which was published in various languages.

295. “The Sinful Church,” 285. See also “The Church of Sinners,” 261-62 and 269.

296. “The Sinful Church,” 288-92, esp. 290-91. Cf. Balthasar, “Who is the Church?” and “*Casta Meretrix*,” in *Spouse of the Word*, 143-288.

Church is truly a bride and fruitful mother now, though sin reveals her need for mercy and growth in holiness towards her final perfection and fulfillment.<sup>297</sup>

### 10. Joseph Ratzinger: Select Writings (1975-2000)

Joseph Ratzinger (b. 1927), now Pope Benedict XVI, has never written a systematic ecclesiology, but his use of ecclesial bridal imagery fits within the largely ecclesiological focus of his work in which a special place is accorded to spousal categories.<sup>298</sup> According to Ratzinger, marriage holds distinctive significance as the singular mode of expressing the covenant “interpersonally”: “Marriage is the form of the mutual relationship between husband and wife that results from the covenant, the fundamental human relationship upon which all human history is based. It bears a theology within itself, and indeed it is possible and intelligible only theologically.”<sup>299</sup> The precise form of the Christian and ecclesial life is a “mystery of love, seen as a nuptial mystery.”<sup>300</sup>

In particular, Ratzinger’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery is noteworthy in his consideration of the relation of Mary and the Church and incorporates special awareness for the image of the Church as the Body of Christ. Mary is the type and personal realization—the

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297. Rahner clarified that he was not placing sin and holiness on a par with regard to the essence of the Church: “If then holiness *and* sin co-exist in the ‘image’ presented by the Church (and the Church is essentially ‘image’, a sign making historically accessible the grace of God in the world), this is of course not to say that sin and holiness in the Church have the same relationship to the hidden essential purpose of the Church and therefore belong to her in the same way” (“The Church of Sinners,” 262-63). Sin “contradicts her nature; but her holiness is the manifestation of her essential being” (ibid., 263-64).

298. See Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger – Life in the Church and Living Theology: Fundamentals of Ecclesiology with Reference to Lumen Gentium* (hereafter *Joseph Ratzinger*), trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007), 254-56, 372-73 and 405-15.

299. Joseph Ratzinger, *Daughter Zion: Meditations on the Church’s Marian Belief*, trans. John M. McDermott (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1983), 23. The German original, *Die Tochter Zion*, appeared in 1977.

300. Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1996), 39. This is a translation of the 2nd edition of the German original, *Zur Gemeinschaft gerufen: Kirche heute verstehen*, published in 1991.



“personal concreteness”—of the Church.<sup>301</sup> “Mariology, rightly understood, clarifies and deepens the concept of Church in two ways.”<sup>302</sup> First, it calls attention to the fact of the feminine mystery of the Church: “Church is more than ‘people’, more than structure and action: the Church contains the living mystery of maternity and of the bridal love that makes maternity possible.”<sup>303</sup> Second, Mariology also contributes to the unique reality of the Church as the Body of Christ.

In Pauline terms ... the claim that we are the “Body of Christ” makes sense only against the backdrop of the formula of Genesis 2:24: “The two shall become one flesh” (cf. 1 Cor 6:17). The Church is the body, the flesh of Christ in the spiritual tension of love wherein the spousal mystery of Adam and Eve is consummated, hence, in the dynamism of a unity that does not abolish dialogical reciprocity [*Gegenübersein*]. By the same token, precisely the eucharistic-christological mystery of the Church indicated in the term “Body of Christ” remains within the proper measure only when it includes the mystery of Mary: the mystery of the listening handmaid who—liberated in grace—speaks her *Fiat* and, in so doing, becomes bride and thus body.<sup>304</sup>

The fact that the Church and Mary can be spoken of as “bride” is important. The Church’s mystery as Bride shows her “relative subsistence [*Selbständigkeit*] vis-à-vis Christ”: “the

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301. Ratzinger, *Daughter Zion*, 43, 67-68, and 80-81.

302. Ratzinger, “Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine and Piety in Faith and Theology as a Whole” (hereafter “Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine”), in Balthasar and Ratzinger, *Mary: The Church at the Source*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 25.

303. Ratzinger, “Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine,” 25. See also Ratzinger’s essay “The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council,” in *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics*, 28: “Church is not a contrivance or an apparatus, not merely an institution or one of the usual sociological entities—she is a person. She is a woman; she is a mother. She is alive. The Marian understanding of the Church is the most categorical antithesis to a merely organizational or bureaucratic concept of Church. We cannot make Church; we must be Church.” This essay was originally published in German in 1986.

304. Ratzinger, “Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine,” 26-27. Ratzinger would later describe in similar terms the qualifying role of bridal imagery for bodily imagery: “The Church is the Body of Christ in the way in which the woman is one body, or rather one flesh, with the man. Put in other terms, the Church is the Body, not by virtue of an identity without distinction, but rather by means of the pneumatic-real act of spousal love. Expressed in yet another way, this means that Christ and the Church are one body in the sense in which man and woman are one flesh, that is, in such a way that in their indissoluble spiritual-bodily union, they nonetheless remain unconfused and unmingled. The Church does not simply become Christ, she is ever the handmaid whom he lovingly raises to be his Bride and who seeks his face throughout these latter days.” Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 39.

subsistence of the bride who, even when she becomes one flesh with Christ in love, nonetheless remains an other before him [*Gegenüber*].”<sup>305</sup> Ratzinger likewise understood Mary’s bridal reality in relation to Christ as a specifically *ecclesial* reality, but as distinct from her unique motherhood. “While the conceptual pairs bride-bridegroom and head-body allow us to perceive the connection between Christ and the Church, Mary represents a further step, inasmuch as she is first related to Christ, not as bride, but as mother.”<sup>306</sup>

For Ratzinger, the two images of body and bride are thus intertwined and indicate the Church’s identity and calling, rooted in love and dependent on the Holy Spirit.<sup>307</sup>

The Church must constantly become what she is through unitive love.... The relational and pneumatological character of the notions of the Body of Christ and of nuptiality becomes evident, as does the reason why the Church is never complete but is perpetually in need of renewal. She is always on the way to union with Christ.<sup>308</sup>

Ratzinger applies bridal imagery in ways that indicate the image’s indispensable place within ecclesiology and theology in general.<sup>309</sup> His use of bridal imagery in his personal writings as a theologian is particularly significant in light of his service as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith during the magisterium of Pope John Paul II.<sup>310</sup>

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305. Ratzinger, “Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine,” 28.

306. Ratzinger, “Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine,” 29.

307. See Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 39. See also Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*, trans. Henry Taylor, ed. Stephan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005), 134-35.

308. Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 40.

309. See also Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 134-35, where he applies the images of body and bride to convey the “ontological precedence of the Church as a whole” over local Churches.

310. See Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 183-202. Kerr restricts his treatment of nuptiality in Ratzinger’s thinking to the 2004 CDF document *Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (ibid., 193-201).

## 11. Studies on the Personhood of the Church (post-1960)

The question of the personhood or personality of the Church is one that consistently arises in connection with the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ. Balthasar's 1960 essay entitled "Who is the Church?" framed the central question and gave a prominent place to bridal imagery. The bridal image naturally raises the question of "who" the Church is rather than "what." It implies a certain subjectivity of the Church as a "person" distinct from Christ, though united to him. But the question remains: how exactly is this personhood or personality of the Church to be understood? Journet, Jacques Maritain, and Congar all contributed to the discussion of the question.<sup>311</sup> Congar's article traced previous treatments of the topic from Scripture, the Fathers, and Thomas to contemporary thinkers including Clérissac, Vonier, Journet, Balthasar, Maritain, and Bouyer.<sup>312</sup> He concluded with his own consideration of the Church as the Bride of Christ, wherein he noted that the bridal Church is not an abstract hypostasis, as if separate from the elect and chosen.<sup>313</sup> Congar also noted the special place of Mary within the Church, both of whom, Mary and the Church, could be considered "spiritually the same person."<sup>314</sup> Interest and inquiries around the question of the personhood of the Church

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311. See C. Journet, "De la personnalité de l'Église," in *Revue Thomiste* 69 (1969): 195 ; Jacques Maritain, *On the Church of Christ: The Person of the Church and Her Personnel*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973), 17 (French original, entitled *De l'Église du Christ*, was published in 1970); and Y. Congar, "La personne « Église »,» *Revue Thomiste* 71 (1971): 613-40.

312. See Y. Congar, "La personne « Église »,» 613-40.

313. Congar, "La personne « Église »,» 639-40.

314. Congar, "La personne « Église »,» 640.

have not abated, and Balthasar's work in particular has remained a key reference point in the discussion.<sup>315</sup>

## VII. Conclusion

Ecclesial bridal imagery historically emerged from the experiences of the people of Israel and the early Church and was rooted in various layers of Scripture. The image became a staple of the patristic and medieval ecclesial imagination and persisted through subsequent centuries. Bridal imagery experienced a rebirth in the nineteenth and especially the twentieth centuries, largely due to a return to the sources of the tradition and a renewed interest in ecclesiology.

The Fathers and medieval thinkers did not present a specifically systematic treatment of ecclesial bridal imagery, but they evidenced an awareness of what might be called an integrated use of spousal imagery. Whether the referent for the term "Bride" was the Church, the soul, the human nature wedded to Christ's divine nature (or humanity itself united to the Word), or even Mary herself, these referents were presumed to be interconnected and interrelated in some way. As noted, the Fathers and medieval thinkers were also aware of the fluidity and the potential for the misuse or misunderstanding of the imagery.

Especially with Scheeben in the nineteenth century and subsequent thinkers in the twentieth century, ecclesial bridal imagery and spousal imagery in general began to receive extensive and developed treatment. Much of this treatment involved a recovery of more ancient usage. However, fresh systematic attention to and integration of the imagery emerged in various

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315. For example, see Jean-Noël Dol, "« Qui est l'Église? » Hans Urs von Balthasar et la personnalité de l'Église," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 117 (1995): 376-95; Larry Chapp, "Who is the Church? The Personalistic Categories of Balthasar's Ecclesiology," *Communio* 23 (1996): 322-38; Stephan Ackermann, "The Church as Person in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar," trans. Emily Rielley *Communio* 29 (2002): 238-49; P. McPartlan, "Who is the Church? Zizioulas and von Balthasar on the Church's Identity" (2008); and J. Komonchak, *Who are the Church?* (2008).

articles and monographs, as seen particularly in the work of Scheeben, Tromp, Vonier, Claude Chavasse, Journet, Bouyer, and Balthasar.

The burgeoning use of ecclesial bridal imagery in the twentieth century was one part of a larger narrative. The decade of the 1930s and beyond marked a decisive shift in ecclesiological style—in shorthand, a shift from “perfect society” to “Mystical Body,” from an emphasis on the Church as a visible institution to an emphasis on the Church as a mystery, as the interlocking of human and divine elements. Certainly, the visible dimension of the Church and the concept of society as applied to the Church were not left behind, but they no longer served as the primary lens through which to understand the Church. Instead, traditional, scriptural images for the Church rose to the fore and received noteworthy consideration. While the image of Mystical Body particularly held attention prior to the Second Vatican Council, the image of Bride received significant attention as well.

The theological and ecclesiological context in the years after the Second Vatican Council was characterized by a large degree of pluralism and divergences. Questions and debates concerning the reception of the Council’s teaching began to create fissures in the theological community. Within this environment, interest in ecclesial imagery per se began to fade with the rise of interest in various contextual theologies and questions of ecclesial praxis. At the same time, the search for a “truly systematic” ecclesiology, beyond reliance upon ecclesial imagery, emerged.<sup>316</sup> The initial fascination with the image of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ and then the Church as the People of God shifted to an attention to the Church as *communio*. Despite the seeming decline of interest in ecclesial imagery, bridal and maternal imagery

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316. See Herwi Rikhof, *The Concept of Church: A Methodological Inquiry into the Use of Metaphors in Ecclesiology* (London: Sheed and Ward; Shephardstown, WV: Patmos Press, 1981).

perdured in particular thinkers and, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, received continued attention in the magisterium.

A few notable characteristics marked the interest in bridal imagery manifest in twentieth-century Catholic theology. First, the *ressourcement* was a clear influence in the renewed consideration of imagery, including bridal imagery (see de Lubac). Second, this consideration did not simply consist of *retrieving* and then repeating the different patristic uses. In varying degrees, it also consisted of *critical and systematic application*—that is, it involved an elaboration of the meaning of the imagery and, even further, a situating of the bridal image in relation to other images, within a justification of the use of imagery in general in ecclesiology (see Vonier, de Lubac, Journet, and Ratzinger) or even within a broader spousal framework (see Balthasar). Third, this attention to the Church as the Bride of Christ spanned a fairly broad theological spectrum. Not all of these thinkers were of the same “school” (for example, compare Tromp with Casel; Journet with de Lubac; and Balthasar and Bouyer with Rahner and Congar). Finally, a notable development in this later use of spousal imagery was the new attention given to anthropological themes, such as the significance of sexual difference and the value of the feminine per se, and the attention to Mariology in its relation to ecclesiology (see Casel, Bouyer, Rahner, Balthasar, and Ratzinger).

As indicated in the survey above, ecclesial bridal imagery has had a broad range of uses throughout its history and has been associated with a variety of themes and patterns of use. The bridal image conveys the unity of the Church herself as the one Bride as well as the Church’s indissoluble and personal union with Christ her Lord. Within this union, the distinction of the bridal Church is not extinguished, and her unique dignity remains. The Holy Spirit has an

important role in uniting the Bride to the Bridegroom. The bridal image also illustrates the holiness and beauty of the Church (see Eph 5). Furthermore, the bridal image signifies the subordination of the Church to Christ, since the Church is utterly dependent upon Christ and his gift of self. At the same time, the Church as the Bride of Christ is called to respond to Christ's love with love and is in her inmost essence a mystery of love. Every member of the Church is called to this love. The bridal Church is a mother whose love is made fruitful by the Holy Spirit.

In addition, the bridal image serves to connect the mystery of Christ and the Church to the mystery of marriage between man and woman, and it leads not only to a further appreciation of the sacramental significance of marriage but also to the valuing of sexual difference in relation to the mystery of the spousal union between Christ and the Church. The bridal image locates the Church within the full spectrum of salvation history with her being anticipated in creation itself and further in the formation of the covenant. Although the bridal Church is historical, the bridal image also signifies the Church as something yet to be realized. The bridal Church on earth is made up of sinners and remains a pilgrim on the way. Individuals enter the bridal and nuptial reality of the Church through Baptism and come to a fuller union with Christ through the Eucharist.

The various themes and patterns above demonstrate the polyvalence of ecclesial bridal imagery, manifested throughout its history. This polyvalence is multiplied when the various possible referents of the term "Church" and the term "Bride" are considered. For example, with regard to the term "Church," are all the faithful intended or simply the hierarchy? With regard to the term "Bride," is it the Church herself, the soul, humanity united to the Word, a consecrated

woman, or Mary that is intended? The variety of referents, themes, and patterns of use might seem overwhelming. There also remains the additional consideration of the interconnection of various ecclesial images. In this regard, it must be noted that from the time of the Fathers to the twentieth century, bridal imagery was not merely set side by side among other ecclesial images but was sometimes connected to others (such as the images of the Church as the Body of Christ and as Mother) with particular sophistication.

This chapter has provided a context for situating the magisterial use of ecclesial bridal imagery from Pope Leo XIII to Pope John Paul II. The next chapter will examine the bridal image as a metaphor and will provide further tools for an analysis of ecclesial bridal imagery in twentieth-century papal and magisterial teaching. Perhaps the most significant datum of the survey above is the fact that over and over again throughout its history, and with poignant emphasis in the twentieth century, the image of the Church as Bride of Christ has never served purely ecclesiological concerns. Rather, the bridal image has consistently been applied to a diverse range of themes and patterns involving ecclesiology, Christology, anthropology, Mariology, sacramental theology, theology of grace, moral theology, Christian vocation, and eschatology. Such a varied usage conveys the striking power and evocative nature of this ecclesial image throughout its history, a history as full of important questions as it is of insights.



## Chapter Two

### Ecclesial Bridal Imagery as Metaphor

It is sometimes forgotten that all language has a metaphorical character. We are perpetually using images, and this indeed is language's own highest gift.... We are rarely far removed from using metaphor, least of all when we come to church.

—Geoffrey Preston (1997)<sup>1</sup>

Images, symbols and myths are not irresponsible creations of the psyche; they respond to a need and fulfill a function, that of bringing to light the most hidden modalities of being.... To have imagination is to be able to see the world in its totality, for the power and the mission of Images is to *show* all that remains refractory to the concept: hence the disfavor and failure of the man “without imagination”; he is cut off from the deeper reality of life and from his own soul.

—Mircea Eliade (1952)<sup>2</sup>

Although twentieth-century theology and philosophy saw a resurgence of interest in imagery, metaphor, and the “symbolic” broadly construed, as evidenced in the two quotes above, questions continue to arise regarding the relationship of imagery to the task of systematic ecclesiology. What is the place of imagery in systematic ecclesiology and how do images relate to concepts? Are images/metaphors of primary or secondary significance with regard to systematic foundations? Is ecclesiology best rendered by a multiplicity of images/metaphors that defies integration? While the preceding chapter was a portrait of the rich and complex landscape and history of ecclesial bridal imagery, the purpose of this chapter is to set forth what it means to understand the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ as a metaphor. That understanding will in turn guide this study's analysis of ecclesial bridal imagery in twentieth-century magisterial teaching.

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1. *Faces of the Church: Meditations on a Mystery and Its Images* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 3-4. This work was published posthumously.

2. English translation taken from *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1961), 12 and 20. Originally published as *Images et symboles* in 1952.

The chapter will proceed as follows: First, it will offer a general account of metaphor and the guiding principles of the present study with regard to realism and theological discourse (part I); then it will consider the interpretation of metaphor in ecclesiology (part II) and the general characteristics of ecclesial bridal imagery (part III). Finally, it will explain the basic parameters that will guide this study's approach to bridal imagery in magisterial teaching (part IV). This study presumes that it is valid to describe bridal imagery as a metaphor and that a basic grasp of metaphor theory can help illuminate various uses of the imagery. At the same time, to speak of "metaphor" is not to say everything that can be said about ecclesial bridal imagery. This statement is not so much a denigration of the category of metaphor in general as an acknowledgment of this particular metaphor's potential significance and promise, as will be explained below.

### **I. Metaphor, Realism, and Theological Discourse**

Metaphors communicate in a variety of ways. Particularly penetrating metaphors can give insights or raise questions about reality, including questions as to their own proper function and significance in scientific discourse. In this first part, an understanding of metaphor and explanation of the presuppositions guiding this study will be presented. The first section below will treat the basics of metaphor theory; the second section will present how metaphor can be depictive of reality; and the third section will situate metaphor in the context of theological discourse.

## A. *The Basics of Metaphor Theory*

Scholarly treatments of metaphor abound.<sup>3</sup> The presentation of metaphor theory below will rely primarily on Janet Martin Soskice's treatment of metaphor, with subsequent reference to the work of Avery Dulles, Kenneth Schmitz, and others to understand the place of metaphor within a realist metaphysics and theological discourse.

### 1. Definition and characteristics of metaphor

What is a metaphor? A metaphor is a figure of speech or trope. It has classically been designated as one among a family of different tropes.<sup>4</sup> Soskice provides a working definition of metaphor which will also serve as the reference point for this study: "Metaphor is that figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another."<sup>5</sup> This definition highlights three fundamental characteristics of metaphor.

First, metaphor is a linguistic reality. Metaphors are neither mental events nor physical objects.<sup>6</sup> As Soskice describes, a metaphor technically cannot be articulated "into language" as if

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3. See, for example, Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). Soskice provides a helpful bibliography of various treatments of metaphor. See also Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello (London: Routledge, 1977 [French original 1975]). I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964 [original 1936]). Max Black, "Metaphor," in his *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 25-47 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962); "How Metaphors Work: A Reply to Donald Davidson," in *On Metaphor*, ed. Sheldon Sacks, 181-92 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979); "More About Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony, 19-43 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

4. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 54-66. Although metaphor can be described as a trope, a full account of metaphor must go beyond regarding metaphors simply as words or names. See Ricoeur's description of the decline of rhetoric into tropology in Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 49-73.

5. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 15.

6. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 16-18. Soskice critiques Nelson Goodman, among others, for his speaking of "nonverbal labels" such as pictures as metaphorical. Cf. Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976), 89, where he states: "A picture of Churchill as a bulldog is metaphorical..."

the reality of the metaphor precedes the metaphorical language itself.<sup>7</sup> Metaphor *is* linguistic; it is a figure of *speech*. One important implication is that to label a particular phrase or sentence (for example, involving ecclesial imagery) as a metaphor is to make a strictly linguistic judgment, as distinct from a metaphysical or theological judgment. That is to say that the category of metaphor does not displace the need for philosophical and/or theological judgment. Whether and how a metaphor might refer to a reality remains a valid question.<sup>8</sup>

Second, metaphor is “a kind of language use” or “speech-act.”<sup>9</sup> Metaphor involves more than words or sentences taken in isolation. The *context* of the metaphorical utterance is important—factors such as reference, the speaker’s intention, and shared beliefs can be critical for identifying that a metaphor is at work.<sup>10</sup> One word alone, by itself, is not sufficient to conclude that a metaphor is at hand, for words by themselves do not have metaphorical meaning (which could be looked up in the dictionary).<sup>11</sup> For example, the word “Bride” is not a metaphor without further context. However, the sentence “the Church is the Bride of Christ” has long been understood by the Christian tradition as a preeminent metaphor, being a way of using the term “bride” metaphorically, that is, within a metaphorical utterance. Another example would be the phrase “as Christ loves the Church (see Eph 5:21-33),” where the bridal metaphor is implied by the use of the term “loves” combined with the parenthetical reference to Eph 5. In both cases, the context of additional words, the subject matter of the Church, and the accepted

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7. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 16-18.

8. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 90 and 118-61.

9. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 18; Herwi Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*, 120-21.

10. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 21-23.

11. The phenomenon of dead or well-used metaphors can lead to the inclusion of metaphorical associations into a word’s “dictionary meaning” or more precisely “sense” (e.g., “leaf” as a page in a book; “leg” as a part of a chair).

meaning are necessary ingredients of the metaphor. An important implication for this study is the fact that there can be various ways a bridal metaphor might manifest itself, beyond, as Soskice says, any one particular syntactic form (e.g., noun, verb, adjective, or adverb), structure (e.g., a set grammatical form or comparison between two subjects), or scope (e.g., words, sentence, and/or sentences).<sup>12</sup>

Third, Soskice's definition highlights that metaphor involves at least two "things" put into close linguistic relationship. These two things are the "tenor" and "vehicle" of the metaphor, respectively. Every metaphor has a "tenor" (the underlying subject of the metaphor) and a "vehicle" (that which is said of the subject in the context of the metaphor).<sup>13</sup> For example, in the metaphor "the Church is the Bride of Christ," the subject "Church" is the tenor and the predicate "is the Bride of Christ" is the vehicle. However, tenor and vehicle are not necessarily manifest as specific words or terms. For instance, if a sentence in reference to the Church reads "the Bride of Christ waits for the Lord in confidence," the tenor is the idea of the Church, and the vehicle is the entire descriptive sentence and associated meaning(s). Such a sentence presumes that the metaphor "Church is the Bride of Christ" is operative.

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12. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 18-23.

13. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 45-49; also Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 96-103. This study agrees with Soskice in finding Richard's terms of "tenor" and "vehicle" ultimately more helpful than Max Black's terms "frame" and "focus." For Black, the "focus" designates the metaphorical word in a sentence, while the "frame" designates the non-metaphorical or literal remainder (see Black, "Metaphor," 28; Black, "How Metaphors Work," 183; Black, "More about Metaphor," 19-43; Soskice *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 39-40; Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 98). Ricoeur judges Black's terminology to be a corrective of Richards' "tenor and vehicle" (see Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 98). However, Soskice notes that the two pairs of terminology are not equivalent and judges "frame and focus" to be deficient (see Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 45-46).

## 2. The interanimation theory of metaphor

Soskice borrows from the philosophy of I. A. Richards and presents an “interanimation theory” of metaphor.<sup>14</sup> Within a metaphor, the words or terms, or thoughts or ideas (the latter to be understood as intra-linguistic, even if extra-utterance),<sup>15</sup> interact with or more properly “interanimate” each other due to the unique combination of certain terms, their networks of associated meaning, the context of their use, and the framework or model(s) suggested and/or relied upon by such use. A metaphor is “the consequence of the interanimation of words [understood broadly] in the complete utterance,” and more precisely the interanimation of the tenor and vehicle.<sup>16</sup> Expanding upon Richards’ theory, Soskice says:

The tension in this initial interanimation of terms is not enough to explain metaphorical construal, nor even to distinguish metaphor from other anomalous combinations of terms. We suggest, therefore, that at a secondary level metaphorical construal is characterized by its reliance on an underlying model, or even on a number of such models....<sup>17</sup>

Just as metaphor involves *speaking* of one thing in terms suggestive of another, so a “model” involves *regarding* one thing in terms of another.<sup>18</sup> The point Soskice wants to emphasize, a point which is particularly important for this study’s examination of bridal imagery, is that metaphor

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14. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 43-51.

15. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 45.

16. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 45. In other words, it is the result of what Ricoeur describes as an “interaction between contexts” that also involves Ricoeur’s evocative description of “the semantic clash between significations” which constitutes metaphor. However, what the term “interanimation” illustrates perhaps more clearly than the term “interaction” is that this so-called “clash” is properly understood not as a conflict of meanings but rather as a fruitful giving and receiving between tenor and vehicle (interanimation) that involves the pairing of both likeness and difference within the unity of the subject matter of the metaphor. Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*, trans. David Pellauer, ed. Mark I. Wallace (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 161. Others who emphasize the aspect of a “clash” or “conflict” of meanings or a collision of two subjects in metaphor include: Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 73; Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*, 70; and Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 44. On this topic, see Soskice’s critique of Max Black in her *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 38-43 and 49.

17. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 50.

18. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 50-51.

normally involves more than an interesting verbal tension but rather relies upon and suggests a “web of implications” or network(s) of associated terms and meanings, namely, what Soskice calls a “model.”<sup>19</sup> Metaphorical talk therefore presumes, whether implicitly or explicitly, one or more models.<sup>20</sup> And even further, according to Soskice, “it is the capacity of the lively metaphor to suggest models that enable us to ‘go on’ which gives the clue to the richness of the metaphorical description.”<sup>21</sup>

This study will use the terms “tenor” and “vehicle” in its analysis of the use of ecclesial bridal metaphors. With regard to the vehicle of a metaphor, two additional descriptive terms, both of which refer to an aspect of the vehicle, will assist this study’s examination. First, the expression “signal term” will describe that element or term which alerts one to the presence of a specifically bridal or spousal metaphor (e.g., the term *sponsa*). Second, the term “qualifier” will denote the various descriptions that qualify or modify the “bride” or bridal Church in some way and thus partially constitute the vehicle of the metaphor (e.g., the “confident waiting” of the Bride of Christ).<sup>22</sup> Such qualifiers may involve a variety of associated meanings that affect the overall meaning of the metaphor, and they also assist in identifying various *themes* and *patterns* of metaphorical usage. The identification and analysis of the variety of themes and patterns of ecclesial bridal imagery will be an important part of this study.

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19. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 73.

20. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 55.

21. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 51.

22. The use of the term “qualifier” is borrowed from Kenneth Schmitz, “Naming God: Analogical Negation,” in Peter J. Casarella and George P. Schnier, eds., *Christian Spirituality and the Culture of Modernity: The Thought of Louis Dupré*, 159-75 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 169. See also Kenneth Schmitz, “Restitution of Meaning in Religious Speech,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 5.3 (Fall 1974): 147-49.

### 3. The disclosive and emblematic potential of metaphor

Two final aspects of metaphor need to be mentioned: the disclosive potential of metaphor and the possibility of a metaphor being “emblematic.” First, contrary to what is maintained by theories that see metaphor as simply ornamental or substitutable—capable of being translated, paraphrased, or reduced exhaustively into “literal” elements—metaphor has the capacity to *disclose*, to advance knowledge and understanding, and not merely to re-describe.<sup>23</sup> Soskice speaks of metaphor’s irreducibility; a metaphor is “reduced” to literal components only at the expense of the original and unique cognitive content conveyed by the metaphor.<sup>24</sup> Metaphors involve a surplus of meaning that cannot be exhausted by conceptualization, necessary though concepts are to advancing human understanding.<sup>25</sup>

A corollary of the disclosive potential of metaphor is the identity conveyed by metaphor. Metaphor is more than a matter of simple comparison,<sup>26</sup> since likeness *and* difference (or contrast) are uniquely fused together in metaphor, often through the mode of *identification*.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, a good metaphor consists of an identification that is difficult to convey in other terms. For instance, the metaphorical statement that the Church *is* the Bride of Christ is quite different from saying simply that the Church is *like* the Bride of Christ. The metaphor conveys an *identity*, not simply a likeness. Missing the fundamental difference between comparison and identification is the danger in theories such as Ricoeur’s that repeatedly use the term “redescription” to explain

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23. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 24-53 and 89-90.

24. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 93-96.

25. This insight was drawn gratefully from conversations with Dr. Thomas Schärfl.

26. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 26 and 42. Cf. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 204ff.

27. Also presumed in this study is that metaphors, as figures of speech, are not necessarily reliant upon some pre-existing likeness or comparison but may function to *produce* such a likeness. This “production” may be artificial or disclosive of a relationship hitherto implicit or unacknowledged.



what takes place in metaphor.<sup>28</sup> Although Ricoeur is aware of the distinction between “metaphor” and “comparison” as such,<sup>29</sup> thinkers who follow Ricoeur’s terminology seem to conflate redescription, resemblance, and comparison in ways that betray metaphor’s uniqueness.

For example, David Tracy’s examination of the “Johannine metaphor ‘God is love’” immediately shifts from the term “metaphor” to the comparative expression “is like” as if they were the same.<sup>30</sup> He speaks of the “metaphorical ‘is like’” as follows: “the resemblance is *produced* by the redescriptive power of the metaphorical language.”<sup>31</sup> Tracy then remarks, “The statement ‘God is love’ does not say literally what God is but *produces* a metaphorical meaning for what God is like.”<sup>32</sup> In short, the problem here is that Tracy does not seem to account for one of the distinctive and powerful traits of metaphor, which is the metaphorical “is” rather than “is like”—or to put it another way, he neglects the disclosive potential of metaphor. While resemblance can be operative in metaphor, some metaphors function so as to express an identity, not simply a quality of likeness or resemblance. To say that “God is (like) love”<sup>33</sup> already empties the potential significance of “God is love.” Tracy claims that “every major religion’s vision of human reality is grounded in certain root metaphors that redescribe the human situation.”<sup>34</sup> However, “God is love” has been understood by the Christian tradition to disclose

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28. See Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 229-36.

29. See Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 217.

30. David Tracy, “Metaphor and Religion: The Test Case of Christian Texts,” in Sacks, ed., *On Metaphor*, 103.

31. Tracy, “Metaphor and Religion,” 103.

32. Tracy, “Metaphor and Religion,” 103.

33. Tracy, “Metaphor and Religion,” 103.

34. Tracy, “Metaphor and Religion,” 104.

something uniquely significant about the human situation and God himself—it is not merely a matter of redescription.

Second, a metaphor can be “emblematic.” A metaphor’s life may be long or short. The broader context of time and culture may figure prominently in the evaluation of the meaning and relevance of a particular metaphor. Ecclesial metaphors such as “the Church is the Body of Christ” or “the Bride of Christ” can be considered as “emblematic metaphors” in Soskice’s terms, having gained centuries of application that make them more than simple metaphors.<sup>35</sup> Still, one ecclesial metaphor may be more immediately relevant than another depending on the situation or period.<sup>36</sup>

There is also the phenomenon of “dead” or “frozen” metaphors. These are metaphors that previously operated in a figurative way but now have become accepted into the canon of literal discourse. Such metaphors have lost their original and immediate evocative nature and function (e.g., “the leg of the chair,”<sup>37</sup> “stem of the glass,” “leaf of the book,” “flow of electricity”<sup>38</sup>), though they can be rediscovered.<sup>39</sup> Emblematic metaphors are susceptible to a kind of “death” or relative non-use or unimportance. However, because of their rich background, they have a strong chance of being revived.

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35. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 158.

36. To call Christ “the King” or to refer to the “kingdom or reign of God” operated as a “semantic bomb” in the Roman empire and perhaps in aristocratic society as well, whereas its effect in a contemporary democratic society may be less evident. (This example is drawn gratefully from conversations with Dr. Thomas Schärli.)

37. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 94.

38. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 71.

39. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 71-83. See also Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 68. These so-called ‘dead’ metaphors are capable of being raised up and enlivened, as it were.

## ***B. Metaphor as Depictive of Reality***

Discussion of metaphor inevitably leads to the question of the relationship between metaphor and reality (i.e., being, ontology) and more generally to the question of the relationship between language (and speech/discourse)<sup>40</sup> and being. The question of the relationship between language and being, especially as it relates to a theory of knowledge and understanding, is an enduring one. At one extreme, there is the position that language simply reflects being or reality which is prior (this view might be termed naïve realism). At the other extreme, there is the position that being or reality simply reflects language (this view might be termed constructivism). The first position reduces the potency and significance of language qua language; the second position reduces metaphysics to a linguistic creation. Both positions fail to see language and being in a dialogic and reciprocal relationship which would always and by necessity require a critical and hermeneutical eye in order to avoid distortions and to advance towards truth. Thus, both represent one-sided epistemologies that fall on either extreme of the question of the interplay between language and being.

### **1. Post-critical and symbolic realism**

There is a middle-way between these two extremes. This study presumes that language and being are related in a way that avoids reducing one to the other and that preserves a distinction-without-separation between the two. The possibility of metaphysical discourse and

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40. In speaking of “language” here, it is acknowledged that “language” is not a simple, static reality. Nor can a proper appreciation for and understanding of language be separated from the event of speech/discourse. On this latter point, see P. Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation,” in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. John B. Thompson, 131-44 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1981 [first English edition, 1973]), 132-36.

analogical discourse about God is presumed.<sup>41</sup> This perspective can be described as a “fiduciary approach” towards language, reality, and truth which avoids the pitfalls of naïve realism and constructivism and represents what might be called a “post-critical and symbolic realism.”<sup>42</sup>

The use of the term “post-critical” recognizes certain values of the critical enterprise that emerged in modernity, especially the important emphasis upon subjectivity, yet it seeks to move beyond modernity’s latent bias toward doubt, skepticism, and even suspicion, its tendency to operate from a radical dichotomy between subject and object, and its rationalistic tendencies closed to sources of truth that might challenge or not fit neatly within one’s own system.<sup>43</sup> The use of the term “symbolic” simply highlights an important aspect of a “post-critical” approach, wherein truth is recognized to be mediated through various symbolic forms. Such a symbolic realism acknowledges the essential mediatory role of symbols in all experience and knowledge and avoids reducing symbols to mere subjective projections or constructions.<sup>44</sup>

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41. For an understanding of metaphysical and analogical discourse, see the respective articles by Kenneth Schmitz: “Neither with nor without Foundations,” in *The Texture of Being: Essays in First Philosophy*, ed. Paul O’Herron, 54-73 (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2007) [originally published in *Review of Metaphysics* 42 (Sept. 1988): 3-25], and “Naming God: Analogical Negation” cited above.

42. The use of the description “fiduciary approach” is borrowed from Paul Avis, *God and the Creative Imagination: Metaphor, Symbol and Myth in Religion and Theology* (London: Routledge, 1999), 31. The use of “post-critical and symbolic realism” is drawn from the work of Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 118-141, and Avery Dulles, *The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System*, expanded ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 50. However, *pace* Soskice, this study prefers to speak of “post-critical” with Dulles rather than to use Soskice’s term “critical realism.” The “post-critical and symbolic realism” advocated here is akin, on a theological level, to what Robert Sokolowski refers to as a “theology of disclosure” or “phenomenological theology” (see *The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology* [Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1995]), ix and 88-103. Sokolowski comments: “[The theology of disclosure] is presented as a complement to speculative, scholastic theology, which brings out the nature of Christian things but is less concerned with the modes of presentation of the things in question. The theology of disclosure does not contradict the achievements of scholastic theology but adds to it a concern with manifestation, a concern that is at the heart if modern philosophy and culture” (ibid., x). For more on a theology of disclosure, see Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1994), and *Christian Faith and Human Understanding: Studies on the Eucharist, Trinity, and the Human Person* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2006).

43. On the various shortcomings of the “critical program,” see Dulles, *The Craft of Theology*, 5-7.

44. See Dulles, *The Craft of Theology*, 50.

The “fiduciary approach” presupposed here is a hermeneutic of critical openness towards the capacity of language to communicate reality (in other words, *what is, being*) and truth. This approach presumes a kind of *perichoresis* or mutual interpenetration of language and being, which is held to be constitutive of all human experience, interpretation, and knowledge.<sup>45</sup> However, the approach also understands that truth is not primarily brought about by knowledge, but rather knowledge “is the effect of truth.”<sup>46</sup> “Truth is first and foremost an ontological relationship; it is a relation between entities, between the knower and the known.”<sup>47</sup> Truth, therefore, transcends the cognitive process and cannot be reduced to a matter of epistemology or hermeneutics alone.<sup>48</sup>

What does all of this mean for the interpretation of metaphor within a realist perspective? If language and reality are intimately woven together, metaphor by its linguistic nature is open to forming a better understanding of, as well as to being formed by, extra-linguistic reality.<sup>49</sup> Metaphors can depict or refer to reality in various ways. “Realism accommodates figurative speech which is reality depicting without claiming to be directly descriptive.”<sup>50</sup> A metaphor alone may be limited in its capacity to describe reality as it is, but it can convey insights about that reality that open toward new vistas of understanding. A metaphor that claims to depict or refer to reality calls for a particular interpretation and critical assessment vis-à-vis the referent it is depicting (the underlying subject). Such assessment requires a judgment

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45. On the constitutive relation between language and reality, see H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed., trans. rev. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 1989), 382-491.

46. K. Schmitz, “Neither with nor without Foundations,” 65.

47. Schmitz, “Neither with nor without Foundations,” 65.

48. See Schmitz, “Neither with nor without Foundations,” 65.

49. A metaphor might also work the other way and veil or confuse understanding as well.

50. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 148.

that rises beyond the confines of linguistic concerns; such a judgment may involve scientific, philosophical, and/or theological interpretation. Interpretation of a particularly significant metaphor has the potential of never being exhausted.

## 2. Clarification and use of terms: image, model, symbol, and analogy

It is important at this juncture to clarify this study's use of the terms "image," "model," "symbol" and "analogy" in relation to metaphor. For the purposes of this study, the terms "metaphor" and "image" are used synonymously with respect to ecclesial bridal imagery, though it is understood that the term "image" is broader and not necessarily linked to metaphors.<sup>51</sup> However, this study does distinguish metaphor/image from model, symbol, and analogy, and it presumes a potential relationship among metaphor, symbol, and analogy that is important for the theological use and interpretation of ecclesial bridal imagery.

The term "symbol" is often used interchangeably with that of "image," "metaphor," or "model."<sup>52</sup> For the purpose of this study, "symbol" and "model" will be held to be distinct. "Model" refers to an implicit or explicit framework of associated terms, categories, and meanings that functions as a heuristic category. "Symbol," on the other hand, is taken here as a special kind of sign that discloses and draws one into something of the whole of the reality signified, precisely through the symbol's limited sign-reality. As distinct from a model which serves as a framework for understanding and referring to a reality, a symbol is taken to be integrally connected to and participative in the reality it signifies.

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51. On the broader use of the term "image," see Brian P. Flanagan, "The Limits of Ecclesial Metaphors in Systematic Ecclesiology," *Horizons* 35 (Spr. 2008): 33-34, and Avis, *God and the Creative Imagination*, 94-98.

52. For an example of a synonymous use of "symbol" and "model," see Avis, *God and the Creative Imagination*, 68.

This study also regards “symbol” and “image/metaphor” as being distinct. Soskice notes that the category of symbol is broader than metaphor in that it includes extra-linguistic reality.<sup>53</sup> This understanding is presumed here, and its application to the category of image/metaphor presumes that metaphor can operate as a *linguistic* symbol in the sense to be articulated below.

This study follows Avery Dulles who holds that particular religious images/metaphors function as symbols. Dulles defines symbol generally as “a sign pregnant with a plenitude of meaning which is evoked rather than explicitly stated.”<sup>54</sup> By their nature, symbols communicate in an evocative way that can draw upon various dimensions of the person, intellectual, emotional, psychological, and spiritual. After describing religious images as symbolic, Dulles writes:

Symbols transform the horizons of man’s life, integrate his perception of reality, alter his scale of values, reorient his loyalties, attachments, and aspirations in a manner far exceeding the powers of abstract conceptual thought. Religious images, as used in the Bible and Christian preaching, focus our experience in a new way. They have an aesthetic appeal, and are apprehended not simply by the mind but by the imagination, the heart, or, more properly, the whole man.<sup>55</sup>

This is a helpful description of the potential significance of symbols, as Dulles draws out the symbol’s powerful connection to reality, experience, and mystery. This study also presumes a symbol’s potential to embody and signify the whole through the part to the extent that the whole becomes actually present and active through the part.<sup>56</sup> A symbol intimately participates in

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53. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 55.

54. Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992 [originally published in 1983]), 132.

55. Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 12.

56. See Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 115: “It seems then that an element becomes a symbol only to the extent that it *represents the whole* ... from which it is inseparable. That is also why *every symbolic element brings with itself the entire socio-cultural system to which it belongs.*”

the reality symbolized in some way.<sup>57</sup> It is an intrinsic expression of the other, “the representation which allows the other ‘to be there.’”<sup>58</sup> Symbol in this sense is not understood as arbitrary or random, even if historically constructed.<sup>59</sup> For example, the name of Jesus is a special linguistic symbol in Christianity traversing the range of human languages and serving as a symbol in which the entire mystery of salvation is contained. The Cross is an extra-linguistic reality which has become the symbol of redemption.

This study presupposes that a metaphor may itself function as a *linguistic* symbol and/or rely upon or evoke *something* or *someone* that serves as a symbol for something or someone else. In this light, the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ, as an emblematic metaphor, can function as a symbol. It not only may disclose a model(s) through which one can understand various aspects of the Church, but it also may disclose something of the essence of the Church as a whole. Sebastian Tromp’s comment that the whole of ecclesiology is somehow contained in the imagery of Christ the Bridegroom and the Church his Bride would be an example of understanding the ecclesial bridal metaphor as a symbol in the sense articulated here.<sup>60</sup>

Likewise, speaking of the Church as the Bride of Christ can also evoke the symbolic (and sacramental) reality of marriage as uniquely reflective of Christ’s love for his Church. The particular power of the bridal metaphor is its relation to the symbolic reality of marriage, which has been judged a capable and privileged representation of the relation between God and his

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57. See Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 112-13.

58. Karl Rahner, “The Theology of the Symbol,” in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4: More Recent Writings, trans. Kevin Smyth, 221-52 (New York: Seabury, 1974), 225.

59. Certainly, many “symbols” taken in a broader sense than that intended by this study are the result of more arbitrary convention. Rahner describes these as “secondary” or “derivative.” Rahner, “Theology of the Symbol,” 224-25.

60. See Tromp, “Ecclesia Sponsa Virgo Mater,” 3; chapter one above, p. 44ff.



people and the union between Christ and the Church. “The power of metaphor depends on the prior presence of meaningful structures in the events and realities to which the metaphor refers.”<sup>61</sup> Thus the power and significance of a metaphor can depend upon its relationship to, or specific function as, a symbol(s). Nevertheless, the metaphor may also disclose or call new attention to symbolic meanings and relationships previously latent or hidden.

Lastly, the relationship between metaphor and analogy needs attention. From a strictly linguistic perspective, metaphor is classified as figurative usage while analogy is classified as literal usage that involves a “stretch” that still seems appropriate and does not require the “imaginative strain” found in metaphor.<sup>62</sup> For example, to compare the *love* between spouses with the *love* that God has for his people is to use the term “love” in an analogical way. Such use is neither univocal nor equivocal, but it is also not metaphorical, a figure of speech. The classical sense of analogy in reference to discourse about God—and this could be extended to include any discourse in reference to any of the mysteries of the faith—includes acknowledgment of likeness only within a greater unlikeness. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) taught: “For between the Creator and the creature there can be noted no similarity so great that a greater dissimilarity cannot be seen between them.”<sup>63</sup> A further understanding of analogy in theology would also need to include awareness of the bi-directionality of analogy: not only is it a matter of

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61. Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, 134.

62. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 66.

63. Denzinger, Heinrich J. D., *Enchiridion symbolorum*, 806. Translation taken from Thomas Joseph White’s introduction in *The Analogy of Being: Invention of the Antichrist or the Wisdom of God*, ed. Thomas Joseph White (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2011), 5.

using the human reality to shed light on the divine, but it also involves allowing the divine to shed light on the human.<sup>64</sup>

There is a tradition of seeing metaphor as an “improper” use of language and analogy as a “proper” use,<sup>65</sup> but the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. This study, while not settling the debate between “improper” and “proper” uses of language, presupposes that certain metaphors may operate within a framework of analogy, wherein both the metaphor(s) and the analogy mutually reinforce each other. There remains disagreement among interpreters of Aquinas whether Aquinas himself allowed for a more general understanding of metaphor as a “kind of analogy.”<sup>66</sup> Dulles has gone so far as to state that the classical images of the Church as the Body and Bride of Christ, although “originally metaphorical” can be “properly though still analogously predicated.”<sup>67</sup> Rather than make this claim here, it seems clearer to speak of such metaphors as having become symbols in the sense outlined above and therefore uniquely significant and integrally (and, in this sense, properly) connected to the reality depicted. In this regard, Max Black’s claim that metaphors can “mediate analogy” (understood as involving both likeness and a greater unlikeness) is a helpful one and can illustrate a metaphor’s significance without eliminating its nature as a metaphor.<sup>68</sup>

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64. This latter aspect has been described as “katalogical.” For example, see Balthasar, *Theo-Logic*, vol. 2: *Truth of God*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), 171-218.

65. Thomas Aquinas, ST I, q. 1, art. 9. See Ralph McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University Press, 1996), 116-36.

66. Compare and contrast Rikhof’s interpretation of Aquinas in *The Concept of Church*, 167-91, with McInerny’s *Aquinas and Analogy*, 116-36.

67. Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 12.

68. See Black, “More about Metaphor,” 31, and Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 42. Soskice critiques Black’s tendency to universalize metaphor’s potential to mediate analogy, which puts Black in danger of understanding metaphor merely as comparison, a view that does not attend properly to the difference (and not only likeness) involved in metaphor.

Of particular importance for this study is the fact that the various, potential relationships between metaphor, symbol, and analogy presume the need for a higher level of interpretation beyond linguistic theory alone. A metaphor may be a strictly linguistic phenomenon, but an adequate hermeneutic of metaphor must be open to the various aspects of intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic significance potentially linked to and/or disclosed by a metaphor.

### ***C. Metaphor within Theological Discourse***

Metaphor plays an important role in the natural sciences as well as in philosophy and theology.<sup>69</sup> Scientific language is often imbued with metaphor and dependent upon metaphor's ability to convey a particular interpretive model that expands into new scientific insights.<sup>70</sup> "Metaphor permeates all discourse, ordinary and special, and we should have a hard time finding a purely literal paragraph anywhere."<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, one's conception of the relation between orders and modes of discourse may affect how and in what way metaphor operates within scientific discourse.

This study takes as a given the distinction between first-order and second-order discourse, which for the purposes of this study can be identified as religious and theological discourse, respectively. Religious discourse is taken to be the ordinary, common, original, first-order discourse, while theological discourse is understood as the interpretive, methodical, scientific, technical, second-order form of discourse.<sup>72</sup> The relationship between religious and theological discourse is somewhat akin to the relationship between experience and

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69. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 97-161.

70. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 97-117.

71. Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 80.

72. Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*, 190-91ff. See also Joseph A. Komonchak, *Foundations in Ecclesiology* (Boston: Boston College, 1995), 66; Komonchak, *Who Are the Church?* 23ff.

interpretation.<sup>73</sup> The distinction between these two orders of discourse is a helpful and important one. While figurative language can be frequent in religious discourse, theological discourse has a responsibility to examine and probe such figurative language and not merely to repeat a first-order type of discourse.

However, the distinction between the two levels or orders of discourse does not necessarily imply a separation. Nor should second-order discourse be presumed to be superior to that of the first order. Here, Kenneth Schmitz's consideration of the distinction between "noetic" and "epistemic" discourse is particularly helpful. Both are instances of "veridical discourse," which is the sequential use of language for the purposes of giving a true account of things.<sup>74</sup> Noetic discourse "is an original, spontaneous yet receptive discourse under the influence of the concrete situation. [I]t has its own integrity, and can find expression in various ways."<sup>75</sup> These ways include "ordinary conversation," the "wisdom of experience," poetry, prose, fiction, and fact.<sup>76</sup> Schmitz later describes "original knowing," which is manifest in noetic discourse, as "the open, ongoing, living understanding, which can take many forms: metaphor, symbolism, narration, informal argument."<sup>77</sup>

Epistemic discourse, on the other hand, proceeds methodically. It is "a special modification of noetic discourse" wherein "discourse proceeds along a determinate way—according to method (*meth-bodos*)—to describe, explain, or interpret the way matters stand."<sup>78</sup>

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73. See Komonchak, *Foundations in Ecclesiology*, 72.

74. See Schmitz, "Neither with nor without Foundations," 65-67.

75. Schmitz, "Neither with nor without Foundations," 67.

76. Schmitz, "Neither with nor without Foundations," 67.

77. Schmitz, "Neither with nor without Foundations," 72.

78. Schmitz, "Neither with nor without Foundations," 67.

Schmitz's following point is especially important for an understanding of the relation between religious speech or discourse and theological discourse:

By non-epistemic, noetic discourse I do not mean opinion, *doxa*, since that is a name given to informal discourse measured by the standards of epistemic discourse. I do not accept such a depreciation of first-order knowing, because the source of truth is not epistemic discourse, but rather the transcendental ontological relation in which truth consists, and out of which cognition arises. Noetic discourse is genuine knowledge which moves within the transcendental ontological truth-relation. Far from being depreciated, it is, on the contrary, epistemic discourse that is a secondary modification of noetic discourse.<sup>79</sup>

Schmitz's analysis of the distinction between noetic and epistemic discourse can be applied in analogous fashion to the distinction between religious and theological discourse. Theological discourse has its own specific aim, rigor, and method and properly involves the use of concepts in order to articulate an understanding of reality as manifest through faith. However, theological discourse does not or should not claim to surpass religious discourse, within which truth continues to be communicated. Just as "metaphysics is constitutively open to noetic discourse,"<sup>80</sup> so also theology is constitutively open to the noetic discourse of religious speech, and therefore constitutively open to the metaphors, symbols, and analogies that have been communicated in privileged forms (e.g., Scripture, commentaries, teaching, liturgy, mystical experience, prayer, and so on) down through the ages. Schmitz's account here and his later account of analogy enable an appreciation of how, in his words, "the unrevisable, unemendable character of the expressive situation in religious speech"<sup>81</sup>—for which uniquely disclosive emblematic metaphors, such as the Church as the Bride of Christ, could be taken as an

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79. Schmitz, "Neither with nor without Foundations," 71.

80. Schmitz, "Neither with nor without Foundations," 73. Compare with Ricoeur's account of the hermeneutical style which he advocates, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 358.

81. Schmitz, "Naming God: Analogical Negation," 172.

example—is not meant to be easily passed over by theological discourse but rather calls for careful attention.

## II. Considerations to Guide an Approach to Metaphor in Ecclesiology

The precise place and function of metaphors in ecclesiology has been a debated question and has received renewed attention in recent decades.<sup>82</sup> The sustained emphasis on images and metaphors in ecclesiology raises the question of why the Church in particular has been the recipient of this imaginative attention. Is it because of the relative newness of the discipline of ecclesiology and the lack of appropriate development of the discipline, i.e., is it that ecclesiology as a systematic task is still in search of its proper bearings and is still reliant on traditional imagery by default?<sup>83</sup> Or, is it perhaps that the very nature of ecclesiology, the very nature of the Church herself, calls for the prominent inclusion of imagery and metaphors within the systematic task?<sup>84</sup> The variation of perspectives calls for a renewed look at the specific task of ecclesiology.

The following account certainly does not propose to settle the question of metaphors and ecclesiology once and for all, but sets out to provide basic considerations that will guide this study's approach to ecclesial metaphors in magisterial teaching. The considerations below are taken to be vital for a proper hermeneutic of metaphor in ecclesiology and are drawn from the

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82. See Dulles, *Models of the Church*; Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*; and Flanagan, "The Limits of Ecclesial Metaphors in Systematic Ecclesiology."

83. Varying examples of this perspective can be found in Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*; Komonchak, *Foundations in Ecclesiology*; and, implicitly, Brian P. Flanagan, "The Limits of Ecclesial Metaphors in Systematic Ecclesiology."

84. Varying examples of this perspective can be found in Dulles, *Models of the Church*; H. U. von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 423. Henri de Lubac's ecclesiological work would be another significant example.

particular nature of ecclesiology as well as from the insights of metaphor theory explored in the first part of this chapter.

### ***A. The Systematic Task of Ecclesiology***

That ecclesiology is a systematic task is taken as a given in this study.<sup>85</sup> It is a second-order form of discourse in the terms explained above, a reasoned and orderly consideration of the reality called *Church*. The articulation of the relationship between first and second-order discourse above presumes that metaphor has some role to play within this systematic task. However, the particular place of ecclesial imagery in ecclesiology remains an open question.

On the one hand, the hermeneutic of ecclesial metaphors advocated here seeks to avoid any “reductive interpretation” that would amount to “clearing away the symbolic base” of religious discourse. The systematic task loses its ground if it “abolishes or destroys the metaphorical order.”<sup>86</sup> Such an interpretation would fall into the fallacy of seeing all metaphor as merely ornamental or substitutable without loss of cognitive content. On the other hand, this study recognizes that there are divergent perspectives on how metaphor should operate within ecclesiology, even when the importance of ecclesial images is acknowledged.<sup>87</sup>

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85. There is some debate about the precise nature of ecclesiology as a systematic discipline. For background, see Komonchak, *Foundations in Ecclesiology*, 65-66; Rikhof, *The Concept of the Church*; and Flanagan, “The Limits of Ecclesial Metaphors.” See also Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, “Systematic Theology: Task and Methods,” in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, vol. 1, eds. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin, 1-88 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 35-85.

86. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 357.

87. For example, H. U. von Balthasar and A. Dulles, who differed in their theological styles, both recognized—not uncritically—what might be called a constitutive place for imagery in ecclesiology. These two thinkers could be contrasted with J. Komonchak and H. Rikhof, both of whom differ from each other in certain ways but share a similar tendency to reign in more strictly the use of imagery in ecclesiology. For examples of these different approaches in relation to the use of imagery, see H. U. von Balthasar, *Theo-Logic: Theological Logical Theory*, vol. 1: *Truth of the World*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 132-79; H. U. von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 423; H. U. von Balthasar, “Who is the Church?” in *Spouse of the Word*, 186; Dulles, *Models of the Church*,

### ***B. The Relation between the Inspired Word and Theology***

Metaphor in ecclesiology not only presupposes the relation between language and being but also, in an analogical way, the relation between the inspired word of Sacred Scripture, the study of which should be “the very soul of theology,”<sup>88</sup> and the mystery of God. While the canonical “language” of Scripture includes various modes of discourse and a range of multiple translations into different languages, the reality of inspiration holds these modes of discourse and multiple translations together in one inspired word.<sup>89</sup> Within this inspired word are established images and emblematic metaphors open to interpretation.

There is a reciprocal and dialogic relation between the language of the inspired word and theology itself. Theology does not subsume the inspired word, nor does the inspired word take the place of theology. Both mutually form and inform the other in particular ways. Theology as a task must be attentive to scriptural images and their potential to form and inform theological understanding. In addition, theology must remain open to returning to scriptural images for further critical insight and appropriation. Yet certainly, the scriptural image or metaphor cannot substitute the work of theology.

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9-10 and throughout; Komonchak, *Foundations in Ecclesiology*, 11-12 and 65-66; Komonchak, *Who Are the Church?* 9-11, 15, and 23-25; Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*, 195-96, 204-5, 207-18 and 236. See also Flanagan, “The Limits of Ecclesial Metaphors,” 43-47.

88. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, no. 24 [AAS 58, 829].

89. For background and a recent treatment of the doctrine of inspiration, see Denis Farkasfalvy, *Inspiration and Interpretation: A Theological Introduction to Sacred Scripture* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2010).



### C. “Metaphor” is Insufficient

Speaking only of “metaphor” within ecclesiology is never sufficient, since ecclesiology presupposes a reality (i.e., being)—its central object is the Church.<sup>90</sup> As outlined above, the power of an ecclesial metaphor or image lies in its capacity to function as a symbol and, furthermore, in its potential to evoke or represent a symbolic or analogical relation between two or more realities.<sup>91</sup> The basic point in speaking of symbol and analogy is that ecclesiology cannot make “metaphors” alone its central point of reference. Ecclesiology cannot be reduced to a metaphorical discipline without emptying itself of its primary purpose which is to speak about the reality of the Church. The view adopted in this study is that so-called “metaphorical theology”<sup>92</sup> is a false reduction of the theological enterprise.

Furthermore, the metaphors of specific concern for ecclesiology are special metaphors. They are special because they are *emblematic* and (at least potentially) *living*.<sup>93</sup> As emblematic, particular ecclesial metaphors and imagery deriving from Scripture have accrued the weight and authority of tradition and have become proper and established descriptions for the Church. Moreover, they have accumulated a range of significance and meaning through various instances of use and application. This accumulation over the years contributes to these metaphors’

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90. Compare with Komonchak’s question, “What do the models model?” *Who are the Church?* 23ff.

91. See p. 86ff. above.

92. The use of the term “metaphorical theology” is borrowed from Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982). McFague herself acknowledges that theology must involve more than a use of metaphor (ibid., 22). However, her attempt to separate “metaphor” from “symbol” and to understand religious and theological language more restrictively “on the basis of metaphor” (ibid., 14-29 and 193-94) gives an undue ultimacy to metaphor that also results in a reductive view of metaphor in theology. The possibility of metaphors operating as symbols within analogical discourse is preempted. See Francis Martin’s critique of McFague in *The Feminist Question: Feminist Theology in the Light of Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 252-64. Martin notes the weaknesses in Ricouer’s study of metaphor that are emphasized by McFague. For other critiques, see Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 89, and Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*, 124-48.

93. These terms are borrowed from Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 158, and Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 33, 128, 225, 336 and 358.

capacity to function as symbolic doorways to a vast horizon of meaning.<sup>94</sup> Because such metaphors are established, they may appear to walk a fine line between being *dead* or *living*. A conventionality and habituality is natural in the case of the use of such metaphors over time. In addition, the metaphors themselves become “proper” as ecclesial metaphors. Their use often does not elicit the surprise and initial perplexity of a first-time metaphor. Nevertheless, even routine usage may be significant in that it shows the living nature of even such well-worn and proper metaphors. The ecclesial metaphor, as living, continues to invite further exploration of the reality, namely, the Church.<sup>95</sup>

#### ***D. Interpretation of Metaphor is not Elimination***

Metaphors call for interpretation. As Ricoeur has noted, “Interpretation is the work of concepts.... a work of elucidation.”<sup>96</sup> Ecclesiology cannot shirk this task of interpretation, which involves a critical evaluation or appropriation of the metaphor or image at hand. However, the interpretation of a metaphor does not necessarily bypass or sidestep the metaphor’s potentially central importance.<sup>97</sup> The fact that interpretation is needed does not itself make the object interpreted less important or primary to the systematic task. If this were the case, theology’s interpretation of Scripture would pretend theology’s superiority over the word of God, as if the inspired word could have no enduring, formative influence in theology.

Can one ever go completely *beyond* the metaphor? It would be difficult to find an ecclesiological concept that has not been shaped or influenced in one way or another by

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94. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 158.

95. See Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 358.

96. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 357.

97. See Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 357-58.

metaphor. In this light, the fruitful interchange between religious and theological discourse, or first-order and second-order discourse, needs to remain critically open.<sup>98</sup>

### III. General Characteristics of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery

The preceding treatment of metaphor theory and of metaphor in ecclesiology provides a perspective from which to focus now on the particular nature of ecclesial bridal imagery as a privileged metaphor in the history of the Church. Below, general characteristics of ecclesial bridal imagery will be highlighted so as to prepare for this study's analysis and interpretation of the particular usage of bridal imagery in magisterial teaching.

#### A. *One Image among Many*

The bridal image is one among many images for the Church. This fact may indicate different points and questions for further consideration. Although the existence of multiple images might suggest that all ecclesial images should be held together equally in some way, this has rarely occurred in the history of theology. Particular images have often risen to higher prominence than others, likely due to the modeling, symbolic, and/or analogical significance of the images and their connection to human experience across historical and cultural contexts.

The multiplicity of images cautions against unique emphasis on one image to the neglect of others. Nevertheless, an emphasis on one image or a few select images, even within a systematic treatment of the Church, might be called for depending upon the context,

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98. Cf. Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*, 193-236. This study commends Rikhof's grappling with the issue of metaphors in ecclesiology, though Rikhof's proposal for a "central term" on which to build a systematic ecclesiology (ibid., 232-36) threatens to bypass the possibility of a metaphor's potential role in concept formation and to overlook a more open relation between first-order and second-order discourse. One may legitimately ask: How was Rikhof's central term "the communio of the faithful" arrived at without at least the implicit influence of a metaphor or image? Soskice raises this question in her review of Rikhof's study. See "Metaphors in Ecclesiology," *The Heythrop Journal* 25.1 (Jan. 1984): 59.

circumstances, and the nature of the image itself. The point here is that the fact of the multiplicity of ecclesial images is not an argument in itself against the emphasis or prioritization of one image(s) over others. The very nature of the image might call for its prioritization, though such would call for systematic explication.

### ***B. A Special, Emblematic Image***

As noted above, particular metaphors are much more than “simple metaphors” and can be described as emblematic. This is the case with ecclesial bridal imagery for at least three basic reasons. First, the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ has a long and extensive history grounded in the inspired word of God.<sup>99</sup> It is an established and revealed image. Rooted in the Old Testament and developed in the New Testament, the bridal image has been interwoven into various exegetical and theological treatises, liturgical prayers, and papal and conciliar teaching, finding multiple points of reference beyond ecclesiology strictly speaking. This history is important for assessing the value and significance of bridal imagery. Nevertheless, this study presumes the possibility that the history of an ecclesial image could be marked by little systematic development and exploration as well as by wrong directions which might over-extend the meaning of the metaphor or image and result in a corruption rather than genuine development.<sup>100</sup> This is to say that the theological evaluation of an emblematic ecclesial image’s historical use needs to be open *a priori* to the possibility of wrong directions having been taken while also respecting the image’s long-standing presence and reputation, as is certainly the case with the image of the Church as Bride of Christ.

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99. See chapter one above.

100. Cf. John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 41.

Second, in addition to its established character, the bridal image holds an extraordinary range of accumulated meaning and application that contributes to its unique capacity to convey different levels of insight and to operate as a medium of integration among different levels of ecclesial and theological realities. The image's unique capacity to extend beyond the normal scope of ecclesial imagery per se was illustrated in the historical survey of the previous chapter.

Finally, the bridal image is among a unique class of ecclesial metaphors in that it functions practically as a *proper* and *personal* name for the Church, namely as Bride of Christ. As a personal name, bridal imagery, along with maternal imagery, suggests that the Church has some form of subjectivity and "personhood." Furthermore, because the bridal image is emblematic and proper in this sense, ordinary qualities of metaphor such as surprise, oddity, and difference are displaced to different degrees in this case, depending on the culture's familiarity with the image. In the case of an emblematic metaphor, the fostering of its capacity to engage the imagination presents a particular challenge, and is a task which may require much work and study.

### ***C. A Polyvalent Image***

The bridal image is an evocative and multi-layered metaphor which escapes simple categorization and explanation. This evocative quality is a result certainly of the accumulation of meanings and associations over time, but it also seems to flow from the nature and depth of the bridal image itself and from its capacity to relate to various human realities and experience while also retaining a certain amount of ambiguity. Paschasius' words cited at the beginning of this study encapsulate the point very well and serve as a succinct commentary on the history of

ecclesial bridal imagery: “Few, and only with difficulty, have understood how Christ can be called spouse and the Church his wife and bride.”<sup>101</sup>

Four points may serve to summarize the challenge in approaching and understanding ecclesial bridal imagery. First, the multiplicity of ecclesial images, combined with the polyvalence of the bridal image, gives the appearance that certain images are in conflict.<sup>102</sup> Interpretation is required. How is the Body at the same time the Bride? How is the People of God one “person,” one Bride? The bridal image, and any ecclesial image for that matter, does not fit readily into an ordered system.

Second, the term “bride” has a history of varied senses and meanings. This study cannot explore all the nuances involved in the meaning of the term “bride” or “spouse” over the course of history and through various languages and cultures, but those nuances are presupposed and are important. The use of the English term “bride” in Western culture is fairly stunted and transitory. Most usually the term is restricted to a woman on the day of her wedding. However, throughout the history of the people of Israel and of the Church, the terms representing “bride” or “spouse” encompassed broader categories, including a betrothed or engaged woman or wife. The Latin term *sponsa* encompassed these broader meanings as well. This wider usage has practical applications. For example, how the Church can be called the “bride” now, even while she remains on her way toward the eschatological marriage with Christ in the kingdom, can be understood more readily in light of the more extensive range of meanings of the term “bride,” a range not immediately evident to contemporary Western culture. Therefore, although the term *sponsa* (and related terms) is regularly translated here as “bride,” this study uses the term “bride”

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101. *Expositio in Matheo* 11, 25.10. See chapter one above, p. 7n2.

102. See Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*, 222.

as an all-embracing term, inclusive of various possible spousal realities (from betrothal to marriage). Context becomes all the more important in the understanding of the meaning and function of a particular use of ecclesial bridal imagery.

Third, as outlined above, metaphors may operate within a larger symbolic and/or analogical context. It is the potential symbolic and analogical implications of metaphor that largely provoke contemporary questions about the significance and value of ecclesial bridal imagery. In other words, how far does the bridal metaphor extend? Does it reach into the very nature of the Church? Does it say something about human nature? Is it capable of illuminating even the very mystery of God in himself? Or is it an image that needs to be contained within strict limits so as to avoid grand connections and conclusions and in order to steer away from potential over-literalization? These are all important questions that bear upon the complexity and the various possibilities of ecclesial bridal imagery. The sacramentality of marriage makes these questions particularly fascinating, as the sacrament is already an example in the positive sense of the potential extra-linguistic symbolic implications bound up within the bridal image.

Finally, the various ways and contexts in which the bridal metaphor has been used can make interpretation a daunting (though exciting) task. Bridal imagery has been used in reference to the Church in relation to Christ, the soul in relation to Christ, the local Church in relation to the bishop, the consecrated virgin in relation to Christ, Mary in relation to God, Mary in relation to the Holy Spirit, Mary in relation to Christ, and the liturgical congregation in relation to the minister. It has also been employed to convey or evoke a kind of analogical relation between married love and the mystery of the Trinity.<sup>103</sup> With regard to the Church, the use of the imagery

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103. See Angelo Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, trans. Michelle K. Borrás (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 9, 213-14 and 232-38.

has varied at times, referring, for example, to the universal Church, the hierarchy alone, the laity alone, the earthly Church, or the heavenly Church.<sup>104</sup> Effort and care are needed for a proper examination and evaluation of the significance of bridal imagery. Overall, it may be said that the capacity of a metaphor to adapt to various usages and thus to carry within itself an inner fluidity down through the centuries is a sign of the metaphor's resilience and vigor in the ebb and flow which is part of the normal life of a valued metaphor as it passes through different times and cultures.

#### **IV. Basic Parameters of this Study of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery in Magisterial Teaching**

Because this study of magisterial teaching spans more than a century of teaching, basic parameters are necessary to ensure a fruitful and focused examination.

##### ***A. The Focus of the Study***

This study's principal focus is the use of *ecclesial* bridal imagery, and therefore it will concentrate on how bridal imagery has been used with specific reference to the Church in papal and conciliar teaching from Pope Leo XIII to Pope John Paul II. However, as history demonstrates, ecclesial bridal imagery has often been interwoven with other, more general uses of bridal and spousal imagery, and so this study will be attentive to those other uses in magisterial teaching only insofar as they relate to the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ.

As an interanimation theory of metaphor illustrates, metaphor is more than a matter of select words or sentences, and it does not follow a set formula or structure. Context is thus vital for the identification and meaning of metaphor. In this light, the presence of a bridal metaphor

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104. See Tromp, "Ecclesia Sponsa Virgo Mater."



may manifest itself in a variety of ways, whether explicitly through key terms or implicitly through other references and allusions. Therefore, this study of ecclesial bridal imagery in magisterial teaching will investigate a broad field of terms and references and will attend to the context of usage in order to identify and analyze the use and meaning of bridal imagery. In other words, the nature of a metaphor as an “interanimation” of terms and associations (words, sentences, thoughts, conceptual systems) within the contextual framework of an utterance will govern the types of examples sought and highlighted. Much more is involved than looking simply for a verbally explicit identification of the Church as “the Bride of Christ.”

At the same time, while considerations of metaphor theory will be important, the study remains attentive to the fact that larger theological questions remain at play beyond the operation of the ecclesial bridal image *qua* metaphor. Ultimately, the image must be approached and interpreted theologically.

The range of papal and conciliar teaching to be examined will be limited generally to instances of teaching with a more evident public and universal character. Letters to dignitaries or specific communities, private homilies and messages, or documents strictly for localized communities will be mostly excluded from this study. References to particular addresses or local letters will be included insofar as they illustrate a specific tendency or contain a significant use of bridal imagery.

### ***B. Approaching Magisterial Teaching***

Magisterial teaching includes a variety of genres and levels of authority.<sup>105</sup> This variety is manifest within both papal and conciliar teaching. A study which examines multiple levels of teaching and documents needs to be generally aware of this inherent variety and cannot approach every document in the same fashion.

It has been increasingly recognized that councils are best understood as “events” of the Church, that is, as living instantiations of the whole Church *in actu*.<sup>106</sup> In practical terms, this means that a full understanding of a particular conciliar text involves more than a parsing of the text itself but also attention to the context out of which the text arose and to the subsequent reception of the text. In an analogous way, papal documents and teachings can be considered as “events” whose context deserves attention. Chapter one has considered the theological context of these events in the twentieth century and also their context within the overall history of the Church. Some further indications of the historical context of particular pontificates will be provided in the following chapters. However, a complete examination of the history and context of particular magisterial documents, including their textual development and reception, is obviously beyond this study’s purview.

This study’s approach to instances of magisterial teaching nevertheless presumes the unique and proper significance of the final text, a significance also acknowledged in philosophical hermeneutics. Such significance is distinct from the path towards the text and even from the reception of the text, however important both of those dimensions may be to the

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105. See Francis A. Sullivan, *Creative Fidelity: Weighing and Interpreting Documents of the Magisterium* (New York: Paulist, 1996).

106. See Komonchak, “Vatican II as an ‘Event’,” *Theological Digest* 46.4 (1999): 337-52.

overall understanding of a text. The final text has an inherent authority of its own as a primary reference point. Paul Ricoeur has spoken of *distanciation*,<sup>107</sup> which in simple terms involves the distinction of text from author, context and reader, or the “independence” of the text.<sup>108</sup> Consequently, in addition to the recognition of the unique nature of magisterial authority—a recognition presupposed in this study—it is also possible to justify a particular attention to magisterial teaching/documents *qua* final texts in accordance with contemporary philosophical hermeneutics. Such an approach avoids a naïve fundamentalism toward the text but is also grounded in the text’s authority and independence *qua* text.

Finally, the term “magisterium” needs to be clarified in relation to the papal and conciliar teaching to be investigated. A guiding presupposition of this work is that the magisterium is both “one” and “many.” Throughout the history of the Church there have been many papal and conciliar “magisteriums.” In this sense, the Church’s magisterium is always situated within a particular historical period. At the same time, however, the Church’s magisterium transcends one particular, historical period. Theologically understood, there is only one magisterium, one living teaching office of the Church, which is manifest and expressed in various yet complementary

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107. See P. Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation,” 131-44. The concept of “distanciation” rests on an understanding of the nature of a text as “written discourse.” J. Thompson describes the “four principal forms” of distanciation according to Ricoeur as follows (see *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 13-14): (1) “the surpassing of the event of saying by the meaning of what is said”; (2) the lack of coincidence “between the inscribed expression and the original speaker”; (3) “a similar discrepancy between the inscribed expression and the original audience”; and (4) “the emancipation of the text from the limits of ostensive reference.”

108. “[The] triple independence of the text with regard to its author, its context, and its initial audience explains why texts are open to innumerable ‘recontextualizations’ through listening and reading that are a reply to the ‘decontextualization’ already contained in the very act of writing or, more exactly, of publication.” Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 219. On the idea of certain texts as classic, see David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 99-153. See also H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 285-90.

and inseparable forms throughout history.<sup>109</sup> While the study will trace its way through particular “magisteriums,” the theological truth of the existence of *one* magisterium is presupposed and will bear especially upon the question of continuity/newness, as well as on the analysis and evaluation of the use of ecclesial bridal imagery.

### ***C. Review of Key Terms***

The technical terms which will be employed in this study’s analysis of ecclesial bridal imagery include “tenor,” “vehicle,” “signal term,” and “qualifier.”<sup>110</sup> The tenor is the underlying subject of the metaphor (e.g., the Church), which may or may not be explicit in a verbal way—hence the need for additional context to determine the precise referent of the metaphor’s subject (e.g., universal Church, the hierarchy, and so on). The vehicle is that which is said of the subject in the context of the metaphor (e.g., the Bride of Christ who waits confidently for the Lord), and it may include specific words as well as extra-utterance associations.<sup>111</sup> The signal term, for the purpose of this study, is the element of the vehicle that indicates that a bridal or spousal metaphor is at work. The signal term could be as simple as the term *sponsa* or it might consist of a combined reference to Christ’s “love for the Church” and a citation of Ephesians 5. Finally, the qualifier is also an element of the vehicle and serves to qualify the vehicle in a particular way. The qualifier contributes to the overall function and significance of the particular metaphor and,

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109. See Avery Dulles, *Magisterium: Teacher and Guardian of the Faith* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007), 2-3. For further background on a theology of the magisterium, see also Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Teaching with Authority: A Theology of the Magisterium in the Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997); and Francis A. Sullivan, *Magisterium: Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church* (New York, Paulist, 1983).

110. On these terms, see p. 79 above.

111. For a clarification of what is meant by the term “association,” one might take as an example speaking of “marriage as the sign of Christ’s union with the Church.” There is no explicit term referring to the Church as “bride,” but because of the particular use of the terms “marriage,” “sign,” and “Christ’s union,” one familiar with the traditional usage of these terms in this context would already associate the Church here with being the Bride of Christ. This association is a key component of the vehicle of this particular metaphor.

for the purpose of this study, consists of key themes and patterns associated with the use of bridal imagery, such as the holiness, unity, and dignity of the Church as the Bride of Christ or the use of the imagery in connection with the sacrament of marriage.

## **V. Conclusion**

Metaphors have a potentially fascinating and dangerous power both in what they may or may not convey. Ecclesial bridal imagery is a significant metaphor which has proven resilient and flexible over the course of its history. By its nature, the theological interpretation of ecclesial metaphors cannot remain at the level of linguistics but must be open to assessing the theological significance of what a metaphor might be saying about the reality of the Church. Instead of a view of theological discourse which would have it hover at a critical level over and against metaphors and imagery—or, even more dramatically, which would seek simply to translate and eliminate metaphor from any form of theological or scientific discourse—this study advocates a dialogic approach between first-order and second-order discourse. Such an approach respects the potential disclosure offered by metaphor and acknowledges the need for theology to be in close relationship with the inspired word of Scripture as interpreted through Tradition. Not only may the systematic rigor of ecclesiology bring an important corrective or order to ecclesial imagery, but an ecclesial image may also serve as an important corrective or re-ordering principle to one's ecclesiology, perhaps recalling insights long forgotten or dangerously ignored as well as disclosing new connections and understandings that may serve to advance one's thinking and understanding.

## Chapter Three

### In Defense of the Immaculate Bride: Ecclesial Bridal Imagery in the Teaching of Pope Leo XIII, Pope Pius X, Pope Benedict XV, and Pope Pius XI

Marriage ... is a sacrament, because it is a holy sign which gives grace, showing forth an image of the mystical nuptials [*imaginem referens mysticarum nuptiarum*] of Christ with the Church.

—Pope Leo XIII (1880)<sup>1</sup>

Is it not rather the case that in all God's advances to man there is more than an offer of relationship; there is a truly nuptial intention [*une véritable intention nuptiale*]?... A spouse [*épouse*] was needed to engender the new Israel; a spouse ever young and immortal and who engenders for Eternity [*qui engendre pour l'Éternité*].

—Humbert Clérissac (1917)<sup>2</sup>

This dissertation's examination of ecclesial bridal imagery in magisterial teaching begins with the early range of late nineteenth to twentieth-century papal teaching spanning from Pope Leo XIII to Pope Pius XI. The title of this chapter highlights the characteristic style in which ecclesial bridal imagery was applied at this time—a style that accentuated the unique juridical, authoritative, and institutional qualities of the Church as a “perfect society” in the face of challenges to her authority and relevance. These challenges largely came from the increasing secularization of society and the phenomenon of modernism.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the quotes above indicate recognition of the importance of the categories of mystery and of nuptiality in the early years of the range that concerns this study. Juridical categories were certainly not exclusive.

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1. Encyclical *Arcanum divinae* (February 10, 1880), no. 24 [LA 2, 26].

2. *Le Mystère de l'Église*, 20 and 29. English translation taken from *The Mystery of the Church* (1937), 15 and 21.

3. Various political crises arose in the aftermath of the French Revolution and Napoleon's conquests. For example, the Church's loss of the Papal States and the demise of the traditional Christian nation profoundly affected the life of the Church. Issues of Church and state continued to be of concern. Modernism emerged within an environment where the intellectual life of Christians had previously been tested by the range of skepticism, atheism, and nihilism present in thinkers such as Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, and those in the school of Liberal Protestant Theology. For further background, see O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 54; Komonchak, “Modernity,” 357ff; and John Saward, *The Way of the Lamb: The Spirit of Childhood and the End of the Age* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), 8-24. As Komonchak notes about the Catholic imagination in this period: “The reigning symbolic context was still that of a warfare.” Komonchak, “Modernity,” 370-71.

The ecclesial bridal imagery of this period of papal teaching remained relatively undeveloped. Therefore this chapter will consist of a concise exposition of the key themes and patterns of the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in each pontificate, with brief reference to contextual background as necessary.

## I. Pope Leo XIII

The pontificate of Pope Leo XIII<sup>4</sup> (1878-1903) was one of the longest in the history of the Church. It oversaw the beginnings of various movements of renewal that would blossom in the twentieth century and have a lasting effect on the shape of Catholic theology and the life of the Church through the end of the century. Leo XIII's teaching was considerable and included eighty-six encyclical letters and epistles. He addressed a wide range of issues, including socialism, communism, and nihilism, the renewal of scholastic philosophy under the inspiration of St. Thomas Aquinas, marriage, liberty, the working classes, the study of Scripture, consecration to the Sacred Heart, the Eucharist, "Americanism," the reunification of Christendom, and the unity of the Church.<sup>5</sup> A repeated concern was the preservation of Christian states and governments in the face of the perceived threat of a radical separation between Church and State, to the detriment of the Church and her liberty.

Leo acknowledged and contributed to movements of renewal in various ways. He encouraged a return to the study of St. Thomas in order to renew the foundations of Christian education and counter questionable philosophies. He opened the Vatican archives to historians,

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4. Vincenzo Gioacchino Raffaele Luigi Pecci (1810-1903).

5. For a complete collection of Leo XIII's encyclical letters in English, see Claudia Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878-1903* (Ypsilanti, MI: Pieran, 1990). For a one-volume selection of Leo XIII's encyclical letters plus other select documents in English, see *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII* (Rockford, IL: TAN, 1995 [originally published by Benziger Brothers, 1903]).

and he also called for a greater study of Scripture, as a result establishing the Pontifical Biblical Commission.<sup>6</sup> Leo's encyclical letter on the Eucharist, *Mirae caritatis*, acknowledged the growth of liturgical movements.<sup>7</sup> His apostolic letter on the reunification of Christendom, *Praeclara gratulationis*, came at a time when the initial buds of the ecumenical movement were beginning to form.<sup>8</sup> Leo's "social encyclical," *Rerum novarum*, invited the Church to address the pressing social needs stemming from the Industrial Revolution and began a rich development of Catholic social teaching based on the two principles of the intrinsic dignity of the human person and the common good.<sup>9</sup>

Leo's encyclical letter on the Church, *Satis cognitum*, accorded a significant place to the idea of the Church as a perfect society as well as to the image of the Church as the Body of Christ.<sup>10</sup> In particular, Leo emphasized the importance of unity and the fundamental role of the

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6. See Thomas Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, rev. and expd. ed. (New York: Image/Doubleday, 1990), 297.

7. See Encyclical *Mirae caritatis* (May 28, 1902), nos. 17-19 [LA 22, 132-36].

8. Apostolic Letter *Praeclara Gratulationis* (June 20, 1894). See also Gregory Baum, *That They May Be One: A Study of Papal Doctrine (Leo XIII – Pius XII)* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1958), vii.

9. On the dignity of the human person, see Encyclical *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891), nos. 20, 36 and 40; on the common good, see nos. 32, 34-35, 38 and 51 [LA 11, 110-11 and 124-27 (*hominis dignitas*); 120-24 (*bonum commune*)].

10. On the priority Leo seemed to attribute to the idea of the Church as a perfect society, though in connection to the image of the Church as the Body of Christ, see Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, no. 10 [LA 16, 184]: "God indeed even made the Church a society far more perfect than any other.... For this reason we find it called in holy writ by names indicating a perfect society.... Finally it is the *body of Christ*—that is, of course, His *mystical* body, but a body living and duly organized and composed of many members..." On other uses of the image of the Church as the Body of Christ, see *Satis cognitum*, nos. 3 and 5 [LA 16, 160-161 and 166-167]. See also Louis Bouyer, *The Church of God*, 93-104; Granfield, "The Church as *Societas Perfecta*," 434-435; and Markey, *Creative Communion*, 35-37. On the connection between Leo's teaching and the First Vatican Council and the Roman school, see Congar, *L'Église*, 451n3 and 464.



Holy Spirit in the Church.<sup>11</sup> Leo also considered the relationship between Mary and the Church, thus anticipating a key development of twentieth-century ecclesiology.<sup>12</sup>

### **A. Key Themes and Patterns in Leo XIII's Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery**

Leo XIII's use of the bridal image for the Church was scattered throughout his teaching and remained on the whole undeveloped. Nevertheless, various themes and patterns of usage associated with the imagery emerged in his teaching and will be considered below.

#### **1. The unity and beauty of the mystical and immaculate Bride of Christ**

On various occasions, Leo XIII used ecclesial bridal imagery in reference to the spotless holiness, unity, mystical quality, and beauty of the Church. The Church is the *immaculata Sponsa*<sup>13</sup> and *mystica Sponsa*<sup>14</sup> of Christ. The spousal union (*connubium, nuptiae*) between Christ and the Church is “mystical.”<sup>15</sup> The Church's unity flows from her union with her one spouse, Jesus, and this unity is an aspect of the beauty (*pulchritudo*) of the Church.<sup>16</sup> Leo elsewhere spoke of the development of liturgical rites as a manifestation of the splendor of the Church as the Bride of Christ, a splendor foreshadowed (*adumbrata*) in Psalm 45 [44]:14-15.<sup>17</sup> Finally, as immaculate, the Church stands apart from the various sects of the world. Leo cited the phrase from the Song of Songs, “a garden enclosed is my sister, my bride,” and explained that these words referred to the

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11. See Congar, *L'Église*, 450-51.

12. See Congar, *L'Église*, 454-55.

13. See Apostolic Letter *Hortus conclusus* (December 15, 1881) [LA 2, 474]; Apostolic Letter *Quod Ioannes vidit* (July 27, 1900) [LA 20, 204-5]; and Apostolic Letter *Annum ingressi* (March 19, 1902) [LA 22, 80].

14. See Motu Proprio *Ut mysticam Sponsam* (March 14, 1891) [LA 11, 60].

15. Encyclical *Arcanum divinae* (February 10, 1880), nos. 9 and 24 [LA 2, 16 and 26].

16. See Encyclical *Satis cognitum* (June 29, 1896), nos. 1, 5, 11 and 16 [LA 16, pp. 157-58, 167, 186 and 207].

17. See Apostolic Letter *Orientalium dignitatis* (November 30, 1894), no. 7 [LA 14, 361].

immaculate Bride of Christ so as “to distinguish her from the sects of infidels and heretics,” in order that people would know whom to follow in matters of eternal salvation.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. The Church as the beloved Bride of Christ

Leo also used ecclesial bridal imagery to convey that the Church is beloved by Christ. Citing Ephesians 5, he observed that Christ’s love for the Church is the “most chaste and perpetual” of loves.<sup>19</sup> The Church is the beloved Bride of Christ (*dilecta Christi sponsa*), even most beloved (*dilectissima*).<sup>20</sup> She is united in “intimate and unchangeable charity” (*intima atque incommutabilis caritas*) with Christ her Bridegroom.<sup>21</sup> As Christ loves the Church, so also should men and women of the Church foster a similar love of the Church in their hearts.<sup>22</sup>

## 3. The dignity and innocence of the bridal Church in the face of adversity and persecution

In his first encyclical letter, *Inscrutabili Dei consilio*, Leo XIII noted that the source of the various evils experienced in the world mainly stemmed from the fact that “the holy and venerable authority of the Church ... has been despised and set aside.”<sup>23</sup> These words indicate the context for much of Leo XIII’s treatment of the Church as well as some of his use of ecclesial bridal imagery. Pope Leo subsequently quoted Pope Gregory XVI, noting that “all kinds of machinations of the infernal enemy harass the beloved spouse of Christ [*dilectam Christi*

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18. Apostolic Letter *Hortus conclusus* (December 15, 1881) [LA 2, 474].

19. Encyclical *Quod Apostolici muneris* (December 28, 1878), no. 8 [LA 1, 178].

20. See Encyclical *Sancta Dei civitas* (December 3, 1880), no. 3 [LA 2, 172]; Apostolic Letter *Umbria gloriosa sanctorum parens* (May 24, 1900) [LA 20, 135].

21. Encyclical *Exeunte iam anno* (December 25, 1888), no. 14 [LA 8, 409].

22. Encyclical *Satis cognitum* (June 29, 1896), no. 1 [LA 16, 158].

23. Encyclical *Inscrutabili Dei consilio* (April 21, 1878), no. 3 [LA 1, 45].

*sponsam*].”<sup>24</sup> Leo would later observe: “To bring contempt and odium on the mystical Spouse of Christ, who [i.e., Christ] is the true light, the children of darkness have been wont to cast in her face before the world a stupid calumny, and perverting the meaning and force of things and words, to depict her as the friend of darkness and ignorance, and the enemy of light, science, and progress.”<sup>25</sup> As the mystical Bride, the Church is alien to the world’s darkness and innocent in the face of attacks.

Leo XIII elsewhere described the delicate honesty with which the historian should address “the trials which the faults of her children [*ses enfants*], and at times even of her ministers, have brought upon the Spouse of Christ [*Epouse du Christ*] during the course of the centuries.”<sup>26</sup> In reviewing his pontificate and the challenges before the Church, Leo recounted the struggles and constant persecution through history, remarking: “So has been transmitted from age to age the melancholy heritage of hatred by which the Church has been overwhelmed.”<sup>27</sup> At the end of his review, Leo looked hopefully towards the final coming of Jesus who is “the most loving and wisest guardian of his immaculate Bride [*sponsa immaculata*].”<sup>28</sup>

#### 4. Christian marriage as the sign of Christ’s love for the Church

Pope Leo XIII frequently referred to aspects of Ephesians 5:21-33 in his use of ecclesial bridal imagery within the context of Christian marriage and family life. Christian marriage, as a sacrament, signifies Christ’s union (*coniunctio*) with the Church and provides help to parents and

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24. Encyclical *Sancta Dei civitas* (December 3, 1880), no. 3 [LA 2, 172]. See also Apostolic Constitution *Praedecessores Nostri* (May 24, 1882) [PA 1, 294].

25. Motu Proprio *Ut mysticam sponsam* (March 14, 1891) [LA 11, 60].

26. Encyclical *Depuis le jour* (September 8, 1899), no. 26 [LA 19, 26].

27. Apostolic Letter *Annum ingressi* (March 19, 1902) [LA 22, 57].

28. Apostolic Letter *Annum ingressi* [LA 22, 80].

children for attaining happiness.<sup>29</sup> As the family is the cornerstone of society, Leo recalled the foundational place of marriage which Christ “chose to use ... as the form of His own union with the Church” (*et suae cum Ecclesia unionis formam voluit referre*).<sup>30</sup> Citing Ephesians 5:23, Leo spoke of the relationship between husband and wife: “...as Christ is the head of the Church, so is the man the head of the woman; and as the Church is subject to Christ, who embraces her with a most chaste and undying love [*et quemadmodum Ecclesia subiecta est Christo, qui eam castissimo perpetuoque amore complectitur*], so also should wives be subject to their husbands, and be loved by them in turn with a faithful and constant affection.”<sup>31</sup>

Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical letter on marriage, *Arcanum divinae*, contained multiple references to the sign-value of marriage in relation to the union of Christ and the Church. Marriage is “wonderfully conformed to the model of the mystical marriage between [Christ] and His Church” (*ad exemplar mystici connubii sui cum Ecclesia mire conformato*).<sup>32</sup> In reference to Ephesians 5:32, the sacrament of marriage itself is the “great mystery [*sacramentum*],” which is “to be revered as an image and sign of the highest realities” (*rerum altissimarum imagine et significatione verendum*).<sup>33</sup> In marriage, the husband serves as an image (*imaginem ... referre*) of Christ and the wife as an image of the Church.<sup>34</sup> God is the author of marriage, which was “even from the beginning a kind of foreshadowing [*quaedam ... adumbratio*] of the Incarnation of His Son,”

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29. Encyclical *Inscrutabili Dei consilio* (April 21, 1878), no. 14 [LA 1, 54].

30. Encyclical *Quod Apostolici muneris* (December 28, 1878), no. 8 [LA 1, 178].

31. Encyclical *Quod Apostolici muneris*, no. 8 [LA 1, 178].

32. Encyclical *Arcanum divinae* (February 10, 1880), no. 9 [LA 2, 16].

33. Encyclical *Arcanum divinae*, no. 9 [LA 2, 16].

34. Encyclical *Arcanum divinae*, no. 11 [LA 2, 18].

and therefore marriage contains something holy by its very nature (*sed natura insitum*).<sup>35</sup> As a sacrament, the significance of marriage as a natural institution is heightened, specified, and fulfilled as it were, and marriage is now “an image of the mystical nuptials of Christ with the Church” (*et imaginem referens mysticarum nuptiarum Christi cum Ecclesia*).<sup>36</sup> “[T]he form and figure [*forma ac figura*] of these nuptials is shown precisely by the very bond [*vinculo*] of that greatest union [*summae coniunctionis*] in which man and woman are bound together in one; which bond is nothing other than the marriage itself [*nisi ipsum matrimonium*].”<sup>37</sup>

*Arcanum divinae* contained a significant portion of Leo XIII’s early use of ecclesial bridal imagery. The variety of vocabulary which was employed to refer to marriage’s “sign-value” (*forma, figura, imago, significatio*, and *ad exemplar conformata*), as well as the inclusion of the terms *mysticum connubium* and *mysticae nuptiae* to refer to Christ’s union with the Church (*mystica* being an important qualifier), conveyed a sense of the mysterious/sacramental quality of the relation between human marriage and Christ’s union with the Church. The various terms are similar but not the same, and a wealth of potential meaning lies latent and unsystematized.

## 5. Church as Bride and Mother

The use of maternal imagery for the Church was frequent in Pope Leo XIII’s teachings, and Leo utilized the image of the Church as mother more often than that of bride.<sup>38</sup> Much of

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35. Encyclical *Arcanum divinae*, no. 19 [LA 2, 22].

36. Encyclical *Arcanum divinae*, no. 24 [LA 2, 26].

37. Encyclical *Arcanum divinae*, no. 24 [LA 2, 26].

38. For examples of ecclesial maternal imagery in Leo XIII, see Apostolic Letter *Ex supremo Apostolatus apice* (March 4, 1878) [LA 1, 4]; Encyclical *Inscrutabili Dei consilio* (April 21, 1878), no. 5 [LA 1, 47]; Encyclical *Diuturnum* (June 29, 1881), no. 26 [LA 2, 286]; Apostolic Letter *Ex hac angustia* (July 5, 1881) [LA 2, 288-289 and 292]; Apostolic Letter *Singulari prorsus beneficio* (December 15, 1881) [LA 2, 469]; Encyclical *Etsi nos* (February 15, 1882), nos. 17 and 20 [LA 3, 23 and 26]; Encyclical *Cum multa* (December 8, 1882), no. 9 [LA 3, 174]; Encyclical *Misericors Dei Filius* (May 30, 1883), no. 1 [LA 3, 225-26]; Encyclical *Nobilissima Gallorum gens* (February 10, 1884), no.

Leo's use of ecclesial maternal imagery conveyed the Church's liberty, rights, and her special place in the history of Catholic nations.<sup>39</sup> Leo used bridal imagery for the Church in close proximity with maternal imagery in a few instances.<sup>40</sup> For example, speaking of the true disciples of Christ, Leo observed: "Of these [disciples] the mother and guide, the leader and guardian is

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8 [LA 4, 20]; Encyclical *Humanum genus* (April 20, 1884), no. 29 [LA 4, 63]; Apostolic Letter *Materna Ecclesiae caritatis* (November 10, 1884) [LA 4, 178]; Encyclical *Immortale Dei* (November 1, 1885), nos. 15, 43 and 46 [LA 5, pp. 128, 145, and 147]; Encyclical *Iampridem* (January 6, 1886), no. 6 [LA 6, 7]; Encyclical *Quod multam* (August 22, 1886), no. 2 [LA 6, 149]; Apostolic Letter *Humanae salutis auctor* (September 1, 1886) [LA 6, 165]; Encyclical *Officio sanctissimo* (December 22, 1887), nos. 10 and 12 [LA 7, 233 and 239]; Apostolic Letter *Angelorum et Sanctorum* (January 22, 1888) [LA 8, 82]; Encyclical *In plurimis* (May 5, 1888), nos. 7, 9 and 22 [LA 8, pp. 176, 178 and 191]; Encyclical *Libertas* (June 20, 1888), no. 33 [LA 8, 239]; Encyclical *Exeunte iam anno* (December 25, 1888), nos. 2 and 14 [LA 8, 394 and 409]; Encyclical *Quamquam pluries* (August 15, 1889), no. 5 [LA 9, 181]; Encyclical *Sapientiae christianae* (January 10, 1890), nos. 4 and 6 [LA 10, 13-14]; Apostolic Letter *Viris morum sanctitate* (February 9, 1890) [LA 10, 75]; Encyclical *Dall'alto dell'Apostolico Seggio* (October 15, 1890), no. 18 [LA 10, 266]; Encyclical *Catholicae ecclesiae* (November 20, 1890), no. 1 [LA 10, 312]; Encyclical *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891), nos. 30 and 57 [LA 11, 119 and 140]; Encyclical *Pastoralis* (June 25, 1891), no. 9 [LA 11, 214]; Encyclical *Pastoralis officii* (September 12, 1891), no. 3 [LA 11, 285]; Encyclical *Octobri mense* (September 22, 1891), nos. 11 and 13 [LA 11, 312 and 315]; Apostolic Letter *Quo magis fidelium* (May 16, 1892) [LA 12, 129]; Encyclical *Custodi di quella fede* (December 8, 1892), no. 6 [LA 12, 335]; Apostolic Letter *Humani generis* (February 3, 1893) [LA 13, 29]; Apostolic Letter *Sapientissimo Dei consilio* (March 4, 1893) [LA 13, 60-61]; Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* (November 18, 1893), no. 17 et al. [LA 13, 351]; Encyclical *Caritatis* (March 19, 1894), nos. 4 and 11 [LA 14, 67-68 and 79]; Encyclical *Inter graves* (May 1, 1894), no. 4 [LA 14, 136]; Apostolic Letter *In sublimi* (May 10, 1894) [LA 14, 152]; Apostolic Letter *Praeclara* (June 20, 1894) [LA 14, pp. 199, 205-206, and 212]; Encyclical *Christi nomen* (December 24, 1894), no. 1 [LA 14, 405]; Encyclical *Longinqua* (January 6, 1895), nos. 2, 6 and 20 [LA 15, pp. 4, 7, and 20]; Apostolic Letter *Amantissimae voluntatis* (April 14, 1895) [LA 15]; Apostolic Letter *Provida matris caritate* (May 5, 1895) [LA 15, 184]; Apostolic Letter *Unitatis christianae* (June 11, 1895) [LA 15, 236]; Encyclical *Adiutricem* (September 5, 1895), nos. 16 and 27 [LA 15, 306 and 310]; Apostolic Letter *Cum sicut* (September 24, 1895) [LA 15, 336]; Apostolic Letter *Magni commemoratio eventus* (January 8, 1896) [LA 16, 19]; Encyclical *Insignes* (May 1, 1896), no. 19 [LA 16, 119]; Encyclical *Satis cognitum* (June 29, 1896), nos. 1, 5, 9, 11, 13 and 16 [LA 16, pp. 158, 167, 179, 181, 193 and 206-8]; Apostolic Letter *Apostolicae curae* (September 13, 1896) [LA 16, 258 and 274]; Encyclical *Fidentem piumque animum* (September 20, 1896), no. 4 [LA 16, 285]; Apostolic Constitution *Officiorum ac munerum* (January 25, 1897) [LA 17, 21-22]; Encyclical *Divinum illud munus* (May 9, 1897), nos. 1 and 3 [LA 17, 125 and 129]; Encyclical *Affari vos* (December 8, 1897), no. 1 [LA 17, 336]; Apostolic Letter *Quum nobis* (June 17, 1898) [LA 18, 67]; Encyclical *Caritatis stadium* (July 25, 1898), no. 3 [LA 18, 104]; Apostolic Letter *Properante ad exitum saeculo* (May 11, 1899) [LA 19, 64]; Encyclical *Depuis le jour* (September 8, 1899), nos. 26 and 49 [LA 19, 173 and 188]; Apostolic Letter *Umbria gloriosa sanctorum parens* (May 24, 1900) [LA 20, 134]; Apostolic Letter *Temporis quidem sacri* (December 25, 1900) [LA 20, 353]; Apostolic Letter *Annum ingressi* (March 19, 1902) [LA 22, pp. 66, 76 and 79]; Encyclical *Mirae caritatis* (May 28, 1902), no. 15 [LA 22, 131]; Apostolic Letter *Ad sinum* (July 31, 1902) [LA 22, 164-65]; Apostolic Letter *Vigilantiae studiique memores* (October 30, 1902) [LA 22, 235]; Encyclical *Fin dal principio* (December 8, 1902), no. 18 [LA 22, 258].

39. For examples of this usage, see Encyclical *Inscrutabili Dei consilio* (April 21, 1878), no. 5 [LA 1, 47]; Encyclical *Octobri mense* (September 22, 1891), no. 13 [LA 11, 315]; Apostolic Letter *Praeclara* (June 20, 1894) [LA 14, pp. 99, 206 and 212]; Encyclical *Affari vos* (December 8, 1897), no. 1 [LA 17, 336]. Leo XIII also spoke of the "Catholic religion" as the mother of human civilization, see Apostolic Letter *Ex hac augusta* (July 5, 1881) [LA 2, 288: "...ut catholica religio, mater et magistra omnis rectae disciplinae omnisque civilis humanitatis..."].

40. For example, see Encyclical *In plurimis* (May 5, 1888), no. 22 [LA 8, 191]; Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, no. 16 [LA 16, 206-8].

the Church; which being united [*copulatur*] to Christ her spouse in intimate and unchangeable charity is also joined [*coniungitur*] to Him by a common cause of battle and of victory.”<sup>41</sup>

## 6. Church as Body and Bride

Leo coupled ecclesial bridal and bodily imagery together in a few instances, though the link remained undeveloped. He referred to those persons already called to the heavenly nuptials of the Lamb (an allusion to the Book of Revelation) and united in the mystical Body of Christ (*ad nuptias Agni caelestis iam vocata, ac mystico Eius corpori sociata*).<sup>42</sup> Leo cited Ephesians 5:25-27 in reference to Christ’s love for the Church and then spoke of Christ as Head, making intercession for the Church.<sup>43</sup> Leo also quoted Augustine, who described Christ the Head and the Church his Body to be united as bridegroom and bride, “two in one flesh” (*sponsus et sponsa, duo in carne una*).<sup>44</sup>

Elsewhere, Leo alluded to the idea of the Church as the second Eve in close connection to bodily imagery. “The Church which, already conceived [*iam concepta*], came forth from the side of the second Adam in His sleep on the Cross [*ex latere ipso secundi Adami, velut in cruce dormientis*],

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41. Encyclical *Exeunte iam anno*, no. 14 [LA 8, 409]. For other examples, some more implicit than others, see Apostolic Letter *Angelorum et Sanctorum* (January 22, 1888) [LA 8, 82]; Encyclical *In plurimis* (May 5, 1888), no. 22 [LA 8, 191]; Encyclical *Adiutricem* (September 5, 1895), nos. 16 and 27 [LA 15, 306 and 310]; and Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, no. 1 [LA 16, 157-58].

42. Apostolic Constitution *Romanos Pontifices* (May 8, 1881) [LA 2, 231].

43. Encyclical *Octobri mense* (September 22, 1891), no. 10 [LA 11, 310]. Leo would cite this passage elsewhere; see Apostolic Letter *Amantissimae voluntatis* (April 14, 1895) [LA 15, 150].

44. See Encyclical *Satis cognitum* (June 29, 1896), no. 16 [LA 16, 207]. Leo cited Augustine’s *Contra Donatistas Epistola*, or *De Unitatis Ecclesiae*, chap. 4, no. 7.

first showed herself before the eyes of men on the great day of Pentecost. On that day the Holy Ghost began to manifest His gifts in the Mystical Body of Christ [*mystici Christi corporis*]. . .”<sup>45</sup>

## 7. Individual souls, consecrated virgins, and Mary as bride

Leo occasionally applied bridal imagery in reference to individuals. The majority of the instances referred to consecrated virgins as brides of Christ.<sup>46</sup> However, Christ is also the “eternal Bridegroom of souls” [*aeternus animarum sponsus*] who embraces them with his love.<sup>47</sup>

Leo did not refer to Mary explicitly as the Bride of Christ. However, his description of the Incarnation as a spousal reality implied that Mary gave a bridal consent on behalf of all humanity: “The Eternal Son of God, about to take upon Himself our nature for the saving and ennobling of man, and about to consummate thus what might be called [*quoddam*] a mystical union [*mysticum connubium*] between Himself and all mankind [*universum humanum genus*], did not accomplish His design without adding there the free consent [*consensio*] of the elect Mother, who represented in some sort all of humankind [*quae ipsius generis humani personam quodammodo agebat*].”<sup>48</sup>

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45. Encyclical *Divinum illud munus* (May 9, 1897), no. 5 [LA 17, 133]. Leo did not provide any particular patristic references. Various sources are cited in Tromp, “De Nativitate Ecclesiae ex Corde Iesu in Cruce,” 489-527. See also chapter one above, p. 21n52.

46. See Apostolic Letter *Qui omnia potest* (October 1, 1881) [LA 2, 368]; Apostolic Letter *Hortus conclusus* (December 15, 1881) [LA 2, pp. 475, 478-480, and 485]; Apostolic Letter *Hoc mandatum* (May 27, 1897) [LA 17, 172]; Apostolic Letter *Nulla unquam aetate* (April 18, 1900) [LA 20, 52-53]; and Apostolic Letter *Umbria gloriosa sanctorum parens* (May 24, 1900) [LA 20, 135].

47. Apostolic Letter *Hortus conclusus* (December 15, 1881) [LA 2, 474-475]. See also Apostolic Letter *Dilectus* (May 27, 1897) [LA 17, 149]; Apostolic Letter *Hoc mandatum* (May 27, 1897) [LA 17, 172].

48. Encyclical *Octobri mense* (September 22, 1891), no. 4 [LA 11, 303]. With regard to Mary’s representative role, Leo cites Thomas, ST III, q. 30, art. 1.



### ***B. Summary and Analysis of Leo XIII***

Pope Leo XIII's use of ecclesial bridal imagery remained for the most part undeveloped, and he used maternal imagery for the Church more regularly than bridal imagery. His most sustained use of bridal imagery appeared in the context of the sacrament of marriage with reference to Ephesians 5:21-33. The state of marriage and the family remained of special concern to Pope Leo XIII.<sup>49</sup>

The common vehicles<sup>50</sup> in Leo's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor included the signal terms *sponsa* (for the Church) and *sponsus* (for Christ), as well as the terms *forma*, *figura*, *imago*, and *significatio* (for Christian marriage in reference to the union of Christ and the Church), and finally the nouns *connubium*, *nuptiae*, *coniunctio*, *exemplar*, and *unione* and the verbs *copulare* and *coniungere* (for that union itself). Qualifiers included the various expressions of the bridal Church's holiness, purity, beauty, and innocence—the latter often in the face of trials which were sometimes caused by her members—as well as the Church's unity and beloved character. Because of the frequent use of the maternal image and the instances in which maternal imagery was aligned closely with spousal imagery, it could be said that an implicit vehicle of the spousal metaphor was the term *mater* (or *parens*) and related maternal terminology and imagery (e.g., maternal care and fruitfulness).

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49. For example, see Apostolic Letter *Annum ingressi* (March 19, 1902) [LA 22, 60-61]: "It is manifest that if there is not some betterment soon, the bases of society will crumble.... It is in consequence of this condition of things that the social body, beginning with the family, is suffering such serious evils. For the lay State ... has laid its hands on the marriage bond to profane it and has stripped it of its religious character ... it has destroyed the stability of marriage by giving a legal sanction to the licentious institution of divorce.... We say nothing of the innocent offspring of these unions, the children who are abandoned..." English translation taken from *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*.

50. For the use of the terms "vehicle," "signal term," "qualifier," and "tenor," see chapter two above, pp. 77 and 108.

The tenor (underlying subject)<sup>51</sup> of Leo's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor was the Church, understood as the (Roman) Catholic Church, that is, the Church universal. Leo's use of the metaphor tended to imply a distinction between the Church and her members and/or the world, thus intimating a more restrictive sense of the referent of the term "Church" (perhaps the hierarchy at times). Spousal imagery was also applied in reference to individual souls, consecrated virgins, and to the mystery of the Incarnation. Leo was therefore familiar with the broader usage of bridal imagery, even if the various instances were not explicitly integrated into his use of ecclesial imagery.

## II. Pope Saint Pius X

The pontificate of Pope Saint Pius X<sup>52</sup> (1903-1914) inherited an environment which Pope Leo XIII had described as "tend[ing] toward a yet more gloomy future by the abandonment of the great Christian traditions," on account of "the implacable war that is waged against the Church" in all ages, especially the present day.<sup>53</sup> Pius X's years are perhaps best-known for the Modernist crisis, which would have a profound effect on the life of the Church and on the Catholic theological climate up through the Second Vatican Council.<sup>54</sup> His teaching traversed a range of topics, including Christian education, the Immaculate Conception, Modernism, three encyclicals dealing explicitly with the separation of Church and state, Catholic

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51. See chapter two above, pp. 77 and 108.

52. Guiseppe Melchiorre Sarto (1835-1914).

53. Apostolic Letter *Annum ingressi* (March 19, 1902) [LA 22, 53-58]. English translation taken from *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*. For further background on Pius X's difficulties with various governments hostile to the Church, see O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 64; Yves Chiron, *Saint Pius X: Restorer of the Church*, trans. Graham Harrison (Kansas City, MO: Angelus, 2002), 161-85 and 270-71.

54. See O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 68-92; Anthony J. Figueiredo, *The Magisterium-Theology Relationship* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2001), 174-77. For a more lengthy and sympathetic account of Pope Pius X's reaction to Modernism, see Chiron, *Saint Pius X*, 187-245.

Action in Italy, and specific encyclicals on Saint Gregory the Great, Saint Charles Borromeo, and Saint Anselm.<sup>55</sup> In face of the challenges from Modernism and secularism, the Church was often portrayed as on the defensive. Also characteristic of the time was his emphasis on the Church as a society and as an institution. Ultimately, Pius shared Leo XIII's view of the vital role of the Church in maintaining Christian civilization.<sup>56</sup>

These early years of the twentieth century were also a time of burgeoning renewal in many areas, including liturgy, theology, Scripture, and ecumenism. Pius X himself promoted aspects of renewal explicitly and implicitly.<sup>57</sup> Early in his pontificate, Pius X sought to revitalize liturgical participation and piety. He encouraged the use of Gregorian Chant to assist the congregation's participation, called for an increased and more frequent reception of the Eucharist, and he lowered the age of first communicants.<sup>58</sup> He also recognized and encouraged the growing participation of the laity in general (e.g., Catholic Action).<sup>59</sup> In continuity with Leo XIII, he recognized the importance of social action rooted in firm moral and religious

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55. For a complete collection of Pius X's encyclical letters in English, see Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939* (Ypsilanti, MI: The Pierian Press, 1990), 3-138.

56. See Encyclical *Il fermo proposito* (June 11, 1905), no. 4 [PA 2, 115]: "The Church, even in preaching Jesus Christ crucified, 'stumbling block and foolishness to the world,' has become the foremost leader and protector of civilization. [...] She endowed every civilization, gradually, but with a certain and always progressive step, with that excellent mark which is today universally preserved. The civilization of the world is Christian [*La civiltà del mondo è civiltà cristiana*]. The more completely Christian it is, the more true, more lasting and more productive of genuine fruit it is. On the other hand, the further it draws away from the Christian ideal, the more seriously the social order is endangered. By the very nature of things, the Church has consequently become the guardian and protector of Christian society [*della civiltà cristiana*]."

57. See his motto, *Instaurare omnia in Christo*. Encyclical *E supremi*, no. 4 (October 4, 1903) [PA 1, 3]. See also Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, 361.

58. See Motu Proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* (November 22, 1903) and Sacred Congregation on the Discipline of the Sacraments, Decree *Quam singulari* (August 8, 1910). See also O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 73; Congar, *L'Église*, 461; and Chiron, *Saint Pius X*, 139-41 and 288-94.

59. For example, see Encyclical *Il fermo proposito* (June 11, 1905).

principles,<sup>60</sup> and he also founded the Pontifical Biblical Institute.<sup>61</sup> In addition, Pius encouraged continued catechesis for both children and adults, worked to reform seminaries and the Roman Curia, and also began a codification of canon law.<sup>62</sup>

### ***A. Key Themes and Patterns in Pius X's Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery***

Pius X's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was sparse and less extensive than that of Leo XIII, and it was similarly undeveloped. Key themes and patterns of Pius X's use of bridal imagery are presented below.

#### **1. The Church as the beautiful and spotless Bride**

Although Pius X did not refer to the Church directly as the *Sponsa immaculata*, he did describe the Church as spotless (*non habentem maculam*) on account of her union with her Bridegroom and cited Ephesians 5:25-27.<sup>63</sup> Elsewhere, Pius referred to the "immaculate honor" (*l'onore immacolato*) of the Church.<sup>64</sup> He also quoted Leo's reference to the Church as *mystica Sponsa Christi*.<sup>65</sup> The Church, the divine Bride (*divina Sponsa*), has particular beauty, despite those who

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60. See Chiron, *Saint Pius X*, 247-68.

61. Leo XIII had planned to found an institute but died before it could take shape. See Pius X, Apostolic Letter *Scripturae sanctae* (February 23, 1904). See O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 71; Chiron, *Saint Pius X*, 216-24.

62. See Chiron, *Saint Pius X*, 146-49, 156-60, and 283-88; O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 65.

63. See Address *Amplissimum coetum vestrum* (March 27, 1905) [PA 2, 66]; Encyclical *Editae saepe* (May 26, 1910), no. 6 [AAS 2, 360].

64. Encyclical *Il fermo proposito* (June 11, 1905), no. 22 [PA 2, 128].

65. See Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici gregis* (September 8, 1907), no. 42 [PA 4, 99]; Leo XIII, Motu Proprio *Ut mysticam Sponsam* (March 14, 1891) [LA 11, 60].

seek to deform her face (*facies*).<sup>66</sup> The beauty of the Bride of Christ particularly shines in the holiness of her saints.<sup>67</sup>

Pius X also used bridal imagery to convey the Church's freedom from error and her youthful strength in the face of history.

Kingdoms and empires have passed away; peoples once renowned for their history and civilization have disappeared; time and again the nations, as though overwhelmed by the weight of years, have fallen asunder; while the Church, indefectible in her essence [*natura non deficiens*], united [*coniuncta*] by ties indissoluble with her heavenly Spouse [*Sponsus*], is here today radiant with eternal youth, strong with the same primitive vigor with which she came from the Heart of Christ dead upon the Cross.<sup>68</sup>

## 2. The Church as the beloved and honored Bride

In a few instances, Pius X's use of ecclesial bridal imagery conveyed the sense of the Church as beloved and deserving of love and honor. Christ loves the Church (see Eph 5), and he has also promised his perpetual help to his Bride.<sup>69</sup> The Pope also quoted St. Anselm who described the Church as "[God's] beloved Bride" and as a queen whom Christ "was pleased to select for His Spouse in this world," and who then exhorted Queen Matilda of England: "Take her [i.e., the Church], I say, into your consideration, exalt her, that with that bride and in that bride [*cum illa et in illa sponsa*] you may be able to please God and reign with her in eternal bliss."<sup>70</sup>

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66. See Encyclical *Communium rerum* (April 21, 1909), no. 15 [AAS 1, 349].

67. Encyclical *Editae saepe* (May 26, 1910), nos. 1 and 5 [AAS 2, 357 and 360].

68. Encyclical *Incunda sane* (March 12, 1904), no. 8. [PA 1, 195]

69. See Encyclical *Editae saepe* (May 26, 1910), no. 6 [AAS 2, 360]; Address *Ex quo postremum* (May 25, 1914) [AAS 6, 255].

70. Encyclical *Communium rerum* (April 21, 1909), nos. 21 and 26 [AAS 1, 353 and 360].

### 3. The dignity and liberty of the Bride in the face of adversity and persecution

Pope Pius X was concerned for the Church's liberty in the face of various hostilities and sufferings. The celebration of the Lord's Passion is a reminder that "the Church, the Bride of Christ ... is not called to comfort in this world but to suffering [*ad aerumnas atque labores*]." <sup>71</sup> The modernists are "the children of darkness" who bring troubles upon the mystical Bride. <sup>72</sup> In the face of enemies (*inimici*), the Bride of Christ can trust her Bridegroom as well as Mary's patronage which secures the help of the Church's Bridegroom. <sup>73</sup> Christ's spousal love consoles the Church through her tribulations. <sup>74</sup>

In his encyclical on Anselm, Pius expressed hope that reflection on the great doctor would assist in his own responsibility "of maintaining unswervingly the doctrine of the Church, of defending strenuously the liberty of the Spouse of Christ [*pro Christi sponsae libertate*], the inviolability of her divine rights, and the plenitude of those safeguards which the protection of the Sacred Pontificate requires." <sup>75</sup> Pius also described the war "waged by unnatural children, nestling in the very bosom of the Church" (i.e., the Modernists), who were attempting "to deface all the beauty of the divine Bride [*totam denique divinae Sponsae deformare faciem*] for the empty glamour of a new culture, falsely called science...." <sup>76</sup> Pius then quoted from various letters of Anselm, the following being a selection of the quotes Pius used:

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71. Address *Festivitas Dominicae Passionis* (April 15, 1907) [PA 4, 26].

72. Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici gregis* (September 8, 1907), no. 42 [PA 4, 99].

73. See Address *Relicturus Ecclesiam* (December 16, 1907) [PA 4, 120]; Letter *Si unquam* (June 29, 1914) [AAS 6, 374].

74. See Encyclical *Editae saepe* (May 26, 1910), no. 6 [AAS 2, 360].

75. Encyclical *Communium rerum* (April 21, 1909), no. 12 [AAS 1, 344]. See no. 13 for a passage on the liberty of the Church as a perfect society (AAS 1, 345).

76. Encyclical *Communium rerum*, no. 15 [AAS 1, 348-49].

“[T]he Church of God, our Mother [*mater nostra*], whom God calls His Fair One and His Beloved Spouse [*dilectam sponsam*], is trodden underfoot by bad princes.... [...] [M]y heart is prepared for the sake of the obedience due to the Apostolic See and the liberty of the Church of Christ, my Mother [*et Matris meae Ecclesiae Christi libertate*]. [...] I pray, conjure, admonish and counsel you, as the guardian of your soul, not to believe that your lofty dignity is diminished if you love and defend the liberty of the Spouse of God and your Mother, the Church [*si sponsae Dei et matris vestrae Ecclesiae amatis et defenditis libertatem*], not to think that you abase yourself when you exalt her, not to believe that you weaken yourself when you strengthen her.... [...] God wills his Spouse to be free [*Liberam vult esse Deus sponsam suam*] and not a slave.”<sup>77</sup>

Pius wove a forceful presentation of the need to defend the Church’s liberty against those who would seek to mar the beauty and dignity of the bride or to reject the maternal care of the Church. “In this world God loves nothing more than the liberty of his Church.”<sup>78</sup>

#### 4. The Church as Bride and Mother

Pius X’s use of ecclesial maternal imagery was more frequent than his use of bridal imagery.<sup>79</sup> Although the Pope did not explicitly connect maternal imagery and bridal imagery for the Church, he did use the two images closely together at times.<sup>80</sup> Instances of close parallels between the images of bride and mother are found in Pius’ citations of Anselm, wherein Anselm

77. Encyclical *Communium rerum*, nos. 21-22 and 24-25 [AAS 1, pp. 353, 355 and 358-59].

78. Encyclical *Communium rerum*, no. 25 [AAS 1, 359]. Pius X emphasized these words of Anselm as his own: *Nilil magis diligit Deus in hoc mundo quam in libertatem Ecclesiae suae*.

79. For examples of the use of ecclesial maternal imagery in Pius X’s teaching, see Encyclical *Acerbo nimis* (April 15, 1905), no. 16 [PA 2, 80]; Encyclical *Il fermo proposito* (June 11, 1905), nos. 4 and 22 [PA 2, 115 and 128]; Encyclical *Vehementer nos* (February 11, 1906), no. 15 [PA 3, 36]; Encyclical *Une fois encore* (January 6, 1907), no. 9 [PA 4, 11]; Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici gregis* (September 8, 1907), nos. 2, 28 and 35 [PA 4, pp. 48, 79 and 87-88]; Exhortation *Haerent animo* (August 4, 1908), nos. 6, 29 and 36 [PA 4, pp. 242, 259 and 262]; Apostolic Letter *Virginis in omne aevum nobilis* (April 11, 1909) [AAS 1, 393]; Apostolic Letter *Omnipotens ac misericors Dominus* (April 11, 1909) [AAS 1, 397 and 399]; Encyclical *Communium rerum* (April 21, 1909), nos. 3, 13, 15, 21-22, 24-26 and 33 [AAS 1, pp. 335, 344-45, 348-49, 353, 355, 358-60 and 367]; Motu Proprio *Id praeclaro* (May 26, 1909) [AAS 1, 445]; Encyclical *Editae saepe* (May 26, 1910), nos. 1, 6, 8, 11, 16, 30 and 43 [AAS 2, pp. 357, 360-61, 363, 365, 373 and 379]; Encyclical *Lacrimabili statu* (June 7, 1912), nos. 1 and 6 [AAS 4, 522 and 524]; Motu Proprio *Cum omnes Catholicos* (August 15, 1912) [AAS 4, 526]; and Address *Il grave dolore* (May 27, 1914) [AAS 6, 262].

80. For example, see Encyclical *Il fermo proposito* (June 11, 1905), no. 22 [PA 2, 128]; Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici gregis* (September 8, 1907), no. 28 [PA 4, 79]; Motu proprio *Sacrorum antistitum* (September 1, 1909) [AAS 2, 1910]; and Encyclical *Editae saepe* (May 26, 1910), nos. 1 and 6 [AAS 2, 357 and 360].

spoke of the Church as the bride of God and the mother of her members.<sup>81</sup> Elsewhere, after describing the Church as a “fertile mother of Apostolic men,” Pius seemed to refer to the Holy Spirit as the spouse of the Church.<sup>82</sup>

## 5. The Church as Body and Bride

There were two instances where Pope Pius X seemed to use bridal and bodily imagery in close proximity, at least implicitly. In one instance, the Church as the Bride of Christ is seen as having to suffer what the Head (*Caput nostrum*) foretold: *was it not necessary that the Christ suffer?*<sup>83</sup> In another instance, while citing part of Ephesians 5, Pius spoke vividly of the union between Christ and the Church which originated in the maternal womb of Mary:

Wherefore in the same holy bosom of his most chaste Mother Christ took to Himself flesh, and united [*adiunxit*] to Himself the *spiritual* body formed by those *who were to believe in Him*. Hence Mary, carrying the Savior within her, may be said to have also carried all those whose life was contained in the life of the Savior. Therefore all we who are united [*iungimur*] to Christ, and as the Apostle says *are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones* (Eph 5:30), have issued from the womb of Mary like a body united [*instar cohaerentis*] to its head. Hence, though in a spiritual and mystical fashion, we are all children of Mary, and she is Mother of us all. *Mother, spiritually indeed, but truly Mother of the members of Christ, who are we* (S. Aug., L. *de S. Virginitate*, c. 6).<sup>84</sup>

There is here perhaps an allusion to the Incarnation as a nuptial reality, though such remains implicit.

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81. Encyclical *Communium rerum* (April 21, 1909), nos. 21 and 24-26 [AAS 1, pp. 353 and 358-60].

82. Encyclical *Lacrimabili statu* (June 7, 1912), no. 6 [AAS 4, 524: “...virtute nimirum Spiritus Sancti, qui Ecclesiae, sponsae suae, prop temporibus subvenit.”].

83. Address *Festivitas Dominicae Passionis* (April 15, 1907) [PA 4, 26].

84. Encyclical *Ad diem illum laetissimum* (February 2, 1904), no. 10 [PA 1, 152-53]. See Tromp, “Ecclesia Sponsa,” 9-10.



## 6. Consecrated women and Mary as brides

At least on a few occasions, Pius employed bridal imagery in reference to individuals, particularly consecrated women and Mary.<sup>85</sup> These select instances were not explicitly connected with an articulation of the Church as the Bride of Christ, but they indicate Pius X's familiarity with some of the broader usage of the bridal image.

### B. *Summary and Analysis of Pius X*

Pope Pius X's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was infrequent and undeveloped. Like Leo XIII, Pius X applied ecclesial maternal imagery more regularly. His encyclical on Anselm contained the most sustained use of bridal imagery.<sup>86</sup> Anselm himself had struggled with Church-State conflicts in his own time as an archbishop and had used the bridal image to convey the distinctive dignity and freedom of the Church.<sup>87</sup> While Pius referred to Ephesians 5 in various places, he did not cite it within an explicit nuptial context or treatment of marriage, as Leo XIII had done in his encyclical letter *Arcanum divinae*.

The vehicles in Pius X's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor included the signal terms *sponsa* (for the Church) and *sponsus* (for Christ), as well as the term *coniunctio* to signify Christ's spousal union with the Church. Qualifiers included the various expressions of the dignity and liberty of the Church, as well as her holiness, indefectibility, beauty, and even youthfulness, in the face of persistent hardships. Pius X's use of maternal vocabulary for the Church (e.g., *mater*)

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85. See Encyclical *Incunda sane* (March 12, 1904) [PA 1, 190]; Encyclical *Une fois encore* (January 6, 1907), no. 21 [PA 4, 17]; Apostolic Letter *Ineffabili Dei providentia* (May 20, 1909) [AAS 1, 644]; and Apostolic Letter *Divinus Magister* (April 11, 1909) [AAS 1, 478].

86. Pius X had identified himself closely with Anselm at the beginning of his pontificate. See Encyclical *E supremi* (October 4, 1903), no. 1 [PA 1, 1].

87. See chapter one above, p. 25. See also Richard W. Southern, *Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 277-307.

could be taken as an implicit or indirect vehicle for the bridal metaphor. His use of bodily and bridal imagery together was minimal. Pius X also included Anselm's description of the Church as *sponsa Dei*, and he alluded elsewhere to the Church as the Bride of the Holy Spirit.<sup>88</sup>

The tenor (underlying subject) in Pius X's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor was that of the (Roman) Catholic Church, understood as the Church universal. The use of the imagery often emphasized a distinction between the bridal Church and her members (or children), as well as the Church as a society in distinction from the world. It does not appear that Pius ever referred explicitly to the Incarnation as a nuptial reality, though a possible allusion was present.

Pope Pius X's use of ecclesial bridal imagery illustrated the prevailing ecclesiological style of his day, focused on institutional concerns. Pius X did not consider marriage and the family in any extensive, pastoral sense in his teaching, and this likely contributed to his more limited use of bridal imagery.

### III. Pope Benedict XV

The pontificate of Pope Benedict XV<sup>89</sup> (1914-1922) began in the first months of World War I and was affected deeply by the war. Benedict was a strong promoter of peace, consistently calling for an end to the war.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, while he continued to denounce the errors of

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88. On the latter allusion, however, see Tromp, "De Nativitate Ecclesiae e Corde Jesu Cruce," 506-7: Tromp cites the tradition of the Church as the New Eve who proceeds from the side of Christ on the cross. As the New Eve, the Church is made fruitful by the seed of the Holy Spirit and thereby becomes a mother. Tromp cites Tertullian, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and others. Here, the Church is not the "Bride of the Holy Spirit," but rather Christ is the Bridegroom and his "seed" is the Holy Spirit. This may be the meaning of Pius X's usage.

89. Giacomo Paolo Giovanni Battista della Chiesa (1854-1922).

90. See John F. Pollard, *The Unknown Pope: Benedict XV (1914-1922) and the Pursuit of Peace* (New York: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999), 85-161.

Modernism, he ended some of the more extreme reactionary efforts of anti-Modernism.<sup>91</sup>

Benedict issued twelve encyclicals. His teaching highlighted the importance of preaching well, the need to care for the children of war-torn Europe, and there were also encyclicals on St. Boniface, St. Dominic, St. Ephrem, Dante, and third-order Franciscans.<sup>92</sup> Benedict also had a strong devotion to Mary. In 1917, the Pope promulgated the first Code of Canon Law. Benedict also encouraged Catholic missions at a significant time when colonialism was giving way and the mission field was becoming more sensitive to the importance of native cultures.<sup>93</sup> Although the years of his pontificate coincided with growing theological reflection on the Church,<sup>94</sup> Benedict himself did not expressly teach on the Church.

### ***A. Key Themes and Patterns in Benedict XV's Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery***

Pope Benedict XV employed ecclesial bridal imagery least of all the popes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>95</sup> However, there were some fresh aspects within the themes and patterns that emerged.

#### **1. Love and honor for the Church as the immaculate and beautiful Bride**

Benedict's most significant use of bridal imagery for the Church was found in his encyclical letter on St. Jerome entitled *Spiritus Paraclitus*. Benedict spoke of Jerome's interior

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91. See O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 71; Pollard, *The Unknown Pope*, 40-47 and 68-69; and Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, 345-46.

92. For the complete collection of Benedict XV's encyclicals in English, see Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939*, 141-220.

93. See Martina, "The Historical Context," 6-13; Pollard, *The Unknown Pope*, 201-4; and Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, 322.

94. For example, in Germany, Karl Adam, who had already composed a study of Tertullian's ecclesiology, and Romano Guardini were both beginning their careers. Various studies on the Church had been appearing, such as Pierre Batiffol, *L'Église naissante et le Catholicisme* (Paris: Cerf, 1971 [originally published in 1909]), and then, during Benedict's pontificate, Clérissac's *Le mystère de l'Église* (1917).

95. Besides Pope John Paul I, of course.

peace which “sprang from love of God and ... worked itself out in an earnest love of God’s Church”:

For in the Books of both Testaments Jerome saw the Church of God foretold. Did not practically every one of the illustrious and sainted women who hold a place of honor in the Old Testament prefigure [*figuram praeferebant*] the Bride of Christ [*Christi Sponsa*]? Did not the priesthood, the sacrifices, the solemnities, nay, nearly everything described in the Old Testament shadow forth that same Church? How many Psalms and Prophecies he saw fulfilled in that Church? To him it was clear that the Church's greatest privileges were set forth by Christ and His Apostles. Small wonder, then, that growing familiarity with the Bible meant for Jerome growing love of the Spouse of Christ [*amor erga Christi Sponsam*].<sup>96</sup>

Here, Benedict recalled traditional typology, and, inspired by Jerome, he also linked knowledge of Scripture with love for the Bride of Christ. He then described Jerome’s desire to present the Church in her glory, citing Ephesians 5:27, *ut sit sancta et immaculata*.<sup>97</sup> “Jerome’s love of the Church, too, shines out even in his Commentaries wherein he lets slip no opportunity for praising the Spouse of Christ [*dilaudandae Christi Sponsae*]...”<sup>98</sup> Jerome spoke of the Church as the house of the living God bedecked with jewels—it is she whom the King has brought to his chamber.<sup>99</sup> Benedict had also elsewhere connected the richness of the Church’s liturgical manifestations to the splendor of the Bride of Christ herself, like the adorned queen of Psalm 45 [44].<sup>100</sup>

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96. Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* (September 15, 1920), no. 60 [AAS 12, 415].

97. Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus*, no. 61 [AAS 12, 415].

98. Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus*, no. 62 [AAS 12, 417].

99. See Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus*, no. 62 [AAS 12, 417].

100. Apostolic Constitution *Sedis huius Apostolicae* (May 14, 1919) [AAS 12, 318].

## 2. The Church as Bride and Mother

The use of maternal imagery for the Church was common in Benedict's teaching.<sup>101</sup> In a few places, Benedict wove both bridal and maternal imagery closely together.<sup>102</sup> In his encyclical on Dante, Benedict noted Dante's respect for the Roman Church and for the authority of the pope: "For him the Roman Church is the *most holy Mother, Bride of Him Crucified [Ecclesiam Romanam vel matrem piissimam, vel Sponsam Crucifixi]*..."<sup>103</sup> Elsewhere, in his encyclical on St. Dominic, Benedict paralleled the Church as mother with Mary's maternal role and also described how Mary used Dominic's "ministry to teach the Most Holy Rosary to the Church, the Bride of her Son [*Ecclesia, Filii sui Sponsa*]." <sup>104</sup>

## 3. The Church as Body and Bride

Benedict did not explicitly develop the link between the bodily and bridal images for the Church. However, at least on one occasion, he closely coupled the images. After speaking of the

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101. For examples of the use of ecclesial maternal imagery in Benedict XV's teaching, see Apostolic Exhortation *Ubi primum* (September 8, 1914) [AAS 6, 501-2]; Address *Convocare vos* (January 22, 1915) [AAS 7, 34]; Apostolic Constitution *Incrumentum altaris* (August 10, 1915) [AAS 7, 402]; Apostolic Letter *Cum Catholicae Ecclesiae* (April 15, 1916) [AAS 8, 137]; Apostolic Letter *Cum divinus Redemptor* (April 27, 1916) [AAS 8, 139]; Address *Quandoquidem* (December 4, 1916) [AAS 8, 466]; Motu Proprio *Dei providentis* (May 1, 1917) [AAS 9.1, 529]; Bull *Providentissima Mater* (May 27, 1917) [AAS 9.2, 5]; *Professio Catholicae Fidei* (May 27, 1917) [AAS 9.2, 9]; Apostolic Letter *Caelestes Ecclesiae* (June 9, 1918) [AAS 10, 311]; Encyclical *In hac tanta* (May 14, 1919), no. 23 [AAS 11, 218]; Decretal Letter *Non sine providentissimo* (May 13, 1920) [AAS 12, 482]; Encyclical *Pacem, Dei munus pulcherrimum* (May 23, 1920), nos. 3 and 20 [AAS 12, 210 and 213]; Motu Proprio *Bonum sane* (July 25, 1920) [AAS 12, 314-15]; Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* (September 15, 1920), nos. 18, 28, 30, 38-39 and 68-69 [AAS 12, pp. 386, 398-99, 403-4 and 421-22]; Encyclical *In praeclara summorum* (April 30, 1921), nos. 3, 6 and 8 [AAS 13, pp. 210, 213 and 215]; Encyclical *Fausto appetente die* (June 29, 1921), nos. 5 and 12 [AAS 13, 331 and 334-35]. Note the pairing of maternal imagery with the concept of the Church as a perfect society: "The Church, the most provident and wise Mother, [was] willed by Christ her Founder in such a way that she would possess wholly the character of a perfect society [*perfecta societas*]...." (Bull *Providentissima Mater*, cited above).

102. See Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* (September 15, 1920), nos. 18, 28, 30, 38-39 and 68-69 [AAS 12, pp. 386, 398-99, 403-4 and 421-22].

103. Encyclical *In praeclara summorum* (April 30, 1921), no. 6 [AAS 13, 213].

104. Encyclical *Fausto appetente die* (June 29, 1921), no. 11 [AAS 13, 334].

Church as the Bride of Christ, Benedict turned to the union of the Church with Christ in terms of body to Head:

Again and again, as in the passages just given, does Jerome celebrate the intimate union between Christ and His Church [*Dominum Iesum intime cum Ecclesia coniunctum*]. For since the Head can never be separated from the mystical body, so, too, love of Christ is ever associated with zeal of His Church; and this love of Christ must ever be the chiefest and most agreeable result of a knowledge of Holy Scripture.<sup>105</sup>

#### 4. Consecrated women as brides of Christ

Benedict referred to consecrated women as brides of Christ in a few instances.<sup>106</sup> His reference to the holy women of the Old Testament as figures of the bridal Church also illustrated his familiarity with a broader use of bridal imagery in reference to individuals (with ecclesiological significance as types).<sup>107</sup>

#### ***B. Summary and Analysis of Benedict XV***

Pope Benedict's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was infrequent and undeveloped. Perhaps most significant was Benedict's coupling of ecclesial bridal imagery with the study of Scripture, whereby he specifically correlated a growing familiarity with Scripture with a growing familiarity with and love for the Bride of Christ, the Church. The underlying premise was Jerome's assertion that *ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ*.<sup>108</sup> Because of the Church's close union with Christ as his Bride and Body, ignorance of Scripture would also mean ignorance of the Church. It is noteworthy that for both Pius X and Benedict XV, the encyclicals with the most abundant

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105. Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* (September 15, 1920), no. 63 [AAS 12, 418].

106. See Decretal Letter *Ecclesiae consuetudo* (May 13, 1920) [AAS 12, pp. 489-91, 494-98, and 503-4]; Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* (September 15, 1920), no. 67 [AAS 12, 420].

107. See Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus*, no. 60 [AAS 12, 415].

108. Jerome, *Commentariorum in Isaiam libri xviii*, prol. [PL 24, 17b].

use of bridal imagery for the Church were devoted to important Doctors of the past, Anselm and Jerome respectively. In a way, this prefigured the growing use of ecclesial bridal imagery which would come as a result of the *ressourcement*.

The vehicles for Benedict XV's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor included the signal terms *sponsa* (for the Church) and perhaps the participle-form of *coniunctio*, which was used with a potential spousal connotation (for the union between Christ and the Church). Qualifiers included the beauty and spotless holiness of the Church, the closeness of her union with Christ (implicitly connected to the bodily image), the splendor of the Church in her liturgy, the prefigurement of the Church in the Old Testament, and the dignity of the Church as worthy to be loved. As with his predecessors, the use of the term *mater* could be seen as an indirect vehicle for expressing the bridal quality of the Church.

The tenor of Benedict's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor was the (Roman) Catholic Church or Church universal, conveyed most often to be in distinction from her members (her children). Benedict's focus rested on the Church as an institution, a perfect society. His reference to the *Ecclesia Romana* as the Bride of Christ was not a reference to the local Church of Rome but rather to the Roman (Catholic) Church. However, it is worth noting here that the distinction between such usages was not always clear in magisterial teaching, especially with regard to maternal imagery. *Ecclesia Romana* might refer to the local Church of Rome in one instance while in another it could be interpreted more broadly as the universal Church.<sup>109</sup>

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109. For example, see Pope Leo XIII: Apostolic Letter *Ex supremo Apostolatus apice* (March 4, 1878) [LA 1, 4: "...ab Ecclesia Romana omnium matre et magistra..."]; Apostolic Letter *Ex hac augusta* (July 5, 1881) [LA 2, 289: "...Apostolicae Sedi adhaerebant, et felicem fratrum conditionem, qui in fide Romanae Ecclesiae manentes ... praesidium matris amantissimae paratum habuerant, in eius gremio fidum perfugium quaerant..."]; Apostolic Letter *Singulari prorsus* (December 15, 1881) [LA 2, 469: "...sanctae romanae Ecclesiae matri et magistrae religionis..."];

#### IV. Pope Pius XI

The pontificate of Pope Pius XI<sup>110</sup> (1922-1939) spanned the period of growing turbulence between the two world wars, a period which included increasing political conflict, the problems associated with the Great Depression, and growing Church-state conflict with the rise of totalitarianism in Mussolini, Hitler, and Communism.<sup>111</sup> Pius XI sought for “the return of Western society and culture to their roots in the truths and values of Christ as mediated by the Catholic church.”<sup>112</sup>

The Pope’s teaching included thirty-one encyclicals. Pius XI instituted the feast of Christ the King, forbade Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement of that time, taught about marriage and the immorality of contraception, addressed the various social issues of the time by marking the fortieth anniversary of Leo XIII’s *Rerum novarum*, and denounced Nazism.<sup>113</sup> Pius XI also encouraged Catholic Action<sup>114</sup> and the expanding movements of lay participation in the Church’s mission, thereby affirming the important place of the laity. As noted in chapter one, Pius XI’s pontificate was situated at a key juncture of ecclesial and theological renewal, which would continue to make its mark in subsequent papal and conciliar teaching.

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*Materna Ecclesiae caritatis* [LA 4, 182: “...ut Ecclesia Romana cunctarum Ecclesiarum princeps sit et magistra...”]; Apostolic Letter *Unitatis Christianae* (June 11, 1895) [LA 15, 236: “...romana Ecclesia, matre nunquam non amantissima...”]; and Pope Pius X: Encyclical *Edictae saepe*, (May 26, 1910), no. 30 [AAS 2, 373: “...Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae, omnium ecclesiarum matris et magistrae...”].

110. Ambrogio Damiano Achille Ratti (1857-1939).

111. See O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 80-81; Congar, *L’Église*, 452; and Komonchak, “Returning from Exile: Catholic Theology in the 1930s,” in *The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview*, ed. Gregory Baum (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 38. Although the Vatican City’s establishment as an independent and sovereign state occurred in 1929 under Mussolini, any apparent peace was short-lived.

112. Komonchak, “Returning from Exile,” 35.

113. For a complete collection of Pius XI’s encyclicals in English, see Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1903-1939*, 223-566.

114. See Congar, *L’Église*, 452-53; Komonchak, “Returning from Exile,” 36.



### ***A. Key Themes and Patterns in Pius XI's Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery***

Pius XI's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was comparable in quantity with that of Leo XIII. As well, the imagery was scattered throughout his teaching and remained generally undeveloped. Nevertheless, basic themes and patterns are identifiable and will be presented below.

#### **1. The Church as the one, immaculate and beautiful Bride**

Pius XI's use of ecclesial bridal imagery often expressed the Church's holiness, purity, beauty, mystical quality, royal dignity, and unity. For example, the Church is the immaculate Bride of Christ (*immaculata Christi Sponsa*), a description present in numerous documents.<sup>115</sup> In at least one instance, Pius XI specifically referred to the "Church militant" as the spotless Bride.<sup>116</sup> The Church as the spotless Bride of Christ offers to the world various examples of holiness through her religious and martyrs.<sup>117</sup> Explaining that the true union of Christians would consist of a return to the one, unchanged Church, Pius stated:

During the lapse of centuries, the mystical Bride of Christ [*mystica Christi Sponsa*] has never been contaminated, nor can she ever in the future be contaminated, as Cyprian bears witness: "The Bride of Christ cannot be made false to her Spouse [*adulterari non*

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115. See Apostolic Constitution *Umbratilem remotamque* (July 8, 1924) [AAS 16, 385]; Homily (May 31, 1925) [AAS 17, 223]; Apostolic Letter *Teterrima ac miseranda* (October 17, 1926) [AAS 18, 415: "immaculata sponsa Dei"]; Encyclical *Iniquis afflictisque* (November 18, 1926), no. 28 [AAS 18, 476]; Encyclical *Divini illius Magistri* (December 31, 1929), nos. 17 and 101 [AAS 22, 54: "purissima Christi sponsa," and 85-86]; Decretal Letter *Militantem Ecclesiam* (June 29, 1930) [AAS 22, 497]; Decretal Letter *Lux illa* (June 29, 1930) [AAS 22, 602]; Decretal Letter *Sub salutiferæ Crucis* (January 14, 1934) [AAS 26, 419]; Apostolic Letter *Tuitioni atque* (May 10, 1934) [AAS 26, 293]; and Decretal Letter *Sævis agitata fluctibus* (May 19, 1935) [AAS 28, 185].

116. See Decretal Letter *Militantem Ecclesiam* (June 29, 1930) [AAS 22, 497].

117. See Apostolic Constitution *Umbratilem remotamque* (July 8, 1924) [AAS 16, 385]; Apostolic Letter *Teterrima ac miseranda* (October 17, 1926) [AAS 18, 415]; Apostolic Letter *Tuitioni atque* (May 10, 1934) [AAS 26, 293]; and Decretal Letter *Ex aperto Christi latere* (April 17, 1938) [AAS 30, 357]. On Pius XI's use of bridal imagery for consecrated women religious, see below.

*potes*]: she is incorrupt and modest. She knows but one dwelling, she guards the sanctity of the nuptial chamber [*cubiculi*] chastely and modestly.”<sup>118</sup>

As the “true Bride of Christ,” the Church has a beauty which radiates from the diversity of liturgical rites, especially those from the East; as Pius XI taught, she will be loved all the more for such beauty.<sup>119</sup> Echoing Psalm 45 [44], he said that such liturgies are like adornments of “precious garments, like ‘a queen ... in gilded clothing...’.”<sup>120</sup> As Bride and Queen, the Church looks to Christ as her Bridegroom and King.<sup>121</sup>

As the mystical Bride (*mystica Sponsa*),<sup>122</sup> the Church is closely united with Christ and is one in herself. The unity and indivisibility of the Church is a crowning jewel of the Bride of Christ. In his encyclical denouncing Nazism, Pius XI warned: “Whoever tampers with that unity and that indivisibility wrenches from the Spouse of Christ [*Braut Christi*] one of the diadems with which God Himself crowned her; he subjects a divine structure [*Gottesbau*], which stands on eternal foundations, to criticism and transformation by architects whom the Father of Heaven never authorized to interfere.”<sup>123</sup>

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118. Encyclical *Mortalium animos* (January 6, 1928), no. 10 [AAS 20, 14]. The Pope cited Cyprian, *De Cath. Ecclesiae unitate*, 6.

119. Encyclical *Rerum Orientalium* (September 8, 1928), no. 12 [AAS 20, 284-85].

120. Encyclical *Ecclesiam Dei* (November 12, 1923), no. 22 [AAS 15, 580].

121. See Encyclical *Quas primas* (December 11, 1925), nos. 3 and 8 [AAS 17, 594 and 596]; Radio Message (February 12, 1931) [AAS 23, 67].

122. See Apostolic Letter *Die vicesima septima* (August 24, 1926) [AAS 18, 379]; Encyclical *Mortalium animos* (January 6, 1928), no. 10 [AAS 20, 14]; and Encyclical *Lux veritatis* (December 25, 1931), no. 38 [AAS 23, 511].

123. Encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (March 14, 1937), no. 18 [AAS 29, 152]. Pius was speaking of a negative consequence that would follow from a nation’s abuse of freedom. The Church respects the autonomy of nations within her unity. Pius was alluding to the German government’s abuse of that autonomy and freedom and the same government’s resulting divisive stance toward the Church.

## 2. Faithful care of Church as the beloved Bride

Pope Pius XI's use of ecclesial bridal imagery also conveyed aspects of God's promise and care and the Church as beloved. Pius XI spoke of God's concern for "the honor of his Bride, the Church" (*dell'onore della sua Sposa, la Chiesa*) by providing help to the Church and inspiration for her renewal and holiness at different times throughout history.<sup>124</sup> In addition, Pius referred to the help given to the Bride of Christ (*Sponsa Christi*) by the Holy Spirit and also mentioned the mindfulness Christ has of the promises he has made to his Bride to hear her supplications.<sup>125</sup> The Church has "received from her divine Bridegroom" (*ab divino Sponso*) a multitude of grace, especially through the sacraments.<sup>126</sup> Jesus' promise to remain with her to the end (see Mt 28:20) "has never failed the Church his Bride [*numquam Ecclesiae suae sponsae defuisse*], and therefore ... will never fail her in the time to come."<sup>127</sup>

The Church is Jesus' "most beloved Bride" (*Sponsa amatissima*).<sup>128</sup> The love that Christ has for the Church is truly for the good of his Bride alone (*Sponsae tantum utilitatem*).<sup>129</sup> In his encyclical on the priesthood, Pius cited the Council of Trent's description of the visible sacrifice which Christ left "to his beloved Bride the Church" (*dilectae sponsae suae Ecclesiae*).<sup>130</sup> "[H]ow much more powerful must be that prayer which is said *ex officio* in the name of the Church, the beloved

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124. See Homily *Accipietis virtutem* (June 4, 1922) [AAS 14, 345].

125. Apostolic Letter *Meditantibus nobis* (December 3, 1922) [AAS 14, 629].

126. Encyclical *Ad salutem humani* (April 20, 1930), no. 18 [AAS 22, 213].

127. Encyclical *Lux veritatis* (December 25, 1931), no. 1 [AAS 23, 493].

128. Encyclical *Caritate Christi compulsi* (May 3, 1932), no. 34 [AAS 24, 193-94].

129. Encyclical *Casti connubii* (December 31, 1930), no. 23 [AAS 22, 548]: Pius cited the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, pt. 2, art. 8, q. 24.

130. Encyclical *Ad Catholici sacerdotii* (December 20, 1935), no. 13 [AAS 28, 11].

Spouse of the Redeemer [*dilectae...Redemptoris sponsae*]?”<sup>131</sup> As beloved by Christ, the Church is meant to be loved by her members as well.<sup>132</sup>

### 3. The dignity and liberty of the Bride of Christ in the face of adversity and persecution

Pope Pius XI's use of ecclesial bridal imagery also reflected the perspective of the Church in the midst of a world of sin and suffering. Many have been the “injuries and damages ... and peculiar errors brought upon the mystical Bride of Christ by Protestant heretics.”<sup>133</sup> The spotless Bride has dealt with many plots of enemies (*hostium insidiae*)<sup>134</sup> and times of persecution (*persecutionum tempestates*).<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, the Church's freedom and spotlessness as the Bride of Christ has been maintained even in the midst of struggle. “Marvelous indeed is the glory of the Divine Spouse of Christ [*divina Christi Sponsa*] who, through the course of the centuries, can depend, without fail, upon a brave and generous offspring ever ready to suffer prisons, stripes, and even death itself for the most holy liberty of the faith [*pro sanctissima fidei libertate*]!”<sup>136</sup> Pius assured the Church of Mexico that, despite the persecutions she was experiencing, she could trust that “‘the gates of hell shall not prevail’ (Mt 16:18) against the immaculate Bride of Christ [*immaculata Christi Sponsa*].”<sup>137</sup>

Like his predecessors, Pope Pius XI acknowledged the evils facing the Church of his time. Encouraging people to turn to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pius stated:

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131. Encyclical *Ad Catholici sacerdotii*, no. 29 [AAS 28, 18-19].

132. See Encyclical *Rerum Orientalium* (September 8, 1928), no. 12 [AAS 20, 284-85].

133. Apostolic Letter *Die vicesima septima* (August 24, 1926) [AAS 18, 379].

134. Decretal Letter *Lux illa* (June 29, 1930) [AAS 22, 602].

135. Apostolic Letter *Tuitioni atque* (May 10, 1934) [AAS 26, 293].

136. Encyclical *Iniquis afflictisque* (November 18, 1926), no. 4 [AAS 18, 466].

137. Encyclical *Iniquis afflictisque*, no. 28 [AAS 18, 476]. Translation modified.

But if at any time, now more than ever, does it behoove all the good to bind themselves by a sincere profession of faith to Jesus Christ and to the Church, His mystical Bride [*eiusque mysticam Sponsam Ecclesiam*], now when so many men everywhere are striving to cast off the sweet yoke of Christ, when they reject the light of His doctrine, spurn the streams of His grace, and repudiate the divine authority of Him who has become, according to the words of the Gospel, “a sign which shall be contradicted” (Lk 2:34).<sup>138</sup>

Elsewhere, in relation to the crisis of the Great Depression, Pius affirmed that the Heart of Jesus would attend to the prayers and sacrifices of the Church, “His most beloved Bride, weeping at His feet under the weight of so many griefs and woes.”<sup>139</sup> In at least two places, Pius mentioned the blood of the Church’s martyrs in connection with her origin from the side of Christ on the Cross, an allusion to the Church as the new Eve.<sup>140</sup>

#### 4. Christian marriage as the “great mystery” and privileged figure

The state of marriage and family was a key concern for Pope Pius XI. As with his predecessors, Pius XI found himself in a time when more marriages were being contracted as purely civil, legal matters, and when divorce was becoming more common. The sacrament of marriage is a “holy and sanctifying figure” (*figura sancta ac sanctificantis*) of the union (*coniungere*) between the Church and Christ.<sup>141</sup> Pius later used the image of the family to describe the Church as “an immense family which embraces the whole human race” (*immensa familia ... quae humani generis universitatem complecteretur*).<sup>142</sup>

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138. Encyclical *Lux veritatis* (December 25, 1931), no. 38 [AAS 23, 511].

139. Encyclical *Caritate Christi compulsi* (May 3, 1932), no. 34 [AAS 24, 193-94].

140. See Apostolic Letter *E Christi latere* (July 5, 1925) [AAS 17, 366], and Decretal Letter *Ex aperto Christi latere* (April 17, 1938) [AAS 30, 357].

141. Encyclical *Ubi arcano Dei consilio* (December 23, 1922), no. 29 [AAS 14, 684].

142. Encyclical *Ecclesiam Dei* (November 12, 1923), no. 1 [AAS 15, 573]. See also Apostolic Letter *Ora sono pochi mesi* (October 28, 1922) [AAS 14, 538].

Pius XI's encyclical on Christian marriage, *Casti connubii*, included the majority of Pius' use of ecclesial bridal imagery, and Ephesians 5:21-33 played a significant role in that usage.<sup>143</sup> Christ raised marriage between Christians to a sacrament and "entrusted all its discipline and care to His Bride the Church [*Ecclesiae Sponsae Suae*]."<sup>144</sup> Christian marriage itself is a *mysterium magnum*.<sup>145</sup> The "mystical signification" (*mystica significatio*) of Christian marriage (*connubium*) is its representation (*refert*) of the most perfect union (*perfectissima coniunctio*), that of Christ and the Church.<sup>146</sup> The specific character of Christian marriage involves the "sublime signification [*significatio*] of grace and of the union [*coniunctio*] between Christ and the Church," and the latter union serves as the archetype (*archetypus*) for the sacrament.<sup>147</sup>

Pius made clear that the union between Christ and the Church was truly a mystery (*mysterium*) and a sublime union (*arcana coniunctio*).<sup>148</sup> Marriage is "the mystical image" (*mystica imago*) of Christ's "own ineffable union [*ineffabilis ... coniunctionis*] with the Church."<sup>149</sup> Pius also quoted Leo XIII in describing the very natural bond of marriage as "a kind of foreshadowing" of the Incarnation.<sup>150</sup>

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143. See Encyclical *Casti connubii* (December 31, 1930) [AAS 22, 539-92].

144. Encyclical *Casti connubii*, no. 1 [AAS 22, 539]. Translation modified.

145. See Encyclical *Casti connubii*, no. 80 [AAS 22, 570].

146. Encyclical *Casti connubii*, no. 36 [AAS 22, 552].

147. Encyclical *Casti connubii*, no. 81 [AAS 22, 570].

148. Encyclical *Casti connubii*, no. 83 [AAS 22, 571].

149. Encyclical *Casti connubii*, no. 129 [AAS 22, 591].

150. Encyclical *Casti connubii*, no. 80 [AAS 22, 570]. See Leo XIII, Encyclical *Arcanum divinae*, no. 19 [LA 2, 22]; p. 117n35 above. Neither Leo nor Pius explain the precise sense of the foreshadowing, i.e., whether it was a foreshadowing of the union of natures or the union between the Word and all humanity. However, Leo later referred to the Incarnation as a spousal union (*mysticum quoddam ... connubium*) between the Word and all humanity. Leo XIII, Encyclical *Octobri mense* (September 22, 1891), no. 4 [LA 11, 303]; see p. 120n48 above. See also Tromp, "Ecclesia Sponsa," 6-11.

Pius maintained the teaching on the “order of love” between husband and wife, which, following Ephesians 5:22-23, matched the husband to Christ and the wife to the Church.<sup>151</sup> In this same context, Pius quoted Leo XIII, stating that the man images Christ and the woman the Church.<sup>152</sup> However, he also interpreted Paul’s injunction to husbands—namely, to love their wives as Christ loved the Church—in a mutual way; both husbands and wives are called to a “holy and pure love ... as Christ loved the Church [*sanctus ac purus amor ... ut Christus dilexit Ecclesiam*].”<sup>153</sup> The husband and wife should seek in every way that their marriage (*connubium*) “may be and remain always the living image [*viva imago*] of that most fruitful union [*fecundissimae illius unionis*] of Christ with the Church, which is to be definitely venerated as the mystery of the most perfect love [*quae est venerandum profecto perfectissimae caritatis mysterium*].”<sup>154</sup>

Pius reserved the term “*connubium*” to Christian marriage and the term “*coniunctio*” to the union between Christ and the Church. This usage differed from that of Leo XIII who used “*connubium*” and “*nuptiae*” (qualified by “*mystica*”) in reference to the union of Christ and the Church.<sup>155</sup> According to Pius XI, the union between Christ and the Church is a “perfect union,” showing forth the “most perfect love.” The sacrament of marriage is a “mystical signification” or “mystical image” of this perfect union, not identical to the union yet neither simply a pointer to something outside of itself.

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151. Encyclical *Casti connubii*, nos. 26-27 [AAS 22, 549-550]: “Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ is the head of the Church (Eph 5:22-23).”

152. Encyclical *Casti connubii*, no. 29 [AAS 22, 550]. See Leo XIII, Encyclical *Arcanum divinae* (February 10, 1888), no. 11 [LA 2, 18].

153. Encyclical *Casti connubii*, no. 23 [AAS 22, 548].

154. Encyclical *Casti connubii*, no. 42 [AAS 22, 555-56].

155. See Encyclical *Arcanum divinae*, nos. 9 and 24 [LA 2, 16 and 26]; p. 115ff. and 121ff.

## 5. The Church as Bride, *therefore* Mother

Like his predecessors, Pope Pius XI referred to the Church as Mother in numerous instances.<sup>156</sup> He also made an explicit connection between the Church as Bride and the Church as Mother by linking the Church's maternal fruitfulness to her identity as the Body and Bride of Christ: "[T]he Church is the mystical body of Christ, the immaculate Bride of Christ, and therefore a most fecund Mother [*immaculata Christi Sponsa, ideoque fecundissima Mater*]...."<sup>157</sup> The use of the term *ideoque* is significant here, showing that for Pius the Church's maternal character follows explicitly from her identity as the Bride (and Body) of Christ. Elsewhere, the Pope described the office (*munus*) of the Church's supernatural motherhood as "that by which the Church, the most pure Bride of Christ [*purissima Christi Sponsa*], bestows the life of divine grace

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156. For examples of Pius XI's use of ecclesial maternal imagery, see Motu Proprio *Romanarum Pontificum* (May 3, 1922) [AAS 14, 323]; Homily *Accipietis virtutem* (June 4, 1922) [AAS 14, 345]; Apostolic Letter *Officiorum omnium* (August 1, 1922) [AAS 14, 452]; Apostolic Letter *Meditantibus nobis* (December 3, 1922) [AAS 14, 629]; Encyclical *Rerum omnium perturbationem*, nos. 2, 16, and 25 (January 26, 1923) [AAS 15, pp. 50, 56, and 58]; Encyclical *Studiorum ducem* (June 29, 1923), no. 30 [AAS 15, 323-24]; Encyclical *Ecclesiam Dei* (November 12, 1923), nos. 3, 14, 22 and 24 [AAS 15, pp. 574, 578 and 580-81]; Apostolic Constitution *Infinita Dei* (May 29, 1924) [AAS 16, 213]; Apostolic Constitution *Si unquam alias* (July 15, 1924) [AAS 16, 315]; Decretal Letter *Vebementer exultamus* (May 17, 1925) [AAS 17, 337]; Decretal Letter *Misericordiarum Deus* (May 21, 1925) [AAS 17, 349 and 363]; Encyclical *Rite expiatis* (April 30, 1926), no. 44 [AAS 18, 173]; Encyclical *Iniquis afflictisque* (November 18, 1926), nos. 4 and 11 [AAS 18, 466 and 469]; Encyclical *Mortalium animos* (January 6, 1928), nos. 4 and 11-12 [AAS 20, 7 and 15]; Letter *Ecclesia mater* (April 10, 1928) [AAS 20, 228]; Encyclical *Misericordissimus Redemptor* (May 8, 1928), no. 15 [AAS 20, 175]; Motu Proprio *Quod maxime* (September 30, 1928) [AAS 20, 314]; Encyclical *Quinquagesimo ante anno* (December 23, 1929) [AAS 21, 707: "...ad Lateranum Ecclesia, quae est omnium Ecclesiarum Mater et Caput..."]; Encyclical *Divini illius Magistri* (December 31, 1929), nos. 17, 21-22, 24-25, 76, 80 and 101 [AAS 22, pp. 54-57, 75-77 and 85-86]; Encyclical *Ad salutem humani* (April 20, 1930), nos. 14, 16, 34 and 52 [AAS 22, pp. 210, 212-13, 225 and 234]; Encyclical *Casti connubii* (December 31, 1930), nos. 14, 42, 58 and 82 [AAS 22, pp. 544, 555-56, 560-61 and 571]; Encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931), nos. 18, 112, 126, and 144 [AAS 23, pp. 182, 213, 218 and 227]; Encyclical *Non abbiamo bisogno* (June 29, 1931), nos. 2 and 18 [AAS 23, 286 and 292]; Encyclical *Lux veritatis* (December 25, 1931), no. 46 [AAS 23, 515]; Encyclical *Caritate Christi compulsi* (May 3, 1932), no. 1 [AAS 24, 177]; Apostolic Constitution *Christo pastorum Principi* (June 11, 1932) [AAS 24, 289]; Apostolic Letter *Bonus Pastor* (April 30, 1933) [AAS 25, 295]; Decretal Letter *Nihil maius* (March 4, 1934) [AAS 26, 541]; Decretal Letter *Misericordiarum Patri* (March 11, 1934) [AAS 26, 609]; Decretal Letter *Saenis agitata fluctibus* (May 19, 1935) [AAS 28, 201]; Encyclical *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* (December 20, 1935), no. 65 [AAS 28, 37]; Encyclical *Vigilanti cura* (June 19, 1936) [AAS 28, 259]; Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* (March 19, 1937), nos. 70-71 [AAS 29, 101-2]; Encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (March 14, 1937), nos. 3, 18-19, 21, 34 and 43 [AAS 29, pp. 146, 152-53, 155, 162 and 167]; Encyclical *Firmissimam constantiam* (March 28, 1937), no. 8 [AAS 29, 191]; Decretal Letter *Sanctorum Mater Ecclesia* (April 17, 1938) [AAS 30, 369]; and Motu Proprio *Qua cura* (December 8, 1938) [AAS 30, 410].

157. Encyclical *Divini illius Magistri* (December 31, 1929), no. 101 [AAS 22, 85-86].



upon human persons.”<sup>158</sup> He also spoke of “that most fruitful [*fecundissima*] union of Christ with the Church.”<sup>159</sup> The “divine Bride of Christ” (*divina Christi Sponsa*) depends upon the courage and generosity of her offspring (*suboles*).<sup>160</sup>

## 6. The Church as Body and Bride

As noted in the section above, Pius XI did couple the two images of body and bride closely together along with the maternal image.<sup>161</sup> Although this usage was not developed, it evidenced Pius’ awareness of a relationship among the images and perhaps an implicit ordering, whereby the Church, as the mystical Body of Christ, can be considered the immaculate Bride of Christ and “therefore” a most fruitful Mother.

## 7. Consecrated women, Mary and souls as brides

Pius XI was familiar with the tradition of referring to consecrated women as “brides” of Christ, and he employed this imagery quite regularly.<sup>162</sup> In addition, he referred at least once to

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158. Encyclical *Divini illius Magistri*, no. 17 [AAS 22, 54].

159. Encyclical *Casti connubii* (December 31, 1930), no. 42 [AAS 22, 555-56].

160. Encyclical *Iniquis afflictisque* (November 18, 1926), no. 4 [AAS 18, 466]. For another example of a close usage of bridal and maternal imagery, see Apostolic Letter *Meditantibus nobis* (December 3, 1922) [AAS 14, 629].

161. See Encyclical *Divini illius Magistri* (December 31, 1929), no. 101 [AAS 22, 85-86].

162. For examples of this use of imagery in Pius XI’s teaching, see Apostolic Letter *Adolevit martyr* (May 10, 1925) [AAS 17, 235-36]; Decretal Letter *Vehementer exultamus* (May 17, 1925) [AAS 17, 337 and 339]; Homily *Benedictus Deus* (May 17, 1925) [AAS 17, 212]; Decretal Letter *Christi nomen* (May 31, 1925) [AAS 17, 468]; Encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* (February 28, 1926), no. 17 [AAS 18, 73]; Apostolic Letter *Christianae caritatis* (May 23, 1926) [AAS 18, 221]; Apostolic Letter *Consummata in brevi* (May 30, 1926) [AAS 18, 268-69]; Apostolic Letter *Decor Carmeli* (June 9, 1929) [AAS 21, 475]; Decretal Letter *Hispana terra* (June 22, 1930) [AAS 22, 372]; Apostolic Letter *Mirabilis Deus* (May 7, 1933) [AAS 25, 300]; Apostolic Letter *Crucifixi Domini Nostri* (May 14, 1933) [AAS 25, 364]; Decretal Letter *Quidquid Immaculatae* (December 8, 1933) [AAS 26, 77]; Decretal Letter *Sub salutiferae Crucis* (January 14, 1934) [AAS 26, 417-420]; Decretal Letter *Nihil maius* (March 4, 1934) [AAS 26, 530-31]; and Apostolic Letter *Anno millesimo* (November 20, 1938) [AAS 31, 18].

Mary as Bride (*Sponsa*), and he referred at least once to the mystical union of Christian souls (*animae*) with Christ the Bridegroom.<sup>163</sup>

### ***B. Summary and Analysis of Pius XI***

Pope Pius XI's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was broad and considerable even though it remained undeveloped, similar to his predecessors' use of the imagery. Perhaps most significant was Pius XI's explicit linkage of bridal and maternal imagery for the Church, which illustrated some thoughtful consideration of the relationship between the two images. In addition, Pius XI's repeated use of ecclesial bridal imagery in his encyclical letter *Casti connubii* showed the continued importance that marriage and the family, under the lens of Eph 5:21-33, would hold in magisterial teaching and in subsequent considerations of the Church as the Bride of Christ.

The vehicles in Pius XI's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor included foremost the signal terms *sponsa* (for the Church) and *sponsus* (for Christ), as well as the terms *figura*, *imago*, and *significatio* (for Christian marriage), and finally the terms *coniunctio* and *archetypus* (for the union of Christ and the Church). Qualifiers included the Church's close union with Christ as his beloved, her holiness as the Bride of Christ, especially in the face of sin and suffering, her oneness, beauty, maternal fruitfulness, and finally her freedom and dignity. The term *mater* and its associations also functioned as at least implicit vehicles for the bridal metaphor.

The tenor of Pius XI's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor was the Roman Catholic Church (*Ecclesia*), understood as the Church universal, often envisaged in distinction from her members or children. In at least one instance, Pius referred to the "Church militant" as the

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163. See Decretal Letter *Hoc sacro anno* (May 31, 1925) [AAS 17, 483]; Apostolic Letter *Die vicesima septima* (August 24, 1926) [AAS 18, 380].

Bride,<sup>164</sup> though elsewhere distinctions between the militant, suffering, and triumphant Church were not employed with regard to bridal imagery. While Pius' teaching on the Church certainly mirrored traditional emphases on the institutional aspects of the Church, he, like Leo XIII, also referred to the Church as an "immense family," which was a more intimate description signifying the familial associations of ecclesial bridal and maternal imagery. The Church, as the beloved Bride of Christ and Mother of all nations, reaches out to all people.

Finally, Pius referred to consecrated women as "brides of Christ" and described at least once Mary and the human soul as bridal.<sup>165</sup> These references reflected the wider usage of the bridal metaphor found throughout the tradition, but they were not explicitly integrated within an understanding of the Church as the Bride of Christ.

## V. Conclusion

Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI applied ecclesial bridal imagery in various ways throughout their teaching. Consideration of the state of marriage and the family played an important role especially in Leo XIII and Pius XI's teaching, and maternal imagery was consistently used by all the popes. In general, the usage of bridal imagery remained at a routine or customary level. There was no explicit articulation or development of the precise meaning of the idea of the Church as the Bride of Christ. The papal magisterium's use of ecclesial bridal imagery during this period was like a mirror in fragmented pieces, catching various aspects and glimmers of a more synthetic picture found in Scripture and the Fathers.

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164. See p. 137n116 above.

165. See note 163 above.

This period's use of ecclesial bridal imagery also reflected what had been the dominant ecclesiological style for many centuries, a style characterized by an emphasis on the institutional and juridical qualities of the Church. As Congar observed, this emphasis also affected how the term "*Ecclesia*" was used and understood.<sup>166</sup>

It is a fact that 'Church' is sometimes understood by the theorists of ecclesiastical power or papal authority as indicating clerics, priests and the Pope. This use of the word was completely unknown to the Fathers and the liturgy. It is a fact that in a large number of modern documents, the word 'Church' indicates the priestly government or even quite simply this government's Roman courts. It is distinct from the faithful, from men in general and outside and above them.<sup>167</sup>

Congar's comments are generally applicable to the teaching of Leo XIII through Pius XI. As noted in the survey above, the tenor of the ecclesial bridal metaphor in this period of teaching often had a more restrictive referent. The Bride of Christ was frequently presented as distinct from the members of the Church, rather than inclusive of all the faithful.

The various movements of renewal and the *ressourcement* well underway in the 1930s would make a profound mark in subsequent magisterial teaching, thereby bringing into focus a broader, more inclusive use of the term "Church." Ecclesial bridal imagery was thus set to take on the broader hues and contours that echoed more strongly scriptural and patristic styles and sensibilities.

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166. Congar has described the changing meaning of the term *Ecclesia* over the centuries. See his article "The Historical Development of Authority in the Church," 132-33, 136, 140-41 and 146.

167. Congar, "The Historical Development of Authority in the Church," 140.

## Chapter Four

### The Revival of Ecclesial Imagery: Ecclesial Bridal Imagery in the Teaching of Pope Pius XII

*De Ecclesia Sponsa*.... All the foundations of this doctrine are found in Sacred Scripture; they are there as if in seed-form and are developed in tradition in a way such that the whole of ecclesiology [*tota ecclesiologia*] is contained therein.

–Sebastian Tromp (1937)<sup>1</sup>

For there are some who neglect the fact that the Apostle Paul has used metaphorical language in speaking of this doctrine [i.e., the Church as the Body of Christ], and failing to distinguish as they should the precise and proper meaning of the terms the physical body, the social body, and the Mystical Body, arrive at a distorted idea of unity ... for although he brings Christ and His Mystical Body into a wonderfully intimate union, he nevertheless distinguishes [*opponit*] one from the other as Bridegroom from Bride [*alterum tamen alteri, ut Sponsum Sponsa*].

–Pope Pius XII (1943)<sup>2</sup>

After its initial emergence in the early decades of the twentieth century, the revival of ecclesial imagery arrived in full force in the 1930s and continued through the mid-1960s. The return to scriptural, patristic, and medieval sources had revitalized interest in ecclesial imagery, particularly in the image of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. The wealth of materials written during the 1930s and 1940s on the Mystical Body demonstrates the almost tangible excitement and interest in this image.<sup>3</sup> From the 1920s through the 1940s, articles and monographs on ecclesial bridal imagery and maternal imagery also appeared. Pius XII in a sense “canonized” these ecclesiological developments with his encyclical letter on the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, entitled *Mystici corporis* (1943). A shift in ecclesiological style was taking

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1. “Ecclesia Sponsa Virgo Mater,” 3.

2. Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 86 [AAS 35, 234].

3. For an example of the range of articles published on the subject from 1890 to 1940, especially noting the boom of the 1930s, see the bibliography provided in Bluett, “Current Theology – The Mystical Body of Christ: 1890-1940,” *Theological Studies* 3.2 (1942): 261-89.

shape, from a juridical emphasis on the Church as an institution and *societas perfecta*, to a theological emphasis on the Church as a mystery to be approached through imagery.<sup>4</sup>

In this chapter, part one (I) will treat briefly the context and overall teaching of Pius XII's pontificate. Part two (II) will examine Pope Pius XII's use of ecclesial bridal imagery, surveying significant teaching and examining key themes and patterns of his use of bridal imagery. Part three (III) will summarize the highlights of Pius XII's use of ecclesial bridal imagery and will analyze his use of bridal imagery as a metaphor. This phase of magisterial teaching holds decisive importance for this study. Pius XII used ecclesial bridal imagery more deliberately and with specific ecclesiological purposes in mind.

### **I. Context and Teaching of Venerable Pope Pius XII**

The extensive pontificate of Venerable Pope Pius XII<sup>5</sup> (1939-1958) spanned the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War. The figure and pontificate of Pius XII have been somewhat enigmatic, proving difficult to assess and open to misinterpretation.<sup>6</sup> In style, Pope Pius XII appeared to be like his predecessors. He retained the stately manner and customs of the papacy familiar at that time. His actions during World War II have been misunderstood over the years.<sup>7</sup> Pius XII's encyclical letter *Humani generis* had the effect (whether intended or not) of

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4. See chapter one above, p. 38ff. As noted already, this shift was foreshadowed by the work of thinkers like Möhler and Scheeben in the 19th century.

5. Eugenio Maria Giuseppe Giovanni Pacelli (1876-1958).

6. Giacomo Martina assesses the significance and limitations of Pius XII's papacy in his article "The Historical Context," 13-21.

7. Multiple studies and popular works have been undertaken on Pius XII and World War II, particularly on the question of Pius XII and the Jews. Studies that claim that Pius XII remained inactive and silent in the face of Nazi atrocities overlook various activities, circumstances, and the larger context. See Martina, "The Historical Context," 14; Pierre Blet, *Pius XII and the Second World War*, trans. Lawrence J. Johnson (New York: Paulist, 1999); Margherita Marchione, *Pope Pius XII: Architect for Peace* (New York: Paulist, 2000); José M. Sánchez, *Pius XII and the Holocaust: Understanding the Controversy* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2002); Joseph Bottum and David G. Dalin, eds.,

silencing major Catholic thinkers in the 1950s, a consequence that recalled the era of the Modernist crisis. Pius XII has been described as “a great centralizer” in his administrative practice with regard to the Roman Curia, a practice which led to what has been characterized as a “splendid isolation” of the Holy See in relation to bishops outside.<sup>8</sup> His sober personality has also been contrasted with the more buoyant personality of John XXIII.<sup>9</sup> In some ways, narrow attention to these aspects has perhaps been the cause for overlooking some of the deeper continuities within Pius XII’s pontificate in comparison to the teaching of the Council.

Pope Pius XII’s teachings anticipated the Second Vatican Council in many ways. Pius issued forty-one encyclical letters, which included treatments of the Church, Scripture, the liturgy, Catholic missions, contemporary errors, the Assumption of Mary, peace in the world, the Council of Chalcedon, Church and state, communications, atheism, communism, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, consecrated virginity, and Sts. Cyril, Benedict, Boniface, and Bernard.<sup>10</sup> Pius XII’s promulgation of the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and his issuance of

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*The Pius War: Responses to the Critics of Pius XII* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), which includes a helpful annotated bibliography and assessment of various works; and David G. Dalin, *The Myth of Hitler’s Pope: Pope Pius XII and His Secret War Against Nazi Germany* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2005). On one perspective of the difficult details of the early years of the Cold War, see Peter C. Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002). For further sources on Pius XII and communism, see Bottom and Dalin, *The Pius War*, 235-38. For an assessment of Pius XII including treatment of World War II, the Cold War, and Pius XII’s contributions in anticipation of the Second Vatican Council, see Michael O’Carroll, *Pius XII: Greatness Dishonoured* (Dublin: Laetare Press, 1980).

8. Martina, “The Historical Context,” 14-16.

9. Nazareno Padellaro’s description of Cardinal Pacelli’s (Pius XII) reserved behavior during a dinner illustrates the contrast compared to Pope John XXIII’s more jovial mannerisms. See Padellaro, *Portrait of Pius XII*, trans. Michael Derrick (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1957), 1-5. Pierre Blet also ends his work in defense of Pius XII by noting the challenge of grasping the personality of Pius XII: “Pope Pius XII’s high ideals, transcending as they did opposing interests and rival passions, will always make difficult the task of understanding his policy and personality” (Blet, *Pius XII and the Second World War*, 289).

10. For a collection of Pius XII’s encyclical letters in English, see Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958* (Ypsilanti, MI: The Pieran Press, 1990).

the encyclical letter *Humani generis* on errors threatening Catholic doctrine both occurred in 1950 and are well-known.

The most significant teaching of Pius XII's pontificate included the encyclical letters *Mystici corporis*, on the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ (1943), *Divino afflante spiritu*, on the promotion of biblical studies (1943), and *Mediator Dei*, on the liturgy (1947). These encyclicals ratified the liturgical and biblical renewals, acknowledged and affirmed recent developments in ecclesiology, and anticipated the core themes of three of the four constitutions of the Second Vatican Council: the dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, the dogmatic constitution on divine revelation *Dei Verbum*, and the constitution on the sacred liturgy *Sacrosanctum concilium*. Pius XII's engagement of issues involving the relationship of Church and world and his emphasis on the dignity of the human person also anticipated Vatican II's pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, *Gaudium et spes*.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, in his tireless advocacy for peace, Pius foreshadowed John XXIII's encyclical letter *Pacem in terris* and anticipated the consistent call for peace which has been maintained in papal teaching up to the present day.<sup>12</sup>

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11. Claudia Carlen alludes to Pius XII's anticipation of the four constitutions of Vatican II in her following description: "In volume and scope the teachings of Pius XII surpassed those of any of his predecessors. He contributed to the theological preparation for the Second Vatican Council especially by his positive expression of the doctrine on the Church, his liturgical reforms, a new impetus given to biblical studies, and the great attention he paid to problems of the modern world." Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958*, 3. A statement from one of Pius XII's early addresses foreshadowed the introduction to *Gaudium et spes*: "The Church is not the daughter of this world; but she is in it, she lives in it, from it she receives her children; she shares all its alternatives of joy and sorrow..." Address *In questo giorno* (June 2, 1939) [DR 1, 152]. English translation taken from O'Gorman, *The Church*, nos. 948-49.

12. On Pius XII and peace, see Padellaro, *Portrait of Pius XII*, 3 and 32-43; Oscar Halecki and James F. Murray, Jr., *Pius XII: Eugenio Pacelli, Pope of Peace* (New York: Lion Library Editions, 1951); and Margherita Marchione, *Pope Pius XII: Architect for Peace*. Describing Pius XII's concern during World War II, Pierre Blet noted that "peace ... was the focal point of everything he said and did..." Blet, *Pius XII and the Second World War*, 287.



## II. Pius XII's Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery

Pope Pius XII's use of ecclesial bridal imagery is best understood within the larger context of the developing *ressourcement* and the maturing biblical and liturgical renewals. Pius XII was the first pope of the twentieth century to use in an *explicit* way ecclesial bridal imagery for ecclesiological purposes. In other words, he articulated the image's meaning and considered its scriptural and historical use in explicit relation to an understanding of the Church. This development mirrored the advancing theological reflection on ecclesial imagery that was concurrent with Pius XII's pontificate. In addition, Pius XII employed bridal and maternal imagery fairly evenly, whereas his immediate predecessors seemed to use maternal imagery more regularly. Below, the first section (A) will introduce the key documents and addresses wherein Pius used ecclesial bridal imagery in a significant way. The second section (B) will survey the key themes and patterns of Pius XII's use of bridal imagery.

### A. *Ecclesial Bridal Imagery at Significant Points in Pius XII's Teaching: Documents and Trends*

Pius XII's four most significant encyclical letters that incorporated spousal imagery were *Mystici corporis* (1943), *Mediator Dei* (1947), *Sacra virginitas* (1954), and *Haurietis aquas* (1956). His apostolic constitution, *Sponsa Christi* (1950), is also important and will be assessed in relation to his encyclical letter *Sacra virginitas*. Pius XII's audiences with newly married couples, which occurred in the early years of his papacy and contained various references to bridal imagery, will also be considered. Pius XII's various speeches to women or girls also form an important background, and one of these speeches will be highlighted here.

## 1. Audiences with newly married couples (1939-1943)

From April 26, 1939 to May 12, 1943, Pope Pius XII delivered a series of seventy-nine speeches to newly married couples.<sup>13</sup> These speeches represented a continuum of teaching on marriage and the family, and Ephesians 5:21-33 played a prominent role as a repeated point of reference for Pius' teaching. Their significance for this study of ecclesial bridal imagery is at least fourfold. First, Pius wove a tapestry of vocabulary associated with the relation between Christian marriage and the union of Christ and the Church. Second, he developed the connection between bridal and maternal imagery as well as the related aspects of the Church's fruitfulness and familial dimension. Third, Pius described that the spouses make a gift of themselves to each other, anticipating the language of "gift" that would be so prominent in John Paul II's teaching. Finally, these early audiences on marriage foreshadowed in a striking way what would become the most well-known papal audiences of the twentieth century, namely Pope John Paul II's Wednesday audiences on human love in the divine plan (the theology of the body).<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Encyclical Letter *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943)

Pope Pius XII's encyclical letter on the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, *Mystici corporis*, affirmed the ecclesiological developments of prior decades and of the previous century.<sup>15</sup> Although the image of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ had been viewed with some suspicion at the First Vatican Council, Leo XIII had employed it in his encyclical letter *Satis*

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13. Most of the speeches are available in English and organized by theme in *Dear Newlyweds: Pope Pius XII Speaks to Married Couples*, selected and trans. James F. Murray, Jr. and Bianca M. Murray (1961; repr., Kansas City, MO: Sarto House, 2001).

14. See chapter six below, p. 265ff.

15. Encyclical Letter *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943) [AAS 35, 193-248].

*cognitum*,<sup>16</sup> and Pius XII solidified its usage as a privileged image in magisterial teaching. “If we would define and describe this true Church of Jesus Christ ... we shall find nothing more noble, more sublime, or more divine than the expression ‘the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ’.”<sup>17</sup>

Ecclesial bridal imagery, too, crossed a threshold in *Mystici corporis*, beyond the fact of numerous instances of bridal imagery and associated references (e.g., Church as new Eve, Church as Mother). Unlike his recent predecessors, Pius XII explained part of the very *raison d’être* of the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ from the perspective of ecclesiology. He noted that the bridal image was a necessary complement to the image of the body—even a corrective to misunderstandings—and it served to illustrate the Church’s distinction from Christ in the midst of her unity with him. Union does not extinguish difference.

Pius’ use of the bridal image resonated with patristic sentiment and set the stage for subsequent frequent couplings of the images of body and bride in magisterial teaching, in a way reminiscent of Augustine. The deliberate reflection on the Church as the Bride of Christ in *Mystici corporis* was likely the result of Sebastian Tromp’s influence. Tromp has traditionally been regarded as the key drafter of the encyclical, and, as noted in chapter one above, he was particularly attentive to the use of ecclesial bridal imagery throughout the tradition. In addition, Pius’ recognition of metaphorical usage anticipated his subsequent consideration of symbols in his encyclical letter *Haurietis aquas* (1956).

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16. See chapter three above, p. 112n10.

17. Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 13 [AAS 35, 199].

### 3. Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947)

Pius XII's encyclical letter *Mediator Dei* acknowledged the fruits of the liturgical renewal and encouraged the continuation of this renewal.<sup>18</sup> In the encyclical, Pius repeatedly used ecclesial bridal imagery in close connection to the liturgy and, on occasion, specifically to the Eucharist, and often with an emphasis upon the action (*actio, opera*) of the bridal Church. This close connection between the liturgy and the use of bridal imagery had a precedent in the Council of Trent which spoke of Christ giving “his beloved Spouse, the Church, a visible sacrifice ... that would re-present the bloody sacrifice.”<sup>19</sup> Pius XII cited this passage in *Mediator Dei*, and the Second Vatican Council would allude to the same.<sup>20</sup> Theologians such as Odo Casel were also offering similar considerations on the Eucharist as Christ's gift to his Bride, the Church.<sup>21</sup>

### 4. Teaching on consecrated virginity: Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi* (November 21, 1950); Encyclical Letter *Sacra virginitas* (March 25, 1954)

Pius XII's apostolic constitution on the canonical status of contemplative nuns, entitled *Sponsa Christi*,<sup>22</sup> contained two strategic endnotes which illustrated that Pius' use of bridal imagery was more than routine. Immediately following the first three words, “*Sponsa Christi Ecclesia*,” an endnote cites Ephesians 5, Revelation 21 and 22, the Shepherd of Hermas, St.

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18. Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947) [AAS 39, 521-95]. See Rita Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2007), 8-13.

19. Council of Trent, Session 22 (September 17, 1562). See chapter one above, p. 34n123.

20. See Encyclical *Mediator Dei*, no. 67 [AAS 39, 547]; Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963), no. 47 [AAS 56, 113].

21. See Casel, “Die Kirche als Braut Christi,” 84-87, and “Die Einigung von Bräutigam und Braut in der Eucharistie,” in *Mysterium der Ekklesia*, 200-2. For more on Casel's use of bridal imagery, see chapter one above, p. 48ff.

22. Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi* (November 21, 1950) [AAS 43, 5-24].

Methodius, and St. Ambrose.<sup>23</sup> In the second paragraph, after Pius describes Christ “as the true Bridegroom of souls [*ut vero animorum Sponsus*],” an endnote cites 2 Corinthians 11, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Methodius, St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas.<sup>24</sup> Pius XII was aware of, and seems to have been intent to ascribe, a certain depth and traditional rootedness to his use of bridal imagery in relation to the Church and to consecrated virgins.

Pius also quoted similar patristic references in his encyclical letter on consecrated virginity, *Sacra virginitas*.<sup>25</sup> More notably, Pius explicitly considered the ecclesial significance of consecrated virginity as a spousal relationship with Christ, and he commented on consecrated virginity’s capacity to image the spousal union of Christ and the Church.<sup>26</sup> In both *Sponsa Christi* and *Sacra virginitas*, Pius offered a more profound and authoritative consideration—certainly than that of his immediate predecessors—of the traditional foundations and ecclesial significance of spousal imagery in relation to consecrated virgins.

## 5. Encyclical Letter *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956)

Pius XII’s encyclical letter on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, *Haurietis aquas*, was one of the more significant treatments of symbolism and imagery in twentieth-century papal teaching.<sup>27</sup> Like Leo XIII had done, Pius XII described the Heart of Christ as the “natural sign and symbol [*naturalis index seu symbol*] of his immeasurable love [*immensa caritas*] for the human

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23. Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi* [AAS 43, 5 and 21].

24. Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi* [AAS 43, 5 and 21].

25. See Encyclical *Sacra virginitas* (March 25, 1954), nos. 17-19 [AAS 46, 166-67].

26. Encyclical *Sacra virginitas*, no. 31 [AAS 46, 173-74].

27. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956) [AAS 48, 309-53].

race,” even the “most expressive symbol of that inexhaustible love.”<sup>28</sup> “[I]n it we can consider not only the symbol [*symbolum*] but also, as it were, the summary [*summa*] of the whole mystery of our Redemption.”<sup>29</sup> Pius XII followed in the line of his predecessors’ encyclicals on the Sacred Heart, namely Leo XIII’s encyclical *Annum sacrum* (1899) and Pius XI’s encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor* (1928). But these former encyclicals neither incorporated nuptial imagery nor considered the love of Christ from the perspective of Old Testament salvation history. In *Haurietis aquas*, however, Pius associated the symbol of Christ’s Sacred Heart with nuptial imagery in various instances, and provided significant consideration of the love of Christ through a nuptial lens.

*Haurietis aquas* marked an important step in the papal magisterium’s consideration of the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ. Pius XII pondered the bridal image within the perspective of divine love and the history of salvation, a love and history which culminated in Christ’s love for the Church. Patristic sources, on which Sebastian Tromp had widely drawn earlier,<sup>30</sup> clearly influenced Pius’ treatment of the notion of the Church’s birth from the Heart of Christ on the cross. Pius also offered a realistic rendering of the bridal Church as she actually is on earth, noting that the Church’s face is affected by the sinfulness of her members.<sup>31</sup> Pius depicted the triumph and perfection of the Bride of Christ as an anticipated, eschatological reality. In his use of bridal and maternal imagery, Pius was anticipating the shift towards a more

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28. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas*, no. 22 and no. 85 [AAS 48, 316 and 336].

29. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas*, no. 86 [AAS 48, 336].

30. See Tromp, “De Nativitate Ecclesiae ex Corde Jesu Cruce.” See chapter one above, p. 44ff.

31. Tromp’s likely influence, as well as Vonier’s, might be noted here as well. See Tromp, “Ecclesia Sponsa,” 26-27, and Vonier, *The Spirit and the Bride*, 257; chapter one above, pp. 44ff. and 46ff.

conscious acknowledgement of the Church as a pilgrim people in this world, awaiting her full perfection.

#### 6. Address *Poussées par le désir* to the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (September 29, 1957)

Pius XII's pontificate was particularly distinguished from those of his predecessors by his regular speeches addressed to women and girls.<sup>32</sup> These speeches did not incorporate ecclesial bridal imagery in any explicit or developed way. Nevertheless, Pius XII's specific attention to the role of women in the world and in the Church, and to the very meaning of the feminine, was significant in light of his developed consideration of the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ. One of Pius XII's final addresses, to the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations in 1957, will be briefly examined here.<sup>33</sup>

In his address, Pius affirmed the importance of the promotion of women within a Christian framework. In considering a woman's relation to Christ, Pius emphasized two themes implicitly related to ecclesial bridal imagery. First, a woman's belonging to Christ "takes a special profile in marriage." After quoting Eph 5:25 (husbands, love your wives) and Eph 5:22 and 24 (wives, be subject), Pius explained:

By elevating marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament, Christ conferred upon spouses an incomparable dignity and assigned a redemptive function to their union. When St. Paul affirmed that women ought to be subject to their husbands as the Church to Christ, he established a very clear difference [*une différence bien nette*] between the spouses, but at the same time, he illustrated the force [*la force*] which associates one to the other and maintains the indissolubility of the bond which unites them.<sup>34</sup>

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32. Many of these speeches or selections thereof are gathered in English in *The Woman in the Modern World*, sel. and arr. Monks of Solesmes (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1959).

33. See Address *Poussées par le désir* (September 29, 1957) [AAS 49, 906-22].

34. Address *Poussées par le désir* [AAS 49, 911].

This passage mirrored Pius' explanation in *Mystici corporis* of the Church's distinction from Christ as his bride, echoing Ephesians 5.<sup>35</sup>

Second, Pius noted that the Virgin Mary represents the perfect fulfillment (*parfait accomplissement*) of the bond between Christ and "woman."<sup>36</sup> In Mary, "the particular dignity" (*fierté*) of women is manifest in an unmatched way.<sup>37</sup> "What civilization or religion has ever held the feminine ideal [*l'idéal féminin*] to such heights, or exalted it to such perfection?"<sup>38</sup> "The feminine ideal" is found in Mary because of her intimate union with Christ.<sup>39</sup>

In his treatment of the relation between woman and the Church, Pius acknowledged that "[t]he ecclesiastical hierarchy is not the whole Church [*n'est pas toute l'Eglise*]."<sup>40</sup> The purpose of this statement was not only to emphasize the role of the laity but specifically to emphasize the place of women in the Church "as members of the Mystical Body of Christ."<sup>41</sup>

Pius XII thus amplified the attention given to the meaning and role of women, and, by doing so, he responded to the "signs of the times" and provided a foundation which would continue to be developed in magisterial teaching. Consideration of the dignity of women would eventually coalesce with the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in a significant way.<sup>42</sup>

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35. See Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 86 [AAS 35, 234].

36. Address *Poussées par le désir* [AAS 49, 912].

37. Address *Poussées par le désir* [AAS 49, 912].

38. Address *Poussées par le désir* [AAS 49, 912].

39. Address *Poussées par le désir* [AAS 49, 912].

40. Address *Poussées par le désir* [AAS 49, 914].

41. Address *Poussées par le désir* [AAS 49, 914].

42. See Pope John Paul II's teaching, treated in chapter six below, especially pp. 268ff. and 307ff.



## ***B. Key Themes and Patterns of Pius XII's Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery***

As indicated in the encyclicals, constitution, and audiences examined above, Pope Pius XII considered ecclesial bridal imagery in a more profound and explicit way than had his immediate predecessors. Below, the key themes and patterns associated with Pius XII's use of ecclesial bridal imagery will be surveyed. While many of the themes are comparable to those of his predecessors, Pius XII's teaching exhibited the marks of the ongoing *ressourcement* and movements of renewal, which uniquely influenced his use of ecclesial bridal imagery.

### **1. Recognition of ecclesial images as metaphors**

In his encyclical letter *Mystici corporis*, Pius XII acknowledged St. Paul's use of the images of head and body as a way of speaking "metaphorically" or "figuratively" (*translata*).<sup>43</sup> According to Pius, this recognition was important for discerning the proper meaning of the imagery. He then used bridal imagery (citing St. Paul) to clarify the meaning of the metaphor of the union between Christ and the Church as the union of head and body. Implicitly, it could be said that Pius recognized ecclesial bridal imagery as a way of speaking metaphorically about the Church. At the same time, this recognition was not a reduction of the potential significance of the imagery. Pius himself stated that the image of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ served as a privileged definition of the Church.<sup>44</sup> Elsewhere, Pius XII was attentive to the category of symbol (e.g., encyclical on the Sacred Heart of Jesus), though he did not examine this category explicitly in relation to ecclesial bridal imagery.<sup>45</sup>

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43. See Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 86 [AAS 35, 234].

44. See Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 13 [AAS 35, 199].

45. See Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956) [AAS 48, 309-53].

## 2. The holiness and glory of the mystical and spotless Bride of Christ

In multiple instances, Pius XII referred to the spotless holiness, the mystical quality, and the particular eminence of the Church as the Bride of Christ. The Church is the “mystical Bride of Jesus Christ,” the *mystica Sponsa*.<sup>46</sup> The Church is the “spotless or immaculate Bride”; however, Pius seemed to prefer the terms *intaminata* and *intemerata* rather than the term *immaculata*,<sup>47</sup> a term he used sparingly in reference to the Church as the Bride of Christ.<sup>48</sup> In other places, Pius XII described the bridal Church as youthful (*giovane*)<sup>49</sup> and even famous or illustrious (*inclita*).<sup>50</sup> The Holy Spirit contributes to this “youthfulness” (*giovinezza*) and “fullness of life” (*una pienezza di vita*) which corresponds to the “supernatural character” of the Bride.<sup>51</sup> The Church is “the one and immortal [*unique et immortelle*] Bride of Christ.”<sup>52</sup> The Church has particular dignity (*dignitas*) as the Bride of Christ.<sup>53</sup>

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46. Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* (October 10, 1939) [AAS 31, 413-453]. See also Address *Recentemente uniti* (December 6, 1939) [DR 1, 413]; Encyclical *Saeculo exeunte octavo* (June 13, 1940), no. 8 [AAS 32, 250-251]; Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956), no. 2 [AAS 48, 310].

47. See Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), nos. 39, 44, 66, and 106 [AAS 35, pp. 210, 213, 225, and 245]; Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947), nos. 27, 50, 78, 118, 177 and 207 [AAS 39, pp. 532, 542, 551, 564, 585 and 594]; Homily *Quotiescumque Ecclesia* (March 15, 1949) [AAS 41, 212]; and Apostolic Letter *Omnigenae sanctimoniae* (April 27, 1958) [AAS 50, 306].

48. Of the following two instances cited, the first is simply a quote from Eph 5:27 (“*santa e immacolata*”): Address *Dacchè piacque* (October 2, 1945) [DR 7, 209]; Decretal Letter *Inter turbida* (May 15, 1949) [AAS 42, 521]. In another instance, Pius referred to the Church as “immacolata Madre.” Radio Message *Circondati dal concorso* (May 13, 1942) [AAS 34, 161].

49. Radio Message *Circondati dal concorso* (May 13, 1942) [AAS 34, 156 and 161]. See also Address *Conforto, letizia* (September 7, 1947) [DR 9, 219].

50. Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947), nos. 37 and 61 [AAS 39, 537 and 545].

51. Radio Message *Già per la decimaterza* (December 24, 1951) [AAS 44, 5].

52. Address *C'est Dieu lui-meme* (May 17, 1949) [AAS 41, 288].

53. Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 89 [AAS 35, 236].

Although the Church is undefiled and unsullied as the Bride, she depends upon and is affected by her members.<sup>54</sup> Pius noted that holy men and women “increase the beauty and multiply the joy of the Bride of Christ.”<sup>55</sup> Saints, who “enrich and embellish the Church, [God’s] Bride,” are as jewels of the Bride.<sup>56</sup> “For the Church, his Bride [*Eius Sponsa Ecclesia*], would not fully respond to the desires of Christ the Lord and men’s eyes would not turn to her full of hope as to ‘the standard raised among the nations,’ if there were not found in her bosom [*in eius sinu*] those who, by the example of their life even more than by their words, shine more gracefully with the beauty [*decor*] of the Gospel.”<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, the face of the Church, who is Bride and Mother, is disfigured by the sins of her members.<sup>58</sup> As Pius explained in *Mystici corporis*, these sins are not attributable to the Church’s “juridical constitution” but to the “inclination to evil” found in her members.<sup>59</sup> “Certainly the loving Mother is spotless [*intaminata*] in the Sacraments ... in the faith ... in the evangelical counsels ... [and] in those heavenly gifts and extraordinary grace through which, with inexhaustible fecundity, she generates hosts of martyrs, virgins and confessors.”<sup>60</sup>

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54. Pius elsewhere identified the members with the Church: *Mysticum Iesu Christi corpus sumus*. Homily *Dum Divinum Redemptorem* (April 9, 1950) [AAS 42, 280].

55. Apostolic Letter *Quoniam* (June 3, 1951) [AAS 43, 462].

56. Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi* (November 21, 1950) [AAS 43, 8].

57. Address *Haud mediocri* (February 11, 1958) [DR 19, 749]. Translation adapted from O’Gorman, *The Church*, no. 1505.

58. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956), no. 116 [AAS 48, 348].

59. Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 66 [AAS 35, 225].

60. Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 66 [AAS 35, 225].

### 3. The Church as the beloved Bride of Christ

Pius XII, like his predecessors, spoke in various places of the love Christ has for his Bride, the Church. The Church is Christ's beloved (*amata, dilecta*) or most beloved Bride (*Sponsa dilectissima*).<sup>61</sup> He looks upon her with a "special love" (*peculiaris amor*) and looks for her "greater honor" (*ad maiorem honorem*).<sup>62</sup> Pius cited Ephesians 5:25-27 when describing the love of Christ's Heart "for us and for his Bride, the Universal Church."<sup>63</sup>

Christ's love for his Bride was especially manifest through his Passion and death. "Christ revealed [*patefecit*] his love for his undefiled Bride ... through the pain and anguish freely and lovingly endured for her sake."<sup>64</sup> He poured out his blood for her; she is "made with his own blood" and is "the bride of his blood."<sup>65</sup> Christ "entered into a mystical marriage [*mysticum matrimonium*] with the Church" through his love, by means of his blood poured out.<sup>66</sup> Pius cited Thomas Aquinas<sup>67</sup> and then quoted from the Hymn at Vespers on the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus: "From the pierced Heart, the Church, wedded to Christ [*Ecclesia Christo iugata*], is born."<sup>68</sup> After the Ascension, Christ remains close to "his Bride, the Church, through the most ardent love [*flagrantissimus amor*] with which his Heart beats."<sup>69</sup>

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61. See Address *Grande conforto* (February 12, 1941) [DR 2, 398]; Address *Gran fonte* (April 15, 1942) [DR 4, 40]; Address *Il fiorire* (May 5, 1943) [DR 5, 55]; Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 89 [AAS 35, 236]; Radio Message *Venerable Brethren* (October 26, 1946) [DR 8, 288]; and Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947), no. 67 [AAS 39, 547].

62. Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), nos. 39 and 44 [AAS 35, 210 and 213].

63. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956), no. 86 [AAS 48, 336].

64. Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 106 [AAS 35, 245].

65. Address *Il fiorire* (May 5, 1943) [DR 5, 55 and 58-59].

66. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956), no. 76 [AAS 48, 333].

67. ST Supplement, q. 42, art. 1: "Per caritatem pro Ecclesia sibi in sponsam coniugenda passus est."

68. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956), no. 76 [AAS 48, 333].

69. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas*, no. 79 [AAS 48, 334].

Pius' encyclical *Haurietis aquas* elaborated on the love of Christ symbolized by his Heart, from which the Bride of Christ was born,<sup>70</sup> and it also considered the covenantal love of God portrayed in nuptial terms by the Old Testament.<sup>71</sup> In particular, Pius reviewed the scriptural expressions of God's love for his people. He noted that "Moses and the prophets ... described all the circumstances and relationships which should exist between God and his people by likenesses [*similitudines*] drawn from the reciprocal love between a father and his children or between a husband and wife."<sup>72</sup> Pius then called attention to Hosea who "so openly and forcefully" portrayed the love of God for his people in both filial and spousal terms, in a way unsurpassed by the other prophets.<sup>73</sup> As well, there were the "moving words" of the author of the Song of Songs, "who having used images of conjugal love [*coniugalis amoris imaginibus usus*], described in a notable manner [*significanter*] the bonds of mutual love [*caritas*] by which God and his beloved people are united [*coniunguntur*] to each other."<sup>74</sup> But the love of God for Israel was only a sign that foretold "that burning charity" which would flow from Christ's pierced Heart (*ex amantissimo Corde*) and which would serve as the exemplar (*exemplar*) of God's love for us.<sup>75</sup> Pope Pius' considerations of spousal imagery within the history of salvation echoed the work of both A. Vonier and H. de Lubac, among others.<sup>76</sup>

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70. See Encyclical *Haurietis aquas*, nos. 29, 76 and 79 [AAS 48, 319 and 333-34]. See also Address *La grandissima solennità* (June 1, 1941) [DR 3, 100].

71. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas*, nos. 26 and 28 [AAS 48, 318-19].

72. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas*, no. 25 [AAS 48, 318].

73. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas*, no. 26 [AAS 48, 318].

74. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas*, no. 28 [AAS 48, 319].

75. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas*, no. 29 [AAS 48, 319].

76. See chapter one above, pp. 46ff. and 49ff.

As the Church is loved by Christ and should love him in return, Pius also emphasized that the Church should be loved by her members. “[L]et this be the supreme law of our love: to love the Spouse of Christ as Christ willed her to be, and as he purchased her with His blood.”<sup>77</sup>

In *Mystici corporis*, Pius notably portrayed the extent of this love:

And first of all let us imitate the breadth of His love. For the Church, the Bride of Christ, is one; and yet so vast is the love of the divine Spouse that it embraces in His Bride [*in sua Sponsa*] the whole human race without exception.<sup>78</sup>

Here the bridal image portrays the intimate relation between the Church and all humanity. Christ loves the whole human race *in sua Sponsa*. Pius then drew out the implication, namely that a real love for the Church must entail not only a love and care for one’s fellow members but also a recognition of those who are not yet members of the Church as “our brothers in Christ according to the flesh.”<sup>79</sup>

#### 4. The bridal Church’s distinct identity and dignity within her union with Christ

In his encyclical letter *Mystici corporis*, Pius examined the nature of the faithful’s union with Christ (within the Mystical Body of Christ). He noted that this union, which is mysterious, is often misunderstood or explained poorly. The union is “very close” (*artissima*) and is likened (*adsimulatur*) in Scripture to a variety of other unions, including “the bond of chaste wedlock” (*casti connubii vinculum*) as well as that of the vine and its branches and the unity of the body.<sup>80</sup> According to Pius, the image of the union of Head and Body provides the most striking

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77. Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 92 [AAS 35, 238].

78. Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 96 [AAS 35, 239-40].

79. Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 96 [AAS 35, 240].

80. Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 67 [AAS 35, 226].

illustration of the closeness of the union, which is so close as to form “one mystical person” (*una mystica person*), or “the whole Christ.”<sup>81</sup>

However, Pius observed that a simplistic consideration of the meanings of terms used by St. Paul (namely, head and body) has led some people to a “distorted notion of unity.” Specifically, they have ignored Paul’s “metaphorical” or “figurative” (*translata*) use of language and therefore have missed the “peculiar and proper” meanings of the physical, moral, and mystical body. This mistake has led to the idea that Christ and the faithful are as “one physical person” (*in physicam unam personam*). It was here that Pius then utilized the bridal image to illustrate the authentic understanding: “[A]lthough [Paul] brings Christ and his Mystical Body into a wonderfully intimate union [*mira inter se coagmentatione coniungat*], he nevertheless distinguishes [*opponit*] one from the other as Bridegroom from Bride (cf. Eph 5:22-23).”<sup>82</sup> Pius thus attributed a particular significance to ecclesial bridal imagery for its ability to convey the Church’s distinction from Christ.

Pius also used bridal imagery in conveying the Church’s unique activity and participation in Christ’s work of salvation. Christ himself is not weak or “needful,” but rather “he has so willed [this participation] for the greater glory of His spotless Bride [*intemerata sua Sponsa*].”<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, “not only does [Christ] share this work of sanctification with his spotless Bride [*intaminata sua Sponsa*], but he wills that in some way [*quodammodo*] it proceed from her action [*ex eius opera*].”<sup>84</sup> The image of the Church as Bride signifies her free agency and the dignity of her

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81. Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 67 [AAS 35, 226].

82. Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 86 [AAS 35, 234].

83. Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 44 [AAS 35, 213].

84. Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 44 [AAS 35, 213].

role in the work of salvation. O. Casel's reflections, especially on the bridal Church's "distinct particularity" and "full freedom in love," certainly found resonance in Pius' use of bridal imagery.<sup>85</sup>

### 5. The Church as the Bride who awaits her victory in the midst of suffering and sin

Like his predecessors, Pope Pius XII referred to the fact that the bridal Church finds herself in situations of persecution and distress. The Bride of Christ "encounters more obstacles and objections in her efforts to assure the reception she desires for her principles and her exhortations..."<sup>86</sup> In his first encyclical, Pius reported having seen in the first months of his pontificate "the distress, constant anxiety, and crises with which the path of the mystical Bride of Jesus Christ is strewn."<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, "[w]ith a heart torn by the sufferings and afflictions of so many of her sons, but with courage and the stability that come from the promises of Our Lord, the Bride of Christ [*Christi Sponsa*], having endured so much misery, goes to meet the gathering storms."<sup>88</sup>

The Second World War deeply affected Pius XII's teaching and emphases.<sup>89</sup> The Bride of Christ found herself in a "sad and distressing hour,"<sup>90</sup> and experienced in herself "the mystery of 'the sign of contradiction'."<sup>91</sup> She has "sorrows and maternal tears."<sup>92</sup> "Christ ever looks after

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85. See chapter one above, p. 48ff.

86. Address *In questo giorno* (June 2, 1939) [DR 1, 152].

87. Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* (October 10, 1939), no. 15 [AAS 31, 418].

88. Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus*, no. 108 [AAS 31, 450].

89. See Radio Message *Nell'alba e nella luce* (December 24, 1941) [AAS 34, 20].

90. Radio Message *We Are* (October 19, 1940) [AAS 32, 425]. See also Homily *Lasciate, diletti figli* (May 14, 1942) [AAS 34, 170]; Decretal Letter *Inter turbida* (May 15, 1949) [AAS 42, 521].

91. Homily *Di anno in anno* (December 24, 1942) [AAS 35, 7].

92. Radio Message *Gravi ed ad un tempo* (December 24, 1948) [AAS 41, 8].



his undefiled Spouse laboring in earthly exile.”<sup>93</sup> The Holy Spirit “guards the Bride of Christ [*la Sposa di Cristo*] ... in the midst of revolutions which subvert the nations.”<sup>94</sup> When “new perils of danger” weigh against the Church, the “Bride of the Divine Redeemer,” she can also rely on the prayers and protection of the Virgin Mary.<sup>95</sup>

After the war ended, Pius commented on the striking presence of suffering in the twentieth century:

The Church is always young!... But the immortal youth of the Church is manifest—oh marvell!—especially in her suffering. She is a “Bride of blood” [*Sposa di sangue*] (cf. Ex 4:25). In blood are her children, her ministers calumniated, imprisoned, killed, tortured. Who would ever have believed possible, in this twentieth century—after such progress in civilization, after so many affirmations of liberty—such oppression, so many persecutions, so much violence? But the Church does not fear. She wishes to be a Bride of blood and suffering [*Sposa di sangue e di dolore*], to reproduce in herself the image of her divine Bridegroom [*del suo Sposo divino*], to suffer, to do combat, to triumph with Him.<sup>96</sup>

Even in the midst of suffering, the Church knows she will triumph with her divine Spouse. This “immortal youth” in suffering was something of a paradox which Pius shared in his address to members of the Italian Catholic Action in order to fortify and encourage their apostolates. Pius later described devotion to the Sacred Heart as a gift which the Savior “imparted to the Church, his mystical Bride, in recent centuries when she had to endure such trials and surmount so many difficulties.”<sup>97</sup>

Compared to his predecessors, one difference in Pius’ usage of imagery concerning the Bride of Christ’s suffering seems to rest in the fact that Pius acknowledged more explicitly the

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93. Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 39 [AAS 35, 210].

94. Homily *Una tradizionale* (December 24, 1943) [AAS 36, 6].

95. Encyclical *Meminisse iuvat* (July 14, 1958) [AAS 50, 449].

96. Address *Conforta, letizia* (September 7, 1947) [DR 9, 219]. English translation adapted from O’Gorman, *The Church*, no. 1210.

97. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956), no. 2 [AAS 48, 310].

Church's posture of waiting, i.e., her waiting for final victory as well as her own perfection. "As tomorrow dawns ... the Church, Christ's Spouse, her hands outstretched, We, with eyes uplifted to heaven for you, Christ Himself, Redeemer of the world, will await with holy confidence the promise of the day."<sup>98</sup> Despite the sorrows experienced by the Bride of Christ through the centuries, a "grand victory" lies in wait, to be found in the time to come.<sup>99</sup> The Church militant awaits the perfection prayed for by her divine Bridegroom.<sup>100</sup> Perhaps most striking in this context was Pius' comparison of the life of the Church with widowhood.

[Widowhood] is a figure of the present life of the Church militant, deprived of the vision of her heavenly Spouse [*de son époux céleste*], with whom, nonetheless, she remains forever united [*indéfectiblement unie*], journeying [*marchant*] towards Him in faith and hope, living by means of love which sustains her in her trials [*épreuves*], and waiting impatiently [*attendant impatiemment*] for the final accomplishment [*l'accomplissement définitif*] of those first promises.<sup>101</sup>

Pius XII was also cognizant of the suffering caused by sin. The sins of the Church's members mar the face of the Church.

[T]here is no one unaware that the Church militant on earth [*militans in terris Ecclesia*], and especially civil society, has not yet reached that full and absolute form of perfection [*plena absolutaque perfectionis forma*] which would correspond to the prayers and desires of Jesus Christ, the Mystical Spouse of the Church [*Mysticus Ecclesiae Sponsus*] and Redeemer of the human race. Not a few children of the Church disfigure [*deturpan*], by too many blemishes and wrinkles [*nimiis maculis, nimiis rugis*], the face [*vultus*] of this mother, which they represent [*referunt*] in themselves. Not all Christians shine with that holiness of behavior to which they are divinely called; not all sinners have come back to the Father's house, which they unfortunately abandoned, that they may be clothed once again with the "first robe" (Lk 15:22) and receive on their finger the ring, the pledge of faith toward the spouse of their soul [*fidei erga animi sui sponsum insigne*]; not all the peoples have yet been gathered into membership of the Mystical Body of Christ.<sup>102</sup>

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98. Radio Message *We Are* (October 19, 1940) [AAS 32, 424].

99. Homily *Una tradizionale* (December 24, 1943) [AAS 36, 9]. See also Address *Una indicibile commozione* (December 22, 1946) [AAS 39, 6].

100. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956), no. 116 [AAS 48, 348].

101. Address *Nous accueillons* (September 16, 1957) [AAS 49, 901].

102. Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956), no. 116 [AAS 48, 348-349]. Translation modified.

The face (*vultus*) of the Bride, the Mother, is manifest in the members of the Church. Because of the sinfulness of her members, the face of the Church on earth will never shine with that brilliancy of holiness that Christ wishes for her and which he has actually bestowed to her in the Holy Spirit. Here, the Church as Bride is not simply characterized in triumphant distinction from sinners, but her sinful children actually are part and parcel of this Bride who awaits the realization and fulfillment of her perfection.

## 6. Christian marriage as a symbol of the mystical union between Christ and the Church

Although Pius XII did not issue an encyclical on marriage, he treated topics related to marriage and the family on numerous occasions, particularly in his early audiences with newlyweds, and linked Christian marriage to the union of Christ and the Church. “The sacrament of matrimony signifies, as you know, the mystical union [*la mistica unione*] of Jesus Christ with his Bride the Church (in and of which are born the adopted sons of God, legitimate heirs of the divine promise).”<sup>103</sup> According to Pius XII, the sacrament of marriage is fortified with ineffable gifts in the same way that “Christ enriches his own mystical nuptials [*le sue mistiche nozze*] with the Church with the precious gem of divine grace.”<sup>104</sup> Pius taught that Christian marriage is “modeled” (*modellato*) upon Christ’s union with the Church in three ways: in both unions, (1) the spouses make a “gift of themselves” that is “total, exclusive, and irrevocable;” (2)

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103. Address *La vostra presenza* (April 26, 1939) [DR 1, 69].

104. Address *La vostra presenza* [DR 1, 69].

the bridegroom is the head of the bride; and finally, (3) “the mutual gift becomes the principle of the expansion and springing forth of life.”<sup>105</sup>

In his audiences to married couples, Pius referred to Ephesians 5:21-33 regularly and employed a variety of terms to speak of the relationship between marriage and the union of Christ and the Church. Pius quoted Eph 5:22-23 (wives, be subject) and Eph 5:25 (husbands, love your wives) in his description of the “mutual duties” (*scambievoli doveri*) of wife and husband.<sup>106</sup> He also taught that Christ willed the Church, his “mystical Bride,” to be holy and without blemish (see Eph 5:27), and that the “greatness of the sacrament of matrimony is its relation to the union [*il suo rapporto all’unione*] of Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32).”<sup>107</sup> According to Pius XII, the union (*unione*) between Christ and the Church is “mystical,” “sublime,” “indissoluble,” “divine,” and “most perfect.”<sup>108</sup> In two instances, Pius referred to this union as “mystical nuptials” (*mystiche nozze*) or a “wedding” (*sposalizio*).<sup>109</sup> Christian marriage is “a symbol or permanent symbol of,” “related to,” “modeled upon,” “a living and permanent image of,” “a sign and symbol of,” and “representative of” Christ’s union with the Church.<sup>110</sup> Elsewhere, Pius

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105. Address *La prima parola* (October 23, 1940) [DR 2, 287].

106. Address *Ci sentiamo* (May 24, 1939) [DR 1, 140].

107. Address *Recentemente uniti* (December 6, 1939) [DR 1, 413-414]. For other references to Eph 5, see Address *Sempre gradite* (July 5, 1939) [DR 1, 234]; Address *La prima parola* (October 23, 1940) [DR 2, 287]; Address *Fra le innumerevoli* (January 15, 1941) [DR 2, 376]; Address *Quante volte* (August 13, 1941) [DR 3, 179]; Address *Quando alcuni* (September 10, 1941) [DR 3, 193]; Address *Gran fonte* (April 15, 1942) [DR 4, 40]; and Address *A un alto* (April 22, 1942) [DR 4, 48].

108. Address *La vostra presenza* (April 26, 1939) [DR 1, 69]; Address *Sempre gradite* (July 5, 1939) [DR 1, 234]; Address *Tra le schiere* (July 12, 1939) [DR 1, 247]; Address *Quando alcuni* (September 10, 1941) [DR 3, 195]; and Address *Quando, diletti* (April 29, 1942) [DR 4, 53].

109. Address *La vostra presenza* (April 26, 1939) [DR 1, 69]; Address *A un alto* (April 22, 1942) [DR 4, 46].

110. Address *Sempre gradite* (July 5, 1939) [DR 1, 234]; Address *Tra le schiere* (July 12, 1939) [DR 1, 247]; Address *Recentemente uniti* (December 6, 1939) [DR 1, 414]; Address *La prima parola* (October 23, 1940) [DR 2, 287]; Address *Grande conforto* (February 12, 1941) [DR 2, 398]; Address *Quante volte* (August 13, 1941) [DR 3, 179]; and Address *Quando, diletti* (April 29, 1942) [DR 4, 53].

referred to marriage's "supernatural dignity" as a symbol of Christ's union with the Church.<sup>111</sup>

Marriage is "the symbol of the redemptive love [*symbole de l'amour rédempteur*] of Christ for his Church" which makes the husband like Christ and the wife like the redeemed Church.<sup>112</sup>

In an address of June 19, 1940, Pius taught about the dignity of the family<sup>113</sup> and in a noteworthy way compared the family to the Trinity.

Man, masterpiece of the Creator, is made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). Now in the family this image takes on, so to speak, a peculiar resemblance with the divine model [*una peculiare somiglianza col divino modello*], for the reason that, as the essential unity [*la essenziale unità*] of the divine nature exists in three distinct, consubstantial, and eternal persons, the moral unity [*la morale unità*] of the human family also comes to be in the trinity [*trinità*] of the father, the mother, and their children. The conjugal fidelity and indissolubility of Christian matrimony constitute a principle of unity, which seems perhaps contrary to the inferior part of man, but conforms to his spiritual nature. On the other hand, the commandment given to the first human couple: Increase and multiply (Gen 1:22), which makes of fecundity a law, assures to the family the gift of perpetuation across the centuries and puts it in place as a reflection of eternity.<sup>114</sup>

Pius then recalled the blessing of a large family affirmed in the Old Law, a blessing recognized in the New Law as well. In the New Law, marriage also becomes a sacrament and therefore "a means of mutual sanctification through the spouses and an inexhaustible spring of supernatural help," and the sacrament "makes their union a symbol of that between Christ and his Church."<sup>115</sup> Pius subsequently described husband and wife as "collaborators in the creative work of the Father, the redemptive work of the Son, and the enlightening and educative work of the

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111. Pastoral Instruction *In meno di un anno* (n.d.; published February 28, 1945) [AAS 37, 34].

112. Address *Nous accueillons* (September 16, 1957) [AAS 49, 901].

113. The important place of the family was a repeated theme of Pius XII's pontificate. For example, see Address *Nell'ordine della natura* (November 26, 1951) [AAS 43, 855-60].

114. Address *Quarantun anno* (June 19, 1940) [DR 2, 148].

115. Address *Quarantun anno* [DR 2, 149].

Holy Spirit.”<sup>116</sup> Significantly, these passages illustrated the interconnection between the human person, marriage, the family, and the Triune God.

## 7. The Bride who is Mother

Pius XII gave a frequent and prominent place to ecclesial maternal imagery in his teaching,<sup>117</sup> and he also employed maternal imagery in ways that illustrated the unique theological

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116. Address *Quarantun anno* [DR 2, 149].

117. For examples of ecclesial maternal imagery in Pius XII's teaching, see Homily *Quoniam Paschalia Sollemnia* (April 9, 1939) [AAS 31, 148]; Address *La vostra presenza* (April 26, 1939) [DR 1, 69]; Address *Ci sentiamo* (May 24, 1939) [DR 1, 139]; Address *Con particolare* (November 8, 1939) [DR 1, 369]; Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* (October 10, 1939), nos. 45, 84, 101-2, 108 and 110 [AAS 31, pp. 429, 441, 447-48 and 450-51]; Encyclical *Sertum laetitiae* (November 1, 1939), nos. 11 and 42 [AAS 31, 637 and 644]; Radio Message *En este solemne día* (October 27, 1940) [AAS 32, 431]; Address *Voi siete* (November 6, 1940) [DR 2, 297 and 302]; Address *In questa vibrante* (November 10, 1940) [DR 2, 306-7, 309 and 313]; Address *Grazie, Venerabili Fratelli* (December 24, 1940) [AAS 33, 11]; Address *Fra le innumerevoli* (January 15, 1941) [DR 2, 376 and 379]; Radio Message *Di cuore* (April 13, 1941) [AAS 33, 114]; Radio Message *La solennità della Pentecoste* (June 1, 1941) [AAS 33, 197]; Radio Message *In questa solennità* (June 29, 1941) [AAS 33, 319]; Address *Davanti* (October 26, 1941) [DR 3, 233]; Radio Message *Es siempre* (November 9, 1941) [AAS 33, 439]; Radio Message *Nell'alba* (December 24, 1941) [AAS 34, 20]; Address *La gradita* (January 21, 1942) [DR 3, 353]; Address *Graditissima* (February 17, 1942) [AAS 34, 141-42]; Address *Una parola* (March 25, 1942) [DR 4, 15]; Radio Message *Circondati* (May 13, 1942) [AAS 34, 158 and 161]; Radio Message *Con sempre* (December 24, 1942) [AAS 35, 9-10]; Address *Il fiorire* (May 5, 1943) [DR 5, 53]; Address *Tutte le famiglie* (May 12, 1943) [DR 5, 64-65]; *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), nos. 3, 5, 18, 28, 66, 73, 88-89, 92, 98, 105 and 109 [AAS 35, pp. 194-95, 201, 205, 225, 229, 235-36, 238, 241 and 244]; Encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* (September 30, 1943), nos. 2, 9, 46-47, 59, and 62 [AAS 35, pp. 299, 303, 319, and 324-25]; Decretal Letter *Maxima inter munera* (November 19, 1943) [AAS 36, 36]; Address *Una tradizionale* (December 24, 1943) [AAS 36, 10]; Encyclical *Orientalis Ecclesiae* (April 9, 1944), nos. 27 and 44 [AAS 36, 138 and 143]; Apostolic Letter *Dilecti Fili* (June 16, 1944) [AAS 36, 239]; Message *In questa vigilia* (December 24, 1944) [AAS 37, 8]; Encyclical *Orientalis omnes Ecclesias* (December 23, 1945), nos. 5, 21, 56 and 62 [AAS 38, pp. 35, 42, 59 and 62]; Message *Negli ultimi sei anni* (December 24, 1945) [AAS 38, 18]; Radio Message *Venerable brethren* (October 26, 1946) [DR 8, 288]; Apostolic Letter *Veritatis Magister* (October 27, 1946) [AAS 39, 26]; Apostolic Constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia* (February 2, 1947), nos. 1 and 5 [AAS 39, 114-15]; Decretal Letter *Gaudio exultat* (June 22, 1947) [AAS 41, 45]; Chirograph *We have just received* (August 26, 1947) [AAS 39, 381]; Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947), nos. 22, 97, 104, 116, 118, 122, 157 and 207 [AAS 39, pp. 529-30, 557, 559, 563-64, 566, 578 and 594]; Radio Message *La festività Natalizia* (December 24, 1947) [AAS 40, 13]; Address *La solennità della Risurrezione* (March 28, 1948) [AAS 40, 138]; Apostolic Constitution *Bis saeculari* (September 27, 1948) [AAS 40, 395]; Radio Message *Gravi ed ad un tempo* (December 24, 1948) [AAS 41, 8-9]; Address *Ancora una volta* (February 20, 1949) [AAS 41, 75]; Homily *Quotiescumque Ecclesia* (March 15, 1949) [AAS 41, 212-13]; Address *Il santo tempo* (March 23, 1949) [AAS 41, 183]; Address *C'est Dieu lui-meme* (May 17, 1949) [AAS 41, 288]; Homily *Quod S. Cyprianus* (June 12, 1949) [AAS 41, 306]; Apostolic Constitution *Decessorum Nostrorum* (July 10, 1949) [AAS 41, 345]; Apostolic Exhortation *Sollemnibus documentis* (November 8, 1949) [AAS 41, 530]; Radio Message *Non mai forse* (December 23, 1949) [AAS 42, 132]; Apostolic Letter *Quandoquidem* (February 5, 1950) [AAS 42, 182]; Apostolic Letter *Quae a veridico Vate* (February 19, 1950) [AAS 42, 237]; Apostolic Letter *Quod ait Sanctus Bonaventura* (May 15, 1950) [AAS 42, 631]; Decretal Letter *Episcopos* (June 11, 1950) [AAS 43, 758]; Encyclical Letter *Humani generis* (August 12, 1950), nos. 1, 37 and 43 [AAS 42, pp. 561, 576 and 578]; Apostolic Exhortation *Menti nostrae* (September 23, 1950) [AAS 42, pp. 663, 669, 675 and 689]; Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi* (November 21, 1950) [AAS 43,

moment of his papacy. For example, in an early address Pius described the Church both as “Bride of the Redeemer and our Mother” (*Sposa del Redentore e Madre nostra*).<sup>118</sup> He then stated:

The Church is not the daughter of this world [*non figlia del mondo*]; but she is indeed in the world [*ma pure nel mondo è la Chiesa*], lives in it, and draws her children from it. She always shares in its alternatives of joy and sorrow [*sempre partecipe delle vicende liete e tristi del mondo*].<sup>119</sup>

In a way, Pius anticipated here the introductory words of *Gaudium et spes*. Shortly thereafter in his first encyclical, Pius described an essential duty of the Church’s maternal office (*materni Ecclesiae muneri*) as the regeneration (*renovatio*) of souls, a regeneration which was to be assisted by adapting or leveling (*exaequare*) the Church’s methods or styles (*rationes*) to the “changing conditions of the times and the changing needs of mankind.”<sup>120</sup> This reference to meeting the changing situations of the day foreshadowed the call to *aggiornamento* which would be a common theme during the Council.<sup>121</sup>

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pp. 5, 8 and 14]; Radio Message *Un anno è già trascorso* (December 23, 1950) [AAS 43, 53 and 59]; Encyclical *Evangelii praecones*, nos. 15 and 71 (June 2, 1951) [AAS 43, 504 and 527]; Apostolic Letter *Quoniam* (June 3, 1951) [AAS 43, 465]; Decretal Letter *Superna illa cunctis* (June 24, 1951) [AAS 45, 113]; Encyclical *Sempiternus Rex Christus* (September 8, 1951), no. 3 [AAS 43, 626]; Address *Certi, come siamo* (April 24, 1952) [AAS 44, 423]; Apostolic Constitution *Exsul familia* (August 1, 1952) [AAS 44, pp. 651, 675 and 691-92]; Encyclical *Doctor Mellifluus* (May 24, 1953), nos. 20-21 [AAS 45, 378]; Encyclical *Fulgens corona* (September 8, 1953), no. 43 [AAS 45, 590]; Apostolic Constitution *Sancta mater Ecclesia* (November 21, 1953) [AAS 46, 245]; Encyclical *Sacra virginitas* (March 25, 1954), no. 31 [AAS 46, 174]; Apostolic Constitution *Omnium ecclesiarum* (August 15, 1954) [AAS 46, 567]; Apostolic Letter *Novimus vos* (January 20, 1956) [AAS 48, 261]; Apostolic Constitution *Sanctorum mater* (February 29, 1956) [AAS 48, 439]; Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956), nos. 18, 72 and 116 [AAS 48, pp. 314, 332 and 348]; Apostolic Constitution *Quasi mater dulcissima* (April 9, 1957) [AAS 49, 818: *omnium parens hominum*]; Encyclical *Fidei donum* (April 21, 1957), nos. 20, 46, 48, 62 and 81 [AAS 49, pp. 231, 238, 242 and 248]; Apostolic Letter *Amictu variegato induta* (May 26, 1957) [AAS 49, 339]; Encyclical *Le pèlerinage de Lourdes* (July 2, 1957), no. 20 [AAS 49, 609]; Encyclical *Miranda prorsus* (September 8, 1957) [AAS 49, 766 and 774]; Apostolic Constitution *Quasi mater dulcissima* (November 21, 1957) [AAS 50, 297]; Address *Hand mediocri* (February 11, 1958) [DR 19, 747]; Apostolic Constitution *Quasi mater* (May 19, 1958) [AAS 51, 99]; Encyclical *Ad Apostolorum Principis* (June 29, 1958), nos. 6 and 22 [AAS 50, 602 and 606]; Apostolic Constitution *Ecclesia Sancta* (July 12, 1958) [AAS 51, 319]; and Encyclical *Meminisse iuvat* (July 14, 1958), nos. 22 and 40 [AAS 50, 454 and 458].

118. Address *In questo giorno* (June 2, 1939) [DR 1, 152].

119. Address *In questo giorno* [DR 1, 152]. English translation adapted from O’Gorman, *The Church*, no. 948.

120. Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* (October 10, 1939), no. 84 [AAS 31, 441].

121. Pius XII’s pontificate was situated at a unique time in the twentieth century—in the middle, as it were—wherein modern ecclesiological approaches influenced by the previous few centuries were now coming into

Pius often linked bridal and maternal imagery together and applied the images with similar frequency. The regular use of both images together resonated with the growing interest in both images found in various thinkers of the preceding decades.<sup>122</sup> Christians receive the word (*la parola*) from the Bridegroom (*dallo Sposo*), and receive the explanations (*le spiegazioni*) from their Mother (*dalla Madre*), the Church.<sup>123</sup> The public prayer of Mother Church “exceeds any other kind of prayer by reason of her dignity as Spouse of Christ.”<sup>124</sup> The “immaculate [*intaminata*] Bride of Christ” is the “Mother of Saints” (*Sanctorum Mater*).<sup>125</sup> The Bride of Christ sheds “maternal tears.”<sup>126</sup> Pius also described the Roman Church (*l’Église romaine*) as “the unique and immortal Bride of Christ, Mother of souls [*épouse du Christ, Mère des âmes*].”<sup>127</sup> The *Sponsa Christi Ecclesia* showers, in a particular way, her maternal love upon her consecrated virgins.<sup>128</sup>

Furthermore, Pius referred to the fruitfulness of the Bride of Christ in various places. The Church, the most chaste Bride (*castissima Sponsa*), is endowed by Christ with a “spiritual and most rich fecundity” (*spiritualem ... uberrimamque fecunditatem*) and “generous maternity” (*generosa maternità*).<sup>129</sup> Pius often spoke of the “sons” or children of the Bride of Christ.<sup>130</sup> In vivid words

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renewed contact with original sources at the roots of the Christian tradition. An additional example illustrates this point. Pius stated the need to renew “the sense of Catholic honor ... the pride and the admiration of the son for his Mother.” Pius identified this renewed attitude as “the *sentire cum Ecclesia* ... [t]he consciousness that the Church is a perfect society...” Address *Graditissima* (February 17, 1942) [AAS 34, 142]. This latter quote, which combined a patristic insight on ecclesial life with a modern notion of the Church as a perfect society, illustrates well the particular context of Pius XII’s pontificate.

122. See chapter one above, p. 42n167ff.

123. See Address *Tutte le famiglie* (May 12, 1943) [DR 5, 64].

124. Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 89 [AAS 35, 236]. Translation modified.

125. Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947), no. 207 [AAS 39, 594].

126. Radio Message *Gravi ed ad un tempo* (December 24, 1948) [AAS 41, 8].

127. Address *C’est Dieu lui-meme* (May 17, 1949) [AAS 41, 288].

128. Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi* (November 21, 1950) [AAS 43, 5].

129. Apostolic Letter *Nosti profecto* (June 6, 1940) [AAS 32, 290]; Address *Graditissima* (February 17, 1942) [AAS 34, 142]. See also Apostolic Letter *Dilecti Fili* (June 16, 1944) [AAS 36, 239].



addressed to members of Catholic Action in Italy, he described the Bride's maternal care of souls.

Who regenerated [*rigenerò*] you? Who gave you a new life which neither your father nor your mother could give you with their blood? The Spouse of Christ, Holy Church [*La Sposa di Cristo, la Santa Chiesa*], was the Mother of your soul [*la Madre dell'anima vostra*]; she kissed you on the forehead with heavenly affection; she pressed you to her heart as the child of the blood poured out by her divine Spouse who loves you and delivered himself to death for you.<sup>131</sup>

Pius then observed that, while the Church is a "loving Mother" in baptism, in confirmation the Church becomes the "Mother and Teacher of heroes."<sup>132</sup>

The fruitfulness of the Bride of Christ is a consequence of the divine blood of Christ (*feconda del suo sangue divino*).<sup>133</sup> "[T]he Church as born from the side of our Savior on the Cross like [*instar*] a new Eve, mother of all the living."<sup>134</sup> The Church is fruitful through her union with Christ, a union that forms a "great spiritual family [*la grande famiglia spirituale*], in which Christ is the Bridegroom and the Church is the Bride."<sup>135</sup> The mystical union of Christ with his Bride, the Church, brings forth the adopted children of God.<sup>136</sup> This union is unique: "whereas the mother, with her spouse and her children, form one family, the Church, in virtue of an incomparably

130. For examples, see Address *Se a temperare* (September 4, 1940) [AAS 32, 372]; Radio Message *En este solemne día* (October 27, 1940) [AAS 32, 431]; Radio Message *Nell'alba* (December 24, 1941) [AAS 34, 20]; Address *Una parola* (March 25, 1942) [DR 4, 15]; Address *Il fiorire* (May 5, 1943) [DR 5, 53]; and Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 88 [AAS 35, 235]. For further examples of related maternal imagery, see note 117 above.

131. Address *In questa vibrante* (November 10, 1940) [DR 2, 306]. English translation adapted from O'Gorman, *The Church*, no. 971.

132. Address *In questa vibrante* [DR 2, 307].

133. Address *Fra le innumerevoli* (January 15, 1941) [DR 2, 376].

134. Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 28 [AAS 35, 205].

135. Address *Tutte le famiglie* (May 12, 1943) [DR 5, 63-64]. See also Address *La gradita* (January 21, 1942) [DR 3, 353]; Address *Una parola* (March 25, 1942) [DR 4, 15]; Address *Gran fonte* (April 15, 1942) [DR 4, 40]; and Address *Il fiorire* (May 5, 1943) [DR 5, 53].

136. See Address *La vostra presenza* (April 26, 1939) [DR 1, 69].

closer union [*unione incomparabilmente più stretta*], constitutes, more and better than one family, the Mystical Body of Christ.”<sup>137</sup>

## 8. The Church as Body and Bride

In his encyclical letter *Mystici corporis*, Pius cited Ephesians 5:22-23 and explained that the bridal image recalls the distinction between Christ and the Church even in the midst of their “wonderfully intimate union” as Head and Body.<sup>138</sup> Certainly, Ephesians 5 provided the crucial Scriptural background for relating the images of the Church as Body and Bride. Pius XII went well beyond his immediate predecessors in *Mystici corporis* itself when he explicitly related the two images and commented upon the rationale for the bridal image. Pius’ insertion of bridal imagery as a necessary complement to bodily imagery mirrored thinkers such as O. Casel who had explained the complementarity between the images of body and bride.<sup>139</sup>

Other couplings of body and bridal imagery in Pius XII’s teaching were either undeveloped or remained more implicit. In *Mystici corporis*, Pope Pius quoted from Thomas Aquinas who referred to Mary’s consent to the “spiritual marriage between the Son of God and human nature,” namely, the Incarnation.<sup>140</sup> Pius then described Mary’s care for the Church as “the Mystical Body of Christ, born of the pierced Heart of the Savior,” which likely was an implicit reference to the Church as the new Eve.<sup>141</sup> Elsewhere, Pius spoke of the liturgical action

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137. Address *Negli ultimi* (December 24, 1945) [AAS 38, 18].

138. Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), no. 86 [AAS 35, 234]. See p. 166ff. above.

139. See chapter one above, p. 48ff.

140. Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 110 [AAS 35, 248].

141. Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 110 [AAS 35, 248]. For other references to the Church as born or coming from Christ’s side on the Cross, see Address *Grande conforto* (February 12, 1941) [DR 2, 398]; Address *La grandissima solennità* (June 1, 1941) [DR 3, 100]; Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), nos. 26, 28 and 110 [AAS 35, 204-5 and 248]; Apostolic Letter *Scisso e Corde Iesu* (April 17, 1955) [AAS 47, 381]; Encyclical *Haurietis Aquas* (May

of the Bride of Christ who acts in a way “most closely united [*coniuncta*] with her Head.”<sup>142</sup> In another instance, Pius used both the image of the Mystical Body and the image of Bride to contrast the Church from various political entities.

The Church is his “mystical body.” She is wholly from Christ, and Christ from God.

Men of politics, and even those of the Church, who try to make the Bride of Christ their ally or tool in their national or international political chances, damage the very essence of the Church and injure their own life in her; in a word, they lower her to the same plane on which they debate the conflicts of temporal interests.<sup>143</sup>

In the above passage, the images of the Church as the Mystical Body and Bride served a similar function as that of the concept of “perfect society,” which often functioned to distinguish the Church from every other type of societal entity.<sup>144</sup> However, in a way different from the concept *societas perfecta*, the images spoke directly to a theological reality first, that is, to a particular relationship with Christ. Here again, Pius’ use of scriptural imagery corresponded with the shift from an ecclesiology which placed structures and institutional realities in the foreground to an ecclesiology which gave priority to theological mysteries and relationships.

## 9. Ecclesial bridal imagery and the Eucharist

In his encyclical letter *Mediator Dei*, Pius applied ecclesial bridal imagery within an explicitly liturgical context. He cited the participatory role or special agency of the Bride of Christ in the liturgical action.

But if one considers the part which the Immaculate Spouse of Jesus Christ [*intaminata Iesu Christi Sponsa*] takes in the action [*actio*], embellishing the [Eucharistic] sacrifice and

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15, 1956), no. 76 [AAS 48, 333]; and Apostolic Letter *E vulnérato* (October 7, 1956) [AAS 48, 754]. See also Tromp, “De Nativitate Ecclesiae ex Corde Jesu Crucis.”

142. Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947), no. 27 [AAS 39, 532].

143. Radio Message *Già per la decimaterza* (December 24, 1951) [AAS 44, 6]. Pius then stated: “The Church is not a political society, but a religious one...” (ibid. [AAS 44, 10]).

144. See chapter one above, p. 38ff.

sacraments with prayer and sacred ceremonies, or if one refers to the ‘sacramentals’ and the other rites instituted by the hierarchy of the Church, then [the sacred liturgy’s] effectiveness is due rather to the action of the Church [*ex opere operantis Ecclesiae*], inasmuch as she is holy and acts always in closest union [*coniuncta*] with her Head.<sup>145</sup>

Elsewhere, Pius described liturgical prayer as the “public supplication of the illustrious Spouse of Christ [*inclita Christi Sponsa*].” He also quoted his encyclical *Mystici corporis* on the fact that Christ willed his Bride to achieve her sanctity in certain measure by her very work.<sup>146</sup> He did not develop this aspect of bridal imagery elsewhere. However, Pius did make reference to the Church as the Bride of Christ in connection to the Eucharist in other instances. For example, in his address on the canonization of Pope Pius X, Pius recalled his predecessor’s eucharistic reforms, specifically the encouragement of frequent communion, “wherefrom a new springtime of eucharistic life is blooming through the Bride of Christ [*la Sposa di Cristo*].”<sup>147</sup> Elsewhere, Pius mentioned the spiritual union of the “children of the Bride of Christ” who partake in “the same drink and the same supra-substantial bread” of the Eucharist.<sup>148</sup>

## 10. Consecrated women as brides of Christ and related imagery

Throughout his teaching, Pius incorporated various references to the spousal relationship between consecrated women and Christ, speaking of consecrated women as brides of Christ and of Christ as their heavenly Bridegroom (*caelestis Sponsus*), the Divine Bridegroom

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145. Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947), no. 27 [AAS 39, 532].

146. Encyclical *Mediator Dei*, no. 78 [AAS 39, 551]. See also Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, no. 44 [AAS 35, 213].

147. Address *Quest’ora di fulgente* (May 29, 1954) [AAS 46, 311].

148. Address *Se a temperare* (September 4, 1940) [AAS 32, 372].

(*Divinus Sponsus*), and of death as the entry of the bride into the nuptials (*ad nuptias*) of the Heavenly Spouse.<sup>149</sup>

In his apostolic constitution *Sponsa Christi* and encyclical letter *Sacra virginitas*,<sup>150</sup> Pius considered such spousal imagery in specific connection to the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ, explicitly linking consecrated virgins with the Church. “[T]he most delicate fruit of virginity consists in this, that virgins make tangible, as it were, the perfect virginity of their mother, the Church and the sanctity of her intimate union [*arctissima coniunctio*] with Christ.”<sup>151</sup> Even further, the “highest glory” of virgins is to be “living images of that perfect integrity by which the Church is joined [*coniungitur*] with her Divine Bridegroom.” Pius continued,

For this society [*societas*] founded by Christ it is a profound joy that virgins should be the marvelous sign [*signum*] of its sanctity and spiritual fecundity.... [Then quoting Cyprian:] “In them the glorious fecundity of our mother, the Church [*Ecclesiae matris gloriosa fecunditas*], flourishes abundantly and she rejoices...”<sup>152</sup>

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149. For examples of this use of spousal imagery in Pius XII’s teaching, see Apostolic Letter *Magno et excellenti* (June 18, 1939) [AAS 31, 253]; Decretal Letter *Sanctitudinis culmen* (May 2, 1940) [AAS 33, 99]; Apostolic Letter *Caritas in humiliate* (December 7, 1941) [AAS 33, 488]; Decretal Letter *Maxima inter munera* (November 19, 1943) [AAS 36, 35 and 37]; Decretal Letter *Spiritus Domini* (July 7, 1946) [AAS 39, 42]; Apostolic Letter *Christiani palmarum martyrii* (April 27, 1947) [AAS 40, 26 and 30]; Address *Con viva commozione* (April 28, 1947) [AAS 39, 355-56]; Homily *Quisquis rerum eventus* (July 6, 1947) [AAS 39, 284]; Decretal Letter *Deus humilium* (July 27, 1947) [AAS 41, 385]; Apostolic Letter *Quae a veridico Vate* (February 19, 1950) [AAS 42, 237 and 239]; Decretal Letter *Ecclesiae alumni* (May 18, 1950) [AAS 43, 700]; Address *Per un amoroso disegno* (June 24, 1950) [AAS 42, 599]; Decretal Letter *Lilia spinis* (July 9, 1950) [AAS 43, 414]; Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi* (November 21, 1950) [AAS 43, 5 and 14]; Decretal Letter *Superna illa cunctis* (June 24, 1951) [AAS 45, 114]; Apostolic Letter *Mitis in omnes* (May 4, 1952) [AAS 44, 405]; Apostolic Letter *Quod Christus* (May 18, 1952) [AAS 44, 458]; Apostolic Letter *Quemadmodum Christianae* (June 8, 1952) [AAS 44, 523]; Encyclical *Doctor mellifluus* (May 24, 1953), nos. 9, 11 and 13 [AAS 45, 373-75]; Encyclical *Sacra virginitas* (March 25, 1954), nos. 17-19, 27, 30-31 and 62-63 [AAS 46, pp. 166-67, 172-74 and 187]; Address *Se le forze* (June 12, 1954) [AAS 46, 361]; Apostolic Letter *Pauperem esse divitem* (November 7, 1954) [AAS 47, 29 and 31]; Apostolic Letter *Sacra in claustra* (January 18, 1956) [AAS 48, 371]; Encyclical *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956), nos. 83 and 116 [AAS 48, 335 and 348-49]; and Apostolic Letter *Amictu variegato induta* (May 26, 1957) [AAS 49, 340 and 342].

150. For example, see Encyclical *Sacra virginitas* (March 25, 1954), nos. 17-19, 27, 30-31 and 62-63 [AAS 46, 166-67, 172-74 and 187].

151. Encyclical *Sacra virginitas*, no. 30 [AAS 46, 173].

152. Encyclical *Sacra virginitas*, no. 31 [AAS 46, 173-74]. Pope Pius quoted Cyprian, *De habitu virginum*, 3 [PL 4, 443].

Pius also referred to the Church Fathers' consideration of the vow of "perfect chastity as a kind of spiritual marriage [*veluti quoddam spiritualis matrimonii genus*], in which the soul is wedded [*coniungitur*] to Christ."<sup>153</sup>

In one of his last radio messages,<sup>154</sup> Pius directed those in contemplative religious orders to remain grounded in the apostolate of the Church herself. After noting the various individual apostolates of contemplatives, Pius closed: "In conclusion, We would wish to evoke an apostolate [*un apostolat*] that is more vast and higher still, that of the Church, the Bride of Christ [*celui de l'Eglise, Epouse du Christ*], in the meaning of the Apostle of the Gentiles (2 Cor 11:2) and of St. John (Jn 20:21-23; 21:16-17; Rev 21)."<sup>155</sup> Here again, Pius connected members of religious orders with their life in the Church. Ecclesial bridal imagery took on a dynamic role—the image became a mission, an apostolate, to be lived by each member. Pius explained that the apostolate of the Church was "grounded on her mission [*mission*] to the whole world," a mission which "comes from the Father," is "transmitted by the Son," and "is realized in the Holy Spirit."<sup>156</sup>

In a more general way, Pius XII briefly considered spousal mysticism in reference to the individual soul, where every soul is regarded in some way as called to a spiritual marriage with Christ. Pius indicated this mysticism by means of a few quotes from St. Bernard, selections of which are present below.

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153. Encyclical *Sacra virginitas*, no. 17 [AAS 46, 166].

154. This was actually a series of three radio messages to cloistered religious around the world, on knowing, loving, and living the contemplative life (delivered July 19, July 26, and August 2 of 1958). See Radio Message *Cédant volontiers* [AAS 50, 562-86]. The message relied heavily upon the apostolic constitution *Sponsa Christi* and the encyclical letter *Sacra virginitas*. The specific radio message referred to above is the final one of the three, on living the contemplative life, entitled *Lorsque Nous* (August 2, 1958) [AAS 50, 579-85].

155. Radio Message *Lorsque Nous* (August 2, 1958) [AAS 50, 585]. English translation adapted from O'Gorman, *The Church*, no. 1551.

156. Radio Message *Lorsque Nous* [AAS 50, 585].

[E]very soul ... [can] aspire to the nuptials of the Word [*ad nuptias Verbi*]. [...] By this likeness of charity ... the soul is wedded [*marital*] to the Word, when, namely, loving even as she is loved, she shows herself, in her will, likened to Him to Whom she is already likened in her nature. Therefore, if she loves Him perfectly, she has become His bride [*nupsit*]. [...] This is in truth the alliance of holy and spiritual wedlock [*connubii contractus*]. Nay, it is saying too little to call it an alliance [*contractus*]: it is rather an embrace [*complexus*]. [...] This spiritual embrace is nothing else than ... a love that joins two, not in one flesh, but in one spirit [*non in carne una, sed uno plane in spiritu duos iungat*].<sup>157</sup>

Pius then observed that all can and must seek after the Lord, even if not everyone can reach such lofty contemplation and the feeling of being closely united with God in the “bonds of heavenly marriage” (*caelestis connubii vinculis*).<sup>158</sup>

Elsewhere, Pius used bridal imagery in reference to Mary. Mary was portrayed as the bride of the Father,<sup>159</sup> the bride of the Holy Spirit,<sup>160</sup> and implicitly as the bride of Christ.<sup>161</sup> Some of this usage was connected to references to Mary as the bride in the Song of Songs.<sup>162</sup>

### III. Summary and Analysis of Pius XII

With Pope Pius XII, ecclesial bridal imagery emerged in magisterial teaching with a particular vigor, significance, and quality unmatched by previous pontificates of the twentieth century. The select encyclicals and audiences examined above evidence Pius XII’s exceptional consideration of the imagery and related themes. In general, Pius XII’s use of ecclesial bridal

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157. Encyclical *Doctor Mellifluus* (May 24, 1953), nos. 9 and 11 [AAS 45, 373-74]. Pius cites Bernard, *In Cantica*, Sermon 83, 3 [PL 183, 1182-c, d] and *In Cantica*, Sermon 83, 6 [PL 183, 1184-c].

158. Encyclical *Doctor Mellifluus*, no. 13 [AAS 45, 375].

159. Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* (November 1, 1950), no. 21 [AAS 42, 761]. Pius quotes and cites John Damascene, *Encomium in Dormitionem Dei Genetricis Semperque Virginis Mariae*, Hom. II, n. 14.

160. See Address *Se a temperare* (September 4, 1940) [AAS 32, 371]; Address *Bendito seja* (May 13, 1946) [AAS 38, 266].

161. Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* (November 1, 1950), no. 26 [AAS 42, 763].

162. See Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, no. 26 [AAS 42, 763]; Encyclical *Le pèlerinage de Lourdes* (July 2, 1957) [AAS 49, 609].

imagery was characterized by regularity, an awareness of broader themes related to the imagery, and at times a more intentional or deliberate articulation of the image's significance.

Pius XII was the first pope of the twentieth century to consider theologically the particular significance of the bridal image in reference to the Church, particularly as the bridal image related to the image of the Church as the Body of Christ. He employed the bridal image to convey the distinction between the Church and Christ within their union. Pius' use of bridal imagery conveyed an understanding of the Bride *in* the world and not just over and against the world. As recipient and agent of Christ's love, the Bride of Christ embraces the whole world.

The vehicles of Pius XII's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor included foremost the signal terms *sponsa* or *sposa* (for the Church), *sponsus* or *sposo* (for Christ), as well as the terms *simbolo*, *segno*, *significato*, *rapporto*, *modello*, *immagine*, and *rappresentazione* (for Christian marriage in reference to the union of Christ and the Church), and the terms *unione* (*mistica*, *sublime*, *indissolubile*, *perfettissima*), *mistiche nozze*, *sposalizio*, and the verb *coniungere* (for that union itself). Qualifiers included the Bride of Christ's spotless holiness, dignity, youthfulness, beauty, and joy, her work or action (*opera*), her unity with Christ, her distinction from Christ, her beloved character, the sufferings and persecutions of the Bride, the Bride's confident waiting, her maternal love and fruitfulness, her distinction from the world and from secular institutions, her closeness to all people, and her bridal identity as giving rise to an apostolate. In light of its close and often explicit connection to bridal imagery, the term *mater* and its equivalent terms and associations also functioned as an at least implicit vehicle of the bridal metaphor. Notably absent in Pius XII's teaching was use of the bridal metaphor in explicit connection to a defense of the



Church's *libertas*. While protection of the Church's freedom was certainly a concern of Pius XII, magisterial assessment of Church and state relations was undergoing development.<sup>163</sup>

Pius' use of bridal imagery gave a less triumphal impression of the Church as Bride when compared to his predecessors' use. His use of the bridal image also conveyed a realistic connection to the Church's historical experience and depicted the Bride of Christ within the larger backdrop of salvation history. In addition, eschatology entered more deeply into the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in magisterial teaching.<sup>164</sup>

The tenor of Pius XII's use of the bridal metaphor was the Church (*Ecclesia*), usually and implicitly understood as the Roman Catholic Church and the Church universal. Pius referred explicitly to the "Church militant," the "visible Church," or a local Church (i.e., the Church of the city of Rome) as the Bride of Christ in only a few instances. The *Sponsa Ecclesia* was often envisaged in distinction from or in relation to her members and children, but Pius also applied the image in places wherein the indivisibility of Church and members was more apparent. Examples included the manifestation of the Bride's holiness as dependent upon individual Christians, sinners as disfiguring the face of the Church, the liturgy as the public prayer of the Bride, and the close link between consecrated virgins as brides and the Church as Bride. As noted above, other subjects of bridal imagery included consecrated virgins, individual souls, and the Blessed Virgin Mary. A distinct contribution of Pius XII was his clear integration of bridal imagery in reference to consecrated women with the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ.

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163. For example, Pius XII's 1944 Christmas message affirmed the value of democracy and emphasized the importance of the dignity of every human person. See Radio Message *Benignitas et humanitas* (December 24, 1944) [AAS 37, 10-23].

164. See Congar, *L'Église*, 425, and "Moving Towards a Pilgrim Church," in Stacpoole, 143.

#### IV. Conclusion

The pontificate of Pope Pius XII marked a decisive turning point in twentieth-century magisterial teaching on the Church as the Bride of Christ. Pius XII was the first pope of the twentieth century to treat the ecclesiological significance of the bridal image, and he did so in a major encyclical on the Church. He also applied bridal imagery in more dynamic and integrative ways, akin to patristic use.<sup>165</sup>

The impact of the *ressourcement* and the various theological renewals made a clear mark on Pius XII's pontificate and his application of ecclesial bridal imagery. The theological output of the 1930s and 1940s and the resurgence of interest in ecclesial imagery, combined with key historical events and the changing experience of the Church in the world, form a critical backdrop for understanding Pius XII's renewed and developed use of ecclesial bridal imagery. At the same time, the pontificates of Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI provide an essential context as well. The teaching of these popes offered an immediate foundation for Pius XII to build upon, through a consistent layering and appropriation of ecclesial bridal imagery. In turn, Pius XII supplied a vital framework for subsequent magisterial teaching and in particular for the work of the Second Vatican Council.

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165. On the meaning of “integrative” in this context, see the conclusion of chapter one above, p. 68ff.

## Chapter Five

### The Mystery of the Pilgrim Bride: Ecclesial Bridal Imagery in the Teaching of Pope John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council, and Pope Paul VI

There is absolutely no analogy [*gibt es schlechterdings keine Analogie*] for the reality that revelation calls the bride of Christ.

—Hans Urs von Balthasar (1961)<sup>1</sup>

A vivid and lively self-awareness on the part of the Church inevitably leads to a comparison between the complete and perfect image [*absolutam et perfectam imaginem*] of the Church as Christ envisaged her, His holy and spotless Bride [*sua Sponsa sancta et immaculata*], and the actual appearance [*sua vero vultu*] which the Church presents to the world today.... [T]he appearance of the Church will never attain to such a degree of perfection, beauty, holiness and splendor that it can be said to correspond perfectly with the original conception [*prima notio*] in the mind of Him who fashioned it.

—Pope Paul VI (1963)<sup>2</sup>

The renewed interest in ecclesial imagery in the 1930s and 1940s contributed to an emphasis on the Church as a mystery and sacrament. This emphasis was accompanied by a growing sense of the Church as a pilgrim people in this world. Both in theology and magisterial teaching, the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ became firmly situated within this dual emphasis of appreciation for the mystery of the Church and acknowledgement that the Church on earth remains fundamentally on the way.

This chapter examines the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in the teaching of Pope John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council, and Pope Paul VI. The most significant event in the life of the Church of the twentieth century was the Second Vatican Council. The Council formed the linchpin between John XXIII and Paul VI, in whose pontificates the event of the Council emerged and was accomplished. Part one (I) below will briefly sketch the historical context of this time. The subsequent three parts will examine the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in the

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1. Balthasar, "Who is the Church?" in *Spouse of the Word*, 186 [*Skizzen zur Theologie II: Sponsa Verbi*, 196].

2. Encyclical Letter *Ecclesiam suam*, no. 10 [AAS 56, 611-12]. Translation modified.

teaching of John XXIII (part II), the Council (part III), and Paul VI (part IV). This phase of magisterial teaching included advanced consideration of ecclesial bridal imagery, which built upon and went beyond the teaching of Pius XII.

### **I. A Time of Tension and New Prospect**

The world preceding the years of the Second Vatican Council was changing. The end of World War II ushered in the nuclear age, and the potential catastrophic effects of war between global powers increased exponentially. The Cold War loomed and conflicts and wars emerged in various places.<sup>3</sup> The end of European colonialism also gave way to situations of violence and continued crisis.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, new ideals were taking shape. After the experience of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, Catholic thinkers began to embrace a renewed vision of democracy and religious freedom and a new understanding of the relationship between the Church and the world. Christians, and particularly Catholics, began to exercise a greater role in democratic politics.<sup>5</sup> Concern for civil rights and religious freedom increased. The prosperity of a post-war economy, particularly in the United States, corresponded with an optimism as well as technological and scientific innovation.

These new ideals and technological breakthroughs had various and profound effects and challenges. For example, the industrial workforce continued to increase whereas the agricultural workforce decreased, a change which affected not only families but cities and nations as well.<sup>6</sup>

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3. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 4-5 and 91-92.

4. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 92. See also Martina, "The Historical Context," 6-13.

5. See O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 5 and 90.

6. See Martina, "The Historical Context," 9-12.

Television entered more and more homes, and thus became destined to change the flow and reception of information on a global scale.<sup>7</sup> The innovations of science and technology brought significant moral questions which were often not met with the same scientific rigor. For example, the kernel of the sexual revolution burst open with the advent of the birth control pill in 1960. Legalized contraception and abortion followed. Consumerism as seen today was in seed-form. Giacomo Martina describes that “in the economic field ... the predominant criteria [became] individual utility, the well being of the greatest number of people, and the quest for quantitatively less and qualitatively greater performance.”<sup>8</sup> Whereas the wealth of some countries grew, the poverty of others became more pronounced. In this mixed environment there emerged the recognition that the Church has something to receive from the world while at the same time she must ever seek to meet and serve the world where it is and to bring it to Christ.

## II. Blessed Pope John XXIII

The pontificate of Blessed Pope John XXIII<sup>9</sup> (1958-1963) is remembered especially for his summoning of the Second Vatican Council. John XXIII was viewed by many as a “transitional pope,” perhaps not expected to undertake large and dramatic initiatives.<sup>10</sup> He left the mark of an ecumenical council, however, and his amiable personality, simple manner and devotion, and administrative style of delegating authority have remained oft-cited qualities.<sup>11</sup>

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7. See Martina, “The Historical Context,” 6 and 11-12.

8. Martina, “The Historical Context,” 12.

9. Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli (1881-1963).

10. See Peter Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII: Pope of the Century*, rev. Margaret Hebblethwaite (London: Continuum, 2000), 135.

11. See Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII*, and Jean Maalouf, ed., *Pope John XXIII: Essential Writings* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008), 15-44. One might fruitfully compare the similar importance of devotion, asceticism, and overall

Peace was a major theme of the teaching of John XXIII, whose motto was *Oboedientia et Pax* (“Obedience and Peace”). His most well-known encyclical letter was *Pacem in terris*, in which he denounced atomic and nuclear war and called for systematic efforts towards dialogue and peace. John issued a total of eight encyclical letters. His encyclical on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Leo XIII’s *Rerum novarum*, entitled *Mater et Magistra*, is also well known. *Mater et Magistra* treated the issue of labor and particularly agricultural labor within the framework of Catholic social teaching. Other encyclicals included consideration of Christian unity (*Ad Petri Cathedram* and *Aeterni Patris Dei*), St. John Vianney and the priesthood (*Sacerdotii nostri primordia*), the Rosary (*Grata recordatio*), missions and the need for lay participation (*Princeps pastorum*), the place of the pope regarding Christian unity (*Aeterna Dei sapientia*), and the practice of penance (*Paenitentiam agere*).

John XXIII/Angelo Roncalli’s experience as nuncio and the friendships he fostered brought him in touch with various aspects of renewal. He began to cultivate a practical ecumenical outlook through his assignments as nuncio to Bulgaria, Turkey, and France, and he sustained this ecumenical interest as Archbishop of Venice.<sup>12</sup> One of John XXIII’s friends was Lambert Beauduin, a Benedictine who proved influential in the liturgical renewal and was a “pioneer of social action and ecumenism.”<sup>13</sup> Another friend was Giovanni Battista Montini, the future Pope Paul VI, who was well-versed in the ecclesiological developments stemming from the *ressourcement*.<sup>14</sup> John XXIII’s pontificate, following upon the groundwork provided by Pius

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piety for both Pius XII and John XXIII. See Pope John XXIII, *Journal of a Soul*, trans. Dorothy White (New York: The New American Library, 1965).

12. Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII*, 55-131 and 128-29 in particular.

13. Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII*, 57 and 129. See also P. McPartlan, “Liturgy, Church, and Society,” *Studia Liturgica* 34 (2004): 149ff.

14. See Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII*, 57.

XII, opened the door towards a new dialogue among the bishops of the world and to the conciliar appropriation of decades of theological and spiritual renewal.

### ***A. Key Themes and Patterns in John XXIII's Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery***

John XXIII's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was fairly routine and undeveloped, though the imagery was consistently present throughout his pontificate. John used maternal imagery much more frequently, but he also linked bridal and maternal imagery on occasion. A few particularly notable uses of bridal imagery stand out in John's brief course of teaching, including considerations of the unity of the bridal Church and of the Church as body and bride. These and other themes and patterns will be treated below.

#### **1. The beauty and holiness of the immaculate Bride**

Pope John XXIII continued the traditional references to the spotless holiness, beauty, and splendor of the Church as the Bride of Christ. Ephesians 5:27 (*non habentem maculam aut rugam ... sancta et immaculata*) was a basic point of reference.<sup>15</sup> The Church, who is "conformed to that most beautiful image with which the divine Bridegroom willed her to be gifted," shines forth in "fresh splendors" across the ages.<sup>16</sup> The Church is the "blessed" (*benedetta*) and "most holy [*sanctissima*] bride."<sup>17</sup> The note of holiness (*sanctitatis nota*) "distinguishes the Catholic Church, the Bride of Christ [*catholica Ecclesia, Christi Sponsa*]."<sup>18</sup> The Bride of Christ is endowed

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15. See Apostolic Constitution *Christi exemplum* (February 13, 1960) [AAS 52, 754]; Letter *Omnes sane* (April 15, 1962) [DMC 4, 902]; Homily *Noster omniumque animus* (May 6, 1962) [AAS 54, 307]; Address *La ringraziamo* (May 13, 1962) [DMC 4, 282]; and Encyclical *Paenitentiam agere* (July 1, 1962), nos. 13 and 15 [AAS 54, 484-85].

16. Apostolic Constitution *Humanae salutis* (December 25, 1961), no. 7 [AAS 54, 9].

17. Address *La Nostra prima Pentecoste* (June 5, 1960) [DMC 2, 397]; Motu Proprio *Appropinquante Concilio* (August 6, 1962) [AAS 54, 609-10].

18. Homily *Sollemnis caeremonia* (December 9, 1962) [AAS 55, 7].

with particular strength and virtue (*virtus*).<sup>19</sup> She has a “perpetual glory” due to the strong and constant virtue of many of her members.<sup>20</sup> When one becomes a member of the Church by baptism, “that one is equally enrobed with the beauty with which Christ adorns his most beloved Bride.”<sup>21</sup> The Bride of Christ is “sublime, beautiful, and chaste” (*sublime, bella e casta*).<sup>22</sup>

## 2. The Church as the one, beloved Bride in union with Christ

Like his predecessors, John XXIII spoke of the Bride of Christ as “beloved” and united with Christ.<sup>23</sup> He also emphasized the oneness of the Bride in relation to the one Bridegroom.

St. Leo teaches that the Church must be one [*esse unam oportere*] because Christ Jesus, her Bridegroom, is really one [*profecto unus*]. “For the Church is that virgin, the bride [*sponsa*] of one husband [*vir*], Christ, who does not allow herself to be corrupted by any error. Thus throughout the whole world we are to have one entire and pure communion” (Letter to Anatolius, Bishop of Constantinople, PL 54, 913).<sup>24</sup>

In another instance, John recalled St. Gregory the Great’s description of Easter as “the most sublime epithalamium [*l’epitalamio*] celebrating the mystical union [*la mistica unione*] of the incarnate Word of God with Holy Church, as the ‘Canticle of Canticles’ of the whole liturgy.”<sup>25</sup>

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19. See Motu Proprio *Consilium* (February 2, 1962), no. 3 [AAS 54, 65]; Homily *Sollemnis caeremonia* (December 9, 1962) [AAS 55, 8].

20. Encyclical *Paenitentiam agere* (July 1, 1962), no. 15 [AAS 54, 484-85].

21. Encyclical *Paenitentiam agere*, no. 13 [AAS 54, 484]. Translation modified.

22. Address *Avete detto parole* (November 25, 1961) [DMC 4, 64].

23. See Apostolic Letter *Celsitudi ex humilitate* (March 19, 1959) [AAS 51, 456]; Motu proprio *Superno die* (June 5, 1960) [AAS 52, 433]; and Encyclical *Paenitentiam agere*, no. 13 [AAS 54, 484].

24. Encyclical *Aeterna Dei sapientia* (November 11, 1961), no. 36 [AAS 53, 793].

25. Radio Message *Urbi et Orbi Questa della grande* (April 17, 1960) [AAS 52, 368].



Quoting Pius XII, John referred to marriage as “a great sacrament, a great sign of grace and of a sacred reality, which is the nuptials [*sposalizio*] of Christ with the Church.”<sup>26</sup>

### 3. The Bride of Christ in the midst of evils and difficulties

John XXIII, in line with his predecessors, also used ecclesial bridal imagery in contexts which highlighted the suffering, troubles, and persecutions facing the Church. The Bride of Christ faces various evils (*malì*), sorrowful persecutions (*douloureuses persécutions*), as well as difficulties and troubles (*asperitates et aegrimoniae*).<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, in the midst of all these, she finds her remedy in Christ and his love, and she stands as a sign of “God among the nations” and shines as a “teacher of truth and minister of salvation.”<sup>28</sup> John’s teaching carried an emphasis on hope and perseverance.

Pope John also distinguished between the holy and immaculate Bride of Christ and those of her children who “forget the greatness of their calling and election.”<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, John did not say that these children mar the beauty of the Church but instead that they “mar their God-given beauty.”<sup>30</sup>

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26. Address *È motivo* (October 25, 1960) [AAS 52, 899-900]. Pope John’s teaching did not include extended or repeated consideration of the union between Christ and the Church through the lens of Christian marriage.

27. Apostolic Letter *Celsitudi ex humilitate* (March 19, 1959) [AAS 51, 456]; Address *C’est une grande joie* (March 15, 1961) [DMC 2, 170]; and Apostolic Constitution *Humanae salutis* (December 25, 1961), no. 2 [AAS 54, 5].

28. Address *C’est une grande joie* (March 15, 1961) [DMC 2, 170]; Apostolic Constitution *Humanae salutis* (December 25, 1961), no. 2 [AAS 54, 5].

29. Encyclical *Paenitentiam agere* (July 1, 1962), no. 16 [AAS 54, 485].

30. Encyclical *Paenitentiam agere*, no. 16 [AAS 54, 485].

#### 4. The Church as Bride and loving Mother

Besides his reflections on the unity of the Church, John XXIII's most distinctive use of ecclesial bridal imagery occurred in connection with his use of maternal imagery for the Church. John employed maternal imagery with more regularity than bridal imagery.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, perhaps, to the once-popular usage of the phrase "Holy Mother Church" as a way of chiding or

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31. For examples of Pope John's use of ecclesial maternal imagery, see Radio Message *In questa sera* (March 28, 1959) [AAS 51, 242]; Decretal Letter *Materna caritatis* (April 12, 1959) [AAS 51, 750 and 753]; Apostolic Exhortation *A quarantacinque anni* (April 21, 1959) [AAS 51, 379-380]; Apostolic Letter *Caritatis praeconium* (May 3, 1959) [AAS 51, 343 and 346]; Radio Message *Nous apprenons* (June 28, 1959) [AAS 51, 481]; Encyclical *Ad Petri Cathedram* (June 29, 1959), nos. 70, 87, 126 and 128 [AAS 51, pp. 513, 516 and 525]; Encyclical *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia* (August 1, 1959), nos. 9, 32 and 58 [AAS 51, pp. 549, 558 and 565]; Encyclical *Grata recordatio* (September 26, 1959), nos. 12 and 20 [AAS 51, 675 and 678]; Apostolic Constitution *Mater Ecclesia* (November 14, 1959) [AAS 52, 743]; Encyclical *Princeps pastorum* (November 28, 1959), no. 41 [AAS 51, 854]; Apostolic Constitution *Orientalis Ecclesiae* (December 11, 1959) [AAS 52, 745]; Radio Message *Eccoci a Natale* (December 23, 1959) [AAS 52, 31]; Apostolic Letter *Omnibus mater* (February 10, 1960) [AAS 52, 556]; Apostolic Letter *Sanctae Matri* (May 20, 1960) [AAS 54, 86]; Decretal Letter *Terrenas hominum* (May 26, 1960) [AAS 52, 442]; Address *È motivo* (October 25, 1960) [AAS 52, 899 and 901]; Address *C'est une grande joie* (March 15, 1961) [DMC 2, 170]; Apostolic Letter *Le voci* (March 19, 1961) [AAS 53, 210-212]; Apostolic Letter *Celebrandi Concilii Oecumenici* (April 11, 1961) [AAS 53, 242]; Address *C'est pour Nous* (May 3, 1961) [AAS 53, 320]; Encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (May 15, 1961), nos. 1, 181 and 262 [AAS 53, pp. 401, 444 and 463]; Address *Lo svolgimento del rito* (May 21, 1961) [AAS 53, 360]; Apostolic Letter *Sancta Mater Ecclesia* (June 29, 1961) [AAS 53, 608]; Apostolic Letter *Quotiescumque* (June 29, 1961) [AAS 53, 466]; Address *La Enciclica* (July 15, 1961) [DMC 3, 647]; Apostolic Constitution *Mater Ecclesia* (September 11, 1961) [AAS 54, 549]; Apostolic Letter *Il religioso* (September 29, 1961) [AAS 53, 642]; Address *C'est avec une grande* (October 20, 1961) [DMC 3, 469]; Encyclical *Aeterna Dei sapientia* (November 11, 1961), nos. 75-76 [AAS 53, 802]; Address *Laus Domini* (November 17, 1961) [AAS 53, 732]; Address *Avete detto parole* (November 25, 1961) [DMC 4, 64]; Apostolic Constitution *Humanae salutis* (December 25, 1961), nos. 7 and 11 [AAS 54, 9-10]; Address *Iam octo mensium* (January 23, 1962) [AAS 54, 98-99]; Apostolic Constitution *Veterum sapientia* (February 22, 1962) [AAS 54, 130-31]; Radio Message *La grande benedizione* (April 22, 1962) [AAS 54, 285]; Address *Le commosse* (May 15, 1962) [DMC 4, 287]; Address *Il Convegno* (June 1, 1962) [DMC 4, 312]; Homily *L'ultimo incontro* (June 10, 1962) [AAS 54, 441-42 and 444]; Encyclical *Paenitentiam agere* (July 1, 1962), nos. 16, 19 and 41 [AAS 54, pp. 485-86 and 491]; Letter *Il tempio massimo* (July 2, 1962) [AAS 54, 510]; Apostolic Constitution *Christi Ecclesia* (July 22, 1962) [AAS 55, 823]; Motu Proprio *Appropinquante Concilio* (August 6, 1962) [AAS 54, 609-10]; Radio Message *La grande aspettazione* (September 11, 1962) [AAS 54, pp. 678, 682 and 684-85]; Motu Proprio *Fidei propagandae* (October 1, 1962) [AAS 54, 757]; Address *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (October 11, 1962), nos. 1 and 7-8 [AAS 54, 786 and 793-94]; Address *Sua Santità* (December 3, 1962) [DMC 4, 631]; Homily *Sollemnis caeremonia* (December 9, 1962) [AAS 55, 8]; Address *Le siamo grati* (December 23, 1962) [AAS 55, 44]; Address *I voti augurali* (January 3, 1963) [DMC 5, 79]; Address *Questo di oggi* (January 22, 1963) [DMC 5, 370]; Address *L'anno del Concilio* (January 27, 1963) [DMC 5, 98]; Address *Dopo il saluto* (February 13, 1963) [DMC 5, 467]; Apostolic Letter *Eliquabatur veritas* (March 17, 1963) [AAS 55, 305]; Address *L'esercizio* (March 19, 1963) [DMC 5, 178]; Encyclical *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963), no. 160 [AAS 55, 301]; Radio Message *Pax vobis* (April 13, 1963) [AAS 55, 400]; Address *Lo spettacolo* (May 1, 1963) [DMC 5, 234]; and Apostolic Exhortation *Novem per dies* (May 20, 1963) [AAS 55, 440].

warning,<sup>32</sup> John used the maternal image within an emphasis on the universal embrace of the Church and her identification with her children.<sup>33</sup>

Pope John used bridal and maternal imagery together in a few notable instances. Quoting Pope Innocent III, John commented:

*He who has the bride is the bridegroom... He is the Bridegroom because [he has] the noble, rich, exalted, beautiful, chaste, well-known, and holy Roman Church, who, set forth by God, is the "mother and teacher" of all the faithful* (Innocent III, *Sermones de diversis*, *Serm. III in Cons. Pont. Migne*, PL 217, 662). The breadth and sublimity of the apostolic and missionary horizon is so truly summarized in this way: in this *mother and teacher* of all the faithful: the Catholic Church, which from Rome extends her cover to the whole of humanity, as the sublime, beautiful, and chaste Bride of Christ [*Sposa di Cristo*].<sup>34</sup>

A summary of the Church's apostolic and missionary essence is contained in the Church's identity as *mater et magistra* (*madre e maestra*) who, as the Bride of Christ, extends herself to all people. As "the most holy bride and mother and teacher of all nations," the Church offers her children the "light of truth" and enlivens them with the "ardor of charity."<sup>35</sup> In this way, John linked bridal imagery to the mission of the Church, a mission which is also inseparable from the Church's maternal identity.

In his opening address at the Second Vatican Council, entitled *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (Mother Church rejoices),<sup>36</sup> John applied bridal imagery in his most oft-cited remark:

As for the present time, it pleases the Bride of Christ [*Christi Sponsa*] to administer the medicine of mercy, rather than to bear the armor of severity [*severitatis arma suscipere*]; she

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32. See R. Kereszty, "Bride and Mother," 415n1.

33. For example, see Encyclical *Ad Petri Cathedram* (June 29, 1959), no. 128 [AAS 51, 525]; Encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (May 15, 1961), nos. 178 and 180 [AAS 53, 444].

34. Address *Avete detto parole* (November 25, 1961) [DMC 4, 64]. Original emphasis preserved. See also Encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (May 15, 1961), no. 1 [AAS 53, 401].

35. Motu Proprio *Appropinquante Concilio* (August 6, 1962) [AAS 54, 609-10].

36. Address *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (October 11, 1962) [AAS 54, 786-96].

deems that she can address the needs of our day by more fully explaining the dynamic power [*vis*] of her teachings rather than by delivering condemnation.<sup>37</sup>

Later in the same address, John described the Church as the “most loving mother of all” (*amantissima omnium mater*).<sup>38</sup> John did not follow the common pattern of employing bridal and maternal imagery in instances wherein the Church’s liberty was being defended. In the example above, he distanced the bridal image from a context which emphasized a defensive posture (i.e., *severitatis arma suscipere*), and he used the bridal image within an emphasis upon the Church as a loving and joyful Mother, thus highlighting more gentle and welcoming aspects of both images.

Love and fruitfulness were both associated with John’s use of bridal and maternal imagery. The bridal Church is “made fecund” by the Holy Spirit.<sup>39</sup> John quoted Augustine: “Let us love God our Lord; let us love His Church. Let us love Him as our father and her as our mother, Him as our master and her as His handmaid. For we are children of His handmaid. This marriage [*matrimonium*] is based on a deep love.”<sup>40</sup>

## 5. The Church as Body and Bride

John XXIII did not extensively use the images of body and bride together. John described Mary as the “Mother of catholic unity” who unites “the Head to the Body, Christ to the Church, Bridegroom to Bride [*Sponsus Sponsae*].”<sup>41</sup> Pope John perhaps alluded to a close

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37. Address *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, no. 7 [AAS 54, 792]. Translation modified.

38. Address *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, no. 7 [AAS 54, 793].

39. Address *C’est une grande joie* (March 15, 1961) [DMC 2, 170].

40. Encyclical *Ad Petri Cathedram* (June 29, 1959), no. 87 [AAS 51, 516]. The quote was taken from Augustine’s *Exp. Ps.* 82 (2/14) [PL 37, 1140].

41. Motu Proprio *Maiores in dies* (December 8, 1959) [AAS 52, 26]. See also Encyclical *Aeterna Dei sapientia* (November 11, 1961), no. 38 [AAS 53, 793-794]: “It was Mary who participated most intimately in this secret birth ‘of the body, the Church’ (Col 1:18) because the Holy Spirit gave fruitfulness to her virginity.”

coupling of body and bridal imagery when he stated that “one cannot be truly joined [*coniungi*] with Christ except in and through the Church, which is his mystical body.”<sup>42</sup>

## 6. Consecrated women and Mary as brides

Like his predecessors, John XXIII referred to consecrated virgins as brides of Christ.<sup>43</sup> Through their vows and consecration, they “unite themselves closely with their Divine Spouse in mystical nuptials [*mysticae nuptiae*].”<sup>44</sup> He described Mary as the “Bride of the Paraclete,”<sup>45</sup> and also referred to all women religious as “daughters of God and spouses of the Holy Spirit [*spose dello Spirito Santo*].”<sup>46</sup> John did not appear explicitly to relate this individual use of bridal imagery to ecclesial bridal imagery, though he did relate the baptism of individual Christians to the beauty of the Bride of Christ.<sup>47</sup>

## B. Summary and Analysis of John XXIII

Within his short pontificate, Pope John XXIII’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery was understandably neither developed nor extensive. Nevertheless, the overall style of John’s use of the imagery is significant and reflected the shifting ecclesiological emphases already found in Pius XII’s teachings, from an institutional-juridical focus to a theological-personalist focus.<sup>48</sup>

42. Apostolic Letter *Quotiescumque* (June 29, 1961) [AAS 53, 467].

43. For examples of this use of spousal imagery in John XXIII’s teaching, see Decretal Letter *Materna caritatis* (April 12, 1959) [AAS 51, 752 and 756]; Radio Message *Aetate hoc nostra* (April 27, 1959) [AAS 51, 316]; Encyclical *Ad Petri Cathedram* (June 29, 1959), no. 111 [AAS 51, 522]; Address *Era ben naturale* (January 29, 1960) [AAS 52, 280 and 284]; Decretal Letter *Sanctorum fastis* (May 11, 1961) [AAS 53, 707-8]; and Exhortation *Il tempio massimo* (July 2, 1962) [AAS 54, 510-11].

44. Encyclical *Ad Petri Cathedram* (June 29, 1959), no. 111 [AAS 51, 522].

45. Radio Message *Aetate hoc nostra* (April 27, 1959) [AAS 51, 316].

46. Letter *Il Tempio Massimo* (July 2, 1962) [AAS 54, 510].

47. See Encyclical Letter *Paenitentiam agere* (July 1, 1962), no. 13 [AAS 54, 484].

48. See chapter one above, p. 41ff.

Pope John's gentle usage of bridal and maternal imagery anticipated the pastoral style of the Second Vatican Council.

The vehicles in John XXIII's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor included the signal terms *sponsa* (for Church) and *sponsus* (for Christ), as well as the terms *mystica unione* and *sposalizio* (for the union between Christ and his Bride, the Church). Qualifiers included the bridal Church as immaculate, holy, virtuous, sublime, one with Christ, beloved, confident in the face of persecutions, embracing all peoples, having a maternal mission, and fruitful. It can be said that the maternal image in Pope John's teaching operated as an implicit vehicle for the spousal metaphor.

The tenor in John XXIII's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor was the Church, the *Ecclesia*, understood both as the Catholic Church and as the Church universal. While the image of the Church as Mother vis-à-vis her children implies a certain distinction between the two, John's use of the bridal and maternal images for the Church normally did not emphasize this distinction. Rather, he emphasized the Church's desire to be close, to teach and nurture, to identify with, and to embrace. Even in the consideration of the Church as holy and immaculate despite her children who forget their way, there remains the "heroic virtue and constancy" of so many of her faithful which make up the Bride's "unfailing glory."<sup>49</sup> Therefore, while John did not explicitly identify or explain the Bride of Christ as the *whole* Church, his use of the imagery was oriented towards this more inclusive understanding of the term *ecclesia*.<sup>50</sup>

As also noted above, John was familiar with the tradition of referring to consecrated women as brides of Christ, and he also alluded to the understanding of the Christian soul as a

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49. Encyclical *Paenitentiam agere* (July 1, 1962), no. 15 [AAS 54, 484].

50. See chapter one above on Congar, p. 55.

bride of Christ through Baptism. His use of “bride of the Holy Spirit” for Mary as well as for women religious illustrated another traditional variant in the usage of bridal imagery.

### III. Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) joined the pontificates of John XXIII and Paul VI. Vatican II emerged from a confluence of movements and events, and ultimately from the decision of Pope John XXIII himself. It was not summoned to address a particular controversy, though in hindsight history will likely identify with greater precision the larger questions and controversies the Council has served to address. Although some of Paul VI's papal teaching preceded particular conciliar documents, Paul's teaching will be discussed as a whole in the next section.

Vatican II was the ecclesiological council *par excellence*. No other council had focused on the nature and meaning of the Church as did the Second Vatican Council. The Council was situated at the cusp of centuries of growing development in ecclesiology, especially the return to scriptural, patristic, and medieval sources that characterized theological movements within the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>51</sup> The Council took up the initial intention of the First Vatican Council, that is, a more extended reflection upon the Church.<sup>52</sup> The movements of renewal (lay, liturgical, biblical, and ecumenical), and the *ressourcement* which flourished in the immediate decades preceding the Council, coupled with Pope Pius XII's contribution in *Mystici*

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51. The Protestant Reformation and Catholic Reformation, inclusive of the Council of Trent, were significant turning points in the history of ecclesiological reflection.

52. See Gérard Philips, “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: History of the Constitution,” trans. Kevin Smyth, in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 1, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 105.

*Corporis*, prepared a firm foundation for the ecclesiological discussions during the Second Vatican Council

Of the Council's four constitutions, two treated the Church explicitly, namely *Lumen gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) and *Gaudium et spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World). The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, involved a direct consideration of the heart of the Church's life. Decrees such as *Unitatis redintegratio* (on ecumenism) and *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (on Eastern Catholic Churches), as well as the Declaration *Nostra aetate* (on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions), also contributed to the Council's teaching on the Church.<sup>53</sup> Other documents, such as those on the Church's missionary activity (*Ad gentes*), on the laity (*Apostolicam actuositatem*), on bishops (*Christus Dominus*), on priests (*Presbyterorum ordinis*), and on the religious life (*Perfectae caritatis*), treated explicit aspects of the Church's life and constitution. The Council indeed was a watershed moment in a century that had already been dubbed "the century of the Church."<sup>54</sup>

#### ***A. Ecclesial Bridal Imagery at Significant Points in Conciliar Teaching: Documents and Trends***

The Second Vatican Council's broad ecclesiological backdrop informed its use of ecclesial bridal imagery. The Council did not offer extensive reflection upon bridal imagery for the Church, nor did it give more weight to or explicitly prioritize bridal imagery above other images for the Church. It has been observed that the images of the Church as the People of God

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53. See Robert Fastiggi, "Introduction," in *Called to Holiness and Communion: Vatican II on the Church*, eds. Steven Boguslawski and Robert Fastiggi, xi-xiv (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2009), xi.

54. O. Dibelius, *Das Jahrhundert der Kirche* (1926). R. Guardini had already expressed in 1921 that "the twentieth century will be the century of the Church." See Charles Moeller, "Le ferment des idées dans l'élaboration de la constitution," in *L'Église de Vatican II*, eds. Guilherme Baraúna and Yves Congar, vol. 2 (Paris : Cerf, 1967), 85.



and the Body of Christ received the most emphasis in conciliar teaching relative to other ecclesial images. Nevertheless, the Council did use ecclesial bridal imagery in an explicit and deliberate way, particularly in its dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium*. Ecclesial bridal imagery was employed in eight of the Council's sixteen documents, including all four constitutions. Ecclesial maternal imagery also appeared in eight documents. In a measured way, the Second Vatican Council advanced the magisterial usage of bridal imagery by confirming its traditional use and by situating it explicitly within a more developed teaching on the Church.

The Second Vatican Council's three most significant documents containing ecclesial bridal imagery are *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963), *Lumen gentium* (1964), and *Gaudium et spes* (1965). *Lumen gentium* is by far the most significant, but the other two are important for the broader context in which bridal imagery was inserted.

### 1. Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963)

The Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*,<sup>55</sup> was a milestone for the liturgical movement and a charter intended for the "renewal and fostering" (*instaurandam atque fovendam*) of the liturgy within the Church.<sup>56</sup> The use of bridal imagery in the constitution was fairly minimal. The significance of its use is mainly twofold: (1) bridal imagery was used in relation to bodily and maternal imagery, and (2) it was located in a context emphasizing the Church's participation in the liturgy and in Christ's Paschal Mystery. Perhaps

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55. Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963) [AAS 56, 97-138].

56. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 1 [AAS 56, 97]. On the use of "renewal and fostering" rather than "reform and promotion" to translate "*instaurandam et fovendam*," see Pamela E. J. Jackson, "Theology of the Liturgy," in *Vatican II: Renewal Within Tradition*, ed. Matthew L. Lamb and Matthew Levering (New York: Oxford, 2008), 120n5. On the place of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* within the larger backdrop of liturgical developments, see Josef Andreas Jungmann, "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," trans. Lalit Adolphus, in Vorgrimler, 1-87; John Fenwick and Bryan Spinks, *Worship in Transition: The Liturgical Movement in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Continuum, 1995); Rita Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium*; and Jackson, "Theology of the Liturgy."

most notably, the constitution linked the idea of the Church as a “sacrament” with a patristic theme closely associated with nuptial categories (that of the Church coming from the side of Christ on the cross).<sup>57</sup> This link between bridal imagery and the concept of mystery mirrored previous theological considerations, such as those found in thinkers like Casel and Balthasar,<sup>58</sup> and would be developed further by subsequent conciliar and papal teaching.

## 2. Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* (November 21, 1964)

The Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, was the most authoritative and developed magisterial document on the Church promulgated in the twentieth century.<sup>59</sup> *Lumen gentium* ratified and inspired various developments both in ecclesiology and specifically in magisterial teaching on the Church.<sup>60</sup> Particular highlights included: (1) the document’s introductory emphasis on the Church as mystery and sacrament (*veluti sacramentum*) rather than on “the nature of the Church militant” (the emphasis of an earlier draft),<sup>61</sup> a focus that illustrated a preference for scriptural and patristic categories rather than neo-scholastic ones; (2) the foundational place of Scripture and ecclesial imagery in the

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57. See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 5 [AAS 56, 99].

58. On Casel and Balthasar, see chapter one above, pp. 48ff. and 59ff.

59. The drafting and background history of *Lumen gentium* has been examined in various studies. For the general historical context of the document and the council deliberations and voting, see G. Philips, “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: History of the Consitution,” in Vorgrimler, 105-37; Charles Moeller, “Le ferment des idées dans l’élaboration de la constitution,” in Baraúna and Congar, 85-120; and J. A. Komonchak, “Toward an Ecclesiology of Communion,” in *History of Vatican II*, vol. 4: *Church as Communion, Third Period and Intersession, September 1964 – September 1965*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo, English version ed. J. A. Komonchak, 1-93 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis/Leuven: Peeters, 2003). See also Richard R. Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006).

60. See Baraúna and Congar, *L’Église de Vatican II*; Avery Dulles, “Nature, Mission, and Structure of the Church,” in Lamb and Levering, 25-26. *Lumen gentium* followed an immediate trajectory of renewed ecclesiological reflections, not only by theologians but also by the magisterium itself, from Vatican I and Leo XIII to Pius XII and Paul VI.

61. See Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 8-9.

description of the Church;<sup>62</sup> (3) the use of the image “People of God” to speak of the communion of *all* the faithful, both within the context of the history of salvation and in relation to other ecclesial and non-ecclesial entities; (4) a more extensive treatment of the hierarchy, particularly the collegial episcopacy, and the laity; (5) an emphasis on the universal call of all believers to holiness, no matter what their state in life; (6) consideration of the Church as a pilgrim in this world and therefore a view of the Church within a more eschatological and historical framework; and (7) the situating of the mystery of Mary within the mystery of Christ and the Church.<sup>63</sup> In general, *Lumen gentium* embodied the shift away from neo-scholastic emphases on the juridical-institutional reality of the Church (*societas perfecta*) to a more biblically-inspired and patristic orientation focused on the Church—both visible institution and spiritual reality—as a mystery of communion (*Body of Christ, People of God, communio*).<sup>64</sup>

*Lumen gentium*’s general treatment of ecclesial imagery was based upon the teaching that the Church is a mystery that finds its origin in the mystery of the triune God and the communication of that mystery in salvation history, wherein the Church is the seed and beginning of the Kingdom on earth (*Lumen gentium*, nos. 2-5). The Council recognized the significant place of figurative language and imagery for conveying the mystery of the Church.

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62. See Lucien Cerfaux, “Les images symboliques de l’Église dans le Nouveau Testament,” in Baraúna and Congar, 243-58.

63. See Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 27 and throughout. For additional commentaries and surveys of the main ideas in *Lumen gentium*, see Philips’ background and others’ commentaries in Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 105-305; Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, and M. H. Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger*, 21-141. See also A. Dulles, “Nature, Mission, and Structure of the Church,” and Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, “The Universal Call to Holiness,” in Lamb and Levering, 37-53.

64. See Congar, “Moving Towards a Pilgrim Church,” 129-52, and “A Last Look at the Council,” in Stacpoole, 337-58; Weakland, “Images of the Church,” 79-87; Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger*, 31-32.

Most studies rightly note that the images of the Body of Christ and the People of God were the central ecclesial images employed in *Lumen gentium*.<sup>65</sup> It is true that bridal imagery did not enjoy the same developed treatment as these former images. However, the conciliar teaching did accord a special significance to ecclesial bridal imagery, which was used in numerous instances throughout the document.<sup>66</sup> On the use of the image of bride (particularly in reference to *Lumen gentium*, nos. 6-7), the Council's Doctrinal Commission commented that the bridal image conveyed "the intimate union between Christ and the Church; the distinction between the Church and Christ; [and] obedience to him."<sup>67</sup> The repeated use of the bridal image in the document witnessed to the prominence, value, and usefulness of the image. In particular, the link between the images of bride and body laid a further authoritative foundation, in addition to Pius XII's encyclical letter *Mystici corporis*, for further consideration of this theme.<sup>68</sup>

*Lumen gentium* endorsed the use of ecclesial images and showed that they were to be related to other images and placed within the broader framework of the Church as mystery. This valuation and contextualization of ecclesial imagery in conciliar teaching remains to this day an important contribution of the dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium*. Although the image of the Church as Bride of Christ did not enjoy the same extended consideration or usage as the images of the Body of Christ and People of God, it would not be justified to conclude that, in *Lumen*

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65. For example, see Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*, 1-66. See also de Lubac, *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, 55.

66. Pace H. de Lubac, *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, 55: The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ was more than "the object of four passing references" alone.

67. Christopher O'Donnell, *Ecclesia: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 427. O'Donnell cites *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani Secundi*, vol. 3, pt. 1 (Rome : Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1973), 174: "Denique per figuram *Sponsae* insistitur super intimam unionem Christi et Ecclesiae, quae tamen a Sponso suo remanet distincta, eique fideliter oboediens."

68. For example, see Angelo Scola, "The Theological Foundation of the Petrine Dimension of the Church: A Working Hypothesis," *Ecclesiology* 4.1 (2007): 12-37. Scola's starting point is the combination of body and bridal images found in *Lumen gentium*, no. 7, and their connection to the Eucharist in that same section.

*gentium*, bridal imagery simply constituted one minor image among other images. Its repeated and strategic use and placement witnessed to the bridal image's significance in the document and to the dogmatic constitution's continuity with the preceding decades of ecclesiological development and magisterial teaching.

### 3. Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (December 7, 1965)

The Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, was one of the final documents promulgated by the Council.<sup>69</sup> Its title signified the Council's intention, after treating the mystery of the Church, to consider more closely the Church's relation to the world.<sup>70</sup> A hallmark of this document is its reflection upon the mutual relation between the Church and the world, and on the help the Church receives from "the world of today."<sup>71</sup> The constitution begins by setting forth the "close connection" (*intima coniunctio*) between the Church and the whole human family.<sup>72</sup> This theme was present to varying degrees in preceding papal magisterial teaching, but it received extended consideration in *Gaudium et spes*. In its renewed consideration of the rapport between Church and world, the pastoral constitution represented the Christological and anthropological focus which had gained attention in the previous decades of ecclesiological development, as opposed to an emphasis on juridical and institutional categories.

Ecclesial bridal imagery and other ecclesial images were used sparingly in *Gaudium et spes*. This is perhaps explained not only by the nature of the topics treated but particularly by the

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69. Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (December 7, 1965) [AAS 58, 1025-1120].

70. The question of the precise meaning of "world" and its ambiguity cannot be explored but only noted here. For more, see M. Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger*, 187-88.

71. *Gaudium et spes*, nos. 40-45 [AAS 58, 1057-66].

72. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 1 [AAS 58, 1025-26].

intended audience, which included all people (*ad universos homines*).<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, the use of the bridal image was dense and strategic. One instance affirmed the Church's identity as the faithful Bride while acknowledging the times in history that her members have been unfaithful, thus providing grist for the Church's continued cultivation of her relationship with the world.<sup>74</sup> The other two instances of bridal imagery are located within the chapter concerning the promotion of the dignity of marriage and the family.<sup>75</sup> This chapter is the first of the second part of the pastoral constitution, which treats "more urgent problems" and needs in the world. That marriage and the family make up the initial focus is significant. The constitution was consistent with previous magisterial emphasis on the significance of marriage, and it also anticipated and even affirmed the critical importance of continued attention to this topic.

### ***B. Key Themes and Patterns in the Council's Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery***

Below, the major themes and patterns associated with Vatican II's use of ecclesial bridal imagery will be surveyed. While many themes reflect previous magisterial teaching, the Council's use of the imagery also showed the fruits of the *ressourcement* and movements of renewal, fruits which had already been manifest to a certain extent in Pius XII's teaching.

#### **1. Mystery as the innermost nature of the Church**

In a unique and authoritative way compared to previous magisterial teaching, the Second Vatican Council taught that the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ together with other

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73. See *Gaudium et spes*, no. 2 [AAS 58, 1026].

74. See *Gaudium et spes*, no. 43 [AAS 58, 1064].

75. See *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48 [AAS 58, 1068-69].

biblical images show forth the “innermost nature of the Church” as a mystery and “universal sacrament of salvation.”<sup>76</sup>

Just as in the Old Testament the revelation of the Kingdom is often proposed by means of figures [*sub figuris*], therefore now too the innermost nature of the Church [*intima ecclesiae natura*] is made known to us through various images [*variis imaginibus*], which, taken from either the life of a shepherd or from agriculture, or from the art of building or also from the family and betrothal [*a familia et sponsalibus*], are prepared for in the books of the prophets.”<sup>77</sup>

After listing examples of these various scriptural images, the Council Fathers concluded with a concise survey of spousal imagery, inclusive of various themes.

John contemplates this holy city, descending out of heaven from God at the renewal of the world, “prepared like a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev 21:1ff.).

The Church, also, which is called “Jerusalem which is above” and “our mother” (Gal 4:26; see Rev 12:17), is described as the immaculate *bride* [*sponsa immaculata*] of the immaculate lamb (see Rev 19:7; 21:2 and 9; 22:17). It is she whom Christ “loved ... and handed himself over for her so as to sanctify her” (Eph 5:25-26). It is she whom he unites to himself by an indissoluble covenant, and whom he unceasingly “nourishes and cherishes” (Eph 5:29). It is she whom, once cleansed, he willed to be joined [*coniunctam*] to himself, subject in love and fidelity (see Eph 5:24), and whom, finally, he filled with heavenly gifts for all eternity, in order that we may know the love of God and of Christ for us, a love which surpasses all knowledge (see Eph 3:19). While here on earth she is on pilgrimage [*peregrinatur*] away from the Lord (see 2 Cor 5:6), as if she were an exile, she seeks and is concerned about those things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, where the life of the Church is hidden with Christ in God until she appears in glory with her Spouse (see Col 3:1-4).<sup>78</sup>

The Council thus in a certain sense circumscribed the bridal image as, together with other images, showing forth an aspect of the Church’s inner reality. As a mystery, the Church cannot be comprehended by one image alone. Nevertheless, the Council did not teach that the ecclesial images are interchangeable, and its repeated use of the bridal image in various contexts

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76. *Lumen gentium*, nos. 1, 6 and 48 [AAS 57, pp. 5, 8 and 53]. See also *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 5 [AAS 56, 99]; and *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48 [AAS 58, 1069].

77. *Lumen gentium*, no. 6 [AAS 57, 8]. Translation modified (Flannery and Tanner consulted in modifications).

78. *Lumen gentium*, no. 6 [AAS 57, 9]. Translation modified.

implicitly revealed the privileged status that the Council accorded to the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ.<sup>79</sup>

## 2. The Church as the holy and immaculate Bride, united to Christ and renewed in the Holy Spirit

In line with traditional usage, the Second Vatican Council employed the bridal image to convey the Church's mark of holiness and her fidelity. The Church is the "immaculate Bride" (*sponsa immaculata*) as described in Revelation,<sup>80</sup> the Bride who is "indefectibly holy" (*indefectibiliter sancta*) through Christ's loving and indissoluble union with her.<sup>81</sup> She remains "faithful" to and "worthy" of her Lord.<sup>82</sup> She is "adorned" by the holiness of her consecrated members.<sup>83</sup> However, she is dependent upon the Holy Spirit's constant help so that she might be ever "renewed" and "young."<sup>84</sup> The Bride's real union with Christ her Bridegroom still remains to be perfected.<sup>85</sup> There is a dialectical tension with regard to the holiness of the Bride, who is truly holy yet remains in need of continual renewal and reform so as to become "more and more like her Bridegroom."<sup>86</sup>

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79. *Lumen gentium*, no. 7 [AAS 57, 11].

80. *Lumen gentium*, no. 6 [AAS 57, 9].

81. *Lumen gentium*, nos. 39 and 44 [AAS 57, 44 and 50].

82. *Lumen gentium*, nos. 9 and 64 [AAS 57, 14 and 64], and *Gaudium et spes*, no. 43 [AAS 58, 1064].

83. *Lumen gentium*, no. 46 [AAS 57, 52] and Decree *Perfectae caritatis* (October 28, 1965), no. 1 [AAS 58, 702].

84. *Lumen gentium*, nos. 4 and 9 [AAS 57, 7 and 14].

85. *Lumen gentium*, nos. 4 and 6 [AAS 57, 7 and 9].

86. *Lumen gentium*, nos. 65 [AAS 57, 64-65]. See also *Lumen gentium*, no. 9 [AAS 57, 14], and *Gaudium et spes*, no. 43 [AAS 58, 1064].



### 3. The Church as the beloved Bride

The Council's teaching also contained the common theme found in Ephesians 5 of the love between Christ and the Church. The Church is the "beloved" or "most beloved" Bride of Christ.<sup>87</sup> Christ loved his Bride and gave himself for her so as to make her holy.<sup>88</sup> The sanctification of the Bride therefore flows from the love of Christ, her Bridegroom. Christian marriage represents the love (*amor, dilectio*) between Christ and his Church.<sup>89</sup>

### 4. The unique dignity and responsibility of the Church as the Bride of Christ

As the Doctrinal Commission had explained, the bridal image portrayed the distinction between the Church and Christ.<sup>90</sup> In *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, bridal imagery was often associated with the Church's participation in liturgical action, namely her calling to and being united with the Lord, her offering worship, her celebrating the saving work of her Bridegroom, and her offering praise<sup>91</sup>—all actions which are part of the Bride of Christ's responsibility entrusted to her and the mark of her unique dignity.<sup>92</sup>

As the Bride of Christ, the Church has been entrusted with the faith, which she, a virgin like Mary, keeps "whole and entire,"<sup>93</sup> even while striving to become more and more like Jesus her Bridegroom.<sup>94</sup> Through her living Tradition, God "uninterruptedly converses with the Bride

87. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 7 and 47 [AAS 56, 101 and 113].

88. *Lumen gentium*, nos. 39 and 41 [AAS 57, 44 and 47], and *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48 [AAS 58, 1068-69].

89. See Decree *Optatum totius* (October 28, 1965), no. 10 [AAS 58, 720], and *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48 [AAS 58, 1069].

90. See p. 204 above.

91. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 7, 84-85 and 102 [AAS 56, pp. 101, 121 and 125].

92. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 47 and 85 [AAS 56, 113 and 121].

93. *Lumen gentium*, no. 64 [AAS 57, 64].

94. *Lumen gentium*, no. 65 [AAS 57, 64-65].

of his beloved Son.”<sup>95</sup> In turn, the “Bride of the Incarnate Word [*Verbi incarnati Sponsa*] ... strives to reach day by day a more profound understanding of the sacred Scriptures, in order to provide her children [*filiis*] with food from the divine words.”<sup>96</sup> The Bride, who is taught by the Holy Spirit, has the responsibility to hand on what she has received.<sup>97</sup>

## 5. The Church as the Bride who still awaits her fulfillment

A characteristic mark of the Council’s teaching on the Church was the attention given to eschatology and history, an attention which also influenced its use of bridal imagery. The spousal union between Christ and the Church was described as something truly present but still awaiting its perfection. The “wondrous” (*mirabile*) and even “mysterious marriage” (*arcanum connubium*) where “the Church has Christ for her only Spouse (*unicum sponsum*)” will be “fully manifested in the future age.”<sup>98</sup> The bridal Church is *on the way*, an emphasis that was also present in various areas of Pius XII’s teaching.<sup>99</sup>

*Lumen gentium* devoted particular attention to the Church’s eschatological nature and her identity as a pilgrim in this world. The book of Revelation was an important reference point. For example, the Council Fathers cited Revelation 22:17 when teaching that the Spirit leads the Church as the Bride of Christ to perfect union with Christ.<sup>100</sup>

By the power of the Gospel [the Holy Spirit] makes the Church ever young, and he constantly renews her and leads her to perfect union with her Spouse [*ad consummatam*

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95. Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* (November 18, 1965), no. 8 [AAS 58, 821]. Translation modified.

96. *Dei Verbum*, no. 23 [AAS 58, 828]. Translation modified.

97. *Dei Verbum*, no. 23 [AAS 58, 828].

98. Decree *Perfectae caritatis*, no. 12 [AAS 58, 707], and Decree *Presbyterorum ordinis* (December 7, 1965), no. 16 [AAS 58, 1016].

99. See chapter four above, p. 168ff.

100. *Lumen gentium*, no. 4 [AAS 57, 7]. M. Heim highlights this notion of “the Church as the Bride of Christ in the Holy Spirit” in his study of *Lumen gentium* in *Joseph Ratzinger*, 47-48 and 67.

*cum Sponso suo unionem*]. For the Spirit and the Bride say to the Lord Jesus: “Come!” (cf. Rev 22:17).<sup>101</sup>

While *Lumen gentium* cites Irenaeus in reference to the Holy Spirit’s role in keeping the Church youthful, Pope Pius XII had also referred explicitly to the youthfulness of the Bride brought about by the Holy Spirit.<sup>102</sup> Pius X, Pius XI, and John XXIII had used ecclesial bridal imagery in close reference to the role of the Holy Spirit as well.<sup>103</sup> In addition, Tromp had noted the patristic theme that the Holy Spirit is the one who brings about the union of Christ the Bridegroom with his Bride the Church.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, thinkers such as Vonier, Casel, de Lubac, Journet, and Balthasar had also mentioned this connection, and Bouyer and others would later comment on its significance.<sup>105</sup>

The Council also cited Revelation 21:1ff. when referring to the Church as the holy city which John saw coming down from heaven as “a bride adorned for her husband.”<sup>106</sup> The Bride of Christ is a pilgrim on earth, even an exile, waiting to appear in glory with her Spouse.<sup>107</sup> While she remains the faithful Bride with the help of the Holy Spirit, the Church advances through “trials and tribulations” to reach the never-ending light that is attainable only through the cross.<sup>108</sup> *Lumen gentium* cites Mt 25:31-46 in reference to the “wedding feast” (*nuptiae*) of heaven,

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101. *Lumen gentium*, no. 4 [AAS 57, 7]. Translation modified.

102. See Pius XII, Radio Message *Già per la decimaterza* (December 24, 1951) [AAS 44, 5]. See also chapter four above, p. 162n51.

103. See chapter three above, pp. 128n82, 130n88, and 139n125; and this chapter, p. 196n39 above.

104. See Tromp, “De Nativitate Ecclesiae e Corde Jesu Cruce,” 491-92, 494-96, 515n7, 520n16, and 521n20 (chapter 4 above, p. 44n175).

105. See chapter one above, p. 42ff.

106. *Lumen gentium*, no. 6 [AAS 57, 9].

107. *Lumen gentium*, no. 6 [AAS 57, 9].

108. *Lumen gentium*, no. 9 [AAS 57, 14]. See also *Gaudium et spes*, no. 43 [AAS 58, 1064].

to which the pilgrim Church is striving.<sup>109</sup> While Mary has reached the spotless perfection promised to the Church in Ephesians 5:27 (*sine macula et ruga*), the Christian faithful are still on their way.<sup>110</sup>

In acknowledging the sins of her members, the Church as the Bride of Christ must continue to grow and mature.

Although by the power of the Holy Spirit the Church will remain a faithful bride [*fidelis sponsa*] to her Lord and will never cease to be a sign of salvation in the world, nevertheless she is not in the least unaware that down through the centuries there have been among her members, both clerical and lay, some who have been unfaithful to the Spirit of God. Today as well, the Church is not blind to the discrepancy between the message she proclaims and the human weakness of those to whom the Gospel has been entrusted. Whatever is history's judgment on these failings, we cannot ignore them and we must combat them earnestly, lest they hinder the spread of the Gospel. The Church also realizes, in cultivating her relationship with the world, how much she ought to mature continually from the experience of the centuries. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Mother Church [*ecclesia mater*] ceaselessly "exhorts her children to purification and renewal so that the sign of Christ may shine more brightly over the face of the Church" (*Lumen gentium*, no. 15).<sup>111</sup>

The Church as the Bride of Christ needs to "cultivate" her relationship with the world and "mature" over the centuries. She does not remain self-enclosed in static perfection. The Bride, who is also Mother, needs the holiness of her children so that her face might shine the light of Christ more vividly.

The Council's single reference to bridal imagery in connection to "trials and tribulations" did not dwell on aspects focusing on any injustice done towards the Bride.<sup>112</sup> Rather, the Church's dependence upon God's grace was emphasized, that she might remain a faithful and

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109. *Lumen gentium*, no. 48 [AAS 57, 54].

110. *Lumen gentium*, no. 65 [AAS 57, 64-65].

111. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 43 [AAS 58, 1064]. Translation modified.

112. *Lumen gentium*, no. 9 [AAS 57, 14].

worthy Bride even up to the cross.<sup>113</sup> This was a markedly different emphasis compared to earlier magisterial teaching that often highlighted the need to stand up for and defend the innocent Bride in the face of her sufferings. The Church's mission was to seek out the poor and even become poor herself just as Christ did.<sup>114</sup>

## 6. Christian marriage as signifying and sharing in the love between Christ and the Church

The Second Vatican Council's most sustained treatment of the sacrament of marriage occurred in *Gaudium et spes*. Ephesians 5 formed the key backdrop for considering marriage as "constituted according to the model [*exemplar*] of [Christ's] union with the Church" and as "an image of and participation in [*imago et participatio*] the covenantal love between Christ and the Church."<sup>115</sup> The Council Fathers also made a point to cite the range of Scripture references from both the Old and New Testaments.

Christ our Lord has abundantly blessed this manifold love [between husband and wife], having arisen from the spring of divine love and made as the model [*exemplar*] of his union [*unione*] with the Church. Just as of old God met his people with a covenant of love and fidelity (see Hos 2; Jer 3:6-13; Ez 16 and 23; Is 54), so our Savior, the Bridegroom of the Church [*ecclesiae sponsus*] (see Mt 9:15; Mk 2:19-20; Lk 5:34-35; Jn 3:29; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:27; Rev 19:7-8; 21:2 and 9), now comes to meet Christian spouses through the sacrament of matrimony. Moreover, he abides with them (*manet cum eis*) so that, just as he loved the Church and handed himself over for her (see Eph 5:25), the spouses, in their mutual self-giving [*mutua deditione*], will also love each other with enduring fidelity.<sup>116</sup>

In this concise passage, the Council connected the nuptial imagery of the Old and New Testaments with the sacrament of marriage. Interestingly, a comparison is set up between God

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113. *Lumen gentium*, no. 9 [AAS 57, 14].

114. *Lumen gentium*, no. 8 [AAS 57, 12].

115. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48 [AAS 58, 1068-69].

116. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48 [AAS 58, 1068]. Translation modified.

the Bridegroom/Israel the Bride and Christ the Bridegroom/Christian spouses (rather than God the Bridegroom/Israel the Bride and Christ the Bridegroom/Church the Bride). The spouses, in Christ, sacramentally embody the very mystery of the love between Christ and the Church.

The Council then commented on the ecclesiological significance of marriage and the family:

The Christian family, since it springs from marriage, which is an image [*imago*] of and participation [*participatio*] in the covenant of love between Christ and the Church [*foederis dilectionis Christi et ecclesiae*] (Eph 5:32), will show forth to all people the Savior's living presence in the world and the genuine nature of the Church [*germana ecclesiae natura*] by the spouses' love and generous fruitfulness, their unity and fidelity, and the loving cooperation of all the members [of the family].<sup>117</sup>

Marriage, as a sacrament, is not only a sign but actually participates in the covenantal love between Christ and the Church. Accordingly, the “genuine or true nature of the Church” is manifest by Christian marriage and family life. This reference to the Church's “nature” is a striking description, and it also recalls *Lumen gentium*'s description of the family as a “domestic church” (*velut ecclesia domestica*).<sup>118</sup> However, whereas in *Lumen gentium* there was a certain qualified use of “domestic church” by the use of the term “*velut*,” *Gaudium et spes* seemed to press the link between the Church and the Christian family further, by attributing to the family the capacity to “reveal” the very nature of the Church.

Ephesians 5 also formed the central context for the Council's other references to marriage and ecclesial bridal imagery.<sup>119</sup> In similar fashion to *Gaudium et spes*, *Lumen gentium* used

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117. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48 [AAS 58, 1069]. Translation modified.

118. *Lumen gentium*, no. 11 [AAS 57, 16].

119. See Decree *Optatam totius*, no. 10 [AAS 58, 720]: Christian marriage “represents [*repraesentat*] the love [*amor*] between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:22-33).” See also Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem* (November 18, 1965), no. 11 [AAS 58, 847]: By grace, the spousal union [*coniugale consortium*] has been made “a great sacrament [*sacramentum magnum*] in Christ and in the Church (see Eph 5:32).”

the idea of “model” (*exemplar*), though it referred specifically to Christ as the “model [*exemplar*] of the husband loving his wife as his own body [*corpus suum*] (see Eph 5:25-28).”<sup>120</sup> In addition, there are two instances where *Lumen gentium* referred explicitly to Christian spouses both signifying and participating in the love between Christ and the Church. “Christian spouses ... signify and share in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church (see Eph 5:32).”<sup>121</sup> In their generous love, including their “witness to and cooperation in the fruitfulness of Mother Church,” Christian spouses and parents are “a sign of and sharing in [*signum et participatio*] that love with which Christ loved his bride and gave himself for her.”<sup>122</sup> Here, the Council Fathers cited Pius XI’s *Casti connubii* and one of John Chrysostom’s homilies on Ephesians.<sup>123</sup> In a particular way, the sacrament of marriage has a distinctive ecclesiological meaning, embodying sacramentally the very covenantal love between Christ and the Church and serving as the source of the “domestic church.”<sup>124</sup>

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120. *Lumen gentium*, no. 7 [AAS 57, 11].

121. *Lumen gentium*, no. 11 [AAS 57, 15-16]. Translation modified.

122. *Lumen gentium*, no. 41 [AAS 57, 47].

123. See Pius XI, Encyclical *Casti connubii* (December 31, 1930), no. 23ff. [AAS 22, 548ff.]; John Chrysostom, *In Ephes.*, homily 20, 2 [PG 62, 136ff.].

124. See M. Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger*, 91-92: “A very special meaning for the Church is assigned, however, to the sacrament of matrimony, which signifies ‘the mystery of the unity and faithful love [*sic*] between Christ and the Church’: First, the Christian marital covenant points as a sacrament to God’s faithful covenant with his People, which God has established in Christ with his Church. Second, from the marital covenant proceeds the family as the ‘domestic church’, which is the sacramental locus where the spouses sanctify one another and accept and raise children. It follows from this, third, that parents are the first to proclaim the gospel to their children, whereby they foster unity as well as the vocation proper to each one and thus reflect the Church in miniature.”

## 7. The Church as Bride and Mother

The Council employed bridal and maternal imagery fairly evenly,<sup>125</sup> though it did not seem to give as extended a consideration of maternal imagery as it did for bridal imagery. Bridal and maternal imagery are closely interwoven in the documents in a few instances. Those who pray the divine office share “in what is the greatest honor for Christ’s Bride ... [by] standing before God’s throne in the name of the Church, their Mother.”<sup>126</sup> “Holy Mother Church” knows “she must celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse.”<sup>127</sup> In *Lumen gentium*, the paragraph on bridal imagery is introduced with a reference to the Church as “our mother.”<sup>128</sup> In addition, Christian spouses, who share in the love between Christ and the Church, also cooperate in the fruitfulness of Mother Church.<sup>129</sup> In fact, all who cooperate in the Church’s apostolic mission of regenerating men and women should be moved by the example of the maternal affection [*materni affectus*] of Mary, the Church’s “exalted Type.”<sup>130</sup> Finally, the bridal Church teaches her sons and daughters (*fili*), “feeding” them with divine utterances which stem from a more profound understanding of Scripture.<sup>131</sup> Even without an explicit consideration of the relationship between the Church as Bride and the Church as Mother, it was clear to the Council Fathers that a

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125. For examples of the Council’s use and application of ecclesial maternal imagery, see *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963), nos. 1, 4, 14, 21, 60, 85, 102 and 122 [AAS 56, pp. 97-98, 104-5, 116, 121, 125 and 131]; Decree *Inter mirifica* (December 4, 1963), nos. 1-2 [AAS 56, 145]; *Lumen gentium* (November 21, 1964), nos. 6, 14-15, 41-42 and 65 [AAS 57, pp. 9, 19-20, 47-49 and 65]; Decree *Christus Dominus*, no. 13 (October 28, 1965) [AAS 58, 678]; Declaration *Gravissimum educationis* (October 28, 1965), preface and no. 3 [AAS 58, 729 and 732]; *Dei Verbum* (November 18, 1965), nos. 11, 19, 21-23, and 25 [AAS 58, pp. 822, 826-28 and 830]; Decree *Ad gentes* (December 7, 1965), no. 15 [AAS 58, 963-64]; and *Gaudium et spes* (December 7, 1965), no. 43 [AAS 58, 1064].

126. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 85 [AAS 56, 121].

127. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 102 [AAS 56, 125].

128. *Lumen gentium*, no. 6 [AAS 57, 9].

129. *Lumen gentium*, no. 41 [AAS 57, 47].

130. *Lumen gentium*, no. 65 [AAS 57, 65].

131. *Dei Verbum*, no. 23 [AAS 58, 828].



dimension of the bridal Church was her maternal fruitfulness. This was also witnessed by reference to the “fruitful love” (*fecundus amor*) between Christ and the Church.<sup>132</sup>

## 8. The Church as Bride and Body

The Council did not explicitly consider the relationship between the images of the Church as the Bride of Christ and Body of Christ, though its close coupling of bridal and bodily imagery signified the Council’s awareness of a complementary relationship between the two images. For instance, immediately after describing the Holy Spirit as the one who vivifies and unites the Body of Christ, the Council noted: “Christ loves the Church as his bride, having been established as the model [*exemplar*] of a man loving his wife as his own body (see Eph 5:25-28); the Church, in her turn, is subject to her head [*ut corpus suum*] (Eph 5:23-24).”<sup>133</sup> This close coupling of bridal and bodily imagery highlighted the value of the bridal image for illuminating the relationship between Head and members.<sup>134</sup>

The close link between the ecclesial images of bride and body was also manifest in the constitution’s treatment of the universal call to holiness.

The Church, whose mystery is set forth by this sacred Council, is held, as a matter of faith, to be indefectibly holy. This is because Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is hailed as ‘alone Holy,’ loved the Church as his Bride, giving himself up for her so as to sanctify her (see Eph 5:25-26); he joined [*coniunxit*] her to himself as his body and endowed her with the gift of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God.<sup>135</sup>

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132. *Lumen gentium*, no. 11 [AAS 57, 15-16].

133. *Lumen gentium*, no. 7 [AAS 57, 11].

134. On this latter point, see *Lumen gentium*, no. 7 (second paragraph) [AAS 57, 9-10].

135. *Lumen gentium*, no. 39 [AAS 57, 44]. Translation modified.

The universal call to holiness is grounded in the mystery of the Church as the Body and Bride of Christ, the Church who, as Body and Bride, is joined to the One who alone is Holy.

Elsewhere, the image of the Church coming from Christ's pierced side on the cross alluded to both bridal and body imagery.<sup>136</sup> The praying of the divine office is also described as "the voice of the Bride herself [*ipsius Sponsae*] addressed to her Bridegroom" and then immediately depicted as "the very prayer which Christ himself together with his Body [*cum ipsius Corpore*] addresses to the Father."<sup>137</sup>

### 9. Ecclesial bridal imagery, the Paschal Mystery, and the liturgy

The Council Fathers used ecclesial bridal imagery in relation to the liturgy and Eucharist and Christ's work of salvation. After speaking of the Paschal Mystery as the principal work of redemption, the Council Fathers described the Church being born from the side of the sleeping Christ on the cross, a theme alluding to the origin of Eve from the side of Adam. "For the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church was born [*ortum est*] from the side of Christ sleeping on the cross."<sup>138</sup> Significantly, the drafters and Council Fathers chose this rich patristic theme with nuptial connotations as the initial reference point for locating the reality of the Church as a mystery (*sacramentum*) bound up within Christ's Paschal Mystery.

Bridal imagery also conveyed the special participation of the Church in Christ's work of redemption. "Indeed, in this great work, by which God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified, Christ always associates with himself the Church, the most beloved Bride, who calls

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136. See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 5 [AAS 56, 99] and *Lumen gentium*, no. 3 [AAS 57, 6].

137. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 84 [AAS 56, 121]. See also no. 7 [AAS 56, 101].

138. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 5 [AAS 56, 99]. Translation modified. See Jackson, "Theology of the Liturgy," 107 and 122n47.

to her Lord and through him offers worship to the eternal Father.”<sup>139</sup> The bridal Church’s ability to participate is due to Christ, who has entrusted his Bride with the Eucharist.<sup>140</sup>

### 10. Consecrated persons, celibacy, Mary and the Church

The Council did not explicitly refer to consecrated women as brides of Christ, most likely since it did not single out consecrated women for extended consideration. Rather, all those in consecrated life are seen to “adorn the Bride of Christ.”<sup>141</sup> In addition, those who practice the evangelical counsels “show forth the unbreakable bond of union that exists between Christ and his bride the Church.”<sup>142</sup> By their chastity “for the kingdom,” all faithful religious evoke the marriage between Christ and the Church which will be fully unveiled at the end of time.<sup>143</sup>

Even further, not only consecrated religious but also priests in general, in their virginity or celibacy for the Kingdom, “evoke [*evocare*] the mysterious marriage established by Christ, and fully to be manifested in the future, in which the Church has Christ as her only Spouse.”<sup>144</sup> This signification of the marriage between Christ and the Church flows from the priest’s dedication to the *munus* (office, task) of complete commitment to Christ as a “chaste virgin” (citing 2 Cor 11:2).<sup>145</sup> According to the Council, the sacrament of marriage, the consecrated life, and particularly consecrated virginity and priestly celibacy all play a significant role in showing forth the union between Christ and the Church, Bridegroom and Bride.

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139. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 7 [AAS 56, 101]. Translation modified.

140. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 47 [AAS 56, 113].

141. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 46 [AAS 57, 52].

142. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 44 [AAS 57, 112].

143. Decree *Perfectae caritatis*, no. 12 [AAS 58, 707].

144. Decree *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 16 [AAS 58, 1016].

145. Decree *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 16 [AAS 58, 1016].

As is well known, the insertion of the chapter on Mary as the final chapter of *Lumen gentium* came after some debate and a very close vote.<sup>146</sup> As Virgin and Mother, Mary stands as a type of the Church, who is also a virgin and mother.<sup>147</sup> The Church becomes a mother in contemplating and imitating Mary's own singular motherhood.<sup>148</sup> The Council did not attribute the title of "bride of Christ" to Mary. Nevertheless, the Council did not rule out such a title. If Mary's motherhood and virginity serve as a type of the Church's motherhood and virginity, and if Mary is also considered a member of the Church, though certainly the preeminent member, the possibility is left open of whether Mary can be understood as bride of Christ in a particular and preeminent way. In Mary "the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle (see Eph 5:27),"<sup>149</sup> which implicitly means that in Mary the Church is already the perfected Bride of Christ.

Furthermore, when the Church meditates and contemplates upon Mary from the perspective of the mystery of the Incarnation, "the Church reverently penetrates more deeply into the great mystery of the Incarnation and becomes more and more like her spouse [*sponsus*]."<sup>150</sup> This conformity would seem to entail that the Church simultaneously would become more herself—more the Bride—in contemplating Mary, thus implicitly presuming that Mary herself is bride and can show the Church how to become closer, as Bride, to her Bridegroom. In this way, Mary assists the Church, as the Bride of Christ, to become more and more like her Bridegroom. *Lumen gentium* thus implicitly confirmed the Church's "Marian" reality

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146. See Ratzinger, "Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine," 22.

147. *Lumen gentium*, no. 53 [AAS 57, 59].

148. *Lumen gentium*, no. 64 [AAS 57, 64].

149. *Lumen gentium*, no. 64 [AAS 57, 64].

150. *Lumen gentium*, no. 65 [AAS 57, 64-65].

(see Balthasar and Journet), and it also left an open door to the application of the image of the bride of Christ in reference to the mystery of Mary.

### ***C. Summary and Analysis of the Second Vatican Council***

In its use of ecclesial bridal imagery, the Second Vatican Council in many ways resumed themes and patterns already found in previous magisterial teaching, particularly that of Pope Pius XII. Like Pius XII, the Council implicitly acknowledged a privileged place to bridal imagery as a necessary complement to the body image. The Council's consideration of the Church as Bride and pilgrim also remained consistent with Pius XII's teaching, though it was advanced in terms of vigor and attention. Absent were uses that would convey the Bride of Christ as if she were a static reality over and above the members of the Church.

Most significantly, the Council situated ecclesial bridal imagery in relation to the Church as mystery and in the larger context of scriptural imagery. Along with Paul VI, the Council circumscribed the use of ecclesial imagery by relating it to the "innermost nature of the Church," which itself remains beyond the grasp of one image. While the Council did emphasize the images of the Body of Christ and the People of God, it repeatedly used the image of the Church as Bride of Christ, and the Council affirmed the bridal image's importance in Scripture and in the history of salvation.

The vehicles in the Second Vatican Council's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor included the signal terms *sponsa* (for the Church), *sponsus* (for Christ), the nouns *signum*, *imago*, *participatio*, and the verb *representare* (for Christian marriage in reference to the union of Christ and the Church), and the terms *unione*, *connubium*, *foedus dilectionis*, *indissolubile vinculum*, *amor*, *nuptiae*, and *exemplar* (for that union itself—the latter term also served to depict Christ himself as

Bridegroom). Qualifiers included the Bride of Christ's immaculate holiness, faithfulness, youthfulness, her beloved character, her union with Christ, her subjection to Christ, her distinction from Christ, her responsibility to teach and to worship, her being led by the Holy Spirit, the Bride's waiting for fulfillment, her need for renewal, and the Bride as virgin and mother. The term *mater* and its equivalent terms and associations also functioned as implicit vehicles of the bridal metaphor. Absent from the Council's teaching was any repeated reference to sufferings and persecutions that the bridal Church faces from the world.

The tenor of the Council's use of the bridal metaphor was the Church (*ecclesia*), understood as the Catholic Church (*ecclesia catholica*) and as the Church universal. In light of the Council's attentiveness to the Church as the Body of Christ and People of God, the bridal metaphor was more often employed in a way that clearly integrated the whole Church, rather than speaking of the "Bride" as if over and above her members (e.g., as an abstract hypostasis, as the hierarchy alone, and so on). Moreover, there was an evident and deliberate tension or dialectic within the tenor of the ecclesial bridal metaphor. The Bride of Christ is at once holy and also in need of purification. The Bride of Christ is at once the Church on earth, still on her way, and also the Church who has reached her perfection in the heavenly communion of saints, as seen most particularly in Mary herself. This dialectic between holiness and continued renewal, earth and heaven, history and eschatology, and the call entailed in that dialectic (e.g., call to holiness and perfection, need for renewal), were marked characteristics of the Council's use of the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ, and they signaled a strong reception of scriptural and patristic elements which hitherto had not been presented so comprehensively in preceding magisterial teaching (cf. *Satis cognitum* and *Mystici Corporis*).

In many ways, the Second Vatican Council was the outgrowth of decades of ecclesiological reflection, which had come about through a return to the sources and the rich movements of renewal (ecumenical, liturgical, biblical, and lay action). In its use of ecclesial bridal imagery, the Council built on preceding teaching, especially that of Pius XII, John XXIII, and Paul VI, but also set a trajectory for future magisterial teaching on the Church as the Bride of Christ.

The Council incorporated both routine and considered uses of bridal imagery, and the repeated use of the bridal image in conciliar teaching gave a certain privileged status to the image. As well, the bridal image was closely related to the Church on earth and to the faithful. In this way, the image of the Bride of Christ was connected with a deeply ecclesial (Christian) anthropology. Speaking of the Bride therefore entailed speaking of all the faithful, who they are and who they are called to be. It could be said that the Council renewed the *accessibility* of the bridal image, particularly by avoiding any triumphalism or static conception of the image and by laying the foundation for further exploration of the relevance of the bridal image as it pertains to a life of discipleship.

#### **IV. Pope Paul VI**

The pontificate of Pope Paul VI<sup>151</sup> (1963-1978) spanned the final years of the Second Vatican Council and its immediate years of implementation. Paul VI would guide the Church through the end of the Council and into the challenging post-conciliar years that involved not only global and societal complexities but the challenges and difficulties accompanying ecclesial renewal, reform, and crises.

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151. Giovanni Battista Enrico Antonio Maria Montini (1897-1978).

Paul VI has been described as “the first modern pope.”<sup>152</sup> In a unique way, Paul VI bridged the gamut of key twentieth century movements, having personally experienced Modernism in the early part of the century, the various movements of ecclesial renewal, the rise and continued threat of totalitarianism, and the more recent movements including modern feminism and the beginnings of contemporary environmentalism.<sup>153</sup> Paul VI made visits and pilgrimages an important part of his pontificate, which also included significant ecumenical encounters. He addressed the difficulties of the Vietnam War, and shepherded the Church through a period of unprecedented public dissent.

Pope Paul VI issued seven encyclical letters, all within the first five years of his pontificate. These include his encyclical on the Church (*Ecclesiam suam*), two Marian encyclicals on the theme of peace (*Mense Maio* and *Christi Matris*), an encyclical on the Eucharist (*Mysterium fidei*), a social encyclical on the development of peoples (*Populorum progressio*), an encyclical on priestly celibacy (*Sacerdotalis caelibatus*), and finally his encyclical on human life and the proper transmission of life (*Humanae vitae*). Paul VI chose not to issue any more encyclicals after the promulgation of *Humanae vitae* and the controversy of reception/dissent that ensued. However, his teaching continued in significant ways, as seen in his apostolic exhortations on the renewal of religious life, Marian devotion, evangelization, and Christian joy, in addition to his general audience addresses, many of which treated the theme of the Church.

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152. Peter Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1993).

153. See Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI*, 1.



Paul VI had shown a strong predilection for studies and questions concerning the Church,<sup>154</sup> and he was influenced by a variety of contemporary works and thinkers. Both Karl Adam's *The Spirit [Essence] of Catholicism* and Henri de Lubac's *The Splendor of the Church (Meditation sur l'Église)* made a considerable impact on his formation.<sup>155</sup> Other thinkers who influenced him included Johann Adam Möhler, Matthias Scheeben, Jacques Maritain, Odo Casel, Romano Guardini, Yves Congar, Louis Bouyer, and Charles Journet. Montini was very aware of the renewed consideration of the Church found in various thinkers. In 1962, a series of ecclesiological articles by Montini was published as a monograph, entitled *Discorsi su la Chiesa (1957-1962)*.<sup>156</sup> This deep interest in matters pertaining to the Church was evident in his first encyclical and in numerous general audiences through the 1970s which treated various aspects of the Church. It is providential that Paul VI, a man who had demonstrated a love and concern for the Church from an early time, would be called to guide the Church through a Council devoted to a more profound reflection upon the very meaning and mission of the Church.

#### ***A. Ecclesial Bridal Imagery at Significant Points in Paul VI's Teaching: Documents and Trends***

Pope Paul VI employed ecclesial bridal imagery consistently and extensively throughout his teaching. He built upon a foundation of magisterial teaching, specifically present in Pius XII and the Second Vatican Council, and he also continued uses of the imagery that he had

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154. See Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI*, 95: "Montini began with essentials. His first theology course in 1927 was on the mystery of Church [*sic*] (as was his first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam*, in 1964)."

155. See Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI*, 89, 95, and 245-46.

156. English translation as *The Church*, trans. Alfred Di Lascia (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964).

employed as Cardinal Montini.<sup>157</sup> Paul VI was the first of contemporary popes to discuss explicitly and extensively the meaning and significance of the Church as the Bride of Christ. His use of bridal imagery extended through the various layers of his teaching—encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, and general audiences. In addition, Paul VI’s attention to other ecclesial imagery and his consideration of the Church as mystery formed an important backdrop for situating bridal imagery almost “systematically” within a framework of teaching.

Paul VI’s encyclical letter *Ecclesiam suam* (1964) contains a particularly significant use of ecclesial bridal imagery. A considerable amount of bridal imagery can also be found throughout his general audiences, especially his audience of June 15, 1966. Paul’s teaching on marriage and the family continued a significant trajectory of magisterial teaching, and one particular speech of May 4, 1970 will also be highlighted below. Finally, because of its close association with Paul VI’s magisterium, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s (CDF) declaration *Inter Insigniores* (1976) will also be examined, particularly because it developed implications deriving from a specifically “nuptial” understanding of the history of salvation.

### **1. Encyclical Letter *Ecclesiam suam* (August 6, 1964)**

Pope Paul VI’s encyclical letter *Ecclesiam suam*, followed in the line of Leo XIII’s encyclical *Satis cognitum* and Pius XII’s encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, both which were on the

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157. For examples of the use of ecclesial bridal and maternal imagery, see Paul VI (Montini), *The Church*, 11-12, 85, 87-88, 107, 122-25, and 185.

Church.<sup>158</sup> The purpose of *Ecclesiam suam* was to consider the ways in which the Catholic Church ought to carry out her service or mission (*munus*) in the present time.<sup>159</sup>

Paul's use of bridal imagery in *Ecclesiam suam* was more significant in placement and quality, rather than in frequency. Paul's most notable use of bridal imagery in the encyclical was in relation to the tension or dialectic between the bridal Church's *theological reality* (the true *imago*) and *actual appearance* (*vultus*), which will be explained further below. For Paul VI, the image of the Church as Bride of Christ functioned as a reference point for the Church, a spur for increasing perfection. Paul also situated the use of ecclesial imagery in relation to the Church as a mystery. Almost as a disclaimer to his own use of imagery, Paul noted the inadequacy of images to convey the full mystery of the Church. "Images are powerless [*impares*] to convey to the mind an adequate notion of the reality and sublimity of this mystery."<sup>160</sup>

Some thinkers have described *Ecclesiam suam*'s greatest contribution to the Council as its emphasis on dialogue as a key task for the Church.<sup>161</sup> In this way, the use of bridal imagery in the context of a prolonged consideration of the need for ecclesial renewal and dialogue was rather new compared to earlier magisterial teaching.

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158. See Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* (August 20, 1964) [AAS 56, 609-59]. A first glimpse of the encyclical was given by Paul in his address to the Council Fathers at the beginning of the Council's second session, Address *Salvete, Fratres* (September 29, 1963) [AAS 55, 841-59].

159. Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*, introduction [AAS 56, 609].

160. Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*, no. 37 [AAS 56, 624].

161. For example, see Richard P. McBrien, *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 211; O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* 204; Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI*, 381-83; and Riccardo Burigana and Giovanni Turbanti, "The Intersession: Preparing the Conclusion of the Council," in Alberigo and Komonchak, eds., *History of Vatican II*, vol. 4, 610-11.

## 2. General Audiences, particularly *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966)

Throughout his pontificate, Pope Paul VI's Wednesday audiences focused consistently on topics pertaining to doctrine on the Church. This is illustrated succinctly in his opening remarks of August 25, 1977, which can be taken to refer to the whole range of his audiences: "[W]hat must we speak about? About the Church, again and always about the Church!"<sup>162</sup> Over and over again Paul asked the question: *Che cosa è la Chiesa?*<sup>163</sup> What is the Church? On many occasions, his audiences served as reflections or meditations upon *Lumen gentium* and *Gaudium et spes*. He emphasized that the Church is a mystery,<sup>164</sup> and thus also a sacrament.<sup>165</sup> Paul also considered the Church as a communion.<sup>166</sup> Multiple times, Paul encouraged the pilgrims and visitors to "love the Church."<sup>167</sup> In words reflective of *Gaudium et spes*, the Church is not a

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162. General Audience *Di che cosa* (August 25, 1977) [IP 15, 771].

163. For example, see General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (May 5, 1965) [IP 3, 927]; General Audience *Noi abbiamo* (October 20, 1965) [IP 3, 1069]; General Audience *Se voi, facendo* (April 27, 1966) [IP 4, 760]; General Audience *Sappiamo di parlare* (May 11, 1966) [IP 4, 778]; General Audience *Ancora noi parleremo* (November 3, 1971) [IP 9, 867]; General Audience *Costruire la Chiesa* (July 21, 1976) [IP 14, 598]. See also General Audience *Chi entra* (April 22, 1970) [IP 8, 340]; *Che cosa fa la Chiesa?* General Audience *Noi vogliamo* (November 18, 1970) [IP 8, 1154]; *Scoprire la Chiesa?* General Audience *La nostra attenzione* (November 17, 1971) [IP 9, 982]; *Chiesa, che cosa significa?* General Audience *Noi riprendiamo* (July 28, 1976) [IP 14, 614]: ...*che cosa significa Chiesa nel pensiero di Cristo?*

164. For example, see General Audience *Se voi, facendo* (April 27, 1966) [IP 4, 761-762]; General Audience *Ripensare la Chiesa* (September 5, 1973) [IP 11, 815]; General Audience *Noi siamo ancora* (June 5, 1974) [IP 12, 525]; and General Audience *Noi vorremmo* (July 16, 1975) [IP 13, 772].

165. See General Audience *Se voi, facendo* (April 27, 1966) [IP 4, 761-62].

166. See General Audience *Noi ripetiamo* (June 8, 1966) [IP 4, 795].

167. For example, see General Audience *Carissimi abbiamo* (April 15, 1964) [IP 2, 863]; General Audience *Amate le Chiesa!* (October 13, 1965) [IP 3, 1061-63]; General Audience *Noi abbiamo* (October 20, 1965) [IP 3, 1069]; General Audience *Ci sia consentito* (April 26, 1969) [IP 7, 936]; General Audience *Abbiamo parlato* (July 15, 1970) [AAS 62, 533]; General Audience *Noi siamo* (September 12, 1973) [IP 11, 836]; General Audience *Ancora una parola* (November 28, 1973) [IP 11, 1151]; General Audience *Noi siamo ancora* (June 5, 1974) [IP 12, 528]; General Audience *Ancora una volta* (November 6, 1974) [IP 12, 1052]; General Audience *Noi vorremmo* (July 16, 1975) [IP 13, 772]; General Audience *Costruire la Chiesa* (July 21, 1976) [IP 14, 599]; and General Audience *In queste semplici* (August 4, 1976) [IP 14, 627].

“ghetto or closed society” but is “immersed in human society,” being *in* the world and *for* the world.<sup>168</sup>

Ecclesial bridal imagery is scattered throughout Paul VI’s general audiences. One of Paul VI’s general audience addresses, *Il nostro desiderio*, focused specifically on the Church as Bride and Mother.<sup>169</sup> This particular address was one of a series of addresses considering the scriptural figures for the Church. In the preceding general audience, Paul had discussed the image of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ and how this image contributed to an understanding of the Church as a communion. In his address *Il nostro desiderio*, Paul surveyed the scriptural roots of bridal and maternal imagery and then discussed what the imagery teaches.<sup>170</sup>

Paul VI understood his general audiences as “informal or familiar conversations” (*familiari conversazioni*) and acknowledged that they could cover a variety of topics and involve a certain amount of flexibility or imprecision based on their informal nature and personal, intimate style.<sup>171</sup> Yet, he also recognized their growing importance and place within his apostolic ministry, wherein the “Wednesday audience” became a regular occurrence.<sup>172</sup> In the audience addresses,

168. General Audience *Noi dicevamo* (July 19, 1967) [IP 5, 831].

169. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 796-98]. Unless otherwise noted, the English translation is taken from *The American Ecclesiastical Review* 155 (1966): 197-200.

170. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* [IP 4, 796-98]. Paul VI also cited Anscar Vonier’s monograph *The Spirit and the Bride* in reference to the book of Revelation’s use of bridal imagery in relation to all redeemed humanity.

171. See General Audience *Che cosa significa* (September 23, 1964) [IP 2, 948]; General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 796].

172. See General Audience *Sappiate tutti* (December 27, 1967) [IP 5, 863]: “This general audience, which the Lord now permits Us to resume, is becoming more and more an important, almost a preponderant part of Our Apostolic Ministry. That which was once an occasional and complementary part of the Pope’s work is now becoming more and more customary and essential in his service at the center of the Church of God. Contacts with faithful from all over the world are becoming more and more frequent and more meaningful. Although this brings some increase to Our work, it nevertheless adds to its range and also, in God’s will, to its fruitfulness. We consider that this development of direct contacts with the People of God is a blessing, and it is Our purpose to respond to that blessing with all Our pastoral capacities.” This translation is taken from *The Teachings of Pope Paul VI – 1968* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1969), 3.

Paul quoted or cited a variety of contemporary (or near-contemporary) theologians and thinkers, demonstrating his familiarity with a range of thinkers.<sup>173</sup> The repeated and regular insertion of the ecclesial bridal metaphor made evident the image's prominent status in Paul's own mind and teaching.

### 3. Address *Tout d'abord* to members of "Equipes Notre-Dame" (May 4, 1970)

Paul VI's speech to married couples of the "Equipes Notre-Dame" was a sustained consideration of the unique dignity of marriage and the family.<sup>174</sup> Paul did not extensively employ ecclesial bridal imagery in this speech. However, his reflection on marriage is noteworthy as it illustrated the papal magisterium's continued attention to marriage and the family, inclusive of a burgeoning emphasis on sexual difference in specific relation to the mysteries of the Christian faith.

In his speech, Paul emphasized the importance of returning to Genesis 1:27 as a fundamental reference point for marriage and the family.<sup>175</sup> "We must always return to this first page of the Bible, if we want to understand what a human couple, a home [*foyer*], is and ought to be."<sup>176</sup> Paul then emphasized: "The duality of the sexes was willed by God, so that *together* man and woman [*pour qu'ensemble l'homme et la femme*] might be the image of God, and like Him, a

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173. Examples include H. de Lubac, J. A. Möhler, C. Journet, Y. Congar, L. Bouyer, A. Ottaviani, J. Maritain, M. Scheeben, R. Gaurdini, J. Daniélou, K. Rahner, J. Leclercq, A. Vonier, R. Garrigou-Lagrange, M.-D. Chenu, E. Schillebeeckx, C. Peguy, J. Hamer, M. Blondel, S. Weil, and K. Adam, among others.

174. Address *Tout d'abord* (May 4, 1970) [AAS 62, 428-437]. An English translation is available as "The Family, a School of Holiness," in *The Teachings of Pope Paul VI – 1970*, 166-76 (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1971). This translation has been consulted here, but with regular modifications made.

175. "God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." Address *Tout d'abord*, no. 3 [AAS 62, 429].

176. Address *Tout d'abord*, no. 3 [AAS 62, 429].

source of life: ‘be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it’ (Gen 1:28) [emphasis added].”<sup>177</sup>

By his use of the term “together,” the implication might be drawn that the very communion between man and woman as a couple—which is the context of the Pope’s words—is a fundamental expression of the image of God.<sup>178</sup> Paul continued: “An attentive reading of the prophets, the wisdom books, and the New Testament shows us ... the meaning of this fundamental reality [the duality of the sexes]...”<sup>179</sup> The prophets, wisdom books (esp. Song of Songs), and the New Testament seem to be strategic references here, since they are the key places in Scripture where spousal imagery is applied to the covenant.

Further on, Paul considered the unique reality of marriage as the mutual gift of husband and wife to one other. “The union of a man and a woman indeed differs radically from every other human association, and constitutes a singular reality, namely, the couple founded upon the mutual gift of one to the other: ‘they become one flesh’ (Gen 2:24).”<sup>180</sup> Paul then clarified the nature of the union arising from the gift of self between husband and wife.

Indeed, the gift is not a fusion. Each personality remains distinct, and, far from dissolving itself in the mutual gift, affirms and refines itself, growing for the length of conjugal life according to that great law of love: to give themselves one to the other in order to give themselves together [*se donner l’un à l’autre pour se donner ensemble*].<sup>181</sup>

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177. Address *Tout d’abord*, no. 3 [AAS 62, 429].

178. If this reading is correct, this speech is a significant magisterial precursor to Pope John Paul II’s reflections on the communion of man and woman as the central reference point of the *imago Dei* (e.g., see TOB 9:3 [IGP 2.2, 1155]). Such considerations were already present in thinkers such as Barth and Balthasar (cf. Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 193-98). If Paul VI’s speech is coupled with Pius XII’s teaching on the comparison between the family and the Trinity, one can discern a consistent trajectory towards John Paul II. This might alter Kerr’s particular reading of magisterial teaching: “Thus, in the closing years of the twentieth century an entirely new doctrine of the human creature as ‘image of God’ is to the fore, with sexual difference as the clue to theological understanding of human nature and destiny. In particular, we owe this doctrine to the reflections of Pope John Paul II” (ibid., 201).

179. Address *Tout d’abord*, no. 3 [AAS 62, 429].

180. Address *Tout d’abord*, no. 5 [AAS 62, 430].

181. Address *Tout d’abord*, no. 6 [AAS 62, 430].

Subsequent to this rich anthropological consideration of marriage, Paul then discussed marriage as a sacrament, basing his reflections on Ephesians 5, and considered the family as a domestic church.<sup>182</sup>

The reference to the various spousal imagery of Scripture, the application of Ephesians 5, and the description of the family as the domestic Church—all within an address which included consideration of the interconnected importance of the duality of the sexes, the gift of self in marriage, and male and female together as the image of God—make this particular speech of Paul’s quite significant. In a way, Paul at least implicitly opened the door further to a consideration of the broader significance of ecclesial bridal imagery, a significance that includes both the anthropological (man-woman unity and distinction, gift of self, fruitfulness) and sacramental (sign and instrument) dimensions of marriage.

#### 4. CDF Declaration *Inter insigniores* (October 15, 1976)

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s declaration on the question of the admission of women to sacred ordination, *Inter insigniores*, contained condensed and strategic use of ecclesial bridal imagery.<sup>183</sup> The imagery, limited to two paragraphs, is used to illustrate the fittingness of the teaching that only men can be ordained.

*Inter insigniores* appears to be the first magisterial document to use the term “nuptial mystery” in reference to God’s relation with his people.<sup>184</sup> From the time of the Old Testament

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182. See Address *Tout d’abord*, nos. 8 and 16 [AAS 62, 431-32 and 436].

183. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), Declaration *Inter insigniores* (October 15, 1976) [AAS 69, 98-116].

184. The CDF prefect at the time of *Inter insigniores* was Cardinal Franjo Šeper. As president of the International Theological Commission, Šeper, as well as Paul VI, would have been acquainted with Hans Urs von



prophets, the covenant was described “principally under the form [*figura*] of a nuptial mystery [*nuptialis mysterii*].”<sup>185</sup> The repeated reading of the Song of Songs in both Christian and Jewish traditions contributed to a deepening appreciation of God’s intimate love for his people under the spousal figure, a love that remained faithful even when betrayed by his people. Through the Incarnation and Jesus’ death, the new covenant is brought about. “...From his pierced side will be born the Church, as Eve was born from Adam’s side.”<sup>186</sup> The declaration then taught:

At that time [*tunc*], there is fully and eternally accomplished the mystery of the nuptials [*nuptiarum mysterium*] proclaimed and hymned in the Old Testament: Christ is the Bridegroom [*sponsus*]; the Church is his Bride [*sponsa*], whom he loves because he has gained her by his blood and made her glorious, holy and immaculate, and henceforth he is inseparable from her.<sup>187</sup>

It is noteworthy that the declaration located the full accomplishment of this nuptial mystery within the Paschal Mystery, and not simply in the Parousia at the end of time. The implication is that the Church is fully Bride even now despite the various imperfections of her earthly appearance. *Inter insigniores* went on to mention that this “theme of marriage” (*argumentum nuptiarum*) is developed by Saint Paul and John and is also found in the synoptic Gospels. The terms *figura nuptialis mysterii* and *argumentum* served as succinct, systematizing language that united the use of spousal imagery in Scripture under a compact and consistent rubric.

The declaration then made a fascinating connection between the spousal imagery of Scripture, which culminates in the mystery of Christ as the Bridegroom and the Church as the Bride of Christ, and the very identity of the human person as male and female. “Through that

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Balthasar who was a member of the ITC. It is possible that this use of the term “nuptial mystery” was influenced by Balthasar’s own work.

185. Declaration *Inter insigniores*, sec. 5 [AAS 69, 110]. Translation modified.

186. Declaration *Inter insigniores*, sec. 5 [AAS 69, 111].

187. Declaration *Inter insigniores*, sec. 5 [AAS 69, 111]. Translation modified.

language [*sermo*] of Sacred Scripture, interwoven with symbols [*symbolis intertexto*], and which expresses and concerns man and woman in their most profound identity [*quo vir et mulier in intima sua identitate exprimuntur et attinguntur*], the mystery of God and Christ is revealed to us, a mystery which of itself is unfathomable.”<sup>188</sup> This seems to be the first *explicit* instance where this connection—between ecclesial bridal imagery and sexual difference *as an anthropological datum* (beyond the context of marriage or consecrated life)—appears in magisterial teaching.<sup>189</sup> The declaration then stated that Christ’s identity as a man (*vir*) should not be disregarded, nor should the importance (*momentum*) of the economy’s symbolism (*symbolism*) be neglected.<sup>190</sup> The implication is that the symbolism of Christ as *Bridegroom* and the Church as *Bride* has an irreplaceable and concrete significance for the life of the Church and for the ways that the task of ministry is carried out within the Church.

In sum, *Inter insigniores* built upon a growing body of magisterial teaching on the significance of spousal imagery in Scripture and on the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ. It also built upon an increased acknowledgment of the connection between ecclesiology and anthropology. However, the declaration’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery also included two somewhat “novel” or fresh aspects: (1) it systematized Scripture’s use of spousal imagery under the category of “nuptial mystery”; and (2) it explicitly related this use of spousal imagery to the significance of being a man and being a woman, and particularly to the significance of the gender of ordained ministers.

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188. Declaration *Inter insigniores*, sec. 5 [AAS 69, 111]. Translation modified.

189. See note 178 above.

190. Declaration *Inter insigniores*, sec. 5 [AAS 69, 111].

## ***B. Key Themes and Patterns in Paul VI's Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery***

Paul VI's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was wide-ranging and frequent. Below, the key themes and patterns associated with his usage will be surveyed.

### **1. The many names for the Church as mystery**

Paul VI repeatedly situated the use of bridal imagery for the Church—and ecclesial imagery in general—within a larger understanding of the Church as a mystery. As a mystery, the Church “always admits of new and deeper explorations of herself.”<sup>191</sup> Images in themselves are insufficient for conveying the full depth of the mystery of the Church.<sup>192</sup> Yet, in light of her mystery, the Church is fittingly called by many names (*nomi*), made up of images (*immagini*), figures (*figure*), and/or symbols (*simboli*).<sup>193</sup> There are “various aspects [*vari aspetti*] through which we can perceive the face [*volto*] of the Church.”<sup>194</sup> Scripture indicates “the difficulty of containing in one name alone the exuberant richness of the mysterious reality of the Church.”<sup>195</sup> Each expression needs to be integrated with others.<sup>196</sup> The image “Bride of Christ” is one of a

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191. Address *Salvete, Fratres* (September 29, 1963) [AAS 55, 848].

192. See Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* (August 6, 1964), no. 37 [AAS 56, 624].

193. See Address *Salvete, Fratres* (September 29, 1963) [AAS 55, 847-48]; General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (May 5, 1965) [IP 3, 927]; General Audience *Se voi, facendo* (April 27, 1966) [IP 4, 762]; General Audience *Sappiamo di parlare* (May 11, 1966) [IP 4, 778]; and General Audience *Noi riprendiamo* (July 28, 1976) [IP 14, 615].

194. General Audience *Noi abbiamo* (October 20, 1965) [IP 3, 1069]. It is noteworthy that Paul did not abandon the concept of “perfect society” but integrated it within a consideration of the image of the Church as a city. See General Audience *Ancora vi parleremo* (May 25, 1966) [IP 4, 786]; General Audience *Ora che il Sinodo* (November 10, 1971) [IP 9, 886-87]. In so doing, he encouraged the preservation of various images and concepts for the Church, and also illustrated that various images and concepts can clarify and complement one another. Although Paul did not apply bridal imagery explicitly in relation to the concept of “perfect society,” Paul’s emphasis elsewhere on loving the Bride in all her historical concreteness may be taken as including the concept of the Church as a “perfect society,” that is, “as a true, organized, visible, and religious society, with her own power as a perfect and sovereign society, her own laws, her own authority, and her own means and ends.” General Audience *Ancora vi parleremo* [IP 4, 787].

195. General Audience *L'incontro* (May 4, 1966) [IP 4, 763].

196. See General Audience *Ripensare la Chiesa* (September 5, 1973) [IP 11, 815].

multiplicity of symbolic names given to the “vast and complex reality of the Church,” a reality which is like a “multifaceted diamond.”<sup>197</sup>

Paul VI was aware of the particular challenges associated with understanding the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ. He considered both images of “the Church as the mystical Bride of Christ and the Church as the Mother of Christians” as “well-known but ever unique [or singular, *singolari*] figures,” even describing them as “chosen but unusual [*strani*] names (especially the first one).”<sup>198</sup>

Paul VI used the term *allegoria* to refer to that which undergirds the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ. “What does this allegory, which allows us to call the Church the Bride of Christ, teach us?”<sup>199</sup> Although the term “allegory” here may have been used loosely, there also may have been a reason why Paul chose to speak of the teaching significance of the “allegory” rather than simply of the “image” itself.<sup>200</sup> The “allegory” refers more generally to the whole relationship between Christ and the Church as viewed in spousal terms, as well as the relationship between Christian marriage and the union of Christ and the Church.

The fact that the Church is a mystery both illuminates the Church as the Bride of Christ and is itself illuminated by bridal imagery. After the promulgation of *Lumen gentium*, Paul shared his hope that “from the doctrine of the mystery of the Church ... all of the Christian faithful

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197. General Audience *Se voi, facendo* (April 27, 1966) [IP 4, 762]. See also General Audience *Noi vogliamo* (November 18, 1970) [IP 8, 1154-55]; General Audience *La ricerca* (September 1, 1971) [IP 9, 724]; General Audience *Noi abbiamo* (October 11, 1972) [IP 10, 1043]; General Audience *Ripensare la Chiesa* (September 5, 1973) [IP 11, 815]; General Audience *Noi siamo ancora* (June 5, 1974) [IP 12, 525]; General Audience *Noi riprendiamo* (July 28, 1976) [IP 14, 614-15]; and General Audience *Noi abbiamo celebrato* (June 1, 1977) [IP 15, 546].

198. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 796]. Translation modified.

199. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 797].

200. It does not appear that Pope Paul had in mind here the more technical sense of *allegoria* understood as one of the three spiritual senses of Scripture. However, the preceding treatment of the Old Testament and New Testament could make a case for such usage. A more likely reason for a deliberate use of “allegory” would be if he wanted to distance the bridal image from any over-literal interpretation.

would see the true face of the Bride of Christ [*verum Sponsae Christi vultum*] more clearly delineated and manifest, as well as the beauty [*pulchritudo*] of their mother and teacher...”<sup>201</sup> Spousal imagery clarifies that the mystery of the Church is one of charity (*un mistero di carità*).<sup>202</sup>

The variety of Paul’s terminology in reference to bridal imagery—image (*imago, immagine*), figure (*figura*), simile (*similitudine*), symbol (*simbolo*), name (*nome*), symbolic name (*nome symboliche*) title (*titolo*), and allegory (*allegoria*)—mirrored the fluidity of his predecessors. However, Paul did display an awareness of the difference between images and concepts. The multiplicity of images conveys only “some kind of concept” (*un qualche concetto*) of the Kingdom of God.<sup>203</sup> One “name” is not able to contain the whole mystery of the Church. Paul referred to “communion” as a “concept” arising from the image of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.<sup>204</sup> He later noted that *communione* was the “fundamental concept” (*il concetto fondamentale*) in contemporary minds concerning the “essence” of the Church, a concept in which the “definitions” of People of God and Body of Christ can be integrated.<sup>205</sup>

## 2. The holy, immaculate, mystical, beautiful, and joyful Bride of Christ

Paul VI’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery included the variety of traditional attributes, often drawn from Ephesians 5 which remained a central point of reference. The Church as the

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201. Address *Post duos menses* (November 21, 1964) [AAS 56, 1012].

202. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 797].

203. General Audience *Noi abbiamo celebrato* (June 1, 1977) [IP 15, 546]. See also Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* (August 6, 1964), no. 37 [AAS 56, 624].

204. See General Audience *Noi ripetiamo* (June 8, 1966) [IP 4, 793-95].

205. General Audience *Noi diremo ancora* (November 12, 1969) [IP 7, 1113].

Bride of Christ is holy and immaculate (*Sponsa sancta et immaculata*).<sup>206</sup> Paul employed the adjective *immaculata* for the Church as Bride only a few times, citing or quoting Ephesians 5 directly.<sup>207</sup> The Church is a mystical Bride (*mystica Sponsa, mistica Sposa*),<sup>208</sup> who has a particular beauty (*pulchritudo, bellezza*) as her own proper form.<sup>209</sup> The Bride of Christ also retains a youthfulness throughout the ages.<sup>210</sup> “Bride of Christ” is one of the “glorious names qualifying the Church.”<sup>211</sup> She rejoices in being the Bride of the glorified Christ.<sup>212</sup>

Joy is a particular attribute of the Bride of Christ as well as a fulfillment of the Lord’s promise. There is the promise of joy given to the People of God to be manifest at the end of time: “...as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you (Is 60:15; 62:3; Gal 4:27; Rev 21:1-4).”<sup>213</sup> The coming of the Lord meets the joyful expectation of the people of Israel, which John the Baptist exemplified by “rejoic[ing] greatly at the bridegroom’s voice (Jn 3:29).”<sup>214</sup> “The Holy Spirit is given to the Church as the inexhaustible principle of her

206. Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* (August 6, 1964), no. 10 [AAS 56, 611-12]. On the Bride’s holiness, see also Address *Salutiamo con* (February 12, 1966) [AAS 58, 224]; Encyclical *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* (June 24, 1967), no. 26 [AAS 59, 668]; and General Audience *La Chiesa ha* (November 4, 1972) [IP 10, 1120].

207. See Address *Salutiamo con* (February 12, 1966) [AAS 58, 224]; Encyclical *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, (June 24, 1967) no. 26 [AAS 59, 668]; General Audience *Lo nostra oggi* (June 7, 1972) [IP 10, 611]; and Address *Ai vostri auguri* (December 23, 1974) [AAS 67, 49-50]. For references to *sine macula* and the like, see *Marialis cultus*, no. 11 [AAS 66, 124]; Decretal Letter *Christi verba* (May 31, 1970) [AAS 63, 342].

208. See General Audience *Noi abbiamo* (October 20, 1965) [IP 3, 1069]; General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 796]; and General Audience *Le Nostre parole* (July 31, 1968) [AAS 60, 530].

209. Address *Salvete, Fratres* (September 29, 1963) [AAS 55, 849]. See also Address *Ai vostri auguri* (December 23, 1974) [AAS 67, 49-50]; Encyclical *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* (June 24, 1967), no. 33 [AAS 59, 670]; Scripted Message *A voi Sacerdoti* (June 30, 1968) [AAS 60, 470]; Homily *La spirituale* (October 4, 1970) [AAS 62, 677]; General Audience *La nostra oggi* (June 7, 1972) [IP 10, 611 and 613]; General Audience *Noi siamo alla* (September 12, 1973) [IP 11, 836].

210. See Apostolic Exhortation *Cum proximus* (September 14, 1963) [AAS 55, 730]; Address *Ai vostri auguri* (December 23, 1974) [AAS 67, 50].

211. General Audience *Quando noi* (August 10, 1966) [IP 4, 830].

212. See Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino* (May 9, 1975), sec. 3 [AAS 67, 302].

213. Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*, sec. 2 [AAS 67, 296].

214. Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*, sec. 3 [AAS 67, 298].

joy as the Bride of the glorified Christ [*Sponsa Christi glorificati*].”<sup>215</sup> In Mary, the “bride of the Holy Spirit,” there echoes the words about the New Jerusalem: “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord ... he has covered me ... as a bride adorns herself with her jewels (Is 61:10).”<sup>216</sup> All are called to the joy and feast of the “nuptials of the Lamb.”<sup>217</sup>

These attributes of the Bride of Christ were not seen simply as static realities. Echoing the Second Vatican Council, Paul taught that the Bride of Christ is in need of continual renewal, even a new Pentecost; her face (*vultus*) as the Bride of Christ as well as that of human society must be continually renewed by the Holy Spirit.<sup>218</sup> The Church’s immaculate holiness corresponds with her *absoluta et perfecta imago* and not her actual face; Paul noted that the Church on earth can only attain this holiness and beauty to a degree.<sup>219</sup> Diligent study of the Sacred Scriptures is also an important means for the Bride of Christ’s renewal.<sup>220</sup> The beauty of the Bride of Christ depends upon her members’ own “humble and filial adhesion.”<sup>221</sup> There is a constant state of *becoming* that is present in the Church while a pilgrim in this world. Her holiness, beauty, and joy are as much a calling and task as they are a gift already bestowed.

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215. Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*, sec. 3 [AAS 67, 302].

216. Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*, sec. 4 [AAS 67, 304].

217. Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*, secs. 4 and 5 [AAS 67, 308-9].

218. See Apostolic Exhortation *Postrema sessio* (November 4, 1965) [AAS 57, 866]; General Audience *Consentite alla paternità* (May 17, 1967) [IP 5, 777]; and Apostolic Exhortation *Paterna cum benevolentia* (December 8, 1974) [AAS 67, 10]. In the latter exhortation, Paul quoted directly from *Lumen gentium*, no. 4 [AAS 57, 7]. For a related reference to the “new Pentecost,” see Address *Salutiamo con* (February 12, 1966) [AAS 58, 224]. See also General Audience *Fate attenzione* (October 12, 1966) [IP 4, 870]: The Holy Spirit is the Church’s “mystical personality. The Church lives in the Holy Spirit. The Church is truly born, so to speak, on the day of Pentecost. The Church must always live Pentecost.”

219. Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* (August 6, 1964), no. 10 [AAS 56, 611-12].

220. See Apostolic Letter *Sedula cura* (June 27, 1971) [AAS 63, 665]; Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus* (February 2, 1974), no. 22 [AAS 66, 133-34].

221. General Audience *Noi siamo alla* (September 12, 1973) [IP 11, 836].

### 3. The Church as the beloved Bride and the call to love

The Church is the beloved Bride of Christ.<sup>222</sup> The “Bride of Christ” is itself a “title of love.”<sup>223</sup> Bridal imagery elucidates the mystery of the Church as a “mystery of charity” (*un mistero di carità*).<sup>224</sup> “The mystery of God, through Christ in the Holy Spirit, falling in love with the world of mankind, that is, with the Church.”<sup>225</sup> The Church is brought forth through the unique love of the Triune God, a love which embraces the whole world of humanity. In the face of those persons critical of the Church or who think that the Church is a useless “diaphragm” between God and man, Paul urged his audience listeners to remember that the Church is the meeting place where they encounter Christ’s love, the “house of the nuptials” as he said, recalling Gregory the Great’s description of the Church as the *nuptiarum domum*.<sup>226</sup>

In Pope Paul’s teaching, the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ gave rise to a Christian duty to love the Church. This exhortation to love the Church (*amate la Chiesa!*) was a steady theme of Paul VI’s pontificate.<sup>227</sup> “It is necessary to love the Church.”<sup>228</sup> This love for the Bride of Christ—loving as Christ loved (Eph 5:25)—was meant to embrace the Church even in her very actuality and historical concreteness.<sup>229</sup> While this theme was identifiable in earlier

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222. See Encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* (September 3, 1965), no. 4 [AAS 57, 754]; General Audience *Un desiderio* (November 22, 1972) [IP 10, 1186]; General Audience *Noi continueremo* (July 23, 1975) [IP 13, 785].

223. General Audience *Ancora una volta* (November 6, 1974) [IP 12, 1052].

224. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 797].

225. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* [IP 4, 797].

226. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* [IP 4, 797].

227. See note 167 above. See also Scripted Message *Parlo ai giovani* (February 15, 1974) [AAS 66, 279]; Apostolic Exhortation *Paterna cum benevolentia* (December 8, 1974) [AAS 67, 21-22].

228. General Audience *Carissimi, abbiamo* (April 15, 1964) [IP 2, 863].

229. See Message for World Day for Vocations *In spirito di cristiana* (December 30, 1976) [AAS 69, 260]; General Audience *Noi siamo alla* (September 12, 1973) [IP 11, 836].



teaching from Leo XIII to Pius XII,<sup>230</sup> it reached a new emphasis and regularity in Paul VI's teaching. "To love the Church, this must be our first and new attitude in this spiritual and historical season."<sup>231</sup>

In light of the love received, the Church herself is also a "most loving Bride."<sup>232</sup> The very reason the Church is holy and immaculate (see Eph 5) is because she has been loved by Christ, joined to him in a bond of "supernatural charity."<sup>233</sup> "In Christ, love precedes and produces the beauty of the Church."<sup>234</sup> Christ's love unites the Church to him in virginal and fecund fidelity.<sup>235</sup> The Church has received the gift of the Eucharist "from Christ, her Bridegroom [*Sponsus*], as a pledge of his immense love [*immensae caritatis pignus*]."<sup>236</sup> It is vital for the Church to be and to live as the beloved.<sup>237</sup> In the end, it is love that builds the Church. "Only the one who loves the Church can build her."<sup>238</sup> And this love is meant to be shared. The Bride of Christ has been called to serve (*servare*) mankind.<sup>239</sup>

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230. For example, see Leo XIII, Encyclical *Exeunte iam anno* (December 25, 1888), no. 14 [LA 8, 409]: see chapter three above, p. 114; Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* (September 15, 1920), nos. 60-61 [AAS 12, 415]: see chapter 3 above, page 131; Pius XI, Encyclical *Rerum Orientalium* (September 8, 1928), no. 12 [AAS 20, 284-85]: see chapter three, p. 139ff.; Pius XII, *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943), nos. 92 and 96 [AAS 35, 238-40]: see chapter four above, page 164ff.

231. Paul VI, General Audience *Noi siamo alla* (September 12, 1973) [IP 11, 836]. See also General Audience *Noi vorremmo* (July 16, 1975) [IP 13, 772].

232. Address *Ecce adstat* (October 13, 1966) [AAS 58, 1149-50].

233. Apostolic Constitution *Indulgentiarum doctrina* (January 1, 1967), no. 10 [AAS 59, 19].

234. General Audience *La nostra oggi* (June 7, 1972) [IP 10, 611].

235. General Audience *Noi abbiamo* (October 11, 1972) [IP 10, 1043].

236. Encyclical *Mysterium fidei* (September 3, 1965), no. 1 [AAS 57, 753]. See also no. 4 [AAS 57, 754].

237. See General Audience *Un desiderio* (November 22, 1972) [IP 10, 1186].

238. General Audience *Costruire la Chiesa* (July 21, 1976) [IP 14, 599]. See also General Audience *In queste semplici* (August 4, 1976) [IP 14, 627].

239. Apostolic Constitution *Mirificus eventus* (December 7, 1965) [AAS 57, 948].

#### 4. The union and distinction between Christ and the Church his Bride

Paul VI observed that the spousal allegory teaches about the intimate and indissoluble union between Christ and the Church while also conveying their distinction.<sup>240</sup> Both union and distinction are held together. Ultimately, the Church is not “her own beginning or her own end.”<sup>241</sup> Rather, she is utterly dependent upon Christ, receiving everything from him.

#### 5. The image and face of the eschatological and historical Bride of Christ

Paul VI’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery was characterized by a consistent awareness of the reality of the historical Church on earth vis-à-vis her eschatological fulfillment already in process. This awareness formed an important backdrop to *Ecclesiam suam*, wherein Paul distinguished between the perfect image of the Church as the Bride of Christ and her actual face as manifest in this world. Near the beginning of the encyclical, after speaking of the need for the Church to meditate upon her own mystery, Paul explained the Church’s simultaneous need to renew herself.

A vivid and lively self-awareness [*conscientia*] on the part of the Church inevitably leads to a comparison between the complete and perfect image [*absolutam et perfectam imaginem*] of the Church as Christ envisaged her, His holy and spotless Bride [*sua Sponsa sancta et immaculata*] (see Eph 5:27), and the actual appearance [*sua vero vultu*] which the Church presents to the world today.... [T]he appearance [*vultus*] of the Church will never attain to such a degree of perfection, beauty, holiness and splendor that it can be said to correspond perfectly with the original conception [*prima notio*] in the mind of Him who fashioned it.<sup>242</sup>

The Church’s face, appearance or expression on earth always falls somewhat short of who she is called to be as the Bride of Christ, but in her pilgrimage she ought to strive

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240. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 797].

241. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* [IP 4, 797].

242. Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* (August 6, 1964), no. 10 [AAS 56, 611-12]. Translation modified.

continually for perfection.<sup>243</sup> The Council would have the task of determining what actions are needed “so that the face [*facie*] of holy Church may shine in purity and become young again.”<sup>244</sup> True reform includes “restoring the Church to her perfect appearance and form [*species et forma*] which corresponds both to her original image [*pristina imago*]” and to the development hoped for over time.<sup>245</sup> This renewal entails that the Church live according to her “notes” or particular characteristics, which allow the “face [*vultus*] of the Bride of Christ to shine.”<sup>246</sup> The tension here between image and face was not only that between eschatology and history, but also that between protology and history, for the reference above to *prima notio* and *pristina imago* could be taken to include the beginning of creation. In his address to the Council, Paul hoped that during the Council it

would equally come to pass that the Bride of Christ [*Sponsa Christi*] would, as it were, search for her image [*imago*] in Him [*in Ipso*] and that in Him, moved by the most burning love, she would desire to unveil her own particular form [*propria forma*], namely beauty [*pulchritudo*], which He wills to be shining forth in his Church.<sup>247</sup>

Paul referred to the face (*vultus, il volto*) of the Bride of Christ on multiple occasions. It is this face—the Church as she exists in this world—that is open to continual renewal.<sup>248</sup> The Bride must strive to unveil her beauty.<sup>249</sup> While “Bride of Christ” is one of the glorious names for the

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243. Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*, no. 41 [AAS 56, 626].

244. Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*, no. 44 [AAS 56, 628]. Translation modified.

245. Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*, no. 47 [AAS 56, 630]. Translation modified.

246. Address *Salvete, Fratres* (September 29, 1963) [AAS 55, 842].

247. Address *Salvete, Fratres* (September 29, 1963) [AAS 55, 849].

248. See Apostolic Exhortation *Postrema sessio* (November 4, 1965) [AAS 57, 866].

249. Address *Salvete, Fratres* (September 29, 1963) [AAS 55, 849].

Church, there is also the aspect of the “humble Church, who knows her own human limits, her own failings, her own need for the mercy of God and the forgiveness of men.”<sup>250</sup>

Being in and for the world,<sup>251</sup> the Bride of Christ has a history and a future. The future is both earthly and heavenly. Thus Paul could say that the very “future life of the Bride of Christ” depends on the success of the Council’s call for the Church “to adapt [*accommodare*] herself to the needs of our day” (i.e., *aggiornamento*).<sup>252</sup> Ultimately, the Church is awaiting “that day in which, without any spot or wrinkle (see Eph 5:27), she becomes like a bride adorned [*veluti sponsa ornata*] for her husband [*vir*] Jesus Christ (See Rev 21:2).”<sup>253</sup> The Bride is a pilgrim in this world. The pilgrim People of God (*populus Dei tamquam viator*) are on a journey (*peregrinatur*) toward heaven where the beauty of the Bride (*Sponsa*) of the Lamb will shine in its full splendor.<sup>254</sup> The Bride of Christ is “the Church, our human and pilgrim [*pellegrina*] Church, and unfortunately sometimes a sinner [*peccatrice*],” who together with the Spirit calls for the Lord’s coming (see Rev 22:17).<sup>255</sup> The Bride of Christ is “perfect [*perfetta*] in the thought of Christ (see Eph 5:27) and perfectible [*perfettibile*] in our experience and desire.”<sup>256</sup>

Paul also noted that the bridal image conveys something permanent and ultimate about the Church. As the Bride of Christ, the Church “is not only the instrument of salvation but also

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250. General Audience *Quando noi* (August 10, 1966) [IP 4, 830].

251. See General Audience *Noi dicevamo* (July 19, 1967) [IP 5, 831]; General Audience *Noi Vi dobbiamo* (May 22, 1968) [IP 6, 794].

252. Encyclical *Mense Maio* (April 30, 1965), no. 4 [AAS 57, 354].

253. Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus* (February 2, 1974), no. 22 [AAS 66, 133-34].

254. Encyclical *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* (June 24, 1967), no. 33 [AAS 59, 670].

255. General Audience *La nostra oggi* (June 7, 1972) [IP 10, 613].

256. General Audience *Noi siamo alla* (September 12, 1973) [IP 11, 836].

the end of that salvation, because the design and the charity of the Lord are fulfilled in her”—*in her* the apotheosis of victorious humanity will be celebrated in heaven, as Revelation discloses.<sup>257</sup>

## 6. Marriage, the family, and the Church as Bride

In various places Paul VI taught about the dignity of the sacrament of marriage and the importance of marriage and family life, and he incorporated ecclesial bridal imagery within these contexts. “Of all human institutions, marriage is perhaps the one which best permits us to know the thought of God the Creator and the manner in which he calls man to cooperate in his work.”<sup>258</sup> “Christian homes discover a mysterious but real participation [*participation*] in the action by which Christ unites himself [*s’unit*] to his Church and glorifies her. Such is the dignity of the sacrament of marriage which becomes the sign of this union [*le signe de cette union*] and the source of all graces which the spouses need.”<sup>259</sup> Such also is the “inestimable value” (*le prix inestimable*) of the sacrament “which alone enables spouses to live their love in accordance with the covenant [*l’alliance*] between Christ and the Church.”<sup>260</sup>

As a sacrament, marriage becomes “capable of expressing [*exprimer*] the union [*l’union*] of Christ and the Church.”<sup>261</sup> Citing Ephesians 5, Paul acknowledged Christian marriage itself as that “great mystery,” “a sign [*signe*] which not only represents [*représente*] the mystery of the union [*l’union*] of Christ with the Church but also contains and radiates it [*le contient et le rayonne*] by the

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257. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 797].

258. Address *C’est pour nous* (June 20, 1973) [AAS 65, 379].

259. Address *C’est pour nous* [AAS 65, 379].

260. Address *Membres et Consultants* (March 13, 1974) [AAS 66, 234].

261. Address *Frères bien aimés* (March 12, 1975) [IP 13, 218].

grace of the Holy Spirit, who is [in the marriage as] the vivifying soul.”<sup>262</sup> The Paschal Mystery is being accomplished “in their marriage, as in the union of Christ and the Church.”<sup>263</sup> Elsewhere, Paul described the union between Christ and the Church as a “marriage,” a *connubium*, though of a special kind.<sup>264</sup>

In St. Paul’s “celebrated simile [*similitudine*] (Eph 5:25)” of the Church as Bride, the love between Christ and the Church serves as “the higher and fuller paradigm [*paradigma*] of love from which even conjugal love ought to draw its example and holiness.”<sup>265</sup> In *Humanae vitae*, Paul cited Ephesians 5 as presenting for Christian spouses the “perfection of conjugal life” (*coniugalis vitae perfectio*) to which they must strive.<sup>266</sup> In his general audience introducing the same encyclical, Paul mentioned the importance of both spouses transfiguring themselves by imitation of the love of “Christ for his mystical Bride, the Church.”<sup>267</sup> Elsewhere, he exhorted the young to look to Christ from whom “the true science of love derives”—Christ, “who gave his life for the Church, his Bride”—so as to form a “new type of family” founded upon the truth of the Christian life.<sup>268</sup>

Paul VI also recalled the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which noted that “Christ the Bridegroom” comes to Christian spouses in the sacrament of matrimony.<sup>269</sup> The

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262. Address *Tout d’abord* (May 4, 1970), no. 8 [AAS 62, 431].

263. Address *Tout d’abord*, no. 16 [AAS 62, 436].

264. Encyclical *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* (June 24, 1967), no. 26 [AAS 59, 668].

265. General Audience *Amate la Chiesa!* (October 13, 1965) [IP 3, 1061].

266. Encyclical *Humanae vitae* (July 25, 1968), no. 25 [AAS 60, 499-500]. Paul quoted Eph 5:25, 28-29, 32-33.

267. General Audience *Le Nostre parole* (July 31, 1968) [AAS 60, 530].

268. General Audience *Viene spontaneo* (December 17, 1969) [IP 7, 810].

269. See Address *Salutiamo con*, no. 4 (February 12, 1966) [AAS 58, 222], quoting *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48 [AAS 58, 1068]. See also Message *Africae terrarum* (October 29, 1967), no. 35 [IP 5, 596-97].

spouses are called to be “a ‘sign’ in the world of the holiness of the Church, the faithful and glorious bride [*sposa*], ‘without spot or wrinkle ... but holy and immaculate,’ of Christ the Lord.”<sup>270</sup>

Paul often referred to the Church as a “family” and even “the great, universal family of Christ.”<sup>271</sup> The Church is “a spiritual family” which “derives from love, lives through love, and leads to love.”<sup>272</sup> The Christian family “is raised to a level of inviolable and always new supernatural love (see Eph 5:21-23)” and manifests “a stupendous unity [*unità*] in which she reflects that which exists between Christ and the Church.”<sup>273</sup> The sacrament enables the spouses’ “community of life” to be called a “domestic Church” (*Chiesa domestica*; see *Lumen gentium*, no. 11), and therefore the family founded upon marriage is a basic and germinal “cell of the Church.”<sup>274</sup> Though it might be the smallest, marriage is “the most fundamental [cell] of the ecclesial organism.”<sup>275</sup>

Finally, Paul was aware of the limits of a comparison of human marriage with the union of Christ and the Church. According to Paul, Christ’s love for the Church, although it can be signified by human marriage (*connubio*) in a certain sense (*in qualche modo*), is “more substantial and

270. Address *Salutiamo con* (February 12, 1966), no. 6 [AAS 58, 224].

271. For example, see General Audience *La vostra visita* (November 6, 1963) [IP 1, 505]; General Audience *Noi vi diremo* (November 13, 1963) [IP 1, 506]; General Audience *Vi salutiamo* (December 18, 1963) [IP 1, 517]; General Audience *Noi abbiamo* (October 20, 1965) [IP 3, 1069]; General Audience *Potremo far Nostro* (January 5, 1966) [IP 4, 693]; Apostolic Exhortation *Petrus et Paulus Apostolos* (February 22, 1967) [AAS 59, 195]; General Audience *La vostra visita* (March 20, 1968) [IP 6, 759]; Address *Agli auguri* (December 23, 1968) [AAS 61, 38]; General Audience *Ci sia consentito* (April 26, 1969) [IP 7, 934]; General Audience *Chi entra* (April 22, 1970) [IP 8, 340]; Address *Questo è il momento* (April 24, 1970) [AAS 62, 299].

272. General Audience *Siate i benvenuti* (April 25, 1966) [IP 4, 758].

273. General Audience *Noi pensiamo* (August 11, 1976) [IP 14, 639].

274. Address *Tout d’abord* (May 4, 1970), no. 8 [AAS 62, 431-432]. For the latter phrase, Paul cited John XXIII [see DMC 1, 298].

275. Address *Tout d’abord*, no. 8 [AAS 62, 432].

unfathomable” than the love of husband and wife.<sup>276</sup> This union between Christ and the Church derives from the Incarnation (Paul cited here Augustine’s phrase *coniunctio nuptialis*) and from the sacrifice of Redemption.

## 7. The Church as Bride and Mother

Pope Paul had a special liking for ecclesial maternal imagery and referred to the image of the Church as Mother frequently throughout his teaching.<sup>277</sup> “The Church is our mother; to her

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276. General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 797].

277. For examples of the use of ecclesial maternal imagery in Paul VI’s teaching, see Apostolic Constitution *Ecclesia Christi* (August 12, 1963) [AAS 56, 504]; General Audience *Questo è un momento* (September 11, 1963) [IP 1, 485]; Pontifical Address *Salvete, Fratres* (September 29, 1963) [AAS 55, 857]; Apostolic Letter *Crucis affixus* (October 27, 1963) [AAS 55, 999]; Homily *Abbiamo voluto* (March 26, 1964) [AAS 56, 362]; General Audience *Noi salutiamo* (April 22, 1964) [IP 2, 867]; General Audience *Il sentimento* (April 29, 1964) [IP 2, 872]; Apostolic Letter *Spiritus Paracliti* (April 30, 1964) [AAS 56, 353]; General Audience *Il vaggio* (May 6, 1964) [IP 2, 877]; General Audience *Daremo in questa* (May 27, 1964) [IP 2, 890]; Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* (August 6, 1964), nos. 1, 94 and 113 [AAS 56, pp. 609, 649 and 657]; Address *In signo Sanctae Crucis* (September 14, 1964), no. 26 [AAS 56, 813]; General Audience *Il pensiero* (September 16, 1964) [IP 2, 945-46]; Apostolic Constitution *Sanctorum mater* (September 29, 1964) [AAS 57, 563]; Decretal Letter *Sancti martyres* (October 18, 1964) [AAS 57, 693]; Address *Post duos menses* (November 21, 1964) [AAS 56, 1015 and 1017]; General Audience *Il tema del giorno* (January 27, 1965) [IP 3, 847]; General Audience *Sapete che cosa* (June 2, 1965) [IP 3, 946-47]; General Audience *All’odierna audienza* (June 23, 1965) [IP 3, 962]; General Audience *La vostra visita* (July 28, 1965) [IP 3, 998]; Encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* (September 3, 1965), nos. 7, 25 and 70 [AAS 57, pp. 754, 758 and 772]; General Audience *Noi vogliamo* (September 22, 1965) [IP 3, 1048]; General Audience *Noi abbiamo* (October 20, 1965) [IP 3, 1069]; General Audience *Al termine* (October 27, 1965) [IP 3, 1079]; Apostolic Exhortation *Postrema Sessio* (November 4, 1965) [AAS 57, pp. 866, 868 and 870]; Motu Proprio *Altissimi cantus* (December 7, 1965) [AAS 58, 24]; Homily *Hodie Concilium* (December 7, 1965) [AAS 58, 54]; Apostolic Letter *In Spiritu Sancto* (December 8, 1965) [AAS 58, 19]; Address *Siamo lieti* (December 23, 1965) [AAS 58, 83]; General Audience *La vita della Chiesa* (January 12, 1966) [IP 4, 698-700]; Address *Salutiamo con* (February 12, 1966), no. 6 [AAS 58, 224]; General Audience *Siamo nella Settimana Santa* (April 6, 1966) [IP 4, 740]; General Audience *Se voi, facendo* (April 27, 1966) [IP 4, 762]; Motu Proprio *Summi Dei beneficio* (May 3, 1966) [AAS 58, 337-38]; General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 796 and 798]; Motu Proprio *De Episcoporum muneribus* (June 15, 1966) [AAS 58, 468]; General Audience *Voi sapete* (August 3, 1966) [IP 4, 826 and 828]; Encyclical *Christi Matri* (September 15, 1966) [AAS 58, 745]; Radio Message *C’est pour Nous* (October 11, 1966) [AAS 58, 907]; Apostolic Constitution *Indulgentiarum doctrina* (January 1, 1967), no. 11 [AAS 59, 19-20]; General Audience *Non possiamo* (January 4, 1967) [IP 5, 671]; General Audience *Possiamo* (January 18, 1967) [IP 5, 679]; Apostolic Letter *Sabaudiae gemma* (January 29, 1967) [AAS 59, 121]; Apostolic Exhortation *Petrus et Paulus Apostolos* (February 22, 1967) [AAS 59, 199]; Apostolic Constitution *Sanctorum mater* (April 13, 1967) [AAS 59, 1030]; Apostolic Letter Motu proprio *Episcopalis potestatis* (May 2, 1967) [AAS 59, 386]; General Audience *Il Nostro particolare* (May 24, 1967) [IP 5, 782]; Encyclical *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* (June 24, 1967), nos. 87-88 and 98 [AAS 59, 691-92 and 696]; General Audience *Uno dei risultati* (July 12, 1967) [IP 5, 827]; Address *Gratia vobis* (September 27, 1967) [AAS 59, 965]; Address *Terminata felicemente* (October 8, 1967) [AAS 59, 975]; Apostolic Letter *Ipsa humilitas* (October 8, 1967) [AAS 59, 957]; Message *Africae terrarum* (October 29, 1967), no. 35 [IP 5, 596]; General Audience *Noi Vi dobbiamo* (May 22, 1968) [IP 6, 793]; Solemn Profession of Faith *Sollemni hac Liturgia (Credo of the People of God)* (June 30, 1968), nos. 2 and 21 [AAS 60, 434 and 441]; Encyclical *Humanae vitae* (July 25, 1968), no. 19 [AAS 60, 495]; Address *Ancora una* (October



we owe everything.”<sup>278</sup> Paul closely coupled bridal and maternal imagery in repeated instances. For example, his audience address on the Church as the mystical Bride of Christ and the Mother of the faithful affirmed a close and ordered relationship between the images: the maternal image “follows upon” the bridal image.<sup>279</sup> Because the Church is the Bride of Christ, she is thus also mother. This ordered relation between the images was also acknowledged elsewhere.<sup>280</sup> In seeing

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6, 1968) [AAS 60, 718]; General Audience *Desideriamo ora* (December 28, 1968) [IP 6, 1065]; General Audience *Si fa oggi* (February 5, 1969) [IP 7, 868]; Motu Proprio *Pastoralis migratorum cura* (August 15, 1969) [AAS 60, 601]; Apostolic Exhortation *Recurrens mensis October* (October 7, 1969) [AAS 60, 651]; General Audience *Come sapete* (October 15, 1969) [IP 7, 681]; Homily *In quest'ora* (January 25, 1970) [AAS 62, 84]; General Audience *Noi andiamo cercando* (January 28, 1970) [IP 8, 81]; Motu Proprio *Apostolicae caritatis* (March 19, 1970) [AAS 62, 193 and 197]; General Audience *Ancora la Chiesa* (April 8, 1970) [IP 8, 285-86]; Homily *Ringraziamo Iddio* (May 31, 1970) [AAS 62, 482]; General Audience *Noi vorremmo* (August 19, 1970) [IP 8, 802]; Apostolic Letter *Multiformis Sapientia Dei* (September 27, 1970) [AAS 63, 187]; Homily *Noi abbiamo* (September 27, 1970) [AAS 62, 592]; Homily *La spirituale* (October 4, 1970) [AAS 62, 676]; Decretal Letter *Ecclesiae filiorum* (October 25, 1970) [AAS 64, 257]; Motu Proprio *Causas matrimoniales* (March 28, 1971) [AAS 63, 441-42]; Homily *Il momento* (May 16, 1971) [AAS 63, 459]; Address *Massimiliano Kolbe* (October 17, 1971) [AAS 63, 821]; Address *Salute a voi* (December 23, 1971) [AAS 64, 35 and 39]; General Audience *Non pare anche a voi* (February 9, 1972) [IP 10, 124]; General Audience *La nostra oggi* (June 7, 1962) [IP 10, 613]; General Audience *Sarà certamente* (July 19, 1972) [IP 10, 764]; General Audience *Una parola* (January 10, 1973) [IP 11, 25]; Apostolic Constitution *Ecclesiae sanctae* (February 11, 1973) [AAS 65, 136]; Address *Questo è* (May 6, 1973) [AAS 65, 316]; Address *È una parentesi* (May 12, 1973) [AAS 65, 328-29]; General Audience *Quest'annuncio* (June 13, 1973) [IP 11, 598]; General Audience *L'antico Catechismo* (July 18, 1973) [IP 11, 729]; General Audience *Questo discorso* (July 25, 1973) [IP 11, 746]; General Audience *Ancora una parola* (November 28, 1973) [IP 11, 1149]; Message *Parlo ai giovani* (February 15, 1974) [AAS 66, 279]; Apostolic Exhortation *Nobis in animo* (March 25, 1974) [AAS 66, 184]; Apostolic Letter *Apostolorum limina* (May 23, 1974) [AAS 66, 295-96 and 302]; General Audience *Di chi ha bisogno* (September 18, 1974) [IP 12, 848]; Apostolic Exhortation *Paterna cum benevolentia* (December 8, 1974) [AAS 67, 21-22]; Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino* (May 9, 1975), sect. 4 [AAS 67, 308]; Address *Yes, Venerable Brothers* (September 14, 1975) [AAS 67, 541]; Address *La Iglesia* (September 28, 1975) [AAS 67, 573]; Address *Gioia grande* (November 16, 1975) [AAS 67, 713]; Address *Dopo la celebrazione* (December 20, 1976) [AAS 69, 44]; Message *Il consueto* (March 29, 1977) [AAS 69, 454]; General Audience *Una volta ancora* (March 30, 1977) [IP 15, 294]; General Audience *Un pensiero* (June 22, 1977) [IP 15, 634]; General Audience *Una parola* (August 3, 1977) [IP 15, 744-45]; Radio-Television Message *Noi raccogliamo* (March 26, 1978) [AAS 70, 261]; and Message *Costituisce un appuntamento* (April 23, 1978) [AAS 70, 341].

278. See General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 798].

279. See General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 796-98]. See also General Audience *Se voi, facendo* (April 27, 1966) [IP 4, 762]: “...la Spose di Cristo, la madre dei fedeli...”

280. For example, see General Audience *Noi abbiamo* (October 20, 1965) [IP 3, 1069]: Paul first spoke of the Church as Christ’s “mystical Bride” and then referred to the Church as “our mother.” See also Message *Africae terrarum* (October 29, 1967), no. 35 [IP 5, 596-97].

the face of the Bride of Christ more clearly, one also sees the beauty of the mother and teacher.<sup>281</sup>

Paul also spoke of the “solicitude of the Bride of Christ” for the needs of mankind: “The deep solicitude of the Church, the Bride of Christ [*Christi Sponsa*], for the needs of men, for their joys and expectations, their sorrows and labors, is therefore nothing other than her great desire to be present to them, in order to illuminate them with the light of Christ and to gather [*congregat*] and unite [*coniungat*] them all in Him, their only Savior.”<sup>282</sup> Such solicitude was commonly expressed as an aspect of the Church’s motherly care.<sup>283</sup>

## 8. The Church as Body and Bride

Paul VI coupled bridal and body imagery in multiple instances, though without extensive development. The Church is “the mystical Body and Bride of the divine Redeemer.”<sup>284</sup> Similar pairing was present in repeated instances of Paul’s teaching.<sup>285</sup> He also described chastity as signifying “the mystery of the union [*coniunctio*] of the mystical Body with its Head and certainly [the union] of the Bride with her eternal Bridegroom.”<sup>286</sup> As noted, the CDF also paired the images together when referring to Christ as both “Bridegroom and Head of the Church” (*sponsus*

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281. Address *Post duos menses* (November 21, 1964) [AAS 56, 1012].

282. Solemn Profession of Faith *Sollemni hac Liturgia* – “Credo of the People of God” (June 30, 1968), no. 27 [AAS 60, 444]. Translation modified.

283. See Message for World Communications Day *Costituisce un appuntamento* (April 23, 1978) [AAS 70, 341]: “la Chiesa ... con materna sollecitudine...”

284. Homily *La spirituale* (October 4, 1970) [AAS 62, 678].

285. See Address *Salvete, Fratres* (September 29, 1963) [AAS 55, 848]; Address *Ecce adstat* (October 13, 1966) [AAS 58, 1149-1150]; General Audience *La Chiesa ha* (November 4, 1972) [IP 10, 1120]; General Audience *Ripensare la Chiesa* (September 5, 1973) [IP 11, 815]; and General Audience *Noi abbiamo celebrato* (June 1, 1977) [IP 15, 546]. In addition, one might also compare the two general audience addresses *Noi ripetiamo* (June 8, 1966) [IP 4, 793-95], and *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 797].

286. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelica testificatio* (June 29, 1971), no. 13 [AAS 63, 505].

*et caput Ecclesiae*).<sup>287</sup> Elsewhere, Paul acknowledged the patristic themes of the Incarnation as a nuptial union between Christ and humanity as well as of the Church being born from the pierced side of Christ on the Cross.<sup>288</sup>

## 9. Consecrated persons, celibacy, and Mary and the Church

Paul VI employed to a degree some of the traditional variant uses of bridal imagery. For example, he followed his predecessors in referring to consecrated virgins as brides of Christ, or to Christ as their Bridegroom, though it seems he did not apply the bridal image to this context as frequently as Pius XII, for instance.<sup>289</sup> In a prayer for priestly vocations, Paul called upon Christ the “divine Bridegroom [*Sponsus*] of the Church.”<sup>290</sup> Paul also used nuptial imagery in reference to the faithful and all people in general, teaching that all are called to the “nuptials of the Lamb.”<sup>291</sup>

More notably, Paul taught that consecrated celibacy itself shows forth “the virginal love of Christ for the Church.”<sup>292</sup>

*Laid hold of by Christ* (Phil 3:12) unto the complete abandonment of one’s entire self to Him, the priest takes on a closer likeness to Christ, even in the love with which the

287. CDF, Declaration *Inter insigniores* (October 15, 1976) [AAS 69, 111].

288. See General Audience *Il nostro desiderio* (June 15, 1966) [IP 4, 797]; Homily *La solenne canonizzazione* (October 25, 1970) [AAS 62, 748]; and Apostolic Letter *Ut de latere* (November 1, 1975) [AAS 67, 489].

289. For examples of Pope Paul’s use of spousal imagery in reference to consecrated women, see Apostolic Letter “*Gloria Libani*” (December 5, 1965) [AAS 57, 956]; Apostolic Letter *Ipsa humilitas* (October 8, 1967) [AAS 59, 957]; Apostolic Letter *Bononia felix* (October 27, 1968) [AAS 60, 681]; Decretal Letter *Admirabilis Deus* (June 22, 1969) [AAS 62, 151]; Homily *Noi abbiamo* (September 27, 1970) [AAS 62, 591-92]; Apostolic Letter *Mirabilis in Ecclesia Deus* (October 4, 1970) [AAS 63, 680]; Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino* (May 9, 1975), sec. 4 [AAS 67, 304 and 308]; Decretal Letter *Praeclara Ordinis* (October 3, 1976) [AAS 69, 130 and 133]; and Homily *Chi è* (November 14, 1976) [AAS 68, 719].

290. Encyclical *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* (June 24, 1967), no. 45 [AAS 59, 675].

291. Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*, secs. 4 and 5 [AAS 67, 308-9].

292. Encyclical *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* (June 24, 1967), no. 26 [AAS 59, 668]. On the Council’s teaching, see p. 219ff. above.

eternal Priest has loved the Church His Body and offered Himself entirely for her sake, in order to make [*exhibere*] her a glorious, holy and immaculate Bride [*Sponsa*] (Eph 5:25-27).

The virginity devoted to God [*virginitas Deo devota*] of the ministers of Holy Orders manifests the virginal love [*amor virginalis*] by which Christ loves the Church, and likewise the virginal and supernatural fecundity of this marriage [*conubium*], by which the children of God are born, *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh* (Jn 1:13).<sup>293</sup>

Here, the priest's abandonment to Christ in priestly celibacy has a specifically ecclesiological significance. The priest enters into Christ's own love for his Body, so as to present her as the beautiful Bride. Not only, then, does Christian marriage signify the union between Christ and the Church, but priestly celibacy (virginity devoted to God) also shows forth this union.

In fact, consecrated chastity “signifies in the most eminent and absolute way [*modo praeclarissimo et absolutissimo significal*]” the “mystery of the union” between Christ and the Church—Head and mystical Body, Bridegroom and Bride.<sup>294</sup>

Without in any way undervaluing human love and marriage—is not the latter, according to faith, the image and sharing of the union of love [*imago est et consortium unitatis amore effectae*] joining Christ and the Church?—consecrated chastity evokes this union in a more immediate way and brings that surpassing excellence to which all human love should tend.<sup>295</sup>

Paul also considered the close relationship between Mary and the Church. In reference to the Missal, Paul explained: “For example, in the Virgin's unblemished [*sine labe*] Conception these texts recognize the first beginning of the Church [*primum Ecclesiae exordium*], the spotless Bride of Christ [*sponsa sine macula Christi*].”<sup>296</sup> The identification of the Immaculate Conception as

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293. Encyclical *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, no. 26 [AAS 59, 688]. Translation modified.

294. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelica testificatio* (June 29, 1971), no. 13 [AAS 63, 505].

295. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelica testificatio*, no. 13 [AAS 63, 505].

296. Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus* (February 2, 1974), no. 11 [AAS 66, 124]. Translation modified.

the initial manifestation of the Church, precisely as the spotless Bride of Christ, would seem to indicate that Mary herself can be called the spotless Bride of Christ.

Paul VI later described Mary as the model of the Church in worship, and specifically as “the most excellent example and model ... of that interior disposition with which the Church, the most beloved Bride [*sponsa dilectissima*] so strongly joined with her Lord, invokes him and through him offers worship to the eternal Father.”<sup>297</sup> In Mary, the Church’s future is “prophetically fulfilled”—the Church who, once “purified of every spot and wrinkle (see Eph 5:27) will become like a bride adorned for her husband Jesus Christ (see Rev 21:2).”<sup>298</sup> Mary is the “bride of Holy Spirit.”<sup>299</sup> Though Mary was not explicitly called “bride of Christ,” the title was never definitively ruled out. As Paul recalled, the theological and liturgical traditions refer to Mary and the Church with “the same symbols” (*i medesimi simboli*).<sup>300</sup> Mary is “the ideal figure of the Church,” the *Ecclesiae typus*, and the “model of the Church” (*il modello della Chiesa*).<sup>301</sup>

### ***C. Summary and Analysis of Paul VI***

Of all the popes thus far considered, Pope Paul VI presented the most sustained consideration of ecclesial bridal imagery. Some uses were routine, but a substantial portion of Paul’s usage involved either an explicit examination or a consistent and repeated thematic application of ecclesial bridal imagery. Paul located the bridal image as one among other images

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297. Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus*, no. 16 [AAS 66, 128]. Translation modified.

298. Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus*, no. 22 [AAS 66, 133-34].

299. Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino* (May 9, 1975), sec. 4 [AAS 67, 304].

300. General Audience *Daremo in questa* (May 27, 1964) [IP 2, 890].

301. General Audience *Daremo in questa* [IP 2, 890]. Paul cites Ambrose (*in Luc.* 2, 7).

conveying something of the mystery of the Church, but the bridal image clearly had a privileged and prominent status for him.

The vehicles in Paul VI's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor included the signal terms *sponsa* or *sposa* (for Church), *sponsus* or *sposo* (for Christ), as well as the nouns *segno* (*signe*), *un grand mystère*, *participation*, *imago*, *consortium*, and verbs *exprimer*, *représenter*, *contenir*, and *rayonner* (for Christian marriage in reference to the union of Christ and the Church), and finally the nouns *unione* (*intima e indissolubile*), *coniunctio*, *mysterium coniunctionis*, *paradigma*, and *con(n)ubium*, the verb *coniungere*, and the CDF's terms *nuptialis mysterium* and *symbolismus* (for that union itself). Qualifiers included the bridal Church as holy, immaculate, mystical, beautiful, youthful, beloved by Christ, one with and distinct from Christ, loving and solicitous for the needs of mankind, pilgrim and servant, on the way to perfection, even sometimes a sinner, exhibiting a tension between her actual face and her perfect image, in need of continual renewal, as instrument and end of salvation, mother and teacher, and fruitful. The term *mater* or *madre* and its various associations in Pope Paul's teaching operated as an implicit vehicle for the spousal metaphor.

A notable feature of Paul's application of bridal imagery was the emphasis that being the Bride of Christ constitutes a call or task to be lived out. Paul VI's use of ecclesial bridal imagery often conveyed a dynamism which encompassed aspects of calling, mission, renewal, and the tension between history and eschatology. With fresh intensity, Paul repeated numerous times the call to love the bridal Church. It might be said that, instead of the earlier tendency to focus on a "defense of the Bride," Paul's teaching shifted the defensive connotation to one of love, in a way that the bridal image itself contained within it a call to love.

The tenor of Paul VI's bridal metaphor was the Church (*Ecclesia*), understood as the Catholic Church and as the Church universal. While certain instances of Paul's use of the bridal and maternal images could naturally imply a distinction between the "Bride-Mother" and the individual faithful (e.g., exhortations to the faithful to "love the Church," references to the Church's "children," and so on), Paul's overall application of bridal imagery consistently implied an inclusive vision, wherein the bridal Church encompasses the individual faithful. The image also functioned more as a dynamic identity and trajectory rather than a static characteristic. The Bride of Christ was not seen simply as over and above the individual faithful. Paul's teaching also included reference to individuals as brides (particularly consecrated women), to the Incarnation as a nuptial reality, and to Mary as a Bride of the Holy Spirit, though these uses were not frequent. Paul also seemed implicitly open towards describing Mary as bride of Christ.

Much of Paul's respective teaching on bridal imagery occurred in the framework of general audiences, though important indicators were also present in more authoritative teaching. No previous pope of the twentieth century gave such consistent attention to the nature of the Church as Paul did both through his first encyclical and in his ongoing general audiences. Likewise, no previous pope of the twentieth century considered and consistently applied ecclesial bridal imagery to the degree that Pope Paul did.

## **V. Conclusion**

The pontificates of John XXIII and Paul VI, along with the Second Vatican Council, included significant use and application of ecclesial bridal imagery. While John's usage was more limited, his application of the imagery was noteworthy in topical ways as well as in style and tone. The teaching of the Second Vatican Council was a breakthrough in terms of ecclesial

imagery. The Council affirmed the vital place of imagery in relation to the Church as a mystery and sacrament. The insertion of bridal imagery within this framework served not only to contextualize the use of the bridal image but also to validate its significance vis-à-vis other images. *Lumen gentium's* teaching was sustained and further discussed in Paul VI's general audiences.

If Pius XII marked a decisive turning point by noting the specifically ecclesiological significance of the bridal image, both the Council and Paul VI expanded and developed this consideration of the Church as the Bride of Christ. In *Mystici corporis*, Pius XII had considered the bridal image in specific relation to another image, the Mystical Body of Christ (which itself was also considered to be a “definition” for the Church). The Council, however, went a step further and considered the bridal image as one among many images in specific relation to the broader concept of the Church as a mystery. Paul VI furthered this implicit, even quasi-systematic, recognition that imagery is somehow distinct from and ordered to concepts. The CDF's declaration *Inter insigniores* appeared to follow this movement towards systematization when it used the term “nuptial mystery” as a specific descriptive concept that contained within itself the whole movement of the covenant and sacred history.

The ecclesiological “shift” from a juridical-institutional emphasis to a person- and communion-centered emphasis (see Congar), already manifest in various ways in the teaching of Pius XII, was complete in the teaching of John XXIII, the Council, and Paul VI. As seen both in the Council and Paul VI's teaching, this “shift” was not a neglect of the institutional aspect of the Church but was rather a contextualization. The *ressourcement* and various movements of renewal had contributed to a retrieval of important theological insights regarding the nature of



the Church as a mystery, both visible and spiritual, human and divine. These developments also helped highlight the meaning of the term *Ecclesia* by recovering a more intentional usage of the term that avoided restricting its reference (even implicitly) to the hierarchy alone.

In this way, the application of bridal imagery to the Church had increased relevance for the Christian life, as seen particularly in Paul VI's teaching. The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ encompasses various levels of meaning and refers not only to an identity but also to a calling and mission that must be lived. Perhaps it might be said that Paul's teaching brought out most emphatically that the bridal image is a *dramatic* one. And thus, the stage was set for Pope John Paul II.

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Before moving to John Paul II, it should be noted that the brief pontificate of Pope John Paul I (August 1978 – September 1978) did not contain any significant usage of ecclesial bridal imagery, and only a very minimal amount of ecclesial maternal imagery was used.

## Chapter Six

### The Drama of the “Great Mystery”: Ecclesial Bridal Imagery in the Teaching of Pope John Paul II

In contrast to the masculine, activistic-sociological *populus Dei* (people of God) approach, Church—*ecclesia*—is feminine.... Church is more than “people”, more than structure and action: the Church contains the living mystery of maternity and of the bridal love that makes maternity possible. There can be ecclesial piety, love for the Church, only if this mystery exists.

—Joseph Ratzinger (1980)<sup>1</sup>

The Bible convinces us of the fact that one can have no adequate hermeneutic [*explicatio*] of man, or of what is “human,” without appropriate reference to what is “feminine.” There is an analogy [*simile*] in God’s salvific economy: if we wish to understand it fully in relation to the whole of human history, we cannot omit, in the perspective of our faith, the mystery of “woman”: virgin-mother-spouse [*virginis matris sponsae*].

Of fundamental importance here are the words of the Letter to the Ephesians: [...] “*This is a great mystery*, and I am applying it to *Christ and the Church*” (5:25-32).

In this Letter the author expresses the truth about the Church as the Bride of Christ, and also indicates how this truth is *rooted in the biblical event of the creation of the human being as male and female*.

—Pope John Paul II (1988)<sup>2</sup>

The scope of Pope John Paul II’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery surpassed the teaching of his predecessors both quantitatively and qualitatively. Spousal categories were present to such an extent that it can be said that a significant portion of John Paul II’s teaching operated within a nuptial framework or paradigm.<sup>3</sup> This chapter will set forth and examine Pope John Paul II’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery. The term “drama” in reference to the “great mystery” of Ephesians 5:32 best captures John Paul’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery—a use grounded in the drama of

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1. Ratzinger, “Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine,” in *Mary: The Church at the Source*, 25. The original German version of Ratzinger’s essay appeared in Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Maria: Kirche im Ursprung* (Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna: Herder, 1980), 15-40.

2. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), nos. 22-23 [AAS 80, 1707-8]. Translation modified.

3. The use of the term “paradigm” here is borrowed from Joseph C. Atkinson, “Nuptiality as a Paradigmatic Structure of Biblical Revelation,” in *Dialoghi sul mistero nuziale*, Festschrift for Archbishop Angelo Scola (Rome: Lateran University, 2003), 15-34.

the Christian life and vocation as illuminated and constituted by the mystery of Christ's spousal love for the Church.

### **I. Context and Teaching of Blessed John Paul II**

The pontificate of Blessed John Paul II<sup>4</sup> (1978-2005) was situated at a significant point in history: the threshold of a new millennium. The world during this time brought its opportunities and challenges. Advancements in science and technology continued to mark wealthier nations but also extended into a more global sphere. In particular, development of communications technology advanced the phenomenon of globalization and more efficient means of communication around the world. Nevertheless, economic disparities between first world and third world countries and the impact of systemic poverty remained largely unresolved. War and dictatorships were an ever present reality, and the clash between various forms of liberal democracy and communism persisted.

In Western nations, secularism was taking deeper root. By the time of John Paul's pontificate, the Western world had been profoundly affected by three overlapping revolutions: the industrial, sexual, and technological.<sup>5</sup> In particular, the sexual revolution had made its mark and burrowed more deeply into the culture. Feminism increasingly yielded to more radical forms, and postmodern critiques of power and oppression began to move from the theoretical realm to praxis and politics. The emergence of the contraceptive pill in the 1960s, the widespread legalization of abortion in the 1970s, "no-fault" divorce in the 1970s, and the ensuing crisis of broken marriages and decline of marriage shaped key concerns for Pope John Paul II in

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4. Karol Józef Wojtyła (1920-2005).

5. J. Brian Bransfield, *The Human Person According to John Paul II* (Boston: Pauline, 2010), 20-33.

relation to the state of marriage and family life as well as the inviolable dignity of the human person and the common good.

By the beginning of John Paul's pontificate, the reception of the Second Vatican Council was still in its infancy. John Paul made it clear that his pontificate would be in service to the implementation of the Council's vision in anticipation of the Church crossing the threshold of the third millennium. The Second Vatican Council and the Great Jubilee at the beginning of the third millennium were two decisive historical markers without which it would be difficult to assess accurately John Paul's own understanding of his pontificate and especially the overall trajectory of his teaching.<sup>6</sup>

It will take some time before the impact of the pontificate of Pope John Paul II can be properly measured and assessed. No other pope traveled the world as he did, or employed means of communications as extensively as he did, touching the lives of millions around the globe, Catholics and non-Catholics alike.<sup>7</sup>

Karol Wojtyła's life was infused with drama—not only in the sense of his personal interests in Polish literature, poetry and drama, but also with regard to the drama of life in Poland during World War II, the ongoing struggle with communism, and his experience of the Second Vatican Council as a young bishop.<sup>8</sup> The experience and reception of the Council

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6. See Karol Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction*, trans. not listed (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 206; John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, ed. Vittorio Messori, trans. Jenny McPhee and Martha McPhee (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 156-60; Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente* (November 10, 1994), nos. 18-24 [AAS 87, 16-20]. John Paul stated: "Preparing for the Year 2000 has become as it were a hermeneutical key of my Pontificate" (ibid., no. 23). See also George Weigel, *The End and the Beginning: John Paul II – The Victory of Freedom, the Last Years, the Legacy* (New York: Doubleday, 2010), 195ff. and 530n2.

7. See George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of John Paul II* (New York: Cliff Street Publishers/HarperCollins, 1999), 844-45.

8. See Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 2-4 and throughout; Weigel, *The End and the Beginning*, 23-187. On the importance of Wojtyła's experience on the stage and playwriting, with a survey of select plays, see Kenneth L.

formed a major aspect of his pastoral work as Archbishop of Kraków and later as Bishop of Rome.<sup>9</sup>

John Paul's academic experience also constituted an important foundation for his later work and ministry. Wojtyła received advanced degrees in both theology and philosophy. As a young priest, he studied Thomism<sup>10</sup> and the mysticism of John of the Cross under Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, completing his doctoral dissertation in theology on the subject of faith according to John of the Cross. Wojtyła continued studies in philosophy, completing his habilitation thesis on Max Scheler's philosophy as a possible basis for Christian ethics.<sup>11</sup> Much of his later teaching as a professor focused on philosophical ethics, anthropology and phenomenology, and he critically integrated the metaphysical insights of Thomism with an appropriation of the different "personalisms" of John of the Cross, Kant, and Scheler.<sup>12</sup>

Wojtyła also became increasingly familiar with contemporary theologians such as Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar and others.<sup>13</sup> He would later cite de Lubac, Hans Küng, Walter Kasper, and Rahner in his Lenten retreat given to the papal

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Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1993), 1-29.

9. See Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of Vatican II*, trans. P. S. Falla (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979). Original Polish edition published in 1972. See also Paul McPartlan, "John Paul II and Vatican II," in *The Vision of John Paul II: Assessing His Thought and Influence*, ed. Gerard Mannion, 45-61 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008).

10. See Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 165-66.

11. See Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 129.

12. On the latter, see M. Waldstein, Introduction to TOB, 23-77. On Wojtyła's familiarity with the varieties of Thomism and his recognition of the importance of Thomistic metaphysics, see K. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama*, 34-35 and 60-61. See also Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering, eds., *John Paul II & St. Thomas Aquinas* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2006), and Kerr, *Twentieth Century-Catholic Theologians*, 165-68 and 180-82.

13. See Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 110

household.<sup>14</sup> Later as pope, he named various well-known theologians as cardinals, including de Lubac, Jérôme Hamer, Balthasar (who died before receiving the cardinal's hat), Congar, Alois Grillmeier, Avery Dulles, Kasper, Angelo Scola, and Marc Ouellet.

John Paul's teaching covered a huge range of topics, and his output of encyclicals was considerable. His fourteen encyclical letters included the early triad of Trinitarian encyclicals (*Redemptor hominis*, *Dives in misericordia*, and *Dominum et vivificantem*), his social encyclicals (*Laborem excercens*, *Centesimus annus*, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*), and his encyclicals on mission (*Redemptoris missio*), Saints Cyril and Methodius (*Slavorum apostoli*), Mary in the Church (*Redemptoris Mater*), the moral life (*Veritatis splendor*), a culture of life (*Evangelium vitae*), the Church's ecumenical mission and duty (*Ut unum sint*), the relationship of faith and reason (*Fides et ratio*), and the Eucharist (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*). His Wednesday audience catecheses spanned from the "theology of the body" to the creed and finally to the psalms and canticles. John Paul promulgated the first, new universal catechism in roughly five centuries. His letters, apostolic letters, and apostolic exhortations addressed such topics as marriage and the family, the dignity of women, consecrated life, priestly and episcopal ministry, Sunday and the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, the Jubilee year, as well as the life of the Church and the need for evangelization on the different continents (Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania).

There were hints of Wojtyła's ecclesiological views in his comments on the initial schema *De Ecclesia* at the Second Vatican Council. Wojtyła critiqued the schema's presentation of the image of the Mystical Body of Christ as seemingly one image among many.<sup>15</sup> It "is more than an image [*plus quam imago*]"—it is the very defining term [*determinatio*] of the nature of the

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14. See Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction*, 17, 90, 108 and 161.

15. See Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama*, 110.

Church under the christological aspect and at the same time under the aspect of the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption.”<sup>16</sup> Wojtyła also observed that more work was needed to integrate the treatments of Mary and the Church and to show their “intimate connection.”<sup>17</sup>

Wojtyła’s book *Sources of Renewal*, on the implementation of the Council, contained his most sustained reflections on the Church. He spoke of the “consciousness of the Church” and the reality of the Church as a “subject.”<sup>18</sup> This terminology reflected Wojtyła’s personalism and phenomenological approach. According to Wojtyła, the Council’s pastoral intention was to highlight what it means to be the Church and to be a believer in the Church. “We ourselves are the Church...”<sup>19</sup> This approach would later be taken up in John Paul’s first encyclical letter, *Redemptor hominis*, wherein he stated that man “in the full truth of his existence” is “the primary and fundamental way for the Church.”<sup>20</sup> The theme of communion was also an important aspect of John Paul’s later teaching on the Church.<sup>21</sup>

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16. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama*, 110n23. See *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani Secundi* (hereafter *Acta Synodalia*), vol. 2, pt. 3 (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1972), sec. 103, p. 857, no. 2: “Aliae enim Ecclesiae imagines non tam profunde naturam eius explicant quam Corpus Christi mysticum, quod plus est quam imago—est enim determinatio ipsius naturae Ecclesiae sub aspectu christologico et simul sub aspectu mysteriorum Incarnationis et Redemptionis.” As an early intervention, this comment does not acknowledge the importance Wojtyła later gave to the image of the People of God (see *Sources of Renewal*). Nevertheless, even after the Council Wojtyła still noted the privileged place of the image of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ (*Sources of Renewal*, 92-93 and *Sign of Contradiction*, 206).

17. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama*, 111n26. See *Acta Synodalia*, vol. 2, pt. 3, sec. 103, p. 856, no. 1. Part of this intimate connection (*intima connexio*) involves the “nexus between the Church’s maternity and Mary’s maternity (ibid., p. 857, no. 4).

18. Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 35-36.

19. Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 38.

20. Encyclical *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), no. 14 [AAS 71, 285].

21. For example, see Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (April 17, 2003), no. 34 [AAS 95, 456]; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America* (January 22, 1999), esp. nos. 33-52 [AAS 91, 767-89]; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* (November 6, 1999), esp. nos. 24-26 [AAS 92, 489-95]; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania* (November 22, 2001), esp. nos. 10-15 [AAS 94, 374-82]; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (June 28, 2003) [AAS 95, 649-719]. See also Final Report of the Second Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (November 25 –

## II. John Paul II's Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery

John Paul II's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was well anticipated by his own earlier studies and works as Karol Wojtyła. His exposure to John of the Cross, as Michael Waldstein has demonstrated, was an important backdrop to his own reflections on spousal love and use of spousal categories and images.<sup>22</sup> In addition, Wojtyła's pastoral reflections on the implementation of the Council and his Lenten preaching to the papal household contained uses of ecclesial bridal imagery that would anticipate those contained in his own papal teaching.<sup>23</sup> John Paul's use of ecclesial bridal imagery extended over a wide range of teaching, and the development of themes and patterns of usage significantly outstripped that of his predecessors.

### A. *Ecclesial Bridal Imagery at Significant Points in John Paul's Teaching: Documents and Trends*

John Paul's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was frequent and persistent. Below is a survey of John Paul's most significant teaching contexts and documents wherein ecclesial bridal imagery was used with depth and frequency. These span post-synodal apostolic exhortations, apostolic letters, and general audience addresses.<sup>24</sup>

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December 8, 1985), II.C.1, in *L'Osservatore Romano* (December 10, 1985), 7; and CDF, Letter *Communio notio* (May 28, 1992) [AAS 85, 838-50].

22. See Waldstein, Introduction to TOB, 23-34. See also Wojtyła's dissertation entitled *Doctrina de fide apud S. Joannem a Cruce* (Rome: Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1948). The English translation is entitled *Faith According to St. John of the Cross*, trans. Jordan Aumann (1981, Ignatius Press; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock). As Waldstein notes, Wojtyła's consideration of love as self-gift had important roots in John of the Cross. For example, see Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), 95-100. The original Polish edition was published in 1960.

23. For example, see Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 88, 93 and 198-99; *Sign of Contradiction*, 91-100.

24. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) is perhaps the most significant teaching "event" since the Second Vatican Council. Because of its unique status as a universal catechism, it will not be considered in the exposition below. However, ecclesial bridal imagery and related imagery is present throughout the four pillars of the



### 1. Wednesday General Audience Addresses (1979-1984): “Theology of the Body”

From September 5, 1979 to November 28, 1984, John Paul II delivered a series of 129 catecheses popularly known by the name “Theology of the Body.” During these Wednesday general audiences, John Paul set out to teach afresh the meaning of marriage and human love within the plan and mystery of redemption in Christ. Remarkably, these addresses had already been basically completed in Polish by Cardinal Wojtyła before his election as pope.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, they exhibit a unity of focus, purpose, and breadth unusual for a collection of general audience addresses.

In these addresses, ecclesial bridal imagery was used extensively and was applied and considered to a degree beyond previous magisterial teaching of the twentieth century. For example, John Paul analyzed Ephesians 5 with specific attention given to the “great analogy [*analogia*] of the spousal love of Christ and the Church.”<sup>26</sup> This analysis was prolonged and revealed John Paul’s precision and depth when applying bridal imagery.<sup>27</sup> In these addresses, for the first time in twentieth century papal magisterial teaching, the term “metaphor” was employed critically in relation to the term “analogy” and in the specific context of ecclesial bridal imagery.<sup>28</sup>

The catecheses on the theology of the body covered various themes: the meaning of the human person created as male and female, the significance of the human body, human sexuality and chastity, the sacrament of marriage in the perspective of the “great mystery” (Eph 5:32), the

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CCC. For example, see CCC, nos. 219, 726, 753-57, 766, 796, 808, 1138, 1602, 1604, 1611-13, 1616-18, 1642, 1647, 1659, 1661, 1821, 2016, 2365, 2618, 2550, 2817 and 2827.

25. See Waldstein, Introduction to TOB, 7.

26. TOB 95:7 [IGP 5.3, 522]. Numbering follows the Waldstein edition (audience number: section number).

27. See TOB 89:5 – 102:8 [IGP 5.3, 206-1606].

28. See TOB 92:1-3 [IGP 5.3, 350-51].

meaning and essential value of virginity/celibacy, and the Church's teaching on married love. In his use of the scriptural texts, John Paul was aware of hermeneutical concerns and sought to make careful terminological distinctions when dealing with different uses of language. In relation to ecclesial bridal imagery, the catecheses set forth a broader nuptial and anthropological paradigm in which the imagery was used and examined.

## 2. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981)

In his post-synodal apostolic exhortation on the role of the Christian family in the modern world, Pope John Paul applied ecclesial bridal imagery in several places. Most of the uses were brief and served to recall the specific vocation of love to which spouses and the family are called.<sup>29</sup> Notably, John Paul included a section that considered the relationship between Jesus as the Bridegroom (of the Church) and the sacrament of marriage.<sup>30</sup> Here, with reference to Eph 5:21-33, Gen 2:24, and Mt 19:5, he linked the mystery of Christ and the Church, marriage, and the identity of the human person as male and female. Elsewhere, John Paul referred to his by then well-known phrase “the ‘spousal meaning’ [*significatio sponsalis*] of the body.”<sup>31</sup> *Familiaris consortio* contained and anticipated many key themes of John Paul's pontificate, and its use of ecclesial bridal imagery within the context of marriage and the family built upon a range of previous magisterial teaching.

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29. See Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), nos. 12, 17, 20, 37, 51 and 56-57 [AAS 74, pp. 93, 100, 103, 128, 143 and 149-50].

30. See Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, no. 13 [AAS 74, 93-96].

31. Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, no. 37 [AAS 74, 128].

**3. Teaching on the religious and consecrated life: Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996)**

Pope John Paul II regularly viewed religious consecration through a nuptial or spousal lens. His apostolic exhortation to men and women religious on the meaning of the consecrated life in light of the mystery of redemption, *Redemptionis donum*, was one of many teaching moments that focused on consecrated men and women. *Redemptionis donum* contains various instances of spousal imagery, including a section on the “spousal covenant of love,” the common theme of Christ’s spousal and redemptive love, and a description of Mary’s love as spousal.<sup>32</sup> In particular, John Paul highlighted the spousal nature of religious profession and of the exercise of the evangelical counsels.<sup>33</sup>

Issued twelve years later, John Paul’s post-synodal apostolic exhortation on the consecrated life, *Vita consecrata*, contained significant use of ecclesial bridal imagery.<sup>34</sup> He emphasized a unique and intense connection between consecrated life in general (of both men and women) and the identity of the Church as Bride of Christ.<sup>35</sup> Further, the exhortation singled out consecrated women—and in a particular way, Mary—in their unique capacity to signify the bridal dimension of the Church. John Paul spoke of consecrated women as “the efficacious image of the Church as Bride” (*Ecclesiae-Sponsae efficax imago*).<sup>36</sup>

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32. Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), nos.8 and 15-17 [AAS 76, 524-27 and 542-45].

33. See Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum*, nos. 3-5, 8, 11 and 14-17 [AAS 76, pp. 516, 518, 521, 524-27, 532, 539 and 541-45].

34. Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996) [AAS 88, 377-486].

35. Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata*, nos. 3, 19, 34, and 105 [AAS 88, pp. 378-79, 393, 407, and 481].

36. Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata*, no. 34 [AAS 88, 407].

#### 4. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988)

Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter on the dignity and vocation of women, *Mulieris dignitatem*, was a milestone in magisterial reflection upon the identity, significance, and mission of women.<sup>37</sup> It also made a considerable advance with regard to the authoritative and developed use of ecclesial bridal imagery in magisterial teaching.

John Paul used ecclesial bridal imagery in a prominent way throughout the letter, and he also singled out the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ for a specific and extended reflection.<sup>38</sup> Particular subsections included treatment of the “great mystery” in relation to God's covenant, the newness brought about by the Gospel as it pertained to the mutual subjection of husband and wife, the “symbolic dimension” (*ratio symbolica*) and analogical significance of the “great mystery,” the place of the Eucharist, and the universal priesthood and significance of the bridal image for all in the Church. Notably, John Paul also gave special consideration to the place and limits of analogy, and inserted an explicit reference to H. U. von Balthasar's description of the “Marian profile” of the Church.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps the most striking aspect of John Paul's use of ecclesial bridal imagery in *Mulieris dignitatem* is its scope. The “great mystery” of Christ the Bridegroom and the Church as his Bride is linked to the creation of the human person as male and female.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, marriage as a sacrament is not the only reality implicated in this “great mystery”; rather, the very contours of the human person—fundamental anthropological truths of the human person created as male

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37. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988) [AAS 80, 1653-1729].

38. See Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, nos. 23-27 [AAS 80, 1708-20].

39. See Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, nos. 8 and 27n55 [AAS 80, 1668-70 and 1718n55].

40. See Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 23 [AAS 80, 1708].

and female—find direction, illumination, and fulfillment in the mystery of Christ the Bridegroom and the Church as his Bride. *Mulieris dignitatem* represented a significant and authoritative advance in magisterial teaching in its focus on the dignity and vocation of women and in its use and application of ecclesial bridal imagery.

### **5. Wednesday General Audience Addresses (1991-2004): Catecheses on the Church, Mary, Salvation History, and the Psalms and Canticles**

Subsequent to his series of Wednesday general audience addresses on the Theology of the Body, John Paul devoted the next fifteen years to a series of catechetical addresses on the creed and salvation history, and the following final four years to the psalms and canticles found in Lauds and Vespers. Ecclesial bridal imagery occurred throughout these addresses.

John Paul's placement of the Marian catecheses directly after the catecheses on the Church reflected Vatican II's and Paul VI's teaching on the close relationship between Mary and the Church. In particular, a sequence of four consecutive addresses indicated this close relationship through the lens of spousal imagery.<sup>41</sup> In various addresses, John Paul devoted special and attentive consideration to ecclesial bridal imagery.<sup>42</sup> Spousal imagery recurred throughout John Paul's Wednesday audiences. This frequency and depth was characteristic of John Paul's magisterium.

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41. See General Audience Addresses of December 4, 1991 [IGP 14.2, 1307-10]; December 11, 1991 [IGP 14.2, 1357-60]; December 18, 1991 [IGP 14.2, 1415-18]; and January 8, 1992 [IGP 15.1, 33-36]. English translation available in *JP-Church*, 103-20.)

42. See General Audience Addresses of December 18, 1991 [IGP 14.2, 1415-18; *JP-Church*, 113-16]; January 8, 1992 [IGP 15.1, 33-36; *JP-Church*, 117-20]; February 7, 2001 [IGP 24.1, 307-09; *JP-Trinity*, 443-46]; June 18, 2003 [IGP 26.1, 957-59; *JP-Lauds*, 250-53]; July 16, 2003 [IGP 26.2, 56-58; *JP-Lauds*, 259-62]; December 10, 2003 [IGP 26.2, 940-42; *JP-Vespers*, 29-31]; September 29, 2004 [IGP 27.2, 312-14; *JP-Vespers*, 93-96]; and October 6, 2004 [IGP 27.2, 347-49; *JP-Vespers*, 96-99]. On the use of the imagery in relation to consecrated women, see General Audience (March 15, 1995) [IGP 18.1, 508-12; *JP-Church*, 606-10].

**6. Teaching on priestly and episcopal ministry: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* (March 25, 1992) and Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis* (October 16, 2003)**

In addition to applying spousal imagery to the consecrated life, John Paul also applied it to the ministerial priesthood and the episcopacy, and two post-synodal apostolic exhortations were particularly significant. In *Pastores dabo vobis*, John Paul's apostolic exhortation on priestly formation, there are multiple instances of spousal imagery as they relate to the priest's distinctive relationship to the Church through his configuration to Christ the Bridegroom.<sup>43</sup> In his final apostolic exhortation, *Pastores gregis*, on the ministry of bishops, John Paul applied spousal imagery to the episcopal ministry.<sup>44</sup> The spousal imagery in *Pastores gregis* was less frequent and less developed in comparison to that of *Pastores dabo vobis*, but the two exhortations reveal the papal magisterium's sustained acknowledgment of the significance of spousal imagery for an understanding of the ordained ministry of priests and bishops.

**7. Letter to Families *Gratissimam sane* (February 2, 1994)**

Promulgated during the Year of the Family, Pope John Paul II's *Letter to Families* contained a considerable amount of ecclesial bridal imagery and allowed John Paul to develop further his teaching on the "great mystery."<sup>45</sup> John Paul devoted a specific portion of the letter to a consideration of the presence of Christ, the Bridegroom, with every Christian married couple—"the Bridegroom is with you."<sup>46</sup> This part of the letter, divided into two sections

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43. See Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* (March 25, 1992) [AAS 84, 658-804].

44. For example, see Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis* (October 16, 2003), no. 13 [AAS 96, 844].

45. Letter to Families *Gratissimam sane* (hereafter *Letter to Families*) (February 2, 1994) [AAS 86, 868-925].

46. *Letter to Families*, nos. 18-19 [AAS 86, 906-14]. This theme, "the Bridegroom is with you," taken from Mt 9:15, can be found in Karol Wojtyła's retreat that he preached to Paul VI in 1976 (see *Sign of Contradiction*, 91-100). See also *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48 [AAS 58, 1068]; chapter five above, p. 213n116.

entitled “at Cana in Galilee” and “the Great Mystery,” included some of the strongest examples of John Paul’s use of spousal imagery and categories.

The section treating “the great mystery” comprises a substantial reflection on Ephesians 5. In a way that was somewhat new compared to his previous reflections, John Paul spoke more intensely of the necessary place of the “‘great mystery’ expressed ... in the reality of marriage and the family” for understanding key aspects of the Church.<sup>47</sup> Throughout the letter, John Paul exhibited his characteristic attentiveness to the anthropology underlying marriage and the family and to the interconnection of these realities with central mysteries of the faith. In this context, ecclesial bridal imagery emerged as vital for a proper appreciation and understanding of fundamental dimensions of the Church.

#### **8. *Letter to Women* (June 29, 1995)**

John Paul’s *Letter to Women* followed his apostolic letter, *Mulieris dignitatem*, in considering the dignity and vocation of women. In particular, John Paul linked the complementarity of manhood and womanhood with their diverse and “iconic” roles in the Church as well as with the “Apostolic-Petrine” and “Marian” dimensions of the Church, borrowing those latter terms from Balthasar.<sup>48</sup> In brief fashion, John Paul’s *Letter to Women* continued his noteworthy teaching on the significance of the sexual difference and complementarity between man and woman as it relates to the life and mystery of the Church.

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47. *Letter to Families*, no. 19 [AAS 86, 911-12].

48. *Letter to Women*, no. 11 [AAS 87, 810-11].

**9. CDF, *Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (May 31, 2004)**

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's 2004 letter to bishops on the collaboration of men and women had a clear and close resonance with the substance of John Paul's magisterial teaching concerning Christian anthropology, the complementarity between man and woman, and spousal imagery.<sup>49</sup> In many ways, this CDF letter not only reinforced the teaching of John Paul in these areas but also provided a fresh synthesis of the place of spousal imagery and categories in an understanding of the human person and the mysteries of the Christian faith.

The letter included spousal imagery in its overview of the biblical vision of the human person, spoke of the "indispensable" symbolism of marriage in the Old Testament even in the face of the dangerous temptation of other religions to confuse the sacred and the sexual, and highlighted the unique and privileged place of the Song of Songs in reference to spousal imagery. In this context, the letter acknowledged the use of metaphors but noted that the "terms bridegroom and bride ... are much more than simple metaphors."<sup>50</sup> The letter also considered the important contribution and newness brought about by the "nuptial mystery" realized in Christ.<sup>51</sup>

The CDF letter thus synthesized in compact form many of the reflections found throughout John Paul's teaching. One notable difference was a preference for the term "nuptial" (*nuziale*) rather than "spousal" (*sponsale*). This may have reflected a desire to use a more synthetic

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49. CDF, *Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (May 31, 2004) [AAS 96, 671-87].

50. *Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World*, no. 9 [AAS 96, 678].

51. *Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World*, nos. 10 and 12 [AAS 96, 678-80].



term for encompassing a larger conceptual field.<sup>52</sup> The CDF letter represented a significant step in the development of magisterial teaching with regard to ecclesial bridal imagery and spousal categories in general.

### ***B. Key Patterns and Themes in John Paul II's Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery***

Compared with his predecessors, John Paul II's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was uniquely broad, deep, and integrated. The breadth was manifest in the range of application and the frequency of use throughout his pontificate. The depth was evidenced by the numerous instances of teaching wherein ecclesial bridal imagery, either directly or indirectly, served as a significant touchstone for reflection and deliberation. Finally, John Paul's consideration of spousal imagery in relation to multiple aspects of the mystery and reality of the Church and Christian life, including Christian anthropology and vocation, enabled the integrative potential of the imagery to be appreciated.

Below, the key patterns and themes associated with John Paul's use of ecclesial bridal imagery will be surveyed. One challenge in presenting these patterns and themes is the degree of overlap and interconnection among them. For practical reasons, the complete extent of John Paul's use of nuptial categories in general cannot be treated here except where such use relates more specifically to his use of ecclesial bridal imagery.

#### **1. Metaphor, analogy, and mystery**

John Paul II placed his use of ecclesial bridal imagery within a larger context of analogy, namely the analogy of spousal love. Various terms such as "metaphor," "figure," "likeness,"

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52. This is the case in Angelo Scola's *The Nuptial Mystery*: see p. xxii.

“comparison,” “model,” “symbol,” “concept,” and “analogy” can be found throughout his teaching. At times, some of his terminology was fluid or employed in synonymous fashion.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, he was attentive to issues of language and hermeneutics.<sup>54</sup> Whereas his predecessors used some of the terminology above,<sup>55</sup> John Paul’s teaching advanced a consideration of how these terms function together, though John Paul did not offer or intend to offer a developed theory.

According to John Paul, “the whole text of Ephesians 5:21-33 is permeated by the same analogy: that is, the reciprocal relationship between spouses, husband and wife, should be understood by Christians *according to the image of the relationship [a immagine del rapporto] between Christ and the Church.*”<sup>56</sup> His analysis of this “analogy of spousal love,” which he understood as the “analogy between the spousal bond [*vincolo*] that unites Christ and the Church and the bond that unites husband and wife in marriage,” illustrated his attentiveness to two important aspects: (1)

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53. For example, in a Wednesday audience address on the Church as the Body of Christ, John Paul referred to the image of the Body of Christ as a *similitudine, immagine, concetto*, or *analogia*, without making any particular distinctions among the terms. He also made multiple comparisons between the “concepts” of Body of Christ and People of God, seeming to equate the term “image” with the term “concept.” See General Audience (November 20, 1991) [IGP 14.2, 1203-6; JP-*Church*, 95-98]. However, John Paul was likely aware of a distinction between the terms “image” and “concept.” This is evident in his subsequent audience address where he referred to the “Pauline image and concept of ‘body of Christ’,” using both terms together in such a way that would seem to imply some distinction between the two. See General Audience (November 27, 1991), no. 5 [IGP 14.2, 1282; JP-*Church*, 101]. Finally, whereas the Italian word *analogia* was a favorite term in his early Wednesday audiences on the theology of the body, in *Mulieris dignitatem*, John Paul used the Latin terms *similitudo* and *comparatio* with much greater frequency than *analogia* (in Latin). It is not clear why this is the case, and there does not appear to be any substantial shift of meaning involved.

54. See TOB 3:1-3 (September 19, 1979) [IGP 2.2, 323-27], particularly notes 4 and 6 (notes 2 and 9, respectively, in IGP). In note 6, John Paul cited Paul Ricoeur on the movement from figurative to conceptual modes of discourse in religious language and the role of philosophical discourse. John Paul then observed: “The question, whether the metaphysical reduction really expresses the content which the symbolic and metaphorical language conceals within itself, is another matter” (TOB 3:3, note 6, translation corrected [n.b., in the Waldstein edition, *metaforico* mistakenly reads as “metaphysical” in this instance]). See also TOB 21:1, note 32 (March 12, 1980) [IGP 3.1, 540-41n1].

55. In particular, see chapters four and five above, pp. 161ff. and 235ff.

56. TOB 89:8 (August 11, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 207].

the relation between the analogy itself and the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church, and (2) the distinction between analogy and metaphor.<sup>57</sup>

First, for John Paul II, analogy and mystery were interrelated. Because “the mystery of salvation includes the particular feature of spousal love in the relationship of Christ with the Church,” the analogy of the love between husband and wife in marriage becomes a most fitting articulation of this mystery.<sup>58</sup> In this way, John Paul held that the “*analogy clarifies the mystery*, at least to a certain degree,” but he also noted that the analogy “*is illuminated by that mystery*.”<sup>59</sup>

While the analogy used in Ephesians clarifies the mystery of the relationship [*il mistero del rapporto*] between Christ and the Church, at the same time *it reveals the essential truth about marriage*, namely, that marriage corresponds to the vocation of Christians only when it mirrors [*rispecchia*] the love that Christ, the Bridegroom, gives to the Church, his Bride, and which the Church (in likeness [*somiglianza*] to the wife who is ‘subject,’ and thus completely given) seeks to give back to Christ in return.<sup>60</sup>

Therefore, the analogy “works in two directions,” and John Paul added that “the logic of the analogy” entails that marriage itself “contains *a particle of the same mystery*” lest the exhortation in Ephesians “be deprived of a real basis, as if it had no ground under its feet.”<sup>61</sup>

Second, John Paul acknowledged a relationship between metaphor and analogy. He referred to both ecclesial images of body and bride as metaphorical.<sup>62</sup> In particular, John Paul commented on the image of the glorious Church “*as a bride all beautiful in her body*”:

Certainly, this is a metaphor [*metaphora*], but it is a very eloquent one and testifies how deeply important the body is in the analogy of spousal love.... The sphere [*l’ambito*] of the metaphor is ... quite vast.... This is essential for the analogy.<sup>63</sup>

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57. TOB 92:1-2 (September 1, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 350].

58. TOB 90:1 (August 18, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 245].

59. TOB 90:1-2 (August 18, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 245-46].

60. TOB 90:2 (August 18, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 246].

61. TOB 90:3-4 (August 18, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 246-47].

62. On the bodily image as metaphorical, see TOB 87:3 (July 28, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 133].

John Paul recognized that the range or disclosive capacity of a metaphor can serve an essential function within an analogy.

Pope John Paul seems to be the first and only pope in the twentieth century to speak of the ecclesial bridal image specifically as a “metaphor” and to situate the metaphor in relation to a larger context of analogical meaning. He also acknowledged that the category of metaphor itself has its limits.

On the basis of the sacrament of creation one must understand the original sacramentality of marriage (the primordial sacrament). In a further step, on the basis of the sacrament of redemption, one can understand the sacramentality of the Church or rather the sacramentality of Christ’s union [*unione*] with the Church which the author of Ephesians presents in the likeness [*similitudine*] of marriage, of the spousal union of husband and wife. An attentive analysis of the text shows that in this case, what is at stake is not only a comparison in the sense of a metaphor [*un paragone in senso metaforico*], but a real *renewal* (or “re-creation,” that is, a new creation) of *what constituted the salvific content* (in a certain sense the “salvific substance”) of the primordial sacrament. This observation has an essential significance, both for clarifying the sacramentality of the Church (the very significant words of *Lumen gentium*, 1, appeal to this) and for understanding the sacramentality of marriage understood as one of the sacraments of the Church.<sup>64</sup>

The metaphor (Church as bride), then, is at the service of the analogy (between the relationship of Christ and the Church and that of husband and wife), which illuminates the mystery and sacrament (both of the Church and of marriage). John Paul did not reject the use of “metaphor” as a proper descriptive term but qualified it, and he recognized the capacity of metaphors, even time-conditioned ones, to disclose truth.<sup>65</sup> But he also showed that to remain at

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63. TOB 92:2-3 (September 1, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 350-51]. See also General Audience (October 6, 1999), no. 2 [IGP 22.2, 556; JP-*Trinity*, 270].

64. TOB 98:8 (October 20, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 860-61].

65. For example, John Paul noted the “surprising” aspect of the metaphors in the Song of Songs which reflect the environment of their time and “search for an analogy of this beauty [of spousal love] in the various things of the visible world ... [though] they seem to indicate the insufficiency of each of these particular analogies.”

the level of metaphor (understood by John Paul in this context as comparison) does not sufficiently account for the realities being described. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith similarly taught (though with perhaps a more limited reference to metaphor):

While having an evident metaphorical dimension [*un'evidente dimensione metaforica*], the terms bridegroom and bride—and covenant as well—which characterize the dynamic of salvation, are much more than simple metaphors [*molto più che semplici metafore*]. This nuptial vocabulary [*vocabolario nuziale*] touches on the very nature of the relationship which God establishes with his people, even though that relationship is more expansive than human nuptial experience [*esperienza nuziale umana*].<sup>66</sup>

John Paul also recognized the significance and limitations of the spousal analogy for understanding the mystery of Christ and the Church. “*The mystery remains transcendent with respect to this analogy [analogia] as with respect to any other analogy with which we try to express it in human language. At the same time, however, this analogy offers the possibility of a certain cognitive ‘penetration’ into the very essence of the mystery.*”<sup>67</sup> And likewise in reference to Ephesians 5: “Reading this rich and complex passage, which *taken as a whole is a great analogy [similitudo maxima]*, we must *distinguish* that element which expresses the human reality of interpersonal relations from that which expresses in figurative language [*sermone figuris*] the ‘great mystery’ which is divine.”<sup>68</sup>

John Paul was well aware that “analogy [*analogia*] ... indicates at one and the same time similarity [*somiglianza*] and also the lack of identity [*la carenza di identità*] (that is, a substantial

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TOB 108:8 (May 23, 1984) [IGP 7.1, 1473-75, no. 4]. The disclosive potential of the time-conditioned metaphors of the Song of Songs is alluded to in an undelivered address (see TOB 109:1).

66. CDF, *Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (May 31, 2004), no. 9 [AAS 96, 678].

67. TOB 95b:1 (September 29, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 626-27]. See also Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 23 [AAS 80, 1708-10].

68. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 23 [AAS 80, 1710]. Translation modified slightly. John Paul II seemed to use the terms *similitudo*, *comparatio*, and *analogia* in comparable ways. See p. 274n53 above.

dissimilarity [*dissomiglianza*]).”<sup>69</sup> God’s love revealed in Christ “is ‘like’ [*similis*] the spousal love of human spouses, but naturally it is not ‘the same’ [*aequalis*]. For the analogy [*comparatio*] implies a likeness [*similitudo*], while at the same time leaving ample room for nonlikeness [*dissimilitudinis*].”<sup>70</sup>

Elsewhere, John Paul noted that the fact of the human person created in the image and likeness of God (*imago Dei*) itself allows for and undergirds the use of human concepts and images in reference to God. Man is “like” God, and God is even “like” man in some fashion. But there is always a limit to this “likeness” and use of analogy:

The language of the Bible is sufficiently precise to indicate the limits of the “likeness” [*fines similis*], the limits of the “analogy” [*fines analogiae*]. For biblical Revelation says that, while man’s “likeness” to God is true, the “non-likeness” [*non-similitudinem*] which separates the whole of creation from the Creator is *still more essentially true*....

This observation on the limits of the analogy [*de finibus analogiae*—the limits of man’s likeness [*similitudinis*] to God in biblical language—must also be kept in mind when, in different passages of Sacred Scripture (especially in the Old Testament) we find comparisons [*comparationes*] that attribute to God “masculine” or “feminine” qualities.<sup>71</sup>

The limits of analogy have practical implications for understanding ecclesial bridal imagery. For example, the image of bride conveys some sort of personhood. John Paul explained what “the person of the ‘bride’” means in reference to the Church:

According to the Letter to the Ephesians, the bride *is the Church*, just as for the Prophets the bride was Israel. She is therefore *a collective subject* and not *an individual* [*singularis*] person. This collective subject is the People of God, a community made up of many persons, both men and women.<sup>72</sup>

John Paul’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery was attentive to analogical and metaphorical limits.

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69. TOB 33:3 (July 30, 1980) [IGP 3.2, 313]. See chapter two above, p. 89ff.

70. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1713].

71. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 8 [AAS 80, 1668].

72. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1713].

## 2. “Christ the Redeemer as Bridegroom”

John Paul II frequently called attention to the link between Christ’s redemptive and spousal love. Christ is both Redeemer and Bridegroom.<sup>73</sup> He is “the complete subject [*subiectum integrum*] of spousal and redemptive love [*caritas*]: spousal because [*quia*] it is redemptive.”<sup>74</sup> In Christ’s gift of self to the Father and for the Church, Christ unites himself indissolubly to the Church he also formed.

That gift of self to the Father through obedience to the point of death (see Phil 2:8) is at the same time, according to Ephesians, an act of “giving himself for the Church.” In this expression, *redeeming love* transforms itself, I would say, *into spousal love*: by giving himself for the Church, with the same redeeming act, Christ united [*unito*] himself once and for all with her as the Bridegroom with the Bride [*come lo sposo con la sposa*], as the husband with the wife [*come il marito con la moglie*], giving himself through all that is included once and for all in his “giving himself” [*“dare se stesso”*] for the Church.<sup>75</sup>

According to John Paul II, the “analogy of spousal love and marriage” is closely connected to the understanding of God as “redeemer” in the Old Testament, and this parallel is subsequently developed in Ephesians, wherein the redemptive and spousal “dimensions of love” are united.<sup>76</sup>

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73. See Letter *Novo incipiente* (April 8, 1979), no. 10 [AAS 71, 411]; Homily *Desidero oggi* (June 30, 1979), no. 2 [AAS 71, 911]; Homily *En cet instant* (January 31, 1980), no. 5 [AAS 72, 165]; Homily *Audivimus modo* (October 25, 1980), no. 3 [AAS 72, 1080]; Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), no. 13 [AAS 74, 95]; Letter *A ministerii nostri* (March 25, 1982), no. 5 [AAS 74, 527]; Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), nos. 8 and 15-16 [AAS 76, pp. 527, 543 and 545]; Apostolic Letter *Dilecti Amici* (March 31, 1985), nos. 7 and 10 [AAS 77, 595 and 606]; Homily “*In verità*” (May 10, 1987) [AAS 79, 1301]; Letter *In cenaculum* (March 25, 1988), no. 5 [AAS 80, 1286]; General Audience (December 18, 1991), nos. 2-3 [IGP 14.2, 1415-17; JP-*Church*, 114-15]; Letter to Families (February 2, 1994), nos. 5, 19 and 22 [AAS 86, pp. 872, 914 and 921]; and General Audience (August 3, 1994), no. 4 [IGP 17.2, 98; JP-*Trinity*, 502].

74. Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), no. 8 [AAS 76, 525-26]. See also TOB 102:5 (December 15, 1982) [IGP 5.2, 1602-06]; Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 26 [AAS 80, 1715-16].

75. TOB 90:6 (August 18, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 248]. See also Homily *En cet instant* (January 31, 1980), no. 5 [AAS 72, 165].

76. TOB 102:4 (December 15, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 1603-4]. See also TOB 95:6 (September 22, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 520-21].

St. Paul ... shows how the ‘Redeemer,’ who is the firstborn Son and from ages ‘the beloved of the Father,’ reveals at the same time that his *saving love*, which consists in his gift of self for the Church, is a *spousal love by which he marries the Church* [*amore sponsale con cui egli sposa la Chiesa*] and makes her his own Body.<sup>77</sup>

John Paul II spoke of the “spousal power” (*sponsalis vis*) of redemption and the “spousal nature” (*sponsalis natura*) of God’s redemptive love.<sup>78</sup> In particular, he accented the privileged place of the Paschal Mystery, “which completely reveals the spousal love of God,” and the Eucharist as the “redemptive act of the Bridegroom.”<sup>79</sup>

Elsewhere, John Paul emphasized the presence of Christ the Bridegroom with the Church and with families. “To hear anew the voice of the Bridegroom” is central to the life of various ecclesial communities, whom Christ continues to call to conversion and to “the great task of the ‘new evangelization.’”<sup>80</sup> John Paul invited married couples and those in consecrated life to a renewed consideration of “the Bridegroom [who] is with you.”<sup>81</sup>

John Paul II’s attention to the Christological counterpart to ecclesial bridal imagery—Christ as Bridegroom—was distinctive compared to his predecessors. His frequent use of the image of Christ as Bridegroom implied that the imagery was not only helpful but actually critical for understanding the contours of the mystery of redemption in Christ and the Church as the beloved and redeemed Bride of Christ. As John Paul observed, Christ himself “insisted on this analogy and terminology [*analogia e terminologia*] to explain what the ‘kingdom’ is that he had come

77. TOB 95:7 (September 22, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 521].

78. Letter *In cenaculum* (March 25, 1988), no. 5 [AAS 80, 1286], and Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 25 [AAS 80, 1713]. Translation modified.

79. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 26 [AAS 80, 1715-16]. See also Homily “*Ecco la dimora*” (April 23, 1989) [AAS 81, 1095].

80. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (June 28, 2003), no. 23 [AAS 95, 665].

81. *Letter to Families*, nos. 18-19 and 22 [AAS 86, 906-14 and 920]. See Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, no. 13 [AAS 74, 93-96], and Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata*, nos. 3, 7, 15, 19, 32, 34, 59 and 110 [AAS 88, pp. 379, 382, 388, 393, 406-8, 431-32 and 484].



to bring.... By defining [*definendo*] himself as the Bridegroom [*Sposo*], Jesus expressed the meaning of his entrance into history.”<sup>82</sup>

### 3. Love as the gift of self at the heart of the Church as the Bride of Christ

Closely related to the theme above, a prevalent thematic throughout John Paul II’s teaching and writing was the understanding of love as a gift of self. In particular, it is in spousal love that this character of love, as a total self-gift, shines in paradigmatic fashion.<sup>83</sup> In his reflections on the theology of the body, John Paul referred to the necessary role of a “hermeneutics of the gift.”<sup>84</sup> Pascal Ide, Michael Waldstein and others have shown the important influence of John of the Cross’ “spousal personalism,” as well as *Gaudium et spes*, no. 24 (“Man ... cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself”), on John Paul’s thinking and consideration of love as self-gift.<sup>85</sup>

This understanding of love as a gift of self was present in multiple ways in John Paul’s use of spousal imagery and categories. According to John Paul, the very uniqueness of the “analogy of spousal love” when applied to the mystery of Christ’s love for the Church is located in the dimension of self-gift:

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82. General Audience (November 23, 1994), no. 2 [IGP 17.2, 845; JP-*Church*, 565]. See also General Audience (April 27, 1988), no. 8 [IGP 11.1, 1047-48; JP-*Jesus*, 352-53]. In particular, the image of Bridegroom is one expression of Jesus’ divinity. See General Audience (September 9, 1987), no. 8 [IGP 10.3, 341; JP-*Jesus*, 220]. Elsewhere, John Paul stated, “The Gospel presents the span of Christ’s earthly life as the *time of the wedding feast*.” General Audience (December 17, 1997), no. 4 [IGP 20.2, 1028; JP-*Trinity*, 17-18]. The miracle at Cana is the beginning of Christ’s work as Bridegroom. See General Audience (January 14, 1998), no. 1 [IGP 21.1, 107; JP-*Trinity*, 20-21].

83. For an early example, see Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 96. See also Waldstein, Introduction to TOB, 30-32. The use of “paradigmatic” here is borrowed from Waldstein (29-30).

84. TOB 13:2 and 16:1 [IGP 3.1, 13 and 218].

85. Waldstein, Introduction to TOB, 23-34 and 79. See Pascal Ide, “Une théologie du don: Les occurrences de *Gaudium et spes*, n.24, §3 chez Jean-Paul II,” *Anthropotes* 17 (2001): 149-78 and 313-44. See also M. Waldstein, “The Common Good in St. Thomas and John Paul II,” *Nova et Vetera* 3.3 (2005): 574ff.

The analogy of the love of spouses (or spousal love) seems *to emphasize* above all *the aspect of God's gift of himself* to man who is chosen "from ages" in Christ (literally, his gift of self to "Israel," to the "Church"); a gift that is in its essential character, or as gift, total (or rather "radical") and irrevocable.... [T]he gift given by God to man in Christ is a "total" or "radical" gift, which is precisely what the analogy of spousal love indicates: it is in some sense "all" that God "could" give of himself to man .... In this way the analogy of spousal love indicates the "radical" character of grace: of the whole order of created grace.<sup>86</sup>

The Paschal Mystery is the central event "which entirely [*funditus*] reveals the spousal love of God."<sup>87</sup> Elsewhere John Paul taught, "The agony of Gethsemane and the agony of Golgotha are *the summit of the revelation of love*."<sup>88</sup> Christ is "the Bridegroom because 'he has given himself [*seipsum tradidit*]'."<sup>89</sup> John Paul interpreted the reference in Eph 5:25 to Christ's loving the Church and giving himself up for her as a description of Christ's "total gift of self [*integra donatio sui*]."<sup>90</sup> "To give [*tradere*]' means 'to become a sincere gift [*sincere donum fieri*]' in the most complete and radical way."<sup>91</sup> "The 'sincere gift' contained in the Sacrifice of the Cross gives definitive prominence to the spousal meaning [*sensum sponsalis*] of God's love."<sup>92</sup> In the Eucharist, Christ the Bridegroom continues to give himself to his Bride, the Church.<sup>93</sup>

The Church, as the Bride of Christ, receives Christ's gift of love and is called to respond with a gift of love in return. This receiving and giving of love is critical to the bridal reality of the

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86. TOB 95b:4 (September 29, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 628].

87. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 26 [AAS 80, 1715]. Translation modified slightly. See also General Audience (April 27, 1988), no. 9 [IGP 11.1, 1048; JP-*Jesus*, 353].

88. *Letter to Families*, no. 22 [AAS 86, 922].

89. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 26 [AAS 80, 1715-16]. See also no. 25 [AAS 80, 1713], and Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, no. 13 [AAS 74, 93].

90. Encyclical *Veritatis splendor* (August 6, 1993), no. 89 [AAS 85, 1204]. See also TOB 94:5 (September 15, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 461].

91. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1713].

92. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 26 [AAS 80, 1716].

93. See Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (April 17, 2003), no. 48 [AAS 95, 465].

Church. In fact, “in the Church every human being – male and female – is ‘bride’ [“*sponsa*” *est*], in that he or she accepts the gift of the love of Christ the Redeemer, and seeks to respond to it with the gift of his or her own person.”<sup>94</sup>

For John Paul, Christ’s spousal love (in his gift of self) is at the core of the Church’s being, and Pope John Paul made numerous references to Christ’s love (*amor*, *caritas*, *dilectio*) for his beloved Bride, the Church.<sup>95</sup> The Church is the “most beloved” (*dilectissima*) Bride of Christ.<sup>96</sup> This love of the Bridegroom makes fruitful the various gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit.<sup>97</sup> By his love as Redeemer and Bridegroom on the Cross, Christ affirms the great dignity of every human person.<sup>98</sup> This love calls for the bride’s response, the Church’s love for Christ, her Bridegroom.<sup>99</sup> John Paul specified an order to the love manifest in the imagery of Bridegroom

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94. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1714]. Translation modified.

95. For examples of these references, see Homily *Desidero oggi* (June 30, 1979), nos. 1, 3 and 4 [AAS 71, 910, 912 and 913]; Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), nos. 13, 17 and 20 [AAS 74, pp. 93, 95, 100 and 103]; Address *Sono lieto* (January 28, 1982), nos. 3 and 12 [AAS 74, 450 and 454]; Apostolic Constitution *Divinus Perfectionis Magister* (January 25, 1983), no. 1 [AAS 75, 349]; Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 25 [AAS 80, 1713]; Message *Sono passati* (May 31, 1989) [AAS 81, 1332]; Address *Queridos jóvenes* (August 20, 1989), no. 3 [AAS 82, 249]; Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* (March 25, 1992), no. 50 [AAS 84, 747]; Address *I have eagerly* (July 7, 1992), no. 9 [AAS 85, 700]; Address *It is with “joy”* (February 9, 1993), no. 3 [AAS 85, 949]; Address *The Spirit has led you* (August 14, 1993), no. 1 [AAS 86, 423]; and Address “*Ci benedica*” (October 15, 2000), no. 4 [AAS 93, 90].

96. Apostolic Letter *Pia Mater* (January 4, 1982) [AAS 74, 534]. See also Address *É para mim motivo* (September 21, 2002) [AAS 95, 123].

97. Letter *A ministerii nostri* (March 25, 1982), no. 5 [AAS 74, 527]. See also Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), no. 17 [AAS 81, 419].

98. See Apostolic Letter *Dilecti amici* (March 31, 1985), no. 7 [AAS 77, 595].

99. For various examples, see Homily *Expedit, ut laborum* (September 26, 1980), no. 5 [AAS 72, 1009]; *Redemptionis Donum* (March 25, 1984), no. 14 [AAS 76, 539]; Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 27 [AAS 80, 1718-20]; Address “*Natus est hodie*” (December 21, 1996), no. 3 [AAS 89, 460-461]; Address “*Quand arriva*” (June 12, 2000), no. 2 [AAS 92, 722]; and General Audience (February 7, 2001), nos. 2-4 [IGP 24.1, 307-9; JP-*Trinity*, 443-45].

and Bride: “The Bridegroom [*Sponsus*] is the one who loves. The Bride [*Sponsa*] is loved: *it is she who receives [recipit] love, in order to love in return.*”<sup>100</sup>

John Paul also echoed his predecessors in affirming the call and mission of Christians to love the Church, the Bride of Christ, as Christ loved her.<sup>101</sup> In a more general sense, as that of the Bridegroom, Christ’s love is the “paradigm and exemplar of all human love.”<sup>102</sup> The following words capture succinctly the significance of the “communion of love” between Christ and the Church:<sup>103</sup> “*To be loved by Christ and to love him* with spousal love is constitutive of the Church’s mystery.”<sup>104</sup>

John Paul’s reflections on vocation and mission also included an emphasis on the dynamic and even dramatic characteristic of the bridal Church’s receiving and giving of love. By means of the sharing in Christ’s Priesthood that comes through baptism, “all are called to respond – as a bride – with the gift of their lives to the inexpressible gift of the love of Christ, who alone, as the Redeemer of the world, is the Church’s Bridegroom.”<sup>105</sup> For young people discerning a priestly or religious vocation, John Paul directed them to consider the “spousal love of Christ.”<sup>106</sup> For those discerning marriage, he invited them to commit to Christ’s invitation:

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100. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 29 [AAS 80, 1722].

101. See Address *Con profunda alegría* (March 3, 1983), nos. 2 and 7 [AAS 75, 703 and 707]; Apostolic Letter *Id habet Ecclesia* (June 22, 1983) [AAS 77, 463]; Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), no. 15 [AAS 76, 541]; Address *I extend* (March 10, 1986), no. 3 [AAS 78, 1038]; Encyclical *Redemptoris missio* (December 7, 1990), no. 89 [AAS 83, 336]; Address *I gladly welcome* (November 19, 1993), no. 1 [AAS 86, 730]; and Message *Benedetto sia Dio* (June 4, 1997), no. 3 [IGP 20.1, 1417-18, original in Polish].

102. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1714].

103. General Audience (December 10, 2003), no. 5 [IGP 26.2, 942; JP-*Vespers*, 31].

104. General Audience (February 7, 2001), no. 2 [IGP 24.1, 307; JP-*Trinity*, 443].

105. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 27 [AAS 80, 1717]. See also Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), no. 14 [AAS 81, 412].

106. Apostolic Letter *Dilecti amici* (March 31, 1985), no. 8 [AAS 77, 600].

“Follow me,” follow me who am the Bridegroom of the Church who is my bride; come, you too become the bridegroom of your bride, you too become the bride of your spouse. Both of you become sharers in that mystery ... which the Letter to the Ephesians says is something great.<sup>107</sup>

John Paul also invited priests “to help Christian families reflect by their whole life the mystery of spousal love [*le mystere d’amour sponsal*] between Christ and his Church.”<sup>108</sup>

#### 4. The Church as the holy, faithful, beautiful, and immaculate Bride, united to Christ and called to deeper union

Like his predecessors, John Paul II incorporated into his teaching the familiar, scriptural attributes traditionally associated with the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ. At the same time, a consistent dynamism and participatory or dramatic quality to these attributes undergirded much of John Paul’s use of the imagery.

The Bride of Christ is holy (*sancta, sanctificata*) and immaculate (*immaculata, sine macula aut ruga*) (see Eph 5).<sup>109</sup> “To profess the Church as holy means to point to her face [*demonstrare faciem*] as *the Bride of Christ*, for whom he gave himself precisely ‘in order to make her holy’ (Eph 5:25-

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107. Apostolic Letter *Dilecti amici*, no. 10 [AAS 77, 605].

108. Address *C’est une joie* (May 17, 1990) [AAS 82, 1613]. See also Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (June 28, 2003), no. 94 [AAS 95, 702].

109. See Apostolic Letter *Patres Ecclesiae* (January 2, 1980) [AAS 72, 18]; Homily *Four hundred years* (February 17, 1981), no. 5 [AAS 73, 312]; Homily *Oggi è un giorno* (October 4, 1981), no. 1 [AAS 73, 662]; Letter *Virtutis exemplum* (October 14, 1981) [AAS 73, 694]; Address *Grande è la mia gioia* (September 26, 1982), no. 2 [AAS 74, 1241]; Address *L’imminenza del Natale* (December 23, 1982), no. 11 [AAS 75, 217]; Address *Con grande gioia* (January 24, 1986) [AAS 78, 726]; Address *No os llamo* (July 5, 1986), no. 6 [AAS 79, 83]; Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus* (April 12, 1988), no. 9 [AAS 81, 905]; General Audience (July 23, 1988), no. 4 [IGP 11.3, 159]; Address *We are coming* (December 10, 1988) [AAS 81, 768]; Address *With great joy* (November 8, 1993), no. 1 [AAS 86, 656]; Letter to Families (February 2, 1994), no. 19 [AAS 86, 911]; Address *E com muito* (July 11, 1995) [AAS 88, 276]; Address *Aguardei com* (September 5, 1995), nos. 1 and 4 [AAS 88, 488 and 491]; Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis* (October 16, 2003), no. 21 [AAS 96, 853]; Address *To you, the Bishops* (April 29, 2004), no. 2 [AAS 96, 656]; and Homily *Con queste parole* (December 8, 2004), no. 6 [AAS 97, 142].

26).<sup>110</sup> She is faithful (*fidelis*), even the faithful virgin (*virgo fidelis*) after the model of Mary.<sup>111</sup> As the holy Bride, the Church is beautiful (*bellezza*) and glorious (*gloriosa*), especially in her saints and consecrated religious (see Rev 21:2).<sup>112</sup> The Bride of Christ is beautiful even in her diverse cultures, which adorn the Bride as jewels (see Is 61:10).<sup>113</sup> She is also youthful.<sup>114</sup>

And yet, echoing Pius XII, the Second Vatican Council, and especially Paul VI, John Paul II taught that the face (*vultus*) of the Bride could still shine with more beauty and holiness.<sup>115</sup> “We ... sons and daughters of the Church, have sinned and have hindered the Bride of Christ from shining forth in all her beauty [*quominus omni sui vultus venustate splenderet*].”<sup>116</sup> The “holiness that Christ wills for his Church” is that which “consummates the union of Christ and his Bride in heaven.”<sup>117</sup> The Bride is still a pilgrim, a “Church of sinners” (*Ecclesia peccatorum*), remaining, as

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110. Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (January 6, 2001), no. 30 [AAS 93, 287]. Translation modified slightly. See also General Audience (July 23, 1988), no. 4 [IGP 11.3, 159; JP-*Jesus*, 385]; General Audience (December 12, 1990), no. 1 [IGP 13.2, 1602; JP-*Spirit*, 330].

111. See Homily *Desidero oggi* (June 30, 1979), no. 1 [AAS 71, 909]; Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987), nos. 35 and 43 [AAS 79, 406 and 420]; Address *Au terme* (May 6, 1993), no. 5 [AAS 85, 321]; Address *In questo incontro* (December 22, 1994) [AAS 87, 846]; and Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (January 6, 2001), no. 49 [AAS 93, 302].

112. See Apostolic Constitution *Divinus Perfectionis Magister* (January 25, 1983), no. 1 [AAS 75, 349]; Apostolic Letter *Inde ab ipsis* (June 20, 1983) [AAS 79, 1264]; Address *Grazia a voi* (January 2, 1986) [AAS 78, 454]; Address *It gives me* (February 11, 1989), no. 6 [AAS 81, 954]; Apostolic Letter “*Exaltavit humiles*” (May 6, 1990) [AAS 82, 853]; Message *Dio è Amore* (May 19, 1991) [AAS 84, 160]; Encyclical *Veritatis splendor* (August 6, 1993), no. 108 [AAS 85, 1218]; Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 19 [AAS 88, 393]; Apostolic Letter *Incarnationis mysterium* (November 29, 1998), nos. 10-11 [AAS 91, 138-139 and 141]; and Address *E com grande* (August 31, 2002) [AAS 95, 55].

113. See Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (September 14, 1995), no. 61 [AAS 88, 39].

114. See Letter *A ministerii nostri* (March 25, 1982), nos. 2 and 9, citing *Lumen gentium*, no. 4 [AAS 74, 523 and 531]; Address “*I thank my God*” (September 21, 1993) [AAS 86, 499]; Apostolic Letter *Orientale Lumen* (May 2, 1995), no. 8 [AAS 87, 753]; Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 64 [AAS 88, 439]; and Address *It is always* (September 27, 1996), no. 2 [AAS 89, 125].

115. For example, see Letter *Virtutis exemplum* (October 14, 1981) [AAS 73, 694], and Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (January 6, 2001), no. 6 [AAS 93, 269].

116. Apostolic Letter *Incarnationis mysterium* (November 29, 1998), no. 11 [AAS 91, 140]. See also Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (January 6, 2001), no. 6 [AAS 93, 269]; Address “*Ti adoreranno*” (January 6, 2001), no. 5 [AAS 93, 312].

117. Address *We are coming* (December 10, 1988) [AAS 81, 768]. Original in English.

the Second Vatican Council taught, a worthy and holy bride by grace and sustained by continual renewal through the Holy Spirit and the Bridegroom's love.<sup>118</sup> In particular, the Jubilee year at the beginning of the third millennium became a call by Christ to his "virginal Bride" toward "a renewed fidelity to the Gospel ... a more radiant holiness and ... a more serene courage in the apostolate."<sup>119</sup>

In the Bride's unity with her Bridegroom, all of the baptized share in Christ's holy priesthood and are called to respond to his love with the gift of self. John Paul emphasized that the hierarchical structure of the Church is ordered toward the "holiness of Christ's members," and "holiness is measured according to the 'great mystery' in which the Bride responds with the gift of love to the gift of the Bridegroom."<sup>120</sup> The call to holiness is "an *undeniable requirement arising from the mystery of the Church*; she is the choice Vine ... the Mystical Body ... the Beloved Bride of the Lord Jesus."<sup>121</sup>

The Church, as the Bride of Christ, is united with Christ—is one with him "in a profound communion of love" (*comunione d'amore*)—and is also herself one, as Christ's one and only Bride.<sup>122</sup> "The Church has only one life: that which is given to her by her Spouse and Lord."<sup>123</sup> The Church is

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118. *Letter to Families* (February 2, 1994), no. 19 [AAS 86, 911]. See also Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987), no. 35 [AAS 79, 406]; Address *Vi accolgo* (February 16, 1996), no. 5 [AAS 88, 803]. On the Second Vatican Council, see chapter five above, p. 210ff.

119. Address *With the words* (October 21, 1994), no. 2 [AAS 87, 622].

120. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 27 [AAS 80, 1717-18]. See also Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), no. 17 [AAS 81, 419-420].

121. Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), no. 16 [AAS 81, 417]. See also *Letter to Families* (February 2, 1994), no. 19 [AAS 86, 911].

122. General Audience (December 10, 2003), no. 5 [IGP 26.2, 942; JP-*Vespers*, 31]. For various examples, see Address *Cette réunion* (April 30, 1983), no. 4 [AAS 75, 654]; Address *It is a real joy* (September 24, 1983), no. 3 [AAS 76, 124]; Address *Through you* (November 26, 1988), no. 6 [AAS 81, 747]; Address *"It is with great joy"* (August 27, 1991) [AAS 84, 515]; Address *E com muito* (July 11, 1995) [AAS 88, 275]; Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata*

*the Bride united [iuncta] to her Bridegroom: united [coniuncta], because she lives his life; united [consociata], because she shares in his threefold mission ... united [copulata] in such a manner as to respond with a 'sincere gift' of self to the inexpressible gift of the love of the Bridegroom, the Redeemer of the world.*<sup>124</sup>

The “concord” of unity within the Church is “necessary for expressing the love that the Church has for her Bridegroom.”<sup>125</sup> The Church’s life is something of a continual “striving [*intentio*] ... towards union [*coniunctio*] with her one Spouse.”<sup>126</sup> John Paul repeatedly cited *Lumen gentium*, no. 4, on the Holy Spirit leading the Bride of Christ to an ever renewed and more perfect union with Christ.<sup>127</sup>

## 5. The Eucharist and ecclesial bridal imagery

Several instances of John Paul II’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery were situated within the context of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is “the greatest gift [*maximum donum*] in the order of grace and Sacrament that the Divine Bridegroom [*Sponsus Divinus*] has offered and unceasingly

(March 25, 1996), no. 59 [AAS 88, 431]; and Message *A voi tutti* (September 8, 2001), no. 2 [AAS 94, 349]. See also CDF, Declaration *Dominus Iesus* (August 6, 2000), no. 16 [AAS 92, 756-57].

123. Encyclical *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), no. 18 [AAS 71, 301].

124. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 27 [AAS 80, 1717].

125. Address “*Quand arriva*” (June 12, 2000), no. 2 [AAS 92, 722].

126. Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 3 [AAS 88, 378]; Message *La celebrazione* (January 6, 1997), no. 1 [IGP 20.1, 22]. See also Address “*Grace to you*” (March 12, 1998), no. 7 [AAS 90, 970].

127. See Apostolic Letter *A Concilio Constantinopolitano I* (March 25, 1981), no. 7; Letter *A ministerii nostri* (March 25, 1982), nos. 2 and 9 [AAS 74, 523 and 531]; Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* (May 18, 1986), no. 25 [AAS 78, 835]; Address *Dans les visites* (June 14, 1986), no. 2 [AAS 78, 1310]; Apostolic Letter *Sescentesima Anniversaria* (June 5, 1987), no. 1 [AAS 79, 1274]; Address *Before beginning* (September 16, 1987), no. 14 [AAS 80, 800]; Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* (June 28, 1988), no. 1 [AAS 80, 842]; Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), no. 20 [AAS 81, 426]; General Audience (September 27, 1989), no. 8 [IGP 12.2, 683; JP-*Spirit*, 104]; Apostolic Letter *Los caminos* (June 29, 1990), no. 13 [AAS 83, 30]; General Audience (November 28, 1990), no. 8 [IGP 13.2, 1318]; Address *Saluto e ringrazio* (April 11, 1991), no. 6 [AAS 84, 30]; and Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 64 [AAS 88, 439]. On the Holy Spirit as enabling Christians to encounter the Lord in a filial context, including “the experience of God as ... Bridegroom,” see General Audience (June 17, 1998), no. 5 [IGP 21.1, 1392; JP-*Trinity*, 76].



offers to his Bride [*Sponsa*].”<sup>128</sup> The “humility of the Bride” reveals in a particular way “the glory and power of the Eucharist, which she celebrates and treasures in her heart.”<sup>129</sup> The Church “prays in union with Christ her Head and Spouse, who takes up [the] plea of his Bride.”<sup>130</sup> The Eucharist involves the Church’s “‘intimacy’ [*familiaritas*] with her Spouse.”<sup>131</sup>

The sacraments of marriage and the Eucharist are closely connected: “The Eucharist is the very source of Christian marriage. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, in fact, represents Christ’s covenant of love with the Church, sealed with his Blood on the Cross.”<sup>132</sup> The Eucharist is “the sacrament of the spousal nuptials [*nozze sponsali*] of Christ and humanity in the Church.”<sup>133</sup> In this regard, John Paul linked the Eucharist closely to the “great mystery” of Ephesians 5: “The Eucharist has a fundamental role [*un fundamental papel*], since in it is manifest and realized the total love that unites Christ with his Church. This is the ‘great mystery’ that illuminates the life of Christian marriage.”<sup>134</sup> In fact, the “highest level [*altissimus gradus*] of the ‘great mystery’” is at the same time “the highest meaning [*altissimus sensus*] of Baptism and the Eucharist,” which are fruits

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128. Apostolic Letter *Dominicae cenae* (February 24, 1980), no. 12 [AAS 72, 142]. See also TOB 79:9 (April 21, 1982) [IGP 5.1, 1274]; Letter *In cenaculum* (March 25, 1988), no. 4 [AAS 80, 1285]; and Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (April 17, 2003), no. 48 [AAS 95, 465].

129. Apostolic Letter *Incarnationis mysterium* (November 29, 1998), no. 11 [AAS 91, 141].

130. Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (April 17, 2003), no. 43 [AAS 95, 461].

131. Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 48 [AAS 95, 465].

132. Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), no. 57, see also no. 84 [AAS 74, 150 and 185]. See also Address *Autour des membres* (May 29, 1987), no. 4 [AAS 79, 1500]; *Letter to Families* (February 2, 1994), no. 11 [AAS 86, 883].

133. General Audience (September 18, 1991), no. 3 [IGP 14.2, 591; *JP-Church*, 63]. Translation modified.

134. Address *Con sentimientos* (October 21, 1989) [AAS 82, 359].

of the Bridegroom's love.<sup>135</sup> Ultimately, the Eucharist is the "sacramental anticipation" of the wedding feast of the Lamb.<sup>136</sup>

John Paul also considered the significance of the link between the Eucharist and the priestly service of the Apostles. The Eucharist is "*the Sacrament of the Bridegroom and of the Bride*," the re-presentation of Christ the Bridegroom's redemptive gift of self for his Bride.<sup>137</sup> In light of the fact that Christ connected the Eucharist with the Apostles' priestly service, John Paul deemed it "legitimate to conclude that [Christ] thereby wished to express the relationship between man and woman, between what is 'feminine' and what is 'masculine.'"<sup>138</sup>

Ecclesial bridal imagery was also used in the context of the liturgy in general and the other sacraments.<sup>139</sup> Baptism, as incorporation into Christ, "entails incorporation into the Church, the Bride of the Word, our immaculate and loving Mother."<sup>140</sup> John Paul referred to the liturgy as "the voice of the Holy Spirit and of the Bride, holy Church, crying in unison to the Lord Jesus: 'Come'."<sup>141</sup> Vespers are described as the voice of the Bride and the Bridegroom

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135. *Letter to Families* (February 2, 1994), no. 19 [AAS 86, 911].

136. General Audience (September 13, 1989), no. 2 [IGP 12.2, 513; JP-*Spirit*, 91].

137. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 26 [AAS 80, 1716]. See also Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* (March 25, 1992), no. 23 [AAS 84, 693]; Address *Mit "der herzlichsten Liebe"* (November 20, 1999), no. 9 [AAS 92, 254].

138. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 26 [AAS 80, 1716].

139. See TOB 91:7-8 (August 25, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 287-88]; Address *I welcome you* (June 5, 1993), no. 2 [AAS 86, 336]; *Letter to Families* (February 2, 1994), no. 19 [AAS 86, 910].

140. Apostolic Letter "*Dio, meraviglioso*" (February 2, 2001), no. 1 [AAS 93, 462].

141. Apostolic Letter *Spiritus et Sponsa* (December 4, 2003), no. 1 [AAS 96, 419].

directed to the Father.<sup>142</sup> “The Psalms resound with the voice of the Bride (*vox sponsae*) as she calls upon her Bridegroom.”<sup>143</sup>

A particularly significant use of ecclesial bridal imagery in connection with the eucharistic liturgy occurred in John Paul’s apostolic letter *Dies Domini*. In this letter, John Paul recognized Sunday as the day *par excellence* when the Church’s nature as Bride (“*sponsalem*” *suam indolem*) is most manifest and when the Church anticipates the coming of her Bridegroom.<sup>144</sup> In using this spousal imagery in reference to Sunday, the Pope also referred to a tradition of Jewish interpretation that recognized the Sabbath as a nuptial reality.<sup>145</sup>

## 6. Marriage and the family, the “great mystery,” and the Church as Bride

Teaching on the sacrament of marriage was a recurring context for John Paul’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery. John Paul used various terms for the union of Christ with his Bride, the Church (*alliance, sponsale foedus, coniunctio, unione nuziale*), understood as a symbol (*le symbole*) and model (*le modele*) of Christian marriage; he also described the sacramental union of husband and wife as an image, sign, or symbol of the covenant and bond between Christ and the Church (*imago et signum foederis, signum et locum, verum signe, il simbolo reale, solidum signum*).<sup>146</sup> According to

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142. Address *In their deepest* (September 17, 1987), no. 1 [AAS 80, 805]. See also General Audience (April 4, 2001), no. 2 [IGP 24.1, 657; JP-Lauds, 10].

143. Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis* (October 16, 2003), no. 17 [AAS 96, 849].

144. Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* (May 31, 1998), nos. 37, 38 and 85 [AAS 90, 736-37 and 764].

145. Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, no. 12 [AAS 90, 720]. See p. 299 below.

146. For examples of John Paul’s use of these terms, see Address *L’émotion et la joie* (May 3, 1980), no. 3 [AAS 72, 426]; Homily *Finding myself* (February 19, 1981), nos. 3-4 [AAS 73, 364-65]; Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), nos. 13, 20, 51, and 56 [AAS 74, pp. 95-96, 103, and 149-50]; Address *It is a real joy* (September 24, 1983), nos. 2-3 and 10 [AAS 76, 124 and 128]; Apostolic Letter *Dilecti amici* (March 31, 1985), no. 10 [AAS 77, 605-6]; Address *È per me una grande gioia* (January 30, 1986), no. 3 [AAS 78, 923]; Homily *These words* (February 9, 1986), no. 5 [AAS 78, 773]; Address *Pace a voi* (May 2, 1986), no. 3 [AAS 78, 1159]; Address *Viva gioia* (February 5, 1987), no. 6 [AAS 79, 1456-57]; Address “*El Señor*” (April 1, 1987) [AAS 80, 137]; Address *Autour des membres* (May 29, 1987), nos. 4-5 [AAS 79, 1500-1]; Letter *Con viva gioia* (March 14, 1988) [AAS 80, 1323]; Apostolic

John Paul, Christ's spousal love for the Church is "the one and only key" for understanding the sacramentality of marriage.<sup>147</sup> "Christ the Bridegroom accompanies married couples."<sup>148</sup> John Paul referenced the privileged place of marriage in the unfolding of God's plans: "Can we not deduce that marriage has remained the platform for the realization of God's eternal plans?"<sup>149</sup> Husband and wife are "sharers" (*particeps*) in the "great mystery"; marriage "expresses," even "contains," this mystery.<sup>150</sup> It is "really inserted into the very mystery of the covenant of Christ with the Church."<sup>151</sup> As it relates to the "great mystery," then, "marriage is organically inscribed in this new sacrament of redemption, just as it was inscribed in the original sacrament of creation."<sup>152</sup>

Following the trajectory set by his predecessors, Pope John Paul II referenced aspects of Ephesians 5:21-33 quite regularly in his teaching on marriage, in his use of ecclesial bridal

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Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 23 [AAS 80, 1710]; Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), nos. 40 and 52 [AAS 81, 468 and 498]; Address *Je suis heureux* (June 16, 1989), no. 2 [AAS 82, 67]; Address *C'est une joie* (May 17, 1990), no. 3 [AAS 82, 1613]; *Pastores dabo vobis* (March 25, 1992), no. 50 [AAS 84, 747]; Address *Pendant cette visite* (March 28, 1992) [AAS 85, 364]; Address *With affection* (September 23, 1993) [AAS 86, 501]; *Letter to Families* (February 2, 1994), nos. 18-19 [AAS 86, 907 and 910-12]; General Audience (November 23, 1994), no. 4 [IGP 17.2, 846-47; JP-*Church*, 566]; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (September 14, 1995), no. 83 [AAS 88, 53]; Apostolic Letter *Operosam diem* (December 1, 1996), no. 24 [AAS 89, 232]; Address *C'est avec joie* (December 7, 1996), no. 6 [AAS 89, 306]; Address *Au moment* (August 28, 1999), no. 6 [AAS 91, 1123-24]; Address *En accomplissant ensemble* (September 27, 1999), no. 7 [AAS 92, 171]; Address *Ogni anno* (January 21, 2000), no. 3 [AAS 92, 351]; Address *L'inaugurazione* (February 1, 2001), no. 8 [AAS 93, 363]; Address *Sono molto* (May 31, 2001), no. 3 [AAS 93, 666]; Address *Me es grato* (July 2, 2002), no. 5 [AAS 94, 738]; Address *Os recibo* (October 15, 2002), no. 4 [AAS 95, 133]; Address *La solenne inaugurazione* (January 30, 2003), no. 4 [AAS 95, 394-95]; Address *Je vous accueille* (June 17, 2003), no. 4 [AAS 95, 869]; and Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (June 28, 2003), nos. 90 and 94 [AAS 95, 700 and 702]. See also CDF, Considerations *Diverse questioni* (July 3, 2003), no. 3 [AAS 96, 43].

147. TOB 81:4 (May 5, 1982) [IGP 5.2, 1406-7].

148. Address *As the Church continues* (April 25, 1997), no. 4 [AAS 90, 134-35].

149. TOB 97:1 (October 13, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 810].

150. Apostolic Letter *Dilecti amici* (March 31, 1985), no. 10 [AAS 77, 605]; Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (January 6, 2001), no. 47 [AAS 93, 300].

151. Address *La solenne inaugurazione* (January 30, 2003), no. 4 [AAS 95, 394].

152. TOB 102:7 (December 15, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 1605].

imagery, and in other teaching on the Church.<sup>153</sup> However, to the extent which Ephesians 5 and the “great mystery” became a decisive reference point, John Paul’s teaching on marriage and the union of Christ with his Church was unparalleled. Some of his most noteworthy uses of ecclesial bridal imagery occurred in the context of extended considerations of Ephesians 5.<sup>154</sup>

For example, in his Wednesday audience addresses on the theology of the body, John Paul’s analysis of Ephesians 5 strategically followed his previous analyses of particular words of Christ from Scripture.<sup>155</sup> John Paul understood these words of Christ as foundations for a theology of the human body, and thus for a theological anthropology that takes full account of

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153. For examples of John Paul’s use of Eph 5:21-33, see Letter *Novo incipiente* (April 8, 1979), no. 8 [AAS 71, 407]; Homily *Desidero oggi* (June 30, 1979), no. 1 [AAS 71, 910]; Homily *Expedit, ut laborum* (September 26, 1980), no. 5 [AAS 72, 1009]; Homily *Finding myself* (February 19, 1981), no. 4 [AAS 73, 365]; Letter *A ministerii nostri* (March 25, 1982), no. 5 [AAS 74, 526]; TOB 87-117b (July 28, 1982 – July 4, 1984) [IGP 5.3, 132-35 – 7.2, 7-10]; Address *Grande è la mia gioia* (September 26, 1982), no. 2 [AAS 74, 1241]; Address *L’immenenza del Natale* (December 23, 1982), no. 11 [AAS 75, 217]; Address *It is a real joy* (September 24, 1983), no. 10 [AAS 76, 128]; Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), no. 15 [AAS 76, 543]; Apostolic Letter *Dilecti amici* (March 31, 1985), no. 10 [AAS 77, 605-6]; Homily *These words* (February 9, 1986), no. 5 [AAS 78, 773]; Address *I extend* (March 10, 1986), no. 3 [AAS 78, 1038]; Address *Viva gioia* (February 5, 1987), no. 6 [AAS 79, 1457]; General Audience (July 23, 1988), no. 4 [IGP 11.3, 159]; Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), nos. 23-27 [AAS 80, 1708-20]; Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus* (April 12, 1988), no. 9 [AAS 81, 905]; Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), no. 16 [AAS 81, 417]; Address *Queridos jóvenes* (August 20, 1989), no. 3 [AAS 82, 249]; Address *Una mujer* (May 10, 1990), no. 4 [AAS 82, 1429]; Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio* (December 7, 1990), no. 89 [AAS 83, 336]; General Audience (January 30, 1991), no. 8 [IGP 14.1, 237]; *Pastores dabo vobis* (March 25, 1992), no. 22 [AAS 84, 690-91]; Address *This meeting* (July 9, 1992), no. 7 [AAS 85, 706]; Address *It is with “joy”* (February 9, 1993), no. 3 [AAS 85, 949]; Encyclical Letter *Veritatis splendor* (August 6, 1993), no. 89 [AAS 85, 1204]; Letter to Families (February 2, 1994), no. 19 [AAS 86, 910-14]; *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 19 [AAS 88, 392]; Apostolic Exhortation *Une espérance nouvelle pour le Liban* (May 10, 1997), no. 46 [AAS 89, 352]; Message *Benedetto sia Dio* (June 4, 1997), no. 3 [IGP 20.1, 1417-18, original in Polish]; Address *Mit “der herzlichen Liebe”* (November 20, 1999), no. 9 [AAS 92, 255]; Address *“Ci benedica”* (October 15, 2000), no. 4 [AAS 93, 90]; Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (January 6, 2001), no. 47 [AAS 93, 300]; Address *L’inaugurazione* (February 1, 2001), no. 8 [AAS 93, 364]; Address *“Cristo amou”* (October 19, 2002), no. 1 [AAS 95, 139]; Address *Salido todos vós* (November 16, 2002), no. 6 [AAS 95, 258]; Address *La solenne inaugurazione* (January 30, 2003), nos. 4 and 6 [AAS 95, 394-96]; Address *To you, the Bishops* (April 29, 2004), no. 2 [AAS 96, 656]; and General Audience (October 6, 2004), no. 1 [IGP 27.2, 347; JP-Vespers, 97].

154. In particular, extended considerations of Eph 5:21-33 can be found in TOB 87-102 [IGP 5.3, 132-1610]; Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, nos. 23-27 [AAS 80, 1708-20]; and Letter to Families, no. 19 [AAS 86, 910-14].

155. “We treated the words in which Christ appeals to the ‘beginning’ (Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6), to the human ‘heart’ in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:28), and to the future resurrection (Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25; Lk 20:35-36).” TOB 87:2 (July 28, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 133].

the significance of the human body and of the meaning and value of sexual difference, male and female.<sup>156</sup> He noted:

What is contained in the passage of Ephesians is the “*crowning*,” as it were, of these other comprehensive key words. Since the theology of the body emerged from them in its evangelical outline, simple and at the same time fundamental, *we must in some sense presuppose this theology* in interpreting the passage from Ephesians just quoted. Therefore, if one wishes to *interpret this passage*, one must do so *in the light* of what *Christ* has told us about the human body.<sup>157</sup>

Already, this passage indicates that John Paul’s consideration of marriage and the “great mystery” was integrally connected to the meaning and vocation of the human person and the mystery of God himself.<sup>158</sup>

According to John Paul II, the “great mystery” of Ephesians 5, in the direct and “strict sense,” refers specifically to the mystery of Christ and the Church and not to the sacrament of marriage.<sup>159</sup> Nevertheless, “the bases of the sacramentality of marriage” are found in the “great mystery,” since it is from that same mystery of Christ’s union with the Church that marriage as a sacrament is born.<sup>160</sup> Marriage thus also can be called “the great mystery,” in light of an extension of “the analogy of Christ’s union with the Church in spousal love ... to the sacramental sign of the spousal covenant between man and woman.”<sup>161</sup> In this way, John Paul followed a long-established tradition of interpreting the “great mystery” in reference to the

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156. The full extent of John Paul’s “theology of the body” cannot be treated here. Helpful introductions on the anthropological significance of John Paul’s thought include Waldstein, Introduction to TOB, 1-128, and J. Bransfield’s *The Human Person According to John Paul II*.

157. TOB 87:2 (July 28, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 133].

158. TOB 87:1-2 [IGP 5.3, 132-33]. In particular, see Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, nos. 23-27 [AAS 80, 1708-20].

159. TOB 93:4 (September 8, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 391].

160. TOB 93:4 [IGP 5.3, 391].

161. TOB 117b:1 (July 4, 1984) [IGP 7.2, 7].

sacrament of marriage, understood of course to be dependent upon (in strict reference to) the union of Christ and the Church.<sup>162</sup> The ambiguous *δέ* of Ephesians 5 was interpreted more in the sense of “and” rather than “however, but.”<sup>163</sup>

The *Letter to Families* (1994) contained perhaps the most noteworthy of John Paul’s reflections on the “great mystery” of Ephesians as it relates to marriage and family life. Marriage is the great mystery because it “contains [*continetur*] the spousal love of Christ for his Church.”<sup>164</sup> John Paul described the bridal Church in dynamic and dramatic terms: “*The Church becomes [fit] a Bride, the Bride of Christ.... The love with which the Bridegroom ‘has loved’ the Church ‘to the end’ continuously renews her holiness in her saints, even though she remains a Church of sinners.*”<sup>165</sup> John Paul then commented on the significance of Ephesians 5:21-33:

This is unquestionably a new presentation [*nova ratio*] of the eternal truth [*veritatis aeternae*] about marriage and the family in the light of the New Covenant. Christ has revealed this truth in the Gospel by his presence at Cana in Galilee, by the sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacraments of his Church. Husbands and wives thus discover in Christ *the point of reference for their spousal love*. In speaking of Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church, Saint Paul uses the analogy of spousal love [*similitudinem ad amorem sponsalem*], referring back to the Book of Genesis: “A man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Gen 2:24). This is the “great mystery” of that eternal love already present in creation, revealed in Christ and entrusted to the Church. “This mystery is a profound one,” the Apostle repeats, “and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church” (Eph 5:32).... The “great mystery,” which is the Church and humanity in Christ, does not exist apart from the “great mystery” expressed [*significatur locutione*] in

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162. For additional examples of Pope John Paul’s reference to marriage as a great mystery, see Letter *Novo incipiente* (April 8, 1979), no. 8 [AAS 71, 407]; Apostolic Letter *Dilecti amici* (March 31, 1985), no. 10 [AAS 77, 605-06]; General Audience (January 30, 1991), no. 8 [IGP 14.1, 237]; *Letter to Families* (February 2, 1994), no. 19 [AAS 86, 910-914]; Address “*Ci benedica*” (October 15, 2000), no. 4 [AAS 93, 90]; Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (January 6, 2001), no. 47 [AAS 93, 300]; Address *L’inaugurazione* (February 1, 2001), no. 8 [AAS 93, 364]; Homily “*Ma il Figlio*” (October 21, 2001), no. 3 [AAS 94, 195]; Address *Saúdo todos vós* (November 16, 2002), no. 6 [AAS 95, 258]; and Address *La solenne inaugurazione* (January 30, 2003), nos. 4 and 6 [AAS 95, 394-396].

163. See chapter one above, p. 13n15.

164. *Letter to Families*, no. 19 [AAS 86, 910].

165. *Letter to Families*, no. 19 [AAS 86, 911].

the “one flesh” (see Gen 2:24; Eph 5:31-32), that is, in the reality [*natura*] of marriage and the family.<sup>166</sup>

Here, John Paul II consolidated his earlier analysis of Ephesians 5 in the theology of the body, maintaining the necessary link between the mystery of Christ and the Church and the “mystery” of marriage and the family.

John Paul also pressed further the implications of St. Paul’s teaching on the great mystery. “Saint Paul’s magnificent synthesis [*complexio mirabilis*] concerning the ‘great mystery’ appears as the compendium or *summa*, in some sense, of the teaching about God and man which was brought to fulfillment by Christ.”<sup>167</sup> However, John Paul observed that modern rationalism, with its dualistic tendency to separate the spirit and the body, has been leading Western thought away from a proper appreciation of this mystery.

The modern age has made great progress in understanding both the material world and human psychology, but with regard to his deepest, metaphysical dimension contemporary man remains to a great extent a *being unknown* to himself. Consequently the family too remains an *unknown reality*. Such is the result of estrangement from that ‘great mystery’ spoken of by the Apostle.<sup>168</sup>

The dualism that has resulted between body and spirit can be described as a “new Manichaeism.”<sup>169</sup>

John Paul then gave a strong indictment of modern rationalism:

Modern rationalism *does not* [*haud*] *tolerate mystery*. It does not [*minime*] accept the mystery of man as male and female, nor is it willing to admit that the full truth about man has been revealed in Jesus Christ. In particular [*at potissimum*], it does not accept the “great mystery” proclaimed in the Letter to the Ephesians, but radically [*radicitus*] opposes it. It may well acknowledge, in the context of a vague deism, the possibility and even the need

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166. *Letter to Families*, no. 19 [AAS 86, 911-12].

167. *Letter to Families*, no. 19 [AAS 86, 912-13].

168. *Letter to Families*, no. 19 [AAS 86, 913].

169. *Letter to Families*, no. 19 [AAS 86, 913]. See also TOB 117b:2 (July 4, 1984) [IGP 7.2, 7].



for a supreme or divine Being, but it firmly rejects [*mordicus repudiat*] the idea of a God who became man in order to save man. For rationalism it is unthinkable that God should be the Redeemer, much less *that he should be “the Bridegroom”* [*“Sponsum”*], the primordial and unique source of the human love between spouses. Rationalism provides a radically different way of looking at creation and the meaning of human existence. But once man begins to lose sight of a God who loves him, a God who calls man through Christ to live in him and with him, and once the family no longer has the possibility of sharing [*facultas communicandi*] in the “great mystery,” what is left except the mere *temporal dimension of life?* . . .

The deep-seated roots of the “great mystery,” the sacrament of love and life which began with Creation and Redemption and which *has Christ the Bridegroom as its ultimate surety*, have been lost in the modern way of looking at things. [These roots] are threatened in us and all around us [*intra nos et circa nos*].<sup>170</sup>

There is an unmentioned implication here: if the “great mystery” and the reality of Christ as the Bridegroom cannot be accepted, neither can it make sense to call the Church the Bride of Christ. According to the logic of John Paul II’s teaching here, the loss of the sense of the Church as the Bride of Christ would signal the loss of a fundamental perspective on reality itself.

Finally, John Paul emphasized the significance of the family in his teaching:

‘The family itself is the great mystery of God. As [*instar*] the ‘domestic church,’ it is the *bride of Christ* [*sponsa Christi*]. The universal Church, and every particular Church in her, is most immediately revealed [*citius sese praestant*] as the bride of Christ in the ‘domestic church’ and in its experience of love.<sup>171</sup>

This passage appears to contain a new and original application of bridal imagery in contemporary magisterial teaching: the Christian family is referred to as the bride of Christ and situated as such in a privileged location within the universal and local Church. Elsewhere, John Paul described the family as “an image of the ineffable *communio* of the Most Holy Trinity.”<sup>172</sup> He

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170. *Letter to Families*, no. 19 [AAS 86, 914]. Translation modified.

171. *Letter to Families*, no. 19 [AAS 86, 912, see also 910]. See also Address *Salúdo todos vós* (November 16, 2002), no. 6 [AAS 95, 258].

172. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania* (November 22, 2001), no. 45 [AAS 94, 417]. The reference to the family as a mystery had a precursor in Pius XII’s teaching on the family as a mirror of the Trinity. See chapter 4 above, p. 173n114.

also spoke of the need to develop an ecclesiology of the Church as the “family of God.”<sup>173</sup> Such an ecclesiology would depend on a “profound study” of *Lumen gentium* and on an investigation of the various images for the Church, including the Church as the Bride of Christ and Mother.<sup>174</sup>

## 7. The covenantal backdrop to the analogy of spousal love

On multiple occasions, John Paul II discussed the analogy of spousal love as it developed in the Old Testament and in the understanding of God’s unfolding covenant with his people. According to John Paul, these considerations were essential for appreciating the significance of the “great mystery” of Christ’s union with his Church and marriage’s participation in this mystery. “This analogy [*comparatio*] [between the spousal love of husband and wife and the relationship between Christ and the Church] is not without precedent; it transfers to the New Testament what was already contained in the Old Testament, especially in the prophets Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah.”<sup>175</sup> Similar remarks and reflections were found throughout John Paul’s teaching.<sup>176</sup> In particular, the prophets revealed a new, “stupendous dimension” of

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173. Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (September 14, 1995), no. 63 [AAS 88, 40].

174. Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 63 [AAS 88, 40].

175. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 23 [AAS 80, 1709].

176. See Address *L’emotion et la joie* (May 3, 1980), no. 3 [AAS 72, 425-26]; Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (November 30, 1980), no. 4 [AAS 72, 1186-88]; *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), nos. 12-13 [AAS 74, 93-94]; General Audience (September 9, 1987), no. 7 [IGP 10.3, 340; JP-*Jesus*, 219]; General Audience (December 4, 1991) [IGP 14.2, 1307-10; JP-*Church*, 103-7]; General Audience (December 18, 1991) [IGP 14.2, 1415; JP-*Church*, 113]; *Letter to Families* (February 2, 1994), nos. 18-19 [AAS 86, 906 and 910-11]; General Audience (April 24, 1996) [IGP 19.1, 1070-73; JP-*Theotokos*, 79-82]; General Audience (March 5, 1997), no. 3 [IGP 20.1, 384-85]; *Dies Domini* (May 31, 1998), nos. 11-12 [AAS 90, 720-21]; Message *Dopo anni di preparazione* (June 29, 1999), nos. 6-7 [AAS 92, 56]; General Audience (October 6, 1999), nos. 1-3 [IGP 22.2, 555-57; JP-*Trinity*, 269-71]; General Audience (June 18, 2003) [IGP 26.1, 957-59; JP-*Lauds*, 250-53]; General Audience (July 16, 2003) [IGP 26.2, 56-58; JP-*Lauds*, 259-62]; General Audience (December 10, 2003) [IGP 26.2, 940-42; JP-*Vespers*, 29-31]; General Audience (September 29, 2004) [IGP 27.2, 312-14; JP-*Vespers*, 93-96]; General Audience (October 6, 2004) [IGP 27.2, 347-49; JP-*Vespers*, 96-99]; and CDF, *Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (May 31, 2004), nos. 9-10 [AAS 96, 677-80]. For related TOB references, see TOB 9:5 (November 14, 1979) [IGP 2.2, 1154-55]; TOB 21:1n32 (March 12, 1980) [IGP 3.1, 540-41n1]; TOB 36:5 (August 20, 1980) [IGP 3.2, 418]; TOB 37:1-3 (August 27, 1980) [IGP 3.2, 451-53]; TOB 87:4 (July 28, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 134]; TOB 94:6-8 (September 15, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 461-63]; TOB 95

God's lordship—the spousal dimension: “the absolute of lordship turns out to be the absolute of love.”<sup>177</sup> The “two levels” of this spousal analogy involved, first, the comparison of the covenant to marriage and, second, what John Paul described as “the language of the body,” to which the prophets referred in order to convey either the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the people.<sup>178</sup>

According to John Paul, God's spousal love was revealed at the very beginning of creation. God's gaze upon man “already discloses something of the ‘spousal’ dynamism or power [*dynamicam vim ‘sponsalem’*] of the relationship which God wants to establish with the creature made in his own image, by calling that creature to enter a pact of love.”<sup>179</sup> Both the work of creation and the work of redemption involved some aspect of “*God reveal[ing] himself as the bridegroom before the bride* (see Hos 2:16-24; Jer 2:2; Is 54:4-8).”<sup>180</sup> In his consideration of the Lord's Day, John Paul cited a tradition of viewing the Sabbath through a nuptial lens. “As certain elements of the ... Jewish tradition suggest, to reach the heart of the ‘*shabbat*,’ of God's ‘rest,’ we need to recognize in both the Old and the New Testament the nuptial intensity [*sponsalem ardorem*] which marks the relationship between God and his people.”<sup>181</sup>

John Paul also discussed the Song of Songs. He was aware of the various exegetical approaches to the text, and he granted that the text itself, with its primary focus on human love,

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(September 22, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 517-22]; TOB 95b:1-2 and 5 (September 29, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 626-29]; and TOB 104 (January 12, 1983) [IGP 6.1, 100-4].

177. TOB 104:3 (January 12, 1983) [IGP 6.1, 101].

178. TOB 104:4 (January 12, 1983) [IGP 6.1, 101-2].

179. Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* (May 31, 1998), no. 11 [AAS 90, 720]. Translation modified.

180. Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, no. 12 [AAS 90, 721].

181. Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, no. 12 [AAS 90, 721].

was situated outside of “the great prophetic analogy,” though connected to it “in some way.”<sup>182</sup> Nevertheless, John Paul argued that it was not possible to separate the Song from an understanding of marriage as the primordial sacrament (see Gen 2:23-25 and Mt 19:4) and thus from its indirect though significant relation to the “great mystery.”<sup>183</sup>

While John Paul considered the continuity between the old and the new covenants, he was also cognizant of the transformation contained in the new covenant, wherein the analogy of spousal love now refers to union with Christ. John Paul observed, “The ‘experience’ [*esperienza*] of Christ’s Passover and the ‘experience’ of Pentecost were necessary to give this meaning to the analogy of spousal love inherited from the prophets.”<sup>184</sup> Knowledge of the mysteries through instruction was not enough; rather, participation in the mysteries through experience was crucial.<sup>185</sup> The fact that the Church is the Bride of Christ should “make us want this beautiful experience.”<sup>186</sup> The bridal image then is only fully understood through experiencing the mystery of Christ’s love and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the metaphor is only truly understood when it is lived by grace.

## 8. The Church as the historical and eschatological Bride

John Paul often used ecclesial bridal imagery within an eschatological context. His emphasis on the covenant and the history of salvation provided an important framework for

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182. TOB 108:1-3 (May 23, 1984) [IGP 7.1, 1471-73].

183. TOB 108:3 (May 23, 1984) [IGP 7.1, 1472-73]. Later, John Paul would make the point more forcefully that the Song of Songs should be understood within the framework of God’s spousal relationship with his people. See General Audience (October 13, 1999), no. 1 [IGP 22.2, 575; JP-*Trinity*, 273].

184. General Audience (December 18, 1991), no. 6 [IGP 14.2, 1418; JP-*Church*, 116].

185. General Audience (December 18, 1991), no. 6 [IGP 14.2, 1418; JP-*Church*, 116].

186. General Audience (December 18, 1991), no. 7 [IGP 14.2, 1418; JP-*Church*, 116].

understanding the bridal Church both as she is here in this world and as she is promised to be in the eschaton.

In this world, the Bride of Christ remains the expectant, “pilgrim Church.”<sup>187</sup> She is on her way toward perfection, toward the “eschatological marriage” [*nuptias eschatologicas*] between Christ and the Church, where “the Church will at last fully live her love for Christ the Bridegroom.”<sup>188</sup> The liturgy involves “the Bride who implores the Bridegroom’s return in a ‘marana tha’ constantly repeated.”<sup>189</sup> History affects the Church. For example, the sins of the Church’s children over the years have darkened the face (*vultus*) of the Bride, leading her to remember her faults, ask forgiveness, and be renewed.<sup>190</sup>

Nevertheless, the “new Jerusalem” which is “prepared as a bride adorned” is not a future abstraction but rather “a *reality already in our midst*.”<sup>191</sup> This “apocalyptic image ... is being constantly realized in the Church, as the image of a people on the way,” as the Bride directed toward the eschatological goal of “the full realization of her marriage” with the Lamb.<sup>192</sup>

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187. Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987), no. 35 [AAS 79, 406]. See also Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* (May 31, 1998), no. 37 [AAA 90, 736]; Address “*Benedetto sia Dio*” (September 29, 1998), no. 2 [AAS 91, 270]; and Homily *A Gerusalemme* (February 2, 2000), no. 3 [IGP 23.1, 145].

188. Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), no. 16 [AAS 74, 98]; Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* (March 25, 1992), no. 29 [AAS 84, 703]; and Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 15 [AAS 88, 388]. See also Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 27 [AAS 80, 1718]; Address *We are coming* (December 10, 1988), no. 3 [AAS 81, 767-68]; General Audience (May 2, 2001), no. 1 [IGP 24.1, 827; JP- *Lauds*, 20]; and Homily *Quando venne* (February 1, 2003), no. 2 [IGP 26.1, 140].

189. Apostolic Letter *Orientale Lumen* (May 2, 1995), no. 10 [AAS 87, 756].

190. See Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (January 6, 2001), no. 6 [AAS 93, 269-70]; Address *Ti adoreranno* (January 6, 2001), no. 5 [AAS 93, 312]. See also Apostolic Letter *Nel tempo pasquale* (July 20, 2000), nos. 9, 11, and 13 [IGP 23.1, 783-88].

191. Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (June 28, 2003), no. 106 [AAS 95, 708]. See also General Audience (January 8, 1992) [IGP 15.1, 33-36; JP-*Church*, 117-20].

192. General Audience (January 8, 1992), nos. 5-6 [IGP 15.1, 35; JP-*Church*, 119-20]. See also General Audience (September 15, 2004) [IGP 27.2, 253-55; JP-*Vespers*, 29-31]. On this theme in connection to the Spirit and the Bride’s cry in Rev 22:17, see General Audience (July 3, 1991), no. 6 [IGP 14.2, 31; JP-*Spirit*, 431]. For other references to Rev 22:17, see General Audience (January 19, 2000), no. 5 [IGP 23.1, 92; JP-*Trinity*, 310]; General

## 9. The Church as Bride and Mother

Maternal imagery for the Church was present throughout John Paul's teaching with a frequency and scope comparable to that found in the writings of his predecessors.<sup>193</sup> Perhaps

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Audience (June 28, 2000), no. 3 [IGP 23.1, 1175; JP-*Trinity*, 354]; and General Audience (February 14, 2001), no. 5 [IGP 24.1, 363; JP-*Trinity*, 449].

193. For examples of the use of ecclesial maternal imagery in Pope John Paul's teaching, see Encyclical *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), no. 13 [AAS 71, 284]; Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* (April 15, 1979), sect. 2 [AAS 71, 471]; Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae* (October 16, 1979), no. 12 [AAS 71, 1286]; Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (November 30, 1980), no. 15 [AAS 72, 1230]; Homily *Finding myself* (February 19, 1981), no. 7 [AAS 73, 366]; Apostolic Letter *A Concilio Constantinopolitano I* (March 25, 1981), no. 11 [AAS 73, 526]; Letter *Virtutis exemplum* (October 14, 1981) [AAS 73, 692]; Apostolic Letter *Pia Mater* (January 4, 1982) [AAS 74, 535]; Apostolic Letter *Sicut mater* (May 23, 1985) [AAS 74, 1208]; Apostolic Letter *Aperite portas Redemptori* (January 6, 1983), nos. 4 and 11 [AAS 75, 94 and 101-02]; Address *Con profunda alegría* (March 3, 1983), nos. 3 and 7 [AAS 75, 704-05 and 707]; Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), no. 15 [AAS 76, 542]; Apostolic Letter *Sacerdotalis usquequaque* (September 30, 1984) [AAS 77, 931 and 933]; Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et paenitentia* (December 2, 1984), nos. 4, 12, 26 and 34 [AAS 77, pp. 189, 207, 242, and 272-73]; Address *Sacrum Consistorium* (May 25, 1985) [AAS 77, 685]; Encyclical *Slavorum apostoli* (June 2, 1985), no. 19 [AAS 77, 801]; Apostolic Constitution *Mense Ianuario* (August 3, 1985) [AAS 77, 1019]; Apostolic Letter *Qui autem perseveravit* (August 15, 1985) [AAS 84, 1114]; Apostolic Letter *Augustinum Hipponensem* (August 28, 1986), nos. 3 and 5 [AAS 79, 155-56 and 164]; Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987), nos. 42-43 [AAS 79, 419-420]; Apostolic Letter *Si mundus* (March 29, 1987) [AAS 80, 364]; Letter *Hymno dicto* (April 13, 1987), no. 13 [AAS 79, 1294-95]; Address *Gratias agamus* (October 29, 1987) [AAS 80, 606]; Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), no. 47 [AAS 80, 581]; Homily *Quando venne* (January 1, 1988), no. 6 [AAS 80, 1000]; Letter *Dilecte Fili* (January 31, 1988) [AAS 80, 970-71]; Letter *In cenaculum* (March 25, 1988), no. 4 [AAS 80, 1284-1286]; Apostolic Letter *Litterae encyclicae* (May 22, 1988), sec. 4 [AAS 80, 1646]; Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 22 [AAS 80, 1706]; Address *Si rinnova* (December 22, 1988) [AAS 81, 835]; Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), nos. 55, 61 and 63 [AAS 81, pp. 503, 512-13, and 517]; Apostolic Constitution *Quo longius* (February 11, 1989) [AAS 82, 644]; Apostolic Letter *Une nouvelle fois* (September 7, 1989), nos. 6-7 [AAS 82, 62-63]; Address *In aula* (November 22, 1989) [AAS 82, 35]; Apostolic Letter *Si quidem cunctis* (December 14, 1990) [AAS 84, 117]; Address *La ringrazio* (January 28, 1991), no. 7 [AAS 83, 952]; Apostolic Constitution *Quam ipsimet* (December 21, 1991) [AAS 84, 477]; Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* (March 25, 1992), nos. 41, 50 and 58 [AAS 84, pp. 727-28, 747, and 760]; Address *Paschales iam* (April 28, 1992) [AAS 84, 475]; CDF, Letter *Communione notio* (May 28, 1992), no. 9 [AAS 85, 843]; Address *Quot cum cogitationibus* (February 25, 1993) [AAS 86, 57]; Encyclical *Veritatis splendor* (August 6, 1993), nos. 95 and 108 [AAS 85, 1208 and 1217-18]; Letter to Families (February 2, 1994), no. 11 [AAS 86, 886]; Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* (May 22, 1994), no. 3 [AAS 86, 547]; CDF, Letter *Annus internationalis* (September 14, 1994), no. 2 [AAS 86, 974]; Encyclical *Evangelium vitae* (March 25, 1995), nos. 3 and 102-3 [AAS 87, pp. 403, 518-20]; Apostolic Letter *Orientale Lumen* (May 2, 1995), nos. 2 and 23-24 [AAS 87, 746 and 770-71]; Encyclical *Ut unum sint* (May 25, 1995), no. 11 [AAS 87, 927]; Letter to Women (June 29, 1995), no. 3 [AAS 87, 805]; Address *Vi accolgo* (February 16, 1996), no. 3 [AAS 88, 801]; Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), nos. 46, 97 and 105 [AAS 88, pp. 419, 472 and 481]; Address *C'est avec joie* (December 7, 1996), no. 6 [AAS 89, 306]; Apostolic Constitution *Singulares omnino* (December 16, 1996) [AAS 89, 436]; Address *Sono lieto* (January 24, 1997), nos. 1 and 3 [AAS 89, 482-84]; Address *Ancora una volta* (March 17, 1997), no. 1 [AAS 89, 575]; Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia Mariae* (June 7, 1997) [AAS 89, 610]; General Audience (August 13, 1997) [IGP 20.2, 112-14; JP-*Theotókos*, 220-22]; Apostolic Letter *Divini amoris scientia* (October 19, 1997), nos. 1 and 10 [AAS 90, 930 and 940]; Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* (May 31, 1998), nos. 30 and 37-38 [AAS 90, 731 and 736]; Address *En ces jours* (September 17, 1998), no. 6 [AAS 91, 218]; Address *Sono lieto* (November 20, 1998), no. 1 [AAS 91, 431]; Apostolic Letter *Incarnationis mysterium* (November 29, 1998), nos. 10-11 [AAS 91, 139-40]; Apostolic Letter *Motu proprio Sacra liturgia* (May 23, 1999), art.

with more regularity and intensity than his predecessors, however, John Paul closely coupled maternal and bridal imagery at various instances. The Church is “our Mother and Bride together [*insieme*],” Bride and Mother “at one and the same time” (*simul*), “the Bride of the Word, our immaculate and loving Mother [*Madre immacolata ed affettuosa*].”<sup>194</sup> “The feminine symbol [*simbolo femminile*] represents the face [*volto*] of the Church in her various aspects [*fsionomie*] as betrothed, bride and mother [*fidanzata, sposa, madre*], thus stressing a dimension [*dimensione*] of love and fruitfulness.”<sup>195</sup> “Sanctified by the blood of her Spouse,” the Church has become “Mother” and “nourisher” of the saints, her children.<sup>196</sup> The saints in fact demonstrate the spiritual fruitfulness (*spiritualis fecunditas*) of the Bride of Christ.<sup>197</sup> The faithful virginity of the Bride of Christ “is the source of a special spiritual fruitfulness: it is the source of motherhood [*fons maternitatis*] in the

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55 § 1: The Lateran is described as the “Mother and Head of all the churches” (*omnium ecclesiarum Matre et Capite*) [AAS 92, 104]; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* (November 6, 1999), no. 27 [AAS 92, 495]; Address *Mit “der herzlichen Liebe”* (November 20, 1999), no. 5 [AAS 92, 252]; Apostolic Letter *Nel tempo pasquale* (July 20, 2000), nos. 9, 11 and 13 [IGP 23.1, 782 and 786-87]; CDF, Declaration *Dominus Iesus* (August 6, 2000), no. 8 [AAS 92, 749]; Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (January 6, 2001), no. 6 [AAS 93, 269-70]; Message *Dio, meraviglioso* (February 2, 2001), no. 4 [AAS 93, 466]; Address *Sono molto* (May 31, 2001), no. 3 [AAS 93, 665]; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania* (November 22, 2001), nos. 12 and 28 [AAS 94, 377 and 400]; Address *Ringrazio vivamente* (January 28, 2002), no. 10 [AAS 94, 346]; Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (October 16, 2002), nos. 7 and 15 [AAS 95, 9 and 14-15]; Address *Grace to you* (March 4, 2003), no. 5 [AAS 95, 599]; Address *Grazia a voi* (March 20, 2003), no. 3 [AAS 95, 773]; Decretal Letter *Caritas pastorum* (May 18, 2003) [AAS 96, 322]; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (June 28, 2003), nos. 56, 91 and 93 [AAS 95, 684 and 701]; Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis* (October 16, 2003), nos. 10, 13, 17 and 34 [AAS 96, pp. 838, 844, 849 and 870]; and Apostolic Letter *Il rapido sviluppo* (January 24, 2005), no. 1 [AAS 97, 265].

194. Homily *Desidero oggi* (June 30, 1979), no. 1 [AAS 71, 910]; Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), no. 15 [AAS 76, 541]; and Message *Dio, meraviglioso* (February 2, 2001), no. 1 [AAS 93, 462]. See also Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987), no. 1 [AAS 79, 362]; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (September 14, 1995), no. 63 [AAS 88, 40].

195. General Audience (February 7, 2001), no. 1 [IGP 24.1, 307; JP-Trinity, 443].

196. Homily *Oggi è un giorno* (October 4, 1981), no. 1 [AAS 73, 662]; Apostolic Letter *Sanctorum altrix* (July 11, 1980), no. 1 [AAS 72, 777]. See also Letter *In cenaculum* (March 25, 1988), no. 4 [AAS 80, 1285].

197. Sacred Consistory (May 24, 1982) [AAS 74, 758]. John Paul elsewhere quoted *Lumen gentium*, no. 41, wherein married couples are described as participating in the fruitfulness of Mother Church. See General Audience (November 24, 1993), no. 5 [IGP 16.2, 1332; JP-Church, 424].

Holy Spirit.”<sup>198</sup> Fruitfulness is “a fundamental dimension of ecclesial nuptiality [*nuzialità ecclesiale*].”<sup>199</sup> This maternal fruitfulness in the Spirit is dependent on Christ’s love and the Bride’s response of love.<sup>200</sup> As the Bride of Christ, the Church is “the Mother of souls” (*animarum Mater*).<sup>201</sup>

John Paul closely integrated spousal love, maternity, and virginity, especially as they related to the Church’s fruitfulness and service to the world. “Spousal love—with its maternal power [*materna virtus*] hidden in the heart of the woman as a virginal bride—when joined to Christ, the Redeemer of each and every person, is also predisposed to being open to each and every person.”<sup>202</sup> Mother Church is “the most beloved Bride of Christ” and looks with love “towards all her sons and daughters.”<sup>203</sup>

## 10. The Church as Body and Bride in the likeness of the one-flesh union

Pope John Paul II, like his predecessors, understood the ecclesial images of Body and Bride of Christ as complementary, and he coupled the images on multiple occasions.<sup>204</sup> He also

198. Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987), no. 43 [AAS 79, 420].

199. General Audience (February 7, 2001), no. 4 [IGP 24.1, 308; JP-*Trinity*, 444]. Translation modified.

200. Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), no. 17 [AAS 81, 420]. See also TOB 97:4 (October 13, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 812-13]; Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 32 [AAS 88, 406].

201. Apostolic Letter *Divini amoris scientia* (October 19, 1997), no. 6 [AAS 90, 934].

202. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 21 [AAS 80, 1704]. Translation modified. See also Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987), no. 5 [AAS 79, 366]; Letter *In cenaculum* (March 25, 1988), no. 5 [AAS 80, 1286]; Letter to Women (June 29, 1995), no. 11 [AAS 87, 811]; Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 57 [AAS 88, 429]; Message *Sin dall’inizio* (January 12, 2003), no. 5 [AAS 95, 621]; and General Audience (July 16, 2003) [IGP; PCM, 261-62].

203. Apostolic Letter *Pia Mater* (January 4, 1982) [AAS 74, 534]; Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), no. 2 [AAS 76, 514-15]. See also Address *It is with great joy* (May 5, 1990) [AAS 82, 1534]; Message *Benedetto sia Dio* (June 4, 1997), no. 3 [IGP 20.1, 1417-18, original in Polish].

204. For examples of John Paul’s use of bodily and bridal imagery together, see Homily *Desidero oggi* (June 30, 1979), no. 2 [AAS 71, 911]; Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), nos. 14-15 [AAS 76, 539 and 541]; Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), nos. 23 and 25-26 [AAS 80, 1708, 1713 and 1716]; Address *we are coming* (December 10, 1988), no. 8 [AAS 81, 771]; Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December



seemed to privilege the images of Body and Bride in certain instances, as when he recalled the Second Vatican Council in preparation for the Jubilee year: “During the Council, precisely out of a desire to be fully faithful to her Master, the Church questioned herself about her own identity [*quae esset*], and discovered anew the depth of her mystery as the Body and Bride of Christ [*Corporis Sponsaeque Christi mysterium*].”<sup>205</sup> And elsewhere: “Through the holy door, symbolically more spacious at the end of a millennium, Christ will lead us [*inseret*] more deeply into the Church, his Body and his Bride.”<sup>206</sup> But John Paul also advanced the teaching in a distinctive direction by giving a primary emphasis to Ephesians 5:31-32 and to the “one flesh” (*una caro*) of marriage as applied (indirectly and analogously) to the union between Christ and the Church as his Bride and Body.

An important locus for John Paul’s considerations on the Church as the Body and Bride of Christ was his Wednesday audiences on the theology of the body and specifically his commentary on Ephesians 5. “Indeed, it seems that, according to the author of Ephesians, this analogy [of spousal love] is complementary to that of the ‘Mystical Body’ (see Eph 1:22-23) when we try to express the mystery of the relationship of Christ with the Church and—going back even further—the mystery of God’s eternal love for man, for humanity.”<sup>207</sup> John Paul

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30, 1988), nos. 14 and 16 [AAS 81, 412 and 417]; Address *Muito me alegra* (May 21, 1990) [AAS 83, 56]; Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* (March 25, 1992), nos. 12, 23, 25 and 29 [AAS 84, pp. 676, 693, 697 and 704]; Address “*Grace to you*” (June 8, 1993) [AAS 86, 345]; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (September 14, 1995), no. 63 [AAS 88, 40]; Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* (May 31, 1998), no. 11 [AAS 90, 720]; Apostolic Letter *Incarnationis mysterium* (November 29, 1998), no. 10 [AAS 91, 138]; Message *Dopo anni di preparazione* (June 29, 1999), no. 8 [AAS 92, 57]; and Address *Accolgo e saluto* (May 24, 2003), no. 4 [AAS 95, 782].

205. Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente* (November 10, 1994), no. 19 [AAS 87, 16]. It is noteworthy that John Paul did not refer here to the image of the Church as the “People of God,” given his emphasis on the latter image in his implementation of the Council during the immediate post-conciliar years in Poland (see Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*). Nevertheless, it is present elsewhere in the letter and was regularly applied by John Paul.

206. Apostolic Letter *Incarnationis mysterium* (November 29, 1998), no. 8 [AAS 91, 136].

207. TOB 90:1 (August 18, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 245].

interpreted the analogy of the “head and body” in Ephesians as a “supplementary analogy” integral to the analogy of spousal love.<sup>208</sup> “The author uses a twofold analogy, head-body and husband-wife, in order to illustrate clearly *the nature of the union between Christ and the Church*.”<sup>209</sup> Christ’s union with the Church, as his “Body and Bride,” is indissoluble.<sup>210</sup> This union can be compared to the one-flesh union of husband and wife, where the union is uniquely intimate while preserving its “bi-subjectivity.”<sup>211</sup> Like husband and wife in marriage, Christ and the Church remain distinct subjects even though they are presented as a “single subject” through the image of “one body.”<sup>212</sup>

John Paul never directly ascribed “one-flesh union” to the union between Christ and the Church. However, the comparison to the “one flesh” of marriage was critical according to John Paul for understanding the Church as the Body of Christ and other aspects of the Church:

The Church cannot therefore be understood as the Mystical Body of Christ, as the sign of man’s Covenant with God in Christ, or as the universal sacrament of salvation, unless we keep in mind the “great mystery” involved in the creation of man as male and female and the vocation of both to conjugal love, to fatherhood and to motherhood. The “great mystery,” which is the Church and humanity in Christ, does not exist apart from the “great mystery” expressed [*significatur locutione*] in the “one flesh” (see Gen 2:24; Eph 5:31-32), that is, in the reality [*natura*] of marriage and the family.<sup>213</sup>

John Paul also highlighted an order between the images of the bride and body. “The Church as Bride, being the object of the redemptive love of Christ, the Bridegroom, becomes his

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208. TOB 91:1-2 (August 25, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 284-85].

209. TOB 91:2 (August 25, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 285].

210. General Audience (September 29, 1999), no. 5 [IGP 22.2, 463; JP-*Trinity*, 268]. The CDF also employed both images of body and bride to emphasize the inseparability of the Church from Christ as well as the Church’s unicity. See CDF, Declaration *Dominus Iesus* (August 6, 2000), no. 16 [AAS 92, 756-57].

211. TOB 91:4 (August 25, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 286].

212. TOB 91:3-6 (August 25, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 285-87]. As noted above, John Paul later clarified that the Bride of Christ is a “collective subject” as the People of God. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 25 [AAS 80, 1713].

213. *Letter to Families* (February 2, 1994), no. 19 [AAS 86, 911-12].

body.”<sup>214</sup> Christ’s “*saving love ... is a spousal love by which he marries the Church* and makes her his own Body.”<sup>215</sup> This ordering of the imagery was also present in John Paul’s consideration of the Eucharist as the *Sacrament of the Bridegroom and of the Bride*:

The Eucharist makes present and realizes anew in a sacramental manner the redemptive act of Christ, who “creates” the Church, his body. Christ is united with this “body” as the bridegroom with the bride.... The perennial “unity of the two” that exists between man and woman from the very “beginning” is introduced into this “great mystery” of Christ and of the Church.<sup>216</sup>

## 11. Spousal imagery and the Christian states of life

John Paul frequently used ecclesial bridal imagery with reference to individual members of the Church. At times he used the imagery more generally, as in the description of Christ as the “Bridegroom of souls” and of the soul as the bride of Christ.<sup>217</sup> More often, however, he used the imagery in the context of specific states in life, with attention to sexual difference.

John Paul II regularly used spousal imagery in reference to consecrated life and the ministerial priesthood.<sup>218</sup> In his Wednesday audiences on the theology of the body, John Paul II

214. TOB 92:6 (September 1, 1982) [IGP 5.2, 352].

215. TOB 95:7 (September 22, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 521]. See also Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), no. 18 [AAS 71, 301]; Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), no. 13 [AAS 74, 93]; and Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (September 14, 1995), no. 83 [AAS 88, 53].

216. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 26 [AAS 80, 1716].

217. For examples, see Homily *Non dimentichiamo* (September 14, 1980), no. 2 [AAS 72, 996]; Apostolic Letter *O anima* (November 25, 1984) [AAS 79, 1268]; Apostolic Letter *Schola caritatis* (August 20, 1990) [AAS 83, 50]; Address *In questi giorni* (September 14, 1990) [AAS 83, 346]; Apostolic Letter *Ecce sto ad hostium* (March 20, 1993) [AAS 85, 984]; Apostolic Letter *Operosam diem* (December 1, 1996), nos. 24-25 [AAS 89, 232-33]; Address *Grace to you* (March 12, 1988), no. 7 [AAS 90, 970]; Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* (May 31, 1998), no. 11 [AAS 90, 720]; Address *Preparate la via* (December 10, 2000), no. 2 [AAS 93, 222]; General Audience (December 10, 2003), no. 6 [IGP 26.2, 942; JP-*Vespers*, 31]; and Apostolic Letter *Mane nobiscum Domine* (October 7, 2004), no. 31: general reference to saints [AAS 97, 352].

218. Multiple examples are provided below. See also Homily *Ma il Figlio* (October 21, 2001), no. 2 [AAS 94, 193].

devoted several audiences to a discussion of “continence for the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>219</sup> He tied this consideration specifically to Christ’s spousal relationship to the Church.

It seems ... that to clarify what the kingdom of heaven is for those who choose voluntary continence for its sake, *the revelation of the spousal relationship between Christ and the Church* has particular significance. Among the other texts, therefore, the decisive one is *Ephesians 5:25-33*, on which we should base ourselves above all when we consider the question of the sacramentality of marriage [see TOB 87-117b].

This text is equally valid both for the theology of marriage and for the theology of continence “for the kingdom,” the theology of virginity or celibacy. It seems that it is precisely in this text that we find concretized, as it were, what Christ had said to his disciples when he invited them to voluntary continence “for the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>220</sup>

The choice to live in virginity or celibacy for the kingdom thus has a spousal dimension and is founded in Christ’s spousal love for the Church.<sup>221</sup>

In applying spousal imagery to consecrated life, John Paul often considered the significance of consecrated women in particular. He acknowledged a contemporary lack of emphasis on spousal mysticism as it pertained to the consecrated life of women, and his teaching emphasized the need to recover and even “rediscover” a proper understanding of the place of spousal mysticism in the consecrated life.<sup>222</sup> He described consecrated women as brides of Christ, spoke of Christ as their Bridegroom, and used related imagery to convey the key place of this spousal consecration for the Church.<sup>223</sup>

219. See TOB 73-85 (March 10-July 14, 1982) [IGP 5.1, pp. 789-93, 878-81, 978-81, 1047-50, 1126-31, 1176-79, 1270-74, 1344-48, 1405-8, 2385-87 and 2452-56; IGP 5.2, 28-32 and 70-74].

220. TOB 79:7 (April 21, 1982) [IGP 5.1, 1273].

221. TOB 79:9 (April 21, 1982) [IGP 5.1, 1274]. See also TOB 102:6 (December 15, 1982) [IGP 5.3, 1604-5]; General Audience (November 23, 1994) [IGP 17.2, 844-48; JP-*Church*, 564-68].

222. See General Audience (March 15, 1995) [IGP 18.1, 508-12; JP-*Church*, 607-10].

223. For examples of John Paul’s use of spousal imagery in reference to consecrated women, see Address *Ecce quam bonum* (November 9, 1979), no. 2 [AAS 71, 1458]; Apostolic Letter *Amantissima providentia* (April 29, 1980) [AAS 72, 571-74]; Address *I bless* (February 17, 1981), no. 9 [AAS 73, 308]; Homily *Four hundred years* (February 17, 1981), no. 5 [AAS 73, 312]; Letter *Virtutis exemplum* (October 14, 1981) [AAS 73, 692]; Address *Sono lieto* (November 28, 1981), no. 1 [AAS 74, 206]; Apostolic Letter *Sicut mater* (May 23, 1982) [AAS 74, 1209]; Apostolic Letter *Dei contuitum* (May 23, 1982) [AAS 86, 474]; Decretal Letter *Amores duo* (October 31, 1982) [AAS 79, 235]; Homily

John Paul stressed that the “spousal dimension” (*sponsalis ratio*) of consecrated life “has a particular meaning for women, who find therein their feminine identity and as it were discover the special genius [*proprium quasi indolem detegens*] of their relationship [*coniunctio*] with the Lord.”<sup>224</sup> “The feminine soul has a particular capacity to live in a mystical spousal relationship [*la mistica sponsalita*] with Christ and thus to reproduce in herself the face and heart of the Church-Bride [*Chiesa-Sposa*].”<sup>225</sup> In consecrated life, this “naturally spousal predisposition of the feminine personality” leads to a particular form of “spiritual motherhood.”<sup>226</sup>

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*Venite, vedete* (October 31, 1982) [AAS 75, 19-25]; Apostolic Letter *O anima* (November 25, 1984) [AAS 79, 1268-69 and 1271]; Apostolic Letter *Si mundus* (March 29, 1987) [AAS 80, 361]; Apostolic Letter *Multum facit* (November 1, 1987) [AAS 80, 963]; Apostolic Letter *Ego in medio* (November 1, 1987) [AAS 81, 9]; Homily *Io sono* (June 11, 1988) [AAS 80, 1406 and 1409-10]; Decretal Letter *Omnis anima* (June 11, 1988) [AAS 81, 592 and 594]; Homily *Gesù Cristo* (November 29, 1988), no. 8 [AAS 81, 537]; Decretal Letter *Scimus autem* (April 9, 1989) [AAS 82, 931]; Homily *Io, Giovanni* (April 9, 1989) [AAS 81, 1093]; Apostolic Letter *Qui ad iustitiam* (June 18, 1989) [AAS 84, 837] Decretal Letter *Salus Deo nostro* (November 12, 1989) [AAS 83, 114]; Apostolic Letter *Dominus pascit me* (May 17, 1992) [AAS 85, 224]; Decretal Letter *Qui habet mandata* (March 21, 1993) [AAS 86, 466]; Apostolic Letter *In fine autem* (May 16, 1993) [AAS 86, 219]; Apostolic Letter *Haec est virgo* (October 10, 1993) [AAS 86, 220]; Apostolic Letter *Infirmus fui* (May 7, 1994) [AAS 88, 684]; Apostolic Letter *Sub umbra* (November 20, 1994) [AAS 88, 83]; General Audience (March 15, 1995), no. 4 [IGP 18.1, 510; JP-*Church*, 608]; Apostolic Letter *Ut quemadmodum* (October 29, 1995) [AAS 89, 9]; Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), nos. 7 and 59 [AAS 88, 382 and 432]; Apostolic Letter *Ambulate in dilectione* (October 6, 1996) [AAS 89, 441]; Apostolic Letter *Dominus pascit* (November 24, 1996) [AAS 91, 89]; Decretal Letter *Spiritus Domini* (June 10, 1997) [AAS 90, 378]; Apostolic Letter *Divini amoris scientia* (October 19, 1997), nos. 5, 8 and 11 [AAS 90, pp. 934, 938 and 942]; Apostolic Letter *Venit sponsus* (May 10, 1998) [AAS 91, 163]; Homily *Io, Giovanni* (May 10, 1998), no. 6 [AAS 91, 181]; Homily *Quanto a me* (October 11, 1998), nos. 7-8 [AAS 91, 249-250]; Apostolic Letter *Ecce venio* (June 13, 1999) [AAS 92, 32]; Apostolic Letter *Supervincimus per Eum* (June 13, 1999) [AAS 92, 665]; Motu Proprio *Spes aedificandi* (October 1, 1999), no. 6 [AAS 92, 225]; Decretal Letter *Dominus Deus* (April 30, 2000) [AAS 93, 586]; Apostolic Letter *Domine, tu scis* (March 11, 2001) [AAS 94, 187]; Apostolic Letter *Dei voluntati fideles* (April 29, 2001) [AAS 94, 26]; Apostolic Letter *Qui habet* (May 9, 2001) [AAS 94, 317]; Apostolic Letter *Secundum eum* (June 27, 2001) [AAS 94, 559]; Message *A voi tutti* (September 8, 2001), no. 2 [AAS 94, 349]; Apostolic Letter *Humilitas, simplicitas* (October 7, 2001) [AAS 94, 323]; Apostolic Letter *Dignus est operarius* (March 23, 2003) [AAS 96, 724]; Decretal Letter *Non circumscibitur* (May 4, 2003) [AAS 96, 521]; Homily *Chi vuol essere* (October 19, 2003), no. 4 [AAS 96, 143]; Apostolic Letter *Da, mihi, Iesu* (March 21, 2004) [AAS 97, 24-25]; Apostolic Letter *Induite vos ergo* (March 21, 2004) [AAS 97, 291]; and Message *A tutti voi* (November 26, 2004), no. 4 [AAS 96, 966].

224. Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 34 [AAS 88, 407].

225. General Audience (March 15, 1995), no. 4 [IGP 18.1, 510; JP-*Church*, 608]. See also Address *Rendons grâce* (May 3, 1980), no. 2 [AAS 72, 440-41].

226. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, nos. 20-21 [AAS 80, 1703-4]. See also General Audience (March 15, 1995), no. 5 [IGP 18.1, 511; JP-*Church*, 609].

### Women who choose virginity

realize the personal value of their humanity by becoming “a sincere gift” for God who has revealed himself in Christ, a gift for Christ, the Redeemer of humanity and the Spouse of souls: a “spousal” [*sponsale*] gift. *One cannot correctly understand virginity – a woman’s consecration in virginity – without referring to spousal love.* It is through this kind of love that a person becomes a gift for the other.<sup>227</sup>

Notably, John Paul added, “Moreover, a man’s consecration in priestly celibacy or in the religious state is to be understood in like fashion [*aequabiliter*],”<sup>228</sup> though he himself did not explain here precisely how this broader application should be understood.

Elsewhere, John Paul highlighted the spousal nature of consecrated life for both men and women, with special emphasis on the evangelical counsels (poverty, chastity, and obedience).

‘The call to the way of the evangelical counsels springs from the *interior encounter with the love of Christ*, which is a redeeming love.... When Christ “looked upon you and loved you,” calling each one of you, dear religious, that redeeming love of His was directed towards a particular person, and at the same time it took on a *spousal* character [*indolens sponsalem*]: it became a *love of choice* [*amor electionis*]. This love embraces the whole person, soul and body, whether man or woman, in that person’s unique and unrepeatable personal “I.”’<sup>229</sup>

This teaching developed (implicitly) a rationale for why both consecrated women and men can be seen to be in a spousal relationship with the Lord. Consecration itself is “the spousal

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227. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 20 [AAS 80, 1702-3].

228. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 20 [AAS 80, 1702-3]. Translation modified slightly. The official English translation uses “analogously” for “*aequabiliter*.” While the use of “analogously” is not incorrect, “*aequabiliter*” carries stronger connotations of equality and even sameness. For brief uses of spousal imagery in reference to monks in particular, see Apostolic Letter *Oriente lumen* (May 2, 1995), nos. 10 and 12 [AAS 87, 756 and 759].

229. Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), no. 3, see also no. 11 [AAS 76, 516 and 532-33]. See also Address *It gives me* (February 11, 1989), no. 6 [AAS 81, 954]; Address *Con animo* (November 12, 1990) [AAS 83, 655].

response [*responsio sponsalis*] to Christ's love."<sup>230</sup> The practice (*exercitatio*) of the evangelical counsels brings about "spiritual marriage [*nuptias spirituales*] to Christ"; the profession of the counsels is a "covenant of spousal love" (*foedus amoris sponsalis*).<sup>231</sup> Both consecrated men and consecrated women give a vivid impression of the "face of the Church-Bride" (*il volto della Chiesa-Sposa*).<sup>232</sup>

Consecrated persons thus provide a special ecclesial witness. In their apostolate, "their spousal love for Christ becomes, in an 'organic' way as it were, *love for the Church* as the Body of Christ, for the Church as the People of God, for the Church which is at one and the same time Spouse and Mother."<sup>233</sup> Their consecration is "an expression [*espressione*] of the holiness of the bride of Christ [*sposa Christi*]" and contributes in a central way to the Church's mission.<sup>234</sup>

Consecrated life is therefore "*at the very heart of the Church* as a decisive element of her mission," expressing "the striving of the whole Church as Bride towards union with her one Spouse."<sup>235</sup> In living out their devotion to Christ the Bridegroom, consecrated persons thus

230. Apostolic Letter *Litterae encyclicae* (May 22, 1988), sect. 3 [AAS 80, 1644]. See also Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 93 [AAS 88, 468].

231. Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum*, nos. 5 and 8 [AAS 76, 520-21 and 525]. See also Encyclical *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), no. 21 [AAS 71, 319-20]; Decretal Letter "*Tuis in comunione*" (June 10, 2001) [AAS 94, 594]; and Message *A tutti voi* (November 26, 2004), no. 6 [AAS 96, 966].

232. Homily *Quando venne* (February 1, 2003), no. 4 [IGP 26.1, 141]. See also Address *Ho ascoltato* (October 18, 2003), no. 4 [AAS 96, 150].

233. Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), no. 15 [AAS 76, 541].

234. Address *Con grande gioia* (January 24, 1986) [AAS 78, 726]. See also Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 19 [AAS 88, 393]; Message *Benedetto sia Dio* (June 4, 1997), no. 2 [IGP 20.1, 1414-15, original in Polish]; Apostolic Letter *Divini amoris scientia* (October 19, 1997), no. 11 [AAS 90, 942]; and Homily *Vieni, Signore* (February 2, 2001), no. 3 [IGP 24.1, 284]. In his message of June 4, 1997, John Paul emphasized previous teaching documents that contributed to the topic of the ecclesial significance of consecrated life, including the Second Vatican Council's *Lumen gentium*, *Perfectae caritatis*, and *Ad Gentes*, Paul VI's *Evangelica testificatio*, and finally various documents of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life.

235. Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 3 [AAS 88, 379]. See also Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), no. 16 [AAS 74, 98]; Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), no. 15 [AAS 76, 543]; Address *I extend* (March 10, 1986) [AAS 78, 1038]; General Audience

constitute the “efficacious image [*efficax imago*] of the Church as Bride.”<sup>236</sup> The consecrated life “discloses [*aperiat*] with great eloquence [the Church’s] inmost ‘bridal’ essence [*‘sponsalem’ essentiam*].”<sup>237</sup> In comparison with Christian spouses, consecrated persons “participate in the mystery of this marriage [*nozze*] [of Christ and the Church] in a more direct manner [*in una maniera più diretta*]” because there is no mediation of a human union but rather “a truly complete and decisive spiritual espousal [*sposalizio*]” to Christ.<sup>238</sup> “Thus in the person of those who profess and live consecrated chastity, the Church realizes her union as Bride with Christ the Bridegroom to the greatest extent [*realizza al massimo la sua unione di Sposa con Cristo-Sposo*]. For this reason it must be said that the virginal life is found at the heart of the Church.”<sup>239</sup>

John Paul also spoke of the importance and need of celibate priests to witness the “spousal love [*amor sponsalis*] of Christ himself.”<sup>240</sup> “The priest is called to be the living image [*imago vivens*] of Jesus Christ, the bridegroom [*sponsus*] of the Church.”<sup>241</sup> By ordination, a priest is configured (*conformare*) to “Christ the Head and Shepherd, the Servant and Bridegroom of the Church.”<sup>242</sup> He is therefore “called to live out Christ’s spousal love toward the Church, his

(January 8, 1992), no. 4 [IGP 15.1, 35; *Church*, 119]; Address *With great joy* (June 26, 1999), no. 7 [AAS 91, 1071]; and Homily *A Gerusalemme* (February 2, 2000), no. 3 [IGP 23.1, 145].

236. Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata*, no. 34 [AAS 88, 407]. Translation modified.

237. Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata*, no. 105 [AAS 88, 481]. Translation modified.

238. General Audience (November 23, 1994), no. 4 [IGP 17.2, 846; JP-*Church*, 566]. Translation modified.

239. General Audience (November 23, 1994), no. 4 [IGP 17.2, 846-47; JP-*Church*, 566-67]. Translation modified. See also General Audience (November 16, 1994), no. 7 [IGP 17.2, 785; JP-*Church*, 563].

240. Apostolic Letter *Dilecti amici* (March 31, 1985), no. 8 [AAS 77, 600]. See also Letter *In cenaculum* (March 25, 1988), no. 5 [AAS 80, 1286]; General Audience (July 17, 1993), no. 5 [IGP 16.2, 69; JP-*Church*, 353]; Address *In the love* (June 14, 1997), no. 3 [AAS 90, 416].

241. Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* (March 25, 1992), no. 22 [AAS 84, 691]. See also General Audience (July 27, 1994), no. 5 [IGP 17.2, 72; JP-*Church*, 498].

242. Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*, nos. 3, 16, 23 and 25 [AAS 84, pp. 661, 681, 693 and 697]. See also Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 26 [AAS 80, 1716]; Address *Com grande alegría* (March 20, 1999) [AAS 91, 941].



bride,” and his life “ought to radiate this spousal character,” being “capable of loving people with a heart which is new, generous and pure.”<sup>243</sup> This configuration to Jesus as Head and Bridegroom through sacred ordination provides “the theological motive [*causa*],” even the “ultimate rationale [*ratio*],” for the law of priestly celibacy: “The Church, as the Bride [*Sponsa*] of Jesus Christ, wishes to be loved by the priest in the total and exclusive manner in which Jesus Christ [her Head and Spouse] loved her.”<sup>244</sup>

In a special way, a bishop also represents Christ the Bridegroom. He is a “living sign” (*vivens signum*) of Jesus the Bridegroom, and in exercising faith in hope and confidence, the bishop becomes “an ever more luminous sign [*praeclarus signum*] of Christ, the Shepherd and Bridegroom of the Church.”<sup>245</sup> “The Bishop stands in a spousal relationship with respect to his community [the particular Church], representing Christ, the divine Spouse.”<sup>246</sup> He is “configured [*conformatur*] to Christ in order to love the Church with the spousal love of Christ [*sponsali Christi amore*].”<sup>247</sup> The bishop has “the task of caring for the Church of God, the Bride purchased at the cost of the blood of the only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>248</sup> The bishop also has the

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243. Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 22 [AAS 84, 691]. See also Apostolic Exhortation *Une espérance nouvelle pour le Liban* (May 10, 1997), no. 58 [AAS 89, 363].

244. Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 29 [AAS 84, 704]. Translation modified. See also no. 50 [AAS 84, 746].

245. Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis* (October 16, 2003), nos. 4 and 7 [AAS 96, 829 and 832]. The bishop is the living sign of Christ as “Shepherd and Bridegroom, Teacher and High Priest of the Church” (no. 7).

246. Address *I give thanks* (March 11, 1994), no. 2 [AAS 87, 68].

247. Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis* (October 16, 2003), no. 13 [AAS 96, 844]. Translation slightly modified.

248. Address *I warmly greet you* (December 14, 1998), no. 2 [AAS 91, 581]. See also Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis* (October 16, 2003), no. 21 [AAS 96, 853-54].

responsibility, through word and example, of teaching seminarians and young priests about priestly configuration to Christ, and about Christ as Bridegroom.<sup>249</sup>

John Paul also used spousal imagery in connection to the teaching that only men can be ordained. In light of Christ's free and authoritative decision, only men have been given "the task of being an 'icon' [*icona*] of his countenance [*volto*] as 'shepherd' and 'bridegroom' of the Church through the exercise of the ministerial priesthood."<sup>250</sup> This is "a practice [*dispositio*] that can be more clearly [*clarior*] understood in light of [*sub luce*] the rapport [*relatio*] between Christ, the Bridegroom, and his Bride, the Church."<sup>251</sup> This distinction of roles is to be understood within an understanding of the "economy of signs" through which God has chosen to reveal himself.<sup>252</sup>

John Paul's teaching on the spousal meaning of the human body<sup>253</sup> undergirded his consideration of both consecrated life and priestly celibacy as "spousal" realities, alongside marriage:

Perfect conjugal love must be marked by the faithfulness and the gift to the one and only Bridegroom (and also by the faithfulness and gift of the Bridegroom to the one and only Bride) on which religious profession and priestly celibacy are based. In sum, the nature of the one as well as the other love is "spousal," that is, expressed through the complete gift of self. The one as well as the other tends to express that spousal meaning of the body, which has been inscribed "from the beginning" in the personal structure of man and woman.<sup>254</sup>

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249. Address *With heartfelt affection* (May 19, 1997), no. 7 [AAS 90, 209].

250. *Letter to Women*, no. 11 [AAS 87, 810-11].

251. Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), no. 51 [AAS 81, 493]. Translation modified.

252. *Letter to Women*, no. 11 [AAS 87, 811]. See also CDF, *Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (May 31, 2004), no. 16 [AAS 96, 686].

253. See TOB 13 – 16:2 (January 2, 9, 16 and 30, 1980) [IGP 3.1, pp. 11-15, 88-92, 148-52, and 218-22].

254. TOB 78:4 (April 14, 1982) [IGP 5.1, 1178]. See also TOB 80 (April 28, 1982) [IGP 5.1, 1344-48].

As evident above, John Paul applied spousal imagery in various ways both to women and to men. On the one hand, bridal imagery has an obviously feminine dimension, in which women by virtue of their femininity uniquely participate. John Paul described this unique character of womanhood as “a kind of inherent ‘prophecy’ ... a powerfully evocative symbolism, a highly significant ‘iconic character’ [*una pregnante “iconicità”*], which finds its full realization in Mary and which also aptly expresses the very essence of the Church as a community consecrated with the integrity of a ‘*virgin*’ heart to become the ‘*bride*’ of Christ and ‘*mother*’ of believers.”<sup>255</sup> Woman is “the bride,” and as such manifests the truth that the human person has been made for love—in particular, to receive love in order to love (*recipit enim ipsa amorem ut ea amet invicem*).<sup>256</sup>

Insofar as “‘being the bride,’ and thus the ‘feminine’ element,” involves responding to Christ’s loving gift of himself with a self-gift in return, this “being the bride” is “a sign and figure [*signum ac figura*] of all that is human.”<sup>257</sup> In the broadest terms, “*all human beings – both women and men – are called through the Church, to be the ‘Bride’ of Christ.*”<sup>258</sup> All the baptized, in their participation in Christ’s priesthood, share in the mission and call to respond as Bride.<sup>259</sup> In this way, “holy women are as it were a certain kind of incarnation [*quasi quadam corporatae personae*] of the feminine ideal [*speciei muliebris optimae*]” and also serve as “a model [*exemplaria*] for all

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255. *Letter to Women*, no. 11 [AAS 87, 811]. John Paul cites Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 29. See also Address *With great joy* (November 8, 1993), no. 4 [AAS 86, 659]; Homily “*Quale uomo*” (September 5, 2004), no. 6 [AAS 96, 937]. To understand God’s plan of salvation fully, according to John Paul, it is necessary to attend to “the mystery of ‘woman’: virgin-mother-bride.” Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 22 [AAS 80, 1707]. Translation modified slightly.

256. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 29 [AAS 80, 1722].

257. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1714].

258. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1713-14].

259. See Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 27 [AAS 80, 1717].

Christians, an example [*exempla*] of the ‘*sequela Christi*,’ an example of how the Bride must respond with love to the love of the Bridegroom.”<sup>260</sup>

On the other hand, John Paul acknowledged the significance of the image of the bridegroom as a masculine image. “*The figure [figura] of the Bridegroom is masculine.*”<sup>261</sup> This “masculine symbol” (*symbolus masculinus*) conveys the “human aspect” of God’s love “for Israel, for the Church, and for all people.”<sup>262</sup> The symbol has significance for all human love, though especially for men. “Precisely because Christ’s divine love is the love of the Bridegroom [*Sponsi amor*], it is the paradigm and model [*paradigma et exemplar*] of all human love, men’s love in particular [*praesertim hominum-masculorum*].”<sup>263</sup> John Paul did not develop or explain specifically this direction of thought, which is a notable complement to reflection on bridal imagery.

Ultimately, according to John Paul II, both masculine and feminine roles in the Church bear particular significance. “When we consider the ‘iconic’ complementarity of male and female roles, two of the Church’s essential dimensions are seen in a clearer light: the ‘Marian’ principle and the Apostolic-Petrine principle.”<sup>264</sup> The Petrine principle here refers to the hierarchical structure of the Church which is ordered toward a more fundamental hierarchy of holiness in which Mary shines in an unsurpassed way and to which all are called to participate.

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260. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 27 [AAS 80, 1720]. Translation modified. See also CDF, *Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (May 31, 2004), nos. 15-16 [AAS 96, 684-85].

261. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1714].

262. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1714].

263. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1715]. Translation modified.

264. *Letter to Women*, no. 11 [AAS 87, 811]. See also Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 27 [AAS 80, 1718].

## 12. Mary as Bride

John Paul followed traditional usage in speaking of Mary as the Bride of the Holy Spirit (*Sposa dello Spirito Santo, Sancti Spiritus mystica Sponsa*).<sup>265</sup> Mary is also “the ineffable Bridal Chamber.”<sup>266</sup> John Paul applied bridal imagery to Mary in broader terms as well, often in reference to her spousal relationship with God. He did not directly describe Mary as “bride of Christ,” though this usage was not explicitly ruled out. Speaking to married couples, John Paul referred to Mary as “the sublime model of bride and mother [*di sposa e di madre*].”<sup>267</sup> After speaking of consecrated persons’ witness of spousal love for Christ, John Paul referred to Mary as “the one most fully consecrated to God,” whose “spousal love reached its height in the divine Motherhood through the power of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>268</sup> Mary and the Apostles in the Upper Room are “a vivid image of the Church as Bride, fully attentive to her Bridegroom and ready to accept her gift.”<sup>269</sup> Here, John Paul explained that Mary’s “spousal receptivity is particularly clear.”<sup>270</sup>

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265. See Homily *Desidero oggi* (June 30, 1979), no. 4 [AAS 71, 913]; Homily *Missus est Angelus* (October 21, 1979) [AAS 71, 1396]; Apostolic Letter *Dominicae cenae* (February 24, 1980), no. 13 [AAS 72, 148]; Address *C’est une très grande joie* (May 30, 1980) [AAS 72, 702]; Address *You have formed* (October 5, 1981) [AAS 73, 703]; Address *Ringrazio anzitutto* (December 22, 1981), no. 2 [AAS 74, 295]; Address *La grâce du Seigneur* (March 26, 1982) [AAS 74, 701]; Homily *Wisdom speaks* (September 15, 1984), no. 5 [AAS 77, 414]; Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987), no. 26 [AAS 79, 395]; Homily *Quando venne* (January 1, 1988), no. 4 [AAS 80, 999]; Apostolic Letter *Litterae encyclicae* (May 22, 1988), sect. 5 [AAS 80, 1652]; Address *Through you* (November 26, 1988), no. 2 [AAS 81, 745]; Address *It is with particular joy* (December 19, 1988), no. 5 [AAS 81, 830]; General Audience (June 28, 1989), no. 6 [IGP 12.1, 1775; JP-*Spirit*, 44]; Apostolic Letter *Si quis sitit* (May 7, 1995) [AAS 88, 94]; and General Audience (July 30, 1997), no. 5 [IGP 20.2, 75; JP-*Theotókos*, 215-16].

266. Message *Dio, meraviglioso* (February 2, 2001), no. 9 [AAS 93, 469].

267. Homily *Ma il Figlio* (October 21, 2001), no. 5 [AAS 94, 195]. See also Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 43 [AAS 77, 420]; Message *Sin dall’inizio* (January 12, 2003), no. 5 [AAS 95, 621].

268. Encyclical *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984), no. 17 [AAS 76, 545]. See also Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987), no. 39 [AAS 77, 412-13]. On Mary as faithful bride and archetype of consecrated virgins, see General Audience (August 7, 1996), no. 2 [IGP 19.2, 151; JP-*Theotókos*, 124].

269. Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata*, no. 34 [AAS 88, 408].

270. Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata*, no. 34 [AAS 88, 408].

Mary is a figure (*figura*), model (*exemplar, modello*), paradigm (*paradigma*), type (*typus*), prototype (*prototipo*), archetype (*archetipo*), image (*imago*), and icon (*icona*) of the Church.<sup>271</sup> According to John Paul II, in Mary is found “the Church’s own beginning;” she “prefigures [*praesignat*] the Church’s condition as spouse and mother [*sponsa et mater*].”<sup>272</sup> In fact, “Mary is the beginning and figure [*figura*] of the Church-Bride [*Chiesa-Sposa*] of the New Covenant.”<sup>273</sup> The Annunciation and Incarnation represent “the beginning of the new covenant, in which Christ, as the divine Bridegroom, unites humanity to himself and calls it to be his Church, as the universal people of the new covenant.”<sup>274</sup> Mary “anticipates in herself the essential outlines—virgin, bride, disciple [*vergine, sposa, discepola*]—of the spiritual physiognomy of the Church.”<sup>275</sup> The Church has a “Marian profile” and “Marian dimension.”<sup>276</sup>

The person of Mary thus has an important representational and expressive role in relation to the Church. Mary “desired to personify in herself the image of that absolutely faithful

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271. See Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987), nos. 5 and 42 [AAS 77, 366 and 419]; Letter “*Hymno dicto*” (April 13, 1987), no. 13 [AAS 79, 1294]; Address *Ringrazio sinceramente* (December 22, 1987), no. 2 [AAS 80, 1026-27]; Letter *In cenaculum* (March 25, 1988), nos. 4, 5 and 7 [AAS 80, 1284-86 and 1289-90]; Apostolic Letter *Litterae encyclicae* (May 22, 1988), sect. 4 [AAS 80, 1646]; Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), nos. 22 and 27 [AAS 80, 1706 and 1718]; Address *A tutti rivolgo* (May 24, 1992) [AAS 85, 667]; Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente* (November 10, 1994), no. 43 [AAS 87, 44]; Encyclical *Evangelium vitae* (March 25, 1995), nos. 102-03 [AAS 87, 518-20]; General Audience (September 6, 1995) [IGP 28.2, 304-7; JP-*Theotókos*, 17-20]; Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996), no. 112 [AAS 88, 485]; General Audience (August 6, 1997) [IGP 20.2, 97-99; JP-*Theotókos*, 217-19]; General Audience (August 13, 1997) [IGP 20.2, 112-14; JP-*Theotókos*, 220-22]; General Audience (September 3, 1997) [IGP 20.2, 240-43; *Theotókos*, 226-29]; General Audience (September 10, 1997) [IGP 20.2, 295-97; JP-*Theotókos*, 230-32]; General Audience (March 14, 2001), no. 3 [IGP 24.1, 518; JP-*Trinity*, 451]; Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (October 16, 2002), no. 15 [AAS 95, 15]; and Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (June 28, 2003), no. 27 [AAS 95, 667]. See also CDF, *Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (May 31, 2004), no. 10 [AAS 96, 678-79].

272. Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 1 [AAS 77, 362]. See also Homily *Con queste parole* (December 8, 2004), no. 6 [AAS 97, 142-43].

273. General Audience (December 11, 1991), no. 7 [IGP 14.2, 1360; JP-*Church*, 111]. See also Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 46 [AAS 77, 424].

274. General Audience (December 4, 1991), no. 6 [IGP 14.2, 1310; JP-*Church*, 106]. Translation modified.

275. Address *A tutti rivolgo* (May 24, 1992) [AAS 85, 667].

276. Address *Ringrazio sinceramente* (December 22, 1987), nos. 2-3 [AAS 80, 1026-28]. See also *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), no. 27 [AAS 80, 1718].

bride, totally devoted to the divine bridegroom, and therefore she became the beginning of the new Israel ... in her spousal heart.”<sup>277</sup> John Paul also commented on the ecclesial significance of Mary as the new Daughter of Zion:

As the new Daughter of Zion, Mary was particularly suited [*idonea*] for entering into the spousal covenant with God. More and better than any member of the Chosen People, she could offer the Lord the true heart of a Bride [*Sposa*]. With Mary, “Daughter of Zion” is not merely a collective subject, but a person who represents humanity. At the moment of the annunciation, she responded to the proposal of divine love with her own spousal love.<sup>278</sup>

In this way, John Paul could speak of “the ecclesial dimension of Mary’s personality” in a unique sense.<sup>279</sup> Mary becomes a universal representative of all humanity.

John Paul’s special devotion to Mary was paralleled by frequent reference to and reflection upon the significance of Mary in the Christian life and in the Church.<sup>280</sup> His wide-ranging use of spousal categories in reference to Mary was closely related to his use of ecclesial bridal imagery, particularly in light of Mary’s archetypal relation to the Church. The importance of ecclesial bridal imagery was thus implicitly acknowledged by John Paul when he made the following notable observation: “At the dawn of the new millennium, we can joyfully discern the emergence of that ‘Marian profile’ of the Church, which epitomizes the most profound content [*il contenuto più profondo*] of conciliar renewal.”<sup>281</sup> In other words, according to John Paul II, it

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277. General Audience (December 4, 1991), no. 5, see also no. 6 [IGP 14.2, 1309-10; JP-*Church*, 105-6]. Translation modified.

278. General Audience (May 1, 1996) [IGP 19.1, 1123; JP-*Theotókos*, 85-86]. Translation modified slightly.

279. General Audience (May 29, 1996), no. 3 [IGP 19.1, 1391; *Mary*, 95].

280. See John Paul’s Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987) [AAS 79, 361-433] and Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (October 16, 2002) [AAS 95, 5-36]. On his Marian devotion, see Pope John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, 212-15; *Gift and Mystery: On the Fiftieth Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination*, trans. n.a. (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 27-31.

281. General Audience (November 25, 1998), no. 5 [IGP 21.2, 1088; JP-*Trinity*, 156]. Translation modified. See also Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 22 [AAS 80, 1706-7].

could be said that the rediscovery and renewal of the Church's face as Virgin, Bride, and Mother constituted a crucial part of the conciliar renewal. This considerable and fascinating claim illustrates what was at stake in John Paul's teaching on these themes.

### III. Summary and Analysis of John Paul II

John Paul's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was not limited to an ecclesiological context but widespread. His application of ecclesial bridal imagery, in addition to his general use of spousal vocabulary and categories, was integrated within an all-encompassing vision or "horizon" present throughout his teaching.

The title of this chapter refers to this horizon as the *drama of the "great mystery."* Two reasons can be given for this description. First, the "great mystery" of Ephesians 5:32 was a repeated and fundamental reference point for John Paul's teaching and for his use of imagery related to the Church as the Bride of Christ. As has been demonstrated, Eph 5:32 served as the basis for John Paul's most significant and developed considerations of the Church as Bride. Furthermore, according to John Paul II, the "great mystery" encompasses the mystery of Christ and the Church as well as the sacrament of marriage, and it also pertains to the life and vocation of all the baptized—especially those in consecrated life—and even every human person. In this way, the "great mystery" became for John Paul a drama encompassing every human life, a drama to be entered and lived. All persons are called to this drama.

For John Paul, the Church's identity as Bride of Christ was a dynamic and dramatic identity, not a static description or characteristic. It was an identity both realized and waiting to be fulfilled, as well as an identity and vocation meant to be lived out as a response to the love of Christ, the Bridegroom. Although John Paul adopted and applied many of the traditional



patterns and themes associated with ecclesial bridal imagery, he often developed these patterns and offered fresh and even somewhat original emphases. John Paul's use of spousal imagery showed an integration reminiscent of the Church Fathers, though saturated with a particular anthropological theme (the significance of the masculine-feminine difference and of the human body) not found in the Fathers explicitly.

The vehicles in John Paul II's use of the ecclesial bridal metaphor included the signal terms *sponsa* or *sposa*, "*sponsalis*" *indoles* (for the Church), *sponsus* or *sposo* (for Christ), *amore sponsale* (for Christ's love for the Church and vice versa), *sponsalis vis* (for redemption), as well as the terms *imago et signum foederis*, *signum et locum*, *verum/solidum signum*, and *il simbolo reale* (for Christian marriage in reference to the union of Christ and the Church), and finally the descriptive terms *coniunctio*, *unione*, *il mistero del rapporto*, *comunione d'amore*, *sponsale foedus*, *unione nuziale*, *modele*, *symbole*, and *mysterium magnum*, the comparisons *come lo sposo con la sposa*, *come il marito con la moglie*, and verbal adjectives *iuncta*, *copulata*, and *consociata* (for that union itself).

Qualifiers included the bridal Church as beloved, as receptive to Christ's gift of self, as holy, immaculate, faithful, glorious, beautiful, youthful, virginal and united to Christ; the Bride whose face is not always as luminous as it could be because of sin; the pilgrim Bride as striving toward perfect union with the help of the Holy Spirit; the Bride whose greatest gift from her Bridegroom is the Eucharist, the sacrament of the Bridegroom and the Bride; the Bride whose beloved character is signified in Christian marriage; the mystery of the Bride of Christ as grounded in the covenant and creation itself; the Bride as realized in history but fulfilled in the eschaton; the Bride's fruitful motherhood as essential to her identity and mission; the Bride who becomes the Body of Christ; the Bride's identity as intimately connected with consecrated life

and virginity; the Church's identity as the Bride of Christ as imaged by woman in a particular way; the Bride as an identity to which all people are called; and the bridal Church as figured by Mary. Because John Paul consistently paired the images of bride and mother, John Paul's use of *mater* or *madre* and associated maternal vocabulary for the Church can be taken as an implicit vehicle for the spousal metaphor.

The tenor of John Paul II's bridal metaphor was the Church (*Ecclesia*), understood as the Catholic Church, the universal Church. In addition, John Paul also referred to the local (particular) Church as well as the liturgical assembly as "bride," most often in reference either to the bishop or the priest's relation to the community. Like Paul VI, John Paul's use of ecclesial bridal imagery consistently implied an inclusive understanding of "Church," meaning all the faithful. The Bride of Christ is a people, the People of God, and therefore a collective subject, not an individual or abstract person. The Bride is the faithful, and all people are called to become the Bride. While particular references to the "Bride-Mother" implied a distinction between the Church and the individual faithful (e.g., the call to love the Church, the description of the "children" of the Church, the vocation to become the Bride), John Paul never emphasized the distinction to the point of separation.

John Paul's teaching on the dignity and unique place of women was an important contribution to magisterial reflection on this topic. While John Paul followed a well-established tradition when he referred to consecrated women as brides of Christ, he also uniquely highlighted femininity for its peculiar expressive and symbolic capacity in relation to the Church and in relation to the very meaning of being human. Mary, in particular, has a unique position both as a preeminent member of the Church and as the Mother of the Church, embodying a

fundamental dimension or profile of the Church. At the same time, John Paul included all persons—consecrated women and men in a particular way, and women and men in a more general way—in his consideration of the Church as Bride.

In light of John Paul II's penchant for spousal vocabulary and categories, it is notable that he, like his predecessors, avoided speaking directly of the Church and Christ as "one flesh" and avoided describing Mary directly as "bride of Christ." John Paul also followed Paul VI in emphasizing the higher sign-value of consecrated life (in comparison to marriage) when it came to signifying the spousal union of Christ and the Church. Marriage and the family was a pivotal theme for John Paul's magisterium. The fact that consecrated life was more deeply expressive of this mystery seems another indication of John Paul's awareness that there are limits to the spousal analogy since the reality of the mystery itself holds priority over its analogical expression and even over its sacramental realization in marriage.

John Paul II's various references to "bride of Christ," "bride of the Holy Spirit," and the "spousal love of God" reflected traditional doctrine, and they also conveyed John Paul's multi-dimensional and analogical use of spousal imagery. Also, for John Paul, the term "spousal" in reference to divine-human interrelations transcended any mere human meaning or application. It conveyed something specifically proper to God's love as a gift and humanity's response to that love. Finally, John Paul was the first pope of the twentieth century to speak of "metaphor" in specific reference to ecclesial bridal imagery, and he exploited the metaphorical associations of bridal imagery to a degree unseen in previous magisterial teaching. Ultimately, John Paul, more than any preceding pope in the twentieth century, advanced the ecclesial bridal metaphor as an

indispensable and privileged ecclesial image, profoundly connected with various spheres of Christian life and doctrine.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Ecclesial bridal imagery was remarkably prominent in the magisterium of Pope John Paul II. His application and adaptation of the imagery were wide ranging. With this analysis of John Paul II, this study has now completed its exposition and analysis of the papal and conciliar magisterium of the twentieth century. Clearly, John Paul exhibited a unique vigor in his use of ecclesial bridal imagery and spousal imagery in general. But when his teaching is examined from the perspective of the larger papal and conciliar magisterium of the twentieth century, profound roots and precursors in preceding teaching are apparent. The next chapter will undertake a broader comparative analysis and synthesis of this thread of magisterial teaching in order to address questions of continuity and theological significance, and also to consider the use of ecclesiological metaphors.

## Chapter Seven

### Play and Disclosure: An Evaluation of the Bridal Metaphor in Magisterial Teaching

Images point beyond themselves to the mystery they harbor. They invite the spirit to a searching movement. In the long run, they allow no simple rest in their significant content but stir up an unrest and levy a demand.

—Hans Urs von Balthasar (1985)<sup>1</sup>

A face has depth; it is not all surface. And yet that depth is not a *thing* at all; it does not yield to a scalpel. It is not the muscles or bones or brain, but a depth that plays upon the surface of the countenance. In philosophical terms, the face displays a spiritual reality.

—Kenneth L. Schmitz (1986)<sup>2</sup>

Applying the quotes above to ecclesial imagery, it may be said that for the theologian, an image is a task, inviting work and careful investigation. It does not call for mere surface attention. Even at its best, an image such as the Bride of Christ points beyond itself and remains at play, capable of generating new insights. And yet, because the image is a personal one, it therefore evokes a “face.” As with a human face, the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ discloses a depth of meaning about the identity and mystery of the Church. The image and the depth it conveys are mysteriously intertwined and even inseparable. To discard the image would be to efface the mystery of the Church herself.

The preceding exposition of twentieth-century papal and conciliar teaching has revealed a rich tapestry of uses of spousal imagery, in particular ecclesial bridal imagery. The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ was never absent from any stage of this teaching and grew in importance as the twentieth century advanced. The task of this closing chapter is to take a view

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1. *Theo-Logic*, vol. 1: *Truth of the World*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 145. German original published in 1985.

2. “The Geography of the Human Person,” in *The Texture of Being*, 152. Reprinted from *Communio* 13 (Spring 1986): 27-48.

of the whole in order to evaluate broadly the use of ecclesial bridal imagery during this span of teaching. This evaluation will proceed in three main parts, so as to examine: (I) the levels of continuity and discontinuity/newness in the magisterial use of the image; (II) ongoing theological questions related to the use of bridal imagery; and (III) the place and function of ecclesial metaphors. Subsequent to this chapter, the conclusion will comment on the enduring value of ecclesial bridal imagery.

### **I. Levels of Continuity and Discontinuity/Newness**

This study has presupposed a general and fundamental theological continuity through the history of the Church and of the Church's teaching office as manifest in her papal and conciliar magisterium. The study has also been cognizant of the unique manifestations of the Church's magisterium in various persons, events, times, and contexts.

This first part of the evaluation is divided into four sections and takes up the question of levels of continuity and discontinuity/newness with regard to the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in magisterial teaching. First, the teaching itself is considered (A); then the broader historical (B) and theological (C) contexts are examined; and finally the matter is considered in relation to the development of doctrine (D).

#### ***A. Use of Ecclesial Bridal Imagery in Magisterial Teaching***

The body of twentieth-century papal and conciliar teaching reveals important trends, distinctions, and developments in relation to the use of ecclesial bridal imagery. This section will explain the distinction between the presence and conscious application/development of the imagery (1); explicate a clear shift and intensification in the use of bridal imagery in magisterial

teaching (2); identify three paradigmatic moments in the magisterial teaching of the time (3); present the development in the use and meaning of the bridal image considered specifically as a metaphor (4); and finally will consider whether a particular motive for the trajectory of increasing use of bridal imagery can be identified (5), a question that will then open to the next section of broader historical and theological considerations.

Whereas earlier twentieth-century teaching was characterized by a more routine use of spousal vocabulary, popes from Pius XII onward, and the Second Vatican Council, made use of spousal vocabulary more intentionally and in a more developed way. This usage opened the way to a discourse permeated by spousal imagery and categories, which emerged in full force and even expanded into a quasi-systematic nuptial vision in the teaching of John Paul II.<sup>3</sup>

### **1. Presence vs. reflective application of the imagery**

A distinction can be made between the presence of a metaphor and the reflective or developed application of the metaphor. The previous exposition has traced “what is there” in magisterial teaching concerning ecclesial bridal imagery and related associations. The exposition has also revealed a difference between what might be called “routine” usage and “engaged” usage and articulation.

In general, the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ was present in various degrees throughout twentieth-century magisterial teaching from Leo XIII to John Paul II. While there was a remarkable consistency in the repetition and development of particular themes and patterns of ecclesial bridal imagery, this study has also identified and traced various new uses or

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3. This “nuptial vision,” along with distinctions between “spousal vocabulary,” “nuptial language or discourse,” and “nuptial mystery,” will be explained further below. See Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 386n9.

emphases that emerged, especially within the teaching of Pius XII. A summary comparison of these key themes and patterns associated with the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in twentieth-century papal and conciliar teaching can be found in the Appendix at the end of this study.

Themes and patterns of usage that were in some way consistently present throughout the span of this period of magisterial teaching included:<sup>4</sup> the bridal Church's holiness, spotlessness, and beauty; the bridal Church's union with Christ; the idea of the Church's bond with Christ as a mystery of love; and the dialectic between sin and perfection in the bridal Church. Ecclesial bridal imagery was consistently used in the context of teaching on the sacrament of marriage and the family. There was sustained use of maternal imagery for the Church and a growing integration of bridal and maternal imagery, as likewise a growing integration of the images of the Church as Body and Bride. There was also a sustained but growing presence of bridal imagery in reference to individual members of the Church. In particular, ecclesial bridal imagery was used in connection to the developing articulation of the relationship between Mary and the Church.

In general, these themes in the teaching of Leo XIII to Pius XI were more routine or customary. The special dignity of the bridal Church was perhaps the most pronounced theme, appearing particularly in the repeated call to defend or protect the bride in the face of suffering and persecution. This use of the bridal image tended to convey the Church's bridal identity in more static fashion and as if the bridal Church existed over and against her individual members.

Ephesians 5:21-33 was a key backdrop to the usage of bridal imagery. Particular moments of teaching also lent themselves to a more significant use of bridal imagery. Leo XIII's

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4. Not all of these themes and patterns necessarily were present in each pope (e.g., John XXIII's range of usage was not as extensive as that of Paul VI or John Paul II), but they represent those themes and patterns that received a level of sustained attention or presence when considering the span of twentieth-century papal and conciliar teaching as a whole. See the appendix at the end of this study for a summary catalogue of the themes and patterns of usage.



manifold use of spousal vocabulary in his encyclical on marriage is one example. More significant use of bridal imagery was also found in Pius X's and Benedict XV's respective encyclicals on Anselm and Jerome, especially because it was Anselm and Jerome's own usage that comprised the main momentum for the use of the imagery in papal teaching.

Of the first four popes examined, both Leo XIII and Pius XI seem to have come the closest to a more critical or reflective use of the imagery. Both issued encyclical letters on marriage that provided a significant context for further use of the imagery. Pius XI considered how the mystery of marriage related to the mystery of Christ's union with the Church, but he distinguished between marriage (*connubium*) between husband and wife and the union (*coniunctio*) between Christ and the Church.<sup>5</sup> Pius XI also related the images of Bride and fruitful Mother in an intentional way and, by so doing, brought to the fore the dependence between the two images.

## 2. A discernible shift and intensification

As the study has demonstrated and the appendix illustrates,<sup>6</sup> with Pius XII there was a clear, discernible shift in the use of ecclesial bridal imagery. Not only did Pius XII employ a considerable range of themes and patterns associated with the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ, but he also anticipated or "initiated" many of the themes that would be developed by subsequent papal and conciliar teaching.<sup>7</sup> He used ecclesial bridal imagery with a clear

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5. See Encyclical *Casti connubii*, no. 36 [AAS 22, 552]. See chapter three above, p. 143.

6. The appendix at the end of this study summarizes and catalogues the various themes and patterns of use of ecclesial bridal imagery and illustrates the quantitative and qualitative shift in the use of ecclesial bridal imagery from Pius XII's teaching onward.

7. See chapter four above, p. 161ff., and the appendix. The order of the themes reflects that found in the appendix.

recognition of the value of imagery and symbols; he distinguished the Church as Bride within her union with Christ; he emphasized the Bride's participation in the work of salvation and mission; and he spoke of the Bride as waiting for fulfillment (anticipating later teaching on the Church as pilgrim) and of spousal love as a fruitful gift of self. He used ecclesial bridal imagery in the context of liturgy and the Eucharist and spoke of God's spousal love in the covenant. He saw the family as mirroring the Trinity; the Bride of Christ as a fruitful Mother; and the images of Body and Bride as complementary. He also understood consecrated virginity as a perfect image of the Church as virgin-bride-mother, and, finally, reflected on the role of women and on the place of Mary as the ideal realization of the feminine.

All of these themes received fresh emphasis in Pius XII and his use of them anticipated subsequent teaching. Pius XII was the first pope during this time to employ the bridal metaphor in reference to a specifically ecclesiological concern: within the union of Head and Body, the Church is also distinct from Christ as his Bride. Pius XII also referred to various patristic and medieval sources in his use of ecclesial bridal imagery and referenced Ephesians 5 often. Compared to his predecessors, Pius XII's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was broader and more integrated. The shift from a rather static conception of the bridal Church to a more dynamic and participatory conception became evident in Pius XII's use of the imagery. Beginning with Pius XII's teaching, then, there was a demonstrable intensification of the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in papal and conciliar teaching.

John XXIII emphasized the theme of the union between Christ and his Bride and the Bride's maternal mission. His use of ecclesial bridal imagery was notable not so much for its content or additional patterns and themes but rather for the way in which he referred to the

Church as Bride and Mother. He famously used bridal imagery when describing the pastoral style of the Council in that the Bride would administer “the medicine of mercy.”<sup>8</sup>

From the Second Vatican Council onward, the use of the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ was further intensified and embedded in magisterial teaching in such a way that its status as a privileged image for the Church was emphasized.<sup>9</sup> The Council used a broad array of Scriptural imagery to refer to the mystery of the Church and by means of the latter concept provided a further theological rationale for the use of ecclesial imagery, developing and advancing beyond Pius XII’s encyclical letter *Mystici corporis*. The Council’s dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium* used ecclesial imagery to illuminate various aspects of the Church as mystery and as a kind of sacrament. Bridal imagery, although not as prevalent as the images of the People of God and the Body of Christ, enjoyed distinctive and repeated use in the Council’s teaching and was particularly connected to the Council’s teaching on the universal call to holiness, the Church’s need for constant renewal, and the ecclesiological significance of the sacrament of marriage (see Eph 5).

Paul VI followed the Council’s lead by recognizing the privileged place of the bridal image.<sup>10</sup> Like the Council but in his own distinctive way, Paul circumscribed the image in relation to other images and even remarked about the unusual character of bridal and maternal imagery for the Church. Although he acknowledged marriage to be included in the “great mystery” of Eph 5, Paul also emphasized the substantial difference between the union of husband and wife and the union of Christ and the Church. In this way, he anticipated the use of analogy (likeness

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8. Address *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (October 11, 1962), no. 7 [AAS 54, 792]. See chapter five above, p. 196.

9. See chapter five above, p. 200ff.

10. See chapter five above, p. 225ff.

and greater non-likeness) by John Paul II.<sup>11</sup> Paul VI perhaps went the farthest in setting up the dialectic between the perfect image of the Bride as envisioned by Christ and the actual “face” of the Bride made up largely of sinners. In more positive terms, Paul also spoke of the image of the Bride as a “title of love,” conveying the Church as a mystery of love, and he frequently taught about the need to love the Church. As well, Paul especially underscored Mary’s special relationship to the bridal Church, following the line of the Council.

Paul VI’s pontificate was the first wherein the spousal imagery found in Scripture in relation to the Church was related (albeit briefly) to the sexual difference of male and female.<sup>12</sup> This link appeared again in the teaching of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). In addition, the systematizing term “nuptial mystery” appeared for the first time in CDF teaching within Paul VI’s pontificate.

John Paul II deepened the use of ecclesial bridal imagery by situating it within a larger perspective of analogy and a network of implications and spousal associations.<sup>13</sup> The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ operated in John Paul’s teaching within a framework or paradigm that recognized the analogy between the spousal love of husband and wife and of Christ and the Church. For John Paul, this analogy is constitutive to a proper understanding of creation and redemption as well as to a proper grasp of the meaning of the human person created in the image of God as male and female. While John Paul’s use of ecclesial bridal imagery and his teaching on the Church were “occasional” rather than “systematic,”<sup>14</sup> he

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11. See chapter two above, p. 89ff., chapter six above, p. 273ff., and the appendix below.

12. See Address *Tout d’abord* (May 4, 1970) [AAS 62, 428-37]. See chapter five above, p. 230ff.

13. See chapter six above, p. 264ff.

14. See Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 240.

frequently employed spousal categories and concepts (rather than simply vocabulary) that served as basic and repeated points of reference throughout his teaching (e.g., the analogy of spousal love, the spousal meaning of the body, the interwoven character of spousal and redemptive love, and the great mystery of Ephesians 5).

The majority of John Paul's use of ecclesial bridal imagery was anticipated or present in some way in earlier magisterial teaching, though John Paul considerably expanded this usage.<sup>15</sup> He developed consideration of Christ as Bridegroom and Redeemer; of the nature of love as self-gift; of the "great mystery" as a fundamental heuristic paradigm; of sexual difference in the perspective of the great mystery of Christ and the Church; and particularly of the Church as the Bride of Christ in relation to the mystery of the feminine. John Paul used bridal imagery in connection with the Eucharist; he considered the relationship between the images of the Body and Bride of Christ and between those of the Church as Bride and Mother; and he taught that individual Christians—especially those in consecrated life as well as men and women together—live out this reality of the Church as Bride.

### **3. The trajectory of magisterial teaching: three paradigmatic moments**

While the imagery was present from Leo XIII to Pius XI, a significant trajectory of increased teaching and application of ecclesial bridal imagery is traceable from Pius XII to John Paul II. As noted above, an intensification of the use of ecclesial bridal imagery is manifest in this trajectory in that ecclesial bridal imagery or associated spousal imagery was applied in an intentional or deliberate way.

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15. The appendix below captures the expanded or new themes and patterns in John Paul's teaching.

Within this trajectory of magisterial teaching, three paradigmatic moments in the use of ecclesial bridal imagery can be identified and linked respectively with Pius XII, Vatican II-Paul VI, and John Paul II: (1) the recovery of the significance of ecclesial imagery per se and the integrated use of bridal imagery (Pius XII); (2) the identification of the bridal image as a unique window to the Church as mystery, sacrament, and pilgrim (Vatican II-Paul VI); and (3) the highlighting of spousal imagery as disclosive of the dramatic mystery at the heart of the Church and humanity (John Paul II).

In a sense, all three of these paradigmatic moments stand within a dynamic (developing) continuity of usage of the imagery. However, in their privileged attention to ecclesial imagery, the three moments stand out against the background of preceding magisterial teaching. In Angelo Scola's terminology, it could be said that while the teaching from Leo XIII to Pius XI included a more routine use of "spousal vocabulary,"<sup>16</sup> a more developed use of "spousal vocabulary" emerged in the teaching of Pius XII and was sustained in the teaching of the Council and advanced in that of Paul VI. In John Paul II's teaching, however, spousal vocabulary was employed to such an extent that it can be said he used a "nuptial language" or, even better, a "nuptial discourse"<sup>17</sup> open to a critical and systematic elaboration, which Scola describes by the expression "nuptial mystery."<sup>18</sup>

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16. See Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 386n9: "By 'spousal vocabulary' I refer to concrete spousal images (bride-bridegroom, the wedding feast, adultery, etc.), of which the Scriptures offer numerous examples. By the term 'nuptial language' I mean the hermeneutical elaboration of spousal categories. The most outstanding example of this occurs in Eph 5:21-33; here the use of the comparison Christ-church/husband-wife led the Council of Trent to affirm that in this passage the author of the letter '*innuit* [hints at]' the sacramentality of marriage (cf. Denziger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, 1799). Lastly, the expression 'nuptial mystery' indicates a critical and organic elaboration of nuptial language for the sake of the *intellectus fidei*."

17. In the way this study employs the terms, "discourse" is preferable to "language" in that discourse encompasses language *use* that is also *ordered* in search of truth. See chapter two above, pp. 83n40 and 91ff.

18. See Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 386.

There is an apparent tension between the moments associated with Vatican II-Paul VI and with John Paul II. Although both moments constitute an advancement in the use of ecclesial bridal imagery, the accent of Vatican II and Paul VI was on the use of the bridal image together with many images in relation to the Church's mystery, whereas the accent of John Paul II was on the spousal analogy and spousal imagery as uniquely disclosive of the Church's inner mystery.

#### **4. The meaning and “play” of the metaphor**

The shift in the use of ecclesial bridal imagery between Leo XIII-Pius XI and Pius XII-John Paul II was in part a shift in the intentional acknowledgment of the value of imagery and metaphors for an understanding of the nature of the Church. Pius XII appears to be the first pope during this time to use a term closely associated with “metaphor” (*translata*) in relation to ecclesial imagery; Vatican II and Paul VI ratified the importance of imagery in relation to a fuller appreciation of the nature and mystery of the Church; and John Paul II advanced these considerations by consciously situating metaphor in relation to a larger network of analogy.

In a more particular way, the shift in the use of ecclesial bridal imagery included a somewhat subtle but important modification of the very meaning of the bridal metaphor with reference to the Church. In earlier usage from Leo XIII to Pius XI, ecclesial bridal imagery was used often when the bridal Church was described as facing opposition from the world or from the sinfulness of her children or members. Hence, there was a call to defend the Bride against calumny, slander, and so on. This usage was paralleled by a frequent use of ecclesial maternal imagery—especially in Leo XIII—that conveyed more often than not a distinction between the Church as Mother and the children of the Church.

In this earlier context, although the tenor (the underlying subject)<sup>19</sup> of the bridal metaphor was often the (Roman) Catholic Church as such, the specific referent of “Church” was not always clear. In fact, the use of the metaphor sometimes implied that the “Church” was something other than her members—perhaps the hierarchy alone, Rome, an abstract “institution,” or another referent. Congar and others have examined the fact that what was intended by the term “Church” in the theology of the patristic-medieval periods was different from what was intended in a later and more juridically- and institutionally-focused ecclesiology. Imagery that previously had direct significance for the life of every Christian began to refer to institutional qualities abstracted from the living members of the Church.

This view which understood the Church “vis-à-vis” her children in a more hardened dialectic was still present in the earlier magisterial teaching of the twentieth century. The *ressourcement* and various movements of renewal contributed to the recovery of a fuller sense of the referent of “Church.” Pius XII’s encyclical letter *Mystici corporis* symbolized the beginning of this renewed era of magisterial teaching on the Church (e.g., “We are the Mystical Body of Christ”)<sup>20</sup> in contrast to the previous juridical and institutional emphases. Thereby, both bridal and maternal imagery became increasingly used in contexts inclusive of every member of the Church. This shift or modification of the tenor of the metaphor, through particular modification of the referent of “Church,” opened ecclesial bridal imagery to the dynamic, participatory, and even dramatic uses found in later magisterial teaching.

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19. On the use of the terms “tenor” and “vehicle,” see chapter two above, pp. 77 and 108.

20. For this phrase, see Pius XII’s Homily *Dum Divinum Redemptorem* (April 9, 1950) [AAS 42, 280].



Furthermore, the growth of qualifiers found in the vehicle of the bridal metaphor<sup>21</sup>—a growth particularly visible from Pius XII onward—signified two important developments for ecclesial bridal imagery. First, there was a transition from a static to a more dynamic identity of the bridal Church, which preserved but qualified the necessary dialectic that accompanies particular uses of bridal and maternal imagery. For instance, the holiness of the Bride perdures in the face of sinful members who are still “Bride” and called to be “Bride.” The Bride is a mystery of love embracing all people as well as a title of love beckoning all members of the Church to love her as Christ loved her. Also, the Bride is a Mother vis-à-vis her children who themselves are called to be fruitful and to love their Mother. Second, an emblematic metaphor (the Church is the Bride of Christ) was more broadly recovered as an actual “living metaphor.”

The significance of this second development will be further explored below. Scripture and the history of theology attest to the bridal metaphor as a privileged and emblematic metaphor for the Church that, despite the ebb and flow of time, culture and context, has perdured beyond the constraints of a particular time and culture. Nevertheless, there are periods when even an emblematic metaphor may appear “forced” or may lose its vitality for a time. The trajectory of magisterial teaching from Pius XII to John Paul II indicates a notable resurgence to the bridal metaphor. In particular, the profuse themes and patterns contained in the metaphorical qualifiers signified a renewed vitality especially in the teaching of John Paul II, who appeared to be particularly open to the “play” of metaphor while also acknowledging the need not to remain at the level of metaphor simply.

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21. The “vehicle” is that which is said of the subject in the context of the metaphor. “Qualifiers” are descriptive terms within the vehicle of the metaphor. See chapter two above, pp. 77 and 108.

### 5. The question of motive: Was there an “agenda” at work?

In light of the evident increase in the use of spousal imagery in magisterial teaching from Leo XIII to John Paul II, and especially the abundant use of such imagery by John Paul II, it is tempting to ask whether a particular motive or rationale undergirded this development. The question of an “agenda” is not intended here in an ideological and divisive way, but in order to highlight a few important points that can be gathered from this study’s analysis.

Within the broad context of magisterial teaching as a whole at this time, it is difficult to pinpoint one matter or concern as the essential pivot-point that comprehensively explains the increased usage and application of spousal imagery. In Pius XII’s teaching, ecclesial bridal imagery was introduced to complement and clarify the meaning of the image of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. Other uses arose in connection to marriage and consecrated virginity. In the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and Paul VI, ecclesial bridal imagery was applied within a recovery of the expanse of Scriptural imagery in service to an understanding of the Church as mystery and sacrament. In the teaching of John Paul II, the use of ecclesial bridal imagery was often connected to broader considerations of the spousal analogy of Eph 5, marriage and the family, the dignity of women, and consecrated life—which might be referred to broadly as Christian anthropology and vocation. Interestingly, each of these broader considerations had important precursors in earlier magisterial teaching, whether it was Eph 5 in Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Pius XII, the dignity of women in Pius XII and Paul VI, or the consecrated life and priesthood in Pius XII, Vatican II, and Paul VI.

In general, then, this study of ecclesial bridal imagery does not indicate that the imagery was used solely for what might be called an “agenda” as minimally conceived or for what might

amount to a use of imagery in purely functionalist terms. For example—to recall often controversial issues—although ecclesial bridal imagery was used in contexts supportive of the Church’s teaching on contraception and the reservation of priestly ordination to men, the use of the imagery was broader than these particular concerns.<sup>22</sup> The use of imagery in these instances was also nuanced. For example, the relation of Christ the Bridegroom with the Church his Bride is a truth that fittingly “illuminates,” though does not itself justify, the Church’s teaching on the reservation of ordination to men, the ultimate foundation of which is found in the will of Christ and the tradition of the Church.<sup>23</sup>

John Paul II’s reflections on the theology of the body, the “spousal meaning of the body,” and subsequent application of spousal symbolism marked a sustained interest of the Pope in matters of marriage and spousal love, previously evidenced in his earlier writings. The bridal image was certainly a privileged image in John Paul’s teaching, though not an exclusive one. Some authors have critiqued aspects of John Paul’s thought for giving an undue “ultimacy” to marriage and spousal symbolism.<sup>24</sup> It is true that John Paul deemed spousal symbolism

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22. There were obviously important points of contact with *Humanae vitae* in John Paul’s teaching. His catecheses on the theology of the body were envisioned precisely as a renewed foundation for understanding and reappropriating Paul VI’s teaching on married love. See TOB 118 – 133. Yet even here, seeing *Humanae vitae* as the “real agenda” for the theology of the body (i.e., “agenda” in a reductive sense) not only misconstrues the deeper anthropological implications and concerns of John Paul II’s work, but it also carries the presupposition that the teaching of *Humanae vitae* has somehow been surpassed or left behind.

23. See CDF, Declaration *Inter insigniores*, sec. 5 (October 15, 1976) [AAS 69, 110-11]; John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), no. 51 [AAS 81, 493]; John Paul II, *Letter to Women*, no. 11 [AAS 87, 811]; and CDF, *Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (May 31, 2004), no. 16 [AAS 96, 686].

24. See William Mattison, “‘When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given to marriage’: Marriage and Sexuality, Eschatology, and the Nuptial Meaning of the Body in Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body,” in *Sexuality and the U.S. Catholic Church: Crisis and Renewal*, eds. Lisa Sowle Cahill, John Garvey, and T. Frank Kennedy, 32-51 (New York: Herder & Herder, 2006). For other critiques along similar lines, see David Cloutier and William C. Mattison III, “Bodies Poured Out in Christ: Marriage Beyond the Theology of the Body,” in *Leaving and Coming Home: New Wineskins for Catholic Sexual Ethics*, ed. David Cloutier, 206-25 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010); and Luke Timothy Johnson, “A Disembodied ‘Theology of the Body’: John Paul II on Love, Sex and

capable of communicating or assisting in the communication of a great range of truths at the heart of the economy of salvation, but he also indicated important nuances. For example, consecrated chastity, rather than the sacrament of marriage, is where “the Church realizes her union as Bride with Christ the Bridegroom to the greatest extent.”<sup>25</sup> In addition, as is the case with all analogies in reference to divine mystery, when using the spousal analogy the greater non-likeness between the image and the reality needs to be recalled.<sup>26</sup> Spousal symbolism remains important but itself is transformed in light of the mystery of Christ and the Church.

The use of ecclesial bridal imagery in twentieth-century papal and conciliar teaching was multi-layered and concerned not only ecclesiological themes but also wider aspects of anthropology, Christology, vocation, and the sacrament of marriage. While personal contributions and context shed light especially on John Paul II’s rich usage of spousal imagery, there are too many connections to previous magisterial teaching to attribute his usage solely to a personal “agenda.” Moreover, the broader socio-cultural and historical context, as well as the theological context, must be taken into account in assessing magisterial usage of bridal imagery.

### ***B. Historical and Socio-Cultural Considerations***

The changing historical and socio-cultural situation of the Church in the twentieth century provides important background for understanding the development of the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in magisterial teaching. As traced in previous chapters, Church-State relations and Church-world understandings were undergoing significant reconsideration during

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Pleasure,” *Commonweal* (January 26, 2001): 11-17. A more general critique can be found in David Matzko McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home: A Theology of the Household* (London: SCM Press, 2001).

25. General Audience (November 23, 1994), no. 4 [IGP 17.2, 846-47; JP-*Church*, 566-67].

26. See TOB 33:3 [IGP 3.2, 313], and Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 8. See also TOB 90 [IGP 5.3, 245-48].

the first half of the twentieth century. The distinction between the Church and the State continued to be worked out and further embedded into the Catholic consciousness, especially after the loss of the Papal States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the ongoing conflicts between Italy and the Vatican, the rise and threats of communism and totalitarianism, various civil and global wars, and the end of colonialism. The initial concern to preserve and defend the liberty of the Church, the Bride of Christ, gradually became broadened to a concern to preserve and defend religious liberty across the board.

The emergent distinction between the Church and the State was one aspect of a further articulation of the relationship between the Church and the world that saw the Church not so much “over and against” but rather “in and with” the world, always with the important qualifier that the Church ultimately is “not of the world” or made for this world alone. Various other developments, such as the rising recognition of the role of the laity, renewed understandings of mission and evangelization, recognition of the importance of inculturation, and ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, played a role in contributing toward a closer relationship between the “Church” and the “world.”

This shift in turn affected the way the bridal metaphor was used in different contexts, in particular how the tenor of the metaphor was conceived and what qualifiers were used. As noted above, especially from the time of Pius XII, the tenor began consciously to reflect more of an understanding of the “Church” as involving “all the faithful.”<sup>27</sup> At the same time, qualifiers within the bridal metaphor began to emphasize the Bride’s reaching out to the world, to embrace the world in the same love with which Christ embraces his Bride.

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27. See chapter four above, p. 185ff.

Concurrent with this changed situation of the Church in relation to the State and the world was an increasingly popular indifference and even hostility toward religion, evidenced in the rising influence of secularism and materialism in various cultural sectors, particularly the so-called developed countries of the West. This hostility was inseparable from the growing mistrust of institutions and the radical individualism manifest in the cultural and sexual revolutions that emerged with force in the 1960s and spawned the post-modern age, radical feminism and egalitarianism, and the crisis and breakdown of marriage and the family.

The large-scale public dissent of many prominent Catholics after Paul VI issued *Humanae vitae* was a significant piece within this overall landscape, illustrating as well the institutional challenges experienced by the Church in the immediate post-conciliar years. In many ways, the ecclesial-cultural shift experienced in many sectors of the Church in the years during and following the Council caused many Catholics to question their current situation in relation to the ecclesial institutional framework. Paul VI's repeated call to "love the Church," the Bride loved by Christ—a love which includes the Church in her institutional form—was one response to these surrounding cultural and institutional challenges.<sup>28</sup>

The challenges posed by radical individualism, radical feminism, and the sexual revolution were a decisive backdrop for John Paul II's teaching and emphasis on the human person, the dignity of women, and marriage and the family. From Leo XIII to Pius XI and onward, the magisterium had been attending to issues of marriage and the family. The advent of the birth control pill and the sexual revolution of the 1960s, however, had a drastic effect on the landscape of marriage, which experienced a profound statistical and institutional decline through

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28. See chapter five above, pp. 228n167 and 240n227.

“no-fault” divorce laws in the 1970s and the rising preference for cohabitation outside of marriage.<sup>29</sup> These changes led to what began in the 1970s but emerged in force in the 1990s as the threat and initial realization of the legal-institutional deconstruction of marriage by legal redefinition.<sup>30</sup> John Paul’s teaching on marriage and the family was certainly framed as a response to these issues, and his frequent use of ecclesial bridal imagery and spousal symbolism in general was a reflection of this larger context of concerns.<sup>31</sup> This context was made particularly clear in John Paul’s consideration of the “great mystery” of Eph 5 as a key counter in the face of modern rationalistic and Manichaeian tendencies.<sup>32</sup>

During the pontificates of Paul VI and John Paul II, the bridal metaphor became increasingly counter-cultural because of the specific socio-cultural situation, and by that very fact the metaphor became potentially more relevant, powerful, and prophetic.

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29. On the effects of contraception and in defense of Paul VI’s encyclical letter *Humanae vitae*, see Janet E. Smith, ed., *Why Humanae Vitae Was Right: A Reader* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993); in particular, see Smith’s “Paul VI as Prophet,” 519-31 (ibid.). See also William May, *Marriage: The Rock on Which the Family is Built* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2009), ix-xvi and 57-74. On the rise and effects of divorce and the general breakdown of marriage and the family, see Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, *The Divorce Culture: Rethinking Our Commitments to Marriage and Family* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996); Elizabeth Marquardt, *Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2005); David Popenoe, *War Over the Family* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005); David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1995); Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage* (New York: Broadway Books, 2000), 1-12; and Don S. Browning, *Marriage and Modernization: How Globalization Threatens Marriage and What to Do about It* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 1-29.

30. On the background, issues and concerns related to the proposal to redefine marriage to include two persons of the same sex, see Robert P. George and Jean Bethke Elshtain, *The Meaning of Marriage: Family, State, Market, and Morals* (Dallas: Spence Publishing Company, 2006); Daniel Cere and Douglas Farrow, eds., *Divorcing Marriage* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004); David Blankenhorn, *The Future of Marriage* (New York: Encounter Books, 2007); and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Marriage: The Dream That Refuses to Die* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2008).

31. Cf. Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 214-21.

32. See *Letter to Families*; chapter six above, pp. 270ff. and 291ff.

### ***C. Theological Correlation***

The changing theological context of the twentieth century was also a decisive background for the renewed use of ecclesial bridal imagery in magisterial teaching during this period. The *ressourcement* and various theological renewals invited a more scripturally-based approach to the Church, inspired largely by the example of the Church Fathers. Various points of contact between uses of bridal imagery in magisterial teaching and uses of the imagery present in specific theologians have been traced in preceding chapters. As theologians are rarely cited by name in papal and conciliar teaching, the identification of specific theological influences on that teaching remains conjectural. The following subsections examine how this theological correlation may illuminate the question of levels of continuity and newness in the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in magisterial teaching. To what extent was the magisterium being influenced by the theological context and to what extent was the magisterium itself taking the lead in theological exploration?

#### **1. Congruencies**

Magisterial teaching from Leo XIII to John Paul II mirrored in certain ways the shift in Catholic theology from the textbooks and manuals of neoscholasticism to a return to the original theological sources themselves, especially Scripture and the patristic and medieval sources. With regard to ecclesial bridal imagery, the flourishing interest in the Church as the Body of Christ during the 1920s and 1930s also invited further consideration of the Church as the Bride of Christ.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, interest in the Church as Mother was evident in different

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33. See chapter one above, p. 41ff.



studies of this time.<sup>34</sup> Pius XI hinted at these theological developments when he noted that the Church is Bride and therefore Mother.<sup>35</sup> Pius XII's encyclical letter *Mystici corporis* (1943) more directly aligned with this burgeoning interest in ecclesial imagery and treated the bridal image within a larger consideration of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. Sebastian Tromp's likely contribution here is an important indicator of how the theological momentum influenced the trajectory of magisterial teaching.<sup>36</sup> Pius XII's later reflections on devotion to the Sacred Heart and on the bridal Church as coming from the heart of Christ had clear theological parallels in studies by figures such as Tromp as well as Karl Rahner.<sup>37</sup>

In certain ways, therefore, Pius XII's magisterium closely paralleled various theological developments and was enriched by them. At the same time, however, Pius XII also expressed hesitancy toward some aspects of the theological exploration associated with the *ressourcement*, particularly the *nouvelle theologie*.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, Pius XII anticipated key themes that would be taken up by the Council (e.g., the mystery of the Church, liturgical reform, a renewed approach to Scripture, and an openness of the Church to the world)<sup>39</sup> as well as by later papal teaching (e.g., dignity of women and theological significance of the family).<sup>40</sup> His use of ecclesial bridal

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34. See chapter one above, p. 42n167.

35. See Pius XI, Encyclical *Divini illius Magistri* (December 31, 1929), no. 101 [AAS 22, 85-86]; chapter three above, p. 144ff.

36. See chapters one and four above, pp. 44ff. and 154ff.

37. See chapters one and four above, pp. 44ff., 62ff. and 157ff.

38. See Pius XII, Encyclical *Humani generis* (August 12, 1950) [AAS 42, 561-78].

39. See respectively Encyclical Letter *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943) [AAS 35, 193-248]; Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947) [AAS 39, 521-95]; Encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* (September 30, 1943) [AAS 35, 297-325]; and on the last point, see Address *In questo giorno* (June 2, 1939) [DR 1, 152]; Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* (October 10, 1939), nos. 84 and 101 [AAS 31, 441 and 447]; and Encyclical *Fidei donum* (April 21, 1957), no. 46 [AAS 49, 238].

40. See respectively Address *Poussées par le désir* (September 29, 1957) [AAS 49, 906-22], and Address *Quarantun anno* (June 19, 1940) [DR 2, 148]; chapter four above, p. 159ff. and 171ff.

imagery mirrored the theological context of his pontificate. Pius XII applied the bridal image in a more deliberately ecclesiological context, reflective of certain developments in contemporary ecclesiology (e.g., the growing interest in ecclesial imagery, and the move away from a solely juridical understanding of the Church).

The teaching of Vatican II and Paul VI reflected a unique interchange and a close interrelationship between theology and the magisterium. The Council's teaching was heavily influenced by the theology of various *periti*, and Paul VI himself regularly cited contemporary theologians in his Wednesday audience addresses.<sup>41</sup> The Council's use of ecclesial bridal imagery, and Paul VI's use subsequently, was contextualized within a larger consideration of the Church as mystery and sacrament and as the People of God.<sup>42</sup> The image of the Church as the People of God became a defining image in *Lumen gentium*, though closely coupled with the image of the Church as the Body of Christ.<sup>43</sup> Bridal imagery, while specifically mentioned, was interwoven within these other emphases. In this way, the Council's use of the imagery reflected that of Henri de Lubac, Charles Journet, and Yves Congar in certain respects, especially in the contextualization of the imagery within a consideration of the Church as mystery.<sup>44</sup>

The particular use of ecclesial bridal imagery by the Council and Paul VI thus mirrored much of what had been present in the theological currents of the preceding two decades. In the broad use of the imagery in relation to the Church as mystery, the Council and Paul VI seemed to align with a growing theological consensus. The Council occasioned a remarkable confluence

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41. See chapter five above, p. 230n173.

42. See chapter five above, pp. 206ff. and 235ff.

43. Rikhof's study notes the privileged use of these two images. See Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*, 11-66.

44. See de Lubac, *The Splendor of the Church*, and *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, esp. 18, 21 and 24; Journet, *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, 49-50; and Congar, "Peut-on définir l'Église? Destin et valeur de quatre notions qui s'offrent à le faire," in *Sainte Église*, 21-44. See also chapter one above, p. 49ff.

of theological energy and episcopal authority. The conciliar teaching was thus certainly influenced by the theological context but itself also led the way into a new period of ecclesiological reflection. Paul VI continued the ecclesiological momentum of the Council by devoting many of his Wednesday audience addresses to a consideration of the mystery of the Church, in which he also discussed the particular nature of ecclesial bridal imagery.<sup>45</sup>

A notable feature of the post-conciliar years is that ecclesial imagery in general began to receive mixed responses in the theological realm and interest in it waned.<sup>46</sup> At the same time, certain theologians continued to use ecclesial imagery, even pressing for heightened consideration of images they judged to be largely ignored, particularly the images of Bride and Mother.<sup>47</sup> In this context, John Paul II's use of ecclesial bridal imagery is particularly noteworthy. John Paul's frequent and steady use of the imagery clearly followed in the line of theologians such as de Lubac, von Balthasar, Bouyer, and Ratzinger. In a way, John Paul also picked up where *Lumen gentium* and Paul VI's Wednesday audiences left off, continuing the use of imagery as a window to the mystery of the Church and even calling for a renewed study of ecclesial images in order for the Church to advance ecclesologically.<sup>48</sup>

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45. See chapter five above, p. 228ff.

46. The rise of contextual theologies, such as political, liberation, and feminist theologies, is indicative of one aspect of a theological shift in interest. In addition, certain images that had spawned a great amount of previous reflection—such as the ecclesial images of the Mystical Body of Christ and the People of God—had also led the way to increased interest in the notion or concept of *communio* (often in connection to eucharistic ecclesiology) as an overarching systematic principle for ecclesiology. See Ratzinger, “The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council,” 17. Rikho's work, *The Concept of Church*, is one example of the interest in the concept of *communio* as well as an interest to respond in systematic fashion to (or to make sense of) the variety of ecclesial images.

47. For example, see de Lubac, *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, 56, and *The Motherhood of the Church*; Bouyer, *The Church of God, Body of Christ and Temple of the Holy Spirit*; and Balthasar, *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church*, 186-204, and *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 283-360. See chapter one above, pp. 49ff. and 57ff.

48. See Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (September 14, 1995), no. 63 [AAS 88, 40].

## 2. Distinctions

Although there were similarities and parallels between magisterial teaching and the theological context of the twentieth century, key distinctions in these respective uses of ecclesial bridal imagery emerged as well.

First, there were particular themes that were either not treated or treated differently when comparing magisterial teaching and theological context. For example, despite the growing theological interest in the quasi-personhood of the Church in the 1960s and 1970s,<sup>49</sup> magisterial teaching did not enter into this area of speculation in relation to bridal imagery. Only later did John Paul take up the question in brief form, speaking of the bridal Church as a “collective subject” rather than an “individual person.”<sup>50</sup> In addition, although some theologians attributed directly the “one flesh” of marriage to a description of the union of Christ and the Church (see Eph 5),<sup>51</sup> magisterial teaching generally avoided a direct attribution. John Paul II came closest to a direct (metaphorical) attribution but maintained an analogical relation between the “one flesh” of husband and wife and the union of Christ the Bridegroom with the Church his Bride in one Body.<sup>52</sup> Finally, although certain theologians referred to Mary explicitly as “bride of Christ,”<sup>53</sup> magisterial teaching remained generally implicit in this regard. Mary was often described in bridal terms (particularly as “bride of the Holy Spirit”) and was increasingly associated with the

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49. See chapter one above, p. 67ff.

50. See Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1713]; chapter six above, p. 278n72.

51. See chapter one above, pp. 51n219, 53n232, 57n261, 59n268 and 66n305.

52. See chapter six above, p. 296n166. Leo XIII quoted Augustine, who attributed the phrase “two in one flesh” to Christ and the Church. See Encyclical *Satis cognitum* (June 29, 1896), no. 16 [LA 16, 207]; chapter three above, p. 119n44.

53. See Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 316-18.

Church, but official teaching, outside of a brief reference in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,<sup>54</sup> did not use the title “bride of Christ” in any explicit or sustained way in reference to Mary.<sup>55</sup>

A second difference in the use of ecclesial bridal imagery is evident in a comparison of John Paul II with the theological context. Certainly, important parallels and theological influences can be traced in John Paul’s teaching (e.g., John Paul cites Balthasar in reference to the Marian dimension of the Church).<sup>56</sup> However, John Paul’s teaching reflected a significant advance in the creative use and consideration of ecclesial bridal imagery. This advance is particularly evident in his commentary on Eph 5:21-33 within his addresses on the “theology of the body,” in his consideration of the Church as the Bride of Christ within his teaching on the dignity of woman (see *Mulieris dignitatem*), and in his further reflections upon the “great mystery” of Eph 5:32 found in the *Letter to Families*. In John Paul II’s teaching, there is what might be called an “anthropological concentration” of the ecclesial imagery insofar as the imagery is intentionally related to the fact and significance of the existence of men and women and to their mutual relationship in marriage and their various states of life.

John Paul thus also broke fresh ground by advancing reflection in ways that theologians are still seeking to understand. John Paul’s Wednesday catecheses on the theology of the body, as much as they are grounded in Scripture and in developments of preceding theological renewal, themselves reflect original work of theological creativity and insight that was then incorporated into official papal teaching under the form of a catechetical address. In addition,

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54. See CCC, no. 1138: *sanctissima Mater Dei (Mulier; Sponsa Agni)*.

55. This lack of direct reference to Mary as Bride of Christ mirrored the general practice of patristic theology. See Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 301.

56. See McPartlan, “The Marian Church: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Ordination of Women,” in *Mary is for Everyone: Essays on Mary and Ecumenism*, eds. William McLoughlin and Jill Pinnock, 41-55 (Leominster: Gracewing, 1997), 51.

the extensive and dedicated consideration he gave to the Church as the Bride of Christ, the “great mystery,” and to marriage and the family in general was unique compared to his predecessors and has itself remained a fertile source of ongoing theological investigation.

The relationship between the magisterium and theology, manifest during the pronounced shift in use of ecclesial bridal imagery that began with Pius XII, might be summarized as follows. In general, various parallels and shared themes were present in both realms throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, though some distinctions persisted. With regard to particular magisterial phases, the phase from Pius XII to Paul VI could be characterized as one in which the magisterium adopted a stance of discernment toward theological exploration, though a further distinction could be made between the pontificate of Pius XII and the phase from John XXIII to Paul VI, because the latter phase was marked by a unique openness to theological contributions as a result of the conciliar event. On the other hand, although John Paul’s pontificate certainly retained the general stance of discernment that marks a key function of the teaching office of the Church, John Paul’s pontificate advanced on its own and even led the way insofar as the use of ecclesial bridal imagery and spousal symbolism is concerned.

#### ***D. Development of Doctrine***

The question of the development of doctrine is one that requires careful and patient attention and examination. It is also a question that needs the appropriate passage of time to allow for adequate assessment. This study does not presume to make a definite assessment here but rather highlights the possibility of doctrinal development as a potential explanation that cannot be ignored when examining the use of spousal imagery and categories in magisterial teaching.

The development of doctrine presumes important distinctions among the status quo, development, and corruption.<sup>57</sup> It also presumes the existence of a particular doctrine in development. Newness could be a sign of development, but not necessarily. It could also signify the recovery of something once known but forgotten, or it could signify a wrong turn or corruption. Time will tell whether advancing trends in the twentieth century related to ecclesial imagery and bridal imagery in particular might be categorized as a development of doctrine.

Much of the use of ecclesial bridal imagery seemed to constitute a recovery of patristic and medieval usage but also accompanied a growing and distinctive attention to ecclesiology in magisterial teaching. Another important and distinctive trend in twentieth-century magisterial teaching was the consistent and increasing emphasis from Leo XIII to John Paul II on the significant place of marriage and the family. The advanced use of ecclesial bridal imagery by John Paul II was intertwined with a growing reflection on the sacramental and anthropological significance of Christian marriage and the human person created as male and female. An identifiable “newness” in the use of ecclesial bridal imagery was the growing reflection upon the significance of sexual difference as it related to an understanding of Christ as Bridegroom and the Church as Bride. Whereas patristic usage referred to the soul as bride of Christ as well as consecrated virgins as brides—always in some connection (at least implicitly) with the Church as Bride—in John Paul II there was an explicit acknowledgement of the importance of masculinity and femininity when considering the mystery of the Church as Bride. This aspect of integration—where bridal imagery has significance not only for the Church per se but for

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57. See John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 6th ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), chaps. 1-2, pp. 33-98.

individuals in the Church, specifically as male or female—was not present in earlier usage of spousal imagery.<sup>58</sup>

In the background of this fresh application of ecclesial bridal imagery lay considerable anthropological and sacramental innovations in John Paul's teaching. First, the image of God is located *par excellence* though not exclusively in the communion of persons between man and woman—an emphasis uncommon in the Western tradition.<sup>59</sup> Sexuality itself becomes an inherent aspect of being created in *imago Dei*.<sup>60</sup> Second, the understanding of marriage as the primordial sacrament receives a further theological underpinning as the image of God is uniquely manifest in the communion of persons of man and woman. Further, as Christoph Schönborn has observed, “[t]his visible sign of marriage ‘in the beginning’ is connected with the visible sign of Christ’s spousal love for the Church and is thus the foundation of the whole sacramental order.”<sup>61</sup> Finally, John Paul set landmarks in his teaching for the further exploration of the relationship between the family and the Trinity, a relationship toward which the Western tradition had expressed general reticence, despite the receptivity found in certain Eastern Fathers, particular medieval thinkers, and in Scheeben.<sup>62</sup>

An evaluation of a development of doctrine associated with the use of ecclesial bridal imagery would require further examination of the themes outlined above. From the perspective

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58. However, on the significance of sexual difference in the thought of select Church Fathers, especially Augustine, see Christopher C. Roberts, *Creation and Covenant: The Significance of Sexual Difference in the Moral Theology of Marriage* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 13-77.

59. See TOB 9:3 [IGP 2.2, 1155]. See also Foreword by Christoph Schönborn in TOB, p. xxv; Ouellet, *Divine Likeness: Toward a Trinitarian Anthropology of the Family*, trans. Philip Milligan and Linda M. Cicone (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 26-33; and Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 201. Balthasar was an important influence here. For example, see *Theo-Drama*, vol. 2, 365-82.

60. See John Paul II, *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 6. See also Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 32-52.

61. Christoph Schönborn, Foreword, TOB, p. xxv. See TOB 95b:7 [IGP 5.3, 629-30].

62. See Ouellet, *Divine Likeness*, 20-37.



of the authority of magisterial teaching, it would also be important to account for the type of teaching presented. Teaching on marriage and the family spanned a broad spectrum of authoritative teaching vehicles, including the use of encyclical letters, apostolic exhortations, and conciliar constitutions. Ecclesial bridal imagery was also used in a variety of teaching contexts, from addresses and letters to encyclical letters, apostolic letters, apostolic exhortations, and conciliar dogmatic constitutions. Much of Pius XII's significant application of spousal imagery is contained in encyclical letters. The Second Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium* remains a key authoritative source for the use of ecclesial bridal imagery. Much of Paul VI's usage is contained in Wednesday general audience addresses, a forum that grew in significance during Paul's pontificate. John Paul II's use of ecclesial bridal imagery is spread broadly over Wednesday audience addresses, post-synodal apostolic exhortations, letters and apostolic letters, with the most developed use of bridal imagery occurring in the context of an apostolic letter (*Mulieris dignitatem*). The entry of elements of this teaching into the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and into documents from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is also an important consideration.

A proper appreciation of the significance of the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in twentieth-century papal and conciliar teaching would thus need to be open to the possibility that genuine doctrinal development may underlie aspects of the trajectory of magisterial application of spousal imagery and categories. If this is the case, isolating John Paul's teaching as an aberration from the larger magisterial context would not only overlook important connections and precursors but would potentially be a short-sighted judgment with likely detrimental ramifications for theological development.

## II. Ongoing Theological Questions

The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ continues to provoke or to be associated with particular questions about the identity of the Church and the Church's union with Christ. The following four particular topics will be examined below: (A) the personhood of the Bride; (B) the relation between the images of body and bride; (C) the relevance of ecclesial bridal imagery for women and men in the Church; and (D) the capacity of the bridal metaphor to disclose something of the Church's essence. For each topic, the basic questions and problems will be presented, then indications from magisterial teaching will be offered, and finally areas for further consideration will be put forward.

### A. *The Personhood of the Bride*

An emblematic metaphor<sup>63</sup> by its very nature carries various overtones associated with the history of its use, its accepted meaning, and the various associations that accompany the vocabulary used. Some of the overtones may be what might be called “literalizing” elements that perhaps are leftovers from other uses and meanings associated with particular words and sentences.<sup>64</sup> Other overtones may indicate fruitful directions for further exploration. Ecclesial bridal imagery carries within itself a variety of overtones and associations gathered over many centuries. Below, the question of the personal aspect or personhood conveyed by the bridal metaphor will be considered in further detail.

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63. See chapter two above, p. 80ff. and 100ff.

64. For example, some medieval commentaries on the Song of Songs could be seen as a bit excessive in their application of spousal imagery to the point of romanticizing or almost sexualizing what is meant to be clearly distinct from such crudeness. Balthasar mentions different exaggerations in the description of Mary as the Bride—exaggerations which in essence reflect a lack of respect for the boundaries of the figurative. See Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 309.

## 1. Questions and problem

A constitutive overtone of the ecclesial bridal (and maternal) metaphor is the implication of personhood on the part of the Church. This implication raises various questions: Who, then, is this bride? Who is the Church? Does the Church have a ‘personhood’ or ‘personality’ proper to it (her)? If so, how might this personhood relate to the many persons within the Church? These questions, in turn, may lead to the following queries: Is it even proper to ask these questions in such a fashion? Are we stretching the metaphor too far?

To pursue the question “Who is the Church?” is to continue to think through the possible implications of what it might mean to think of the Church as a “person,” and—in light of the Church as a “bride,” “mother,” and “virgin”—particularly as a “feminine person.” In other words, such pursuit is to remain within a particular approach to the Church—in this case, an approach illuminated by the bridal metaphor (though the question of the personhood of the Church arises in other contexts as well), in which there is some trust that remaining within the metaphor or, more broadly, the spousal analogy, can still bear further cognitive fruit.

Balthasar’s well-known essay entitled “Who is the Church?” presumes that the question is worth asking, and others have followed suit, either to continue the reflection or critically ponder the treatment of the question.<sup>65</sup> Balthasar’s reflection is a creative attempt to hold together the centrality of Christ as the essential subject of the Church in an exploration of what it might mean to posit simultaneously a positive significance to a distinct personhood of the

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65. See chapter one above, p. 67ff. In particular, see Balthasar, “Who is the Church?” in *Spouse of the Word*, 143-91, and *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 283-360. See also Congar, “La personne « Église »”; McPartlan, “Who is the Church?”; Komonchak, *Who are the Church?*; Dol, “Qui est l’Église? Hans Urs von Balthasar et la personnalité de l’Église”; Chapp, “Who is the Church? The Personalistic Categories of Balthasar’s Ecclesiology”; G. Baril, *The Feminine Face of the People of God*, 165-73; and Ackermann, “The Church as Person in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar.”

Church. For Balthasar, this personhood is understood to be focused in Mary, although always hinging ultimately on Christ.<sup>66</sup> “There is no such thing as a Church consciousness simply contrasted with Christ.”<sup>67</sup>

Paul McPartlan’s study of the eminent Greek Orthodox theologian and bishop, Metropolitan John Zizioulas, has revealed that the question “who is the Church?” may be answered differently depending on particular theological approaches. An obvious difference between Zizioulas and Balthasar is the priority that the latter gives to spousal categories and to the Church as *both* Body and Bride of Christ, whereas Zizioulas only rarely has used ecclesial bridal imagery.<sup>68</sup> More consideration of Zizioulas will be offered in section (B) below.

Finally, it might be objected that the question “who is the Church?” complicates rather than clarifies, and that perhaps the trajectory of a metaphor such as the Church as Bride or the Church as Mother needs to be curtailed before such a question is made legitimate. A recent, alternative treatment of the question “who is the Church?” is found in Joseph Komonchak’s lecture entitled *Who are the Church?* which, by the very title, appears to query the question as phrased by Balthasar and the resulting emphasis.<sup>69</sup>

## 2. Indications from magisterial teaching

Papal and conciliar teaching in the twentieth century did not pursue extensively what it might mean to speak of the Church as a “person” per se. Various uses of bridal and maternal imagery presumed rather than specified a certain subjectivity and activity on the part of the

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66. See Balthasar, “Who is the Church?” in *Spouse of the Word*, 144-45 and 179.

67. Balthasar, “Who is the Church?” in *Spouse of the Word*, 183.

68. See McPartlan, “Who is the Church?” 278-88, and *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 90-91 and 258-59. See also Miller, *Members of One Body*, 192-203.

69. See Komonchak, *Who are the Church?* 13-15.

Church (e.g., whether being entrusted with the gift of the Eucharist, being called to love, having the responsibility to teach, participating in Christ's work of redemption, and so on). Nevertheless, John Paul II did comment on the meaning of the personal aspect of ecclesial bridal imagery. He noted that the Church considered as the "person of the 'bride'" is a "collective subject," the People of God, a "community made up of many persons, both women and men"—not an "individual [*singularis*] person."<sup>70</sup> Notably, John Paul offered this clarification as an example of the greater non-likeness involved with respect to the spousal analogy and with regard to analogy generally speaking.

John Paul's emphasis rested on the concrete reality of the Church made up of real persons. This emphasis reflected a heightened consciousness, present especially from Pius XII onward, toward articulating the plural subject or the "we" of the Church as encompassing *all* the Church, laity, consecrated, and ordained.<sup>71</sup> In this context, to extend the bridal metaphor to the point of collapsing the Church into one, individual (*singularis*) person (such as Mary for instance) would be a mistake, and, as Balthasar said, it would also be a mistake to think of the Church as a "person" abstracted from the many persons of the Church and even existing without them (as a distinct, ecclesial hypostasis).<sup>72</sup>

John Paul's teaching ultimately suggests that any consideration of the Church as a subject or person should recognize the analogical or metaphorical use of "subject" and "person." As John Paul's use of the image of 'People of God' in relation to bridal imagery implies, the bridal image itself does not contain or exhaust the answer to the question of the precise identity of the

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70. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1713].

71. See Pius XII, Homily *Dum Divinum Redemptorem* (April 9, 1950) [AAS 42, 280].

72. See Balthasar, "Who is the Church?" in *Spouse of the Word*, 143-49, 157-66 and 179; and Dol, "Qui est l'Église," 384-87.

Church, but it points to possible avenues for explanation that depend on the assistance of other images and further considerations. An image does not exhaust but beckons toward the mystery.

The question then becomes: is it sufficient to understand the “personhood” of the Church only as a sign or thin metaphor of the “personal nature” of the Church (i.e., involving real persons) in contrast to her institutional form? If so, couldn’t the same be said of other human institutions and communities that consist of real persons? What would make the personhood of the Church distinct from the personhood of any human association? Magisterial teaching does not answer this question decisively with respect to the “personhood” of the Church, but the Second Vatican Council made clear that the Church is ultimately a mystery that cannot be reduced to a solely human reality.<sup>73</sup> In this context, the use of the bridal image, if carried through to its personal implications, presses toward an understanding of the mystery of the Church as something beyond a mere collectivity.

Furthermore, twentieth-century magisterial teaching was consistent in associating oneness, unity, and union with the image of the Bride, as well as personal distinctiveness (as seen in Pius XII and in subsequent teaching).<sup>74</sup> The bridal image in particular retains the sense of personal distinction from Christ within a context of communion in Christ. Union in Christ is thus conveyed as never anti-personal: persons in Christ are never extinguished but rather retain their distinction and are brought to their fulfillment in communion with the Persons of the Trinity.<sup>75</sup>

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73. See *Lumen gentium*, nos. 1-8 [AAS 57, 5-12].

74. See chapters four, five, and six above, pp. 166ff., 192ff., 208ff., 242ff. and 285ff.

75. See Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, throughout; Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), throughout; Kerestzy, *Jesus Christ*, 414-20; and McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 19 and throughout.

Finally, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and subsequent papal teaching emphasized strongly the particular place of Mary in salvation history and in the Church. John Paul II's magisterium significantly adopted a Balthasarian phrase and spoke of the Church as having a "Marian profile,"<sup>76</sup> a phrase that also entered into the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.<sup>77</sup> Mary is not simply one member among others but is an archetypical and singular member of the Church as both the Virgin Mother of God and Mother of the Church. This singularity of Mary's personhood is not explored in depth by magisterial teaching in relation to spousal categories, though the traditional title of "bride of the Holy Spirit" indicates something of the uniqueness of Mary's place and role in salvation history.

### 3. Considerations for further development

There are various aspects associated with the "personhood" of the Bride in her union with Christ that seem ripe for continued reflection. More could be said about the personal aspect of the Church's union with Christ. Personhood is always retained when there is oneness and union and is never sacrificed, and the bridal image speaks to this aspect of personhood in a unique way, as will be discussed further below in relation to the image of the Body of Christ. In addition, a pneumatological understanding of the bridal image may shed further light on the meaning of the personhood of the Bride. It is the role of the Holy Spirit to unite the Bride and the Bridegroom in perfect union, and therefore to bring each person into communion with the Father through Christ (through the Church).<sup>78</sup> This role was highlighted by the Second Vatican

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76. General Audience (November 25, 1998), no. 5 [IGP 21.2, 1088; JP-*Trinity*, 156]. See also Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 22 [AAS 80, 1706-7].

77. See CCC, no. 773.

78. See Kerestzy, *Jesus Christ*, 415-20. Balthasar intimates this important role of the Holy Spirit only at the very end of his essay, "Who is the Church?" (see p. 191). He explores the Spirit's role further in relation to his

Council and recalled in subsequent papal teaching, often with reference to the book of Revelation.<sup>79</sup> The Holy Spirit's role in uniting persons in communion is an important complement to the ecclesial bridal metaphor's emphasis on unity in distinction and distinction in unity, an emphasis that will also be discussed further below in relation to the bodily image.

The question remains as to who *precisely* this Bride might be. On the one hand, the subject matter—the mystery of the Church—necessitates an acknowledgment of some type of metaphorical and/or analogical use of the idea of “person” in reference to this mystery, as John Paul II related. On the other hand, the image of Bride invites a consideration of “personhood” as distinct (yet not separate) from the person of Christ. The question of the “person”—particularly the “feminine person”—of the Bride continues to call for further investigation of the relationship between Mary and the Church.<sup>80</sup>

Ultimately, as McPartlan has demonstrated in his studies of Zizioulas, de Lubac, and Balthasar, this question hinges upon one's Christology (and pneumatology), ecclesiology, Mariology, and anthropology.<sup>81</sup> Further consideration will be given to Zizioulas' perspective below. If Balthasar's viewpoint is followed here in relation to the question of the personhood of

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Christology of mission as it relates to the person of the Bride. See Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 348ff. See also Dol, “Qui est l'Église?” 394-95. Zizioulas emphasizes the importance of a pneumatological understanding of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. See Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, ed. Paul McPartlan (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 294ff. It would seem that further consideration of the pneumatological significance of the Church as the Bride of Christ would also be important. For an example of an ecclesiology that situates both images of Body and Bride within a Trinitarian perspective, see Miller, *Members of One Body: Prophets, Priests and Kings*. See also Baril, *The Feminine Face of the People of God*, 166-67. For further lines of exploration of the Holy Spirit's role in the spousal covenant between God and his people and ultimately Christ and the Church, see Ouellet, *Divine Likeness*, 79-88 and Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 272-89.

79. See chapters five and six above, pp. 208ff. and 288n127.

80. See Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 13-20.

81. See McPartlan's *The Eucharist Makes the Church* and “Who is the Church?”



the Bride, the person of Mary has a constitutive role in Christic-ecclesial communion.<sup>82</sup> For Balthasar, Mary, properly understood, can be considered the “personal center” of the Church as Bride, though this must always be qualified by the fact that Christ remains the ultimate center (i.e., the Church is the Body of Christ, not the Body of Mary).<sup>83</sup>

Questions have risen as to whether the bridal image might contribute to an over-emphasis on the relation between Mary and the Church to the detriment of the relation between Christ and the Church,<sup>84</sup> but this was clearly not Balthasar’s intention. It would seem that further attention to Mary’s unique significance both for the Church and for Christ as well as an understanding of ecclesial communion that includes a type of perichoresis or mutual indwelling of persons within what might be called an “order of glory” (Mary being the “highest” of all glorified creatures in her Son) would assist in a nuanced appreciation of the mysterious personhood of the Church.<sup>85</sup> As the perfect type of the Church as well as the perfect realization of the *Ecclesia Immaculata*, it can be said that Mary is the preeminent bride of Christ.<sup>86</sup> Mary’s distinct personhood and very being are constitutive of the mystery of Christ and the Church. Mary’s personhood has received a unique *munus* of mediation: as Mother of Christ (and hence Mother of God and Mother of the Church), her motherhood is foundational for the *Christus totus*. This needs to be understood not as an exaltation of Mary to the detriment of Christ’s role but rather as an illumination of the splendor of Christ, who associates others with his work of

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82. Balthasar sees Mariology and ecclesiology as “closely intertwined” while Mariology also “must claim priority.” See Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 291 and 352-53.

83. See Balthasar, “Who is the Church?” in *Spouse of the Word*, 161, and *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 352-53.

84. See McPartlan, “Who is the Church?” 286-88 and *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 301-2.

85. On this aspect of perichoresis, see Ackermann, “The Church as Person in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar,” 248.

86. See Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 14-16.

salvation. Mary's Immaculate Conception, in order to be appreciated fully, must not simply be seen as an isolated and special favor bestowed solely to prepare a proper vessel to carry the Son of God. Rather, the Immaculate Conception is a Christological and ecclesiological reality, revealing the significance of the *other* from the beginning of God's plan of salvation.<sup>87</sup> Any investigation of the mysterious personhood of the Bride of Christ would need to account for Mary's particular place as it illuminates, rather than detracts from, the mystery of Christ.

Finally, with regard to Komonchak's question that asks "who *are* the Church" rather than "who *is* the Church," this study suggests that, rather than pit the questions against each other, it would be helpful to see Komonchak as posing a different question. Komonchak's framing of the question is intended to take up the matter of the precise referent of "Church." His approach is abstracted from a particular ecclesial image or metaphor as well as from a theological consideration of the Church's union with Christ. This means that from the outset, Komonchak chooses not to explore the further implications of the "personhood" suggested by the various images of Virgin, Bride, and Mother. This choice entails a particular view of the "referent" shaped by considerations not of the primary given-ness of the ecclesial images but rather of the Church on earth as a social reality. This method of investigation has its own validity, and the reflection actually yields an interesting retrieval of maternal imagery.<sup>88</sup> The issue left unaddressed by Komonchak, however, is whether his question, as he phrased it, is theologically complete. The metaphors of bride and mother continue to press the theological question of "who is the

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87. This line of thinking is comparable to that of Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 14-20, and Ratzinger, "Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine," 19-36. See also Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus*, no. 11 [AAS 66, 124], and John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, nos. 1 and 46 [AAS 77, 362 and 424] (chapters five and six above, pp. 251ff. and 317ff.).

88. See Komonchak, *Who are the Church?* 46-55.

Church?” and not “who are the Church?” The very dynamism of the question of the “who *is*” consists precisely in that it presumes but transforms the question of “who *are*.” The question “who is the Church?” can be complemented by the question “who are the Church?” but the former question transcends the latter question and invites continued reflection.

### ***B. Christ and the Church: Head-Body and Bridegroom-Bride***

The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ is one of two preeminent ecclesial images concerning the relationship between Christ and the Church, the other image being that of the Church as the (Mystical) Body of Christ. Indeed, the two images “are immensely hallowed by the tradition of the Church and profoundly linked to the liturgy.”<sup>89</sup> The relation between the two images remains an area of continued reflection.

#### **1. Questions and problem**

How can the Church be considered simultaneously as the Body and the Bride of Christ? The images seem to operate within different, even contrasting models<sup>90</sup>—the first in a bodily, organic model and the second in a spousal, personal model. Historically, however, the images have often been closely paired. Ephesians 5:21-33 has been the decisive scriptural reference with regard to the relation of these two images. The comparison to marriage, where the two become one, has provided an important context for understanding bodily and bridal imagery for the Church as complementary: Christ and his Bride, the Church, are united in one Body.

The complementarity of the two images would thus seem to be a safe mainstay of ecclesiology. In particular, the image of the Church as the Body of Christ strongly connotes the

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89. McPartlan, “Who is the Church?” 283-84.

90. On the meaning of “model,” see chapter two above, p. 86.

Church's inseparable union with Christ and the idea of the Church as the *Christus totus*, inseparable from Christ and incorporated in him. The image of the Bride of Christ recalls the personal distinction that remains within the Church's union with Christ, where difference and otherness are not extinguished but are rather brought to their perfection in Christ.

Nevertheless, as Paul McPartlan has noted, John Zizioulas has avoided the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in his ecclesiological reflections.<sup>91</sup> McPartlan has observed that this hesitation on Zizioulas' side seems largely the result of Zizioulas' particular understanding of the relation between Christology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology.<sup>92</sup> For Zizioulas, Christ is never a mere "individual" who then takes upon himself a union with the Church as Bride. Rather, Christ is a "corporate personality," who from the beginning both constitutes the Church (the many) and is himself constituted by the Church (the many) through the Holy Spirit. Christ is never without his body (the Church), nor is he ever without the Holy Spirit.<sup>93</sup>

In this way, the image of the Church as the Body of Christ is a favorite image of Zizioulas. Not only does the image of the body convey the Church's dependence on Christ, but it also portrays Christ's dependence on the Church—again, Christ is never without his body.<sup>94</sup> McPartlan suggests that the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ would be perceived by Zizioulas as leading to a possible separation between Christ and the Church, where the Church

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91. See McPartlan, "Who is the Church?" 278ff; *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 90-91, 258-59 and 301-2; and "Mary and Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue," *One in Christ* 34 (1998): 14-17. See also Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 286-307.

92. For example, see Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 123-42, and *Communion and Otherness*, 245-47.

93. See McPartlan, "Who is the Church?" 280-82 and "Mary and Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue," 15. See also Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 130-31 and *Communion and Otherness*, 244.

94. "*Christ without His body is not Christ but an individual of the worst type.*" Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 182 (emphasis in original). See McPartlan, "Who is the Church?" 277.

is seen too much as a distinct hypostasis whom Christ, as an individual, only subsequently joins with himself.

The absence of ecclesial bridal imagery in Zizioulas' synthesis raises a significant question in that many themes traditionally related to spousal imagery, particularly those of communion, difference and otherness, and freedom, are held in high esteem by Zizioulas, but treated in other ways, primarily in relation to the image of the Body of Christ. Would Zizioulas' theology indicate that the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ is a superficial or even misleading embellishment that can (and should) be passed over in preference for other images?

## 2. Indications from magisterial teaching

The trajectory of magisterial teaching since Pius XII indicates a necessary linkage between the two images of body and bride. For Pius XII, the bridal image signified the distinction between the Church and Christ within their close union as body and head. Following the implicit lines of the Second Vatican Council,<sup>95</sup> John Paul II emphasized the complementarity of the two images, to the point of observing an order wherein the Church, precisely as the Bride of Christ, becomes the Body of Christ.<sup>96</sup> In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, ecclesial bridal imagery is situated as a particular implication and clarification of the meaning of the Church as the Body of Christ.<sup>97</sup>

Magisterial teaching from Leo XIII to John Paul II has also consistently interpreted the reference in Ephesians 5:32 to the "great mystery" in a way consonant with the span of the Western theological tradition, that is, in a way that encompasses both the mystery of Christ and

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95. See chapter five above, p. 217ff.

96. See TOB 92:6 (September 1, 1982) [IGP 5.2, 352]; chapter six above, p. 304ff.

97. See CCC, nos. 787-96.

the Church and the union of husband and wife in marriage. Therefore, the “one flesh” of husband and wife, going back to the creation narrative in Genesis, has relevance for understanding the mystery of the Church as both the Body and Bride of Christ.<sup>98</sup> In particular, John Paul explicitly noted that an understanding of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ must be accompanied by attention to the mystery of the one-flesh union of husband and wife in marriage.<sup>99</sup>

### 3. Considerations for further development

Three considerations may assist an understanding of the relation between bodily and bridal imagery in a way that is attentive to Zizioulas’ concerns to avoid an excessive distinction between Christ and the Church while nevertheless inviting further appreciation of the paradox and mystery of the Church’s spousal union with Christ.

First, magisterial teaching has emphasized consistently the value of the bridal image for conveying the specific nature of the *union* between Christ and the Church. The bridal image for the Church, in the strictest sense, only operates within a fundamental perspective of union. Therefore, the “face-to-face” of Bridegroom and Bride is a particular quality of union or, more precisely, *communion*. This communion highlights the “I” of Christ without extinguishing the other “I’s” incorporated in the one Christ by virtue of his Incarnation, Paschal Mystery, and the mystery of Pentecost.

In this way, the holding together of both images, Body and Bride, points to the radically unique character of the Church’s communion in Christ. Symbolically, the bridal image points to

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98. For example, see Augustine, *Exp. Ps.* 74, 4 [PL 36, 948-49], as quoted in CCC, no. 796.

99. See *Letter to Families* (February 2, 1994), no. 19 [AAS 86, 911-12]; chapter six above, p. 306n213.

the enduring place of the *other* in communion, symbolized as the Woman espoused with Christ, who is not extinguished but preserved in the mystery of the *Christus totus*.<sup>100</sup> Concretely, the bridal image specifically points to the significant and enduring place of Mary, both historically and eschatologically as woman, virgin, bride, and mother, in the mystery of Christ. The *other* of communion is realized ontologically in Mary from the beginning of the mystery of Christ. The mystery of the Incarnation was mysteriously dependent upon the free *fiat* of a young, Jewish woman from Nazareth, who herself was absolutely dependent on and receptive to the Lord's grace from the beginning (as expressed in the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception).<sup>101</sup> While Zizioulas emphasizes that the mystery of Christ can never be considered apart from the Holy Spirit and the mystery of the Church, it would also be important not to neglect the particular place of Mariology in an understanding of the contours of communion in Christ.<sup>102</sup> In itself, the image of the Body of Christ is deficient for conveying the radical nature of the personal (and masculine/feminine) difference that is preserved in communion with Christ.

In his own way, Zizioulas also appears to acknowledge this deficiency of the bodily image when he observes the following: "In order to apply the 'body of Christ' image to ecclesiology in a way that would do justice to the well-balanced mysticism of Chalcedonian Christology, we must condition it Pneumatologically right from the beginning. Pneumatology involves, among other things, two fundamental dimensions. One is the dimension of

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100. See Kereszty, *Jesus Christ*, 422-23.

101. See chapter one above, p. 65n304.

102. McPartlan has also observed that Zizioulas' theology is in need of development with regard to Mariology, and Zizioulas himself has indicated some openness to this development. See McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 301-2.

communion and the other is that of freedom.”<sup>103</sup> This study contends that, in addition to pneumatology, the bridal image should also be incorporated into a conditioning of the image of the body. The “conditioning” by pneumatology should be complemented by the recognition of the distinctive otherness of the “many” as Zizioulas describes, an otherness that has its own distinctive reality and integrity that cannot be reduced to the otherness of the Holy Spirit. In other words, Zizioulas’ ecclesiological approach to otherness and communion tends to be top-down, where the preservation of otherness is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit, and where the integral ecclesial otherness itself cannot be imaged (the bodily image being deficient in this regard). This appears to stop short of all that can be said about the reality of the *ecclesia* as a distinctive reality. The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ, understood as pointing to the personal distinctiveness and masculine/feminine difference retained in the Church’s union with Christ, *belongs* to the Church as fundamental to her identity. The work of the Holy Spirit illuminates and preserves that identity and difference-otherness within communion.

Second, the Church is Bride only because Christ is the Bridegroom, but it is also true that Christ is the Bridegroom because he has made the Church his Bride. The significance of Christ as the Bridegroom was explored in a particular way by John Paul II, though only in initial outline. The consistent pairing of bodily and bridal imagery especially from the Second Vatican Council onward provides ground for the consideration that the constitutive relation between Bridegroom and Bride is comparable to and complements the constitutive relation between Head and Body. Understanding these two pairs to be interwoven from the beginning of the mystery of Christ in the Incarnation—without neglecting the particularly decisive and dramatic

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103. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 294.



role of the Paschal Mystery<sup>104</sup>—would seem to provide a way forward in appreciating the mystery of the Church as both Body and Bride. The Son of God, in assuming human nature to himself, has assumed in himself all humanity in a certain sense. Traditionally, this union of the two natures or that between the Word and humanity has been described as a nuptial reality. Thus, in taking on a particular human body (and, more completely, human nature), Christ is always constituted in some sense by his Body (the Church) and is in fact “wedded” to it, only to see its full dramatic unfolding through the Paschal Mystery and the mystery of Pentecost. The fullness of Christ’s spousal love is manifest in his work of redemption, as John Paul II notes, but the immediate base, as noted by Augustine and others, lies in the mystery of the Incarnation as a spousal reality.<sup>105</sup>

As a further consideration, although Mary’s womb has been described as a nuptial chamber *in which* this spousal reality (i.e., the Incarnation) comes to be, it cannot be forgotten that Christ’s human nature comes from his Mother, who herself can thus be called the perfect Bride. Thus, Christ’s body is organically interwoven with and derived from Mary, who can be described in a sense as the “first Bride of Christ.” If the Immaculate Conception is seen as a Christological-ecclesiological reality (where Mary’s redeemed person is seen to already prefigure both the Body and Bride of Christ because she is already mysteriously and uniquely encompassed within the mystery of Christ from the moment of her conception), this perspective

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104. Traditionally, the Church as Bride is born from the Cross and then ultimately manifest in the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Although the mystery of the Incarnation encompasses as it were the Paschal Mystery, the decisive event of the mystery of the Cross—the mystery of Christ’s suffering, death, Resurrection, and Ascension—should not be overlooked. This consideration also has particular implications for an appreciation of the theological-historical origin of the Church, an origin which cannot be reduced simply to the beginning of the mystery of the Incarnation. In fact, any consideration of the Church’s “origin” must both precede and extend beyond the historical point of entry of the mystery of the Incarnation, while always being related to and grounded in that mystery.

105. See chapters one and six above, pp. 20ff. and 279ff.

would further ground an understanding of the mutual and inseparable relationship of bridal and bodily imagery that precedes historically the event of the Incarnation.

In this way, Zizioulas' concerns about bridal imagery contributing to an overly "clear-cut distinction" (or separation?) between Christ and the Church might be remedied by an attentive examination of the interrelationship of the Bridegroom-Bride and Head-Body pairs as constitutive from the beginning of the Christ-Church relation, a relation with its foundation in the mystery of the Incarnation and its mysterious preparation and even initial realization in the Immaculate Conception.

A third consideration that might assist in advancing an exploration of the complementarity of the images of body and bride is found in an anthropology attentive to the significance of sexual difference and to the latter's sacramental implications manifest in marriage. Zizioulas' perspective involves and is conditioned by various factors, including his unique ontology of communion, his approach to sexual difference and anthropology, his view of Christology and Chalcedon, particular ecumenical concerns, and his approach to key scriptural passages, especially Eph 5:21-33. Comparing the trajectory of twentieth-century magisterial teaching with Zizioulas' ecclesiology, despite various important parallels, at least two notable differences emerge. In magisterial teaching, a growing emphasis on Eph 5 and on the significance of sexual difference was a consistent factor in teaching related to marriage and to the Church as the Bride of Christ. However, Eph 5 and the significance of sexual difference have played little to no role in Zizioulas' ecclesiology and his thinking on communion and otherness.<sup>106</sup> In fact, consideration of sexual difference is notably absent from Zizioulas'

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106. This absence can be partially explained by Zizioulas' following of Gregory of Nyssa's perspective on the creation of male and female as a *second* creative act, which therefore results in a view of sexual difference as

reflection on otherness and the human body.<sup>107</sup> This absence starkly differentiates his writing from that of John Paul II on similar topics.

The theme of sexual difference is a fascinating, albeit controversial, topic today for various reasons (see the next section below). If the trajectory of magisterial teaching is followed, it would seem that attention to the significance of sexual difference, as constitutive to an understanding of human personhood and spousal love and fruitfulness, and thus as a key factor in the sacramentality of marriage as it relates to the union of Christ and the Church, opens a fresh level of insight into aspects of the relationship between Christ and the Church that entails attentive consideration of the significance of ecclesial bridal imagery in connection to ecclesial bodily imagery.<sup>108</sup>

Zizioulas' ecclesiology ultimately raises the question of whether bridal imagery is even necessary and whether themes traditionally associated with ecclesial bridal imagery can be presented just as well if not better by other images (such as the bodily image) or concepts. This study does not presume to address adequately the full scope of Zizioulas' probing contributions, but this study's rationale for retaining an appreciation of the connection between the images of the Body and Bride of Christ can be summarized as follows: (1) an approach which assumes that one image can be replaced by other images or concepts overlooks the unique disclosive potential of metaphor, particularly an emblematic and hallowed metaphor such as that of the Bride of

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*secondary* rather than *primordial* and therefore as not essentially linked to the human person made as *imago Dei*. See McPartlan, "The Marian Church: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Ordination of Women," 53-54.

107. See his essay "On Being Other: Towards an Ontology of Otherness," in his *Communion and Otherness*, 13-98, especially 61-62. Compare also with pp. 110-12.

108. Cardinal Angelo Scola takes up this trajectory of magisterial teaching, especially as found in John Paul's apostolic letter *Mulieries dignitatem*. See his *The Nuptial Mystery* and "The Theological Foundation for the Petrine Dimension of the Church," throughout. See also Baril, *The Feminine Face of the People of God*, 206-23.

Christ; (2) bodily imagery as such inevitably limps in the face of the mystery of personal alterity or otherness that remains in the union between Christ and the Church; and (3) bodily imagery and reference to the members of the Body of Christ cannot itself suffice as a foundation for exploring or expressing the primordial difference involved in the mystery of human alterity, namely sexual difference of man to woman and woman to man, the topic of the next section below.

### ***C. Men and Women in the Church***

One of the most notable developments in Catholic theology and magisterial teaching of the twentieth century was the expansion of the doctrine of the *imago Dei* to be inclusive of the communion of persons, both male and female, and therefore inclusive of the human body and of sexual difference.<sup>109</sup> The classical doctrine of the human person made in the image of God emphasized the human mind and the soul's ability to reason and to will.<sup>110</sup> Without rejecting the classical tradition, John Paul II, mirroring Balthasar and others, added sexual difference into magisterial teaching as a constitutive category for understanding the human person made as *imago Dei*. Relatively speaking, the study of the theological significance of sexual difference and of the human body is still in its early stages. But there is indeed critical interest in the question of the human person as male and female as it relates to theology and other disciplines.

In the contemporary environment of heightened theological interest in the topic of sexual difference, exploration of the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ finds continued

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109. See Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 201. Throughout his book, Kerr repeatedly highlights this “entirely new doctrine of the human creature as ‘image of God’” as central to the narrative evidenced in the book’s subtitle: “From Neoscholasticism to Nuptial Mysticism.” This “entirely new doctrine” according to Kerr is the insertion of sexual difference within an understanding of the *imago Dei* (manifest through the communion of persons, male and female).

110. See Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 194.

relevance. As with all images, a basic question with regard to ecclesial bridal imagery is what the imagery conveys about the actual persons who make up the Church. Because the bridal image conveys a “feminine person,” the question of the image’s relation and relevancy to Church members is particularly interesting and challenging since the Church is made up of both female and male persons.

### 1. Questions and problem

The most obvious question that arises in considering the image of the Bride of Christ in relation to the persons of the Church is what the image might mean for male persons. If emphasis on the Bride’s “femininity” becomes exclusive, what place does masculinity have? Is masculinity something less or lower than femininity? In addition, are men in the Church called to aspire to become “brides” to the detriment of their masculinity? These questions carry an evident pastoral dimension in a Church today that has seen less and less laymen taking active part in parish life or in lay service in general.<sup>111</sup> Blanca Castilla de Cortázar has likewise noted the difficulty with seeing the symbol of the bride as embracing both men and women, since paradoxically it seems to obscure the radical nature of sexual difference and, although it is an attribution found in the tradition of nuptial spirituality and mysticism, it “seems forced when applied to anthropology.”<sup>112</sup>

There has been a tendency to emphasize and perhaps even idealize the “feminine” over and above the “masculine.” Aspects of Louis Bouyer’s writings seem to confirm this tendency,

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111. See John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988), no. 52 [AAS 81, 496-98].

112. Blanca Castilla de Cortázar, “‘So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them’ (Gen 1:27): Person, Nature and Culture,” [hereafter “Person, Nature and Culture”] in *Woman and Man: The Humanum in its Entirety*, ed. Pontifical Council for the Laity (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2010), 91-92.

following in the line of Teilhard de Chardin.<sup>113</sup> Jean-Noël Dol has also noted this concern with aspects of Balthasar's reflections on the feminine dimension of the Church which might benefit from further consideration of "masculine" virtues in relation to the "feminine" and Marian virtue of obedience.<sup>114</sup> Emphasis on the feminine has been understandable in light of its basis in a twentieth-century context which saw the rise of feminism as a cultural and near-global phenomenon, leading to what would become two different poles, a secular, radical feminism on the one hand and the "new feminism" of John Paul II on the other.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, the question of the precise value of masculinity remains.<sup>116</sup>

Concerns have also been raised about the biblical symbolism of the Bridegroom and the Bride insofar as they represent "hierarchical ontological levels."<sup>117</sup> Since the Bridegroom always refers to God or Christ while the Bride refers to humanity, a critique sensitive to feminist concerns might conclude—from the fact that the masculine symbol represents the divine while the feminine symbol represents the human—that the feminine remains in a certain sense subordinate to and under the power of the masculine. As Cortázar has noted, this is a "limitation

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113. See Bouyer, *Woman in the Church*, 56, 58 and 63; de Lubac, *The Eternal Feminine*; and McPartlan, "Mary for Teilhard and de Lubac."

114. Dol, "Qui est l'Église," 390-91. Balthasar spoke of both Marian and Petrine dimensions of the Church, but the Marian is more fundamental, applying to all Christians, whereas the Petrine refers only to the ministers. See Scola, "The Theological Foundation of the Petrine Dimension of the Church: A Working Hypothesis," 16-20, particularly 18n26 and 19n27.

115. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium vitae* (March 25, 1995), no. 99 [AAS 87, 514]. Magisterial teaching on the dignity of women continued to progress in a notable way from Pius XII to John Paul II. John Paul II's apostolic letter *Mulieris dignitatem* significantly "contains the first explicit declaration from the Magisterium that woman as woman is image of God." Cortázar, "Person, Nature and Culture," 74.

116. Fergus Kerr has raised this question in relation to the CDF's *Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World*. See Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 200-1.

117. See Cortázar, "Person, Nature and Culture," 91. In what follows, Cortázar is presenting a critique voiced by Kari E. Børresen, "Imagen actualizada, tipología anticuada," in M.A. Macciocchi, ed., *Las mujeres según Wojtyła* (Madrid: 1992), 181-95.

of the symbolic dimension” that “blurs reciprocity in equality” when regarding the relationship between men and women.<sup>118</sup>

In various ways, these questions press toward the need for a clarification of the cognitive weight and limits of the ecclesial bridal metaphor in reference to men and women in the Church.

## 2. Indications from magisterial teaching

Papal and conciliar teaching from Leo XIII to John Paul II used bridal imagery in ways that were both specific and non-specific with respect to gender. On the one hand, the significance of consecrated women as brides of Christ remained a consistent theme that received sustained consideration by Pius XII and John Paul II. This consideration was complemented by emphasis on Mary’s bridal identity in various parts of magisterial teaching. John Paul II explicitly reflected on the prophetic significance of *woman as such* as the bride in light of Ephesians 5.<sup>119</sup>

On the other hand, papal and conciliar teaching included a growing emphasis on the Church’s bridal identity as embracing all members of the Church. This emphasis was present in Pius XII’s teaching, and John Paul II’s use of the imagery made most explicit that all persons, men and women, are called to become “bride.”<sup>120</sup> Femininity in this way became “a symbol of all that is ‘human’.”<sup>121</sup>

Magisterial teaching also consistently referred to priests and bishops as configured to Christ the Bridegroom. John Paul II commented briefly on the significance of the image of Christ the Bridegroom as a “masculine symbol” and on Christ’s love as having special

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118. Cortázar, “Person, Nature and Culture,” 91.

119. See Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 29 [AAS 80, 1721-24].

120. See Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1713-14].

121. Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1714].

significance for men, though the love of the Bridegroom was also a universal model having significance for all human love.<sup>122</sup>

The specifically feminine aspect of bridal imagery was emphasized in various ways depending on the precise referent of the imagery. For example, John Paul's understanding of love as self-gift formed a crucial backdrop to his reflections and his application of spousal imagery. All women and men are called to be "bride" in a general sense insofar as they are called first to receive the gift of divine love in order to make a response of love in return. John Paul's description of the family as "bride" was another example of a wider use of the imagery inclusive of both men and women.

Finally, a common way both men and women in the Church relate to her bridal identity is through the Church's motherhood: both are children of the Church. The use of ecclesial maternal imagery remained consistent throughout twentieth-century magisterial teaching. Nonetheless, the use of the image of Mother Church was not as popular in the latter half of the century, both theologically and devotionally.

### **3. Considerations for further development**

Any assertion of the practical relevance of ecclesial bridal imagery begs the question of the precise significance of the image for both men and women in the Church. Any interpretation that would emphasize the femininity of the Church in such a way as to inhibit a proper incorporation of the masculine must be regarded as inadequate. At the same time, the bridal image attributes a unique spiritual significance to the feminine dimension which cannot be overlooked and requires further investigation.

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122. See Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 25 [AAS 80, 1714-15].



As has been indicated by various thinkers, a proper exploration of these issues requires a careful examination of ecclesiology in its anthropological and sacramental dimensions. Anthropologically, the primordial reality of sexual difference is still only beginning to be appreciated and studied by theologians and others. Angelo Scola, building on the teaching of John Paul II and carrying forward aspects of Balthasar's thought, has offered a significant theological synthesis of sexual difference as a key datum of anthropology, specifically one that is "nuptial" and "dramatic."<sup>123</sup> Scola's work, as well as the work of Marc Ouellet, is especially attentive to Trinitarian concerns.<sup>124</sup> As Cortázar has noted, feminist concerns about an "ontological hierarchy" between the images of bridegroom and bride would perhaps be surpassed by a renewed appreciation of woman *as woman* made in the image of God (see John Paul II, *Mulieris dignitatem*), wherein the feminine is thus part of the divine image, and by a consideration of the *imago Dei* as more specifically the *imago Trinitatis*, wherein difference is not conceived as subordinate or hierarchical in any sense of greater or lesser.<sup>125</sup> The Trinitarian grounding of anthropology, inclusive of a serious consideration of sexual difference, holds significant possibility for continued insights into the mystery of both woman and man in relation to the mystery of the Trinity and that of Christ and the Church.

Possible lines of enquiry for a more thorough study of the relation between the Marian and Petrine dimensions of the Church have also been provided by Scola. He understands the foundation for this reflection to lie in what he calls a "dual anthropological and sacramental

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123. See Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 384-405.

124. See Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 11-13 and throughout. "In the first place—and this point seems to me particularly important—we must admit that a culture that does not accept the revelation of the trinitarian God ultimately renders itself incapable of understanding sexual difference in a positive sense" (ibid., 12). See also Ouellet, *Divine Likeness*.

125. See Cortázar, "Person, Nature and Culture," 92-95.

‘*concentration*’” that would hold together the feminine (Marian) and masculine (Petrine) dimensions of the Church and thus integrate the Church’s institutional elements within her bridal identity.<sup>126</sup> Scola’s article charts a way for a more thorough exploration and appreciation of the Petrine dimension, which can also serve as a positive impetus to explore “masculinity” in the Church.

Cortázar’s observation about the limits of an anthropological application of bridal imagery (to both men and women) also invites further consideration, as she indicated, of the bridegroom-masculine and bride-feminine symbolics in the context of the *imago Trinitatis*.<sup>127</sup> This consideration would seem to provide an opening to examine a potentially masculine “role” *within* the Bride as precisely *vis-à-vis* the Bride. The Christian man is called to serve and protect the Bride (both women and the Church) through his very dependence on and transformation within the Bride (as Mother), as fundamentally receptive to God’s grace.

A model for further exploration of the distinct poles of the masculine and feminine within the one Bride of Christ seems to have been provided by Pope John Paul II in his reference to the family, the domestic church, as the Bride of Christ.<sup>128</sup> Within the family, the distinction between the feminine and the masculine is integral especially in relation to motherhood and fatherhood. The use of the bridal image in reference to the Christian family is a strong caution against any interpretation of ecclesial bridal imagery that would overlook the

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126. Scola, “The Theological Foundation of the Petrine Dimension of the Church,” 15ff. See also Scola, “Christ, the Light of the Nations; the Church, His Spouse and Helpmate,” in *Called to Holiness and Communion: Vatican II on the Church*, edited by Steven Boguslawski and Robert Fastiggi (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2009), 17-47.

127. See Cortázar, “Person, Nature and Culture,” 91-95.

128. See *Letter to Families*, no. 19 [AAS 86, 912, see also 910]; chapter six above, p. 297n171.

place of the masculine and is an invitation for further consideration of the image's ability to foster an appreciation of the reciprocity between male and female that is essential to the Church.

Finally, the Church as Mother is in principle an image commonly relatable to both male and female persons in the Church. Mother Church always precedes her children, properly understood. There is a relational transcendence here that also can be said to characterize the bridal image. Because the Church is more than the sum of her members, love for the Church must involve a love that transcends self-love and that respects the mystery of the Church as indissolubly and fruitfully united to Christ in the Spirit.<sup>129</sup> This transcendence of the Mother and thus also of the Bride enables both female and male persons to love and serve the Church as Bride-Mother in their distinctive capacities as women and men and in a way that acknowledges their unique dependence upon Mother Church who bears children by bringing them into her womb so as to make them fruitful in the Spirit through union with Christ.

#### ***D. To what extent is the Church truly Bride?***

By its nature, ecclesial imagery invites further consideration of specific aspects of the Church. An image calls for exploration and explanation. What does it mean to call the Church the People of God, the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and so on? The images and questions are many. In a unique way, the bridal image carries an historical and eschatological characteristic that continues to invite theological consideration of the Church's precise identity as Bride.

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129. See Baril, *The Feminine Face of the People of God*, 168-73 and 184-205.

## 1. Questions and problem

Scripture vividly portrays the dramatic story of Israel, the chosen Bride, who remained in the tension between righteousness and sin, obedience and disobedience, chaste spousal love and adultery-harlotry (see especially Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel).<sup>130</sup> While chosen as the Bride of God, Israel never seemed able to live fully in that identity. Israel, as the Bride, remained *on the way*. In the New Testament, a definitive newness is portrayed in Christ, who himself is the Bridegroom now present in flesh and blood with his people. In his Eucharist and Paschal Mystery, Christ the Bridegroom makes the ultimate gift of self that makes possible a new, purified Bride—a new Israel, that is, the Church. This Bride has received the full gift of God through Jesus' gift of himself in the Eucharist and the sending of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the Bridegroom has ascended to the Father. The Bride, while truly a Bride, remains *on the way*. She is not unaffected by sin, though she is preceded and encompassed by Jesus and Mary who are sinless and by all the saints who make up the Church in glory.

The question of whether and in what sense the Church is truly the Bride includes multiple sub-questions. First, there is the question of terminology and its fluidity when comparing terms such as betrothed, bride, and wife-spouse. In addition, there is the question of the relationship between history and eschatology (the already and not yet). In what sense is the Church on earth a Bride and is she truly a Bride in the midst of sin? Is the bridal identity solely an eschatological reality to be realized or an identity in which the Church mysteriously participates even now? What is the relationship between history and eschatology that governs this understanding of the Church as the Bride of Christ? How does this Bride differ from the

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130. See Balthasar, "Casta Meretrix," in *Spouse of the Word*, 198-204.

Bride of the Old Testament? Furthermore, there is the question of the relation between the so-called objective and subjective holiness of the Church as Bride. Ultimately, perhaps the key question is whether bridal imagery can disclose anything about the very essence of the Church.

## 2. Indications from magisterial teaching

As noted in previous chapters, the use of ecclesial bridal imagery from Pope Leo XIII to Pope Pius XI conveyed the bridal Church more in terms of a static reality over and against her members. As the image became increasingly employed in connection to its traditional scriptural and patristic roots and in a context of renewed ecclesiology, the sense of the bridal image as encompassing all the members of the Church was more pronounced in the teaching of Pius XII and subsequently. The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ entered a sphere more attentive to both history and eschatology, or to what might be described as an inseparable and interwoven triad of protology (the beginning, creation, the human person created *ad imaginem Dei*), history (the middle, the drama of sin and grace wherein Christ the perfect image enters and transforms history) and eschatology (the end, heaven, the fulfillment of the *imago Dei* in perfect *communio*).

Attention to the historical and eschatological dimensions of the Church was heightened by a renewed look at the relationship between the Church and the world and a renewed appreciation of the Church as a pilgrim in this world. This attention also contributed to what emerged clearly in Paul VI's teaching as a dialectic between the face or actual appearance and the ideal image of the Church as the Bride of Christ. The Bride's face, as seen in this world, is always marred by sin. The glorious Bride envisioned by Christ from the beginning remains an identity that is difficult to see and experience in this life. This difficulty is one of the seemingly tragic

paradoxes of the Church's bridal identity. The holy and spotless Bride is subject to continued sin and suffering and is herself sometimes seen as the very subject of sin, especially when serious sin and scandal arises from within her.

Paul VI's dialectic between the actual face and the ideal image of the Bride was accompanied, both in his teaching as well as in conciliar teaching, by a further implicit dialectic between the Church as a gift and a task.<sup>131</sup> The Church receives her being from Christ as a gift—she does not “make” herself. At the same time, the Church is ever on a journey to become more completely who she is and is called to be. The Second Vatican Council's emphasis on the universal call to holiness made clear that the mystery of the Church cannot be seen apart from this call to further renewal and conversion.

John Paul II contributed to this ecclesial dialectic of gift and task (or call) through his renewed emphasis on protology, that is, on how attention to the “beginning”—to creation and the fundamental anthropology of the human person created male and female *ad imaginem Dei*—needs to be interwoven with a proper appreciation of history and eschatology.<sup>132</sup> In this context, the Church as Bride is a gift and identity that remains a call and drama to be lived out and fully realized. This drama goes back to the very beginning of creation in the “first marriage” of the man and the woman, and the drama is directed toward the fulfillment of the “great mystery,” the union of Christ and his Church—the fulfillment of creation in the new creation. The eschatological “end” therefore is in no way merely in tension with the historical or seen as a distant and unrelated end. Rather, the “end” is mysteriously (sacramentally) present from the

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131. On Paul VI, see chapter five above, pp. 226ff. and 242ff. On the Council, see 210ff.

132. See TOB, throughout.

“beginning” and therefore informs history in a radical way, despite the inroads of sin—precisely because of Christ.

The developing emphasis in magisterial teaching on the relation between Christ, Mary and the Church must also be included in this consideration of the precise extent and location of the Church’s bridal identity. In light of Mary’s Immaculate Conception, Mary’s significance as the bearer of the perfections of the Church as Bride cuts across history and eschatology. In her person, Mary is the New Eve and thus is connected to the “beginning,” actualizing the Church’s identity as Bride in perfect form in her docility to the Spirit and her reception of and union with the Word.<sup>133</sup> Magisterial teaching on the relation between Mary and the Church’s identity as Bride of Christ remained at an implicit level in the twentieth century, though the parallel between Mary and the Church, highlighted in now classic form by the Council’s dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium*,<sup>134</sup> provides an important direction for further investigation.

In general terms, it could be summarized that papal and conciliar teaching recognized that the Church even here on earth is Bride but also that she is ever on the way to her fulfillment.

### 3. Considerations for further development

If the dialectic between the actual face and the ideal image of the Church as Bride is drawn to an extreme form, it would appear that the Church on earth cannot properly be “the Bride” until she reaches her final endpoint in glory. The Church’s holiness might then be located more in her “objective” structures (institutional dimension at the service of the sacraments, the

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133. This line of thinking is comparable to that of Bouyer, *Woman and Man with God*, vii–viii and throughout, and Balthasar and Ratzinger, *Mary: The Church at the Source*. See also p. 362n87 above.

134. See *Lumen gentium*, nos. 52–69 [AAS 57, 58–67].

offer of grace available through the sacraments) rather than the subjective reality of the Church (real persons).

To overcome a hardening of the dialectic, the idea of gift and task intuited by Paul VI and the Council but developed more clearly in John Paul II's use of bridal imagery provides a direction. The Bride's identity, prefigured and prepared from the beginning of creation in the communion of man and woman, flows from Christ's gift of self and is realized in the corresponding response of love. The identity is a call and a drama to be lived and realized as well as one that has already been realized (namely, in Mary and the saints in full communion with the glorified Christ) and that in turn continues to inform the present drama.<sup>135</sup>

The insight into the *already and not yet* of history and eschatology needs to be complemented by an appropriate incorporation of the interwoven and dramatic triad of protology, history, and eschatology, wherein each of the categories is informed and completed by the others.<sup>136</sup> The Church is already and not yet the Bride. The Bride's historical instantiation depends on the in-breaking of the Word of God in the dual event of the Annunciation-Incarnation<sup>137</sup> and on the Son's gift of self in his Paschal Mystery. Nevertheless, all of history from the beginning has been marked by and readied for this mystery of the Church as the Bride of Christ, as is evident in Israel's call to be the bride of God and more immediately evident in

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135. On the Church as "event," see Scola, "The Theological Foundation of the Petrine Dimension of the Church," 24-26.

136. The phrase *already and not yet* is used to describe eschatological realities which already are partly actualized in the here and now. The conjunction 'and' rather than 'but' emphasizes better the fact that something of the *not yet* is contained within the *already*—the two are not completely separated. For a basic trajectory of this integrated hermeneutic of the already and not yet, see K. Rahner, "The Hermeneutics of Eschatological Assertions," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon Press; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), 323-46.

137. The expression "dual event" is used here to call attention to Mary's active (receptive) role in the mystery of the Incarnation.



Mary's Immaculate Conception. In the mystery of Christ, the beginning in which man and woman were made in the image of God is illuminated and fulfilled by the end, where, in view of the wedding feast of the Lamb, the Spirit and the Bride together cry "Come!" (Rev 22:17).

Still, attention to the beginning and the end does not remove the drama of history, where a certain type of dialectic between actual face and ideal image remains. Sin and scandal still arise which mar the Church's visible face on earth. Her image is contradicted from without and within. What becomes of the image of the Bride of Christ in such a situation other than to be a pious abstraction that lacks any real substance?

Here arises the importance of the two categories of paradox and drama. De Lubac has provided important reflections on the category of paradox, one of his favorite ways of characterizing the precise nature of the mystery of the Church.<sup>138</sup> It would seem that a renewed appreciation of Paul VI's dialectic of actual face and ideal image can be captured by inserting the dialectic within the paradox and drama of the Church's identity as Bride. Paradox cannot be merely resolved into synthesis. Instead, paradox holds the tension of two seemingly opposite poles together and invites further consideration of this tension without resolving the tension. Paradox in its most general form essentially arises from love and freedom. For example, one of the great paradoxes is the existence of Hell in the face of God's mercy and love—a testament to the fact that God's love ultimately respects and does not consume freedom. The paradox of the Church's actual appearance and true image as Bride hinges on a recognition of the place of freedom and ultimately on the dramatic identity of the Bride of Christ that needs to be lived out.

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138. See de Lubac, *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, 1-12, and de Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, 9-16. On de Lubac's synthetic approach to ecclesiology, including his use of the category of paradox, see Dennis M. Doyle, "Henri de Lubac and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies* 60 (1999): 209-27, esp. 211-14.

The paradox is not resolved by synthesis but rather must be worked out in drama, that is, in living out the gift, identity and call to be the Bride of Christ.<sup>139</sup> Only at the end will the paradox, a drama to be lived, be fully illuminated and surpassed by God who is love in perfect freedom.

Perhaps more than any ecclesial image, the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ conveys simultaneously the Church's derivative nature (fully dependent on Christ's gift of self) and her own specific dignity and integrity as Bride. Again, not only is mystery conveyed here but also paradox. The Bride of Christ is a new creation, wherein the first creation is not destroyed but is incorporated, transformed, and raised to its transcendent and supernatural end.

These paradoxical characteristics of the Church as the Bride of Christ deserve further consideration particularly in relation to Jewish-Christian dialogue. John Paul II noted the presence of important nuptial elements of Jewish spirituality.<sup>140</sup> The prophets and the Song of Songs witness to this importance for an understanding of the covenant. Attention to the relation between the Church and the people of Israel (historical and present) through a spousal hermeneutic may yield further areas for dialogue and rapprochement. The Bride of Christ has not eliminated or superseded Israel, nor has the Church as Bride come to be as merely separate from Israel. Rather, the Church's roots and life are in the people of Israel. In the fullest theological sense, the Church *is* Israel, or more precisely, the new Israel. The Israel of today is waiting for the Bridegroom. The Church proclaims that this Bridegroom has come and will come again. The Church in her bridal identity cannot forget her history in the people of Israel.

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139. Angelo Scola's discussion of the "elliptical nature of the Church" is also relevant here. See Scola, "The Theological Foundation of the Petrine Dimension of the Church," 24-26, and "Christ, the Light of the Nations; the Church, His Spouse and Helpmate," 17-47.

140. See Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, no. 12 [AAS 90, 720]; chapter six above, p. 299n181.

In a related way, an appreciation of the bridal identity of the Church also has an ecumenical component and must take into account the tragic divisions that the Church has experienced throughout history and continues to experience today. The images of body and bride are powerful expressions of the oneness and unity of the Church with Christ that are contradicted by the visible divisions in Christianity. The bridal image especially, because of its particular capacity to span the range of protology, history, and eschatology, remains a dire call for a renewed ecumenism that is attentive to the whole of history (protology to eschatology) in light of God's plan revealed in Christ. The divisions within Christianity portray in stark colors the fractured face of the Bride, making it much more difficult for the world and even Christians themselves to see this one Bride for whom Christ has given himself and with whom he is united. Bridal imagery in this case remains a paradoxical and dramatic call for conversion and for perceiving the divisions within Christianity as one of the great sins of the Church for which all Christians must ask forgiveness, while working for reconciliation with the help of the Holy Spirit, the One who bestows the gift of perfect unity in communion.

### **III. Reappraisal of Ecclesial Metaphors**

This concentrated and specific study of ecclesial bridal imagery has invited a renewed look at the value and function of ecclesial metaphors in general. Some strains of ecclesiology since the Council have tended to see ecclesial images as an obstacle to a truly systematic approach or as a first step which must be surpassed in ecclesiology, or perhaps as unnecessary or misleading in a treatment of ecclesiological foundations.<sup>141</sup> The call to systematization might

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141. Though they recognize a value to images and metaphors, and rightly recognize the need for systematic theology not to remain at the level of speaking in metaphor, the following thinkers would share the tendency not to give ecclesial images a formative or constitutive capacity in their theological approaches: Rikhof,

sometimes be wrongly conceived as what Ricoeur has described as a “clearing away [of] the symbolic base,”<sup>142</sup> a tacit understanding that images and metaphors should be confined mainly to first-order discourse and only allowed into second-order discourse with severe restrictions.<sup>143</sup>

This study’s contention is that such a restricted view of image and metaphor for ecclesiology mistakes the nature of the systematic task as well as the nature of ecclesial metaphors, language, and discourse. Second-order or epistemic discourse needs to be continually open and available to first-order or noetic discourse.<sup>144</sup> While the systematic task requires a methodical and conceptual “modification” or reduction,<sup>145</sup> this reduction should not be understood as a Cartesian clearing away of things (*res*, reality) so as to arrive at “clear and distinct ideas” that then serve as a foundation for systematization, as if unencumbered by images. On the contrary, the attempt to reach the *essence* without the *image* will inevitably fall short. Ecclesial images and metaphors are uniquely disclosive of the reality of the Church in particular ways. The theologian must remain open to this disclosive potential and avoid the presumption that he or she has exhausted the cognitive value of an image or metaphor.

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*The Concept of Church*; Komonchak, *Foundations in Ecclesiology*; and Flanagan, “The Limits of Ecclesial Metaphors in Systematic Ecclesiology.”

142. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 357.

143. Such a view presumes too strong a divide between the orders of discourse. See chapter two above, p. 91ff.

144. See Schmitz, *The Texture of Being*, 67-73 and “Restitution of Meaning in Religious Speech.” See also Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 357-58.

145. See Schmitz, *The Texture of Being*, 67-73.

### ***A. The Irreducibility and Play of Metaphor***

As an interanimation theory of metaphor indicates,<sup>146</sup> a sign of a good metaphor is its irreducible character. A good metaphor cannot be paraphrased without a loss of significant cognitive content.<sup>147</sup> An attentive ecclesiology will seek carefully to draw out the unique significance of ecclesial images or metaphors while simultaneously respecting and balancing their irreducible character within the demands of methodical discourse. Ecclesial bridal imagery, for example, holds together and integrates such a variety of levels of meaning and associations that any attempt to conceptualize and paraphrase this significance as if to leave the image behind is not possible without considerable loss of cognitive content.

In addition to its irreducibility, a good metaphor carries within itself the potential of further “play.”<sup>148</sup> That is, a metaphor may continue to open up new vistas for investigation, for good or for ill. The play of a metaphor requires respect and attention on the part of the theologian lest the metaphor move out of itself in such a way as to become hardened and literalized. At the same time, the play of the metaphor reminds the theologian that his or her task is not to control and decipher the mystery but rather to allow the mystery to be further appreciated *as* mystery.<sup>149</sup> The preservation of wonder is a central task and virtue of the

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146. See chapter two above, p. 78ff. See also Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 43-51.

147. See chapter two above, p. 80ff.

148. See H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 101-110. The use of the concept of “play” is borrowed from Gadamer who speaks of art and the experience of art, whereas this study substitutes “metaphor” or “image.” “When we speak of play in reference to the experience of art, this means neither the orientation nor even the state of mind of the creator or of those enjoying the work of art, nor the freedom of a subjectivity engaged in play, but the mode of being of the work of art itself” (ibid., 101). Gadamer also notes that the nature of play requires it to be approached in a particular way, that is, according to the nature of play (ibid., 102). Likewise, there is a particular way of approaching metaphors and images as well in their playful essence—a way that must be open to further and even unexpected insights and yet careful when making claims that may extend beyond the image itself.

149. See Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 27-39.

theologian.<sup>150</sup> The play of the ecclesial bridal metaphor invites both care and respect for its disclosive potential.

### ***B. Emblematic Metaphors***

Presumed in this study is that the ecclesial bridal metaphor and other classic ecclesial images are more than simple metaphors. In Soskice's terminology, they are "emblematic metaphors" that have accrued such a rich tradition and history of meanings and interpretations that it would be difficult if not impossible to capture otherwise the whole range of uses and nuances.<sup>151</sup> As emblematic, they have achieved a unique and time-tested status, with important roots in Sacred Scripture. In this sense, they cannot or should not be easily dismissed from the theological task as mere artifacts of a past long forgotten. In addition, ecclesial metaphors, as emblematic, begin to take on a status beyond metaphor proper as images, faces, and even names for the Church. In fact, their groundedness in Scripture shows them to be revealed images.

This study has suggested that emblematic ecclesial metaphors—images of the Church—can also become symbolic and hence disclosive of and operative within more profound realities and relationships, such as analogical relationships.<sup>152</sup> If metaphor is technically a linguistic phenomenon—as presupposed in this study<sup>153</sup>—it is theology's task to ascertain the potential symbolic and analogical significance of the metaphor. John Paul II's awareness of an analogy of spousal love in which metaphors operate coincides with this perspective.<sup>154</sup> In John Paul's

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150. See Kenneth L. Schmitz, *The Recovery of Wonder: The New Freedom and the Ascetism of Power* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

151. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 158; chapter two above, p. 80ff.

152. On this study's understanding of "symbol" and "analogy," see chapter two above, p. 86ff.

153. See chapter two above, p. 75ff., and Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 15-23.

154. See chapter six above, p. 273ff.

teaching, there was a theological recognition of the potential significance of metaphor that retained an awareness of the value of metaphor even while inviting further exploration of analogical meaning.

This theological recognition was likely the reason why John Paul and the CDF asserted that the images of bridegroom and bride are “more than metaphors.”<sup>155</sup> If taken in the sense that the metaphors are symbolic and operative within a larger theo-analogical framework, this assertion is justified. However, the assertion “more than metaphors” would limp if the underlying presupposition is that metaphor as such is merely an ornamental reality that can be substituted by some other description. This study would contend that it is important not to lose the term “metaphor” even in a theological context of deeper symbolic and analogical significance. While the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ is symbolic and disclosive of much meaning, it is precisely such as a metaphor at its base. Its metaphorical nature not only invites further investigation but also offers a continuing reminder and caution to avoid placing so much cognitive weight on the metaphor itself that it over-extends itself into literalization or ungrounded abstraction.

### ***C. Living Metaphors***

As noted in chapter two above, one of the curious facts of the history of metaphor is that some metaphors have “died” into more literal usage, such as the dead metaphor of the “leg of a table.”<sup>156</sup> Such dead metaphors can be revived, but in general they no longer operate in a manner disclosive of further meaning and depth. In a way, emblematic metaphors such as

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155. See TOB 98:8 [IGP 5.3, 860] and CDF, *Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (May 31, 2004), no. 9 [AAS 96, 678].

156. See chapter two above, p. 82.

classical ecclesial images are protected from a simple death because the layers of tradition and history and the ongoing presence of Scripture in the life of the Church can always rejuvenate the metaphor. However, just because a metaphor has gained emblematic status does not necessarily mean that it is presently operating as a living metaphor.

Ricoeur has described the concept of living metaphor as follows:

Metaphor is living not only to the extent that it vivifies a constituted language. Metaphor is living by virtue of the fact that it introduces the spark of imagination into a ‘thinking more’ at the conceptual level. This struggle to ‘think more,’ guided by the ‘vivifying principle,’ is the ‘soul’ of interpretation.<sup>157</sup>

That a metaphor might be “living” for one is no guarantee that it will also be living for another. Various factors such as experience, knowledge, and cultural context are all important.

This study of ecclesial bridal imagery in twentieth-century papal and conciliar teaching would seem to indicate that the emblematic bridal metaphor was not as “alive” in the early part of the century as it was in the latter half. Whereas routine application dominated the usage of Leo XIII to Pius XI, the image began to “return to life” as it were in Pius XII’s teaching and afterwards. In John Paul II’s teaching, the image recurred with regularity and depth, and even took on further significance within his elaboration of the analogy of spousal love, the “great mystery” of Ephesians 5, and the significance of sexual difference within an understanding of the human person made in the image of God. In large part due to John Paul’s teaching, there has been a resurgence of popular interest in spousal imagery and categories. At the same time, for various reasons there has also been resistance to an emphasis on spousal or nuptial categories.<sup>158</sup>

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157. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 358.

158. See Kerr’s approach in *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*.



The lesson is that even emblematic metaphors experience an ebb and flow in their value and usage at different times and places. This ebb and flow may be such that at times the image could very well appear irrelevant or forced, and different contexts may call for a renewed re-evaluation of the metaphor's value and significance. The living potential of an emblematic metaphor, however, unlike a new and creative metaphor, may take some work and energy to uncover.

Although the emblematic metaphor of the Church as the Bride of Christ may not immediately spark a meaning or association in someone's mind, the trajectory of magisterial teaching over the last century would indicate that this absence of a spark is not so much a sign of irrelevance as an indication of a need to proclaim and witness anew to the mystery of love disclosed through the Church as the Bride united to Christ her Bridegroom.

## Conclusion

The contemporary crisis of faith is, I believe, in very large part a crisis of images.

—Avery Dulles (1974)<sup>1</sup>

Avery Dulles' words in 1974 about the crisis of faith experienced within the Church and in contemporary society could very well be repeated with similar force today. With a slightly different emphasis, this dissertation would suggest that the contemporary crisis of faith is ultimately a crisis of man, a crisis of the meaning of the human person, made in the image and likeness of God. This is a crisis of *image* in its most profound sense, for the human person, made *in* and *according to* the image of God (*imago Dei*), the image of the Trinity (*imago Trinitatis*), is made for Christ, the incarnate Word who is the perfect image of the Father. Christ is the key for unlocking the crisis of man (see *Gaudium et spes*, no. 22), of man made *in the image*. If in turn Christology and ecclesiology are inseparable, this means simultaneously that the *ecclesia* is also a key for unlocking the crisis of man. The human person is made for communion, and the Church is the way and “intrinsic medium” of the communion for which every human person is made.<sup>2</sup> The preceding pages indicate that the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ bears—and must bear, to retain its true relevance—precisely on the question of the meaning of the human person. Although ecclesial bridal imagery does not and cannot be expected to exhaust this question, the imagery discloses a decisive and unique answer to the question of man, of the human person created as male and female in the image of God.

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1. Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 13.

2. See Scola, “The Theological Foundation of the Petrine Dimension of the Church,” 13n2ff.

## I. Review and Questions

This dissertation has examined a particular subsection of magisterial teaching, within a century of fruitful theological developments, in order to consider the use and significance of ecclesial bridal imagery as found in that teaching. As its fundamental backdrop, the study relied on a specific understanding of metaphors as set forth in an *interanimation theory* of metaphor within a *post-critical, symbolic realism*, and it presupposed that metaphors can and should operate within the task of ecclesiology in a manner open to metaphor's disclosive capacity but also respectful of the criteria of methodical discourse.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the study relied on a brief overview of the vast history of the use of ecclesial bridal imagery, a history that demonstrates an integrated use of bridal imagery in the Church Fathers that was recovered and even advanced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>4</sup>

This study has identified and demonstrated a broad continuity, despite particular differences, in twentieth-century magisterial teaching concerning the use of spousal imagery. In particular, the study has shown the importance of Pius XII's magisterium for anticipating and setting forth many themes of a renewed ecclesiology of the Church as the Bride of Christ. The study also illuminated the larger magisterial context for John Paul II's significant teaching. Although John Paul II had a penchant for nuptial categories, the idea that significant use of spousal terms and categories was exclusive to John Paul II would be inaccurate. Insofar as ecclesial bridal imagery is concerned, John Paul's frequent and profound usage was rooted in an advancing trajectory of magisterial teaching notably present from Pius XII onward. As a parallel to and influence upon the magisterial usage of the imagery, a general interest in spousal imagery

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3. See chapter two above, esp. p. 78ff.

4. See chapter one above.

and concepts was reborn especially through the movement for *ressourcement* and was found across thinkers from various schools.<sup>5</sup>

A variety of questions and areas for further exploration remains beyond the limits of this study. A deeper investigation of the individual pontificates' ecclesiological visions could shed further light on the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in comparison with other ecclesial images and its place within a more complete presentation of the Church. This could be especially fruitful for understanding the broader scope of the teaching of Leo XIII, Pius XII, Paul VI, and John Paul II. Further historical work on the background, development, and drafting of key documents may reveal additional lines of communication between the theological and magisterial contexts.

More generally, the wealth of ways that ecclesial bridal imagery has been employed throughout the tradition deserves more individual attention, thinker by thinker. Although various general surveys have been done, careful expositions devoted entirely to Augustine, Bernard, Scheeben, and others would add immensely toward a more complete understanding of the ways the image has been used throughout the tradition and what the image might potentially communicate today.<sup>6</sup>

Further consideration of the relation between ecclesial images and the systematic task of ecclesiology would also be important. A portion of this task would entail a closer study of recent and contemporary ecclesiologists to investigate how ecclesial imagery operates within their systematic articulation. A deeper task would involve a careful articulation and evaluation of the presuppositions underlying different approaches, both philosophical and theological. At a

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5. See chapter one above, p. 42ff.

6. For example, see Kereszty, "'Bride' and 'Mother' in the *Super Cantica* of St. Bernard: An Ecclesiology for Our Time?"

concrete level, such a consideration must attend to the relation between Scripture and theology, a topic that remains of vital importance.<sup>7</sup>

Lastly, among other considerations, the various theological questions that emerge in close association with bridal imagery, as identified in the final chapter above, all deserve continued and more thorough treatment. The place of sexual difference is a crucial area for further work. Mariology, especially in its relation to Christology, ecclesiology, and anthropology, also remains an important and vital field.

## II. The Enduring and Prophetic Value of the Bridal Image

This study has invited further consideration of the enduring and prophetic value of ecclesial bridal imagery. Four aspects of bridal imagery deemed particularly important by this study are highlighted below.

### A. *Name and Face*

The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ, considered as a metaphor, has traditionally functioned as a *symbol* insofar as the metaphor has operated as a unique and quasi-proper name and face for the Church. The bridal image is a unique point of entry into the personal dimension of the mystery of the Church. The term “bride” bespeaks a personal subject, one who calls and who has first been called. As “bride,” the Church is “woman,” “virgin,” and “mother” in a mysterious sense that encompasses the difference between the masculinity and femininity of her members without reducing this difference.

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7. See Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (September 30, 2010) [AAS 102, 681-787].

As a unique name and face, the bridal image discloses the identity of the Church while also hiding this identity. To know someone's name or to see someone's face is not to know that person fully. Such a surface knowledge or perception might even cloud or give an incomplete picture of reality. Yet, without knowing someone's name or seeing someone's face, it would be difficult to say generally that a familiar and intimate knowledge of the other had been achieved. Something would be missing. It might help to understand ecclesial bridal imagery in a similar way. The Church *is* the Bride of Christ, not *like* the Bride of Christ. The metaphor speaks of an identity, a constitutive name and face that opens to and contains in some way the whole mystery (as a symbol) while also protecting and circumscribing this mystery through the image's particular contours.

In this way, it becomes clearer why ecclesiology would be mistaken if it sought to move beyond the bridal image as if to leave it behind or surpass it for a clearer conceptualization that then has no need for the image. It should not be a question of "getting beyond" in this sense, as even a general theory of metaphor would indicate. The systematic task must always return to the name and the face. Intimacy with the name and attentiveness to the face of the Bride is not a mere means to an end for the ecclesiologist. Certainly, such attention may reveal further insights for a systematic ecclesiology, but the attention is also an end of ecclesiology itself; it should mark the task of ecclesiology from beginning to end. Ultimately, the bridal image, in its unique function as name and face, has the capacity to disclose further the Church's own identity and her promised end, while simultaneously witnessing to the fact that the Church, as the Bride *of Christ*, is nothing apart from her loving union with Christ.

### ***B. Dignity and Integrity of the Bride***

A consistent emphasis of twentieth-century papal and conciliar teaching in its use of ecclesial bridal imagery was the particular dignity and distinction of the Bride. In earlier teaching of the twentieth century, this emphasis on the dignity of the Bride was not accompanied by sufficient attention to the identity between the Bride and her members and to the bridal dimension as a call to be lived out. Nevertheless, a sense of the dignity of the Church as the Bride, inclusive of the Church understood as an institution, has often been lost in contemporary discourse. It would be well worth recovering this sense in way that avoids a false “hierarchizing” of the image (that is, envisioning the image as pertaining only to the clergy, for instance) while still maintaining a wonder and respect for the institutional reality of the Church.<sup>8</sup>

The unique dignity, integrity, and distinction of the Church in her union with Christ was implied in the emphasis of earlier papal teaching on the dignity of the Bride and was later made explicit in Pius XII’s teaching. The distinction of the Bride should never be understood as a separation or false autonomy. Nor should the distinction be glossed over in favor of an emphasis on union. The fact is that there is no true union—communion—without the preservation of distinction and personal integrity.<sup>9</sup> Difference and otherness remain constitutive of communion. The bridal image, like no other ecclesial image, conveys the primordial difference that is preserved in unity and communion with Christ. A full appreciation of this difference in unity would comprise recognition of the Holy Spirit’s work as well as of the place of Mary in and for the Church. There is an integrity to creation, an integrity to the Bride, that is

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8. See Kereszty, “Bride and Mother,” 434.

9. “True union does not tend to dissolve into one another the beings that it brings together, but to bring them to completion by means of one another.... Union differentiates.” De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 330-31. See McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 19.

preserved, raised and transformed in the *Christus totus*, not annihilated or subsumed. Along with this integrity, the bridal image also conveys the freedom that remains in communion.

Mary provides a striking picture of the dignity and integrity of the Bride of Christ. In Christ, spousal imagery has been transformed to convey a radical union (viz., the Incarnation) wherein fundamental difference (that between God and creation) is preserved in the hypostatic union. This radical union becomes the basis for the communion offered in Christ through the Church, where difference is enhanced, not abolished. Notably, the radical union of the Incarnation is inseparably linked to Mary who, at the Annunciation, responded “thy will be done.” The person of Mary was mysteriously interwoven with the mystery of the Incarnation. She was not subsumed by it but rather elevated. Following this line of thought and looking analogously to Mary as bride and mother, further appreciation for the unique nature of union-communion in its preservation of otherness and difference could contribute to a renewed sense of the dignity of the Church as Mother, worthy of respect and love, who is also one in and with all her children.<sup>10</sup>

### ***C. Mystery of Love and Call to Love***

A sustained accent in the use of ecclesial bridal imagery in twentieth-century magisterial teaching was the idea of the Church as a mystery of love and the call and responsibility of Christians to love the Church as Christ loved her. Ephesians 5 was an important backdrop to this emphasis. Pius XII, Paul VI, and John Paul II were particularly notable in the prominence they gave to this theme in relation to ecclesial bridal imagery. Paul VI especially made the call to love the Church a key part of his Wednesday audience addresses.

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10. See Kereszty, “Bride and Mother,” throughout.



Bridal imagery, in a way unparalleled by other ecclesial images, discloses the profound nature of the Church as a mystery of love in a spousal or, as Scola puts it, nuptial sense. Love, (sexual) difference, and fruitfulness are intertwined.<sup>11</sup> In the salvific economy, love (God himself) seeks us out, bridges the seemingly unbridgeable difference between Creator and creature without extinguishing the difference (Annunciation-Incarnation), and brings about a superabundant fruitfulness through the Church as Bride and Mother. Grace, justification, and sanctification—and more concretely, the adoption and transformation of human beings as children of God, sons and daughters in the Son through his Body and Bride—comprise the great fruit of this communion.

Love, ultimately the Trinitarian communion, is at the basis of ecclesial communion. The Church, as a mystery of communion, is only such as a mystery of love, contingent upon Christ's love. The bridal image reveals the drama of love that is the basis of the Church's very existence—the Paschal Mystery—and that beckons every Christian to participate. Christians become beloved in the one beloved Bride, but Christians are also called to love this Bride in a unique way. The call to “become the Bride”<sup>12</sup> cannot be separated from the call to love the Bride, a call lived in different ways by men and women in the Church.

This call to love the Bride and Mother perhaps illuminates one of the unique ways that Christian men, in distinction from Christian women, “become the Bride”—not by becoming “feminized” in a reductive sense but rather by responding to Christ's love uniquely as men in and through the bridal-maternal reality of the Church and expressly loving the Church. In their masculinity, which is fostered not emasculated within the “feminine” Church, Christian men can

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11. See Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, 89-96 and 362-69.

12. For example, see Augustine and John Paul II, chapters one and six above, pp. 20ff. and 281ff.

reflect Christ's unique love as the Bridegroom and serve to remind the Bride of her identity and dignity as well as to recall every woman's distinctive capacity to express the truth—grounded not in mere biology but more fully in creation and salvation history—that human existence and the call to love are contingent upon the fact of being loved first. Everything is first a gift.

#### ***D. A Prophetic Image***

The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ stems from prophetic roots and holds prophetic import. The image has its historical roots in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, wherein Israel was portrayed as the beloved bride of God. Jesus took upon himself the image of bridegroom, and the New Testament writings—especially Ephesians and Revelation—transformed the bridal image to refer to the Church, the people of the new covenant formed in Christ.<sup>13</sup> The historical origin of bridal imagery therefore serves as a basis for continued dialogue between Christians and Jews, and it also recalls the inseparability of “the old and the new.”

At the same time, the fact that Jesus himself took on the title of Bridegroom is of decisive Christological significance.<sup>14</sup> The title had been reserved to God alone throughout the Old Testament. Christ's assumption of the title and the early Church's recognition of it conveyed both continuity and newness in relation to the covenant. The Bridegroom had remained faithful to his promises and yet simultaneously fulfilled those promises in a totally unexpected way: the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The transcendent Bridegroom had become man. The Church as the Bride of Christ therefore emerged as a mystery of continuity

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13 . See chapter one above, p. 10ff.

14. See Kereszty, *Jesus Christ*, 142-43.

(anticipated by the chosen people of Israel) and newness (drawn from Christ's gift of self and revealed in the sending of the Holy Spirit), bonded in communion not by race or blood but by grace.

There is another aspect of the prophetic dimension of ecclesial bridal imagery that remains especially relevant and profound for today's context. This is the prophetic witness of the metaphor that involves what might be called the "memory" of the metaphor. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, society is experiencing a threatened eclipse of marriage and the family. Statistics on broken marriages bear this out, as well as a general reluctance by many young adults to make a spousal commitment. In a disturbing way, proposals to legally redefine marriage show how deep this threatened eclipse of marriage and the family runs: at the root it involves an eclipse of difference, sexual difference, the feminine and the masculine. The bridal metaphor contains within it a call to remember what has been forgotten or overlooked. In particular, it invites further reflection on the category of sexual difference as a fundamental reality at the basis of every human experience.<sup>15</sup>

Appreciation for the prophetic dimension and various other aspects of bridal imagery emphasizes that a metaphor or image can be irreplaceable and can bear unique cognitive content. An image is a portal to the real. The recovery of the real is at the same time a recovery of the symbolic, of sacramentality in its broad and specific senses. Ecclesial metaphors and images, especially those with emblematic and symbolic value, are not simply substitutable or mere ornaments.

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15. See Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, xxiii.

The Second Vatican Council made great strides in the recovery of biblical imagery in reference to the Church. It would be a mistake to interpret this recovery minimally as simply “pre-” or “unsystematic,” or as a historical datum that has already been surpassed. Certainly, the Council did not intend to present a systematic theology *per se*. Nevertheless, the trajectory of magisterial teaching over the course of the twentieth century has benefitted from and has itself prompted much theological work, and this trajectory indicates the potential for a great deal more work yet to be done with ecclesial imagery, particularly the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ. Careful study of ecclesial images and their “fittingness” (*convenientia*), as Anselm might say, may yet uncover renewed directions for ecclesiology and ecclesial life—the life of Christian discipleship.

## Appendix

### Summary Comparison of Themes and Patterns of Bridal Imagery, Leo XIII to John Paul II

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
Usage of ecclesial images and metaphors in general		<p><i>Explicit recognition of ecclesial images as metaphors in reference to St. Paul's "metaphorical" (translata) use of language (viz. Church as Body of Christ); recognition of symbols; image of Body can serve to "define" the Church</i></p>	<p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>Ecclesial images in context of Church as mystery and sacrament; Bride of Christ as one image among others, though also privileged; images show Church's innermost nature as mystery and sacrament</i></p>	<p><i>Ecclesial images in context of Church as mystery; images not sufficient to convey full mystery of the Church; yet, many names, images, figures and symbols are fitting in light of Church's mystery; the many images need to be integrated; the bridal image as one image among others; "bride" as one of many names for the Church; bridal and maternal imagery as singular and unusual images; use of "allegory" and "similitude" in reference to Eph 5; dynamic use of imago as an identity to be achieved. CDF: recognition of spousal "symbols" in Scripture through which mystery of God is revealed</i></p>	<p><i>Attentiveness to issues of language and hermeneutics and various terminology; use of bridal imagery within analogy of spousal love; recognition of metaphor within larger context of analogy; recognition of importance of a metaphor's range for the purposes of analogy; analogy in context of mystery; analogy illuminates and is clarified by the mystery; recognition of the limits of metaphor qua metaphor; the bridal image as "more than metaphor"; analogy involves both likeness and greater non-likeness; Christ himself insisted on the terminology of "Bridegroom" which thereby revealed the meaning of his historical entry; full understanding of "great mystery" of Eph 5 as counter to rationalism and dualism. CDF: recognition of metaphorical quality of "bride and bridegroom" while also "much more than simple metaphors"</i></p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
Holiness and associated attributes	<p><b>Leo XIII:</b> <i>Bride as holy, immaculate (immaculata), mystical, beautiful; immaculate Bride is distinct from world.</i></p> <p><b>Pius X:</b> <i>Bride as holy, spotless, mystical, divine, beautiful youthful, indefectible and royal (queen); with immaculate honor as Mother.</i></p> <p><b>Benedict XV:</b> <i>Bride as immaculate and beautiful.</i></p> <p><b>Pius XI:</b> <i>Bride as immaculate, mystical, divine, uncontaminated, beautiful, most pure and royal (queen)</i></p>	<p><i>Bride as spotless, immaculate (intaminata, intemerata, and less frequently, immaculata), mystical, youthful, supernatural, illustrious and immortal; Bride has particular dignity; beauty and joy of the Bride increased by holy men and women and saints, who are jewels of the Bride</i></p>	<p><b>John XXIII:</b> <i>Bride as holy (note of holiness distinguishes the Bride), immaculate (immaculata, intaminata), spotless, blessed, most holy, beautiful, endowed with strength and virtue, glorious, sublime, and chaste.</i></p> <p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>Bride as indefectibly holy, immaculate (immaculata), ever young, renewed by Holy Spirit, faithful with help of Holy Spirit, obedient, worthy</i></p>	<p><i>Bride as holy, immaculate, mystical, youthful; holiness achieved only to a degree by the Church on earth; beauty as a form of the Bride and a task to be unveiled; the joy associated with being the Bride of Christ; Bride as “glorious name”; the various attributes as a dynamic calling</i></p>	<p><i>Bride as holy, immaculate, faithful, virgin, beautiful and glorious (in saints, consecrated, and also in her diverse cultures), and youthful; attributes are still to be achieved perfectly</i></p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
Union with Christ	<p><b>Leo XIII:</b> <i>Church's spousal union (connubium, nuptiae; and the verbs copulare, coniugare) with Christ as "mystical"; unity of the Bride stems from union with Christ and is an aspect of Church's beauty; one with Christ.</i></p> <p><b>Pius X:</b> <i>indissoluble union (coniunctio) of Christ and Church.</i></p> <p><b>Benedict XV:</b> <i>Bride's union (coniunctio) with Christ.</i></p> <p><b>Pius XI:</b> <i>unity and indivisibility as crown jewels of Bride; Bride united (coniungere; coniunctio) with Christ; a perfect union.</i></p>	<p><i>Reference to union between Christ and Church (unione, coniunctio; coniungere) as mystical, sublime, indissoluble, divine and most perfect; reference to union as mystical nuptials (nozze), wedding (sposalizio), and mystical matrimony (matrimonium); Church as wedded (jugata) to Christ; Bride as unique; the Bride as one and as embracing all through Christ's love; the Bride is united but distinct: not one as a "physical person" but facing one another (opponit); fruitful union</i></p>	<p><b>John XXIII:</b> <i>Bride as united with Christ; Bride is one because Bridegroom is one (quote from St. Leo); Easter as epithalamium celebrating mystical union of Christ and Church (quote from St. Gregory).</i></p> <p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>Indissoluble union between Christ and Church; various terms for union (unione, connubium, foedus dilectionis, indissolubile vinculum, nuptiae, and exemplar); Holy Spirit leads Bride to perfect union with her Bridegroom.</i></p> <p><b>Doctrinal Commission:</b> <i>The bridal image as conveying the Church's intimate union with, distinction from, and obedience to Christ</i></p>	<p><i>The union between Christ and the Church is a marriage (conubium) of a special kind; various other terms used for union (intima et indissolubile unione, coniunctione, mysterium coniunctionis, paradigma, and the verb coniungere); the bridal allegory teaches about both the union and distinction between Christ and the Church; the bridal Church is neither her own end or beginning but rather utterly dependent on Christ</i></p>	<p><i>Bride united with Christ in communion of love; as Christ's one and only Bride, the Church herself is one; various terms for union (alliance, sponsale foedus, coniunctio, unione nuziale); dual unity likened to "one flesh" union of marriage; Bride united (iuncta) with Christ in various ways: united (coniuncta) by living his life, united (consociata) by sharing his mission, and united (copulata) by responding with self-gift to Bridegroom's self-gift; unity necessary to show love; Church's life is a striving toward union with her Bridegroom; Holy Spirit leads Bride to ever more perfect union with Christ</i></p>
Gift of self		<p><i>Spouses make total and mutual gift of self to each other modeled on Christ and the Church; the mutual gift of self is the source of fruitfulness</i></p>	<p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>As Christ gave himself for the Church, Christian spouses called to mutually give themselves in enduring love and fidelity; man can only find himself through a sincere giving of himself (see Gaudium et spes, no. 24; not connected to bridal imagery, but later incorporated by John Paul II).</i></p>	<p><i>Marriage is a singular reality because it is founded on mutual gift of self in the one-flesh union, wherein personalities are not extinguished but refined and affirmed</i></p>	<p><i>Love defined by gift of self (see John of the Cross and GS no. 24); repeated use of the phrase "hermeneutics of the gift"; spousal love as paradigm of love's character as total self-gift; the analogy of spousal love illustrates God's love as gift of self; analogy of love indicates the radical order of grace as God's total self-gift</i></p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
Love	<p><b>Leo XIII:</b> <i>Bride as beloved; Christ’s love for the Church as “most chaste and perpetual” of all loves; call to love Bride as Christ has loved.</i></p> <p><b>Pius X:</b> <i>Bride as beloved of God (Anselm) and of Christ (Eph 5); call to honor the Bride.</i></p> <p><b>Benedict XV:</b> <i>reference to Jerome’s love for the Bride and desire to praise her.</i></p> <p><b>Pius XI:</b> <i>Bride as beloved by Christ and meant to be loved by members; the Bride as cared for and helped by Christ and the Holy Spirit; Christ’s promises to Bride have been kept; God’s concern for the honor of his Bride.</i></p>	<p><i>Bride as beloved and honored; Bride as made from Christ’s blood poured out (“Bride of his blood”); Bride born from Christ’s Heart of spousal love; Christ’s spousal love embraces all people in his Bride; to love Bride as Christ loves is also to imitate the breadth of Christ’s love, and therefore to love all people</i></p>	<p><b>John XXIII:</b> <i>Bride as the beloved of Christ; marriage between God and Church based on deep love (quote from Augustine).</i></p> <p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>Bride as beloved; Christ gave himself out of love to make her holy (see Eph 5)</i></p>	<p><i>Christ’s love for the Church (Eph 5); bridal imagery conveys that the Church is a mystery of charity; bridal Church as meeting place of Christ’s love (“house of nuptials”); Bride as “title of love”; the bridal image as a reminder of the call and duty to love the Church; only the one who loves the Church can build her; the Bride’s duty to respond in love</i></p>	<p><i>Bride as Christ’s beloved; many references to Christ’s love for the Church (Eph 5); Bride as one who receives and then gives love; call to love Church as Christ loves; Christ’s love and the call to love as constitutive of Church’s mystery; Paschal Mystery as definitive revelation of spousal love of God; an order of love insofar as Bridegroom loves and Bride is loved; Christ’s love as Bridegroom and Redeemer affirms dignity of every human person</i></p>



	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
Call and mission linked to bridal identity	<p><b>Pius X:</b> Exhortation to please God and reign eternally “with and in that bride [i.e., the Church]” (quote from Anselm); Bride as called to suffer in this world</p>	<p>Christ willed distinct participation and cooperation of Bride in work of salvation, not only as a sharing but also in a way where the work proceeds from the action of the Church; contemplative religious encouraged to see their apostolate as that of the Church as Bride (see 2 Cor, Jn, Rev)</p>	<p><b>John XXIII:</b> A summary of the Church’s apostolic and missionary horizon can be found in the description of the bridal Church as “mother and teacher” (see Pope Innocent III).</p> <p><b>Vatican II:</b> Bridal image linked with universal call to holiness, the foundation of which is the Bride’s being joined to Christ as his Body; Christ associates his Bride with the work of redemption; the distinct participation and responsibility of Bride</p>	<p>Bridal imagery associated with the call to love the Church as well as the call to be joyful; the various attributes of the Bride are a calling to become what the Bride was intended to be (according to her perfect image in the mind of Christ); Bride called to serve mankind</p>	<p>Bride called to respond to Christ’s love with gift of self; all called to respond to Christ’s love as bride; measure of holiness is Bride’s response of love; Christ’s spousal love as a key reference point for all discerning vocation (whether priestly, consecrated, or married); in the union of Bridegroom and Bride, all the baptized share Christ’s priesthood and are called to respond with self-gift; the bridal image is only understood if it is lived</p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
<b>Trials, sin, suffering and relation to world</b>	<p><b>Leo XIII:</b> <i>dignity and innocence of Bride in face of adversity, calumny, and trials brought about by world and own children; theme of liberty applied to Church as Mother.</i></p> <p><b>Pius X:</b> <i>Bride's dignity and liberty in midst of adversity; Bride called to suffer; need to defend the liberty and divine rights of the Bride; Bride can trust in Bridegroom's help and love; Bride as beautiful despite those who seek to deform her face.</i></p> <p><b>Pius XI:</b> <i>the Bride's dignity, liberty, and spotlessness in face of adversity and evil; Bride weighed down by grief and woe (Great Depression); beautiful despite those who seek to mar her face; blood of Church's martyrs associated with Church's birth from Christ's side</i></p>	<p><i>The distress, anxiety and crises facing the Bride of Christ; despite misery and sadness, the Bride goes to meet the gathering storms with courage from Christ's promises; beautiful face of Bride-Mother disfigured by sins of children who represent that face; Bride remains undefiled and has help of Christ, Holy Spirit, and Mary; Church as "Bride of blood and suffering"—she does not fear but knows she will triumph with her divine Bridegroom; immortal youth of Bride in the midst of suffering and evil; as Bride-Mother, Church shares joys and sorrows of the world; the Bride embraces all humanity</i></p>	<p><b>John XXIII:</b> <i>In the midst of various difficulties, evils, and sufferings, the Bride remains grounded in Christ's love and stands as sign of God and teacher of truth; the Bride's children who sin mar their own God-given beauty; at the Council, the Bride of Christ as set to deliver medicine of mercy and to explain rather than condemn.</i></p> <p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>Bride as assisted by Holy Spirit through trials and tribulations to remain a worthy and faithful bride, dependent on grace; nevertheless, some lay and clerical members have been unfaithful to the Spirit of God; Church is not blind to discrepancy between message and weakness of those entrusted with Gospel; need to cultivate relationship with world and mature from experience over centuries</i></p>	<p><i>The original image of the Bride of Christ is distinct from the actual appearance or face of the Church; the Bride of Christ is the human and pilgrim Church, sometimes a sinner; the future of the Bride of Christ depends on how she adapts to the needs of the present day; Bride as in and for the world; Bride called to serve mankind; Bride's deep solicitude for the needs of men as her desire to be present with them and to unite them in Christ</i></p>	<p><i>Sins hinder beauty of Bride's face from shining in its fullness; Bride as Church of sinners who remains Bride through Holy Spirit and Christ's love; sins of her children remind the Church to remember faults, ask forgiveness, and be renewed</i></p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
<b>Pilgrim Bride</b>		<p><i>Bride, even in suffering, as waiting confidently for triumph and victory; widowhood as figure of Church militant who nonetheless remains united to Christ and waits for fulfillment of his first promises</i></p>	<p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>Bride as pilgrim; Bride as in constant renewal; Bride as on the way to perfection and perfect union through Holy Spirit's help (Rev 22:17); marriage of Christ and Church to be manifest in future</i></p>	<p><i>Bride as pilgrim; a needed renewal, which would involve the Church living in conformity with her notes or marks, will allow face of Bride to shine; Bride as instrument and end of salvation because the divinization of humanity occurs in and through her; Bride waiting joyfully for fulfillment; the journey of the pilgrim People of God will allow the beauty of the Bride to shine completely; Bride as perfect in Christ's thought and perfectible in reality</i></p>	<p><i>Bride as pilgrim, on the way to eschatological marriage; called to renewed fidelity, holiness and mission; Holy Spirit leading Bride to more perfect union with Christ; Bride calls on Bridegroom's return in liturgy; Bride as "New Jerusalem," a reality in our midst and constantly being realized</i></p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
Attention to sexual identity and difference		<p><i>St. Paul’s teaching on wife’s being subject to husband illustrative of “very clear difference” between the spouses as well as the force that unites them—implicit and initial awareness of sexual difference</i></p>		<p><i>Men and women “together” are the image of God; the prophets, wisdom books, and New Testament identified as crucial for explicating meaning of duality of sexes.</i>  CDF: Scriptural imagery and spousal symbolism of economy connected to man and woman in their most profound identity as well as the very mystery of God</p>	<p><i>Image of God found in communion of persons, male and female; bridal image linked to feminine; bridegroom image linked to masculine; spousal meaning of the body; Eucharist tied to imagery of Bridegroom-Bride and significance of masculine-feminine; Eph 5 and development of a theology of the body; iconicity of masculinity and femininity in connection to Christ’s choosing only male Apostles; sexual difference tied to economy of signs; prophetism of the feminine; Marian and Petrine dimensions of Church</i></p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
Relation to marriage & family	<p><b>Leo XIII:</b> <i>Eph 5 as key reference for Leo; marriage itself as the “great mystery” (Eph 5) to be revered as sign and image of union of Christ and the Church; husband as image of Christ and wife as image of Church; marriage from beginning (by nature) foreshadows Incarnation (Word and humanity); marriage as highest of unions.</i></p> <p><b>Pius XI:</b> <i>marriage as “great mystery” (Eph 5); marriage as living and mystical image and figure of Christ’s perfect union with Church; husbands and wives mutually called to love as Christ loved; husband as image of Christ and wife as image of Church (quoting Leo); marriage foreshadowing of Incarnation (quoting Leo).</i></p>	<p><i>Eph 5 as key, frequent reference; marriage as symbol, sign, and image of Christ’s redemptive love; marriage as modeled upon Christ and Church in three ways: (1) mutual and total gift of self; (2) bridegroom as head, and (3) fruitfulness of union; various spousal vocabulary, husband like Christ and wife like redeemed Church; husband and wife both as collaborators in the work of the Trinity; moral unity of family compared with essential unity of Trinity</i></p>	<p><b>John XXIII:</b> <i>Marriage as great sacrament and sign of the sacred reality of the nuptials of Christ and the Church (quote from Pius XII).</i></p> <p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>Eph 5 as central reference; marriage as model of Christ’s union with Church; nature of Church shown forth in Christian family founded on marriage; marriage has distinct ecclesiological meaning as embodying covenantal love of Christ for his Church and as source of domestic church; Christ the Bridegroom abides with spouses so that mutual self-giving in love will endure; God’s spousal covenant with Israel compared with Christ’s coming to Christian spouses; Christian spouses cooperate in Mother Church’s fruitfulness</i></p>	<p><i>Marriage as the “great mystery” (Eph 5); Eph 5 presents the perfection of conjugal life; the Christ-Church bond is comparable to marriage but there is also a substantial and abysmal difference; Christ-Church as fuller paradigm for love from which conjugal love draws its example and holiness; marriage contains and radiates union of Christ and Church; in marriage and the family, Christian homes participate in the action by which Christ unites himself to the Church; Paschal Mystery being accomplished in marriage; spouses called to be sign of Bride of Christ in the world; Christ the Bridegroom comes to Christian spouses</i></p>	<p><i>Extended commentary on Eph 5; Eph 5 as new presentation of eternal truth about marriage and family; marriage as “great mystery” in light of an extension of the analogy; marriage as real and solid sign, real symbol, and image of union between Christ and Church; union of Christ and Church as symbol and model for marriage; marriage contains spousal love of Christ and Church; mystery of Christ-Church tied to “one flesh” of marriage as primordial sacrament; Christ’s spousal love for Church the “one and only key” for understanding sacramentality of marriage; family itself as mystery of God and as bride of Christ; Church’s bridal identity most immediately revealed through family as domestic church; St. Paul’s teaching on great mystery as summary of teaching on God and man in Christ; great mystery and family eclipsed by rationalism and dualism; invitation to spouses to recall the presence of Christ the Bridegroom</i></p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
Eucharist and liturgy	<p><b>Leo XIII:</b> <i>diverse liturgies signifying splendor of the Bride (likened to adorned queen of Ps 45 [44]).</i></p> <p><b>Benedict XV:</b> <i>same as above (cites Leo).</i></p> <p><b>Pius XI:</b> <i>same as above</i></p>	<p><i>Liturgy involves the work and action of the Bride, with an effectiveness due to her close union with Christ her Head; frequent communion as bringing about a springtime of Eucharistic life in Bride</i></p>	<p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>The Bride as entrusted with the gift of the Eucharist (see Trent); the responsibility and participation of the Bride in the liturgy and Eucharist; the Divine Office as voice of Bride with Bridegroom</i></p>	<p><i>The Eucharist, the mystery of faith, is the ineffable gift and pledge of love that the Bride of Christ has received to guard as most precious treasure</i></p>	<p><i>Eucharist as greatest gift to Bride from Bridegroom; Eucharist as sacrament of spousal nuptials; Eucharist as realization of great mystery; Eucharist as sacrament of Bridegroom and Bride; in Eucharist Christ continues to give himself to his Bride; Eucharist involves Church's intimacy with Bridegroom; Eucharist as anticipation of wedding feast; Eucharist as source of Christian marriage; Christ's institution of the Eucharist says something about men and women; Sunday as day of the Bride; sacraments as Bridegroom's communication to Bride of his saving death; liturgy as voice of Spirit and Bride (Rev 21); baptism as washing of the Bride (Eph 5) and incorporation into the Bride and Mother; Divine Office as voice of Bridegroom and Bride to the Father. CCC: Baptism as a nuptial mystery; Eucharist as wedding feast</i></p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
Scripture, covenant and economy of salvation	<p><b>Benedict XV:</b> <i>Bride prefigured in individual women of the OT; familiarity with Bible yields growing love for Bride of Christ (see Jerome).</i></p>	<p><i>God's covenantal love as spousal; the spousal imagery of the covenant a foreshadowing of the love of the Heart of Christ; Bride of Christ prefigured in OT; specific references to Hosea and Song of Songs</i></p>	<p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>Spousal and familial imagery used in the OT; various figures in OT; key place of prophets; God's spousal covenant compared with Christ the Bridegroom's presence with Christian spouses; Bride is in an uninterrupted conversation with God through her living Tradition; the Bride strives for a more profound understanding of Scripture so as to hand on what has been received</i></p>	<p><i>God's spousal love portrayed in OT, especially prophets and Song of Songs; Gospels where Jesus described as Bridegroom; Ephesians where bridal image given ecclesiological meaning; Revelation as place where bridal imagery refers to all redeemed humanity.</i> CDF: use of "nuptial mystery" in reference to the covenant; use of "theme of marriage" (argumentum) as shorthand description of NT's development of OT spousal themes</p>	<p><i>analogy of spousal love and "great mystery" contained in the OT and developed especially in Ephesians; prophets and Song of Songs as key sources; spousal imagery as decisive in disclosing God's lordship as one of love; God's spousal love revealed at beginning of creation; "nuptial intensity" marking God's relation with people in both OT and NT; transformation of bridal imagery in NT through revelation and experience; Jewish recognition of spousal paradigm for Sabbath</i></p>
Vital link with Christ's saving mystery and work	<p><b>Leo XIII:</b> <i>Church conceived in Incarnation and born from Christ's side on the Cross.</i> <b>Pius X:</b> <i>implicit reference to (spousal) union between Word and faithful in Mary's womb; Bride's origin from Heart of Christ on Cross</i></p>	<p><i>Incarnation as "spiritual marriage" of Son of God and human nature (quote of Thomas Aquinas); Church born of Christ's pierced heart as New Eve; the love of the Heart of Christ as spousal; Christ entered "mystical marriage" with Church through his blood poured out</i></p>	<p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>Church born from Christ's side on Cross—connected to idea of Church as sacrament; allusion to Church as the New Eve</i></p>	<p><i>The spousal union of Christ and humanity (through Christ and the Church) derives from the Incarnation and Redemption; Incarnation as nuptial union of Christ and humanity; Church born from Christ's pierced side.</i> CDF: <i>Paschal Mystery itself fulfills nuptial mystery</i></p>	<p><i>Christ as Bridegroom and Redeemer; Christ's love is spousal because it is redemptive; Paschal Mystery as definitive revelation of God's spousal love; sacrifice of the Cross gives "definitive prominence" to spousal meaning of God's love; Church as New Eve; Eucharist as ultimate expression of Christ's spousal and redemptive love</i></p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
<b>Bride and Mother</b>	<p><b>Leo XIII:</b> Maternal imagery more frequent than bridal; liberty of Mother Church; fruitfulness of Mother Church in the Holy Spirit; some parallel use of both images.</p> <p><b>Pius X:</b> more frequent use of maternal imagery; close parallel use of both images at times.</p> <p><b>Benedict XV:</b> regular use of maternal imagery; infrequent paralleled use of both images.</p> <p><b>Pius XI:</b> regular use of maternal imagery; Bride and therefore fruitful Mother</p>	<p>Regular and frequent use of ecclesial maternal imagery; the Church is Bride and Mother—interconnected use of both images; Bride is Mother made fruitful by Christ's blood; fruitful union as source of divine filiation and spiritual family, wherein Christ is Bridegroom and Church is Bride; Mother Church's task of regenerating souls involves adapting to needs of the day; Mother as supra-national</p>	<p><b>John XXIII:</b> Regular use of ecclesial maternal imagery; Bride as loving and joyful Mother and most loving mother of all; the Bride-Mother has a two-fold munus of giving life and teaching truth—bridal and maternal imagery linked to Church's mission; as Bride and Mother, the Church gives truth and love to her children; Bride as made fruitful by Holy Spirit.</p> <p><b>Vatican II:</b> Comparable use of bridal and maternal imagery; Church as Bride and Mother; recognition of the maternal fruitfulness of the Bride and the fruitful love between Christ and the Church; greatest honor of the Bride is when her faithful stand before God's throne in the name of Mother Church; Christian spouses cooperated in Mother Church's fruitfulness</p>	<p>Regular use of ecclesial maternal imagery; close coupling of bridal and maternal imagery; maternal imagery follows directly from bridal imagery; to see the face of the Bride is also to see the beauty of the Church as Mother and Teacher; deep solicitude of the Bride for the needs of mankind</p>	<p>Regular use of ecclesial maternal imagery; the maternal image as capturing Church's fundamental mission; Church as Bride and Mother simultaneously; feminine symbol includes aspects of betrothed, espoused, and mother, emphasizing dimension of love and fruitfulness; love and fruitfulness linked; fruitfulness fundamental to ecclesial nuptiality; bridal, maternal and virginal aspects key to Church's fruitfulness and service to world; maternal fruitfulness in Spirit dependent on Bride's response to Christ's love; as Bride, Church is Mother of souls; saints as spiritual fruitfulness of Bride</p>



	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
<b>Bride and Body</b>	<p><b>Leo XIII:</b> <i>implicit connection between images, particularly in reference to Incarnation and birth of Church from Jesus on Cross; citation of Augustine’s parallel use of both images, Head-Body and Bridegroom-Bride, the latter described as “two in one flesh.”</i></p> <p><b>Pius X:</b> <i>parallel use of images (infrequent); implicit connection of images with reference to Incarnation.</i></p> <p><b>Benedict XV:</b> <i>only implicit connection between images.</i></p> <p><b>Pius XI:</b> <i>parallel use of images (infrequent).</i></p>	<p><i>Bridal image as specific complement to bodily image; awareness of the need to understand the metaphorical uses of Body; Church as Body and Bride different from political societies; use of bodily image associated with Incarnation as “spiritual marriage” and with the Church as the New Eve drawn from Christ’s side on the Cross</i></p>	<p><b>Vatican II:</b> <i>Use of the images of Body and Bride in close proximity; close coupling of images; implicit acknowledgment of unique complementarity of the images; the Bride’s being joined to Christ as his Body as foundation of universal call to holiness</i></p>	<p><i>Close coupling of images of Body and Bride in various instances; implicit acknowledgment of Body and Bride as complementary images; reference to Incarnation as a nuptial union as well as the Church’s being born from Christ’s pierced side</i></p>	<p><i>Close coupling of images of Body and Bride in multiple instances; Body and Bride as complementary images; likeness of “one flesh”; privileging of images in relation to Church’s mystery; order between images insofar as bridal Church becomes Christ’s body; Church’s exploration of own identity during the Council led to greater appreciation of her mystery as Body and Bride of Christ; Christ and Church are distinct subjects though presented as one subject through bodily image</i></p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
<b>Bridal image in relation to individual members of the Church</b>	<p><b>Leo XIII:</b> consecrated women as brides of Christ; reference to Jesus as Bridegroom of souls; saints as crowning jewels of Bride.</p> <p><b>Pius X:</b> saints as jewels of Bride (following Leo); saints as reflections of Bridegroom; consecrated women as brides.</p> <p><b>Benedict XV:</b> consecrated women as brides of Christ; women of OT prefiguring Bride of Christ.</p> <p><b>Pius XI:</b> consecrated women as brides of Christ (regular use); reference to souls' mystical union with Bridegroom</p>	<p>Consecrated virgins as brides of Christ; consecrated virgins as perfect image of Church as virgin-bride-mother; consecrated virgins as living images of the integrity of the Church's union with Christ the Bridegroom; consecrated women to be grounded in apostolate of Church as Bride; vows of perfect chastity as "a kind of spiritual marriage"; Christ as Bridegroom of souls; every soul called in some way to spiritual marriage in Christ (quoted St. Bernard)</p>	<p><b>John XXIII:</b> Consecrated virgins as brides of Christ and brides of Holy Spirit; beauty of Bride shows forth in the baptized.</p> <p><b>Vatican II:</b> Consecrated men and women as adorning the Bride of Christ; consecrated virginity and priestly celibacy evoke the mysterious marriage of Christ and the Church to be fully manifest in the future.</p>	<p>Consecrated virgins as brides of Christ; priests' consecrated celibacy is a sign of Christ's virginal love for the Church and the fruitfulness of that union; consecrated chastity as preeminent and absolute sign of the union between Christ and the Church, the latter evoking that union more immediately than marriage</p>	<p>General usage of bridal imagery in reference to souls; consecrated women as brides of Christ in a special way; importance of spousal mysticism for consecrated women, whose natural spousal predisposition leads to particular form of maternal fruitfulness; unique capacity of feminine soul to live in mystical spousal relationship with Christ; consecrated men and women as brides of Christ through practice of evangelical counsels; ecclesial witness of consecrated as at heart of Church and as living image of the Church; consecrated have more direct participation in spousal union with Christ and realize to the greatest extent the identity of the Church as Bride of Christ; bishops and priests configured to Christ the Bridegroom; only men given the task to be icon of Bridegroom in sacramental ministry; invitation to consecrated to recall presence of Christ the Bridegroom; everyone called to be bride, to accept and respond to Christ's love; gift of freedom is fulfilled in unreserved self-giving</p>

	Leo XIII – Pius XI	Pius XII	John XXIII – Vatican II	Paul VI	John Paul II
Mary	<p><b>Leo XIII:</b> Mary's (bridal) consent as representative for all mankind in its union (connubium) with Christ; Mary as bridal (implicit).</p> <p><b>Pius X:</b> Mary in service to Church as Bride; Mary as bridal.</p> <p><b>Benedict XV:</b> Mary in service to Church as Bride;</p> <p><b>Pius XI:</b> reference to Mary as bride</p>	<p>Mary as fulfillment of union between Christ and woman understood broadly; Mary as feminine ideal b/c of her special union with Christ; Mary as Bride of the Holy Spirit; Mary as Bride of the Father (see John Damascene); Mary as, implicitly, the Bride of Christ as bride of Song of Songs</p>	<p><b>John XXIII:</b> Mary as Bride of Paraclete.</p> <p><b>Vatican II:</b> Mary as type of Church, virgin and mother; Mary as assisting the Bride of Christ to reach her perfection and become more like the Bridegroom; Mary has reached the immaculate perfection cited in Eph 5:27; the Church as Bride keeps faith "whole and entire" like the virgin Mary; Mary never described explicitly as Bride of Christ though there is an implicit openness to such attribution</p>	<p>Parallel between Mary and Church; Mary as type, ideal figure, and model of the Church; reference to "same symbols" used to describe Mary and the Church in the tradition; Mary as bride of Holy Spirit; Mary as most excellent model and example of interior disposition of Church as Bride; Immaculate Conception as beginning of spotless Bride; Mary as fulfillment of Church's future as Bride</p>	<p>Various terms used to show parallel between Mary and the Church; Mary as bride of Holy Spirit; Mary as bride in general terms; Mary's spousal receptivity; model of bride and mother; Church learns to be totally dedicated Bride from Mary; Mary as immaculata is beginning and figure of Church-Bride; Mary as personifying in herself the perfect bride as New Israel and Daughter of Zion; Mary as expressive of Church's essence as Bride and Mother; Marian profile of Church as decisive content of conciliar renewal. CCC: Mary as New Eve and Bride of Lamb</p>

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- . Encyclical Letter *Immortale Dei* (November 1, 1885). LA 5, 118-50.
- . Encyclical Letter *Iampridem* (January 6, 1886). LA 6, 3-15.
- . Encyclical Letter *Quod multum* (August 22, 1886). LA 6, 146-61.
- . Apostolic Letter *Humanae salutis auctor* (September 1, 1886). LA 6, 164-79.

- Leo XIII (*cont.*). Encyclical Letter *Officio sanctissimo* (December 22, 1887). LA 7, 219-243.
- . Apostolic Letter *Angelorum et Sanctorum* (January 22, 1888). LA 8, 67-85. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *In plurimis* (May 5, 1888). LA 8, 169-92. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Libertas* (June 20, 1888). LA 8, 212-46.
- . Encyclical Letter *Exeunte iam anno* (December 25, 1888). LA 8, 393-411. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Quamquam pluries* (August 15, 1889). LA 9, 175-82.
- . Encyclical Letter *Sapientiae Christianae* (January 10, 1890). LA 10, 10-41.
- . Apostolic Letter *Viris morum santitate* (February 9, 1890). LA 10, 71-79.
- . Encyclical Letter *Dall'alto dell'Apostolico Seggio* (October 15, 1890). LA 10, 247-67.
- . Encyclical Letter *Catholicae Ecclesiae* (November 20, 1890). LA 10, 312-18.
- . Motu Proprio *Ut mysticam Sponsam Christi* (March 14, 1891). LA 11, 60-66. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891). LA 11, 97-144.
- . Encyclical Letter *Pastoralis* (June 25, 1891). LA 11, 207-15.
- . Encyclical Letter *Pastoralis officii* (September 12, 1891). LA 11, 283-89.
- . Encyclical Letter *Octobri mense* (September 22, 1891). LA 11, 299-315. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Quo magis fidelium* (May 16, 1892). LA 12, 128-29.
- . Encyclical Letter *Custodi di quella fede* (December 8, 1892). LA 12, 331-43.
- . Apostolic Letter *Humani generis* (February 3, 1893). LA 13, 29-33.
- . Apostolic Letter *Sapientissimo Dei consilio* (March 4, 1893). LA 13, 60-69.
- . Encyclical Letter *Providentissimus Deus* (November 18, 1893). LA 13, 326-64.
- . Encyclical Letter *Caritatis* (March 19, 1894). LA 14, 65-80.
- . Apostolic Letter *In sublimi* (May 10, 1894). LA 14, 151-63.

- Leo XIII (*cont.*). Apostolic Letter *Praeclara gratulationis* (June 20, 1894). LA 14, 195-214.
- . Apostolic Letter *Orientalium dignitatis* (November 30, 1894). LA 14, 358-70. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Christi nomen* (December 24, 1894). LA 14, 405-9.
- . Encyclical Letter *Longinqua* (January 6, 1895). LA 15, 3-21.
- . Apostolic Letter *Amantissimae voluntatis* (April 14, 1895). LA 15, 138-55. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Provida matris caritate* (May 5, 1895). LA 15, 184-88.
- . Apostolic Letter *Unitatis Christianae* (June 11, 1895). LA 15, 229-36.
- . Encyclical Letter *Adiutricem* (September 5, 1895). LA 15, 300-12. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Cum sicut* (September 24, 1895). LA 15, 335-37.
- . Apostolic Letter *Magni commemoratio eventus* (January 8, 1896). LA 16, 16-20.
- . Encyclical Letter *Insignes* (May 1, 1896). LA 16, 107-19.
- . Encyclical Letter *Satis cognitum* (June 29, 1896). LA 16, 157-208. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Apostolicae curae* (September 13, 1896). LA 16, 258-75.
- . Encyclical Letter *Fidentem piumque animum* (September 20, 1896). LA 16, 278-87.
- . Apostolic Constitution *Officiorum ac munerum* (January 25, 1897). LA 17, 17-22.
- . Encyclical Letter *Divinum illud munus* (May 9, 1897). LA 17, 125-48. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Dilectus* (May 27, 1897). LA 17, 149-70. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Hoc mandatum* (May 27, 1897). LA 17, 171-90. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Affari vos* (December 8, 1897). LA 17, 336-45.
- . Apostolic Letter *Quum nobis* (June 17, 1898). LA 18, 65-71.
- . Encyclical Letter *Caritatis studium* (July 25, 1898). LA 18, 101-13.
- . Letter *Testem benevolentiae nostrae* (January 22, 1899). LA 19, 5-20. \*\*



Leo XIII (*cont.*). Apostolic Letter *Properante ad exitum saeculo* (May 11, 1899). LA 19, 62-70.

———. Encyclical Letter *Depuis le jour* (September 8, 1899). LA 19, 157-90. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Nulla unquam aetate* (April 18, 1900). LA 20, 52-58. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Antequam Christus* (May 24, 1900). LA 20, 108-33.

———. Apostolic Letter *Temporis quidem sacri* (December 25, 1900). LA 20, 352-62.

———. Apostolic Letter *Annum ingressi* (March 19, 1902). LA 22, 52-80. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Mirae caritatis* (May 28, 1902). LA 22, 115-36.

———. Apostolic Letter *Ad sinum* (July 31, 1902). LA 22, 164-66.

———. Apostolic Letter *Vigilantiae studiique memores* (October 30, 1902). LA 22, 232-38.

———. Encyclical Letter *Fin dal principio* (December 8, 1902). LA 22, 246-59.

**Pope Pius X.** Encyclical Letter *E supremi* (October 4, 1903). PA 1, 1-16.

———. Motu Proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* (November 22, 1903). PA 1, 75-87.

———. Encyclical Letter *Ad diem illum laetissimum* (February 2, 1904). PA 1, 147-66.

———. Apostolic Letter *Scripturae sanctae* (February 23, 1904). PA 1, 176-79.

———. Encyclical Letter *Iucunda sane* (March 12, 1904). PA 1, 189-213. \*\*

———. Address *Amplissimum coetum vestrum* (March 27, 1905). PA 2, 66-68. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Acerbo nimis* (April 15, 1905). PA 2, 69-84.

———. Encyclical Letter *Il fermo propositio* (June 11, 1905). PA 2, 112-32.

———. Encyclical Letter *Vehementer Nos* (February 11, 1906). PA 3, 24-39.

———. Encyclical Letter *Une fois encore* (January 6, 1907). PA 4, 7-17. \*\*

———. Address *Festivitas Dominicae Passionis* (April 15, 1907). PA 4, 26-29. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Pascendi dominici gregis* (September 8, 1907). PA 4, 47-114. \*\*

Pius X (*cont.*). Address *Relicturus Ecclesiam* (December 16, 1907). PA 4, 120-24. \*\*

———. Exhortation *Haerent animo* (August 4, 1908). PA 4, 237-64.

———. Apostolic Letter *Virginis in omne aevum nobilis* (April 11, 1909). AAS 1, 390-94.

———. Apostolic Letter *Omnipotens ac misericors Dominus* (April 11, 1909). AAS 1, 394-401.

———. Apostolic Letter *Divinus Magister* (April 11, 1909). AAS 1, 477-82. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Communium rerum* (April 21, 1909). AAS 1, 333-88. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Ineffabili Dei providentia* (May 20, 1909). AAS 1, 637-53. \*\*

———. Motu Proprio *Id praeclaro* (May 26, 1909). AAS 1, 445-46.

———. Motu Proprio *Sacrorum antistitum* (September 1, 1909). AAS 2, 655-80. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Editae saepe* (May 26, 1910). AAS 2, 357-80. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Lacrimabili statu* (June 7, 1912). AAS 4, 521-25. \*\*

———. Motu Proprio *Cum omnes Catholicos* (August 15, 1912). AAS 4, 526-27.

———. Address *Il grave dolore* (May 27, 1914). AAS 6, 260-62.

———. Address *Ex quo postremum* (May 25, 1914). AAS 6, 253-57. \*\*

———. Letter *Si unquam* (June 29, 1914). AAS 6, 374-75. \*\*

**Pope Benedict XV.** Exhortation *Ubi primum* (September 8, 1914). AAS 6, 501-2.

———. Address *Convocare vos* (January 22, 1915). AAS 7, 33-36.

———. Apostolic Constitution *Incrumentum altaris* (August 10, 1915). AAS 7, 401-4.

———. Apostolic Letter *Cum Catholicae Ecclesiae* (April 15, 1916). AAS 8, 137-38.

———. Apostolic Letter *Cum divinus Redemptor* (April 27, 1916). AAS 8, 139-40.

———. Motu Proprio *Dei providentis* (May 1, 1917). AAS 9.1, 529-31.

———. Bull *Providentissima Mater* (May 27, 1917). AAS 9.2, 5-8.

- Benedict XV (*cont.*). *Professio Catholicae Fidei* (May 27, 1917). AAS 9.2, 9-10.
- . Apostolic Letter *Caelestes Ecclesiae* (June 9, 1918). AAS 10, 310-11.
- . Encyclical Letter *In hac tanta* (May 14, 1919). AAS 11, 209-221.
- . Apostolic Constitution *Praeclara gesta* (March 21, 1920). AAS 12, 265-67.
- . Decretal Letter *Non sine providentissimo* (May 13, 1920). AAS 12, 474-86.
- . Decretal Letter *Ecclesiae consuetudo* (May 13, 1920). AAS 12, 486-514. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Sedis huius Apostolicae* (May 14, 1920). AAS 12, 317-20. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Pacem, Dei munus pulcherrimum* (May 23, 1920). AAS 12, 209-18.
- . Motu Proprio *Bonum sane* (July 25, 1920). AAS 12, 313-17.
- . Encyclical Letter *Spiritus Paraclitus* (September 15, 1920). AAS 12, 385-422. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *In praeclara summorum* (April 30, 1921). AAS 13, 209-17. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Fausto appetente die* (June 29, 1921). AAS 13, 329-35. \*\*
- Pope Pius XI.** Motu Proprio *Romanarum Pontificum* (May 3, 1922). AAS 14, 321-26.
- . Homily *Accipietis virtutem* (June 4, 1922). AAS 14, 344-48. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Officiorum omnium* (August 1, 1922). AAS 14, 449-58.
- . Apostolic Letter *Meditantibus nobis* (December 3, 1922). AAS 14, 627-34. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Ubi arcano Dei consilio* (December 23, 1922). AAS 14, 673-700. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Fin dal primo momento* (December 23, 1922). AAS 15, 5-26. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Rerum omnium perturbationem* (January 26, 1923). AAS 15, 49-63.
- . Encyclical Letter *Studiorum ducem* (June 29, 1923). AAS 15, 309-26.
- . Encyclical Letter *Ecclesiam Dei* (November 12, 1923). AAS 15, 573-82.
- . Apostolic Constitution *Infinita Dei* (May 29, 1924). AAS 16, 209-15.

Pius XI (*cont.*). Apostolic Consitution *Umbratilem remotamque* (July 8, 1924). AAS 16, 385-90. \*\*

———. Apostolic Constitution *Si unquam alias* (July 15, 1924). AAS 16, 309-16.

———. Apostolic Letter *Adolevit martyrum* (May 10, 1925). AAS 17, 235-38. \*\*

———. Decretal Letter *Vehementer exsultamus* (May 17, 1925). AAS 17, 337-48. \*\*

———. Homily *Benedictus Deus* (May 17, 1925). AAS 17, 211-14. \*\*

———. Decretal Letter *Misericordiarum Deus* (May 21, 1925). AAS 17, 349-65.

———. Homily *Ecclesiam sanctam* (May 21, 1925). AAS 17, 215-18. \*\*

———. Decretal Letter *Christi nomen* (May 31, 1925). AAS 17, 465-81. \*\*

———. Decretal Letter *Hoc sacro anno* (May 31, 1925). AAS 17, 482-97. \*\*

———. Homily *Praeclaram Nobis* (May 31, 1925). AAS 17, 223-25. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *E Christi latere* (July 5, 1925). AAS 17, 366-69. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Quas primas* (December 11, 1925). AAS 17, 593-610. \*\*

———. Address *Iam annus* (December 14, 1925). AAS 17, 633-47. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Rerum ecclesiae* (February 28, 1926). AAS 18, 65-83. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Christianae caritatis* (May 23, 1926). AAS 18, 220-24. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Rite expiatis* (April 30, 1926). AAS 18, 153-75.

———. Apostolic Letter *Consummata in brevi* (May 30, 1926). AAS 18, 267-71. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Die vicesima septima* (August 24, 1926). AAS 18, 379-81. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Teterrima ac miseranda* (October 17, 1926). AAS 18, 415-25. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Iniquis afflictisque* (November 18, 1926). AAS 18, 465-77. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Mortalium animos* (January 6, 1928). AAS 20, 5-16. \*\*

———. Letter *Ecclesia mater* (April 10, 1928). AAS 20, 228-29.

- Pius XI (*cont.*). Encyclical Letter *Miserentissimus Redemptor* (May 8, 1928). AAS 20, 165-78.
- . Encyclical Letter *Rerum orientalium* (September 8, 1928). AAS 20, 277-88. \*\*
- . Motu Proprio *Quod maxime* (September 30, 1928). AAS 20, 309-15.
- . Apostolic Letter *Decor Carmeli* (June 9, 1929). AAS 21, 473-77. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Quinquagesimo ante* (December 23, 1929). AAS 21, 707-22.
- . Encyclical Letter *Divini illius Magistri* (December 31, 1929). AAS 21, 723-62. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Ad salutem humani* (April 20, 1930). AAS 22, 201-34. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Hispana terra* (June 22, 1930). AAS 22, 371-80. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Militantem Ecclesiam* (June 29, 1930). AAS 22, 497-509. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Lux illa* (June 29, 1930). AAS 22, 593-604. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Casti connubii* (December 31, 1930). AAS 22, 539-92. \*\*
- . Radio Message *Ed ora* (February 12, 1931). AAS 23, 65-70. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931). AAS 23, 177-228.
- . Encyclical Letter *Non abbiamo bisogno* (June 29, 1931). AAS 23, 285-312.
- . Encyclical Letter *Lux veritatis* (December 25, 1931). AAS 23, 493-517. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Caritate Christi compulsi* (May 3, 1932). AAS 24, 177-94. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Christo pastorum Principi* (June 11, 1932). AAS 24, 289-92.
- . Apostolic Letter *Bonus Pastor* (April 30, 1933). AAS 25, 295-99. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Mirabilis Deus* (May 7, 1933). AAS 25, 300-3. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Crucifixi Domini Nostri* (May 14, 1933). AAS 25, 363-67.
- . Decretal Letter *Quidquid Immaculatae* (December 8, 1933). AAS 26, 73-85. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Sub salutiferae Crucis* (January 14, 1934). AAS 26, 417-28. \*\*

- Pius XI (*cont.*). Decretal Letter *Nihil maius* (March 4, 1934). AAS 26, 529-42. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Misericordiarum Patri* (March 11, 1934). AAS 26, 609-21.
- . Decretal Letter *Geminata laetitia* (April 1, 1934). AAS 27, 281-95. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Tuitioni atque* (May 10, 1934). AAS 26, 292-96. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Saevius agitata fluctibus* (May 19, 1935). AAS 28, 185-204. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* (December 20, 1935). AAS 28, 5-53. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Vigilanti cura* (June 29, 1936). AAS 28, 249-63.
- . Encyclical Letter *Divini Redemptoris* (March 19, 1937). AAS 29, 65-106.
- . Encyclical Letter *Mit brennender sorge* (March 14, 1937). AAS 29, 145-67. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Firmissimam constantiam* (March 28, 1937). AAS 29, 189-99.
- . Decretal Letter *Ex aperto Christi latere* (April 17, 1938). AAS 30, 357-69. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Sanctorum Mater Ecclesia* (April 17, 1938). AAS 30, 369-80.
- . Apostolic Letter *Anno millesimo* (November 20, 1938). AAS 31, 16-20. \*\*
- . Motu Proprio *Qua cura* (December 8, 1938). AAS 30, 410-13.
- Pope Pius XII. Homily *Quoniam Paschalia Sollemnia* (April 9, 1939). AAS 31, 145-51.
- . Audience Addresses to Newly Married Couples (April 26, 1939 – May 12, 1943).  
DR 1 – 5.  
*Select addresses follow:*
- Address *La vostra presenza* (April 26, 1939). DR 1, 69-70. \*\*
- Address *Con particolare benevolenza* (November 8, 1939). DR 1, 367-71. \*\*
- Address *Recentemente uniti* (December 6, 1939). DR 1, 413-15. \*\*
- Address *La prima parole* (October 23, 1940). DR 2, 285-88. \*\*
- Address *Voi siete* (November 6, 1940). DR 2, 297-302.
- Address *Fra le innumerevoli* (January 15, 1941). DR 2, 375-79. \*\*
- Address *Grande conforto* (February 12, 1941). DR 2, 397-402. \*\*
- Address *Il mistero della paternità* (March 19, 1941). DR 3, 17-23. \*\*
- Address *Quante volte* (August 13, 1941). DR 3, 177-80. \*\*
- Address *Quando alcuni* (September 10, 1941). DR 3, 191-97. \*\*

Address *La gradita* (January 21, 1942). DR 3, 353-58. \*\*  
 Address *Una parola* (March 25, 1942). DR 4, 11-17. \*\*  
 Address *Gran fonte* (April 15, 1942). DR 4, 37-41. \*\*  
 Address *A un alto concetto* (April 22, 1942). DR 4, 45-49. \*\*  
 Address *Quando, diletti* (April 29, 1942). DR 4, 53-57. \*\*  
 Address *Il fiorire* (May 5, 1943). DR 5, 53-60. \*\*  
 Address *Tutte le famiglie* (May 12, 1943). DR 5, 63-69. \*\*

Pius XII (*cont.*). Address *In questo giorno* (June 2, 1939). DR 1, 149-55. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Magno et excellenti* (June 18, 1939). AAS 31, 252-57. \*\*

———. Address *Particolarmente gradite* (October 2, 1939). DR 1, 331-36. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Summi pontificatus* (October 20, 1939). AAS 31, 413-53. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Sertum laetitiae* (November 1, 1939). AAS 31, 635-44.

———. Apostolic Letter *Iam recolendae* (November 9, 1939). AAS 31, 670-74. \*\*

———. Decretal Letter *Sanctitudinis culmen* (May 2, 1940). AAS 33, 97-109. \*\*

———. Address *Ammirevole spettacolo* (May 5, 1940). AAS 32, 181-88. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Nosti profecto* (June 6, 1940). AAS 32, 289-96. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Saeculo exeunte octavo* (June 13, 1940). AAS 32, 249-60. \*\*

———. Address *Quarantun anno fa* (June 19, 1940). DR 2, 147-51. \*\*

———. Address *Se a temperare* (September 4, 1940). AAS 32, 362-72. \*\*

———. Radio Message *We are* (October 19, 1940). AAS 32, 424-27. \*\*

———. Radio Message *En este solemne día* (October 27, 1940). AAS 32, 429-32. \*\*

———. Address *In questa vibrante* (November 10, 1940). DR 2, 305-13. \*\*

———. Address *Grazie, Venerabili Fratelli* (December 24, 1940). AAS 33, 5-14. \*\*

———. Radio Message *Di cuore inviamo* (April 13, 1941). AAS 33, 112-17. \*\*

———. Radio Message *La solennità della Pentecoste* (June 1, 1941). AAS 33, 195-205.

- Pius XII (*cont.*). Address *La grandissima solennità* (June 1, 1941). DR 3, 99-103. \*\*
- . Radio Message *In questa solennità* (June 29, 1941). AAS 33, 319-25.
- . Address *Davanti a questa* (October 26, 1941). DR 3, 225-35. \*\*
- . Radio Message *Es siempre una fecha grande* (November 9, 1941). AAS 33, 439-43.
- . Apostolic Letter *Caritas in humilitate* (December 7, 1941). AAS 33, 483-90. \*\*
- . Radio Message *Nell'alba e nella luce* (December 24, 1941). AAS 34, 10-21. \*\*
- . Address *Gratissima* (February 17, 1942). AAS 34, 137-47. \*\*
- . Radio Message *Circondati dal concorso fedele* (May 13, 1942). AAS 34, 154-67. \*\*
- . Address *Lasciate, dilette figli* (May 14, 1942). AAS 34, 167-71. \*\*
- . Address *Di anno in anno* (December 24, 1942). AAS 35, 5-8. \*\*
- . Radio Message *Con sempre buona freschezza* (December 24, 1942). AAS 35, 9-24.
- . Address *Tutte le famiglie* (May 12, 1943). DR 5, 63-69. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Mystici corporis* (June 29, 1943). AAS 35, 193-248. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Divino afflante Spiritu* (September 30, 1943). AAS 35, 297-325.
- . Decretal Letter *Maxima inter munera* (November 19, 1943). AAS 36, 33-40. \*\*
- . Address *Una tradizionale* (December 24, 1943). AAS 36, 5-11. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Orientalis Ecclesiae* (April 9, 1944). AAS 36, 129-44.
- . Apostolic Letter *Dilecti Fili* (June 16, 1944). AAS 36, 238-43. \*\*
- . Address *In questa vigilia* (December 24, 1944). AAS 37, 5-10. \*\*
- . Radio Message *Benignitas et humanitas* (December 24, 1944). AAS 37, 10-23.
- . Pastoral Instruction *In meno di un anno* (n.d.; date published February 28, 1945). AAS 37, 33-43. \*\*
- . Address *Dacchè piacque* (October 2, 1945). DR 7, 201-10. \*\*



- Pius XII (*cont.*). Encyclical Letter *Orientalis omnes Ecclesias* (December 23, 1945). AAS 38, 33-63.
- . Address *Negli ultimi dei anni* (December 24, 1945). AAS 38, 15-25.
- . Decretal Letter *Spiritus Domini* (July 7, 1946). AAS 39, 41-54. \*\*
- . Radio Message *Venerable Brethren* (October 26, 1946). DR 8, 283-89. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Veritatis Magister* (October 27, 1946). AAS 39, 25-31.
- . Address *Riceverete la virtù* (November 27, 1946). AAS 39, 307-11. \*\*
- . Address *Una indicibile commozione* (December 22, 1946). AAS 39, 5-7. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia* (February 2, 1947). AAS 39, 114-24. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Christiani palmarum martyrii* (April 27, 1947). AAS 40, 26-32. \*\*
- . Address *Con viva commozione* (April 28, 1947). AAS 39, 352-58. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Gaudio exultat* (June 22, 1947). AAS 41, 45-57.
- . Decretal Letter *Dei Ecclesia* (July 6, 1947). AAS 41, 637-49. \*\*
- . Homily *Quisquis rerum eventus* (July 6, 1947). AAS 39, 282-85. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Deus humilium* (July 27, 1947). AAS 41, 385-86. \*\*
- . Chirograph *We have just received* (August 26, 1947). AAS 39, 380-82.
- . Address *Conforto, letizia* (September 7, 1947). DR 9, 213-220. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Divini Redemptoris* (November 9, 1947). AAS 40, 314-19. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947). AAS 39, 521-95. \*\*
- . Radio Message *La festività Natalizia* (December 24, 1947). AAS 40, 8-16.
- . Address *La solennità della Risurrezione* (March 28, 1948). AAS 40, 137-39. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Bis saeculari* (September 27, 1948). AAS 40, 393-402.
- . Radio Message *Gravi ed ad un tempo* (December 24, 1948). AAS 41, 5-15. \*\*

- Pius XII (*cont.*). Address *Ancora una volta* (February 20, 1949). AAS 41, 74-76.
- . Homily *Quotiescumque Ecclesia* (March 15, 1949). AAS 41, 212-14. \*\*
- . Exhortation *Il santo tempo* (March 23, 1949). AAS 41, 182-87.
- . Address *C'est Dieu lui-meme* (May 17, 1949). AAS 41, 286-91. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Inter turbida* (May 15, 1949). AAS 42, 521-34. \*\*
- . Homily *Quod S. Cyprianus* (June 12, 1949). AAS 41, 306-8. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Decessorum Nostrorum* (July 10, 1949). AAS 41, 340-45.
- . Apostolic Exhortation *Sollemnibus documentis* (November 8, 1949). AAS 41, 529-30.
- . Radio Message *Non mai forse* (December 23, 1949). AAS 42, 121-33.
- . Apostolic Letter *Quandoquidem* (February 5, 1950). AAS 42, 182-87. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Quae a veridico Vate* (February 19, 1950). AAS 42, 237-42. \*\*
- . Homily *Dum Divinum Redemptorem* (April 9, 1950). AAS 42, 279-82.
- . Apostolic Letter *Quod ait Sanctus Bonaventura* (May 15, 1950). AAS 42, 631-32.
- . Decretal Letter *Ecclesiae alumni* (May 18, 1950). AAS 43, 699-710. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Episcopus* (June 11, 1950). AAS 43, 758-68.
- . Address *Per un amoroso disegno* (June 24, 1950). AAS 42, 597-99. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Lilia spinis* (July 9, 1950). AAS 43, 413-26. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Humani generis* (August 12, 1950). AAS 42, 561-78.
- . Apostolic Exhortation *Menti nostrae* (September 23, 1950). AAS 42, 657-702.
- . Apostolic Letter *Quodsi fortitudo* (October 1, 1950). AAS 42, 719-23. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* (November 1, 1950). AAS 42, 753-73. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi* (November 21, 1950). AAS 43, 5-24. \*\*

- Pius XII (*cont.*). Radio Message *Un anno è già trascorso* (December 23, 1950). AAS 43, 49-59.
- . Encyclical Letter *Militaris virtus* (May 21, 1951). AAS 44, 181-82.
- . Encyclical Letter *Evangelii praecones* (June 2, 1951). AAS 43, 497-528.
- . Apostolic Letter *Quoniam* (June 3, 1951). AAS 43, 462-68. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Superna illa cunctis* (June 24, 1951). AAS 45, 113-24. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Sempiternus rex Christi* (September 8, 1951). AAS 43, 625-44.
- . Encyclical Letter *Ingruentium malorum* (September 15, 1951). AAS 43, 577-82.
- . Address *De qualle consolation* (October 14, 1951). AAS 43, 784-92.
- . Address *Nell'ordine della natura* (November 26, 1951). AAS 43, 855-60.
- . Radio Message *Già per la decimaterza* (December 24, 1951). AAS 44, 5-15. \*\*
- . Address *Certi, come siamo* (April 24, 1952). AAS 44, 420-24.
- . Apostolic Letter *Mitis in omnes* (May 4, 1952). AAS 44, 405-9. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Quod Christus* (May 18, 1952). AAS 44, 456-60. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Quemadmodum Christianae* (June 8, 1952). AAS 44, 522-27. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Exsul familia* (August 1, 1952). AAS 44, 649-92.
- . Encyclical Letter *Doctor mellifluus* (May 24, 1953). AAS 45, 369-84. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Fulgens corona* (September 8, 1953). AAS 45, 577-92.
- . Apostolic Constitution *Sancta mater Ecclesia* (November 21, 1953). AAS 46, 245-47.
- . Encyclical Letter *Sacra virginitas* (March 25, 1954). AAS 46, 161-91. \*\*
- . Address *Quest'ora di fulgente* (May 29, 1954). AAS 46, 307-13. \*\*
- . Address *Se le forze* (June 12, 1954). AAS 46, 358-62. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Omnium ecclesiarum* (August 15, 1954). AAS 46, 567-74.

- Pius XII (*cont.*). Apostolic Letter *Pauperem esse divitem* (November 7, 1954). AAS 47, 28-33. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Scisso e Corde Iesu* (April 17, 1955). AAS 47, 381-88. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Quasi hortus* (June 19, 1955). AAS 47, 445-51.
- . Apostolic Letter *Sacra in claustra* (January 18, 1956). AAS 48, 370-72. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Novimus vos* (January 20, 1956). AAS 48, 260-64.
- . Apostolic Constitution *Sanctorum mater* (February 29, 1956). AAS 48, 439-41.
- . Encyclical Letter *Haurietis aquas* (May 15, 1956). AAS 48, 309-53. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *E vulnerato* (October 7, 1956). AAS 48, 754-59. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Quasi mater dulcissima* (April 9, 1957). AAS 49, 818-20.
- . Encyclical Letter *Fidei donum* (April 21, 1957). AAS 49, 225-48. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Amictu variegato induta* (May 26, 1957). AAS 49, 339-44. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Le pèlerinage de Lourdes* (July 2, 1957). AAS 49, 605-19. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Miranda prorsus* (September 8, 1957). AAS 49, 765-805.
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- . Apostolic Constitution *Quasi mater dulcissima* (November 21, 1957). AAS 50, 297-99.
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- . Address *Haud mediocri* (February 11, 1958). DR 19, 747-56. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Omnigenae sanctimoniae* (April 27, 1958). AAS 50, 306-9.
- . Apostolic Constitution *Quasi mater* (May 19, 1958). AAS 51, 99-100.
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- . Apostolic Constitution *Ecclesia Sancta* (July 12, 1958). AAS 51, 319-20.

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———. Radio Message *In questa sera* (March 28, 1959). AAS 51, 241-45.

———. Decretal Letter *Materna caritatis* (April 12, 1959). AAS 51, 750-64. \*\*

———. Apostolic Exhortation *A quarantacinque anni* (April 21, 1959). AAS 51, 375-81.

———. Radio Message *Aetate hoc nostra* (April 27, 1959). AAS 51, 314-16. \*\*

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———. Encyclical Letter *Ad petri cathedram* (June 29, 1959). AAS 51, 497-531. \*\*

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———. Encyclical Letter *Princeps pastorum* (November 28, 1959). AAS 51, 833-64.

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———. Apostolic Constitution *Orientalis Ecclesiae* (December 11, 1959). AAS 52, 745-47.

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———. Radio Message *Questa della grande* (April 17, 1960). AAS 52, 369-71. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Sanctae Matri* (May 20, 1960). AAS 54, 86-87.

- John XXIII (*cont.*). Decretal Letter *Terrenas hominum* (May 26, 1960). AAS 52, 437-47.
- . Apostolic Letter *Superno die* (June 5, 1960). AAS 52, 433-37. \*\*
- . Address *La Nostra prima Pentecoste* (June 5, 1960). DMC 2, 391-402. \*\*
- . Address *È motivo* (October 25, 1960). AAS 52, 898-903. \*\*
- . Address *C'est une grande joie* (March 15, 1961). DMC 2, 169-70. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Le voci* (March 19, 1961). AAS 53, 205-13. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Ecclesia Christi* (April 10, 1961). AAS 54, 80-82.
- . Apostolic Letter *Celebrandi Concilii Oecumenici* (April 11, 1961). AAS 53, 241-42.
- . Address *C'est pour Nous* (May 3, 1961). AAS 53, 318-21.
- . Decretal Letter *Sanctorum fastis* (May 11, 1961). AAS 53, 705-14. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Animorum societas* (July 22, 1961). AAS 54, 420-22.
- . Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (May 15, 1961). AAS 53, 401-64.
- . Address *Lo svolgimento del rito* (May 21, 1961). AAS 53, 358-62.
- . Apostolic Letter *Sancta Mater Ecclesia* (June 29, 1961). AAS 53, 608-9.
- . Apostolic Letter *Quotiescumque* (June 29, 1961). AAS 53, 465-69. \*\*
- . Address *La Enciclica* (July 15, 1961). DMC 3, 647-49.
- . Apostolic Constitution *Mater Ecclesia* (September 11, 1961). AAS 54, 549-50.
- . Apostolic Letter *Il religioso* (September 29, 1961). AAS 53, 641-47.
- . Address *C'est avec une grande* (October 20, 1961). DMC 3, 466-69.
- . Encyclical Letter *Aeterna Dei sapientia* (November 11, 1961). AAS 53, 785-803. \*\*
- . Address *Laus Domini* (November 17, 1961). AAS 53, 731-33.
- . Address *Avete detto parole* (November 25, 1961). DMC 4, 60-5. \*\*

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———. Address *Iam octo mensium* (January 23, 1962). AAS 54, 97-101.

———. Apostolic Letter *Consilium* (February 2, 1962). AAS 54, 65-66. \*\*

———. Apostolic Constitution *Veterum sapientia* (February 22, 1962). AAS 54, 129-35.

———. Letter *Omnes sane* (April 15, 1962). DMC 4, 901-8. \*\*

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———. Homily *Noster omniumque animus* (May 6, 1962). AAS 54, 306-9. \*\*

———. Address *La ringraziamo* (May 13, 1962). DMC 4, 269-82. \*\*

———. Address *Le commosse* (May 15, 1962). DMC 4, 285-89.

———. Address *Il Convegno* (June 1, 1962). DMC 4, 310-15.

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———. Apostolic Letter *Appronquante Concilio* (August 6, 1962). AAS 54, 609-11. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Summi Pontificis* (September 5, 1962). AAS 54, 632-40. \*\*

———. Radio Message *La grande aspettazione* (September 11, 1962). AAS 54, 678-85.

———. Apostolic Letter *Fidei propagandae* (October 1, 1962). AAS 54, 755-57.

———. Address *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (October 11, 1962). AAS 54, 786-96. \*\*

———. Address *Sua Santità* (December 3, 1962). DMC 4, 629-31. \*\*

———. Decretal Letter *Humilitatis amator* (December 9, 1962). AAS 56, 63-73. \*\*

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———. Address *Le siamo grati* (December 23, 1962). AAS 55, 43-49.

———. Address *I voti augurali* (January 3, 1963). DMC 5, 75-79.

———. Address *Questo di oggi* (January 22, 1963). DMC 5, 363-72.

———. Address *L'anno del Concilio* (January 27, 1963). DMC 5, 96-104.

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———. Apostolic Letter *Eliquabatur veritas* (March 17, 1963). AAS 55, 305-11. \*\*

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———. Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963). AAS 55, 257-304.

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———. Address *Lo spettacolo* (May 1, 1963). DMC 5, 230-34.

———. Apostolic Exhortation *Novem per dies* (May 20, 1963). AAS 55, 440-41.

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———. Decree *Inter mirifica* (December 4, 1963). AAS 56, 145-57.

———. Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* (November 21, 1964). AAS 57, 5-71. \*\*

———. Decree *Christus Dominus* (October 28, 1965). AAS 58, 673-701.

———. Decree *Perfectae caritatis* (October 28, 1965). AAS 58, 702-12. \*\*

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———. Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem* (November 18, 1965). AAS 58, 837-64. \*\*

———. Decree *Ad gentes* (December 7, 1965). AAS 58, 947-990.



Second Vatican Council (*cont.*). Decree *Presbyterorum ordinis* (December 7, 1965). AAS 58, 991-1024. \*\*

———. Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (December 7, 1965). AAS 58, 1025-1120. \*\*

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*Select General Audience Addresses follow:*

- General Audience *Questo è un momento* (September 11, 1963). IP 1, 485.
- General Audience *La vostra visita* (November 6, 1963). IP 1, 504-5.
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- General Audience *Daremo in questa* (May 27, 1964). IP 2, 889-90.
- General Audience *Il pensiero* (September 16, 1964). IP 2, 945-47.
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- General Audience *Il tema del giorno* (January 27, 1965). IP 3, 845-47.
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- General Audience *All'odierna udienza* (June 23, 1965). IP 3, 961-65.
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- General Audience *Potremo fa Nostro* (January 5, 1966). IP 4, 692-94.
- General Audience *La vita della Chiesa* (January 12, 1966). IP 4, 698-700.
- General Audience *Siamo nella Settimana Santa* (April 6, 1966). IP 4, 739-41.
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- General Audience *Se voi, facendo* (April 27, 1966). IP 4, 760-62. \*\*
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———. Apostolic Letter *Crucis affixus* (October 27, 1963). AAS 55, 996-1001.

———. Address *Tempus iam advenit* (December 4, 1963). AAS 56, 31-40.

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———. Apostolic Exhortation *Postrema sessio* (November 4, 1965). AAS 57, 865-71. \*\*

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- . Apostolic Letter *Altissimi cantus* (December 7, 1965). AAS 58, 22-37.
- . Apostolic Constitution *Mirificus eventus* (December 7, 1965). AAS 57, 945-51. \*\*
- . Homily *Hodie Concilium* (December 7, 1965). AAS 58, 51-59.
- . Apostolic Letter *In Spiritu Sancto* (December 8, 1965). AAS 58, 18-19.
- . Address *Siamo lieti* (December 23, 1965). AAS 58, 79-83.
- . Address *Salutiamo con* (February 12, 1966). AAS 58, 218-24. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Summi Dei beneficio* (May 3, 1966). AAS 58, 337-41.
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- . Apostolic Constitution *Sanctorum mater* (April 13, 1967). AAS 59, 1030-32.
- . Message *Nous sommes* (April 24, 1967). AAS 59, 639-40. \*\*
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- . Apostolic Exhortation *Signum magnum* (May 13, 1967). AAS 59, 465-75. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* (June 24, 1967). AAS 59, 657-97. \*\*
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- . Address *Terminata felicemente* (October 8, 1967). AAS 59, 975-79.

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- . Solemn Profession of Faith *Sollemni hac Liturgia – Credo of the People of God* (June 30, 1968). AAS 60, 433-45. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Humanae vitae* (July 25, 1968). AAS 60, 481-503. \*\*
- . Address *Ancora una* (October 6, 1968). AAS 60, 715-20.
- . Apostolic Letter *Bononia felix* (October 27, 1968). AAS 60, 680-84. \*\*
- . Address *Agli auguri* (December 23, 1968). AAS 61, 34-46.
- . Decretal Letter *Admirabilis Deus* (June 22, 1969). AAS 62, 145-56. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Christi sponsa* (June 26, 1969). AAS 62, 29-30. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Pastoralis migratorum cura* (August 15, 1969). AAS 60, 601-3.
- . Apostolic Exhortation *Recurrens mensis October* (October 7, 1969). AAS 60, 649-54.
- . Homily *In quest'ora* (January 25, 1970). AAS 62, 82-88.
- . Apostolic Letter *Apostolicae caritatis* (March 19, 1970). AAS 62, 193-97.
- . Address *Questo è il momento* (April 24, 1970). AAS 62, 295-301.
- . Address *Tout d'abord* (May 4, 1970). AAS 62, 428-37.
- . Homily *Ringraziamo Iddio* (May 31, 1970). AAS 62, 482-87.
- . Decretal Letter *Christi verba* (May 31, 1970). AAS 63, 337-46. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Multiformis Sapientia Dei* (September 27, 1970). AAS 63, 185-92.
- . Homily *Noi abbiamo* (September 27, 1970). AAS 62, 590-96. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Mirabilis in Ecclesia Deus* (October 4, 1970). AAS 63, 674-82. \*\*
- . Homily *La spirituale* (October 4, 1970). AAS 62, 673-78. \*\*

- Paul VI (*cont.*). Decretal Letter *Ecclesiae filiorum* (October 25, 1970). AAS 64, 257-69.
- . Homily *La solenne canonizzazione* (October 25, 1970). AAS 62, 746-53. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Laudis canticum* (November 1, 1970). AAS 63, 527-35. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Causas matrimoniales* (March 28, 1971). AAS 63, 441-46.
- . Homily *Il momento* (May 16, 1971). AAS 63, 456-59.
- . Apostolic Letter *Sedula cura* (June 27, 1971). AAS 63, 665-69. \*\*
- . Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelica testificatio* (June 29, 1971). AAS 63, 497-526. \*\*
- . Address *Massimiliano Kolbe* (October 17, 1971). AAS 63, 818-23.
- . Address *Salute a voi* (December 23, 1971). AAS 64, 31-39.
- . Address *Poesia dovrebbe* (November 12, 1972). AAS 64, 719-24. \*\*
- . Address *Questo è* (May 6, 1973). AAS 65, 316-19.
- . Address *È una parentesi* (May 12, 1973). AAS 65, 327-30. \*\*
- . Address *C'est pour nous* (June 20, 1973). AAS 65, 378-80. \*\*
- . Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus* (February 2, 1974). AAS 66, 113-68. \*\*
- . Message *Parlo ai giovani* (February 15, 1974). AAS 66, 274-80. \*\*
- . Address *Membres et Consultants* (March 13, 1974). AAS 66, 232-34. \*\*
- . Apostolic Exhortation *Nobis in animo* (March 25, 1974). AAS 66, 177-88.
- . Apostolic Letter *Apostolorum limina* (May 23, 1974). AAS 66, 289-307.
- . Apostolic Exhortation *Paterna cum benevolentia* (December 8, 1974). AAS 67, 5-23. \*\*
- . Address *Ai vostri auguri* (December 23, 1974). AAS 67, 49-53. \*\*
- . Address *Frères bien aimés* (March 12, 1975). IP 13, 218-20. \*\*
- . Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in domino* (May 9, 1975). AAS 67, 289-322. \*\*

Paul VI (*cont.*). Address *Yes, Venerable Brothers* (September 14, 1975). AAS 67, 537-41.

———. Address *La Iglesia* (September 28, 1975). AAS 67, 573-78.

———. Apostolic Letter *Ut de latere* (November 1, 1975). AAS 67, 489-92. \*\*

———. Address *Gioia grande* (November 16, 1975). AAS 67, 713-19.

———. Address *Après plus* (January 31, 1976). AAS 68, 197-201.

———. Homily *Ad notitiam* (April 15, 1976). AAS 68, 265-69.

———. Decretal Letter *Praeclara Ordinis* (October 3, 1976). AAS 69, 129-35. \*\*

———. Homily *Chi è* (November 14, 1976). AAS 68, 717-21. \*\*

———. Address *Dopo la celebrazione* (December 20, 1976). AAS 69, 37-46.

———. Message *In spirito di cristiana* (December 30, 1976). AAS 69, 258-61. \*\*

———. Message *Il consueto* (March 29, 1977). AAS 69, 450-54.

———. Radio-Television Message *Noi raccogliamo* (March 26, 1978). AAS 70, 260-62.

———. Message *Costituisce un appuntamento* (April 23, 1978). AAS 70, 341-45.

**Pope John Paul II.** Homily *É giunto* (November 12, 1978). AAS 70, 984-88. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979). AAS 71, 257-324. \*\*

———. Letter *Novo incipiente* (April 8, 1979). AAS 71, 393-417. \*\*

———. Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* (April 15, 1979). AAS 71, 469-99.

———. Wednesday General Audience Addresses on the Theology of the Body (September 5, 1979 – November 28, 1984). IGP 2.2 – 7.2.

*Select General Audience Addresses follow:*

TOB 3, General Audience (September 19, 1979). IGP 2.2, 323-27.

TOB 9, General Audience (November 14, 1979). IGP 2.2, 1153-57. \*\*

TOB 13, General Audience (January 2, 1980). IGP 3.1, 11-15.

TOB 15, General Audience (January 16, 1980). IGP 3.1, 148-52.

TOB 16, General Audience (January 30, 1980). IGP 3.1, 218-22.

TOB 21, General Audience (March 12, 1980). IGP 3.1, 540-45. \*\*

TOB 33, General Audience (July 30, 1980). IGP 3.2, 311-14.  
 TOB 36, General Audience (August 20, 1980). IGP 3.2, 415-19. \*\*  
 TOB 37, General Audience (August 27, 1980). IGP 3.2, 451-56. \*\*  
 TOB 78, General Audience (April 14, 1982). IGP 5.1, 1176-79. \*\*  
 TOB 79, General Audience (April 21, 1982). IGP 5.1, 1270-74. \*\*  
 TOB 81, General Audience (May 5, 1982). IGP 5.2, 1405-8. \*\*  
 TOB 84, General Audience (July 7, 1982). IGP 5.3, 28-32.  
 TOB 87, General Audience (July 28, 1982). IGP 5.3, 132-35. \*\*  
 TOB 89, General Audience (August 11, 1982). IGP 5.3, 204-7. \*\*  
 TOB 90, General Audience (August 18, 1982). IGP 5.3, 245-48. \*\*  
 TOB 91, General Audience (August 25, 1982). IGP 5.3, 284-88. \*\*  
 TOB 92, General Audience (September 1, 1982). IGP 5.3, 350-54. \*\*  
 TOB 93, General Audience (September 8, 1982). IGP 5.3, 389-94. \*\*  
 TOB 94, General Audience (September 15, 1982). IGP 5.3, 459-63. \*\*  
 TOB 95, General Audience (September 22, 1982). IGP 5.3, 517-22. \*\*  
 TOB 95b, General Audience (September 29, 1982). IGP 5.3, 626-30. \*\*  
 TOB 96, General Audience (October 6, 1982). IGP 5.3, 697-701. \*\*  
 TOB 97, General Audience (October 13, 1982). IGP 5.3, 810-14. \*\*  
 TOB 98, General Audience (October 20, 1982). IGP 5.3, 857-61. \*\*  
 TOB 99, General Audience (October 27, 1982). IGP 5.3, 936-39. \*\*  
 TOB 101, General Audience (December 1, 1982). IGP 5.3, 1485-90. \*\*  
 TOB 102, General Audience (December 15, 1982). IGP 5.3, 1602-6. \*\*  
 TOB 104, General Audience (January 12, 1983). IGP 6.1, 100-4. \*\*  
 TOB 106, General Audience (January 26, 1983). IGP 6.1, 247-49. \*\*  
 TOB 108, General Audience (May 23, 1984). IGP 7.1, 1471-75. \*\*  
 TOB 117b, General Audience (July 4, 1984). IGP 7.2, 7-10. \*\*  
 TOB 133, General Audience (November 28, 1984). IGP 7.2, 1316-20.

John Paul II (*cont.*). Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae* (October 16, 1979).  
 AAS 71, 1277-1340.

———. Homily *Desidero oggi* (June 30, 1979). AAS 71, 909-13. \*\*

———. Homily *Missus est Angelus* (October 21, 1979). AAS 71, 1395-1400. \*\*

———. Address *Ecce quam bonum* (November 9, 1979). AAS 71, 1457-61. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Patres Ecclesiae* (January 2, 1980). AAS 72, 5-23. \*\*

———. Homily *Con questo* (January 6, 1980). AAS 72, 68-71. \*\*

———. Homily *En cet instant* (January 31, 1980). AAS 72, 160-69. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Dominicae cenae* (February 24, 1980). AAS 72, 113-48. \*\*



- John Paul II (*cont.*). Homily *Summo cum gaudio* (March 24, 1980). AAS 72, 675-80. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Amantissima providentia* (April 29, 1980). AAS 72, 569-81. \*\*
- . Address *L'émotion et la joie* (May 3, 1980). AAS 72, 424-30. \*\*
- . Address *Rendons grâce* (May 3, 1980). AAS 72, 440-48. \*\*
- . Address *C'est une très grande joie* (May 30, 1980). AAS 72, 695-702. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Sanctorum altrix* (July 11, 1980). AAS 72, 777-91. \*\*
- . Homily *Non dimentichiamo* (September 14, 1980). AAS 72, 995-1002. \*\*
- . Homily *Expedit, ut laborum* (September 26, 1980). AAS 72, 1007-11. \*\*
- . Homily *Audivimus modo* (October 25, 1980). AAS 72, 1072-85. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Dives in misericordia* (November 30, 1980). AAS 72, 1177-1232. \*\*
- . Address *I bless* (February 17, 1981). AAS 73, 304-9. \*\*
- . Homily *Four hundred years* (February 17, 1981). AAS 73, 309-14. \*\*
- . Homily *Finding myself* (February 19, 1981). AAS 73, 362-67. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *A Concilio Constantinopolitano I* (March 25, 1981). AAS 73, 513-27. \*\*
- . Homily *Oggi è un giorno* (October 4, 1981). AAS 73, 662-68. \*\*
- . Address *You have formed* (October 5, 1981). AAS 73, 700-3. \*\*
- . Address *After a long period* (October 9, 1981). AAS 73, 706-9. \*\*
- . Letter *Virtutis exemplum* (October 14, 1981). AAS 73, 692-700. \*\*
- . Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981). AAS 74, 81-191. \*\*
- . Address *Sono lieto* (November 28, 1981). AAS 74, 205-8. \*\*
- . Address *Ringrazio anzitutto* (December 22, 1981). AAS 74, 294-308. \*\*

- John Paul II (*cont.*). Apostolic Letter *Pia Mater* (January 4, 1982). AAS 74, 534-37. \*\*
- . Address *Sono lieto* (January 28, 1982). AAS 74, 449-54. \*\*
- . Address *Sono particolarmente* (February 27, 1982). AAS 74, 551-65. \*\*
- . Letter *A ministerii nostri* (March 25, 1982). AAS 74, 521-31. \*\*
- . Address *La grâce di Seigneur* (March 26, 1982). AAS 74, 694-702. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Sicut mater* (May 23, 1982). AAS 74, 1208-10. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Dei contuitum* (May 23, 1982). AAS 86, 473-76. \*\*
- . Sacred Consistory (May 24, 1982). AAS 74, 757-59. \*\*
- . Address *Grande è la mia gioia* (September 26, 1982). AAS 74, 1241-46. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Amores duo* (October 31, 1982). AAS 79, 233-37. \*\*
- . Homily *Venite, vedete* (October 31, 1982). AAS 75, 19-25. \*\*
- . Address *L'imminenza del Natale* (December 23, 1982). AAS 75, 207-18. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Aperite portas Redemptori* (January 6, 1983). AAS 75, 89-106. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Divinus Perfectionis Magister* (January 25, 1983). AAS 75, 349-55. \*\*
- . Address *Con profunda alegría* (March 3, 1983). AAS 75, 703-7. \*\*
- . Address *Cette réunion* (April 30, 1983). AAS 75, 652-58. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Inde ab ipsis* (June 20, 1983). AAS 79, 1264-68. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Id habet Ecclesia* (June 22, 1983). AAS 77, 461-63.
- . Address *It is a real joy* (September 24, 1983). AAS 76, 123-28. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Confiteor tibi* (November 13, 1983). AAS 77, 5-8. \*\*
- . Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* (March 25, 1984). AAS 76, 513-46. \*\*
- . Homily *Frères et Soeurs* (September 11, 1984). AAS 77, 397-405. \*\*

- John Paul II (*cont.*). Homily *Wisdom speaks* (September 15, 1984). AAS 77, 411-17. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Sacerdotalis usquequaque* (September 30, 1984). AAS 77, 931-35.
- . Apostolic Letter *O anima* (November 25, 1984). AAS 79, 1268-73. \*\*
- . Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et paenitentia* (December 2, 1984). AAS 77, 185-275.
- . Apostolic Letter *Dilecti amici* (March 31, 1985). AAS 77, 579-628. \*\*
- . Address *Sacrum Consistorum* (May 25, 1985). AAS 77, 683-88.
- . Encyclical Letter *Slavorum apostoli* (June 2, 1985). AAS 77, 779-813.
- . Apostolic Constitution *Mense Ianuario* (August 3, 1985). AAS 77, 1019-20.
- . Apostolic Letter *Qui autem perseveraverit* (August 15, 1985). AAS 84, 1112-15.
- . Address *Grazia a voi* (January 2, 1986). AAS 78, 454-57. \*\*
- . Address *Con grande gioia* (January 24, 1986). AAS 78, 725-29. \*\*
- . Address *È per me una grande gioia* (January 30, 1986). AAS 78, 921-25. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Si quis vult* (February 8, 1986). AAS 83, 457-59. \*\*
- . Homily *These words* (February 9, 1986). AAS 78, 771-77. \*\*
- . Address *I extend* (March 10, 1986). AAS 78, 1037-38. \*\*
- . Address *Pace a voi* (May 2, 1986). AAS 78, 1156-63. \*\*
- . Message *On the occasion* (May 14, 1986). AAS 79, 204-6. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Dominum et vivificantem* (May 18, 1986). AAS 78, 809-900. \*\*
- . Address *Dans les visites* (June 14, 1986). AAS 78, 1309-13. \*\*
- . Address *No os llamo* (July 5, 1986). AAS 79, 80-87. \*\*
- . Wednesday General Audience Addresses on the Apostle's Creed: Jesus Christ (August 27, 1986 – April 19, 1989). IGP 9.2 – 12.1.

*Select General Audience Addresses follow:*

General Audience (September 9, 1987). IGP 10.3, 337-41. \*\*

General Audience (April 27, 1988). IGP 11.1, 1043-48. \*\*

General Audience (July 23, 1988). IGP 11.3, 157-62. \*\*

General Audience (August 31, 1988). IGP 11.3, 490-95.

John Paul II (*cont.*). Apostolic Letter *Augustinum Hipponensem* (August 28, 1986). AAS 79, 137-70.

———. Address *Viva gioia* (February 5, 1987). AAS 79, 1453-59. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987). AAS 79, 361-433. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Si mundus* (March 29, 1987). AAS 80, 360-64. \*\*

———. Address *El Señor* (April 1, 1987). AAS 80, 134-39. \*\*

———. Letter *Hymno dicto* (April 13, 1987). AAS 79, 1285-95.

———. Apostolic Letter *Si vos manseritis* (May 1, 1987). AAS 82, 645-49. \*\*

———. Homily *In verita* (May 10, 1987). AAS 79, 1295-1301. \*\*

———. Address *Autour des membres* (May 29, 1987). AAS 79, 1498-1503. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Sescentesima Anniversaria* (June 5, 1987). AAS 79, 1273-85. \*\*

———. Address *Before beginning* (September 16, 1987). AAS 80, 787-805. \*\*

———. Address *In their deepest* (September 17, 1987). AAS 80, 805-13. \*\*

———. Address *To him whose power* (September 18, 1987). AAS 80, 813-20. \*\*

———. Address *Gratias agamus* (October 29, 1987). AAS 80, 606-11.

———. Apostolic Letter *Multum facit* (November 1, 1987). AAS 80, 961-64. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Ego in medio* (November 1, 1987). AAS 81, 7-11. \*\*

———. Address *Ringrazio sinceramente* (December 22, 1987). AAS 80, 1025-34. \*\*

———. Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987). AAS 80, 513-86.

———. Homily *Quando venne* (January 1, 1988). AAS 80, 997-1001. \*\*

- John Paul II (*cont.*). Letter *Dilecte Fili* (January 31, 1988). AAS 80, 969-87.
- . Homily *Quando venne* (February 2, 1988). AAS 80, 1107-12. \*\*
- . Letter *Con viva gioia* (March 14, 1988). AAS 80, 1323-25. \*\*
- . Letter *In cenaculum* (March 25, 1988). AAS 80, 1280-91. \*\*
- . Homily *Di questo* (April 17, 1988). AAS 80, 1399-1404. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Litterae encyclicae* (May 22, 1988). AAS 80, 1639-52. \*\*
- . Homily *Essi furono* (May 22, 1988). AAS 80, 1276-80. \*\*
- . Homily *Io sono* (June 11, 1988). AAS 80, 1404-10. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Pastor bonus* (June 28, 1988). AAS 80, 841-912. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988). AAS 80, 1653-1729. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus* (April 12, 1988). AAS 81, 897-918. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Omnis anima* (June 11, 1988). AAS 81, 590-95. \*\*
- . Address *I welcome you* (October 28, 1988). AAS 81, 604-8. \*\*
- . Homily *Gesù Cristo* (November 20, 1988). AAS 81, 533-38. \*\*
- . Address *Through you* (November 26, 1988). AAS 81, 744-48. \*\*
- . Address *We are coming* (December 10, 1988). AAS 81, 766-72. \*\*
- . Address *It is with particular joy* (December 19, 1988). AAS 81, 828-30. \*\*
- . Address *Si rinnova* (December 22, 1988). AAS 81, 830-39.
- . Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988). AAS 81, 393-521. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Quo longius* (February 11, 1989). AAS 82, 644-45.
- . Address *It gives me* (February 11, 1989). AAS 81, 950-54. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Scimus autem* (April 9, 1989). AAS 82, 929-32. \*\*

John Paul II (*cont.*). Homily *Io, Giovanni* (April 9, 1989). AAS 81, 1091-95. \*\*

———. Homily *Ecco la dimora* (April 23, 1989). AAS 81, 1095-1100. \*\*

———. Wednesday General Audience Addresses on the Apostle's Creed: The Holy Spirit (April 26, 1989 – July 3, 1991). IGP 12.1 – 14.2.

*Select General Audience Addresses follow:*

General Audience (June 28, 1989). IGP 12.1, 1772-76. \*\*

General Audience (September 13, 1989). IGP 12.2, 512-16. \*\*

General Audience (September 27, 1989). IGP 12.2, 679-83. \*\*

General Audience (November 28, 1990). IGP 13.2, 1314-18. \*\*

General Audience (December 12, 1990). IGP 13.2, 1602-7. \*\*

General Audience (January 30, 1991). IGP 14.1, 234-38.

General Audience (July 3, 1991). IGP 14.2, 27-31. \*\*

———. Message *Sono passati* (May 31, 1989). AAS 81, 1331-33. \*\*

———. Address *Je suis heureux* (June 16, 1989). AAS 82, 65-70. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Qui ad iustitiam* (June 18, 1989). AAS 84, 835-38. \*\*

———. Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptoris custos* (August 15, 1989). AAS 82, 5-34. \*\*

———. Address *Queridos jóvenes* (August 20, 1989). AAS 82, 240-53. \*\*

———. Address *Con sentimientos* (October 21, 1989). AAS 82, 356-61. \*\*

———. Decretal Letter *Salus Deo nostro* (November 12, 1989). AAS 83, 113-17. \*\*

———. Address *In aula* (November 22, 1989). AAS 82, 35-36.

———. Address *Abramo credette* (March 19, 1990). AAS 82, 967-71. \*\*

———. Address *It is with great joy* (May 5, 1990). AAS 82, 1533-38. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Exaltavit humiles* (May 6, 1990). AAS 82, 853-55. \*\*

———. Address *Una mujer* (May 10, 1990). AAS 82, 1428-34. \*\*

———. Address *C'est une joie* (May 17, 1990). AAS 82, 1611-14. \*\*

———. Address *Muito me alegre* (May 21, 1990). AAS 83, 50-58. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Los caminos* (June 29, 1990). AAS 83, 22-45. \*\*

- John Paul II (*cont.*). Apostolic Letter *Schola caritatis* (August 20, 1990). AAS 83, 46-51. \*\*
- . Address *In questi giorni* (September 14, 1990). AAS 83, 345-48. \*\*
- . Address *Sejam bem-vindos* (September 29, 1990). AAS 83, 400-4. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Sacri Canones* (October 18, 1990). AAS 82, 1033-44. \*\*
- . Address *Con animo* (November 12, 1990). AAS 83, 652-57. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio* (December 7, 1990). AAS 83, 249-340. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Si quidem cunctis* (December 14, 1990). AAS 84, 117-18.
- . Letter *Maestro en la fe* (December 14, 1990). AAS 83, 561-75. \*\*
- . Address *Le sono particolarmente* (January 26, 1991). AAS 83, 938-43. \*\*
- . Address *La ringrazio* (January 28, 1991). AAS 83, 947-53.
- . Address *Saluto e ringrazio* (April 11, 1991). AAS 84, 26-32. \*\*
- . Address *Tu sei il Cristo* (April 22, 1991). AAS 84, 64-68. \*\*
- . Address *Simon Pietro* (May 8, 1991). AAS 84, 136-41. \*\*
- . Message *Dio è Amore* (May 19, 1991). AAS 84, 159-63. \*\*
- . Wednesday General Audience Addresses on the Apostle's Creed: The Church (July 10, 1991 – August 30, 1995). IGP 14.2 – 18.2.
- Select General Audience Addresses follow:*
- General Audience (September 18, 1991). IGP 14.2, 590-93. \*\*
- General Audience (November 20, 1991). IGP 14.2, 1203-6.
- General Audience (November 27, 1991). IGP 14.2, 1280-83.
- General Audience (December 4, 1991). IGP 14.2, 1307-10. \*\*
- General Audience (December 11, 1991). IGP 14.2, 1357-60. \*\*
- General Audience (December 18, 1991). IGP 14.2, 1415-18. \*\*
- General Audience (January 8, 1992). IGP 15.1, 33-36. \*\*
- General Audience (January 29, 1992). IGP 15.1, 183-87. \*\*
- General Audience (July 17, 1993). IGP 16.2, 66-71. \*\*
- General Audience (November 24, 1993). IGP 16.2, 1329-33. \*\*
- General Audience (July 27, 1994). IGP 17.2, 70-74. \*\*
- General Audience (August 3, 1994). IGP 17.2, 96-99. \*\*

General Audience (November 16, 1994). IGP 17.2, 781-85. \*\*  
General Audience (November 23, 1994). IGP 17.2, 844-48. \*\*  
General Audience (March 15, 1995). IGP 18.1, 508-12. \*\*

John Paul II (*cont.*). Address *Dio, Padre* (July 19, 1991). AAS 84, 508-12. \*\*

———. Address *It is with great joy* (August 27, 1991). AAS 84, 512-17. \*\*

———. Apostolic Constitution *Quam ipsimet* (December 21, 1991). AAS 84, 477-78.

———. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* (March 25, 1992). AAS 84, 658-804. \*\*

———. Address *Pendant cette visite* (March 28, 1992). AAS 85, 360-66. \*\*

———. Address *Paschales iam* (April 28, 1992). AAS 84, 475-76.

———. Address *Il y a plus de deux ans* (April 30, 1992). AAS 85, 481-86.

———. Apostolic Letter *Dominus pascit me* (May 17, 1992). AAS 85, 224-26. \*\*

———. Address *A tutti rivolgo* (May 24, 1992). AAS 85, 662-70. \*\*

———. Address *In these days* (May 29, 1992). AAS 85, 671-76. \*\*

———. Address *I have eagerly* (July 7, 1992). AAS 85, 695-700. \*\*

———. Address *This meeting* (July 9, 1992). AAS 85, 700-6. \*\*

———. Address *I extend* (October 2, 1992). AAS 85, 749-53. \*\*

———. Address *La Santa Chiesa* (December 7, 1992). AAS 85, 925-30. \*\*

———. Address *It is with "joy"* (February 9, 1993). AAS 85, 947-56. \*\*

———. Address *Quot cum cogitationibus* (February 25, 1993). AAS 86, 56-58.

———. Apostolic Letter *Ecce sto ad hostium* (March 20, 1993). AAS 85, 983-85. \*\*

———. Decretal Letter *Qui habet mandata* (March 21, 1993). AAS 86, 465-67. \*\*

———. Address *Au terme* (May 6, 1993). AAS 86, 318-23. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *In fine autem* (May 16, 1993). AAS 86, 218-20. \*\*



- John Paul II (*cont.*). Address *I welcome you* (June 5, 1993). AAS 86, 335-40. \*\*
- . Address *Grace to you* (June 8, 1993). AAS 86, 341-46. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Veritatis splendor* (August 6, 1993). AAS 85, 1133-1228. \*\*
- . Address *The Spirit has led you* (August 14, 1993). AAS 86, 423-26. \*\*
- . Address *I thank my God* (September 21, 1993). AAS 86, 494-99. \*\*
- . Address *With affection* (September 23, 1993). AAS 86, 499-504. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Haec est virgo* (October 10, 1993). AAS 86, 220-23. \*\*
- . Address *With great joy* (November 8, 1993). AAS 86, 656-61. \*\*
- . Address *I gladly welcome* (November 19, 1993). AAS 86, 730-35. \*\*
- . Address *With affection* (December 4, 1993). AAS 86, 753-59. \*\*
- . Letter to Families *Gratissimam sane* (February 2, 1994). AAS 86, 868-925. \*\*
- . Address *I give thanks* (March 11, 1994). AAS 87, 68-72. \*\*
- . Letter *Ci incontriamo* (March 19, 1994). AAS 86, 641-48.
- . Apostolic Letter *Infirmus fui* (May 7, 1994). AAS 88, 684-87. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* (May 22, 1994). AAS 86, 545-48.
- . Address *Seguimi!* (October 2, 1994). AAS 87, 579-87.
- . Address *With these words* (October 21, 1994). AAS 87, 621-26. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente* (November 10, 1994). AAS 87, 5-41. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Sub umbra* (November 20, 1994). AAS 88, 83-85. \*\*
- . Address *In questo incontro* (December 22, 1994). AAS 87, 839-46. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Evangelium vitae* (March 25, 1995). AAS 87, 401-522.
- . Apostolic Letter *Orientale lumen* (May 2, 1995). AAS 87, 745-74. \*\*

- John Paul II (*cont.*). Apostolic Letter *Si quis sitit* (May 7, 1995). AAS 88, 92-95. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint* (May 25, 1995). AAS 87, 921-82.
- . *Letter to Women* (June 29, 1995). AAS 87, 803-12. \*\*
- . Address *E com muito* (July 11, 1995). AAS 88, 273-81. \*\*
- . Address *Aguardei com* (September 5, 1995). AAS 88, 488-98. \*\*
- . Wednesday General Audience Addresses on Mary, the Virgin Mother of God (September 6, 1995 – November 12, 1997). IGP 18.2 – 20.2.  
*Select General Audience Addresses follow:*
- General Audience (April 24, 1996). IGP 19.1, 1070-73. \*\*
- General Audience (May 1, 1996). IGP 19.1, 1120-23. \*\*
- General Audience (May 29, 1996). IGP 19.1, 1389-92. \*\*
- General Audience (August 7, 1996). IGP 19.2, 150-53. \*\*
- General Audience (July 30, 1997). IGP 20.2, 73-75. \*\*
- General Audience (August 6, 1997). IGP 20.2, 97-99.
- General Audience (August 13, 1997). IGP 20.2, 112-14.
- General Audience (September 3, 1997). IGP 20.2, 240-43.
- General Audience (September 10, 1997). IGP 20.2, 295-97.
- . Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (September 14, 1995). AAS 88, 5-82. \*\*
- . Address *È com imensa alegria* (September 29, 1995). AAS 88, 550-59. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Ut quemadmodum* (October 29, 1995). AAS 89, 8-10. \*\*
- . Address *Continuing this series* (November 25, 1995). AAS 88, 696-701. \*\*
- . Address *Graça e paz* (January 29, 1996). AAS 88, 777-86. \*\*
- . Address *Vi accolgo* (February 16, 1996). AAS 88, 799-805. \*\*
- . Address *It gives me great joy* (February 20, 1996). AAS 88, 805-11. \*\*
- . Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata* (March 25, 1996). AAS 88, 377-486. \*\*
- . Address *It is always* (September 27, 1996). AAS 89, 124-30. \*\*

- John Paul II (*cont.*). Apostolic Letter *Ambulate in dilectione* (October 6, 1996). AAS 89, 440-42. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Dominus pascit* (November 24, 1996). AAS 91, 88-90. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Operosam diem* (December 1, 1996). AAS 89, 217-39. \*\*
- . Address *C'est avec joie* (December 7, 1996). AAS 89, 303-6. \*\*
- . Apostolic Constitution *Singulares omnino* (December 16, 1996). AAS 89, 436-37.
- . Address *Natus est hodie* (December 21, 1996). AAS 89, 459-65. \*\*
- . Message *La celebrazione* (January 6, 1997). IGP 20.1, 22-26. \*\*
- . Address *Sono lieto* (January 24, 1997). AAS 89, 482-85. \*\*
- . Address *Ancora una volta* (March 17, 1997). AAS 89, 575-78.
- . Address *As the Church continues* (April 25, 1997). AAS 90, 132-38. \*\*
- . Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Une espérance nouvelle pour le Liban* (May 10, 1997). AAS 89, 313-416. \*\*
- . Address *With heartfelt affection* (May 19, 1997). AAS 90, 204-11. \*\*
- . Message *Benedetto sia Dio* (June 4, 1997). IGP 20.1, 1413-21. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia Mariae* (June 7, 1997). AAS 89, 610-11.
- . Decretal Letter *Spiritus Domini* (June 10, 1997). AAS 90, 377-79. \*\*
- . Address *In the love* (June 14, 1997). AAS 90, 414-17. \*\*
- . Address *With fraternal affection* (October 13, 1997). AAS 90, 575-81. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Divini amoris scientia* (October 19, 1997). AAS 90, 930-44. \*\*
- . Wednesday General Audience Addresses on the Great Jubilee (November 19, 1997 – March 14, 2001). IGP 20.2 – 24.1.
- Select General Audience Addresses follow:*
- General Audience (December 17, 1997) IGP 20.2, 1026-29. \*\*
- General Audience (January 14, 1998). IGP 21.1, 106-9. \*\*
- General Audience (June 17, 1998). IGP 21.1, 1389-92. \*\*
- General Audience (July 8, 1998). IGP 21.2, 45-48.

General Audience (November 25, 1998). IGP 21.2, 1085-88. \*\*  
 General Audience (September 22, 1999). IGP 22.2, 396-99. \*\*  
 General Audience (September 29, 1999). IGP 22.2, 460-63. \*\*  
 General Audience (October 6, 1999). IGP 22.2, 555-58. \*\*  
 General Audience (October 13, 1999). IGP 22.2, 575-78. \*\*  
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 General Audience (January 19, 2000). IGP 23.1, 89-92. \*\*  
 General Audience (June 28, 2000). IGP 23.1, 1174-77. \*\*  
 General Audience (February 7, 2001). IGP 24.1, 307-9. \*\*  
 General Audience (February 14, 2001). IGP 24.1, 361-63. \*\*  
 General Audience (March 14, 2001). IGP 24.1, 517-19. \*\*

John Paul II (*cont.*). Address *Grace to you* (March 12, 1998). AAS 90, 965-71. \*\*

———. Address *Following the visits* (March 31, 1998). AAS 90, 981-87. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Veni sponsus* (May 10, 1998). AAS 91, 163-65. \*\*

———. Homily *Io, Giovanni* (May 10, 1998). AAS 91, 179-83. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* (May 31, 1998). AAS 90, 713-66. \*\*

———. Address *En ces jours* (September 17, 1998). AAS 91, 214-21.

———. Address *Benedetto dia Dio* (September 29, 1998). AAS 91, 269-73. \*\*

———. Homily *Quanto a me* (October 11, 1998). AAS 91, 246-50. \*\*

———. Address *Sono lieto* (November 20, 1998). AAS 91, 431-34.

———. Apostolic Letter (Bull) *Incarnationis mysterium* (November 29, 1998). AAS 91, 129-43. \*\*

———. Address *I warmly greet you* (December 14, 1998). AAS 91, 580-86. \*\*

———. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America* (January 22, 1999). AAS 91, 737-815.

———. Address *Com grande alegría* (March 20, 1999). AAS 91, 937-45. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter (Motu Proprio) *Sacra liturgia* (May 23, 1999). AAS 92, 89-112.

———. Address *Je suis particulièrement heureux* (June 1, 1999). AAS 91, 1038-45. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Ecce venio* (June 13, 1999). AAS 92, 32-34. \*\*

- John Paul II (*cont.*). Apostolic Letter *Supervincimus per Eum* (June 13, 1999). AAS 92, 665-70. \*\*
- . Address *With great joy* (June 26, 1999). AAS 91, 1065-72. \*\*
- . Message *Dopo anni di preparazione* (June 29, 1999). AAS 92, 51-60. \*\*
- . Address *Au moment* (August 28, 1999). AAS 91, 1119-26. \*\*
- . Address *In the love* (September 25, 1999). AAS 92, 161-65. \*\*
- . Address *En accomplissant ensemble* (September 27, 1999). AAS 92, 165-72. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter (Motu Proprio) *Spes aedificandi* (October 1, 1999). AAS 92, 220-29. \*\*
- . Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* (November 6, 1999). AAS 92, 449-528. \*\*
- . Address *Mit “der herzlichen Liebe”* (November 20, 1999). AAS 92, 249-57. \*\*
- . Address *Ogni anno* (January 21, 2000). AAS 92, 350-55. \*\*
- . Homily *A Gerusalemme* (February 2, 2000). IGP 23.1, 143-47. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Dominus Deus* (April 30, 2000). AAS 93, 585-88. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Nel tempo pasquale* (May 7, 2000). IGP 23.1, 777-89.
- . Address *Quand arriva* (June 12, 2000). AAS 92, 721-24. \*\*
- . Address *Ci benedica* (October 15, 2000). AAS 93, 88-91. \*\*
- . Address *Preparate la via* (December 10, 2000). AAS 93, 221-24. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (January 6, 2001). AAS 93, 266-309. \*\*
- . Address *Ti adoreranno* (January 6, 2001). AAS 93, 310-14. \*\*
- . Address *L’inaugurazione* (February 1, 2001). AAS 93, 358-65. \*\*
- . Homily *Vieni, Signore* (February 2, 2001). IGP 24.1, 282-85. \*\*
- . Message *Dio, meraviglioso* (February 2, 2001). AAS 93, 461-70. \*\*

John Paul II (*cont.*). Apostolic Letter *Domine, tu scis* (March 11, 2001). AAS 94, 186-88. \*\*

———. Wednesday General Audience Addresses on the Psalms and Canticles of Morning and Evening Prayer (March 28, 2001 – January 26, 2005). IGP 24.1 – 28.

*Select General Audience Addresses follow:*

General Audience (April 4, 2001). IGP 24.1, 656-59. \*\*

General Audience (May 2, 2001). IGP 24.1, 827-29. \*\*

General Audience (June 18, 2003). IGP 26.1, 957-59. \*\*

General Audience (July 16, 2003). IGP 26.2, 56-58. \*\*

General Audience (December 10, 2003). IGP 26.2, 940-42. \*\*

General Audience (September 15, 2004). IGP 27.2, 253-55. \*\*

General Audience (September 29, 2004). IGP 27.2, 312-14. \*\*

General Audience (October 6, 2004). IGP 27.2, 347-49. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Dei voluntati fideles* (April 29, 2001). AAS 94, 25-27. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Qui habet* (May 9, 2001). AAS 94, 317-18. \*\*

———. Address *Sono molto* (May 31, 2001). AAS 93, 664-67. \*\*

———. Decretal Letter *Tuis in comunione* (June 10, 2001). AAS 94, 593-95. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Secundum eum* (June 27, 2001). AAS 94, 558-60. \*\*

———. Message *A voi tutti* (September 8, 2001). AAS 94, 347-52. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Humilitas, simplicitas* (October 7, 2001). AAS 94, 321-94. \*\*

———. Homily *Ma il Figlio* (October 21, 2001). AAS 94, 192-96. \*\*

———. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania* (November 22, 2001). AAS 94, 361-428.

———. Address *Ringrazio vivamente* (January 28, 2002). AAS 94, 340-46.

———. Letter *Con animo commosso* (March 21, 2002). AAS 94, 433-44. \*\*

———. Address *Me es grato* (July 2, 2002). AAS 94, 735-40. \*\*

———. Address *E com grande* (August 31, 2002). AAS 95, 50-55. \*\*

———. Address *Com prazer vos* (September 14, 2002). AAS 95, 61-66. \*\*

———. Address *E para mim motivo* (September 21, 2002). AAS 95, 121-26. \*\*

- John Paul II (*cont.*). Address *Os recibo* (October 15, 2002). AAS 95, 131-36. \*\*
- . Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (October 16, 2002). AAS 95, 5-36.
- . Address *Cristo amou* (October 19, 2002). AAS 95, 139-44. \*\*
- . Address *Saúdo todos vós* (November 16, 2002). AAS 95, 254-60. \*\*
- . Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania* (November 22, 2002). AAS 94, 361-428.
- . Message *Sin dall'inizio* (January 12, 2003). AAS 95, 619-22. \*\*
- . Address *My thoughts and prayers* (January 25, 2003). AAS 95, 505-8. \*\*
- . Address *La solenne inaugurazione* (January 30, 2003). AAS 95, 393-97. \*\*
- . Homily *Quando venne* (February 1, 2003). IGP 26.1, 139-41. \*\*
- . Address *Grace to you* (March 4, 2003). AAS 95, 596-602.
- . Address *Grazia a voi* (March 20, 2003). AAS 95, 772-74.
- . Apostolic Letter *Dignus est operarius* (March 23, 2003). AAS 96, 723-25. \*\*
- . Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (April 17, 2003). AAS 95, 433-75. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Non circumscibitur* (May 4, 2003). AAS 96, 521-23. \*\*
- . Decretal Letter *Caritas pastorum* (May 18, 2003). AAS 96, 321-24.
- . Address *Accolgo e saluto* (May 24, 2003). AAS 95, 780-83. \*\*
- . Address *Je vous accueille* (June 17, 2003). AAS 95, 866-71. \*\*
- . Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (June 28, 2003). AAS 95, 649-719. \*\*
- . Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis* (October 16, 2003). AAS 96, 825-924. \*\*
- . Address *Ho ascoltato* (October 18, 2003). AAS 96, 149-50. \*\*

John Paul II (*cont.*). Homily *Chi vuol essere* (October 19, 2003). AAS 96, 141-43. \*\*

———. Address *Je suis heureux* (November 22, 2003). AAS 96, 265-71. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Spiritus et Sponsa* (December 4, 2003). AAS 96, 419-27. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Da, mihi, Iesu* (March 21, 2004). AAS 97, 23-26. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Induite vos ergo* (March 21, 2004). AAS 97, 291-93. \*\*

———. Address *To you, the Bishops* (April 29, 2004). AAS 96, 656-60. \*\*

———. Homily *Quale uomo* (September 5, 2004). AAS 96, 935-37. \*\*

———. Apostolic Letter *Mane nobiscum Domine* (October 7, 2004). AAS 97, 337-52. \*\*

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———. Homily *Con questo parole* (December 8, 2004). AAS 97, 140-43. \*\*

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———. Letter *Annus internationalis* (September 14, 1994). AAS 86, 974-79. \*\*

———. Declaration *Dominus Iesus* (August 6, 2000). AAS 92, 742-65. \*\*

———. Considerations *Diverse questioni* (July 3, 2003). AAS 96, 41-49. \*\*

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