

THE PNEUMATIC PARADIGM OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST: A KEY TOWARDS A CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER IN A SYNODAL CHURCH

Mikhail P. Cabangisan

Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University

Email: cabangisanmikhail@lst.edu

Abstract

This study explores the pivotal role of the pneumatological paradigm in shaping the priesthood within a synodal Church context, emphasizing its potential to cultivate a culture of encounter. Grounded in theological inquiry and pastoral reflection, the study investigates how a pneumatologically informed understanding of priesthood to facilitate transformative encounters marked by authenticity, dialogue, and communion. By delving into the dynamics of pneumatological interpretation and its implications to the church, the research sheds light on the profound ways in which the Holy Spirit animates and guides the Church towards greater unity and mission. Through its exploration of the hermeneutics of the pneumatological paradigm, this study seeks to contribute to ongoing conversations within ecclesiology, offering insights into how pneumatic priesthood can effectively engage in the synodal journey towards a more vibrant and inclusive Church community.

Keywords: *pneumatology, Trinity, priesthood, ecclesiology, synodality, communion*

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary Church stands at a crossroads, grappling with the imperative to adapt to evolving societal realities while remaining faithful to Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium. The Church seeks to authentically engage with the contemporary world and respond to the signs of the times, there arises a pressing need to re-examine and redefine the role of the priesthood. The emerging concern now in ecclesiology is the lack of missionary dynamism among Christians, resulting from not highlighting the responsibilities shared by the common priesthood of the faithful and the hierarchical priesthood of ordained ministers in a way that stimulates exacerbating tensions instead of cooperation. This is a concern and a conviction of current research in ecclesiology, which aims, with the help of pneumatology, to overcome not only clericalism but also the type of church organization that is too exclusively centered on the ordained ministry.¹

Against this backdrop, a Synodal Church is an emerging landscape of the Church that is transforming and reshaping the people of God in this contemporary period. Indeed, it is evident in the words and teachings of Pope Francis. Even from the moment of his election as the Pope, he subtly unraveled his vision for the Church in his message to the faithful when he said, "Let us always pray for one another. Let us pray for the whole world that there might be a great sense of brotherhood." He humbly asked the faithful to pray for him, saying the following words, "And now I would like to give the blessing, but first I want to ask you a favor. Before the bishop blesses the people, I ask that you would pray to the Lord to bless me—the prayer of

¹ Cardinal Marc Ouellet, *A Fundamental Theology of the Priesthood*, (Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, NJ 2023), 119.

the people for their Bishop. Let us say this prayer—your prayer for me in silence."² Indeed, it was a gesture from Pope Francis to reaffirm the Church's vision of opening its windows and letting in the fresh air. Since Vatican Council II, the Church has continued to embrace this mission of opening its windows so that the Church can see out and the people can see in.³

Reflecting upon the message and gesture of Pope Francis on the day of his election, one can already notice the incitement towards participation, communion, and mission that all the people of God should be engaged in building up the kingdom of God, and it all started with praying for one another. He wanted to take the whole of the Second Vatican Council's vision; for him, the whole is more than the sum of the parts. The various emphases of his pontificate on a church that is poor and for the poor, a merciful church, and a missionary church are attempts to name vital aspects of what he interprets as the comprehensive vision of the council. A synodal church is one such aspect, but one that, like the others, the council itself did not quite bring to the neat formulation. "*Synodality*" is his catch-all phrase for how he believes the Second Vatican Council is envisioning the church ad intra—in its inner workings—without wanting to separate the church's inner life from the effectiveness of its outward (ad extra) mission in the world.⁴ *Synodality* is a constitutive element of the Church. In this Church, as in an inverted pyramid, the top is located beneath the base. A synodal Church is a Church that listens and realizes that listening is more than simply hearing. It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all are listening to each other, and all are listening to the Holy Spirit, the 'Spirit of truth,' in order to know what the Spirit says to the Churches.⁵

Framework

This synodal framework in ecclesiology opens new facets for investigation in theology to understand deeply its theological underpinnings. In this task of theology, the pneumatological paradigm emerges as a potent lens to understand and navigate the role of the priesthood within the framework of a synodal Church. Grounded in the theological concept of the Holy Spirit's guidance and empowerment, this paradigm offers a transformative approach to ministerial priesthood and common priesthood that emphasizes participation, mission, and communion. Furthermore, it seeks to explore the hermeneutics of the pneumatological paradigm of priesthood and its significance as a key element in fostering a culture of encounter towards a synodal Church. By delving into the theological foundations, ecclesiological frameworks, and practical implications of this paradigm, this study aims to illuminate its potential to shape priestly formation, ministry practices, and the broader dynamics of ecclesial life.

² Pope Francis, Transcript: Pope Francis' First Speech As Pontiff, Retrieved February 19, 2024, <https://www.npr.org/2013/03/13/174224173/transcript-pope-francis-first-speech-as-pontiff>.

³ Pope John XXIII, The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul and the Second Vatican Council, Retrieved March 15, 2024 <https://www.ewtnvatican.com/articles/feast-of-the-conversion-of-st-paul-and-the-second-vatican-council-415>.

⁴ Ormond Rush, Inverting the Pyramid: The *Sensus Fidelium* in a Synodal Church, Retrieved February 19, 2024, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0040563917698561#body-refn11-0040563917698561>.

⁵ Ibid.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

On The Holy Spirit and Christ's Priesthood

To embark on a deeper understanding of the pneumatological dimension of Christ's priesthood, it is essential to primarily consider its trinitarian structure. This trinitarian structure of priesthood is evident in the persona of Christ, the high priest of the new covenant encapsulated through three core elements: the act of offering, the role of mediation, and the fostering of communion. Jesus Christ is the Father's envoy to humankind to incarnate his love and offer in return a sacrifice of expiation for sins that re-establishes our communion with God through the paschal gift of the Holy Spirit. These three aspects make up the trinitarian structure of the priesthood; the offering is, first, that of the Father, who gives his Son to the world (John 3:16), then that of the Son, whose mediation consists of taking on our sinful flesh to offer it to the Father, redeemed, in response to his love. The incarnate Son thus obtains from the Father the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who raises him from the dead, absolves the sin of the world, and gives believers access to the eternal life of the Father and the Son in the communion of the Spirit.⁶ In this figure, the active participation of the Holy Spirit in the trinitarian life is not only perceived as a fruit of the union between the Father and the Son but a necessary condition to make possible the function of communion in the Holy Trinity and the priesthood of Christ.

From this standpoint, the Holy Spirit appears very explicitly in the aspect of communion, in accordance with his hypostasis in the Trinity and his own mission in the economy of salvation in company with the Word incarnate.⁷ Incarnation, in the language of the Council of Chalcedon, is the assumption of a human nature by God the Son, who had existed from eternity in the divine nature, so that from that time, the divine Son existed as the man Jesus of Nazareth. Christian faith understands the high point of God's presence to man in terms of incarnation. Faith further understands this presence of God as radiating out from the Incarnation and being shared by all who make the submission of faith through Christ. This is accomplished through the Holy Spirit, who, also existing from eternity, is now sent by Christ to men and women to unite them to himself and ultimately to the Father.⁸ "Through him (Christ), we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in one Spirit to the Father."⁹ The integration of the eternal Spirit into God's scheme of redemption occurs through Christ and relies on Him entirely. We can even call it an "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit in Christ, provided that we keep the word in inverted commas, understanding it only by analogy to the incarnation of the divine Son in the human being of Jesus. Specific New Testament communities, notably those influenced by Paul, perceived this "incarnation" and equated the Spirit of Christ with the Holy Spirit of ancient times, recognizing His presence as Christ among them.¹⁰ The incarnation represents not only the union of divinity with humanity in Christ but also the ongoing presence of the Spirit, uniting believers with the divine.

In relation to the priesthood of Christ, the Spirit participates in that priesthood from the first moment of his incarnation, since the Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit and took the flesh of the Virgin Mary under the action of the Holy Spirit, which lasted for the entirety of his mission on this earth. Thus, the Spirit configured

⁶ Ouellet, *A Fundamental Theology of the Priesthood*, 117.

⁷ Ibid., 116.

⁸ David Coffey, "The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit in Christ, Volume 45, Issue 3, Retrieved March 16, 2024 <https://doi.org/10.1177/004056398404500303>.

⁹ Cf. Eph. 2:18.

¹⁰ Coffey, "The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit in Christ, Retrieved March 16, 2024 <https://doi.org/10.1177/004056398404500303>.

the priesthood of Christ by imprinting on his human life the features of the Son of God.¹¹ Christ's priesthood is, therefore, constituted and configured by the Holy Spirit, who participates intimately in his incarnation of the trinitarian love in history. This participation involves first the hypostatic union, where the Holy Spirit joins together the divine and human natures, without confusion or separation, in the person of the incarnate Word.¹² This participation of the Holy Spirit in the priesthood of Christ is consistent with the Holy Spirit's character of communion. Ultimately, what should be retained here is the fact that Christ's priesthood as mediation necessarily involves the participation of the Spirit not only as its fruit but also as the condition for it to be possible because the Redeemer's obedience in love is made possible by the grace of the Holy Spirit who mediates for him the will of the Father even unto death.¹³ Thus, it illuminates the profound theological significance of the Holy Spirit's involvement in Christ's priesthood, highlighting the inseparable bond between the two in the economy of salvation.

In conclusion, this redemptive obedience expresses in the economy of salvation his eternal procession as Son of the Father, and the glorification of Christ by the Holy Spirit confirms the divinity of the incarnate Son and the perfect unity of Father and Son in the common work of reconciling the world with God.¹⁴ Moreover, Christ's paschal mystery manifests the trinitarian economy of salvation, where the Holy Spirit confirms the fruitfulness of the new covenant by being poured out himself, effecting humankind's participation in the communion of the Trinity. The Church is the concrete manifestation of this under its social form as people of God. This form acquires a sacramental meaning through the work that is properly that of the Holy Spirit but is always accomplished jointly with the risen Christ, the one mediator of the new covenant.¹⁵ It shows the interplay between Christ's redemptive work, the Holy Spirit's role, and the Church's manifestation within the trinitarian economy of salvation. It emphasizes the Holy Spirit's pivotal role in affirming Christ's divinity and priesthood while empowering believers to participate in the life of the Trinity.

Pneumatic Dimension of The Priesthood in The Ecclesial *Communio*

One fundamental characteristic of the Church is communion. The discussion about communion in the Church is vital to the life and mission of the Church. Communion is Jesus' deepest desire, "that all may be one."¹⁶ And so, part of the mission of the Church is to fulfill and reflect God's unity among the faithful and in the world. The Church understands communion as not only about the question of the Church's structure, but it refers rather to the actual thing (res) from which the Church comes and for which she lives.¹⁷ This actual thing refers to all men called by God to participate in the divine life because the very life of the triune God is a life of communion. Communion is a gift of God offered to all men upheld by the visible bond of ecclesiastical order.¹⁸ The unity of the Church, her existence, her nature, as

¹¹ Ouellet, *A Fundamental Theology of the Priesthood*, 116.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 117.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Cf. Jn. 17:21.

¹⁷ Walter Kasper, "Kirche Als communio: Überlegungen zur ekklesiologischen Leitidee des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils", in *Die bleibende Bedeutung des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, ed. F. König, 62-84, citation at 66 (Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1986).

¹⁸ *Lumen Gentium*, 14

well as her historicity have their basis in the triune God. He himself is the prototype for this unity and desires to include men in his divine life.¹⁹ To illustrate it further, the Father destined men to take part in his divine life through the power of creation. The Father's call to partake in the divine life attains its full specificity in the incarnation, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, in whom the *communio* is realized in a unique manner. In becoming man, he wills to unite himself, so to speak, with every human being so as to lead every individual into the fellowship of the triune God through his redemptive work.²⁰ This participation of men in the divine life of Jesus Christ is brought about by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit unites the entire people of God with Christ and gives it life. Thus, the trinitarian *communio* is the source and goal of ecclesial *communio*.

In view of this background, how can the perspective of the pneumatic dimension of the priesthood affect, strengthen, and deepen the Church's life of *communio* in *synodality*? The key to this inquiry is the invisible, perpetual, and fundamental principle of the Church's unity, the Holy Spirit. This defines the fundamental relationship of the Spirit with the Church. To further understand this fundamental relationship of the Spirit with the Church, it is essential to view it from the ontological sense of the *communio*.

The relation of Christ's priesthood in the Church is derived from the pneumatic dimension. It means that it is drawn from a trinitarian direction in the sense of participation in the Spirit of the Father and the Son, who is equally the same Spirit of communion. To exemplify this pneumatic trinitarian direction, it is essential to view this in the context of redemption. First, in the act of redemption, the absolution by the Father in response to Christ's sacrifice is signified and given to him in the very act of his resurrection from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is then that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is communicated to him as Spirit of the Father, sovereign Spirit who absolves from sin, raises the dead, and "pneumatizes" Christ's humanity to make it a life-giving Spirit, able to be prolonged throughout history under a new corporal, sacramental modality in the Church, the Body and Bride of the risen Christ.²¹ Second, in the act of redemption, Jesus Christ situates us at the heart of the mystery of the incarnation and its sacramental continuity in the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit. If the Word of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit and accompanied by him for the whole of his incarnate life on earth, it was so that he would live integrally his human condition and his mission as Son of the Father assisted by his filial Spirit, to fulfill his redemptive mission to the end, which included carrying the sins of the world in the offering of love he made on the cross; and to obtain the Father's absolution in response to his sacrifice.²² The third consideration is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and the Son, which is the same Spirit of communion that manifests in the common priesthood of the baptized and the ministerial priesthood,²³ for it is the Spirit who always brings about communion, without confusion or separation, between the divine persons and the ecclesial community.²⁴ To articulate further this manifestation of the Spirit of communion in the common and ministerial

¹⁹ Maximilian Heinrich Heim, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger *Life in the Church and Living Theology* (Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2007), 65.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

²¹ Ouellet, *A Fundamental Theology of the Priesthood*, 128.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 130.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 128.

priesthood, the presence of the Holy Spirit should be exemplified in the sacramental life of the faithful.

In baptism, the person receives the Holy Spirit. What the person receives is an identification, not a representation, of both the person and community, with the Son and through him with the Father in the Spirit.²⁵ The Spirit always brings about communion, which configures the grace of divine sonship in the souls of the baptized in an indelible way that is expressed by the concept of sacramental character. The permanent possibility possessed by each baptized person, whether in a state of grace or of sin, is the filial priesthood of the baptized.²⁶ On the other hand, in the case of the ministerial priesthood, the same Spirit of communion effects not purely and simply identification; instead, it effects the sacramental representation of the paternal dimension of Christ's mission because, in the economy of salvation, Christ manifests himself as the Son who is obedient to his Father and subject to his parents, but also is revealed as the apostle of God the Father, the Father's minister or servant.²⁷ Thus, the essential distinction between the two participations in the one priesthood of Christ is based, therefore, on the pneumatology that distinguishes the Spirit of the Son at the source of the filial priesthood of all the faithful and the Spirit of the Father as the source of the paternal priesthood of ordained ministers. In light of this, it is evident that both participations are ordered to one another, the more fundamental one being the eternal filial priesthood, in the service of which the hierarchical sacramental priesthood is deployed for the time of the economy of salvation.²⁸ Indeed, their explication of the ontological interrelation between the common and the ministerial forms of priesthood implies a concept of metaphysics marked by a quite distinctive trait: it is a "pneumatological" metaphysics since Christ and Christians are viewed as ontologically united by sharing not in an abstract and impersonal state of being, but in the specific and personal existence of the Holy Spirit whom they possess in common.²⁹

In this perspective, the priesthood is understood through a Trinitarian lens, involving participation in the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. This Spirit of communion reveals its filial aspect within the shared priesthood of the baptized and its paternal aspect within the ministerial priesthood. Indeed, the Holy Spirit continues Christ's mission by taking it up and spreading it throughout humankind through the sacramental mediation of the Church. The Holy Spirit accomplishes this sacramental universalization of Christ's mission by letting himself be poured out freely by the Father and the Son and by giving himself to the Church in a way that is beyond the power of speech to describe and beyond all analogy. This indescribable presence of the Holy Spirit is the foundation for the Church's participation in the trinitarian communion and the principal agent of the differentiation of the sacramental gifts and the multiple interactions between the divine persons and human beings in the service of communion and mission.³⁰ Thus, the Holy Spirit always brings about communion, without confusion or separation, between the divine persons and the ecclesial community.

²⁵ Ibid., 127.

²⁶ Ibid., 128.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 129.

²⁹ Philip J. Rosato, *Priesthood of the Baptized and Priesthood of the Ordained: Complementary Approaches to Their Interrelation*, 221, Retrieved March 15, 2024 [https:// www.jstor.org/stable/23577665](https://www.jstor.org/stable/23577665).

³⁰ Ouellet, *A Fundamental Theology of the Priesthood*, 127

Hence, the baptized and the ordained are not so much distinct participants as they are distinct participants in Christ's mediatory being and mission. While it is important that the two modalities of Christian priesthood not be confused, since each is ontologically different from the other, it is even more important that they not be disjoined since each is ontologically related to the other due to its equally valid foundation in Christ's priestly person and activity.³¹ In other words, although it's crucial to acknowledge the differences between these two modes of Christian priesthood because they are fundamentally distinct, it's even more vital to recognize their connection brought about by the Holy Spirit.

Pneumatic Priesthood As A Social Model Towards *Synodality*

Synodality, in its deepest sense, is the coexistence of the common priesthood and hierarchical priesthood in the Church. The determining feature of the union between the two modalities is the priesthood shared from the priesthood of Christ impressed by the indwelling of the Spirit. *Synodality* seeks to resolve the gap between these two modalities and create a common ground where coexistence and collaboration in the mission are envisioned. The model for a synodal Church is necessarily derived from the Trinitarian perspective.

This Spirit of communion reveals its filial aspect within the shared priesthood of the baptized and its paternal aspect within the ministerial priesthood. St. Paul, for example, makes the connection on several occasions: 'Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone.'³² Here, Paul presses to an understanding that the unity of the Church is grounded in God, who is Three. Cyprian of Carthage describes the Church as 'the people united in one in the unity of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.'³³ Tertullian also draws a correspondence between the ecclesial and the divine three. For the very Church itself is, properly and principally, the Spirit Himself, in whom is the Trinity of the One Divinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Spirit combines that Church which the Lord has made to consist in 'three'. Thus, from that time forward, every number of persons who may have combined together into this faith is accounted 'a Church' from the Author and Consecrator of the Church.³⁴ Early Christian texts attest to an emerging consciousness that the God who is Three is the origin of the Church and the source of its *synodality*. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, begins by describing the Church as a sacrament, a sign and instrument of 'communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race.'³⁵ It states that 'the universal Church is seen to be a people made one by the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Indeed, at the heart of Vatican Council II is the theme of synodality.

In this regard, the vision and purpose of *synodality* in the Church is theologically attested. The concept of *synodality* in the Church is rooted in the theological truth of the Pneumatic Priesthood. This pneumatic priesthood as a social model towards *synodality* ought to prevent this monolithic concentration of

³¹ Philip J. Rosato, Priesthood of the Baptized and Priesthood of the Ordained: Complementary Approaches to Their Interrelation, 221, Retrieved March 15, 2024 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23577665>.

³² Cf. 1 Cor 12: 4-6.

³³ Cyprian, Treatise IV, 'On the Lord's Prayer, 'IV:23, in The Anti-Nicene Fathers, vol.5, 454.

³⁴ Tertullian, 'On Modesty', 21, in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 4, 99-100.

³⁵ *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

power and to open the way for broad egalitarian participation on the part of all.³⁶ In this sense, *synodality* transforms an authoritarian leadership style that precludes the laity's participation. Here calls the early conception of the Church as a community of believers, in which each member has their own gifts and talents, to be exercised for the benefit of all. Each person performs their task but in communion with everyone else. In this fashion, the whole Church is transformed into a sign of the Trinity and after the model of the pneumatic priesthood. The *synodality* of the Church does not consist of a bureaucratic uniformity but of perichoresis among all the faithful in the service of others.³⁷ This model of the pneumatic priesthood continues to relive the essence of the Christian community in the impulse of *synodality*. It produces a vision of the Church that is more communion than hierarchy, more service than power, more circular than pyramidal, and more loving embrace than bending the knee before authority. Such a model of the Church would submit all ecclesial functions (episcopate, presbyterate, lay ministries, and so on) to the imperative of communion and participation by all in everything that concerns the good of all.³⁸ Indeed, the norm of *synodality* derived from the pneumatic priesthood model describes the Church's communion, participation, and mission.

Moreover, *synodality* is the new face of the Church that reflects the nature of the pneumatic priesthood. It calls for a transformation of ecclesial relations, which means all ecclesial relationships must be reconfigured in accordance with the priority of our baptism. The mission of *synodality* demands a movement from the center to the peripheries so that the church may go forth to everyone without exception. Remarkably, the synodal church seeks to concentrate on the essentials of the Christian faith. It focuses on the concrete life of discipleship over a preoccupation with abstract dogmatic formulations, canonical determinations, and liturgical rubrics. In other words, relating doctrine to something more fundamental: the Christian kerygma, is essential. Also, in a synodal church, the authentic exercise of authority is guided by the principle of subsidiarity. Synodal authority should always be exercised as a service to God's people in ways that attend to both the local and universal dimensions of the church.³⁹ Thus, patterned after the model of pneumatic priesthood, the call towards *synodality* is an impulse response to the signs of the times. The Holy Spirit, as the agent of *synodality*, dwells in the Church, and he continues to guide the work of Christ until the end of time. For this reason, the Holy Spirit lives in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful "as in a temple,"⁴⁰ brings about their communion in God, bears witness to their adoptive filiation, and unifies the Church in communion and works of ministry.⁴¹ This relationship of the Holy Spirit with the Church is seen from the perspective of the priesthood of Christ shared by the people of God.

³⁶ Anne Hunt, "The Trinity and the Church: Explorations in Ecclesiology from a Trinitarian Perspective," in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 70(3), 219, Retrieved April 15, 2024 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/002114000507000302>.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 220.

³⁹ Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Synodality and the Francis Pontificate: A Fresh Reception of Vatican II*, in *Theological Studies* 2023, Vol. 84(1), 46, Retrieved April 15, 2024 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/00405639221147844>.

⁴⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19.

⁴¹ *Lumen Gentium*, 4.

Implications of Pneumatic Priesthood Towards a Synodal Church

The significance of the pneumatic approach in ecclesial communion has been recognized deeply in the life of the Church. However, there was a critique on the way the Vatican Council II presented the collegiality in the context of ecclesial communion. It lacks a solid pneumatology, which is one main weakness of the approach of Vatican II to collegiality. All discussions about bishops focused on Jesus and his direct, explicit offices.⁴² The path leading to a preoccupation with ecclesiastical power is wide and clear. In contrast, pneumatology, brought about closer to ecclesiology, would dwell upon the constitution, the dynamic self-realization of the Church as the total Christ in the Spirit.⁴³ In order to achieve this, christology also needs to be informed by pneumatology.

On that premise, appropriating the paradigm of the pneumatic priesthood into a synodal Church diminishes the probability of falling into the same mistake. The impact of the pneumatic paradigm gives birth to positive implications that may conform with the aim of a synodal church. The implications of pneumatic priesthood offer concrete resolutions to the current landscape in the Church. These are resolutions that are ontologically existing already in the life of the Church. It is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit to effect communion in the Trinity and the members of the Church. It takes place in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit describes the fundamental relationship of the Spirit with the Church. Explicitly, *Lumen Gentium* described eloquently this profound relationship in the following words:

The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple. In them, He prays on their behalf and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons. This is the basic aspect that precedes in dignity and importance all the other manifestations of the Spirit: it is his witness to filial adoption that is at the base of the mission of the Church- the Church that the Spirit animates, sanctifies, renews, builds up, and guides "with hierarchical and charismatic gifts," embellishing it and leading it "to perfect union with its Spouse". Thus, this remarkable passage concludes, the universal Church is seen as "people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."⁴⁴

The profound presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church provides the right reason and ways so that the Church may grow in a synodal way. Also, it unveils the concrete actions to overcome the obstacles to a synodal life in the Church. The first effect is the two sacramental manifestations, the Spirit of communion manifested in his filial side in the common priesthood of the baptized and his paternal side in the ordained ministry of ministers, converging toward a building-up of ecclesial communion. Its effects are the peaceful or joyous complementarity between faithful and ministers founded on and nourished at the spring of the communion of the divine persons. This participation in the loving relationship between the Father and the Son sanctifies human relationships, heals those that are sometimes subject to conflict, places questions of power and authority in their correct setting, and, above all, opens a space of freedom for the creativity of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ In other words, the sacramental manifestations reverberate the actual life of communion of the

⁴² Luis Antonio Tagle, *It is the Lord* (Loyola School of Theology, Manila, Philippines, 2003) 52.

⁴³ John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Valdimir's Seminary, 1985) 22.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Ouellet, *A Fundamental Theology of the Priesthood*, 130.

Trinity and create a condition that will serve as the focal point of healing amongst the people of God. This is relevant to the process of *synodality* because the process itself aims to achieve healing from conflicts and confusion. The healing that comes from the Holy Spirit's power of communion results in an atmosphere of *synodality* in the Church.

The second effect is the relationship between authority and community is thus decentered from the over-human dimension, so often a locus of conflict, and re-centered on grace, namely the communion of the divine persons given participatively in the filial identity of the baptized and the paternal identity of ordained ministers, both being inhabited and sanctified by the Spirit of the Father and the Son. This grace is not a dream, an ideal, or a symbol; it is the ontology of the divine persons and human beings in the exercise of communion in the Spirit.⁴⁶ Transcending mere positions or roles in the Church becomes the lived experience of communion with the Divine. Without this ontological perspective of ecclesial relationship, *synodality* becomes a mere institution, not a people that journeys together. Thus, the ontological perspective forms the synodal way of being a Church.

The third effect, as the fruitfulness of this trinitarian approach first appears in the communion between pastors and faithful, truly blossoms and flourishes in the flowering of an ecclesial community rich in charisms. For ecclesial communion strengthened by harmonious participation in the relationships of filiation and paternity liberates the sphere of action of the Holy Spirit, which is then expressed in an abundance of charisms and vocations of all sorts, lay, matrimonial, religious, and priestly, in the service of the sacramental mission of the Church.⁴⁷ The working of the Holy Spirit is evident in the charismatic gifts and works in ministry by equipping and directing the hierarchical offices of service.

Thus, the pneumatic priesthood is a key fundamental truth of faith that affirms the nature of communion and *synodality* in the Church. Through this fundamental truth makes the possibility of achieving concrete resolutions to the current landscapes and issues in the Church more intelligible. Indeed, this approach infers that the journey towards the true identity of the Church is caused by the Pneumatic Priesthood.

CONCLUSION

Synodality in the Church is an invitation not to do something completely new but to give a new impulse to something that has always existed in the Church. It is inherent in the life of the Church because the very foundation of our journeying together is mirrored in the desire of God to journey with us. Journeying together as a human institution per se is futile if God is not the fundamental reason of our journeying together. *Synodality* should be anchored and centered on the divine life of the Trinity. The eminent gift of the priesthood of Christ, far from being a principle of division or even of opposition between the ministerial and common priesthood, is the basis of their union in the life of the Church.⁴⁸ This gift of the priesthood given to both the ordained and the laity is the principle of *synodality* in the Church. This assertion of the key principle of *synodality* in the Church illuminates the truth about the Church as a fundamental sacrament of Christ. The Church is the sacrament of Christ because it is a historical continuation of the presence of Christ in and through

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 131.

⁴⁸ Cardinal Maurice Roy, Intervention at the Synod of Bishops, October 1971 (Ottawa: CCCB 1971).

the community of those who believe in Him.⁴⁹ The Church has a sacramental function as the concrete mediation of salvation and grace, which Christ was in his earthly life. As Jesus Christ was the tangible manifestation of God's irreversible eschatological offer of salvation for mankind, and in this way, properly called the sacrament of the Father, so is the Church.⁵⁰

The synodal practice is a call to develop the missionary awareness of the baptized but also to develop genuine, charismatically diverse ministries duly recognized and integrated into the pastoral and missionary dynamics of ecclesial communities. Hence, it is urgent and essential to go deeper into the dimension of pneumatology.⁵¹ The Holy Spirit was then better seen, through a meditation on the mystery of the Church, as the one who points out the ways leading to the union of Christians, indeed as the supreme source of this unity, which comes from God himself and to which St. Paul gave a particular expression in the words which are frequently used to begin the Eucharistic liturgy: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. ⁵²' Synodality in the Church is a fruit of the indwelling of the Spirit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cyprian. Treatise IV. 'On the Lord's Prayer,' IV:23, in *The Anti-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5.
- Coffey, D. (1984). The "Incarnation" of the Holy Spirit in Christ. *Theological Studies*, 45(3), 466-480. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004056398404500303>.
- Gaillardetz, Richard R. *Synodality and the Francis Pontificate: A Fresh Reception of Vatican II*, in *Theological Studies* 2023, Vol. 84 (1). Retrieved April 15, 2024. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/00405639221147844>.
- Heim, Maximilian Heinrich. *Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger Life in the Church and Living Theology*. Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2007.
- Hunt, Anne. "The Trinity and the Church: Explorations in Ecclesiology from a Trinitarian Perspective," in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 70 (3). Retrieved April 15, 2024. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/002114000507000302>.
- Kasper, Walter. "Kirche Als communio: Überlegungen zur ekklesiologischen Leitidee des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils", in *Die bleibende Bedeutung des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, ed. F. König, 62-84, citation at 66 (Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1986).
- Ouellet, Cardinal Marc. *A Fundamental Theology of the Priesthood*. Paulist Press, New York / Mahwah, NJ 2023.
- Pope Francis. Transcript: Pope Francis' First Speech As Pontiff. Retrieved February 19, 2024. <https://www.npr.org/2013/03/13/174224173/transcript-pope-francis-first-speech-as-pontiff>.

⁴⁹ Karl Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, trans. W.J. O'Hara, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), 18.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ouellet, *A Fundamental Theology of the Priesthood*, 118.

⁵² Pope John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, 2, Retrieved April 15, 2024 https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_18051986_dominum-et-vivificantem.html.

- Pope John Paul II. *Dominum et Vivificantem*. 18 May 1986, Vatican, Rome. Retrieved April 15, 2024. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp_ii_enc_18051986_dominum-et-vivificantem.html.
- Pope John XXIII. The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul and the Second Vatican Council. Retrieved March 15, 2024. <https://www.ewtnvatican.com/articles/feast-of-thecon-version -of-st- paul-and-the-second-vatican-council-415>.
- Rahner, Karl. *The Church and the Sacraments*, trans. W.J. O'Hara. New York: Herder and Herder, 1963.
- Rosato, Philip J. Priesthood of the Baptized and Priesthood of the Ordained: Complementary Approaches to Their Interrelation, 221. Retrieved March 15, 2024. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23577665>.
- Roy, Cardinal Maurice. Intervention at the Synod of Bishops. October 1971 Ottawa: CCCB 1971.
- Rush, O. (2017). Inverting the Pyramid: The *Sensus Fidelium* in a Synodal Church. *Theological Studies*, 78(2), 299-325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040563917698561>.
- Tagle, Cardinal Luis Antonio. *It is the Lord*. Loyola School of Theology, Manila, Philippines, 2003.
- Tertullian. 'On Modesty', 21, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. vol. 4.
- The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006.
- Vatican Council II. *Lumen Gentium*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1965.
- Zizioulas, John. *Being as Communion*. Crestwood, NY: St. Valdimir's Seminary, 1985.