The Ecclesial Movements:
A Theological Reflection on Their Place in the Church

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In his great Encyclical Letter on mission *Redemptoris Missio,* the Holy Father says: "Within the Church, there are various types of services, functions, ministries and ways of promoting the Christian life. I call to mind, as a new development occurring in many Churches in recent times, the rapid growth of 'ecclesial movements' filled with missionary dynamism. When these movements humbly seek to become part of the life of local Churches and are welcomed by Bishops and priests within diocesan and parish structures, they represent a true gift of God both for new evangelization and for missionary activity properly so-called. I therefore recommend that they be spread, and that they be used to give fresh energy, especially among young people, to the Christian life and to evangelization, within a pluralistic view of the ways in which Christians can associate and express themselves".[1]

For me personally it was a wonderful experience when, in the early 1970s, I first came into closer contact with movements such as the *Neocatechumenal Way, Communion and Liberation and the Focolare Movement,* and so experienced the energy and enthusiasm with which they lived their faith and the joy of their faith which impelled them to share with others the gift they had received. That was the period in which Karl Rahner and others were speaking of a winter in the Church; and, indeed, it did seem that, after the great flowering of the Council, spring had been reclaimed by frost, and that the new dynamism had succumbed to exhaustion.

The dynamism now seemed to be somewhere else altogether—where people, relying on their own strength and without resorting to God, were trying to shape a better world for the future. That a world without God could not be good, let alone better, was obvious to any-one who had eyes to see. But where was God? After so many debates and so much effort expended on seeking new structures, had not the Church in fact become tired and dispirited? Rahner's remarks about a winter in the Church were perfectly understandable; they expressed an experience we all shared. But then something suddenly happened which

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[1] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter Redemptoris Missio, no. 72.

no one had planned. The Holy Spirit had, so to say, once again made his voice heard. The faith was reawakened, especially in young people, who eagerly embraced it without any ifs and buts, without subterfuges and reservations, and experienced it in its totality as a precious, life-giving gift. To be sure, many people felt that this interfered with their intellectual discussions or their models for redesigning a completely different Church in their own image—how could it be otherwise? Every irruption of the Holy Spirit always upsets human plans. But there were, and are, far more serious difficulties. For these movements had their share of childhood diseases. The power of the Spirit could be felt in them, but the Spirit works through human beings and does not simply free them from their weaknesses. There were tendencies to exclusivity and one-sidedness, and hence the inability to involve themselves in the life of the local Church. Buoyed up by their youthful élan, they were convinced that the local Church had, as it were, to crank itself up to their level, to adapt itself to their form, and not vice versa; that it was not up to them to be dragged into a structure that was at times somewhat fuddy-duddy. Frictions arose, in which both sides were at fault in different ways. It became necessary to reflect on how the two realities could be related to each in the right way: on the one hand, the spiritual revival conditioned by new situations, and, on the other, the permanent structure of the Church's life, i.e. the parish and the diocese. While the questions posed here were, to a large extent, very practical ones that should not be unduly inflated into the theoretical dimension, the phenomenon at issue was one that periodically recurs, in various forms, throughout the history of the Church. There is the enduring basic structure of the Church's life, which is expressed in the continuity of her institutional structure throughout history. And there are the ever new irruptions of the Holy Spirit, which continually revitalise and renew that structure. But this renewal hardly ever occurs entirely without pain and friction. So the fundamental question posed by these "movements" is one that cannot be ignored: namely, how can their theological place within the continuity of the Church's institutional structure be correctly identified?

I. ATTEMPTS TO CLARIFY THE ISSUE
THROUGH A DIALECTIC OF PRINCIPLES

Institution and Charism

The duality of institution and event, or institution and charism, immediately suggests itself as a basic model for resolving the question. But if we try to elucidate the two concepts, in order to arrive at valid rules for defining their mutual relationship, something unexpected happens. The concept of "institution" falls to bits in our hands as soon as we try to give it a precise theological connotation. For what, after all, are the fundamental institutional factors that characterise the Church as the permanent organizational structure of her life? The answer is, of course, the sacramental ministry in its different degrees: bishop, priest, deacon. The sacrament, that, significantly, bears the name *Ordo,* is, in the last analysis, the sole permanent and binding structure that forms so to say the fixed order of the Church. It is the sacrament that constitutes the Church as an "institution". But it was not until this century that it became customary, presumably for reasons of ecumenical expediency, to designate the sacrament of *Ordo* simply as "ministry", with the result that it is viewed entirely in the framework of the institution and the institutional. But this "ministry" is a "sacrament", and hence clearly transcends

the usual sociological understanding of institutions. That this structural element of the Church, the only enduring one, is a sacrament, means at the same time that it must be perpetually created anew by God. It is not something that the Church can dispose of herself; it is simply not there. It is not something that can be determined by the Church on her own initiative. Only secondarily is the sacrament realised through a call on the part of the Church. But primarily it comes into being by God's call, that is to say, only at the charismatic and pneumatological level. It can only be accepted and lived by virtue of the newness of the vocation and by the freedom of the *pneuma*. Since that is so, and since the Church cannot simply appoint "officials" by herself, but must await the call from God, it follows for the same reason—and for that reason alone—that there may be a shortage of priests in the Church. That is why it has been clear from the very beginning that this ministry cannot be produced by the institution, but can only be invoked in prayer from God. From the very beginning, what Jesus said has remained true: "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few, pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers to his harvest" *(Mt* 9:37-38). This also explains why the calling of the Twelve was the fruit of a whole night spent by Jesus in prayer (cf. *Lk* 6:12-16).

The Latin Church has expressly underscored this strictly charismatic character of the service of the priest by linking it—in conformity with ancient ecclesial tradition—with celibacy, which is clearly to be understood only as a personal charism, and not simply as a qualification of office.[2] The demand that the two—priesthood and celibacy—be decoupled ultimately rests on the notion that the priesthood should not be considered charismatically, but as an "office" that the institution itself can fill in order to guarantee its own security and the satisfaction of its own needs. If priesthood be understood as wholly subordinated to the Church's own administrative machine and her own security as an institution, then the charismatic bond implied by the requirement of celibacy is a scandal that has to be removed as quickly as possible. But in that case the Church as a whole would be understood as a purely human organization, and the security that is supposed to be obtained by these means would fail to achieve precisely what it is meant to deliver. That the Church is not our institution, but the irruption of something else, that it is intrinsically *iuris divini,* has as its consequence that we can never create the Church ourselves. It means that we can never apply purely institutional criteria to her; and that the Church is entirely herself only where the criteria and methods of human institutions are transcended.

To be sure, alongside this fundamental principle on which the institutional structure of the Church rests—the sacrament—, there are also institutions of purely human right in the Church. These institutions serve various roles of administration, organization and co-ordination, and each can and must develop according to the needs of the times. But it must be said that, while the Church does indeed need such self-created institutions, if they become too numerous and too powerful, they jeopardise the order and vitality of her spiritual reality. The Church must continuously examine her own institutional structure to make sure that it does not become top-heavy—to prevent it from hardening into a suit of armour that stifles her real spiritual life. Of course, it is understandable that the Church, if priestly vocations are denied to her over a longer period of time, should succumb to the temptation to create for herself what one might call an *ersatz* clergy of purely human

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[2] That priestly celibacy is not a medieval invention, but can be traced back to the earliest period of the Church, is shown clearly and convincingly by Card. A. M. Stickler, *The Case for Clerical Celibacy: Its Historical Development and Theological Foundations* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995). See also C. Cochini. *Origines apostoltques du célibat sacerdotal* (Paris, 1981); S. Heid, *Zölibat in der frühen Kirche* (Paderborn, 1997).

right.[3] The Church must also create emergency structures in cases of need, and has successfully done so time and again in the missions or in mission-like situations. To all those who have served and continue to serve the Church as spiritual leaders and evangelists in such situations of emergency we can only be grateful. But if the prayer for vocations to the sacrament is neglected as a result, if the Church gradually begins here and there to be satisfied with what she herself can do, if she makes herself, as it were, independent of God's gift, she would be acting like Saul, who, hard pressed by the Philistines, waited long for Samuel, but when Samuel failed to appear and the people began to disperse, lost his patience and made the burnt offering himself. He, who had thought that, given the urgency of the situation, no other course of action lay open to him and that he had no other choice but to take in hand the cause of God, was then rebuked for doing just that; he had thereby thrown everything away: to God "obedience is better than sacrifice" (cf. *1 Sam* 13:8–14; 15:22).

Let us return to our question: How are we to characterise the relationship between the permanent structures of Church order and ever new charismatic irruptions? The dialectic between institution and charism is unable to provide any answer to this question, because the antithesis between the two terms gives no satisfactory description of the reality of the Church. Nonetheless we can deduce a few initial guidelines from what has been said so far:

a) It is important that the sacred ministry, the priesthood itself, be charismatically understood and lived. The priest himself should be a "pneumatic", a *homo spiritualis,* a man aroused and impelled by the Holy Spirit. It is the Church's task to make sure that this character of the sacrament be seen and accepted. Out of zeal for the survival of her institutions the Church should not place numbers in the foreground and lower her spiritual needs. She would travesty the meaning of the priesthood itself by doing so; a poorly performed service does more harm than good. It stands in the way of the priesthood and the faith. The Church must keep faith and acknowledge the Lord as her creator and sustainer. And she must do everything she can to help those called to the priesthood to preserve their faith beyond the initial enthusiasm, and not get slowly bogged down in routine. She must help them increasingly to become truly spiritual men.

b) Where the sacred ministry is lived pneumatically and charismatically in this way, no institutional hardening takes place: what exists, instead, is an inner responsiveness to the charism, a kind of instinct for the Holy Spirit and his action. And so the charism too can once again recognise its own origin in the holder of the ministry, and ways will be found for fruitful collaboration in the discernment of spirits.

c) The Church must create emergency structures in situations of hardship. But these structures must understand themselves as intrinsically open to the sacrament; they must strive towards it, not lead away from it. As a general rule, the number of administrative structures the Church herself has created must be kept as small as possible. The Church must not over institutionalise herself. She must always remain open to the calls of the Lord, which remain unpredictable and for which no plans can be laid in advance.

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[3] *The Instruction on Some Questions Concerning the Collaboration of Laity in the Ministry of Priests,* published in 1997, concerns in essence this problem.

Christology and Pneumatology

The question is now posed: If institution and charism can only partially be considered as a dialectical pair, and thus provide only partial answers to our question, are there perhaps other theological viewpoints that are better adapted to it? The dialectic between the Christological and pneumatological view of the Church is increasingly being pushed to the forefront in contemporary theology. In the light of this dialectic, it is asserted that the sacrament belongs to the christological-incarnational aspect of the Church, which then has to be supplemented by the pneumatological-charismatic aspect. It is true, of course, that a distinction has to be drawn between Christ and the *Pneuma.* On the other hand, just as the three persons of the Trinity should be treated not as a *communio* of three gods, but as the one triune God, so the distinction between Christ and Spirit can be rightly understood only when their diversity helps us better to understand their unity. The Spirit cannot be rightly understood without Christ, but the converse is equally true. "The Lord is the Spirit", Paul tells us in the Second Letter to the Corinthians (3:17). That does not mean that the two are simply the same thing or the same Person. It means that Christ as the Lord can only be among us and for us because the incarnation was not the last word. The incarnation was fulfilled in Christ's death on the cross and in his resurrection. That means that Christ can only come because he has preceded us in the order of life of the Holy Spirit and communicates himself through that Spirit and in it. The pneumatological christology of St. Paul and the farewell discourses of the Gospel of John have not yet sufficiently penetrated our view of christology and pneumatology. The ever new presence of Christ in the Spirit is the essential condition for the existence of sacrament and for the sacramental presence of the Lord.

This consideration, too, helps to throw light on the "spiritual" ministry in the Church and its place in theology, which tradition has defined with the term *successio apostolica.* "Apostolic succession" means precisely the opposite of what it might appear to mean: It does not mean that we become, as it were, independent of the Spirit through the continuous chain of succession. The bond with the line of succession means quite the reverse: it means that the sacramental ministry is never ours to dispose of, but must be given each time by the Spirit. For it is the spirit-sacrament we can neither create nor institute ourselves. Professional expertise, functional skill, is not in itself sufficient for this: the Lord's gift is necessary. In the Sacrament, in the Church's vicarious [*stellvertretenden*]*,* symbolic action, the Lord has reserved for himself the permanent institution of the priestly ministry. The quite specific link between the "once" and the "always", that holds good for the mystery of Christ as a whole, is here made visible in an exemplary way. The "always" of the sacrament, the presence in pneumatical form of the Church's historical origin in every age, presupposes the link with the *ephapax,* with the unrepeatable event from which the Church derives her origin. This link with the origin, this stake planted in the ground of the once-only and unrepeatable event, can never be repudiated. Never can we take refuge in a free-floating pneumatology; nor abandon the solid ground of the Incarnation, the historical action of God. But, conversely, this unrepeatable event is communicated to us in the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Risen Lord. It does not vanish, like something dead and gone, into the forever irretrievable past, but bears in itself the power to make itself perpetually present, because Christ has passed through the "curtain, that is, through his flesh" (H*eb* 10:20) and hence made accessible to us what is eternally renewable in the unrepeatable event. The Incarnation does not stop with the historical Jesus, with his *sarx*

(cf. *2 Cor* 5:16). The "historical Jesus" has eternal significance precisely because his "flesh" is transformed in the resurrection, so that he can make himself present in all places and at all times in the power of the Holy Spirit, as wonderfully shown by the farewell discourses of Jesus in *John* (cf. especially 14:28): "I go away, and I will come to you". From this christological-pneumatological synthesis it may be inferred that a closer examination of the concept of "apostolic succession" will be of real help in resolving our problem.

Hierarchy and Prophecy

Before we pursue this line of thought any further, we need to mention briefly a third interpretational model for explaining the relation between the permanent order of ecclesial life on the one hand and new irruptions of the Spirit on the other. Building on Luther's interpretation of Scripture in terms of the dialectic of Law and Gospel, there are those who place particular stress on the dialectic between the cultic-sacerdotal aspect on the one hand and the prophetic aspect of salvation history on the other. On this reading, the movements would be ranged on the side of prophecy. This interpretation too, like the others we have considered so far, is not entirely erroneous. But it is extremely imprecise and hence unusable in this form. The problem thus raised is too complex to be dealt with in detail here. First of all, it would have to be pointed out that the Law itself has a character of promise. Only because it has this character could it be fulfilled by Christ and, in its fulfilment, at the same time "abolished" *[aufgehoben]*. Second, the biblical prophets never meant to annul the *Torah,* but, on the contrary, to defend it against abuses by vindicating its true meaning. Third, it is important to stress that the prophetic mission was always entrusted to individuals, and never became fixed in a particular "class" [*Stand*]. Insofar as prophecy claimed to be a class (as was sometimes the case), it was criticised by the biblical prophets just as sharply as the "class" of priests of the Old Covenant.[4] Any attempt to divide the Church into two wings, into a "left" and "right", into the prophetic class of the religious orders or the movements on the one hand, and the hierarchy on the other, can find no justification in Scripture. On the contrary: such a dualism is entirely alien to Scripture. The Church is built not dialectically, but organically. What only remains true is that there are various functions in the Church, and that God continually inspires prophetic men and women—whether they be laypeople or religious, bishops or priests—who would not derive the necessary strength in the normal course of the "institution" to make this charismatic appeal to the Church. It is quite clear, I think, that the nature and tasks of the movements cannot be interpreted from this perspective. They themselves certainly don't understand themselves in this way.

The result of the foregoing reflections is thus unsatisfactory for the elucidation of our question, yet it is important. It suggests that no solution to our problem is to be found if we choose a dialectic of principles as our starting point. Instead of trying to resolve the question in terms of such a dialectic of principles, we should, in my view, opt for an historical approach, as befits the historical nature of the faith and of the Church.

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[4] The classical antithesis between prophets sent by God and professional prophets is found in Amos 7:10-17. A similar situation is found in 1 Kings 22 in the distinction drawn between the four hundred spurious prophets and Misaiah; and again in Jeremiah, e.g. 37:19. See also J. Ratzinger, *The Nature and Mission of Theology: Its Role in the Light of Present Controversy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 118ff.

II. THE PERSPECTIVE OF HISTORY: APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

AND APOSTOLIC MOVEMENTS

Universal and Local Ministries

Let us therefore pose the question: What does the origin of the Church look like? Anyone who has even a modest knowledge of the discussions about the nascent Church, from the form of which all Christian churches and communities seek to derive their justification, will also know what a seemingly hopeless enterprise it is to expect any such historical enquiry to yield tangible results. If, in spite of that, I risk trying to find a solution from this viewpoint, I do so with the presupposition of the Catholic view of the Church and her origin. This view, while offering a solid framework, also leaves open areas for further reflection which are far from having been exhausted. There is no doubt that, from Pentecost on, the immediate bearers of Christ's mission were the Twelve, who would soon after appear under the name of "apostles". To them was entrusted the task of taking Christ's message "to the end of the earth" (*Acts* 1:8), to go out to all nations and to make disciples of all men (cf. *Mt* 28:19). The territory assigned to them for this mission was the whole world. Without being restricted to any one place, they served to build up the one body of Christ, the one people of God, the one Church of Christ. The apostles were not bishops of particular local churches: they were, in the full sense of the term, "apostles" and as such assigned to the whole world and to the whole Church which was to be built up in it: the universal Church thus preceded the local Churches, which arose as its concrete realisations.[5] To put it even more clearly and unequivocally, Paul was never, nor did he ever wish to be, the bishop of a particular place. The only division of labour that existed at the beginning was the one described by Paul in the Letter to the Galatians (cf. 2:9): We—Barnabas and I—for the Gentiles, you—Peter, James and Cephas—for the Jews. And even this initial division of the mission field was soon superseded. Peter and John recognised that they too had been sent to the Gentiles, and lost little time in crossing the frontiers of Israel. James, the Lord's brother, who became a kind of primate of the Jewish church after the year 42, was not an apostle.

Without going into further detail, we can say that the apostolic ministry is an universal ministry, assigned to the whole of humanity and thus to the one Church as a whole. It was the missionary activity of the apostles that gave rise to the local Churches, which now needed leaders to assume responsibility for them. It was the duty of these leaders to guarantee unity of faith with the whole Church, to develop the life within the local Churches and to keep their communities open, so that they might continue to grow and be able to bestow the gift of the Gospel on those of their fellow citizens who did not yet believe. This ministry at the level of the local Church, which at the beginning appeared

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[5] Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana [1992]), no. 9; see also my short introduction to this document, in *Lettera "Commun onis notion" su alcuni aspetti della Chiesa intesa come comunione* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), 8ff. I have presented the relations between universal Church and local Churches in greater detail in my little book *Called to Communion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), esp. 43f. and 75-103. The fact that the one Church, the one Bride of Christ, by whom the legacy of the people of Israel, "daughter" and "bride" of Zion, is prolonged, takes precedence over the empirical concretization of the people of God in the local Churches is so evident in Scripture and in the Fathers that it is hard for me to understand the often-repeated objections to this affirmation. It is enough to re-read Lubac's *Catholicisme* (1938) or his *Méditation sur l'Eglise,* 3d ed. (1954), or the marvellous texts that H. Rahner collected in his book *Mater Ecclesiae* (1944).

under a variety of different names, slowly acquired a fixed and homogeneous form. Two orders thus quite clearly co-existed side by side in the nascent Church. There was of course a certain fluidity between them, but they can be quite clearly distinguished: on the one hand, the services of the local Church, which gradually assumed permanent forms; and on the other, the apostolic ministry, which very soon ceased to be restricted to the Twelve (cf. *Eph* 4:10). Two concepts of "apostle" can be quite clearly distinguished in Paul. On the one hand, he stresses the uniqueness of his apostolate, which rested on his encounter with the risen Lord and so placed him on a level with the Twelve. On the other hand, he understood "apostle" as an office extending far beyond this elite, as in the First Letter to the Corinthians (cf. 12:28). This broader concept is also presupposed by his description of Andronicus and Junias as apostles in the Letter to the Romans (cf. 16:7). A similar terminology is found in the Letter to the Ephesians (cf. 2:20), where talk of the apostles and prophets as the foundations of the Church is clearly meant to include more than just the Twelve. The prophets, of whom the *Didache* speaks in the early years of the second century, are clearly understood as fulfilling just such a missionary, supralocal ministry. It is all the more interesting that the *Didache* says of them: "They are your high-priests".[6]

We may therefore assume that the co-existence of the two types of ministry—the universal and the local—continued well into the second century, i.e. into a period when the question of the apostolic succession, and who was to represent it, was already being seriously posed. Various texts suggest that this co-existence of the two ministries was not entirely free of conflict. The Third Letter of John provides us with a very clear example of just such a situation of conflict. However, the more "earth's remotest end", or the part of it then accessible, was reached, the harder it became to continue to assign any meaningful role to the "itinerants"; it may be that abuses of their ministry concurred to their gradual disappearance. Now it was up to the local communities and their leaders, who had in the meantime acquired a very clear profile in the tripartite division of bishop, priest and deacon, to spread the faith in the territories of their respective local Churches. That at the time of the emperor Constantine Christians made up around 8% of the population of the Empire, and that even at the end of the fourth century they remained a minority, shows what an immense task this was. In this situation those who presided over the local Churches, the bishops, had to recognise that they were now the successors of the apostles and that the apostolic mission lay entirely on their shoulders. The insight that the bishops, the responsible leaders of the local Churches, were the successors of the apostles, was very clearly articulated by Irenaeus of Lyon in the second half of the second century. His definition of what it is that forms the essence of the episcopal ministry includes two fundamental elements:

a) Apostolic succession entails, first of all, an idea familiar to us: guaranteeing the continuity and the unity of the faith—in a continuity we call *sacramental*.

b) But apostolic succession also implies an even more concrete task, which goes beyond the administration of the local Churches: the bishops must now ensure the continuation of Jesus' mission to make all nations his disciples and to bring the Gospel to the earth's remotest end. They are, as Irenaeus forcefully underlines, responsible for ensuring that the Church does not become a kind of federation of competing local Churches, but retains her universality and unity. They must continue the universal

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[6] *Didache 13.3,* ed. W. Rodorf and A. Tuilier, Sources chrétiennes, vol. 248 (Paris: Cerf, 1978), 190.

dynamism of apostolicity.[7]

At the beginning of our reflections we pointed out the danger of the priestly ministry ending up by being understood in purely institutional and bureaucratic terms, and of its charismatic dimension being forgotten. But now a second danger appears: there is a danger that the ministry of the apostolic succession may wither away into a purely local ecclesial ministry, that the universality of Christ's mission may be lost from view or fade from the heart. The restlessness that impels us to bring the gift of Christ to others, may be extinguished in the stagnation of a firmly established Church. I would like to express the point in even more forcible terms: the concept of apostolic succession transcends the purely local ecclesial ministry. Apostolic succession can never be exhausted in the local Church. The universal element, the element that transcends the services to the local Churches, remains indispensable.

Apostolic Movements in the History of the Church

This thesis, which anticipates my final conclusions, must now be examined in a little more depth and clothed in concrete historical flesh. It leads us directly to the place occupied by the movements in the Church. I said that for various reasons the ministries of the universal Church gradually disappeared in the course of the second century and were absorbed by the episcopal ministry. In many respects this was a development not only historically inevitable, but also theologically necessary; it brought to light the unity of the sacrament and the intrinsic unity of the apostolic service. But it was also—as already pointed out—a development that was not without its dangers. For this reason it was perfectly understandable that a new element should appear in the life of the Church as early as the third century. And we have no hesitation in calling this element a "movement": monasticism. Now it might be objected that early monasticism had no apostolic and missionary character, that it was, on the contrary, a flight from the world, an escape into islands of holiness. The absence of a missionary tendency, directly aimed at the propagation of the faith through-out the world, can doubtless be ascertained in the initial stage of monasticism. The predominant impulse in Anthony, who in our eyes stands out as a clearly defined historical figure at the beginning of monasticism, was indeed the desire to live the *vita evangelica—the* desire to live the Gospel radically and in its totality.[8] The story of his conversion bears an astonishing resemblance to that of St. Francis of Assisi. We find in both the same impulse to take the Gospel quite literally, to follow Christ in total poverty, and to model one's whole life on him. Anthony's retreat into the desert was a deliberate abandonment of the firmly established structure of the local Church, a flight from a Christianity that was progressively adapting itself to the needs of secular life, in order to follow uncompromisingly in the footsteps of Christ. But this gave rise to a new spiritual fatherhood; and this spiritual fatherhood, while it had no directly missionary character, did nonetheless supplement the fatherhood of bishops and priests by the power of a wholly pneumatic life.[9]

In the works of Basil, who gave Eastern monasticism its permanent form, we see very clearly the same problems that many movements are having to face today. He had utterly

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[7] On this paragraph, see Ratzinger, *Called to Communion,* 83ff.

[8] See Athanasius of Alexandria, *Life of Anthony,* ed. J.M. Bartelink, Sources chrétiennes, vol. 400 (Paris: Cerf, 1994); in the introduction especially the section: "L'exemple de la vie évangélique et apostolique". 52-53.

[9] On the theme of spiritual fatherhood I would like to refer to the perceptive little book of G. Bunge, *Geistliche Vaterschaft: Christliche Gnosis bei Evagrios Pontikos* (Regensburg, 1988).

no intention of creating a separate institution alongside that of the normal Church. The first and, in the strict sense, only rule he ever wrote was not conceived—as Balthasar puts it—as the rule of a religious order, but as an ecclesial rule: his "*Enchiridion* (or manual) of the committed Christian".[10] Yet the same is true of the origin of almost all movements, not least those in our century: what they seek is not a community apart, but an integral form of Christianity, a Church that is obedient to the Gospel and that lives by it. Basil, who had first been a monk, accepted the episcopal office and thus powerfully underlined in his own life the charismatic character of the episcopal ministry, the inner unity of the Church lived by the bishop in his personal life. Basil, like today's movements, was obliged to admit that the movement to follow Christ in an uncompromising fashion cannot be totally merged with the local Church. In a second draft of a rule, which Gribomont calls the small *Asketikon,* Basil conceives of movement as a "transitional form between a group of committed Christians open to the Church as a whole and a self-organising and self-institutionalising monastic order".[11] The monastic community that Basil founded is likened by Gribomont to a kind of leaven: a "small group for the vitalisation of the whole"; he does not hesitate to call Basil "the founding father not only of the teaching and hospital orders, but also of the new communities without vows".[12]

It is clear, therefore, that the monastic movement created a new centre of life that did not abolish the local ecclesial structure of the postapostolic Church, but that did not simply coincide with it either. It was active in it as a life-giving force, a kind of reservoir from which the local Church could draw truly spiritual clergy in whom the fusion of institution and charism was constantly renewed. That the Eastern Church should select bishops from the ranks of the monks, thus defining the episcopal ministry in a charismatic way and perpetually renewing it from its apostolic source, is significant in this regard.

If we now look at the history of the Church as a whole, it seems clear that the local Church, necessarily determined by the episcopal ministry, is the supporting structure that permanently upholds the edifice of the Church through the ages. But the history of the Church is also traversed by the successive waves of movements that renew the universalistic aspect of her apostolic mission and thus serve to foster the spiritual vitality and truth of the local Churches. After the monasticism of the Early Church I would like briefly to mention five such waves, in which the spiritual essence of what we might call *movements* emerges ever more clearly and their ecclesiological place is progressively defined.

1. The first wave was the missionary monasticism that flourished especially in the period from the pontificate of Gregory the Great (590–604) to that of Gregory II (715–731) and Gregory III (731–741). Pope Gregory the Great recognised the missionary potential in monasticism and exploited it by sending Augustine—later to become Archbishop of Canterbury—and his companions to evangelise the pagan Angles in the British Isles. The Irish mission of St. Patrick had already taken place; it too was spiritually rooted in monasticism. So monasticism now became a great missionary movement. It led to the Germanic peoples being converted to the Catholic Church, and thus laid the foundations of

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[10] H. U. von Balthasar (ed.), *Die großen Ordensregeln,* 7th ed. (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1994), 47.

[11] Balthasar, *Die großen Ordensregeln,* 48—49; cf. J. Gribomont, "Les Règles Morales de S. Basile et le Nouveau Testament", in *Studia patristica,* ed. K. Aland, vol. 2 (Berlin: Akademie—Verlag, 1957), 416—426.

[12] Balthasar, *Die großen Ordensregeln, 57;* cf. J. Gribomont, "Obeissance et Evangile selon S. Basile le Grand", *La Vie Spirituelle: Supplement 5* (1952): 192—215, esp. 192.

the new Christian Europe. Linking together East and West in the ninth century, Cyril and Methodius, brothers in the flesh and in monastic life, brought the Christian faith to the Slav world. Two of the formative elements of what it means to be *a movement* clearly emerged from all this:

a) The papacy did not create the movements, but it did become their most important backer in the structure of the Church, their main source of ecclesial support. Perhaps the deepest meaning and true nature of the petrine office as a whole was in this way brought into view: namely, that the Bishop of Rome is not merely the bishop of a local Church; his ministry is always referred to the universal Church. It thus has, in a specific sense, an apostolic character. It must keep alive the dynamism of the Church's mission *ad extra* and *ad intra.* In the Eastern Church, the Emperor had at first claimed for himself a kind of office as guarantor of unity and universality; it was no accident that Constantine was called "bishop" *ad extra* and "equal to the apostles". But that could at best be a temporary, *ersatz* role, the danger of which is all too clear. From the mid-second century on, with the end of the old universal ministries, the claim of the popes to assume particular responsibility for this aspect of apostolic mission thus made itself ever more clearly felt. Movements that transcended the scope and structure of the local Church, not by chance, went increasingly hand in hand with the papacy.

b) The motivation of the *vita evangelica,* which we encounter already at the beginning of the monastic movement with St. Anthony of Egypt, remains decisive. But it now becomes clear that the *vita evangelica* also includes evangelization. Its poverty and freedom are conditions for a service to the Gospel that goes beyond one's own homeland and its community. At the same time this service is the goal and *raison d'être* for the *vita evangelica,* as we shall soon see in greater detail.

2. If only briefly I would like to mention the reform movement of Cluny, which was of such decisive importance in the tenth century. Once again backed by the papacy, it accomplished the emancipation of the *vita religiosa* from the feudal system and from domination by episcopal feudatories. By a process of associating the individual monasteries into a single congregation, it became the great movement of the renewal of Christian life and devotion, in which the idea of Europe took shape.[13] Later, in the eleventh century, the impulse of the Cluniac reform gave rise to the Gregorian Reform,[14] which rescued the papacy from the perils of worldliness and the quagmire of strife among the Roman nobility. More generally, the Gregorian Reform took up the battle for the freedom of the Church, and for the safeguard of its distinctive spiritual nature, though later this often degenerated into a power struggle between pope and emperor.

3. The spiritual force of the evangelical movement that exploded with Francis of Assisi and Dominic in the thirteenth century continues to be felt to this day. In the case of Francis, it is quite clear that he had no intention of founding a new religious order, a separate community. He simply wanted to recall the Church to the whole Gospel, to gather together the "new people", and to renew the Church on the basis of the Gospel.

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[13] B. Senger points out the connection between the Cluniac reform and the shaping of the idea of Europe. He also emphasises the juridical independence and help of the popes *(Lexikon für Theologie and Kirche,* 2d ed., vol. 2 [1958], 1239).

[14] Even though P. Engelbert may justifiably say that "it is impossible to ascertain a direct influence of the [Cluniac reform] on the Gregorian reform" *(Lexikon für Theologie and Kirche,* 3d ed., vol. 2 [1994], 1236), B. Senger's observation that the Cluniac reform helped to prepare a favourable climate for the Gregorian reform retains its validity *(Lexikon für Theologie and Kirche,* 2d ed., vol. 2 [1958], 1240).

The two meanings of the term *evangelical life* are inextricably intertwined: whoever lives the Gospel in poverty, celibacy, and renunciation of worldly possessions, must at the same time preach the Gospel. There was then a need for the Gospel, and Francis saw it as his essential task to proclaim, with his brothers, the simple core of the Gospel of Christ. He and his followers wanted to be evangelists. And it followed from this that the frontiers of Christendom had to be crossed and the Gospel taken to the ends of the earth.[15]

When conflict later broke out at the University of Paris between the mendicant orders and the secular clergy, Thomas Aquinas summed up the novelty of these two movements (the Franciscans and Dominicans) and, at the same time, their fidelity to their origins and to the form of the religious life expressed in them. The secular clergy, as the representatives of a narrowly closed local Church structure, opposed the evangelising movement. They only wanted to accept the Cluniac type of monasticism in its later, rigidified form: monasteries separated from the local Church, dedicated to an ascetic cloistered life, and serving contemplation alone. Such monasteries, they held, could not disturb the order of the local Church, whereas conflicts inevitably broke out wherever the new preachers appeared. Thomas Aquinas opposed this view. He emphasised that Christ himself is the model, and hence defended the superiority of the apostolic life over a purely contemplative form of life. "The active life that brings to others the truths attained through preaching and contemplation is more perfect than the exclusively contemplative life".[16] Thomas understood himself as the heir of the successive revivals of the monastic life, that had all appealed to the *vita apostolica.*[17] But in his interpretation of the *vita apostolica*—drawn from his experience of the mendicant orders—he took an important new step. He proposed something that had indeed been actively present in the previous monastic tradition, but that has as yet been little reflected on. Everyone had appealed to the primitive Church to justify the *vita apostolica;* Augustine, for example, had based his whole monastic rule ultimately on *Acts* 4:32: "The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul"..[18] But to this essential blueprint for the religious life Thomas Aquinas now added another component: Jesus' missionary instruction to the apostles in Matthew 10:5-15. The genuine *vita apostolica,* Thomas taught, is the life that observes the teachings both of Acts 4 and Matthew 10: "The apostolic life consisted in the fact that the apostles, after they had abandoned everything, went through the world, proclaiming and preaching the Gospel, as shown by Matthew 10, where they are given a rule".[19] Matthew 10 now appeared as nothing less than a religious rule, or better: the rule of life and mission that the Lord gave to the apostles is itself the permanent rule of the apostolic life, of which the Church has a perpetual need. It was on the basis of this rule that the new movement of evangelization was justified.

The Parisian controversy between the secular clergy and the representatives of the new movements, in which these texts were written, is of permanent significance. The exponents

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[15] The edition of the *Fonti Francescane* by the Movimento Francescano (Assisi, *1977),* with helpful introductions and bibliographical apparatus, remains authoritative. Instructive for the way the mendicant orders understood themselves is the brief study by A. Jotischky, "Some Mendicant Views of the Origins of the Monastic Profession", *Cristianesimo nella storia* 19 (1998): 31-49. The author shows that the apologists of the mendicant orders appealed to the primitive Church, and especially to the desert fathers, in order to explain their origin and significance in the Church.

[16] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 3.40.1.2. For a stimulating and clarifying discussion of the position of St. Thomas in the controversy surrounding the mendicant orders, see also J.P. Torrell, *St. Thomas Aquinas,* vol. *1, "The Person and His Work* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), esp. 75-90.

[17] Thus, Torrell, *St. Thomas Aquinas,* 89-90.

[18] See A. Zumkeller, „Zum geistigen Gehalt der Augustinerregel", in *Die großen Ordensregeln,* 150-170. On the place of the Rule in Augustine's life and work, see G. Vigini, *Agostino d'Ippona: L'avventura della grazia e della carità* (Cinisello Balsamo, 1998), 91-109.

[19] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem* 4, cited in Torrell, *St. Thomas Aquinas,* 90.

of a restricted and impoverished idea of the Church, that absolutises the structure of the local Church, could not tolerate the intrusive new class of preachers. The latter, for their part, necessarily found their support in the holder of an universal ecclesial ministry, in the Pope as guarantor of the mission and the up-building of the one Church. It is no surprise, therefore, that all this gave a great boost to the development of the doctrine of primacy. Beyond any colouring lent by a certain historical period, primacy was now understood anew in the light of its apostolic roots.[20]

4. Since the question that concerns us here has to do not with Church history, but with an insight into the forms of life in the Church, I will have to limit myself to only a brief mention of the new movements of evangelization that arose in the sixteenth century. Prominent among them were the Jesuits, who now embarked on a world-wide mission in the newly discovered lands of America, Africa and Asia, though the Dominicans and Franciscans, thanks to their enduring missionary impulse, did not lag far behind.

5. Finally, we are all familiar with the new spate of movements that began in the nineteenth century. Strictly missionary congregations now emerged. From the very outset they were aimed less at the internal renewal of the Church than at evangelization in those continents that had hardly been touched by Christianity. Conflict with the local ecclesial structures was as a result largely avoided. Indeed, a fruitful collaboration was established between them. The historical local Churches derived new strength from it, animated as they were from within by the impulse to propagate the Gospel and serve charity. An element now came powerfully to the fore, an element that had in no way been lacking in the previous movements, but that can easily be overlooked: the apostolic movement of the nineteenth century was pre-eminently a women's movement. It was characterised by a strong emphasis on *caritas,* on care for the suffering and for the poor: we know what the new women's communities have meant, and continue to mean, for the hospital apostolate and for the care of the needy. But they also assumed a very important role in the fields of schooling and education. In this way, the whole range of service to the Gospel was made present in the combination of teaching, education and charity. If we look backwards from the nineteenth century we will see that women have always played an important role in the apostolic movements. It is enough to think of the courageous women of the sixteenth century such as Mary Ward or Teresa of Avila, or, yet earlier, of the women religious of the Middle Ages such as Hildegard of Bingen and Catherine of Siena, of the women in the circle of St. Boniface, of the sisters of the Church Fathers and, finally, of the women in the letters of Paul and in the circle around Jesus himself. Though women were never bishops and priests, they did assume co-responsibility for the apostolic life and for its universal mission.

The Breadth of the Concept of Apostolic Succession

After this survey of the great apostolic movements in the history of the Church, we return to the thesis I already anticipated after our brief analysis of the biblical data: namely, that the concept of apostolic succession must be broadened and deepened if we wish to do justice to everything it claims to be. What does that mean? First, it means

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[20] I first presented the connection between the mendicant controversy and the doctrine of primacy in a study that appeared in the *festschrift* for M. Schmaus *(Theologie in Geschichte und Gegenwart* [Munich: Zink, 1957]), which I then incorporated with minor additions in my book *Das neue Volk Gottes* (Düsseldorf, 1969), 49-71. Y. Congar then took up my work, which had essentially been restricted to Bonaventura and his interlocutors, and expanded the argument to cover the whole field of the relevant sources (cf. "Aspects ecclésiologiques de la querelle entre mendiants et séculiers clans la seconde moitié du XIIIe siècle et le début du XIVe" *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age 28* [1961]: 35-151).

that the sacramental structure of the Church must be retained as the core of this concept. It is in this structure that the Church receives, perpetually renewed, the legacy of the apostles, the legacy of Christ. It is through the sacrament, in which Christ acts through the Holy Spirit, that the Church is distinguished from all other institutions. The sacrament means that the Church lives and is continually recreated by the Lord as "creature of the Holy Spirit". The two inseparable components of the sacrament we mentioned above must here be kept in mind: first, the incarnational-christological component, that is, the Church's being bound to the "once only", the unique and unrepeatable event of the Incarnation and of the Easter events, the link with God's action in history; second, and simultaneously, the making present of this event in the power of the Holy Spirit, hence the christological-pneumatological component, which guarantees at once the newness and the continuity of the living Church.

What has always been taught in the Church about the essence of apostolic succession, the real core of the sacramental concept of the Church, is summed up in this way. But this core risks being impoverished, indeed withering away, if the concept is applied only to the structure of the local Church. The ministry of the succession of Peter breaks asunder the purely local ecclesial structure. The successor of Peter is not just the local bishop of Rome: he is bishop for the whole Church and in the whole Church. He thus embodies an essential dimension of the apostolic mission, which must never be absent from the Church. But the petrine ministry itself would in turn be misunderstood, and distorted into a monstrous exception to the rule, if we burdened its bearer alone with the realisation of the universal dimension of the apostolic succession.[21]

Ministries and missions that are not tied to the local Church alone, but serve universal mission and the spreading of the Gospel, must always exist in the Church. The pope has to rely on these ministries, they on him; and in the harmonious interaction between the two kinds of mission the symphony of ecclesial life is realised. The apostolic age, which has normative value for the Church, clearly emphasised these two components as indispensable for the Church's life. The sacrament of the *Ordo,* the sacrament of succession, necessarily forms an intrinsic part of this structural form, but it is—even more than in the local Churches—surrounded by a multiplicity of services, and here the contribution made by women to the Church's apostolate cannot be ignored. In sum, we could even say that the primacy of the successor of Peter exists precisely to guarantee these essential components of the Church's life and to connect them harmoniously with the structures of the local Churches.

At this point, to avoid misunderstandings, it should be said quite clearly that the apostolic movements appear in ever new forms in history—necessarily so, because they are the Holy Spirit's answer to the ever changing situations in which the Church lives. And just as vocations to the priesthood cannot be artificially produced, cannot be established by administrative diktat, still less can movements be established and systematically promoted by ecclesiastical authority. They need to be given as a gift, and they are given as a gift. We must only be attentive to them. Using the gift of discernment, we must only learn to accept what is good in them, and discard what is bad. A retrospective glance at the history of the Church will help us to acknowledge with gratitude that, through all her trials and tribulations, the Church has always succeeded in

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[21] Aversion to primacy and the disappearance of the sense of the universal Church are doubtless bound up with the assumption that the concept of the universal Church is embodied by the papacy alone. The papacy, thus isolated and without any living connection with the realities of the universal Church, then appears as a scandalous monolith that disturbs the image of a Church reduced to purely local ecclesial ministries and the coexistence of local communities. But the reality of the ancient Church is not grasped in this way.

finding room for all the great new awakenings of the spirit that emerge in her midst. Nor can we overlook the succession of movements that failed or that led to painful schisms: Montanists, Cathars, Waldensians, Hussites, the Reform movement of the sixteenth century. And no doubt blame must be apportioned to both sides for the fact that in the end schism has remained.

III. DISCERNMENTS AND CRITERIA

The last task of this paper is therefore to pose the question about the criteria for discernment. To be able to answer this question well, we would first have to define a little more precisely the term *movement,* perhaps even attempt a classification of movements. Clearly, all this is beyond the scope of the present paper. We should also beware of too strict a definition, for the Holy Spirit always has surprises in store, and only in retrospect do we recognise that, despite their great diversity, the movements do have a common essence. However, as a preliminary contribution to the clarification of terminology, I would like very briefly to distinguish three different types of movement, that can be observed at least in more recent history. I would call them *movement, current* and *action.* The *Liturgical movement* of the first half of this century, or the *Marian movement* that has been gaining increasing prominence in the Church since the nineteenth century, I would not characterise as movements, but as currents. These currents may subsequently have taken on concrete form in specific movements such as the Marian Congregation or the various associations of Catholic youth, but they clearly extended beyond them. Petitions, or campaigns for the collection of signatures, pressing for a change in the teaching or practice of the Church, that are becoming the custom today, cannot be described as movements, but as actions. The Franciscan awakening in the thirteenth century probably provides the clearest instance of what a movement is: movements generally derive their origin from a charismatic leader and take shape in concrete communities, inspired by the life of their founder; they attempt to live the Gospel anew, in its totality, and recognise the Church without hesitation as the ground of their life without which they could not exist.[22]

This attempt to find some kind of definition of what constitutes an ecclesial movement is no doubt very unsatisfactory. But it does help us to isolate a number of criteria that may, so to say, take the place of a definition. The essential criterion has already spontaneously emerged: it is the being rooted in the faith of the Church. Whoever does not share the apostolic faith, cannot lay claim to apostolic activity. Since there is only one faith for the whole Church, and since this faith is indeed the cause of her unity, it follows that the apostolic faith is inseparable from the wish for unity, the wish to be incorporated in the living community of the whole Church, the wish, quite concretely, to stand at the side of the successors of the apostles and the successor of Peter, who bears responsibility for the harmonious interaction between local Church and universal Church as the one people of God. If the "apostolic" dimension is that in which the movements find their place in the Church, it follows that the wish to lead the *vita apostolica* must be fundamental for them in every period. Renunciation of property, celibacy, the abandonment of any attempt to impose their own image of the Church, in short, obedience in the *sequela Christi,* have

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[22] Helpful for a definition of the essence of movements is A. Cattaneo, "I movimenti ecclesiali: aspetti ecclesiologici" *Annales Theologici* 2 (1997): 401-427, esp. 406-409.

been regarded throughout the ages as the essential ingredients of the apostolic life. To be sure, these cannot be indiscriminately applied to all the participants of a movement, but they do form, though in different ways, points of orientation for each of their lives. The apostolic life, in turn, is not an end in itself, but creates freedom for service. Apostolic life calls for apostolic activity. Pride of place is given—again in different ways—to the proclamation of the Gospel as the missionary element *par excellence.* In the *sequela Christi* evangelization is always primarily *evangelizare pauperibus*—preaching of the Gospel to the poor. But this never happens by word alone; charity, which is its inner source, at once the mainspring of its truth and its action, has to be lived and so become proclamation itself. That is why social service, in whatever form, is always linked with evangelization. All this presupposes—mainly thanks to the power and inspiration of the original charism—a deep, personal encounter with Christ. The becoming a community, and the building up of the community, does not exclude the personal dimension, indeed it demands it. Only when the person is struck and penetrated by Christ to the depths of his or her being, can others too be touched in their innermost being; only then can there be reconciliation in the Holy Spirit; only then can true community grow. Within this basic christological-pneumatological and existential structure, a great variety of accentuations and emphases can exist, in which Christianity is perpetually renewed and the spirit of the Church continually rejuvenated like the youth of the eagle (cf. *Ps* 103:5).

The dangers, but also the ways of overcoming them, that exist in the movements may at this point be glimpsed. One-sidedness is threatened by the over-accentuation of the specific mission that emerges in one particular period or through one particular charism. That the spiritual awakening that gives rise to a movement is experienced not as *one* of the many forms of Christian life, but as a response to what is perceived as the Gospel in its entirety, can lead to the movement being absolutised. It comes to be identified with the Church herself. It comes to be understood as the *one* way for everyone, though this one way can take and communicate itself in a variety of forms. It is almost inevitable, therefore, that the vitality and totality of the original charismatic experience should time and again give rise to conflicts with the local community, a conflict in which both sides may be at fault, and both may be spiritually challenged. The local Churches may have entered into a kind of conformist *modus vivendi* with the world; the salt can lose its flavour, a situation that Kierkegaard described with mordant acuity in his critique of Christianity. Even if the departure from the radical demands of the Gospel has not reached the point that provoked Kierkegaard's denunciation, the irruption of the new is nonetheless experienced as a disruption, especially when it is accompanied, as is not seldom the case, by infantile fads and misguided absolutizations of all kinds.

Both sides must let themselves be educated by the Holy Spirit and also by their ecclesiastical superiors. Both must learn selflessness, without which no inner assent to the multiplicity of forms in which the faith is lived is possible. Both sides must learn from each other, allow themselves to be purified by each other, put up with each other, and discover how to attain those spiritual gifts of which Paul speaks in his great Hymn to Love (cf. *1 Cor* 13:4-7). The movements thus need to be reminded that—even if they have found and transmitted the totality of the faith in their way—they are a gift to the Church as a whole, and must submit to the demands of this totality, in order to be true to their own essence.[23] But the local Churches, too, even the bishops, must be reminded that they must avoid any uniformity of pastoral organizations and programmes. They must not

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[23] See Cattaneo, "I movimenti ecclesiali", 423—425.

turn their own pastoral plans into the criterion of what the Holy Spirit is allowed to do: an obsession with planning could render the Churches impervious to the action of the Holy Spirit, to the power of God by which they live.[24] Not everything should be fitted into the straightjacket of a single uniform organization; what is needed is less organization and more spirit! Above all, a concept of *communio,* in which the highest pastoral value is attached to the avoidance of conflict, should be rejected. Faith remains a sword and may demand conflict for the sake of truth and love (cf. *Mt* 10:34). A concept of Church unity in which conflicts are dismissed *a priori* as polarization, and in which internal peace is bought at the price of the renunciation of the totality of witness, would quickly prove to be illusory. What, in the last analysis, needs to be established is not a blasé attitude of intellectual superiority that immediately brands the zeal of those seized by the Holy Spirit and their uninhibited faith with the anathema of fundamentalism, and only authorises a faith in which the ifs and buts are more important than the substance of what is believed. In the last analysis everyone must let himself be measured by the unity of the one Church, which remains *one* in all the local Churches and as such appears again and again in the apostolic movements. Local Churches and apostolic movements must constantly recognise and accept the simultaneous truth of two propositions: *ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia—ubi episcopus, ibi ecclesia.* Primacy and episcopacy, the local ecclesial system and the apostolic movements, need each other. Primacy can only live with and through a living episcopacy, episcopacy can only preserve its dynamic and apostolic unity in subservience to primacy. Where one of the two is weakened, the Church as a whole suffers.

After all these reflections and arguments, what should remain at the end is above all a feeling of gratitude and joy. Gratitude that the Holy Spirit is quite plainly at work in the Church and is lavishing new gifts on her in our time too, gifts through which she relives the joy of her youth (cf. *Ps* 42:4 Vulgate). Gratitude for the many people, young and old, who accept God's call and joyfully enter into the service of the Gospel without looking back. Gratitude for the bishops who open themselves up to the new movements, create room for them in their local Churches, struggle patiently with them in order to overcome their one-sidedness and guide them to the right form. Above all, in this place and at this time, let us thank Pope John Paul II. He surpasses us all in his capacity for enthusiasm, in his strength of interior rejuvenation won from faith, in his discernment of spirits, in his humble and courageous struggle for the fullness of services for the sake of the Gospel, and in his unity with the bishops of the whole world: a unity based on a willingness both to listen and teach. He leads us all to Christ. Christ lives, and he sends the Holy Spirit from the Father—that is the joyful and life-giving experience that is given to us by the meeting with the ecclesial movements in our time.

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[24] The point is insistently made by Cattaneo, "I movimenti ecclesiali", 413—414 and 417.

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