

## **INFORMATION TO USERS**

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.**

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

**Bell & Howell Information and Learning  
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA  
800-521-0600**

**UMI<sup>®</sup>**





Université d'Ottawa • University of Ottawa



**THE ASSESSMENT AND PERSPECTIVES  
OF THE SPECIAL ASSEMBLY FOR AFRICA OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS**

by  
**(C) Joseph M. WAMALA**

**A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Canon  
Law, Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada, in par-  
tial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Canon Law**

**Ottawa, Canada  
Saint Paul University  
1999**



National Library  
of Canada

Acquisitions and  
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale  
du Canada

Acquisitions et  
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

*Your file Votre référence*

*Our file Notre référence*

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-52280-6

Canada

## ABSTRACT

### **The Assessment and Perspectives of the Special Assembly For Africa of the Synod of Bishops**

On the opening day of the fourth session of the Second Vatican Council, September 14, 1965, Pope Paul VI announced to the council fathers that a synod of bishops would be established in the near future. On the following day, September 15, in the presence of Pope Paul VI, Cardinal P. Marella, presented to the fathers the *motu proprio, Apostolica sollicitudo*, establishing the synod of bishops on a permanent basis.

According to the *motu proprio*, among the important reasons for the establishment of the synod of bishops was the pope's ministry as universal pastor. Thus, the synod of bishops would serve the pope by consolidating the unity and mutual help between himself and the bishops, and ensure that direct and accurate information is provided to the pope on vital issues. These ideas were later codified into law, which states that, in exercising his office, the Roman Pontiff is assisted in various ways, among these being the synod of bishops (c. 334).

Since its creation, many assemblies of the synod of bishops have been realized, one of which was convoked especially for Africa, on February 6, 1989. In 1994 this assembly was concluded in Rome. Among the issues discussed during the Synod, some have canonical implications. For instance, the existence of small Christian communities alongside parishes; the formation of the principal agents of evangelization in Africa which involves local churches especially the episcopal conferences and the small Christian communities; the ecclesial identity and ministry of the catechist; marriage; and inculturation of liturgy.

From the inquiry of the *raison d'être* of the synod of bishops according to the Second Vatican Council and the 1983 Code of Canon Law, we have explored the extent to which the current legislation of the Church can be of assistance in the implementation of the above issues. Since Africa is a big continent with a wide range of peoples with different cultural, ethnic, and political backgrounds, we deliberately limited our discussions to general canonical elements that we consider important in the implementation of any one of the synodal conclusions.

As a consultative organ available to the Roman Pontiff in the exercise of his Petrine office, the African Synod was a success. Also, the African Synod enabled the heads of the particular churches in Africa to work together for the first time, in that manner. However, like any human institutions, the synod of bishops, *per se*, can be improved. For this reason, we have made some suggestions to this effect.

(Joseph M. Wamala)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
GENERAL INTRODUCTION .....	1
<b>CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE AFRICAN SYNOD .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 - A Brief History of the Synod of Bishops .....	6
1.1.1 - The Synod of Bishops and the Petrine Ministry .....	7
1.1.2 - The Synod of Bishops according to 1983 Code of Canon Law .....	12
1.2 - The Concern for Incarnating the Gospel Message in Africa .....	16
1.3 - The Church's Response .....	24
1.3.1 - Pastoral Response: Inculturation .....	24
1.3.2 - Canonical Response: An African Council or the African Synod .....	34
1.3.2.1 - African Council .....	35
1.3.2.2 - Towards an African Synod .....	45
Conclusion .....	51
<b>CHAPTER TWO: THE DYNAMICS OF THE AFRICAN SYNOD OF BISHOPS .....</b>	<b>53</b>
2.1 - The Gateway to the Synodal Process: The <i>Lineamenta</i> .....	53
2.1.1 - The Role of the Conferences of Bishops in the Synodal Process .....	54
2.1.2 - Effective and Affective Collegiality .....	56
2.2 - The First Fruits of the Synod: The <i>Instrumentum laboris</i> .....	60
2.3 - <i>Cum et sub Petro</i> : The Working Session .....	66
2.3.1 - The First General Congregation .....	69
2.3.2 - The Synodal Interventions .....	73
2.3.3 - The Synodal Message: An <i>Unofficial Post-Synodal Exhortation</i> .....	81
2.4 - <i>Ecclesia in Africa</i> : Last Word or Last Synodal Act? .....	83
2.4.1 - The Sources of <i>Ecclesia in Africa</i> .....	83
2.4.2 - The Nature of <i>Ecclesia in Africa</i> .....	86
2.4.3 - The Message of <i>Ecclesia in Africa</i> .....	93
Conclusion .....	99
<b>CHAPTER THREE: PRINCIPAL CANONICAL ISSUES .....</b>	<b>102</b>
3.1 - The Small Christian Communities .....	102
3.1.1 - The Origin and Nature of Small Christian Communities in the African Church .....	103
3.1.2 - The African Synod and the Small Christian Communities .....	106
3.2 - The Agents of Proclamation of the Gospel in Africa .....	110
3.2.1 - Priests and Religious .....	111
3.2.2 - Catechists .....	115
3.2.2.1 - A Brief History of Catechists in the African Church .....	115

3.2.2.2 - The Identity and Role of Catechists in the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents .....	117
3.2.2.3 - The Identity and Role of Catechists According to the African Synod .....	120
3.3 - Inculturation in Africa .....	125
3.3.1 - The Magisterial Teaching on Inculturation in Conciliar and Post- Conciliar Documents .....	126
3.3.2 - Theologians on Inculturation in Africa .....	130
3.3.3 - Inculturation in the Synodal Documentation .....	132
3.3.3.1 - Inculturation and Marriage .....	135
3.3.3.2 - Inculturation and Liturgy .....	139
Conclusion .....	142
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN SYNOD .....</b>	<b>145</b>
4.1 - The Small Christian Communities .....	145
4.1.1 - The Parish in the Conciliar Documents .....	146
4.1.2 - The Parish in CIC/83 .....	147
4.1.3 - Quasi-Parish .....	150
4.1.4 - Towards a Juridic Status of Small Christian Communities .....	153
4.2 - The Agents of Proclamation of the Gospel in Africa .....	160
4.2.1 - Formation of Priests and Religious in Africa .....	160
4.2.1.1 - The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents on the Formation of Priests .....	161
4.2.2 - The Catechists .....	168
4.2.2.1 - The Identity and Ministry of Catechists According to CIC/83 .....	168
4.3 - Inculturation: Canonical Perspectives .....	175
4.3.1 - Inculturation and Marriage .....	175
4.3.1.1 - <i>Status questionis</i> : The Complexity of Marriage in Africa .....	176
4.3.1.2 - The Nature of Christian Marriage According to Vatican II and CIC/83 .....	178
4.3.2 - Inculturation and Liturgy .....	184
4.3.2.1 - A Plan of Action for Liturgical Inculturation .....	187
Conclusion .....	192
GENERAL CONCLUSION .....	195
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	202
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE .....	241

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AA</i>	<i>Apostolicam actuositatem</i> , Vatican Council II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity
<i>AAS</i>	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
<i>ACEAC</i>	Association of Episcopal Conferences of Central Africa
<i>ACECCT</i>	Association of Episcopal Conferences of Congo, Central Africa, Cameroon, Chad and Equatorial Guinea
<i>AECAWA</i>	Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa
<i>AFER</i>	<i>African Ecclesial Review</i>
<i>AG</i>	<i>Ad gentes divinitus</i> , Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity
<i>AMECEA</i>	Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa
<i>AS</i>	<i>Motu proprio Apostolica sollicitudo</i>
<i>ASDRP</i>	African Synod, Documents, Reflections, Perspectives
<i>CCC</i>	Catechism of the Catholic Church
<i>CD</i>	<i>Christus Dominus</i> , Vatican Council II, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops
<i>CCEO</i>	<i>Codex canonum Ecclesiarum orientalium</i>
<i>CERAO</i>	Regional Episcopal Conferences of Francophone West Africa
<i>CERNA</i>	Conference of Bishops of the Region of Northern Africa.
<i>CIC 17</i>	<i>Codex iuris canonici</i> (1917)
<i>CIC 83</i>	<i>Codex iuris canonici</i> (1983)
<i>CLD</i>	Canon Law Digest
<i>CLSA</i>	Canon Law Society of America
<i>DC</i>	<i>La Documentation catholique</i>
<i>DS</i>	Denzinger-Schönmetzer, <i>Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum</i>
<i>EAAT</i>	Ecumenical Association of African Theologians
<i>GS</i>	<i>Gaudium et spes</i> , Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World
<i>IAMBISA</i>	Inter-Regional Meeting of the Bishops of Southern Africa
<i>LG</i>	<i>Lumen gentium</i> , Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church
<i>ORE</i>	<i>L'Osservatore romano</i> , English language edition
<i>ORI</i>	<i>L'Osservatore romano</i> , Italian language edition
<i>OT</i>	<i>Optatam totius</i> , Vatican Council II, Decree on the Training of Priests
<i>PO</i>	<i>Presbyterorum ordinis</i> , Vatican Council II, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests
<i>SAC</i>	Society for African Culture
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> , Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
<i>SECAM</i>	Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to those who made it possible for me to undertake and complete this study, especially my bishop, His Eminence Alexander Cardinal Dos Santos, the Archbishop of Maputo, Moçambique.

Special thanks to Rev. Roch Pagé, the Dean, and to all members of the faculty of Canon Law for their support and encouragement. Rev. J.M. Huels, O.S.M., whose co-operation, guidance and concern were indispensable in this study, spent considerable time and energy in directing this research. I remain immensely grateful and indebted to him for his suggestions, generosity and kindness. My deepest appreciation to Rev. F.G. Morrisev, O.M.I. and Rev. A. Mendonça for their useful comments on this dissertation.

My heartfelt gratitude to Sr. Anne-Marie Ezenwa, E.H.J., whose friendship, support and assistance were invaluablely indispensable in this project.

My studies were made possible through a partial scholarship offered by the *Kirche in Not* organization. To them I am very grateful.

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Second Vatican Council was a great moment for the whole Church.<sup>1</sup> Its preparation involved consultation with bishops on the possible topics for discussion. Many bishops indicated that they wanted the council to discuss, among other issues, the office of bishops in its collegial context, and the solicitude of bishops for the entire Church. Some bishops proposed the creation of some kind of episcopal council that would be the institutional expression of episcopal collegiality and the embodiment of the bishops' solicitude for the entire Church. One of the bishops, Cardinal Bernard Alfrink of Utrecht, made this proposal:

Let the Council clearly proclaim that the episcopal college under the presidency of the Supreme Pontiff exercises by right government over the entire Church. From this it follows, on the one hand, that all bishops could exercise by right their own part in governing the entire Church. This could occur not only in convoking an ecumenical council, but also by creating other institutes. Possibly some permanent councils of bishops who were experienced and chosen from the whole Church could exercise, together with the Supreme Pontiff and the curial cardinals, the legislative function for the entire Church. The Roman Congregations could then retain consultative and administrative capacity.<sup>2</sup>

Before the beginning of the second session of the council, Paul VI, who had just been elected pope a few months earlier, spoke to the Roman Curia on the possibility for bishops to share in the task of governing the entire Church.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of the second session of the council (September 29, 1963), Paul VI again welcomed the proposals on ways through which bishops could

---

<sup>1</sup>In this study, we shall use upper case (Church) to refer to the entire Church or Catholic Church; otherwise, we shall use lower case.

<sup>2</sup>B.J. Alfrink, in *Acta et documenta Concilio oecumenico Vaticano II apparando, series I (Antepreparatoria)*, vol. II, pars II, Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1960, p. 511.

<sup>3</sup>"... quando il concilio ecumenico mostrasse desiderio di vedere associato in un certo modo e per certe questioni, in conformità alla dottrina della chiesa e alla legge canonica, qualche rappresentante dell'episcopato, particolarmente fra i presuli che digono una diocesi, al capo supreme della chiesa stessa, nello studio e nella reponsabilità del governo ecclesiastico, non sarà sicuramente la curia romana a farvi opposizione...." Paul VI, Allucution *Quali siano*, September 21, 1963, to officials of the Roman Curia, in *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* (=AAS), 55 (1963), p. 799.

help him in carrying out his duty of pastor of the entire Church.<sup>4</sup> However, the pontiff did not allude to the nature of this assistance or to the form it would take; he did not hint at the creation of a new episcopal council, even though there were already proposals for it.

The first conciliar debates on the *Schema decreti de Episcopis ac de diocesum regimine* began on November 5, 1963 and lasted until November 18. During this period, the debate focused on the college of bishops and the supreme power in the Church. The debate showed a growing awareness among the council fathers that the bishops, together with the pope, constitute a college which heads the Church and, therefore, there was a need to involve the bishops in the governing of the entire Church. The ecumenical council is the usual way of doing this; other ways are possible. This is how the council fathers began discussing some form of episcopal council that would function in this capacity.

The conciliar debates on the creation of an episcopal body were inconclusive. Some fathers held that such an organ was a necessary consequence of episcopal collegiality,<sup>5</sup> a means by which, outside an ecumenical council, the episcopal college could function. Other fathers felt that such a council would not be properly a collegial body but merely a way through which bishops could assist the pope in his petrine ministry.<sup>6</sup> Attempts to bring together both opinions were not lacking. The new body was acknowledged to be not a true representation of the college of bishops but only a kind of sign of it that would exist only to assist the Supreme Pontiff in the governance of the entire

---

<sup>4</sup>See *Acta synodalia*, V, II, I, pp. 190-191.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. II, IV, pp. 467, 480; III, II, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. II, IV, pp. 454, 519, 520; III, II, pp. 23-24.

Church.<sup>7</sup>

It was on the opening day of the fourth session of the Second Vatican Council, September 14, 1965, that Paul VI broke the impasse by announcing to the council fathers that a synod of bishops would be established in the near future. On the following day, September 15, in the presence of Pope Paul VI, Cardinal P. Marella presented to the fathers the *motu proprio, Apostolica sollicitudo*,<sup>8</sup> establishing the synod of bishops on a permanent basis.

According to the *motu proprio*, among the important reasons for the establishment of the synod of bishops was the pope's ministry as universal pastor. Thus, the synod of bishops would serve the pope by consolidating the unity and mutual help between himself and the bishops, and ensure that direct and accurate information is provided to the pope on vital issues. These ideas were later codified into law, which states that, in exercising his office, the Roman Pontiff is assisted in various ways, among these being the synod of bishops (c. 334).

As an institution, the synod of bishops was something new in the Church. Its *raison d'être* has been emerging gradually with experience. This is confirmed by the fact that the synodal rule has been revised three times as of this writing.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Paul VI foresaw this when he said that the synod

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. III, IV, p. 127.

<sup>8</sup>Paul VI, *motu proprio, Apostolica sollicitudo* (=AS), September 15, 1965, in *AAS*, 57 (1965), pp. 775-780; English translation in *Canon Law Digest* (=CLD), VI, p. 388.

<sup>9</sup>In addition to the *motu proprio, Apostolica sollicitudo*, the synod is governed by its *Ordo*, which has undergone three revisions: (1) *Ordo synodi episcoporum celebrandae*, December 8, 1966 (=Ordo 1966), in *AAS*, 59 (1967), pp. 91-103; (2) *Ordo synodi episcoporum celebrandae recognitus et auctus*, June 24, 1969 (=Ordo 1969), in *ibid.*, 61 (1969), pp.525-539; and (3) *Ordo synodi episcoporum celebrandae recognitus et auctus nonnullis additamentis perficitur*, August 20, 1971, (=Ordo 1971), in *ibid.*, 63(1971), pp. 702-704. General norms concerning the synod of bishops are also found in the *Code of Canon Law*, (=CIC/83), cc. 334 and 342-348. In this work, unless otherwise stated, English citations of CIC/83 are from *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition*, translation prepared under the auspices of the Canon Law Society of America, Washington, DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1983.

of bishops, like all human institutions, may be perfected in the course of time.<sup>10</sup>

Up to the present time, fifteen synodal assemblies have been realized, one of which was convoked especially for Africa. Various writers have expressed their views on the synod of bishops in general and the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops (which will be cited subsequently as the African Synod) in particular.

The present study is a canonical assessment of the synod of bishops, with particular reference to the African Synod. An analysis of the synodal process and the documents will indicate that the African Synod provided an occasion for the pope to exercise his petrine ministry by establishing what he considered to be the priority for the church in Africa, namely the promotion of an organic pastoral solidarity among the African episcopate.

A brief overview of the petrine ministry *per se* will help us to understand how this ministry was enhanced by the African Synod throughout the synodal process. The first chapter will analyze the historical background to the African Synod leading up to its convocation. The second chapter will analyze the dynamics of the African Synod, with special attention being given to the *Lineamenta*, the *Instrumentum laboris* and the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*. The third chapter will examine the principal canonical issues which were treated by the African Synod; these are the issues that were brought up with the greatest frequency throughout the synodal process. In the fourth chapter, we shall return to these issues to explore the extent to which the current legislation of the Church can be of assistance in their implementation. We will end with a general conclusion, in which we shall suggest some practical guidelines for the African church.

---

<sup>10</sup> "Haec synodus, quae omnium humanorum institutorum more, successu temporis, perfectiorem usque formam assequi poterit," AS, p. 776; CLD, VI, p. 389.

# CHAPTER ONE

## BACKGROUND TO THE AFRICAN SYNOD

### Introduction

On January 6, 1989, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, Pope John Paul II convoked the African Synod. In his address, the pontiff said:

Accepting the petitions often expressed for some time now by the African bishops, priests, theologians and representatives of the laity, in order to promote an organic pastoral solidarity within the entire African territory and nearby islands, I have decided to convoke a Special Assembly for Africa of the synod of bishops.<sup>11</sup>

According to the above words of the Holy Father, there were petitions expressed for some time by African bishops, priests, theologians, and representatives of the laity. Probing into them will help us to understand the *Sitz im Leben* in which the African synod was convoked. What, for example, were these petitions? What were they asking for? When the Pope finally decided to grant their request, what was he settling or putting an end to? From all the assemblies, why did the Pope choose the synod of bishops as the means to respond to the African petitions? In this chapter, we shall determine whether these petitions were made to the Pope to help in promoting an organic pastoral solidarity within the African church, or whether the Pope saw in the petitions a pressing need in the African church that a synod of bishops could resolve.

Though every synodal assembly is specific in its agenda, the ultimate purpose of all synods is to assist the pope in his petrine ministry. In this chapter, our particular interest will be to see how the convocation of the African Synod fulfilled this agenda of service to the petrine ministry. We shall achieve this by analysing the synod of bishops in general and the process that led to the convocation of the African Synod.

---

<sup>11</sup>John Paul II, "An African Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: 'The Church in Africa Towards the Third Millennium'," in *L'Osservatore romano*, English language edition (= *ORE*), January 16, 1989, p. 1.

## 1.1 - A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

The institution of the synod of bishops was conceived during the Second Vatican Council. On the opening day of the Fourth Session, September 14, 1965, Pope Paul VI announced to the council fathers that a synod would be established in the near future. On the following day, in the presence of the pope, Cardinal P. Marella presented to the council fathers the *motu proprio*, *Apostolica sollicitudo*, establishing the synod of bishops on a permanent basis.

Various writers have explained the *raison d'être* of the synod of bishops. Some describe it as an instrument of *effectus collegialis* (effective collegiality),<sup>12</sup> others as an instrument of *affectus collegialis* (affective collegiality),<sup>13</sup> as an instrument of both *effectus* and *affectus collegialis*, or even as neither of these.<sup>14</sup> No single explanation is sufficient in itself, and the adoption of one does not necessarily exclude the possibility of accepting the others. Sufficient time has passed (34 years)

---

<sup>12</sup>E. Schillebeeckx, holds that "collegiality is a living reality which allows for all sorts of degrees. The ecumenical council is at the top of this scale, followed immediately by the synod of bishops as conceived by the *motu proprio Apostolica sollicitudo* of September 15, 1965 and which – when all is said and done – perhaps corresponds more closely to what *Lumen gentium* calls the 'non-conciliar but nonetheless strictly collegial act'." P. Hebblethwaite, "What is the Synod of Bishops?" in *The Month*, New Series, 38 (1967), pp. 14-15.

<sup>13</sup>"The synod of bishops is not a form of exercising collegiality in the governance of the Church, but it is a way of collaborating with the Roman Pontiff in his primatial function. From this viewpoint, it is an institutionalized form of communion and collegial attachment, *collegialis affectus*, of the bishops among themselves and with the Roman Pontiff." See E. Caparros, M. Thériault, J. Thorn (eds.), *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, Latin-English edition of the *Code of Canon Law* and English-language translation of the 5th Spanish-language edition of the commentary prepared under the responsibility of the Instituto Martin de Azpilcueta, Montréal, Wilson & Lafleur Limitée, 1993 (= *Code of Canon Law Annotated*), p. 271.

<sup>14</sup>"It is thus quite unambiguous that the synod has nothing to do with the collegial form of power over the entire Church, but is directly connected with the personal form of government (*i.e.*, by the pope). Strictly speaking, it is not a manifestation of collegiality because it has a consultative function, and because its decision-making function does not derive from God through the episcopal consecration of its members, but from the pope." P. Hebblethwaite, "What is the Synod of Bishops?" p. 14.

to allow us to conclude that the *raison d'être* of the synod of bishops lies in its service to the petrine ministry.

### 1.1.1 - The Synod of Bishops and the Petrine Ministry

Canon 331 of CIC/83 states:

The bishop of the Church of Rome, in whom resides the office given in a special way to Peter, first of the apostles, and to be transmitted to his successors, is the head of the college of bishops, the Vicar of Christ and Pastor of the Universal Church on earth; therefore, in virtue of his office he enjoys supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary power in the Church, which he can always freely exercise.

Without entering into the debates over the source of the pope's role in the Church, this canon synthesizes the Church's teaching since Vatican I (Dogmatic Constitution, *Pastor aeternus*).<sup>15</sup> through CIC/17<sup>16</sup> (c. 218) to the Second Vatican Council (*Lumen gentium* and *Christus Dominus*).<sup>17</sup> The first part of the canon (up to the semicolon) deals with the pope as one "*in quo permanet munus a Domino singulariter Petro concessum et transmittendum*" (in whom resides the office given in a special way to Peter and to be transmitted). The second part is a corollary of the first: "therefore,

---

<sup>15</sup>First Vatican Council, *Pastor aeternus*, chap. 2, in Denziger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, ed. XXXIV, Barcinone, Herder, 1967, (= DS), n. 3050.

<sup>16</sup>*Codex iuris canonici, Pii X Pontificis Maximi iussu digestus, Benedicti Papae XV auctoritate promulgatus* (= CIC/17), Romae, Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1917.

<sup>17</sup>For the reference to succeeding Peter, cf. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, 20, November 21, 1964, (= LG) in AAS, 57 (1965), pp. 5-75. English translation in *Church Documents, Conciliar and Post-Conciliar*, CD-ROM, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1995. For the terms characterizing the nature of the power of his office and his freedom to exercise it, cf. LG, 22,27; Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, 2, October 28, 1965, (= CD) in AAS, 58 (1966), pp. 673-696; English translation in *Church Documents, Conciliar and Post-conciliar*, CD-ROM, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1995.

in virtue of his office he enjoys supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary power in the Church.”

There are two senses of succession to Christ’s power as regards the successors for the apostles: one is functional and the other is collegial. First, just as the successor of Peter continues Peter’s function, so the successors of the apostles continue the apostles’ pastoral function. Second, as Peter and the rest of the apostles formed one college, so the successors of Peter and of the apostles form one college: “Just as, by the decree of the Lord, Saint Peter and the rest of the apostles form one college, so for a like reason the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter, and the bishops, the successors of the apostles, are united together in one.”<sup>18</sup>

The source of c. 331 of CIC/83 is the Preliminary Note of Explanation to *Lumen gentium* which presents Peter’s function in these terms:

[...] it is not a distinction between the Roman Pontiff and the bishops taken collectively, but the Roman Pontiff taken separately and the Roman Pontiff together with the bishops. Since the Roman Pontiff is the head of the college, he alone is able to perform certain actions which are not at all within the competence of the bishops [...]. It is up to the judgement of the Supreme Pontiff, to whose care Christ’s whole flock has been entrusted, to determine, according to needs of the Church as they change over the course of centuries, the way in which this care may be exercised – whether in a personal or a collegial way.<sup>19</sup>

According to the Preliminary Note of Explanation, the pope is able to act alone: there are certain actions he alone must do as his very office demands. The note enumerates some of these actions: “e.g., convoking the college and directing it, approving the norms of action, etc.”<sup>20</sup> This list

---

<sup>18</sup> Canon 330, as translated in J.A. Coriden, T.J. Green, and D.E. Heintschel (eds.), *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary* (= *American Commentary*), commissioned by the Canon Law Society of America, New York, Mahwah, NJ, Paulist Press, 1985, p. 265. Because of differences in translations of various commentaries, we shall indicate, where necessary, the translation adopted.

<sup>19</sup>*IG*, Preliminary Note of Explanation, n. 3, p. 384.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

is not exhaustive, though, as indicated by the "etc." When the pope exercises his function (*in eius munere exercendo*), demanded by his office, he has assistance from other people and institutions. It is in this context that the synod of bishops was both conceived and presented in Canon Law: "In exercising his office the Roman Pontiff is assisted by the bishops who aid him in various ways and among these is the synod of bishops."<sup>21</sup>

A brief look at the historical evolution of c. 334 will suffice to show where any emphasis should be located. This canon is a by-product of a three-paragraph canon in the 1977 schema, of which only the first paragraph referred to the synod: "All bishops are to be of assistance to the Roman Pontiff in the exercise of his duty as Supreme Pastor of the Church, specifically and especially the synod of bishops, whose duty is to search out more suitable courses of action in anticipation of the needs of the entire Church and to express what is desirable."<sup>22</sup> According to this schema, the synod of bishops is of assistance to the personal exercise of the duty of the Roman Pontiff as Supreme Pastor of the Church. It does not reflect the teaching of *Christus Dominus*, which had described the synod as both an aid to the pope and as acting on behalf of the whole Catholic episcopate.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1980 schema, changes were made that reflected the spirit of *Christus Dominus*:

---

<sup>21</sup>Canon 334: In eius munere exercendo. Romano Pontifici praesto sunt Episcopi, qui eidem cooperatricem operam navare valent variis rationibus, inter quas est synodus Episcoporum. Auxilio praetera ei sunt Patres Cardinales, necnon aliae personae itemque varia secundum temporum necessitates instituta; quae personae omnes et instituta, nomine et auctoritate ipsius, munus sibi commissum explent in bonum omnium Ecclesiarum, iuxta normas iure definitas.

<sup>22</sup>1977 schema, c. 156, § 1: Latin text: "In eius munere Supremi Ecclesiae Pastoris exercendo Romano Pontifici auxilio sunt Episcopi omnes, in specie quidem Synodus Episcoporum, cuius est aptiores quibus universae Ecclesiae necessitatibus prospiciatur ratione inquirere atque de iisdem optata exprimere." (*Schema canonum libri II de populi Dei*, Romae, Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1977, p. 70).

<sup>23</sup>*CD*, 5, p. 507.

Both the Roman Pontiff and the college of bishops, in accordance with the norms of the prescriptions which are established in the *Lex Ecclesiae fundamentalis* concerning the Roman Pontiff and the college of bishops, possess full and supreme power in the Church. The synod of bishops, the college of cardinals, and the Roman Curia, in accordance with the norms which follow and particular legislation, offer assistance to them in their own ways.<sup>24</sup>

According to the 1980 schema, the synod of bishops offers assistance to both the pope and the college of bishops. Had the evolution of this canon stopped here, we would be more reluctant to say that the *raison d'être* of the synod of bishops is service to the petrine office. But the 1982 schema, which became c. 334 of the CIC/83, dropped the college of bishops altogether as beneficiaries of the synod's assistance, leaving the Supreme Pontiff as the sole object of the synod of bishops. Now, the canon states that the Roman Pontiff is assisted by the bishops, who aid him in various ways: among these is the synod of bishops.<sup>25</sup>

The role of the bishops during the synod, according to this canon, is to help the pope in his mission as successor of Peter. In this mission they cannot substitute for the pope. This explains why the synod of bishops is consultative, that is, it offers an auxiliary service to the pope. This is not to reduce the bishops' office to that of papal advisors, but rather to enhance it and to show that, in the Church, the best people to assist the Supreme Pontiff are his co-workers, those who like him preside

---

<sup>24</sup>1980 schema, c. 277: "*Potestate plena et suprema in Ecclesia pollet tum Romanus Pontifex tum Collegium Episcoporum, ad normam praescriptorum quae in Lege Ecclesiae Fundamentali de Romano Pontifice deque Collegio Episcoporum stantuntur; eisque auxilio sunt pro parte sua Synodus Episcoporum, Collegium Cardinalium necnon, secundum normas quae sequuntur legesque peculiares.*" (*Codex iuris canonici: schema Patribus Commissionis reservatum*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1980, p. 63).

<sup>25</sup>1982 schema, c. 333: "*In eius munus exercendo, Romano Pontifici sunt Episcopi, qui auxilio ei esse valent varis rationibus, inter quas est Synodus Episcoporum.*" The only difference with the 1983 Code version is in having "*qui eidem cooperatricem operam navare valent.*" instead of "*qui auxilio ei esse valent.*" Cf. *Codex iuris canonici: schema novissimum iuxta placita Patrum Commissionis emendatum atque Summo Pontifici praesentatum*, Civitate Vaticana, Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1982, p. 58.

in the place of God over the flock, act in Christ's person, receive from the Lord the mission, and are also partakers of Christ's consecration.

Founded for the petrine ministry, the synod of bishops cannot, at least in principle, be but consultative: "the function of the synod of bishops is to discuss the matters proposed to it and set forth recommendations. It is not its function to settle matters or to draw up decrees."<sup>26</sup> Put differently, the synod of bishops does not substitute for the petrine office but enables it: it does not destroy it but safeguards it, buttresses it, strengthens it, and renders it apt to act, as it were, collegially. On the other hand, the petrine ministry does not substitute for the episcopal office of the bishops. The Supreme Pontiff does not usurp the right and duty of the bishops in their ministry as vicars of Christ governing the particular churches assigned to them.

As successor of Peter, the Supreme Pontiff can and indeed should exhort his brothers as Christ indicated to him to strengthen his brothers in faith.<sup>27</sup> The synod of bishops helps the pope to assist the bishops and their local churches. On the one hand, the synod of bishops "provides a truly unique opportunity for the bishops from every part of the globe to report on significant development in their areas and to explore together how the mission of the Church can be carried out effectively under such circumstances."<sup>28</sup> As Pope John Paul II put it, speaking of the African synod: "some bishops and entire hierarchies have expressed their joy and thanks to me for giving them the occasion to meet, to agree at the pastoral and missionary levels, to fulfil better their responsibilities

---

<sup>26</sup>Canon 343, as translated in *American Commentary*.

<sup>27</sup>Lk. 22:32

<sup>28</sup>J.H. Provost, "The Hierarchical Constitution of the Church," in *American Commentary*: p. 283.

as pastors.”<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the synod of bishops provides an occasion for the pope to acquaint himself with the situation of the churches: “it [the African synod] will give occasion to establish what we consider to be priorities for the church in Africa.”<sup>30</sup>

### **1.1.2 - The Synod of Bishops According to 1983 Code of Canon Law**

It is very difficult to explain the exact definition of the synod of bishops. What we can do is to describe it by its constitutive elements and essential characteristics and exclude all non-essential ones. This is the approach adopted by the CIC/83 in giving a description (not a definition) of a synod of bishops. The description of c. 342 can be laid out in a linear fashion:

- The synod of bishops is a group of bishops
- selected from different parts of the world,
- who meet together at specified times
- to promote the close relationship between the Roman Pontiff and the bishops.
- These bishops, by their counsel, assist the Roman Pontiff
- in the defense and development of faith and morals
- and in the preservation and strengthening of ecclesiastical discipline.
- They also consider questions concerning the mission of the Church in the world.<sup>31</sup>

Such are the constitutive elements of the synod of bishops as presented by the CIC/83. It is clear that the Code does not define the synod of bishops but describes it.

The above canon was drawn from the *motu proprio, Apostolica sollicitudo*. However, the Code omits intentionally certain elements found in the *motu proprio*, like “a central ecclesiastical

---

<sup>29</sup>John Paul II, “Council for the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops.” in *African Ecclesial Review* (= *AFER*), 31 (1981), p. 258.

<sup>30</sup>Chukwuma, O., “The Synod of Bishops/Special Assembly for Africa: Is this Another Roman Program for Africa.” in *AFER*, 34 (1992), p. 209.

<sup>31</sup>Translation adopted from Gerald Sheehy et al. (eds.), *The Canon Law, Letter & Spirit: A Practical Guide to the Code of Canon Law* (- *The Canon Law, Letter & Spirit*) translation prepared under the auspices of the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland in association with the Canadian Canon Law Society, Collegeville, MN, The Liturgical Press, 1995.

organism representing the entire catholic episcopate.”<sup>32</sup> This omission is understandable considering the juridical nature of the Code. For instance, a synod of bishops can be construed as having solicitude for the whole Church, as stated both in the *motu proprio* and the canon. But in the juridical sense, it would be scarcely true to say that the bishops who came, for instance, to a Special Synod Assembly like that of Africa, do in reality represent churches other than their own, or that they can be considered as delegates of other churches. The African Synod was never representative of the whole catholic episcopate of the world.

In continuing to search for the *raison d'être* of the synod of bishops, we go to one of the sources for this canon to determine the mind of the legislator. We notice that it was a *motu proprio* that brought the synod of bishops into existence. This shows clearly the perfect independence of the pope both in creating the synod of bishops and in determining its *raison d'être*. Thus, Pope Paul VI used such expressions as “[...] of Our own motion and in virtue of Our apostolic authority [...].”<sup>33</sup> According to the *motu proprio* the reasons for establishing the synod of bishops are:

... to consolidate by ever closer ties Our union with the bishops ‘whom the Holy Spirit has placed to rule the Church of God’ [...] we are drawn into this [...] by the ever heavy burden of Our office of the universal pastor [...] daily experience shows Us how useful for Our apostolic charge is this union with all bishops [...] the ecumenical council was in fact the cause of Our resolve to establish a consultative body of bishops on a permanent basis.<sup>34</sup>

The synod of bishops as presented in the *motu proprio* and in the CIC/83 is directly under the full control of the Supreme Pontiff. Canon 344 states:

A synod of bishops is directly under the authority of the Roman Pontiff whose role is to:

---

<sup>32</sup>AS, art. 1: *CLD*, VI, p. 389.

<sup>33</sup>AS, in *AAS* 57 (1965) p. 775; *CLD*, VI, p. 388.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

- 1° convene the synod as often as this seems opportune to him, and to designate the place where the meetings are to be held;
- 2° to ratify the election of those who, in accordance with the special law of the synod, are to be elected, and to designate and appoint other members;
- 3° at a suitable time before the celebration of the synod, to prescribe the outlines of the questions to be discussed, in accordance with the special law;
- 4° to determine the agenda;
- 5° to preside over the synod personally or through others;
- 6° to conclude, transfer, suspend or dissolve the synod.

The source of this canon is the revised synod rule of 1969.<sup>35</sup> As the canon stands now, the Supreme Pontiff determines what kind of synod it will be. There are three kinds of synods: (1) the General Assembly which is classified as ordinary deals with matters that affect the entire Church;<sup>36</sup> (2) the General Assembly designated as extraordinary deals with matters demanding speedy consideration;<sup>37</sup> (3) a Special Assembly deals with matters concerning one or several regions of the Church.<sup>38</sup>

If the synod of bishops assists the pope by counsel, it makes sense that the pope himself selects the topics he deems necessary for discussion. In other words, the pope knowing what he wants, chooses those topics he wants to be counseled about, which according to the canon are "the

---

<sup>35</sup>Cf. *Ordo* 1969, part I, chap. I, art. I, n. 7. Everything is the same except that number 6 is changed from "to transfer, suspend and dissolve the synod and to deliberate on its opinions" to "to conclude, transfer, suspend or dissolve the synod." The pope's deliberation on the synodal opinions was dropped, and the pope's prerogative to conclude it was inserted. The new formula is stronger, revealing that the synod of bishops is directly under the Supreme Pontiff.

<sup>36</sup>Up to the present time, nine have been realized: on implementing of the Second Vatican Council (1967), on ministerial priesthood and justice in the world (1971), on evangelization (1974), on catechesis (1977), on the Christian family (1980), on reconciliation and penance (1983), on the vocation and mission of the laity (1987), on priestly formation (1990), and on consecrated life (1994).

<sup>37</sup>So far there have been two: on the collegiality of bishops and the pope (1969), and on the 20th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council (1985).

<sup>38</sup>The following special assemblies have been realized: the particular synod for the Netherlands (1980), the Ukrainian synod (1980), the special synod for Europe (1991), the special synod for Africa (1994), the special assembly for Lebanon (1995), the special assembly for the Americas (1997), the special assembly for Asia (1998), the second special assembly for Europe (to be realized later this year) and the special assembly for Oceania (yet to be realized).

defense and development of faith and morals and [...] the preservation and strengthening of ecclesiastical discipline” and “questions concerning the mission of the Church in the world.”<sup>39</sup> It is his prerogative “to prescribe the outlines of the questions to be discussed” and “to determine the agenda.”<sup>40</sup> Likewise, the pope knows who can counsel him best, so he reserves the right “to ratify the election of those who, in accordance with the special law of the synod, are to be elected, and to designate and appoint other members.”<sup>41</sup> He does know when (and where) to seek counsel “as often as this seems opportune to him, and to designate the place where the meetings are to be held.”<sup>42</sup>

After the papal prerogatives, what remains of the synod of bishops is discussing the matters proposed to it and setting forth recommendations, but not settling matters or even drawing up decrees.<sup>43</sup> The pope is not bound by the recommendations of the synod; he is free to accept them *in toto* or do otherwise. This consultative role of the synod of bishops could further explain why it is listed among those organs whose counsel the pope can find useful but is not bound to follow. As a rule, “the documents drawn up by the synod are forwarded to the pope, who will use them as he considers most convenient. He may use them as drafts or working tools for future documents and for his activity in governing the Church, or order them to be made public, etc.”<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup>Canon 342.

<sup>40</sup>Canon 344, 3°, 4°.

<sup>41</sup>Canon 344, 2°.

<sup>42</sup>Canon 344, 1°.

<sup>43</sup>Canon 343.

<sup>44</sup>J.L. Gutiérrez, “The Synod of Bishops,” in *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, p. 271.

In concluding this section on the *raison d'être* of the synod of bishops as service to the petrine ministry, it is helpful to take a look at the structure of Book II of the CIC/83. In part one, the Code presents in their different categories who the People of God are: the Christian faithful. In part two, it presents those who minister to the People of God and their authority on the universal level (the pope and the college of bishops) and on the local level (the bishops). In part three, it presents those who within the People of God have a special calling to consecrated life. Of interest to us is the position occupied by the synod of bishops in this structure as the first among those bodies or institutions which assist the Roman Pontiff (and not the college of bishops) in his ministry to the entire Church. The synod of bishops first appears among the canons dealing with the Roman Pontiff, and not the college of bishops, and the fuller treatment of it is situated among the agencies of papal ministry. Therefore, as far as canon law is concerned, the *raison d'être* of the synod of bishops is service to the petrine ministry. It is under this canonical conception that we now turn to the African synod.

## **1.2 - THE CONCERN FOR INCARNATING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IN AFRICA**

A historic event in the development of the Church in Africa took place from July 31 to August 2, 1969, when for the first time in recent history, the successor of Peter as Vicar of Christ, Pope Paul VI, set foot upon the soil of Africa. All Catholic Africa was represented by seven cardinals and 34 bishops who had just taken part in a meeting of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) in Kampala from July 28 to 31, 1969. The meeting was concluded by the Pope himself.

The papal visit followed a series of political changes in Africa. Since the late 1950s and early 1960s, “winds of change”<sup>46</sup> had been blowing over the African continent, leading many countries to political independence from colonial powers. Though these winds were initially political and continental, the Catholic world too was experiencing some “winds of change” in the form of *aggiornamento* initiated by the Second Vatican Council. Were it not for this Council, the “winds of change” would probably have remained only political in Africa. But Vatican II brought about a continent-wide ecclesial consciousness of the need to work together in the Church,<sup>47</sup> just as many African countries were successfully coming together in such groups as the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Before he went to Africa, Pope Paul VI sent a message (*Africae terrarum*)<sup>48</sup> to the countries of Africa in a period of “great delicacy,” as the Pope called it, when the first phase of the transition to independence had just been successfully completed and the new states had entered upon a period of adjustment and consolidation.<sup>49</sup> It is not an exaggeration to say that the tone of this document was that of the Catholic Church recognizing and affirming the newly independent nations of Africa.

In *Africae terrarum*, the Pope first acknowledges the process leading to independence. He says: “the transition to independence was made almost universally in an orderly and peaceful

---

<sup>46</sup>When seventeen African countries gained their independence in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan described the times as “winds of change.”

<sup>47</sup>The Second Vatican Council was a powerful instrument in the awakening of a common pastoral solicitude for the African church. On 11 October 1962 the bishops of Africa and Madagascar present at the Council decided to institute a General Secretariat—the only one instituted during the Council—which would serve to coordinate their views for presentation to the Council as a common point of view.

<sup>48</sup>Cf. “*Africae terrarum*. A Message from Paul VI,” in *AJER*, 10 (1968), pp. 71-84.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.* n. 6.

manner.” He also affirms the international importance of the newly independent nations: “[...] they have only recently become nations. they have immediately taken their place with the most ancient nations of the world in the great international assemblies, to cooperate in maintaining and consolidating the peace of humanity.”<sup>50</sup> Then, he offers some wise advice: “What has been achieved with the proclamation of independence requires consolidation by well-ordered legislation and its peaceful implementation [...]. Peaceful development and stability of institutions are prerequisites for progress in the new African States today [...]”<sup>51</sup> Finally, he cautions: “the road is not an easy one and the obstacles are many [...] (n. 19); the mere declaration of independence by the new states has not changed the general condition for Africa’s economic development.”<sup>52</sup>

The *leitmotif* of the Pontiff’s visit to Africa was “be firm in your ecclesial identity.” A glance at some of his key statements will suffice to substantiate this theme. Closing the SECAM assembly, the Pope remarked:

You have clear and concordant ideas: so, now, go forward methodically and courageously in the awareness of your great task: that of building up the Church [...].

By now, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves. The Church of Christ is well and truly planted in this blessed soil. [...]. ‘Missionaries to yourselves’: in other words, you Africans must now continue, upon this Continent, the building up of the Church [...].

But, one day, we shall no longer call your apostolate a ‘missionary’ apostolate in the technical sense, but rather a native, indigenous apostolate, all your own.

And in this sense you may, and you must, have an African Christianity [...].

---

<sup>50</sup>Ibid. n. 6.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid. n. 16.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid. n. 21.

[...] you will be able to remain sincerely African even in your own interpretation of the Christian life; you will be able to formulate Catholicism in terms congenial to your own culture [...].<sup>53</sup>

Addressing a special session of the Uganda Parliament, at which were present the presidents of Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and representatives of other African countries. Pope Paul VI said:

It seems to Us that this is a unique recognition of the new Africa, emancipated from its past, and ripe for a new era [...]. The Church thanks you for your recognition of her freedom: freedom to exist, and to fulfil her mission. She appreciated this freedom, the religious domain; which also means her autonomy in religious matters [...] the Peoples of Africa have themselves assumed the responsibility for their own destiny. The Church greets this event with satisfaction.<sup>54</sup>

Pope Paul's address to SECAM was important in that it marked an end as well as a beginning, as reported by B.J. Bohn immediately after the meeting:

The Symposium of Bishops may well have marked an end of one hundred years of mission activity in Africa. The Church has not only found a home in Africa, as Pope Paul put it: it has grown strong and matured. A sign of this maturity was the acceptance by the Bishops of their responsibility to guide the Church in an African way. Having set up the machinery for unity among themselves [SECAM], the Catholic Bishops of Africa look forward to taking the greater step of working towards the unity of all African Christians.<sup>55</sup>

Just as the "winds of change" blowing across Africa were bringing political independence to many countries, so the visit of Pope Paul VI to Africa was a kind of Catholic Church version of declaring or granting independence to Catholic Africa. In effect, it confirmed the African church in its emerging continent-wide ecclesial consciousness. No wonder that, in the year following his visit, a study group formulated and proposed a constitution for SECAM which was submitted to each episcopal conference for review. It was approved at the 1970 General Assembly of SECAM

---

<sup>53</sup>Paul VI, "Discourse to SECAM," in *AAS*, 61 (1969), pp. 575-578.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 580-581.

<sup>55</sup>B.J. Bohn, "Report on All-Africa Bishops Symposium," in *AFER*, 11 (1969), p. 401.

in Abidjan (August 18-24). SECAM has since been both the means and the concrete expression of this concerted ecclesial identity.

The contemporary political consciousness experienced by different countries in Africa leading to their political independence also had its ecclesial ramifications. The rapid and almost unprecedented foundation of SECAM, followed by the formation of similar organizations across Africa, attested to this phenomenon. This was expressed by one of the bishops during the African Synod as follows: "Through a concurrence of particular circumstances, the Catholic Church [...] has been thrust into the democratic process underway. She had to exercise her pastoral mission in the new context of democracy and to often deal with political milieux."<sup>56</sup>

That the African Church changed after the events that occurred between the late 1950s to 1970 (political independence of several African countries, the Second Vatican Council, the visit of Paul VI and formation of SECAM) is most apparent in the statistics. In 1955, there were about 15,500,000 Catholics in Africa; 42,000,000 in 1975; 56,000,000 in 1980; 89,000,000 in 1990; and 95,000,000 in 1993.<sup>57</sup>

The demographical analysis of the situation of the Church in Africa shows Africa as "a young, dynamic Church, one filled with life and potential, although fragile because of its youth. On

---

<sup>56</sup>A.T. Yungu, Bishop of Tshumbe, Democratic Republic of Congo, 16<sup>th</sup> General Congregation, April 20, 1994. For the citations of the synodal speeches we shall follow this sequence: name of speaker, position in Church, country of origin where applicable, synodal session, and date when speech was delivered. All speeches are taken from *ORE*.

<sup>57</sup>The statistics in this section were taken from the following sources: *Guida delle Missioni Cattoliche*, Roma, 1975; 1989; *Le Missioni Cattoliche*, Roma, Agenzia Fides, 1990; *Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae*, 1991; Agenzia Internazionale Fides; *Status Seminariorum in Terra Missionum existentium quae a Pontificio Opere a Santo Petro Apostolo patrocinantur*, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993; and the Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. See also J. Tomko, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, 7<sup>th</sup> General Congregation, April 14, 1994.

the African continent too it is a divine and human institution, with its light and dark sides, positive qualities and risky aspects due to its maturity level and to human weakness as well."<sup>58</sup> Furthermore,

modern Africa is [...] at the crossroads, subject to many forces and currents, and we are beginning to witness a certain disjunction between religion and life. As far as Christians are concerned, it is noted that there is "a certain double quality in living their beliefs, holding them divided between their faith in Jesus Christ and custom's traditional practices" [...] what is our effective pastoral response?"<sup>59</sup>

According to this observation, there are two concerns here: the presence of a dichotomy in the life of many Africans and the reaction to it. A look at the synodal interventions will help in substantiating this.

During the Assembly of the African Synod, many fathers used a biblical image to describe Africa. Africa is like the man who was on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho but fell into the hands of brigands who took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead on the side of the road.<sup>60</sup> Looking at the synodal interventions in light of this biblical image, we are able to see that Africa, due to sustained wounds, is no longer walking whole and so is not *walking*

---

<sup>58</sup>J. Tomko, Report to the Africa Synod of the Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples, 7<sup>th</sup> General Congregation, April 14, 1994, n. 2.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid, n. 4.

<sup>60</sup>J. Zoa, Bishop of Yaoundé, Cameroun, 4<sup>th</sup> General Congregation, April 12, 1994. Cf. the parable of the Good Samaritan, in Lk 10, 29-37.

together.<sup>61</sup> On the eve of the Synod, Africa is described as torn by wars, famine, debt, unemployment, poverty, decline of the educational system, AIDS and other endemic diseases.<sup>62</sup>

There is not a *walking together* of faith and culture in Africa. This is notable in people walking as if with two sticks: one pagan and the other Christian, with rosary in the morning and witchcraft in the afternoon.<sup>63</sup> For many Africans, gospel and life are not walking together, as Archbishop P. Pengo pointed out in the African Synod:

The life of many Tanzanian Christians today is characterized by a deep dichotomy regarding the professed Christian faith and the concrete day to day living. While theoretically the faith may be expressed in very orthodox terms, concrete life is often so contradictory to the professed faith that one remains stunned by the mere possibility of the two attitudes coexisting in a single individual. This dichotomy becomes most obvious in situations threatening human life such as serious illness or death. Equally provocative of such dichotomy are cases of infertility in marriage. In other words, the said dichotomy lies in the most fundamental levels of the person's being. The dichotomy at such basic levels of being is bound to cause great pains at less fundamental levels: at psychological and socio-relational levels. The resulting plight is comparable to that of the Gerasene demoniac so well depicted by the Evangelist Mark in Chapter five of his Gospel. The poor man is, on the one hand, strongly attracted by the person of Christ while on the other hand, he requires Christ to leave him alone.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup>The concept of "walking together" will be examined in greater detail in due course, but for now it suffices to say that it was the *leitmotif* of the African Synod. On the one hand, the synodal fathers used it often to describe the disparity between faith and life, gospel and culture in Africa, and, on the other hand, Pope John Paul II uses it on many occasions before, during and after the African Synod, especially in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*. It is the same concept that is reflected in the purpose for which the Pope called the African Synod: "to promote pastoral **solidarity** [emphasis added] in Africa and nearby islands." (cited above). Coincidentally, the word "synod" etymologically means "walking together." This, as we shall see, has made the synod of bishops significant in the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, especially in the preparation of the Third Millennium.

<sup>62</sup>Jean-Noel Diouf, Bishop of Tambacound, Senegal, 5<sup>th</sup> General Congregation, April 13, 1994.

<sup>63</sup>James Dominic Sangu, Bishop of Mbeya, Tanzania, 10<sup>th</sup> General Congregation, April 16, 1994.

<sup>64</sup>Polycarp Pengo, Archbishop of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, 4<sup>th</sup> General Congregation, April 12, 1994.

In Africa, there is not a *walking together* of evangelization and inculturation, and as a result many are Christians more by name than by life.<sup>65</sup> Women and men are also not walking together due to the customs, traditional practices and beliefs that dignify maleness more than femininity.<sup>66</sup> There is not a *walking together* of Catholics with other Christians, of Christian faiths with other faiths like Islam and African Traditional Religions, and of Africa with the rest of the world.

It is recognized today more than ever that, in Africa, evangelization has been more a task of proclamation than witness.<sup>67</sup> that its results were wider than they were deep: that it has yielded more quantitative rather than qualitative results. In reference to this situation, the report of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples observed that,

there is an immense need for the continued evangelization of the baptized. As His Holiness has remarked: "the growth of your Church has been very rapid. Perhaps the gospel message has not yet had the time it requires to be sufficiently assimilated by the community of the baptized. It is thus necessary to continue the proclamation of the Good News."<sup>68</sup>

A similar concern has oftentimes been expressed by the African bishops in their *ad limina* visits, suggesting in effect that "every Christian in Africa must be enabled to become a Christ-bearer, an apostle of Christ to his or her neighbor and a force for transformation, the leaven of the society."<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup>Evaristus Thatho Bitsoane, Bishop of Qacha's Nek, Lesotho, 10<sup>th</sup> General Congregation, April 16, 1994.

<sup>66</sup>Kathryn Hauwa Hoomkwarp, member of the Pontifical Council for Culture, Nigeria, 14<sup>th</sup> General Congregation, April 19, 1994.

<sup>67</sup>Speaking in Kilimanjaro Stadium of Moshi in Tanzania, on September 5, 1990, Pope John Paul II made reference to this: "The same witness of the Risen Lord which the Apostles gave [...] is the principal task facing the Church in Africa." Cf. *Synodus episcoporum: Bulletin Édition Française*, Vatican City, Bureau de Presse du Saint Siège, (= Bulletin for African Synod), April 14-16, 1994, n.18. [This is a bound compilation of the informational bulletin distributed to the media at the African Synod by the Press Bureau of the Holy See].

<sup>68</sup>Tomko, Report to the African Synod, n. 4.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid, n. 5.

However, the exact way of responding to these concerns has itself turned out to be another concern for the African church, as we shall see in the next sections.

### **1.3 - THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE**

Several attempts have been made to address the great need of making the gospel message effective in Africa and of enabling everybody to become a Christ-bearer. These attempts may be divided into two categories: pastoral and legal or canonical. The pastoral approach is inculturation, while the canonical approach was first a Council for Africa that never saw the light of day, and then the African Synod that was successfully realized in 1994. These approaches – inculturation, African Council and African Synod – are considered in the next section.

#### **1.3.1 - The Pastoral Response: Inculturation<sup>70</sup>**

The events – political independence from colonialism, the Second Vatican Council, and Pope Paul VI's visit to Africa – served as an impetus for the African church to seek a deeper understanding of its identity and faith. It felt the need to address evangelization on the continent and redress the inexplicable dichotomies. The dichotomies between gospel and culture, between faith and life, have been a puzzle to many: how can one explain, for instance, the genocide, tribal

---

<sup>70</sup>In this study, inculturation will be discussed as a background to the African Synod leaving aside other important aspects of the issue, such as its historical, biblical, theological, ecclesiological, and christological foundations. For a thorough treatment of all these aspects, see T. Okure, et al., "Inculturation of Christianity in Africa," in *AMECEA Gaba Publications*, 112-114 (1990), pp. 3-259; A.R. Crollius, "What is so New About Inculturation?" in *Gregorianum*, 59 (1978), pp. 721-738; A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1988, pp.3-16; P. Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation*, New York, Paulist Press, 1990; G.A. Arbuckle, *Earthing the Gospel: An Inculturation Handbook for the Pastoral Worker*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1990.

wars, *coups d'état*, and political corruption in the mostly *Catholic countries* of Africa? Why are the numerically best evangelized countries of Africa the most turbulent? One takes, for example, the cases of Rwanda (46.27% Catholics),<sup>71</sup> Burundi (59.79%), Uganda (43.41%), Nigeria (9.68%), former Zaire and now Democratic Republic of Congo (49.66%), Republic of Congo (40.02%), Mozambique (8.58%), Angola (64.69%), Sudan (8.54%), Kenya (21.94%), South Africa (7.23%), and Lesotho (35%). One wonders if Catholic faith in these and many other countries has come close to dying out, just as in ancient north Africa. Added to this dilemma is the proliferation of sects in Africa: why are these sects succeeding where mainline churches seem to fail?

These and other related questions are at the heart of the great concern of the African church, which has sought to redress the dichotomies primarily through inculturation. Indeed, in the answers to the African Synod's *Lineamenta*,<sup>72</sup> the necessity and the urgency of inculturation in Africa was acknowledged: "Inculturation is looked upon by the great majority of the particular churches in Africa as a task that is urgent, necessary and even a priority."<sup>73</sup> As for the *raison d'être* of this urgency, necessity, and priority of inculturation in Africa, the Synod's *Instrumentum laboris* states:

Inculturation makes evangelization begin at the very depths of hearts and customs. Christianity remains for many Africans 'a stranger religion,' there being some part of their very selves and lives that stays outside the gospel. This is the source of a certain double

---

<sup>71</sup>At the African Synod, one shadow continually haunted the members and proceedings: the ongoing genocide in Rwanda. This is one of the most Catholic countries in Africa, at least numerically. Nonetheless, all kinds of people (bishops, priests, religious and laity) were massacred, sometimes even inside churches.

<sup>72</sup>In chapter two, we shall discuss in detail the synodal documents among which will be the *Lineamenta* and the *Instrumentum laboris*. These are mentioned here because of their close connection with the issue under consideration.

<sup>73</sup>Cf. *Instrumentum laboris*, Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa: "The Church in Africa and her Evangelizing Mission towards the Year 2000, 'You shall be my witnesses' (Acts 1:8)," Vatican City, Vatican Press, 1993, (= *Instrumentum laboris*), n. 50.

quality in living their beliefs, holding them divided between their faith in Jesus Christ and custom's traditional practices.

Inculturation will help the African Christian resolve the tension between the two ways of living, and to accept what it costs to abandon beliefs and practices that are incompatible with the gospel. Without inculturation the faith of the African will remain fragile and superficial, lacking depth and personal commitment.

Inculturation will additionally relativize the problem of the sects, enabling the African Christian to express his faith in his own tongue and in attitudes and gestures natural to him, in catechesis, liturgy and pastoral work as well as in theological reflection [...]. Inculturation enables the Church in Africa to take its place in the ongoing process of the mystery of the incarnation, for wherever the Word is proclaimed by the Church there it must take flesh in and for culture.<sup>74</sup>

This assertion is very important because it empowers the African church in its task to concretize Jesus for the African people so that they can experience him, as a living person, who exercises a dynamic influence upon their daily lives and values. The *Instrumentum laboris* cautions that:

a Church that does not attain success in integrating its proper cultural values into its belief will not be able to stand against the influences of other religious currents. This is certainly one of the causes of the failure of evangelization in certain regions of Africa [...]. It is incontestable that the Church has flourished in those areas where the principle of inculturation was taken seriously.<sup>75</sup>

This caution, on the one hand, and the hope for a better future on the other has led the African church to seek an understanding of itself and of its faith. If theology is "faith seeking understanding," the African church, in the course of knowing itself and its faith, has been emerging with a theology based on the urgent need for inculturation of the gospel in Africa.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.* nn. 53, 74.

<sup>75</sup>*Instrumentum laboris*, nn. 54, 63.

<sup>76</sup>In fact, many and varied theologies have been identified in Africa. For the purpose of this study, we shall address not these theologies *per se* but the theme which is common to all of them: inculturation. Indeed, we can say that all theologies are different approaches to inculturation. As for a unified African theology, the journey is still long, as Cardinal J. Ratzinger puts it: "[...] African theology is at present more a project than a reality." Cf. E. Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, Grand Rapids, MI, William B. Eerdmans

An in-depth treatment of inculturation presupposes some reflection, albeit brief, of the theme of evangelization which, in turn, involves evangelizers, for as Elizabeth Isichei points out, "one cannot do justice to African encounters with Christianity without some understanding of those who brought it. Christianity has never existed in an abstract form: it is always incarnated in a particular milieu. The age, nationality, gender, church affiliation, and theological bent of the missionary had a decisive impact on the message transmitted."<sup>77</sup>

It is not an exaggeration to say that Christianity came to Africa in a variety of European cultural expressions. A brief look at the evangelizers of Africa will help highlight the fact that the encounter of Christianity with Africa was not only between the gospel and Africa, but also between the cultures of the evangelizers and the evangelized. It is true that Christianity was inculturated long before it was introduced to Africa: "The history of all Christian missions is a theme in counterpoint, the intricate and ever-changing relationship between Christianity, the cultural packaging in which it is presented, and the culture of the host community."<sup>78</sup>

Language is a vehicle of the culture, and to learn a new language is like getting born anew in another culture. The missionaries had to learn the many African languages, and this took time. Meanwhile, they used interpreters, who themselves had tried to learn the languages of the missionaries. As the dictum says, *traductor est traditor*; the correct translation was not always possible: some Christian notions were just not amenable to translation. A good example was the attempt to translate *logos* in the first verse of St. John's Gospel in LUO, which came to be translated

---

Publishing Company, 1995. p. 330.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid, p. 74.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid, p. 46.

as, "From long long ago there was News, News was with the Hunchback Spirit, News was the Hunchback Spirit."<sup>79</sup>

Most African languages do not encompass abstract realities: they are languages of the concrete, the visible and palpable. To translate certain Christian concepts into African languages is very difficult, and so Christianity, in many areas, remained un-translated or even mis-translated. However, with enormous effort, some missionaries learned and mastered African languages. Others did not, and those who did, as one of them put it, always discovered unwelcome surprises: "the more one knows of the natives, the more one finds consistently they [Africans] keep on concealing from strangers what they really know."<sup>80</sup>

Many African religions are life-affirming, with a stress on earthly life, health, good crops, children, and protection from evil. Theological treaties simply did not exist in Africa. Christianity, being largely a religion of the book, was always a risky venture in Africa, which has had the highest rate of illiteracy in the world. The missionaries had either to make the people learn the prayers and doctrines by heart or to teach them first how to read. The traditional African religions passed on their beliefs through oral traditions and never had "dogmas" or "creeds" in the Christian sense. Although religious practices and truths were not written, nor were there catechism classes or Sunday schools, religion permeated the entire culture in which everyone was born. Africans became literate in religion through the experiences of their daily living.

Several factors motivated the African people to embrace Christianity. In fact, for many, Christianity was synonymous with literacy, prosperity, and modernity. As one missionary put it: "I

---

<sup>79</sup>Ibid. p. 133.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid. p. 132.

showed them a Bible [...] and told them it was it that made our nation rich and powerful.”<sup>81</sup> and as a result many became Christians in order to learn how to read and write.

Many a king invited missionaries for economic purposes, such as to increase literacy and to teach technical skills. These kings would welcome the missionaries with the belief that, in the long run, their presence would encourage trade by bringing merchants with them, or if the merchants were already in the country, they would not easily leave the country while the missionaries were still there. In 1620, Catholicism was described as a court religion.<sup>82</sup>

Outside the small town of Santo Agostinho there are no other Christians; and even in the town a minority are of the Catholic faith. Although very many of them are nominally Christians, true Christianity is almost wholly confined to the king and the prince; the rest only call themselves Christians in order to please the king.<sup>83</sup>

The very idea of foreign missionaries was new to the Africans. African religions were not “proselytizing” religions. Everyone was born into a religious culture, and so there were neither “pagans” nor “believers” in the Christian sense. Every culture had its own god(s) and religious practices.<sup>84</sup> This is probably why many Africans embraced Christianity without true inner conversion, but did so mainly to attain the technological superiority of the Europeans because their religion seemed more powerful.

---

<sup>81</sup>Ibid, p. 140.

<sup>82</sup>In Africa, Christianity survived so long in most cases because of the devotion of its kings: in part this was due to the fact that many Africans would convert only after their king himself had converted, or they would be ordered by their king to convert: a kind of *cuus regio eius religio*. Thus, to some, Christianity was a façade, maintained for political reasons.

<sup>83</sup>Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, p. 61.

<sup>84</sup>On May 23, 1999, the Pontifical Council for Culture issued a document entitled, “Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture,” which acknowledges that “When the evangelization of Africa began, the positive cultural values of these religions were not always taken seriously enough to be integrated with the Gospel.” See *Origins*, 29 (1999), p. 75, n. 19.

The missionaries were also humans and had human failings. In spite of the Instruction issued by the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide in 1959,<sup>85</sup> many missionaries often did not comprehend the cultural practices of the Africans. They tried to eradicate many traditional practices by propagating scientific and rationalistic explanations. Among such practices were bride wealth and animal sacrifices:

Missionaries often opposed bride wealth, but as a Ganda dignitary pointed out, "the girl was not forced to go against her wish, but that she liked to see how much the man cared for her, and also that there was a reasonable prospect of her being taken good care of when she had been obtained with some cost to the man."<sup>86</sup>

The thoughts of a certain African, Lubengula, who believed that God had given each people the culture he intended for them, was reported by the missionaries as follows:

... he believed God had made all things as he wanted them. He had made all people and that he had made every country and tribe just as he wished them to remain, he believed God made the Amandebele as he wished them to be and it was wrong for anyone to seek to alter them. He attempted to correct missionary misunderstandings: "We do not believe that the killing of an ox or burning particular herbs makes rain, but these are the means by which we ask it, just as you ask it by reading your book and saying prayers."<sup>87</sup>

In 1911, the missionaries working among the Kaguru of Tanganyika made a list of prohibitions, among which were wearing discs in the ears or numerous chains around the neck, removing the incisors and braiding men's hair with fibre. The members of the Church Missionary Society working in Uganda condemned Ganda domestic architecture:

---

<sup>85</sup>"Do not make any attempt nor in any way seek to persuade these peoples to change their practices, their way of life, their dress and custom unless they are openly contrary to religion and morals. There is nothing more absurd than transporting customs or practices from France, Spain, Italy or other parts of Europe to China. Nothing of this should be brought; it is the *Faith* that is to be brought, a Faith which neither rejects nor offends the way of life or customs of a people unless it is perverse or depraved" (*Collectanea S.C. de Prop. Fide*, I, 42, 135; cf. J. Tomko, Report to the African Synod).

<sup>86</sup>Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, p. 240.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid. p. 114.

There was no home life among them and their houses were an outward symbol of the sad fact. They were round, very dark inside, having only one opening; there were no partitions beyond those made by hanging backcloth [...] It could not be a wholesome life [...]. The response: "A chief argued with me for a week that by making a square house I had at once created four points of near or remote breakage."<sup>88</sup>

Difficult economic conditions forced many missionaries to engage in commercial activities, firstly in order to survive, and secondly to fight the rampant slave trade which was for some time the principal economic activity of the explorers across Africa. Such a life style became time consuming to many missionaries, leaving little time for proper catechetical instruction.

The missionaries to Africa had their own problems; many had constant complaints of depression and loneliness. These personal problems sometimes led to marriages of convenience just for companionship. As one missionary put it: "In leaving Europe I had not labored the slightest idea of marriage, but my experiences in Abyssinia convinced me that an unmarried missionary could not prosper."<sup>89</sup> They often expressed these sentiments in their correspondence, as one Catholic missionary from Alsace wrote back home in a letter in 1886: "One can hardly understand the trouble one experiences, arriving in a savage land, unknown and inhospitable, and being there without what one could call a home – one can't understand what I'm saying, unless one has been there. A thousand worries and a thousand anxieties pursue one daily. No bread, no wine, no eggs ..."<sup>90</sup>

Even if these are but a few examples, they are intended to enable us to "remember those who spoke to us the word of God and to consider the outcome of their life" (Heb. 13:7). The modern methods of cultural analysis used by human sciences make it easier for us to understand and

---

<sup>88</sup>Ibid, p. 83.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid, p. 80.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid, p. 78.

appreciate African cultural values. This was not the case at the time the missionaries came to Africa.

Indeed, as Pope Paul VI put it,

many customs and rites, once considered to be strange, are seen today, in the light of ethnological science, as integral parts of various social systems, worthy of study and commanding respect [...]. The Church views with great respect the moral and religious values of the African tradition, not only because of their meaning, but also because she sees them as providential, as the basis for spreading the Gospel message and beginning the establishment of the new society in Christ.<sup>91</sup>

Later when Pope Paul VI visited Africa in 1969, he remarked to the African bishops at a SECAM meeting in Kampala:

Indeed, you possess human values and characteristic forms of culture which can rise up to perfection such as to find in Christianity, and for Christianity, a true superior fullness, and prove to be capable of a richness of expression all its own, and genuinely African [...] then you will be able to remain sincerely African even in your own interpretation of the Christian life; you will be able to formulate Catholicism in terms congenial to your own culture; you will be capable of bringing to the Catholic Church the precious and original contribution of 'negritude,' which she needs particularly in this historic hour.<sup>92</sup>

These words were addressed to the African continent in general and to African Catholics in particular. They have continually provided an impetus and a direction for the study and application of inculturation in Africa, as will be seen in this study.

Before discussing inculturation, it is necessary to keep in mind that "inculturation is not just a twentieth century, and specifically an African problem [...]. Theologically speaking, inculturation belongs to the very core of the history of the fulfilment of the Church's universal mission of evangelization."<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, it is important to note that other terms have been used to express

---

<sup>91</sup>*Africae terrarum*, nn. 7, 14; "A Message from Pope Paul VI to the Countries of Africa," in *AFER*, 10 (1968), pp. 73, 75.

<sup>92</sup>*AAS*, 61 (1969), pp. 577-578.

<sup>93</sup>T. Okure, "Inculturation: Biblical/Theological Bases," in *AMECEA Gaba Publications, Spearhead Numbers* 112-114, 1990, p. 55.

almost the same notion that inculturation conveys.<sup>94</sup> As far as a canonical approach to inculturation is concerned, an in-depth analysis of the related principles seems to be only in its initial stages. Some possibilities in this area will be suggested in the fourth chapter.

The magisterium of the Church uses the term inculturation to define more precisely "the incarnation of the Gospel in autonomous cultures and at the same time the introduction of these cultures into the life of the church."<sup>95</sup> Inculturation is presented as "an intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity and the implantation of Christianity into different human cultures."<sup>96</sup>

As with all other forms of evangelization, inculturation calls for an ongoing discernment of the presence of Christ in the cultural matrix of every generation. Inculturation involves a progressive reciprocal process between faith and culture. It necessitates looking at the customs, rites, and rituals of people to discover in them the active and saving presence of God. Through inculturation, the

---

<sup>94</sup>Among these terms are adaptation, indigenization, acculturation, enculturation, contextualization, localization, transposition, and incarnation. As to how far these terms coincide, overlap, converge, complement, conflict with or contradict one another, is beyond the scope of this study. For a discussion of these terms, see A.R. Crollius, "What is so New About Inculturation?" in *Gregorianum*, 59 (1978), pp. 721-738; printed in A.R. Crollius and T. Nkeramihigo (eds.), *Inculturation*, vol. 5, Rome, Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1984, pp. 1-18; A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, pp. 10-16, 79-83; P. Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation*, pp. 14-27; G.A. Arbuckle, *Earthing the Gospel: An Inculturation Handbook for the Pastoral Worker*, pp. 17-20.

<sup>95</sup>John Paul II, Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli*, June 2, 1985, n. 21, in *AAS*, 77 (1985), pp. 802-803; discourse to the Pontifical Council for Culture, January 17, 1987, in *AAS*, 79 (1987), pp. 1204-1205; Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, "The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation, IV Instruction for the Right Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy (nn. 37-40)," January 25, 1994, in *ORE*, April 6, 1994, n. 4.

<sup>96</sup>John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, December 7, 1990, n. 52, in *AAS*, 83 (1991), p. 300; Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, "The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation, IV Instruction for the Right Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy (nn. 37-40)," January 25, 1994, in *ORE*, April 6, 1994, pp. 1-8.

Church affirms what is good in a culture, purifies what is false and evil, strengthens what is weak, educates what is ignorant.<sup>97</sup>

Inculturation has become a focus for the hopes and aspirations of the African church which sees in it a means of incarnating the gospel more deeply in African society. During the African Synod, inculturation was, after justice, mentioned or alluded to more times than any other concept in the synodal interventions.<sup>98</sup>

A comprehensive analysis of the notion of inculturation would have to include its theological aspects. But, that would be beyond the scope of the present discussion, which is primarily concerned with the pastoral response of the African church to its immediate concern for more effective incarnation of the gospel message in Africa.

### **1.3.2 - The Canonical Response: an African Council and the African Synod**

On January 6, 1989, the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, Pope John Paul II announced the African Synod in these words: "accepting the petitions often expressed for some time now by the African bishops, priests, theologians and representatives of the laity, in order to promote an organic pastoral solidarity within the entire African territory and nearby islands, I have decided to convoke a Special Assembly for Africa of the synod of bishops ..."<sup>99</sup> According to these words of

---

<sup>97</sup>*Principles for Inculturation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Department of Education, United States Catholic Conference, August 31, 1994, p. 1.

<sup>98</sup>The theme of inculturation appeared in 35 interventions; justice, 40; laity, 30; Church, 15, communications, 14; small basic Christian communities, 27; dialogue, 18; priests, 9; religious, 9; marriage, 13; youth, 4; Bible, 3; schools, 4; family, 11; catechists, 2; missionaries, 11; signs of the times, 3. Cf. "Synode Africain: panorama thématique." in *Au coeur de l'Afrique*, November 4, 1994, p. 261.

<sup>99</sup>John Paul II, Angelus message, January 6, 1989, in *ORE*, January 16, 1989, p. 1.

the Pope, there were petitions expressed for some time by African bishops, priests, theologians, and representatives of the laity. Probing into what these petitions were will help us identify the second response of the African church to its burning concern with how effectively to incarnate the gospel message in Africa.

### 1.3.2.1 - African Council

The idea of some meeting of the African bishops was at first complex.<sup>100</sup> At the Seventh Congress of the Catholic African students in Fribourg on April 13-17, 1962, a motion was passed calling for an assembly of African bishops. In 1972, Alioune Diop, the secretary general of the *Société Africaine de Culture*, proposed the idea of an African Council to the bishops of the Regional Episcopal Conferences of Francophone West Africa (*CERAO*).<sup>101</sup> At Lyons, in December 1982, Archbishop B. Gantin, now Cardinal, stated that an African Council had already been spoken of in the corridors of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>102</sup> In September 1977, a colloquium held at Abidjan under the aegis of the Society for African Culture (SAC) on the theme of "Black Civilization and the Catholic Church," passed a resolution for a Council of the Catholic Church in Africa. In 1981, Abbé K. Bimwenvi, the secretary general of the episcopal conferences of Zaire, and Fathers Meinrad

---

<sup>100</sup>We shall base our study on the two consultations that were carried out: the Yaoundé Consultation of April 11-12, 1984 and the Kinshasa Consultation of February 23, 1986. For a thorough treatment of these consultations, see E. Mveng, "The African Synod: Prolegomena for an African Council?" in *Concilium*, n.1 (1992), pp. 112-128.

<sup>101</sup>Cf. P. Monsengwo, "Un Synode spécial de l'Épiscopat africain," in *Revue africaine de théologie*, 25 (1989), p. 5.

<sup>102</sup>Cf. E. Mveng, "The Historical Background of the African Synod," in *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, New York, Orbis Books, 1996, p. 21.

Hegba and Nicholas Ossama visited Europe under the aegis of the SAC and gave a series of lectures in Paris, Lvons, Brussels, and Louvain to explain the proposal for an African Council.<sup>163</sup>

Up to this point, the whole project of a meeting for Africa had been developed by theologians, priests and laity, not by the African hierarchy. The initiative for this project was undertaken by the African francophone community and propagated in francophone countries like France and Belgium. Later, in 1980, the Ecumenical Association of African Theologians (EAAT) identified itself with the wish for an African Council and included this among its major study projects. Later, EAAT made its recommendations for a council to SECAM, which consequently charged its Secretary General with the task of undertaking an in-depth analysis of its feasibility.

The project of a council realized its first step when the Zairean episcopate introduced it to Pope John Paul II during his visit to Kinshasa. The second step was taken in April 1983 when Cardinal J. Malula, in the name of the episcopate of Zaire, repeated to the Pope the same desire for an African Council, "which would allow our churches to take stock of the present situation of Christianity and to establish in consultation an adequate basis for the integral evangelization of our continent in the future."<sup>164</sup> Of importance in this statement is the *raison d'être* of such a council: to take stock of the present situation of Christianity in Africa and to establish a basis for integral evangelization of the African continent. On April 21, 1983, replying to a second group from Zaire in Rome, Pope John Paul II expressed his agreement in principle with the project for an African Council. He stated:

---

<sup>163</sup>Ibid.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid. p. 21.

Moreover, I have already spoken of the indispensable harmony of action among all bishops of Zaire; **I also think that, to respond to a desire which you have expressed concerning the whole Church of Africa, a harmony of action is also necessary at this level, under one form or another, in order to examine the religious questions which are posed to the continent as a whole [emphasis added], in connection with the entire Church and the Holy See. But this subtracts nothing from the responsibility of each bishop in his own diocese.**<sup>105</sup>

The Pope here emphasizes two things, namely (1) the *raison d'être* — to examine the religious problems facing the whole continent; and (2) the necessity for a consultation in one form or another so that the African Council would not be a project only of the Zairean bishops.

In October 1983, under the presidency of Cardinal P. Zoungana of SECAM, the African bishops present at the synod of bishops in Rome examined the project for an African Council and opted for the formula of an African Council in place of an African synod.<sup>106</sup> Except for the time that SECAM charged its Secretary General to study the proposal, this is the first time (1983) that the whole African episcopate identified itself with the project of a council but, even so, with reluctance:

The Seventh General Assembly of SECAM at Kinshasa, Zaire, in 1984 discussed the question of an African Council. Arriving at no decision, it referred the matter to the episcopal conferences for further study. Three years later [1987] the Assembly at Lagos, Nigeria, took up the matter and considered the responses of the various conferences. It found no agreement on any course of action. The same happened with a separate consultation of all the bishops of Africa and Madagascar in 1985 by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.<sup>107</sup>

Pope John Paul II was aware of the proposed Council for Africa:

Subsequently, from 1977 to 1983, some bishops, priests, consecrated persons, theologians and lay people expressed a desire for an African Council or African synod, which would have the task of evaluating evangelization in Africa vis-à-vis the great choices to be made

---

<sup>105</sup>*AAS*, 75 (1983), pp. 634-635; John Paul II, "The Christian Community Ought to Witness to the Vitality and Richness of the Church," April 21, 1983, in *ORE*, May 30, 1983, p. 4.

<sup>106</sup>Mveng, "The Historical Background," p. 22.

<sup>107</sup>The Address of the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, then Archbishop Jan Schotte, "African Synod is Special Moment of Grace," in *ORE*, April 20, 1994, p. 5. Apparently, some bishops were unhappy with the way in which some episcopal conferences and priests had begun to promote the idea of a council without due consultation with all the particular churches of Africa.

regarding the Continent's future. I gladly welcomed and encouraged the idea of the "working together, in one form or another, of the whole African episcopate ... to study the religious problems that concern the whole continent."<sup>108</sup> SECAM thus studied ways and means of planning a continental meeting of this kind. A consultation of the episcopal conferences and of each bishop of Africa and Madagascar was organized, after which I was able to convoke a Special Assembly for Africa of the synod of bishops.<sup>109</sup>

It is worth noting that, before convoking the African synod, the Holy Father consulted representatives of the African episcopate, apparently the same people that were working for the proposed African Council. While the talk was originally of an African council, what was finally convoked was an African synod! Why was this changed? Why did the African Council project fail? We shall consider some of the reasons.

The first, and perhaps the most important reason, was the structural composition of SECAM and its lack of legal authority. SECAM was not a legal structure capable of convening a council. There was no competent authority in Africa legally capable of convoking a continental council. The African Council could not be realized by SECAM acting alone. There could have been a council, but it would have required an extraordinary act of the Pope, because there are neither structures nor provisions in canon law for a council on the level of a continent encompassing many episcopal conferences.

Canon 124 of the CIC/1983 states that "for the validity of a juridical act [like convening a council] it is required that it be performed by a person who is legally capable, and it must contain elements which constitute the essence of the act, as well as the formalities and requirements which the law prescribes for the validity of the act." Without actually defining a juridic act, this canon

---

<sup>108</sup>See John Paul II, Address to Zairean bishops during their *ad limina* visit, (April 21, 1983), in *AAS*, 75 (1983), pp. 634-635; in *ORE*, May 30, 1983, p. 4.

<sup>109</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 5.

presents its constitutive elements: the person placing the act, the intrinsic nature of the act placed, and the extrinsic formalities. All three elements — the person, the act, and the formalities — must simultaneously exist for the validity of the act. For the African Council to be convened (act), someone who is legally capable (person) would have to do it, and in the right way according to law (formalities).

To say that SECAM was not a legal structure capable of convening a council means that it had no juridic personality; it was not a legal person. Persons in law are either physical, juridical or moral (the Catholic Church and the Apostolic See). Physical persons are real human beings, whereas juridic persons are entities created by law, comprising either aggregates of physical persons (*universitates personarum*) or aggregates of things (*universitates rerum*). The *raison d'être* of any juridic person is the fact there are some collective interests which go beyond the capacity of any physical person to pursue individually. To promote these collective aims, both civil and canon law recognize determined entities, institutions, and corporate bodies as capable of enjoying rights and obligations, just like physical persons.

Juridic persons are instituted for purposes appropriate to the Church's mission; their constitution may be established by virtue of the law itself<sup>110</sup> or through a provision (decree) of a competent ecclesiastical authority. This formal sanction granted either by law or by a competent authority gives to such a corporation the juridic capacity to act. Without this formal constitutive act, the corporation remains *de facto* capable of some juridic relationships in the sense of c. 310,<sup>111</sup> but

---

<sup>110</sup>Examples of these are seminaries (c. 238, §1), public associations of the faithful (c. 313), parishes (c. 515, §1), religious institutes (c. 634, §1).

<sup>111</sup>This canon states: "A private association which has not been constituted a juridical person cannot, as such, be the subject of duties and rights. However, the faithful who are joined together in it can jointly

is not a true juridic person. This formal element constituting the juridic personality cannot be presumed. For instance, according to c. 312, public associations must be provided for their juridic personality either by law or by one of the competent ecclesiastical authorities enumerated in law: the Holy See for associations which have world-wide dispersion and activity, the episcopal conference for associations acting nation-wide, and individual bishops for associations whose activity is limited to the confines of the diocese. The law does not provide for continental juridic persons.

SECAM is not an official canonical structure; it is called a “symposium” of episcopal conferences of Africa and Madagascar. This is evident in a statement published by the SECAM Press Office:

SECAM remained the organ of liaison, study and consultation for fruitful collaboration among the episcopal conferences of the Continent and the islands. Since it is not a supra-conference, it respects the freedom of its members while facilitating their tasks by promoting joint study of and concerted action in questions of common interest. It exists to preserve, foster and promote communion, joint action and collaboration among its members in the following areas: evangelization (the continuation of the primary evangelization of those who have not yet received the message of Christ; the in-depth and on-going evangelization of those who have received the message of Christ); human promotion (the promotion and integral liberation of the human person); ecumenism (the pursuit of ecumenical relations and interreligious dialogue in Africa); formation (the promotion of institutes of research and of pastoral and theological formation); consultation (regular consultation of the major problems facing the Church in Africa and in the world).<sup>112</sup>

SECAM is an instrument and expression of affective collegiality for the African episcopate to come together to exercise in a communal fashion its pastoral mission.<sup>113</sup> It is at the service of episcopal

---

contract obligations. As joint owners and joint possessors they can acquire and possess rights and goods. They can exercise these rights and obligations through a delegate or a proxy.”

<sup>112</sup>*Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM): History, Objectives, Members, Activities*, SECAM Press Office, Accra-Ghana, April, 1994, pp. 2-3.

<sup>113</sup>SECAM is comprised of 34 episcopal conferences joined into nine regional groups: Association of Episcopal Conferences of Central Africa, that is, Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire (ACEAC); Association of

conferences and respects their freedom. It facilitates the exercise of their responsibilities in the sense that it encourages common reflection on problems of general interest and promotes solidarity in action. Such solidarity is intended to offer appropriate assistance to each bishop in fulfilling his particular ministry in the local church.

In its present form, SECAM does not correspond to any of the ecclesial structures envisaged in the law. The CIC/83 speaks of a plenary council as one which is held for all particular churches belonging to the same conference of bishops.<sup>114</sup> and a provincial council as one for the various particular churches of the same ecclesiastical province.<sup>115</sup> There is no mention of a continental council.

Invoking c. 439 §1, the proponents of the African Council imagined a particular regional council, at the level of Africa, which would bring together all the particular churches that are part of SECAM.<sup>116</sup> This council would be convened at the level of SECAM by its president, but the prior approval of the Holy See would be sought:

It would bring together all the bishops, who would be joined by representatives of all the people of God in Africa, meaning priests, religious and duly chosen laity, and foreign missionaries working in Africa ... In a special category, SECAM could invite a delegation or

---

Episcopal Conferences of Congo, Central Africa, Cameroon, Chad and Equatorial Guinea (ACECCT); Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa (AECAWA); Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA); Conference of Bishops of the Region of Northern Africa, that is, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya (CERNA); Regional Episcopal Conferences of Francophone West Africa (CERAO); Inter-Regional Meeting of the Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA); the Episcopal Conference of Madagascar and the Patriarchal Coptic Synod, Egypt; in *ORE*, April 20, 1994, p. 5.

<sup>114</sup>See c. 439, §1.

<sup>115</sup>See c. 440, §1.

<sup>116</sup>“In conformity with canon 439, §1, this is a particular regional council, at the level of Africa. The canon speaks directly of a particular plenary council bringing together the particular churches of an episcopal conference. In this case, the council is sought at the continental level, and it will bring together all those particular churches which are part of SECAM.” See Mveng, “The African Synod,” p. 115.

representation from the Holy See, but this delegation would have no voting rights. As observers, SECAM could also invite the categories that were represented at Vatican II, namely ecumenical representatives from Africa and even from outside the continent or from other episcopal conferences.<sup>117</sup>

As a symposium,<sup>118</sup> having no legal status, SECAM cannot convene a plenary Council on a continental level. The nearest legal provision that can be invoked in support of SECAM's present status may be found in c. 459 which states: "Mutual relationships are to be fostered between the conferences of bishops of different regions, especially those who are neighbours, for the promotion and protection of the greater good." However, paragraph two of the canon states: "Whenever the actions or programs entered into by the conferences take on an international aspect it is necessary to consult the Apostolic See." This prescription made it impossible for SECAM on its own to convene a council on a continental level. Therefore, there was neither a structure nor proper authority in Africa legally capable of convening a council. Even if the Pope made an exception and convoked a council himself, there are no provisions in the law to regulate a council at this level.

The second reason for not convening an African council was the unclear motive for convoking it. As was reported in the Kinshasa consultation: "On the whole, discussions revolve around two major questions: the justification for an African Council and its aims, and the need to inform, sensitize and inspire the people of God."<sup>119</sup> Would it be to reform or to form an African church?

The basic proposal was to take stock of the present state of Christianity in Africa, to create conditions for the development of the Christian religion so that it could put down deep

---

<sup>117</sup>Mveng, "Historical Background," pp. 24-25.

<sup>118</sup>The original meaning of "symposium" (from Gk. *sun*, together and *posis*, a drink) is a friendly meeting over drinks; then it came to mean a gathering at which interchange or discussion of ideas takes place.

<sup>119</sup>Mveng, "The African Synod," p. 120.

roots, and to make a general survey of the current religious situation of Africa. Ways forward for Christianity in the future will be examined in the following areas: theology and doctrinal situation, liturgy, spirituality, overall pastoral orientations and options, and the activity of the church in African society.<sup>120</sup>

Other proposals were that, since the Catholic Church in Africa had not yet assimilated Vatican II, a council would be the extension and implementation in Africa of the conciliar teaching.<sup>121</sup> Also, given the extraordinary increase in conversions in Africa, "the African boom," theologians considered it necessary for the church in Africa "to take stock, to develop strategies for its second evangelization (most of the churches are celebrating their centenaries), and to give itself the means to control and guide the 'African boom.'"<sup>122</sup> But fears were also present that it might lead to an African schism: to form a distinctly African church with a distinct discipline, liturgy, and laws.

The third reason why the African Council never took place was the lack of consensus and mutual support among SECAM members. The poor response of the episcopal conferences to the SECAM survey indicated reservations among the episcopate. A second survey was conducted by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, which sent a questionnaire to each African bishop. The results of the first survey were made public at the Lagos Meeting of SECAM in 1987: "only one-third of the bishops was in favour of an African Council."<sup>123</sup> It must be remembered that

---

<sup>120</sup>Ibid, p. 115.

<sup>121</sup>"Les africains avaient le sentiment qu'ils devaient être *eux-mêmes leurs propres missionnaires*. La prise en charge de l'Évangile par eux-mêmes nécessitait une réévaluation, un réajustement et une coordination qui ne pouvait être que l'oeuvre d'un Concile Africain. Celui-ci devant donner *les structures et les moyens nécessaires pour mettre la catholicité africaine en état de conciliarité permanente et lui faire assumer la tâche de la mission intérieure d'Afrique en toutes ses dimensions, spirituelles, intellectuelles, politiques et économiques.*" (M.M.L. Mpongo, "Un Synode au lieu d'un Concile Africain: Qu'est-ce à dire?", in *Revue africaine de théologie*, 35 [1994], p. 40). See also Mveng, "The African Synod," p. 119.

<sup>122</sup>Mveng, "The African Synod," p. 115.

<sup>123</sup>C. Okoye, "The Synod of Bishops/Special Assembly for Africa: Is this Another Roman Programme for Africa?" in *AFER*, 31 (1992), p. 215.

the whole idea of a council was begun by theologians whose contribution was significant in raising the consciousness of the churches in Africa. But the episcopate was reluctant, and at the Kinshasa consultation "the theologians felt the need for discretion, to avoid offending the African episcopate by giving the impression of pre-empting or forcing its decisions."<sup>124</sup>

There were serious differences of opinions between Anglophones and Francophones<sup>125</sup> with mutual accusations that the whole idea of a council was Francophone, concretely from Zaire, being imposed on a reluctant Anglophone Africa:

Not only is there no agreement on the significance, function, role or scope of SECAM; there is also division over the opportunities, the content, the programme and the power of an African Council. The emotional character of some of the debates, emphasizing the disparities between English-speakers and French-speakers, conservatives and progressives, supporters and opponents of inculturation, has quickly led to the identification of scapegoats, first of all the African theologians, who have been christened 'problem theologians', then in the Zaire episcopate, which has been accused of continental hegemonism, and finally in the person of a man who was an authentic father of the African church, Cardinal Malula, Archbishop of Kinshasa, of holy and blessed memory.<sup>126</sup>

The Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, Cardinal Jan P. Schotte, summarized the process of the African Council in the following terms:

The Seventh General Assembly of SECAM at Kinshasa (Zaire) in 1984 discussed the question of an *African Council*. Arriving at no decision, it referred the matter to the Episcopal Conferences for further study. Three years later the Assembly at Lagos (Nigeria) took up the matter and considered the responses of the various Conferences. It found no agreement on any course of action. The same happened with a separate consultation of all the bishops of Africa and Madagascar in 1985 by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. By

---

<sup>124</sup>Mveng, "The African Synod," p. 119.

<sup>125</sup>Africa is a "world in one continent": it has a bit of everything in the world, culturally, linguistically, racially, economically. As a result, pastoral approaches vary. The Christian communities of the Islamic north differ from those of the great lakes and of the south. The Anglophones think and proceed differently from either the Francophones or the Lusophones. All these factors made it difficult to have concerted and coordinated action. This is another area where Africa is not walking together.

<sup>126</sup>Mveng, "The Historical Background," p. 28.

the initiative of the Holy Father, the idea of a meeting of the bishops of Africa has seen the light of day in the form of this Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.<sup>127</sup>

The fourth reason for the failure of the African Council was the distance and lack of communication between SECAM and Rome. Much preparation had been done for a council before permission had been obtained to hold it. There were proposals for the venue (Kinshasa, Abidjan, Yaounde, Nairobi, Harare, and Ibadan); the date (1990); the duration (one month); participation (1,000 people); and budget (\$3,000,000.00). These preparations were in vain without the Holy See's approval for such a council.

Perhaps the fifth reason for the failure to realize an African council was the lack of involvement by African canonists in the work of preparation. There is hardly any mention of canonical input into the process. Canonists could have pointed out the legal problems and issues involved in such an important event. In the Kinshasa Consultation of February 23, 1986, all the documents presenting the survey results treated the historical, pastoral and theological questions relating to the possibility of an African council.<sup>128</sup> without any reference to its canonical considerations.

### **1.3.2.2 - Towards an African Synod**

In the previous sections, we considered the circumstances in which the African Synod was convoked. In our analysis of the pope's address, we noted that he *decided* to convoke an assembly for Africa, and that the kind of Assembly was a synod of bishops. A decision puts an end to a

---

<sup>127</sup>Schotte, J., "African Synod is Special Moment of Grace," in *ORE*, April 20, 1994, p. 5.

<sup>128</sup>Cf. Mveng, "African Synod," p. 117.

dispute: it settles an issue. The Holy Father's decision was to convoke a synod of Africa. In view of the unsuccessful attempts by the African church to address its problems, the Pope broke the impasse by convoking, not a council, but a synod of bishops. Some people "saw the calling of the African synod as the quite logical gesture of a Pope who tired of waiting for the African episcopate to take on the responsibility, took it upon himself to do what the law allowed him to do — convene a synod of bishops and designate the evangelization of Africa as its theme."<sup>129</sup> Others concluded that the Pope had taken sides with the opponents of an African council. Some people were pleased with the Pope's decision,<sup>130</sup> while others were not.<sup>131</sup>

On the opening day of the African Synod in Rome, the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops observed:

[...] a month before the announcement of the synod on 6 December 1988, the Holy Father summoned the Presidents of SECAM, the Presidents of the nine regional conferences on Africa and Madagascar, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples and the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops to a meeting in the library of the pontifical apartments [...]. The meeting heard of the inconclusive consultations, the persistent desire for a meeting of the bishops of Africa in some form, and the rejection of a Council by the majority. It was decided to convene a Special Synod, to be announced on the feast of the Epiphany of the following year.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup>Mveng, "The Historical Background," p. 28.

<sup>130</sup>"Nous trois Instituts [l'Institut catholique de Yaoundé, au Cameroun, l'Institut catholique d'Afrique de l'Ouest de Port Harcourt, Nigeria, et les Facultés catholiques de Kinshasa, au Zaïre] approuvent vivement l'action du Saint Père, le Pape Jean Paul II, de convoquer l'Assemblée spéciale du synode des évêques pour l'Afrique" (*La documentation catholique* [= DC], 89 [1992], p. 240). Likewise, in the second meeting of the Ante-preparatory Commission held March 1-3, 1989, a report was heard "on the very positive reactions all over Africa to the announcement by the Holy Father." See J.P. Schotte, 1<sup>st</sup> General Congregation, April 4, 1994.

<sup>131</sup>"The bureaucrats in Rome wanted the Synod, let them have it, and let them follow it. We will simply ignore it" (*New People* Editorial Staff [Nairobi], "An Open Letter to the Holy Father," in Africa Faith & Justice Network, *The African Synod. Documents, Reflections, Perspectives* [= ASDRP], Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1996, p. 67).

<sup>132</sup>General Secretary's opening address to the African Synod, in *ORE*, April 20, 1994, p. 5.

The Pope did not unilaterally propose or impose a synod instead of a council; he took the decision for a synod in a meeting held on December 6, 1988 with the President of SECAM, the presidents of the nine regional episcopal conferences of Africa and Madagascar, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops. The Pope himself remarked that “a consultation of the Episcopal Conferences and of each bishop of Africa and Madagascar was organized, after which I was able to convoke a Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops.”<sup>133</sup>

The Pope did not act arbitrarily. He saw the lack of solidarity in the African church manifested especially during the preparation of the would-be-council. The Holy Father opted for the synod of bishops, as he stated on the day that he announced the African synod, to “promote an organic pastoral solidarity within the entire African territory and nearby islands.”<sup>134</sup>

There is, however, a problem of translation here. The Italian original text reads: “*Accogliendo l’istanza molte volte e da diverso tempo espressa dai vescovi africani, da sacerdoti, teologi ed esponenti del laicato, perchè sia promossa un’organica solidarietà pastorale* [emphasis added] *nell’intero territorio africano ed isole attigue, ho deciso di convocare un’Assemblea per l’Africa del Sinodo dei Vescovi sul tema: ‘La Chiesa in Africa verso il Terzo Millennio’.*”<sup>135</sup> Two apparent meanings can be derived from this text, that is, the petitions were asking the Pope to help promote an organic pastoral solidarity among the petitioners. This, if we so translate: “Accepting

---

<sup>133</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 5.

<sup>134</sup>See John Paul II, “An African Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: The Church in Africa Towards the Third Millennium,” January 6, 1989, in *ORE*, January 16, 1989, p. 1.

<sup>135</sup>*L’Osservatore romano*, Italian language edition (= *ORF*), January 7, 1989.

the petitions often and at different times expressed [...] that an organic pastoral solidarity be promoted [...].” Or, the Pope himself decided to convoke the synod in order, by his initiative and decision, to promote an organic pastoral solidarity. The question is, who is the subject of *perchè sia promossa un'organica solidarietà pastorale*? Whose wish is it? The English edition of *L'Osservatore romano* by translating it as “accepting the petitions often expressed for some time now [...] in order to promote an organic pastoral solidarity [...] I have decided to convoke a Special Assembly for Africa [...]” gives the impression that it was proposed by, and not to, the Pope.

Taking into consideration all the Pope's other speeches on the African Synod, it appears more likely that he is the subject of the *perchè sia promossa un'organica solidarietà pastorale*,<sup>136</sup> that is, he convoked the African Synod in order to promote an organic pastoral solidarity in Africa and nearby islands. A few examples will suffice to substantiate this conclusion.

Travelling to Africa (Madagascar), the Pope gave an interview to journalists during which he said of the African Synod that it would give occasion to establish what he considers to be priorities for the Church in Africa.<sup>136</sup>

On the day the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops for Africa was constituted, the Pope clarified the following as his reasons for calling the Synod: “To promote collaboration, to express the one faith in various contexts, to coordinate pastoral and missionary activity where necessary, to make the transmission of the Gospel Message more convincing and to respond better to the demands which occur.”<sup>137</sup>

---

<sup>136</sup> “Avec le Synode africain, la possibilité nous est donnée de vérifier les choses que nous pensons être prioritaires pour l'Église en Afrique.” in *DC*, 86 (1989), p. 559.

<sup>137</sup> “Discours au Conseil du Secrétariat du Synode: cinq thèmes pour le prochain Synode des évêques africains.” in *DC*, 86 (1989), p. 722.

On the occasion of the first meeting in Rome of the members of the Council for the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, Pope John Paul II said:

However, from the apostolic times, the Church realized that she had to promote collaboration, the expression of the one faith in various contexts, and, where necessary and possible, pastoral and missionary coordination, in order to make the transmissions of the Gospel message more convincing, and to respond better to the demands which occur. For this reason, today, it seemed opportune to convoke this *Special Assembly*.<sup>138</sup>

Again, speaking to members of the same Council meeting in Kampala, Uganda, the Pope remarked:

The word "synod" literally means a walking together: "syn-odos." It provides a powerful image which can be applied not only to the actual synodal Assembly but also to all the phases of preparation which precede that gathering. All members of the church in Africa — clergy, religious, and laity — are making a common journey, "walking together," placing their gifts at the service of the church in Africa for the sake of the forthcoming Special Assembly.<sup>139</sup>

The basic ecclesiological principle applicable to the notion of walking together as in the practice of synods is that of *communio*. Since Vatican Council II, the Holy See has been more conscious of fostering the *communio* dimension of the Church. During the pontificate of John Paul II, the synod of bishops, among other structures, has become an important instrument of realizing this *communio*. Since he was Cardinal Archbishop of Krakow, Poland, Pope John Paul II has viewed the synod of bishops "as **the best way**, the best means for putting the Council into practice, **for guiding the church in the post-conciliar stage**."<sup>140</sup> This conviction seems to underlie the importance the Pope has given to the synod of bishops.<sup>141</sup> be it the general or special synod:

---

<sup>138</sup>John Paul II, "Council for the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops," in *AFER*, 31 (1989), p. 259.

<sup>139</sup>*AAS*, 85 (1993), p. 952; *DC*, 90 (1993), p. 269.

<sup>140</sup>Cf. John Paul II, "Parish: Model of Church Community," in *ORE*, March 17, 1993, pp. 7. Emphasis added.

<sup>141</sup>An answer to the question, "What the synod of bishops has come to be under the pontificate of Pope John Paul II" would cover an immense field which is beyond the scope of this study. For our purpose,

The Synod of Bishops responds to the needs of the Church when the Successor of Peter, with the aid of his brother Bishops, has to carry out tasks which emerge from his apostolic mandate as Universal Shepherd, amid complex circumstances which are subject to continuing change. In this way the synod constitutes a realization and an illustration of the collegial nature of the order of Bishops (cf. *Lumen gentium*, nn. 22-23; and *Nota Praevia, Christus Dominus*, nn. 4-10), of which the Second Vatican Council has, so to speak, come to a renewed awareness.

[...] The current world situation at times demands a presence and action by members of the College which, as the successor of the College of the Apostles, has received the mission to teach and govern in the Church. The Synod is capable of supplying an answer to these needs.

Everyone — and the Pope first of all — is in fact aware that it is thanks to the Synod that a certain number of crucial problems have been faced and have found a collegial answer [...].

On the other hand, in the varying circumstances in which Christ's Church carries out her mission today, the Synod is at the service of the unity of the Church, the mystery of communion [...].

The Synod constitutes a unique experience on a universal basis of episcopal communion, which strengthens the sense of the entire Church and the sense of responsibility of the Bishops towards the entire Church and her mission, in affective and effective communion around Peter.

Thanks to the Synod it is possible at regular intervals to make the voice of the various particular Churches heard and to hear the experiences of brother Bishops.<sup>142</sup>

For the Pope, the synod is a means of strengthening and promoting both episcopal collegiality and ecclesial communion. Speaking specifically to the Council of the General Secretariat of the African Synod in Kampala, Uganda, the Pope stated that the synod is a particular instrument of ecclesial communion. It expresses and promotes the communion of the bishops among themselves around the world. He said that "the principle underlying the institution of the synod of

---

a limited investigation is sufficient to show the importance the Pope attaches to the synod of bishops.

<sup>142</sup>John Paul II, address "Synod is 'Indirectly Deliberative'," in *ORE*, November 5, 1990, p. 7.

bishops is that the more the communion of the bishops in the world episcopate is achieved, the more the communion of the Church is enhanced.”<sup>143</sup>

In the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, the Pope remarks:

At my first meeting with the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, gathered to discuss the Special Assembly for Africa, I indicated the reason why it seemed appropriate to convoke this Assembly: the promotion of ‘an organic pastoral solidarity throughout Africa and the adjacent Islands’. With these words I wished to include the main goals and objectives which that Assembly would have to pursue.

During my pastoral Visits in Africa, I frequently referred to the Special Assembly for Africa and the principal aims for which it has been convoked [...] I did not fail to emphasize my conviction that a Synodal Assembly cannot be reduced to a consultation on practical matters. Its *raison d’être* is the fact that the Church can move forward only by strengthening communion among her members, beginning with her Pastors.

Every Synodal Assembly manifests and develops solidarity between the heads of particular Churches in carrying out their mission beyond the boundaries of their respective Dioceses.<sup>144</sup>

## CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this chapter, we discussed the origin and *raison d’être* of the synod of bishops in general. We, thereafter, analyzed the *Sitz im Leben* under which the African Synod was convoked. We identified the great concern of the Church in Africa as effecting the gospel message in the lives of the people. This concern had been raised by a greater awareness of the fact that in Africa evangelization has been more a task of proclamation than one of witness, and that its results lacked deeper roots in the lives of the Catholics. There have been various attempts to address this concern, of which we identified three: inculturation, an African council, and the African Synod.

---

<sup>143</sup>Ibid.

<sup>144</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, nn. 16-17.

Inculturation is looked upon as an urgent, necessary and indispensable means of incarnating the gospel in the cultures of the African people. Such an inculturated gospel message would make African Christians experience Jesus as a living person, who exercises a dynamic influence on their daily life and cultural values.

Before the convocation of the African Synod there were attempts to hold a council for Africa. Since canon law does not provide norms for regulating such a council on a continental level encompassing several episcopal conferences, an African council would be an exception, requiring an extraordinary act of the Pope.

Pope John Paul II, in view of the unsuccessful attempts by the African church to address its problems, decided to convoke a Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops and set evangelization as its overall theme. The historical data analyzed in this chapter seems to point to disunity in Africa as the major challenge, thus justifying both the convocation of the African Synod itself and the choice of its purpose.

The opinion set forth in this chapter is that by convoking the assembly of the synod of bishops in order to promote pastoral solidarity in Africa, Pope John Paul II exercised his petrine ministry. The prevailing *Sitz im Leben* in the African church gave occasion to the Pope to convoke a Special Assembly for Africa and to determine its purpose as promoting an organic pastoral solidarity within the entire African territory and nearby islands. This promotion of solidarity in Africa was, in essence, petrine ministry *in actu*, at times involving the very person of the Pope, as we shall see in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DYNAMICS OF THE AFRICAN SYNOD OF BISHOPS

The opinion set forth in the previous chapter is that the petrine ministry was exercised in the convocation of the African Synod. In this chapter, we shall discuss how this petrine ministry was again exercised throughout the dynamics<sup>1</sup> of the African Synod. We shall accomplish this by systematically analysing the *Lineamenta*, the *Instrumentum laboris*, the working session, and the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*.

#### 2. 1 - THE GATEWAY TO THE SYNODAL PROCESS: THE *LINEAMENTA*

The living practice in preparation of a synod assembly features two major documents, the *Lineamenta* and the *Instrumentum laboris*. The *Lineamenta*,<sup>2</sup> or outline, is a document that invites the people to submit opinions freely for the prospective synod. It gives a brief presentation of the theme or scheme of the subject of the synod which, accompanied by a series of questions, has as its end to generate reflection and prayer in the concerned ecclesial community, and to provide written contributions for the use of individual bishops in their reports to the conferences of bishops.<sup>3</sup> The release of the *Lineamenta* to the conferences of bishops marks the gateway to the synodal process.

---

<sup>1</sup>What we offer in this chapter is by no means a thorough thematic or theological presentation of the synodal documents, but rather a follow-up survey of the exercise of the petrine ministry throughout the dynamics of the synod. It is beyond the purview of this study to discuss the theology contained in the synodal documents.

<sup>2</sup>Although *Lineamenta* is plural, it will be used as a collective singular here to refer to the document as a whole.

<sup>3</sup>It is worth noting that the Latin *episcoporum conferentia* is translated "episcopal conference" by the British edition of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, and "conference of bishops" by the CLSA edition. Since the Latin original is *episcoporum conferentia* and not *conferentia episcopalis*, we shall use "conference of bishops" in this work, except in citations.

### 2.1.1 - The Role of the Conferences of Bishops in the Synodal Process

The preliminary step for the generation of the *Lineamenta* usually involves a consultation with the patriarchates, conferences of bishops, heads of Vatican offices of the Roman Curia and the Union of Superiors General for suggestions of possible topics for a synod. For the African Synod, Pope John Paul II appointed various members of the African episcopate to form a pre-preparatory commission made up of the presidents of the regional and continental associations of conferences, as well as the prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and the president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The commission's task was the remote preparation of the synod involving procedural matters, the formulation of the synodal theme, and its presentation to the Pope for approval.

After the Pope had approved the synodal theme, the General Secretary Cardinal Jan Schotte, called together various African specialists associated with it — together with the pre-preparatory commission — to draw up a draft of the *Lineamenta* and submit it to the Pope for approval, as the law requires.<sup>4</sup> The *Lineamenta* was later released to the conferences of bishops, which are its first recipients. The bishops are encouraged to conduct a broad consultation at the grassroots level.

The immediate purpose of the *Lineamenta* is to offer the conferences and their member bishops an appropriate tool to foster a common reflection on the theme of the synod. It is here that the *real* synod of bishops begins to happen.<sup>5</sup> The information that is collected at the grassroots level

---

<sup>4</sup>Canon 344: "The synod of bishops is directly under the authority of the Roman Pontiff, whose prerogative it is: 3° [...] to prescribe the outlines of the questions to be discussed [...]."

<sup>5</sup>The word "synod" comes from two Greek words, *syn* (together, common) and *hodos* (journey, walking, road). Thus, "synod" literally means "common journey, walking together, or simply coming together." But this common journey or walking together, though not exclusively, is intended for the bishops, thus "synod of bishops."

is used to enable the conferences of bishops to compose their official responses. For this reason, the preface to the *Lineamenta* of the African Synod states that it is offered to the conferences with the sole purpose of fostering a common reflection on the theme of the Special Assembly for Africa.

The conferences of bishops occupy a central place in the synodal process. Speaking of the African conferences, Cardinal J.P. Schotte observed:

In the synod process the episcopal conferences become the pivotal point between the synod assembly and the various efforts at prayer and reflection undertaken at different levels of the Church life. For it will be the work of the episcopal conferences, in view of the *Instrumentum laboris*, to formulate from the contributions submitted the official responses which will be forwarded to the General Secretariat. For this reason, each episcopal conference will lend its authority to the responses to the questions on the topic. In other words, each will affirm, on the basis of each member bishop's pastoral charge, that the responses truly and accurately reflect the situation of the People of God in Africa as it seeks to carry out its mission on the continent.<sup>6</sup>

Though, in principle, every bishop with a pastoral duty in the area can participate in the conferences of bishops,<sup>7</sup> not all of them go to Rome to participate in synodal sessions. In other words, the synodal sessions involve a limited number of bishops.<sup>8</sup> The majority of bishops do not

---

<sup>6</sup>Cf. "'Listening to Africa' is theme of the *Lineamenta* for Synod," July 30, 1990, in *ORF*, p.10.

<sup>7</sup>Canon 450, §1 enumerates the members of the conference of bishops as: "diocesan bishops and those equivalent to them in law; all coadjutor bishops, auxiliary bishops and other titular bishops who exercise in the territory a special office assigned to them by the Apostolic See or by the conference of bishops." Those equivalent to a diocesan bishop in law include territorial prelates, territorial abbots, vicars apostolic, prefects apostolic, apostolic administrators of a permanently established apostolic administration, the superior of a *Missio sui iuris*, who rules an independent mission, not yet erected into a prefecture apostolic. The administrator of a vacant diocese (or equivalent territory) is not specifically mentioned, but c. 427, §1 says that he is bound by the obligations and enjoys the power of a diocesan bishop, excluding those matters which are excepted by the nature of things or by the law itself. An apostolic administrator, *sede vacante*, even if not a bishop, would be in the same position. Military ordinaries, and retired bishops are also members of the conference of bishops.

Common to all members of conferences is a pastoral responsibility in the area. Indeed, according to (1), 38 and c. 450, membership in the conference pertains to those who have a pastoral duty within the area. Other bishops are not *de iure* members.

<sup>8</sup>Of the 497 bishops in Africa at the time of the Synod, only 181 went to Rome for the sessions. This is approximately 36.4%.

go to Rome for discussions at a synod as they do in their conferences. Indeed, the Order of the Synod of Bishops stipulates the number of bishops to represent their individual conferences: one for each national conference of bishops that does not exceed twenty-five members; two for each national conference that does exceed fifty members; three for each national conference that does not exceed 100 members; and four for each national conference of bishops that might have more than 100 members.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.1.2 - Effective and Affective Collegiality

The *Lineamenta* says in its preface that the African Synod was convoked “so as to celebrate the communion and collegiality of the African episcopate with Rome and the Universal Church.”<sup>10</sup> Pope John Paul II had said that it was “in order to promote an organic pastoral solidarity in Africa and nearby islands.”<sup>11</sup> If words mean what they say, we have two different objectives here. One objective is “to celebrate the communion and collegiality of the African episcopate **with Rome and the Universal Church,**” and another is “to promote an organic pastoral solidarity **in Africa and nearby islands.**” However, because every individual bishop by virtue of his consecration shares also in the *solicitudo omnium ecclesiarum*, the two themes, although similar, are not contradictory. The former refers to *effectus collegialis* (to realize collegiality in its broader sense) and the latter to *affectus collegialis* (the *esprit de corps*, togetherness, unity).

---

<sup>9</sup>Art. 6, § 1, 3°. In Africa, most conferences of bishops have less than 25 members. This means that such conferences were to send only one member to the synod.

<sup>10</sup> “Synod of Bishops. Special Assembly for Africa: *Lineamenta*,” St. Paul Publications – Africa, Nairobi, p. vii.

<sup>11</sup>See supra p. 48 note 134.

It may help our study to discuss here, albeit briefly, the difference between effective collegiality and affective collegiality and their relationship. The terms appeared in the period following the Second Vatican Council. They surfaced especially at the time of the 1969 Synod of Bishops, as an attempt to give flesh to the conciliar description of the concept of collegiality found in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, nn. 22 and 23 vis-à-vis the *Nota explicativa praevia* of this same document.

Although effective collegiality and affective collegiality are related, they are not the same. Both have the same subjects, namely the bishops, but both are lived differently: "Effective collegiality refers to the exercise of episcopal authority by all the members of the college of bishops gathered in Ecumenical Council or as they carry out their teaching responsibilities in their own particular churches but in full communion with the college of bishops and its head, the successor of Peter."<sup>12</sup> According to the *Nota explicativa* of *LG*, the bishops are unable to act as a college without the action of the head. This means that effective realization of collegiality *in actu pleno* is limited to two instances: in an ecumenical council or in a united action of *all* bishops called for or at least received by the Pope. The other forms of episcopal collaboration that do not meet these two conditions are juridically not effective collegiality (*effectus collegialis*).<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>See attachment to a report to the United States bishops, "Effective and Affective Collegiality" in *Origins*, 25 (1995-1996), p.134.

<sup>13</sup>This affirmation although clear to canonists, can pose some difficulties for theologians. In a juridical sense, it is difficult, if not impossible, to speak of "partial" acts of collegiality. Juridically, an act is either collegiate in its fullness or is not at all; but never partial. This exactitude is proper to juridic language. However, theologically speaking, one can admit partial realization of collegiality especially if seen from the *communio* point of view which can exist at different levels and with varying intensity.

Affective collegiality (*affectus collegialis*) refers to “the bond among bishops as well as the pastoral activity of the groups of bishops. Distinct from collegiality exercised by the entire college of bishops united with the pope (effective collegiality), the activities among bishops or groups of bishops or both, particularly those of a given national or geographic region, are recognized as expressions of affective collegiality.”<sup>14</sup>

Underlying the concept of affective collegiality is the *we* dimension of the episcopate that the Second Vatican Council called “the collegiate character and aspect of the episcopal order.”<sup>15</sup> Both the being and the ministry of the bishop cannot be limited to his own diocese. The consecration of the bishop constitutes him a member of the college of bishops: “One is constituted a member of the episcopal body in virtue of the sacramental consecration and by the hierarchical communion with the head and members of the college.”<sup>16</sup> Because of this intrinsic link, every bishop can rightly say of himself, “I am because we are,” meaning that his being as a bishop is essentially tied to his being as a member of the episcopal college.

In a certain way, the *we* aspect precedes the *I* aspect of the bishop. Because he is a member of the college (the *we* aspect), he can also be head of a particular church (the *I* aspect). It is important to note that there are members of the college of bishops who are, in effect, not bishops of any existing particular church: “If a bishop can only be bishop of his diocese in so far as he is at the same time a member of the college, then this unity and cooperation with other bishops is in

---

<sup>14</sup>See attachment to a report to the United States bishops, “Effective and Affective Collegiality,” p.135.

<sup>15</sup>*LG*, 22.

<sup>16</sup>*LG*, 23; *CD*, 4.

principle not a matter for his own free judgement but something which flows essentially from the nature of his office."<sup>17</sup>

In *Lumen gentium*, conferences of bishops are viewed primarily as the concrete realization of affective collegiality among bishops.<sup>18</sup> Canon 447 — inspired by *Christus Dominus*, 38 — calls the conference of bishops an assembly (grouping) of bishops which comes into being when bishops of a given country or territory determined by the Holy See come together. This coming together of the bishops must be in order to exercise *together* certain pastoral offices for the good of the faithful.<sup>19</sup> It is, in effect, an institutionalized form of affective collegiality. By it, the member bishops come *together* to live out their affective collegiality. Indeed, we can say that, in terms of affective collegiality, the conference of bishops is to the country or territory what the special assembly of the synod of bishops is to the region.

It is the affective collegiality that Pope John Paul II wanted to promote on a continental level in and by the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. This is corroborated by the secondary motive for which the synod of bishops exists, namely, the promotion of affective collegiality among bishops. If the conference of bishops is understood as a kind of institutionalized

---

<sup>17</sup>K. Rahner, "The Episcopal Office" in *Theological Investigations* 6, London, Darton, 1974, p. 354.

<sup>18</sup>"Simuli ratione coetus episcoporum hodie multiplicem atque fecundam opum conferem possunt, ut collegialis affectus ad concretam applicationem perduratur [emphasis added]" *LG*, 23.

<sup>19</sup>The canon does not enumerate these "pastoral offices." However, elsewhere in the Code, some 82 instances are mentioned in which the conference of bishops can act. Indeed, the conference can act in any way that the mission of the Church can be fostered and forwarded especially, but not exclusively, in the seven forms of apostolate enumerated in c. 298: promoting the perfection of Christian life, divine worship, teaching the faith, evangelization, works of piety, works of charity, and animating the world with a Christian spirit. The underlying characteristic of all these pastoral activities is the greater good of the people which c. 1752 calls *suprema lex*, the salvation of souls.

pastoral solidarity among the bishops of the same country or territory.<sup>20</sup> then the best place to begin preparing a synod of bishops is the conference itself. For this reason, it is logical that the *Lineamenta*, as the gateway to the synod, be addressed to the conferences of bishops.

Africa and Madagascar have thirty-four conferences of bishops of which thirty-one sent in their responses to the *Lineamenta*. The remaining three (one for Rwanda and two for Burundi) were under very difficult circumstances at the time. This was the highest number of replies at that time for any synodal assembly since its creation in 1965.<sup>21</sup> This means that the *Lineamenta* initiated a process of synodality for the African episcopate to engage in a common journey, a walking together, a synod. This synodality achieved its first fruits with the *Instrumentum laboris*.

## 2.2 - THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE SYNOD: THE *INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS*

The *Instrumentum laboris*, or working paper, is a document intended to express the consensus that resulted from the responses to the *Lineamenta*. In this regard, it is the first fruits of the synod. The *Instrumentum laboris* carries forward the process of consultation by collating and presenting in an ordered way the responses to the *Lineamenta* which have been collected from the conferences of bishops, the concerned bodies of the Roman Curia and other organs of the Church: it is a point of convergence of several reflections or viewpoints which are blended together.

---

<sup>20</sup>Cf. c. 447.

<sup>21</sup>A comparative study of the synod records: Synod on Evangelization (1974) 75.38%; Catechesis (1977) 67.18%; Family (1980) 50.37%; Reconciliation and Penance (1983) 42.75%; Laity (1987) 59.85%; Priestly Formation (1990) 63.94%; Consecrated Life (1994) 64%; Special Assembly for Europe (1991) 82.61%; and Special Assembly for Africa (1994) 94%. In *ORE*, April 20, 1994, p. 7.

The primary purpose of the *Instrumentum laboris* is to prepare those who will take part in the synod by furnishing them with what the synod secretariate considers to be the state of being of the Church on those questions emerging from the questionnaire of the *Lineamenta*.<sup>22</sup> During the sessions of the synod, the *Instrumentum laboris* constitutes the point of reference and of order for the discussions. It is not expected to anticipate the conclusions of the synod; rather, it is meant to be a reference point for the discussions.

The *Instrumentum laboris* for the African Synod follows the same pattern as the *Lineamenta*: two parts and five chapters treating the synodal theme. Part one is a theological treatment of the theme of evangelization, showing how the five sub-themes are related to this central theme. Part two considers each of the sub-themes: proclamation, inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace, and means of social communication.

A synod of bishops provides an occasion for the heads of particular churches to manifest and develop their pastoral solidarity. To do this, the synod of bishops takes and builds on the basic institutionalized form of this episcopal solidarity: the conference of bishops.<sup>23</sup> In the synodal process, this solidarity achieves a particular concretization when the bishops, meeting either in their

---

<sup>22</sup>Due to the synodal rule of secrecy, the responses generated by the *Lineamenta* are not published: "All persons who take part in the synod are bound to secrecy as regards both the preparatory acts and the work of the meeting itself [...]" (*Ordo* 1966, Art. 18). Because of this rule, we shall content ourselves with the *Instrumentum laboris*, which is supposed to be their embodiment.

<sup>23</sup>Outside of the synodal process, the conferences of bishops cannot be said to be at the service of the petrine ministry in the strict sense, because, although their activities are always monitored (c. 456), by and large, they function "alone" in a kind of *laissez faire* situation. However, within the context of the synod of bishops, the petrine ministry "borrows" them to achieve on the *international* level that which is normally achieved by them on the local level.

conferences or through small committees, engage in a common journey of prayer, study and reflection on the *Lineamenta*.<sup>24</sup>

The African episcopal synodality can be said to have begun on the day that John Paul II announced the African Synod and appointed a pre-preparatory commission composed of the presidents of the regional and continental associations of the conference of bishops, the cardinal prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and the president of the Pontifical Council for Inter Religious Dialogue. This commission was later expanded and was named the Council of the General Secretariat of the (African) Synod. Under the guidance of the pontiff, and with the collaboration of the staff of the General Secretariat (of the synod of bishops), the eighteen members of this Council drafted the text of the *Lineamenta*<sup>25</sup> and the questions which appear at the conclusion. Because of the synodal rule of secrecy, this is all that is publicly known about the origin and preparation of the *Lineamenta*. It was released by the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, Jan P. Schotte, on July 24, 1989, during the Ninth Plenary Assembly of SECAM, in Lome, Togo.

It is worth noting that the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod that drafted the *Lineamenta* was largely composed of *representatives* of the conferences of bishops.<sup>26</sup> The expression, "representatives of the episcopal conferences," highlights the notion that the synodal

---

<sup>24</sup>See "Special Synod for Africa Will Provide a Powerful Image of Ecclesial Communion," in *ORE*, February 17, 1993, p.8.

<sup>25</sup>"African Synod: *Lineamenta* and Questions," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 322-329.

<sup>26</sup>According to the Order of the Celebration of the Synod of Bishops, a special assembly is attended by the patriarchs, major archbishops and metropolitans outside the patriarchates of the Catholic Churches of the Oriental rite; and by the representatives of the episcopal conferences. Cf. *Ordo* 1969, art. 5, § 3, 1°. For the sake of simplicity and clarity, the rest of this study will refer to the conferences of bishops with the understanding that the other members are also implied.

bishops are chosen to represent their respective conferences of bishops rather than their particular churches: they are delegates of the conference of bishops. The emphasis here is on the *conference of bishops* rather than on the particular church, just as the synodal rules stipulate that these bishops, “deputed by the episcopal conferences of one or more nations are those who have been elected by secret ballot in a plenary session of their respective conferences.”<sup>27</sup> This synodal rule assigns primacy to the conferences of bishops over the individual diocesan bishops in their capacity as heads and pastors of particular churches. The stress falls on the collegial body rather than on the individual. What is being recognized as significant is the bishop as a member of the conference of bishops.

The emphasis on the conferences of bishops raises a question: Is the object of the petrine ministry the individual bishops and their particular churches, the bishops and their groupings (like the conferences of bishops), or the Church universal? This question was present, albeit in a different form, as a recurring problem throughout the preparation of the synod — and was the object of many criticisms — on how to involve both the bishops and the other faithful. The most common criticism of both the preparatory process and the celebration of the African Synod centred around the participation of African Catholics. Many criticisms focussed on the general unawareness and, consequently, on the lack of due participation by the Christian communities at the grassroots level.<sup>28</sup> Many people wanted or expected the number of delegates truly to represent all African Catholics: women and men, adults and youth from grass-root communities, movements and associations, representatives of diocesan priests and religious (women and men), and to include representatives

---

<sup>27</sup>Ibid. art. 6, §1, 1<sup>o</sup>. Emphasis added.

<sup>28</sup> “An Open Letter to the Holy Father,” in *ASDRP*, pp. 61-62.

of other churches and religions.<sup>29</sup> Even the criticisms against Rome being the venue of the synod were occasioned by the inability of African Catholics *fully* to participate in a synod held outside Africa.<sup>30</sup>

If the bishops go to the synod as delegates and representatives of the conferences of bishops, it follows logically that the *Lineamenta* and the *Instrumentum laboris* be “offered to the episcopal conferences [...] so that **episcopal conferences can have the necessary information to draft their official response.**”<sup>31</sup> This rule implies that, as representatives of their respective conferences, the bishops take to the synod not the concerns of their particular churches (at least not directly) but of their conferences. Consequently, these bishops do not, or should not, speak in their own name (or of their dioceses, and other offices they may be holding) but in the name of the conferences of bishops they represent.<sup>32</sup> No wonder that the synodal rule requests:

At the beginning of every meeting of the synod the elected members must present to the Supreme Pontiff through the Secretary General the authentic document of this **deputation.**

---

<sup>29</sup>Cf. African Synod Communication Working Group (Nairobi), “Some Proposals for the African Synod,” in *ASDRP*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. “An Open Letter to the Holy Father,” in *ASDRP*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>31</sup>Preface to the *Lineamenta* of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. Emphasis added.

<sup>32</sup>The English translation of art. 23, §3 that appears in *CLD*, vol. VI, p. 332 is unclear; it says: “An opinion is also expressed in the meetings by each of the members who have been deputed for the synod.” This translation seem to suggest that the individual members can express their own opinions. However, the Latin original says, “Huiusmodi sententia a singulis sodalibus pro synodo deputatis in synodi coetu exprimitur.” Taking into consideration the previous two sections of art. 23 which state, “The topics which the Supreme Pontiff determined in the convocation of the synod to be treated, should be studied carefully in advance by each conference of bishops and each group of bishops of the Oriental rite.” (§ 1) and “On the same topics each conference of bishops expresses its common opinion, according to the manner judged most opportune.” (§ 2), our translation of § 3 is, “Such opinion is expressed in the assembly of the synod by the individual members delegated to the synod.” For this reason, each individual member expresses not his own opinion but that of the conference of bishops he represents.

signed by the president and secretary of his own conference, or in the case of religious by the president and secretary of the Union of Superiors General.<sup>33</sup>

The principle underlying this synodal rule on representation is stated in *Lumen gentium*, 23: "each bishop represents his own Church." For this reason, bishops exist not by themselves but in relationship to their churches. As James Provost pointed out:

Bishops 'represent' Christ in their churches; they 'in an eminent and visible way undertake Christ's own role as Teacher, Shepherd, and High Priest' so that 'they act in his person' (*LG* 21). So, too, they 'act in the person' of the particular church and not in their own name when they represent that church in the communion of churches. They make present (re-present) the joys and sorrows, hopes and aspirations of the particular church they serve; they make present the faith of that church within the communion, just as 'acting in the person of Christ' within the particular church they are to proclaim the gospel and nourish the faith of the people.<sup>34</sup>

As pastors, bishops point beyond themselves to the body of the faithful whom they serve. In virtue of this service, bishops are part and parcel of their churches: "The office of bishop, of *episcopos* (overseer), makes sense only in relationship, only as a term which demands of its nature the presence of another term — the church."<sup>35</sup> Since to target the bishops is to target at the same time the faithful they serve, we can conclude: (1) although it is good that the faithful at the grassroots level receive and study the *Lineamenta*, canonically it is not necessary; (2) the object of the petrine ministry is neither the bishops nor the Church *alone* but both taken together. As pastors, bishops do not represent themselves alone nor do they speak their own ideas but those of their churches: the bishops are presumed to know the joys and sorrows, hopes and aspirations of their people.

---

<sup>33</sup>*Ordo* 1969, art. 7. Emphasis added.

<sup>34</sup>T. J. Reese, (ed.), *Episcopal Conferences as an Expression of the Communion of the Churches*, Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, 1989, p. 276.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

### 2.3 - CUM ET SUB PETRO: THE WORKING SESSION

The *sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum* of the bishops is not limited to the conferences of bishops but extends to the Church universal. According to *Christus Dominus*, the synod of bishops is a sign that all the bishops in hierarchical communion participate in the care of the Church universal.<sup>36</sup> Every synod of bishops, even a special assembly concerned with a particular region, has a universal dimension. The synod is a symbol of the solicitude of both the Pope — pastor of the Church universal — and the bishops, for the Church universal. For this reason, the dynamics of the synod are such that, after the synodal preparation at the level of the conferences of bishops, the bishops go to Rome for the working session,<sup>37</sup> *cum et sub Petro*. In so doing, they express their communion with the pope in the solicitude for the Church universal.

The order of the synod of bishops requests that the conferences of bishops (or body of bishops of the Oriental rites) express an opinion on the topic which the Supreme Pontiff decided to treat in that particular synod. It is an “opinion” or recommendation (*sententia*) because the nature

---

<sup>36</sup>“Omnes Episcopos in hierarchica communione sollicitudinis universae Ecclesiae participes esse.” (*CD*, 5), also *LG*, 23: “Sed [singuli episcopi] qua membra Collegii episcopalis et legitimi Apostolorum successores singuli ea sollicitudine pro universa Ecclesia ex Christi institutione et praecepto tenentur.”

<sup>37</sup>The order for the synod does not stipulate the venue for the working sessions; the choice of Rome is more by tradition and convenience. This leaves open the possibility of the synod of bishops being held in another place. For the African Synod, the choice of Rome as the venue was made on January 26, 1993, when the Holy Father met with all the African cardinals at Rome to hear them on the issue: “It was in this ‘African consistory’, having considered the exigences of the synod itself, the need for freedom from undue pressures, the current socio-political situation of many African nations, the desired presence of the Holy Father at all the sessions of the synod that, following the opinions expressed, the Holy Father decided to hold the working sessions in the Vatican, but to have a celebratory phase with his participation in some places on the continent of Africa at a later date” (Schotte, “African Synod Is Special Moment of Grace, in *ORE*, April 20, 1994, p. 6).

of the synod of bishops is, in principle, not legislative but consultative. It is the pope who makes the ultimate decision on the topic treated by the synodal fathers.<sup>38</sup>

According to the Order of the Synod of Bishops, "The assembly of the synod is opened with the celebration of Mass and the solemn intonation of the hymn *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*."<sup>39</sup> The African Synod was inaugurated in this manner on April 10, 1994 in St. Peter's Basilica, where Pope John Paul II concelebrated with one patriarch, thirty-five cardinals, thirty-nine archbishops, 146 bishops and ninety priests. In the homily, the Holy Father recapitulated the dichotomies that characterize Africa: "[...] this continent is torn apart by long-standing tensions and bloody conflicts. We cannot but feel deeply upset and disturbed by this dramatic contrast between love and hatred, between the joy of life and terror, between solidarity and fratricide, between life and death."<sup>40</sup> It should be remembered that concurrent with the African Synod was the genocide in Rwanda — one of the most Catholic countries of Africa — that left bishops, priests, religious and lay Christians massacred in cold blood.

Drawing on the liturgy of the day, the Second Sunday of Easter, the Holy Father reiterated his synodal theme of solidarity: "The community of believers was of one heart and mind [...] the Apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and a great favor was accorded to them all' (Acts 4:32-33). We ask the Holy Spirit that this 'great favor' may inspire our synodal assembly."<sup>41</sup> This wish encapsulated the pope's main goal in the exercise of his petrine ministry for

---

<sup>38</sup>Canon 343.

<sup>39</sup>Art. 29, § 1.

<sup>40</sup>John Paul II, "Africa, Exult in All Your Sons and Daughters Who Have Believed in Christ's Resurrection," in *ORF*, April 13, 1994, p. 8.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

the assembly of the African Synod itself and beyond, that the community of believers in Africa bear witness to the faith by being of one heart and mind. Both the synodal assembly and the whole African continent living under dramatic contrasts had to seek this ultimate objective. Acknowledging this purpose the pope stated: "After its Roman sessions, the Synod will be transferred with its own heritage to Africa, and there in appropriate places it will witness to how much it is a synod born in Africa and destined for Africa."<sup>42</sup>

The synodal order reserves to the Supreme Pontiff the right to preside over the synod assembly in person or through others appointed by him,<sup>43</sup> namely, the delegate(s) president, the general secretary, the special secretary, and the relator. The delegate president presides over the assembly in the name of the Supreme Pontiff and by his authority; he is appointed *ad actum*, that is, his responsibility ceases with the end of the assembly for which he is appointed. The tasks of the delegate president are principally to guide the workings of the synod, assign duties to the members as need be, and to sign the acts of the assembly. The Supreme Pontiff can delegate several persons as delegates president of the assembly in which case they fulfil their office one after the other in the order set by the Supreme Pontiff.<sup>44</sup>

The general secretary carries out the directives of the Supreme Pontiff and communicates to him all that is related to the synod of bishops. The general secretary directs the operations of the general secretariat and signs all its actions.

---

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>*Ordo* 1966, arts. 1, 6<sup>o</sup>; 12, §§ 1-8; 14-15; 30.

<sup>44</sup>For the African Synod there were three delegates president: Cardinals Francis Arinze, President of the Pontifical Council for inter-religious dialogue; Christian Wiyghan Tumi, Archbishop of Douala (Cameroun); and Paulos Tzadua, Archbishop of Addis Abeba (Ethiopia).

The special secretary is appointed for each assembly which might treat a subject in which he is a specialist. His duties include preparing documents and reports, providing information briefings and explanations in response to requests, and drawing up the acts of the assembly.<sup>45</sup> The relator's duty is to prepare and present, at the opening session of the synodal assembly, an illustrated and developed report on the topic of the synod.<sup>46</sup>

### **2.3.1 - The First General Congregation**

On the morning of April 11, 1994, in the presence of Pope John Paul II, the First General Congregation<sup>47</sup> of the African Synod was held in the synod hall. One of the delegate presidents of the African Synod, Cardinal Francis Arinze, gave the opening speech, in which he thanked the pope for convening the African Synod in recognition of the expressed desire by Africa for a major reflection on its response to the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ. The purpose of this opening address was to welcome the participants and to introduce them to the dynamics of the working session of the synod: "Now the hour has come. We have come together to speak, to listen, to give, to receive, to discuss, to reflect, to discern, to plan how the church in Africa can give ever greater witness to our Lord and Savior."<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup>For the African Synod, two Archbishops served as special secretaries: Jaime Pedro Gonçalves of Beira (Mozambique), and John Olorunfemi of Abuja (Nigeria).

<sup>46</sup>Cardinal Hvacinthe Thiandoum, Archbishop of Dakar (Senegal), served as relator for the African Synod.

<sup>47</sup>For the full texts of the addresses of the delegate president, the general secretary of the synod of bishops, and the general relator see "Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops," in *ORF*, April 20, 1994, pp. 4-12.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4.

Jan P. Schotte, general secretary of the synod of bishops, presented the second intervention at the First General Congregation. He discussed at length the preparations for the African Synod that culminated in the working session, intended "to examine the challenges, discern appropriate responses and outline the goals and objectives towards which the Church will tend on the African continent."<sup>49</sup>

The report of the general secretary indicates constantly and consistently that the preparation of the African Synod was done *cum et sub Petro*.<sup>50</sup> Pope John Paul II followed with particular interest and affection the different stages of preparation. Since its announcement, on January 6, 1989 the pope personally participated in two sessions of the preparatory commission in Rome, two sessions of the council in Rome, the presentation of the *Lineamenta* at the ninth plenary assembly of SECAM in Lome, Togo, on July 25, 1990, the third meeting of the synod council at Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast (1990), the meeting of synod council at Luanda, Angola (1992), and the seventh meeting of the synod Council at Kampala, Uganda (1993). Of note here is that the Council held three of its meetings in the presence of the pope, and in each of the three major language spheres of Africa: francophone, anglophone, and lusophone.<sup>51</sup> The pope himself attested:

On my apostolic visits after the convocation of the Special Assembly, the theme of the synod [solidarity] and the need for all the faithful to prepare for the Synodal Assembly, always figured prominently in my meetings with the people of Africa. I also took advantage of the *ad limina* visits of the continent's bishops in order to ask for the co-operation of everyone in the preparation of the Special Synod for Africa. All this was done in order to mobilize an

---

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>The report has many expressions like, "the Holy Father summoned," "the Holy Father concluded that," and "at the expressed wish of the Holy Father."

<sup>51</sup>In the Lusophone groups are included speakers of Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian languages.

active and harmonious participation by Africans in the preparation of the Synodal Assembly.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, the pope issued special norms for the African Synod to allow wide participation.<sup>53</sup>

The pope's direct control over the synod was demonstrated in the choice of the theme. As we noted above, a month before the announcement of the synod, on December 6, 1988, the pope summoned to a meeting some representatives of the African episcopate and of the Roman curia to suggest some possible themes for the African Synod. The suggestions of the African episcopate included the family, Christian marriage in the African context, quality formation for pastoral agents, autonomy in finances and personnel, inculturation, Islam and the sects, evangelization and human promotion in Africa today, international solidarity with Africa. However, in the meeting held from January 7-9, 1989, the Holy Father presented the synodal theme as, *The Church in Africa and Her Evangelization Mission Towards the Year 2000: "You Shall Be My Witnesses" (Acts 1:8)*.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 23.

<sup>53</sup>The Holy Father allowed (1) all dicastery heads of the curia to be members *ex officio* (the Order of the Synod stipulates for the special synods the cardinals of the offices of the Roman curia that have responsibility for the matters to be treated); (2) one for every four bishops or fraction thereof from the national conferences of bishops (the Order of the Synod stipulates one bishop for each national conference of bishops not exceeding twenty-five members, two for those not exceeding fifty, three for those with less than 100 members, and four for those conferences with more than 100 member); (3) eight members from the union of superiors general of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life in such a manner that two were superiors general and six major superiors from Africa (the Order of the Synod states that for a special assembly not more than two men religious, chosen by the union of superiors general, as specialists representative of the religious institutes which know both the material for treatment, and the territory for which the synod is convoked, even if they do not belong to that territory) (cf. Art. 6, § 2, 4°); (4) thirty-seven members by pontifical appointment (that is, 31% of the total membership; usually these members do not exceed 15% of the total membership); (5) experts, auditors and auditrices totaling sixty-six; (6) release of the *Instrumentum laboris* to the public. In addition, easy copyright conditions for reprint were granted by the general secretariat to facilitate the diffusion of the synodal documents.

<sup>54</sup>J.P. Schotte, "African Synod Is Special Moment of Grace," in *ORE*, April 20, p. 5.

Comparing the suggestions of the participants with the eventual theme, we notice some major differences. The suggestions reflected Africa's concerns in the concrete as opposed to the rather abstract, general and theological subject of evangelization that became the theme of the African Synod. It appears from the suggestions that the Africans wanted the synod to redress Africa's present ills rather than address topics that look to the future. In whatever way, it is the prerogative of the Supreme Pontiff to determine the topics for the discussion.

The general relator, Cardinal H. Thiandoum, followed the general secretary in presenting a report to the assembly. This report — known as *relatio ante disceptationem*, that is, "report before the debate" — is intended to generate and focus the debate on the synodal question, which was stated as, "Church of Africa, what must you now *become* so that your message may be relevant and credible?"<sup>55</sup>

The synodal question supposes implicitly that the situation of Africa prior to the time of the synod needed change. Taking into consideration what we said above in chapter one on what Africa was on the eve of the African Synod, we can paraphrase the question as, "Church of Africa, what must you become to get over your long-standing tensions and bloody conflicts, dichotomies between faith and life, gospel and culture?" This question is similar to the concern of the African church that we discussed in chapter one: the concern for incarnating the gospel message in Africa, enabling every African Christian to become a Christ-bearer. In the rest of this chapter, we shall analyze the "answers"<sup>56</sup> given to this question by the synodal delegates and by the Supreme Pontiff.

---

<sup>55</sup>H. Thiandoum, "The Gospel, Inculturation, and Dialogue," in *ORIGINES*, April 20, 1994, p. 8. Emphasis added.

<sup>56</sup>It is important to remember that all the synodal interventions (more than 200) were given to the pope as advice from which the pope could formulate his last word in the form of post-synodal exhortation — to

### 2.3.2 - The Synodal Interventions<sup>57</sup>

The Second General Congregation began on the afternoon of Monday, April 11, 1994. Each delegate was given eight minutes to express an opinion on a topic deemed important. Because the delegates could speak only once in a discussion, and with the time limit, many speeches dealt with several topics. The synodal rule stipulates that *on one and the same topic*,<sup>58</sup> only one father speaks in the name of the episcopal conference, and if many have petitioned to speak, the fathers are asked not to repeat what has already been stated, but to refer to it briefly.<sup>59</sup> However, repetitiveness during the synod of bishops is almost inevitable, firstly, because the speeches are not given according to a common subject. Secondly, many delegates go to Rome with speeches already written, unaware of what the other speakers would say.

The majority of the bishops who went to Rome for the African Synod were having the synodal experience for the first time. As one of them put it, they expected the synod to be much like

---

it we shall devote particular attention. For this reason, it is neither possible nor necessary to reproduce all the interventions in their entirety. The synodal fathers presented their joint advice in the form of "propositions" that were presented to the pope. We shall pay more attention to these sixty-four propositions than to individual speeches.

<sup>57</sup>In this section it is not our intention to enter into the theological issues discussed in the synodal interventions. These issues have received attention elsewhere: M. Nwabenda, *'L'Église-famille de Dieu: la réponse du synode africain à la 'Nouvelle évangélisation' et son ambiguïté.* Ottawa, Université Saint – Paul, 1995; Idem., *L'Image 'Église-famille de Dieu,' pour l'Église du Burundi: étude historique et théologique,* Ottawa, Université – Saint Paul, 1998. In this section, our attention will rather be given to the unfolding of the synodal dynamics during the working session.

<sup>58</sup>According to "Certain Explanations on the Order of the Synod of Bishops" (Vatican City, September 27, 1994), these words mean "on one and the same part of a discussion." If so, technically it is possible for a member to speak again but on another part of the discussion.

<sup>59</sup>See *Ordo* 1969, art. 35, § 1, 4<sup>o</sup>; § 2, 1<sup>o</sup>.

a diocesan synod, where problems are posed, solutions are sought, and policy is set.<sup>60</sup> Many bishops posed and sought concrete answers to Africa's concerns like the African traditional marriage vis-à-vis Church marriage. The delegate president, in his *relatio ante disceptationem*, called the assembly's attention to these expectations, and had cautioned that the assembly would not be able to tackle them all and offer definitive solutions in four weeks of work:

We, therefore, need to beware of generalizations, both in the diagnosis of problems and issues and in the suggestion of solutions. The local church must take responsibility for the details of its own concrete existence. A forum such as the synod can give only broad guidelines and general orientations.<sup>61</sup>

Notwithstanding these rules, many delegates still posed questions particular to their countries, regions, or dioceses.

The dynamics of the working session show some flexibility towards these expectations. During the first phase of the working session, the participants openly and freely presented their opinions on topics they considered important. Of the 317 participants (130 members by election, thirty-seven by papal appointment, twenty experts, forty-six auditors, and seven fraternal delegates), 243 presented their reports either in person or in writing (218 members, sixteen auditors, six fraternal delegates, and three others).<sup>62</sup>

If, after the intervening public discussions, the delegate president judges it opportune, he can move the treatment of the topic to small groups, called *circuli minores*, organized according to language. For the African Synod, the language divisions were French, English, Portuguese, Italian

---

<sup>60</sup>C.F. Langenfeld, "The African Synod – An Interview with Archbishop Wilfrid Napier," in *Grace and Truth*, 3 (1995), p. 6.

<sup>61</sup>H. Thiandoum, "The Gospel, Inculturation, and Dialogue," in *ORE*, April 20, 1994, p. 8.

<sup>62</sup>Cf. Bulletin for African Synod, May 8, 1994, n. 41.

and Spanish. The considerable amount of interventions constituted the raw material for the reflection and discussion of the small groups so as to arrive at practical conclusions to be formulated into propositions. Each group chooses one moderator and group relator to chair the meetings and present the result of the discussion to the synodal assembly.

The working of groups by language makes this phase the most productive of the working session, firstly, because the number of participants is greatly reduced (between twenty and thirty), and secondly, because the language is user-friendly to the participants. The experience of the delegates in the small groups recalls that of the conferences of bishops: the members have the opportunity to express themselves and their opinions more easily.

There are major differences of opinions between African Anglophones, Francophones, and Lusophones. As a result, pastoral approaches vary. This diversity was manifested in the discussions and recommendations of the small groups.

The Anglophone groups were more pragmatic in their approach and offered concrete solutions. For instance, they suggested that Africa was in need of an all-inclusive evangelization, and that this evangelization must take note of the many acts of injustice, oppression, bad government, tribal strife, rivalries, and wars, afflicting the continent;<sup>63</sup> they also urged the synod to address the reality of tribalism in Africa. Small Christian communities are a very positive way to proclaim the gospel, and the family is the model of the Church. The African theological institutes, not Rome, should be at the forefront of research on inculturation. This inculturation was, for the Anglophones, the central theme of the African Synod, not evangelization.

---

<sup>63</sup>For summaries on small group discussions, see 22<sup>nd</sup> General Congregation, in *Bulletin for African Synod*.

On justice and peace, the Anglophones suggested that the African church lead a "moral clean-up" throughout Africa and the laity take an active part in politics while organizing seminars for Catholic professionals and elite on justice and peace. Regarding mass media, it was proposed that a Catholic radio station in Africa be created. It was suggested that a psychological test be carried out on candidates for the priesthood to ensure a balanced mind, and that Christian communities be involved in the selection of candidates to the priesthood. In addition, it was recommended that religious congregations with no presence in the diocese not carry out recruitment of candidates there.

The Anglophone groups suggested that African conferences of bishops should spell out guidelines and strategies for dialogue with other religious groups. It was proposed that all African conferences of churches and SECAM approach the World Bank to press for the cancellation of Africa's debt. Finally, it was noted that the plight of women in Africa calls the Church to do something to change the situation; women must have rights equal to men because both men and women are equal.

The Francophone groups were more theological and theoretical in their approach to African problems. For them, formation was the solution to all of Africa's problems. Priests and religious men and women should receive a careful formation to serve African society better. To the laity, formation adapted to their state of life must be proposed, without neglecting the social doctrine of the Church. Inculturation must form the primary orientation for the formation of priests, and an institute for research on inculturation should be opened in Africa. Specialists need to be trained in Islamic studies for dialogue with the Moslems.

For the Francophones, evangelization must show the historical dimension of salvation accomplished in Christ. It is the good news of Jesus Christ which Africa needs. Therefore, all the messengers of the good news (priests, religious, and laity) must be prepared through adequate formation. Every African Christian should be able to have a Bible at a good price. On family, the Francophones pointed out that it is above all the Holy Trinity, not the human family as such, that pushes us to the promotion of an authentic Church family.

The Lusophone groups portrayed a more legalistic approach. To them, to be really new, evangelization must launch more signs and symbols that Africans today can readily understand so that, by accepting the gospel, they will renounce everything that opposes it. Ecumenical dialogue is necessary, since the division of Christianity is a public and scandalous sin of which all Christians should be aware. All would be guilty if they do nothing about it. They said that accomplices of the bloody and destructive civil wars in Africa are the suppliers and buyers of deadly weapons. They said that it is important to arouse multi-party democracies with a state of law in order to protect human rights and promote development.

On the family, the Lusophones pointed out that the African Christian must respect the family rules. Just as an African cannot set up a new hearth without the consent of the elders of the traditional family, likewise he must not set up a new family without the approval and benediction of God, his Father, by religious marriage. As to the basic ecclesial communities, the Lusophone groups observed that these communities are an easy alternative and so that these communities should not close themselves to the diocese and parish community, it is important to stress their ecclesial goal and put at their head a qualified and responsible person who can guarantee their communion with the Church. On women, the Lusophones observed that, in some regions of Africa,

when the husband dies, his family takes all his assets and leaves the wife and children without anything. It is important, therefore, for the law to look into this issue justly, and where this *law* does not exist there should be a proposal to include it.

Notwithstanding the diversity of approaches to Africa's problems as portrayed by the suggestions of the small groups, some concerns were identified by all groups. According to the press conference conducted on the works and progress of the synod thus far, the theme of inculturation recurred consistently in the discussions, not only as a topic on its own but also in relation to the other themes of the synod. Many fathers tried to give a definition of inculturation as "as marriage of professed faith and concrete life, a harmony between faith and culture."<sup>64</sup> The aim of inculturation in Africa is to ensure authenticity and depth of faith in the African Christian: to heal cultural alienation, to bridge the gap between faith and life, and thus to resolve the many instances of "spiritual schizophrenia," the double life affecting African people.<sup>65</sup>

The major question identified in relation to inculturation was how to achieve it. Two criteria were identified as paramount in any pursuit of inculturation: (1) the compatibility of cultures with the Christian message, since Christ and his message have absolute precedence over culture; and (2) the communion with the entire Church, lest a Church that is totally new and substantially different be constructed in Africa. In order to bring about inculturation, four practical steps were suggested: (1) to rethink the model of the Church that the Africans received; (2) to involve all Christ's faithful in the process of inculturation; (3) to make a thorough scientific research of African cultures; and (4) to conduct a serious dialogue with African traditional religions.

---

<sup>64</sup>Bulletin for African Synod, April 26, 1994, n. 27.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

Frequent references were made to the possibility and desirability of an African rite or rites including the issue of canon law for the African church. Special concerns were expressed about the need to examine the question of marriages to which African Christians are subjected: the traditional marriage, the civil marriage, and the canonical marriage (marriage in the Lord).

The other issue that surfaced in the interventions was family, described as "a place of reproduction, of transmission and of protection of life, a place of learning and of interiorizing cultural values."<sup>66</sup> The Church-as-family model was posited as a suitable means of evangelization in Africa. This model was explained at three theological levels. First, on the doctrinal level, it is based on the Trinity.<sup>67</sup> Second, on the spiritual level, it is based on Christ's commandment of love: "love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 13:34; 12:12). Thirdly, on the sacramental level, it is based on Eucharist: the Christians are *one body of Christ* sharing the same bread and cup.

Justice and peace was another major issue mentioned in the interventions. The synod treated justice and peace as a dimension of evangelization: political issues are not outside of the mission of the Church because they have a necessary link with evangelization. Indeed, "[t]he promotion of justice and peace is the basis for evangelization."<sup>68</sup> It is evident from the synodal interventions that justice and peace was a central issue underlying Africa's problems. Of the synod's five themes, four are at the service of justice and peace: proclamation announces the Gospel and its values of justice and peace, inculturation roots them among the people and their culture; dialogue is the most

---

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>See *Message of the Synod*, 20: "The Church-Family has its origin in the Blessed Trinity at the depths of which the Holy Spirit is the bond of communion."

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

conducive spirit or atmosphere in which these values can be delivered, and social communication supplies the means of delivery.<sup>69</sup>

After ten days of general interventions and auditions,<sup>70</sup> the second phase of the working session began on April 22, 1994. Just as he did at the beginning of the first phase, Cardinal Thiandoum, helped by the special secretaries, made and presented a report, the *Relatio post disceptationem*. This report sought to present, in a summary form, the substance of the interventions and the discussions held thus far. The aim of the report was to bring out the convergence or consensus, or the contrary, the divergences and differing emphases, in order to facilitate the further reflection of the synod fathers.<sup>71</sup>

The last part of the working session was spent formulating the propositions that were submitted to the pope.<sup>72</sup> The African Synod adopted sixty-four propositions drafted by a council

---

<sup>69</sup>See J.P. Mbyemeire, *A Theological Analysis of the Problem of Justice and Peace: The Contribution of the Special Synod for Africa and the Church in Uganda*, Dissertation in Dogmatic Theology, Urbaniana University, Rome, 1997, p. 83.

<sup>70</sup>In this study, a brief and incomplete summary of the main issues that were the object of attention and concern of the synodal fathers is presented, with the sole purpose of demonstrating the dynamics of the working session. A complete treatment of such issues lies outside the scope of this study.

<sup>71</sup>It is important to note that the integral report was not *officially* made public; the document appeared in a summary form in *ORE*, May 25, 1994, p. 9, and in *DC*, 91 (1994), pp. 523-525. The full text, however, appeared later in the review *Renaitre*, 12-30 (1994), pp. 15-26, and in M. Cheza (ed.), *Le synode africain: histoire et textes*, Paris, Edition Karthala, 1996.

<sup>72</sup>For the Synod for America, the general secretary of the synod bishops, Cardinal J. P. Schotte, issued ten "commandments" to help the delegates formulate the propositions: 1) Thou shalt not cut the *relatio* (the mid-term summary of synod speeches) into little pieces and call them propositions. 2) Thou shalt not try to win a prize for being the small group with the most propositions. 3) Thou shalt not deputize an expert (a nonvoting synod member) to do all the work so you can go home. 4) Thou shalt not take the problems of a diocese or small region and universalize them as a concern of the synod. 5) Thou shalt not wait until the last session and try to write all your propositions at once. 6) Thou shalt not write propositions reflecting a purely French-Anglo North American perspective. 7) Thou shalt not make every proposition a new theological treatise, thus composing a new catechism. 8) Thou shalt not leave everything to the ingenuity of the relator (who presents the small group's work to the full assembly). 9) Thou shalt not hope that all the other groups

constituted of twelve members.<sup>73</sup> Because of their nature and purpose,<sup>74</sup> we shall discuss the propositions in relation to the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* of Pope John Paul II.

### 2.3.3 - The Synodal Message: An Unofficial Post-Synodal Exhortation

The formulation of the propositions marked the end of the working session, as far as the synodal delegates were concerned. However, concurrent to the drafting of the propositions was the formulation of the message of the synod.<sup>75</sup> The Order of the Synod of Bishops does not mention a synodal message but only "a report which describes the treatment of the topic or topics examined, and the conclusions reached by the participants on the synod."<sup>76</sup> The making of the synodal message, while not required by law, has become customary. That notwithstanding, the synodal message is important because it offers us a window, albeit small, through which we can get a glimpse of what Cardinal Tomko referred to as the "synodal truth."<sup>77</sup> Indeed, we can call the synodal message a kind

---

write the really important propositions. See Cindy Wooden, "Cardinal Issues 10 Commandments for Drafting Synod Propositions," CNS, December 5, 1997.

<sup>73</sup>The council was constituted by nine elected members representing the major regions of Africa and Madagascar, and three elected by the pope.

<sup>74</sup>As the term *propositions* denotes, the synodal conclusions are recommendations or counsels formulated by the synodal delegates for the pope's personal use in writing the post-synodal apostolic exhortation.

<sup>75</sup>The French version uses the title, "*Message final du synode*," that is, the "final message of the synod." Our interest here is on the word "final" which should not be construed to mean the definitive or authoritative and official statement of the synod which can only be done by the pope (c. 343). "Final" here refers to the concluding address of the synodal delegates.

<sup>76</sup>Art. 40.

<sup>77</sup>J. Tomko, "A Retrospective Look at the 1983 Synod of Bishops," in *ORE*, December 27, 1983, p. 4.

of an *unofficial post synodal exhortation*: the other one, which is the official one, is the post synodal apostolic exhortation, issued by the pope.

During the working session, many speakers depicted Africa as the biblical man on his way to Jericho, who was attacked, beaten and left bleeding on the side of the road. But, by the end of the synod, the bishops, in their final message, showed themselves as transformed:

Like Mary Magdalene on the morning of the resurrection, like the disciples at Emmaus with burning hearts and enlightened minds, the Special Synod for Africa, Madagascar, and the Islands, proclaims: *Christ, our Hope, is risen. He has met us, has walked along with us. He has explained the scriptures to us.*<sup>78</sup>

The first message of the African Synod is, therefore, a message of reassurance and consolation. Indeed, the bishops refer to the African Synod not only as a success<sup>79</sup> but also as a "Synod of resurrection, the Synod of hope":

At this very time when so much fratricidal hate inspired by political interest is tearing our peoples apart, when the burden of the international debt and currency devaluation is crushing them, we, the bishops of Africa, together with all the participants in this holy synod, united with the Holy Father and with all our brothers in the episcopate who elected us, we want to say a word of hope and encouragement to you, the family of God in Africa; to you, the family of God all over the world: *Christ our hope is alive; we shall live!*<sup>80</sup>

In the following section, we shall discuss this synodal message vis-à-vis the post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*.

---

<sup>78</sup> "Message of the Synod," in *ASDRP*, p. 72.

<sup>79</sup> In chapter four we shall discuss in detail the success and accomplishments of the African Synod. Here we limit ourselves to noting the exhortatory nature of the final message.

<sup>80</sup> "Message of the Synod," n. 2.

## 2.4 - *ECCLESIA IN AFRICA*: LAST WORD OR LAST SYNODAL ACT?

In this section, we shall try to identify the source, the nature and the canonical status of a post-synodal apostolic exhortation in general and of *Ecclesia in Africa* in particular. Finally, we shall examine the message that Pope John Paul II conveys to the Church in Africa through the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation. Finally, we shall ask whether this message is intended to be the last word for the African Synod or just a last synodal act.

### 2.4.1 - The Sources of *Ecclesia in Africa*

The living practice of the synod of bishops is that, at the end of the working sessions, the delegates present to the pope their deliberations and conclusions. It is up to the pope to publish what he desires. At the end of the African synod, the Synod fathers submitted to Pope John Paul II sixty-four propositions, the first of which requested him to publish the results: "The synod fathers, therefore, request the Holy Father to publish at an opportune time a document on *The Church in Africa and her Evangelizing Mission Toward the Year 2000*, 'You shall be my witnesses' (Acts 1:8)."<sup>81</sup> These propositions and other synodal documents were the principal source for the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*.<sup>82</sup> This document is, therefore, a product of several documents, namely, the *Lineamenta*, the *Instrumentum laboris*, the report of the General Secretary, the *relatio ante disceptationem*, the *relatio post disceptationem*, the reports of the *circuli minores*, the synodal discussions, the message of the synod, and the synodal propositions.

---

<sup>81</sup>See "Propositions," in *ASDRP*, p. 87.

<sup>82</sup>See English language translation in *ASDRP*, pp.233-286; for the French language translation see Cheza, *Le synode africain: histoire et textes*, pp. 271-357.

Pope John Paul II quotes the proposition that requested him to write the exhortation: "The members of the synodal assembly asked me to bring to the attention of the whole Church the results of their reflections and prayers, discussions and exchanges [proposition 1]. With joy and gratitude to the Lord I accepted this request."<sup>83</sup> In this statement, the pope mentions four sources he used to generate *Ecclesia in Africa*: the reflections, prayers, discussions, and exchanges of the synodal members. However, a closer look at *Ecclesia in Africa* reveals abundant use of other documents. These extra-synodal sources reveal the personal touch of the pope on the synod itself: they reveal, at least indirectly, the pope's mind on the topic discussed in the synod.

*Ecclesia in Africa* makes reference to the propositions: of the sixty-four, fifty-two found their way into the document, albeit in a changed form for some of them.<sup>84</sup> Of the 272 citations in *Ecclesia in Africa*, ninety are from the propositions. This reliance on the propositions reflects the value the pope places on the synodal recommendations. At the end of the 1990 synod of bishops on priestly formation, Pope John Paul II said:

The extensive consultation which the synod structure allows for during every assembly has never failed to yield results and decisions as well. Given the way they function, synods are never able to immediately publish a document which takes on deliberative form. That notwithstanding, the post-synodal document takes its inspiration from and, one might say, contains what was planned out in common. It, therefore, can be asserted that a synod's proposals indirectly assume the importance of decisions. For, when the Sovereign Pontiff

---

<sup>83</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 1.

<sup>84</sup>Some propositions are quoted more than once: proposition forty-five on the situation of injustice in Africa and the Church's prophetic role is quoted six times. Propositions eight on the Church as family of God, and thirty-two on areas of inculturation are each quoted four times. Propositions four on the "new evangelization," eighteen on future priests, twenty-four on Catholic schools, forty-eight on women, and forty-nine on arms and African debts, each appear three times. Propositions 3 on proclamation and evangelization, 6 on the Bible in evangelization, 10 on the missionary vocation of the Church, 15 on family, 16 on the Church as family of God, 20 on formation of priests, 22 on bishops and the religious, 54 on poverty and 57 on means of social communication, are each quoted twice. All the other propositions (1, 5, 9, 12, 13, 17, 21, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 36, 37, 39, 46, 47, 51, 53, 58, 60, and 61) are quoted once.

publishes the corresponding document. he takes great care to express the full wealth of the reflections and discussion which led up to the synodal *Propositiones*, as well as the views of the synodal assembly, as much as possible.<sup>85</sup>

Other sources for *Ecclesia in Africa* include the Second Vatican Council documents and the papal encyclicals: these documents are quoted thirty-five times.<sup>86</sup> Post-synodal apostolic exhortations are cited thirty-two times.<sup>87</sup> Papal addresses on various occasions and the synodal message appear eighteen times each. The *relatio ante disceptationem* is cited fourteen times. Papal homilies are cited ten times. The *relatio post disceptationem* and the papal apostolic letters<sup>88</sup> each appear five times. The *Instrumentum laboris*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *Angelus* messages and the synodal report of the African Synod are cited four times. The *Lineamenta* and Pope Paul VI's message to Africa, *Africae terrarum*, are both cited three times. The *motu proprio* of Paul VI, *Apostolica sollicitudo*, the report of the general secretary of the synod of bishops, the message of SECAM, the ordinary synod of bishops, the antiphon, the Nicene Creed, *Sermo XXI*, the papal message to the 1994 United Nations Conference held in Cairo (Egypt), the decree *Perfectae caritatis*, and the directives *Mutuae relationes* and *Epistolarum liber* are each cited once.

---

<sup>85</sup>John Paul II, Address at the Conclusion of the Eighth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, in *ORE*, October 27, 45 (1990), p. 7; see J. M. Miller (ed.), *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, Huntington, Indiana, Our Sunday Visitor Division, 1998, p.32.

<sup>86</sup>Second Vatican Council documents: *GS* is quoted twelve times; *LG* and Second Vatican Council, Decree, *Ad Gentes* (= *AG*), December 12, 1965, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 947-990, are quoted eight times each; Second Vatican Council, Decree, *Presbyterorum ordinis* (= *PO*), December 7, 1965, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 991-1024, is quoted three times; *CD* is quoted twice: both the Second Vatican Council, Decree, *Apostolicam actuositatem* (= *AA*) November 18, 1965, in *AAS*, 59 (1966), pp. 837-864 and the Second Vatican Council, Constitution *Sacrosanctum concilium* (= *SC*), December 4, 1963, in *AAS*, 56 (1964), pp. 97-138 are quoted once each; papal encyclicals: *Redemptoris missio* is quoted sixteen times, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* nine times, *Populorum progressio* five times, *Centesimus annus* three times, and *Ut unum sint* twice.

<sup>87</sup>*Evangelii nuntiandi* was cited sixteen times, *Familiaris consortio* ten times, *Catechesi tradendae* and *Christifideles laici* twice each, *Pastores dabo vobis* and *Gaudete in Domino* once each.

<sup>88</sup>Pope John Paul II's *Tertio millennio adveniente* is quoted three times, and *Mulieris dignitatem* twice.

From the above data, we observe that the synodal propositions are the primary source of *Ecclesia in Africa* (33% of the total), followed by both the Second Vatican Council documents and the papal encyclicals (about 13% of the total for each).

#### 2.4.2 - The Nature of *Ecclesia in Africa*

In this section, we shall examine the canonical status of a post-synodal apostolic exhortation. However, the purpose of our study will be limited to the canonical status and consequences, if any, of *Ecclesia in Africa*. Other significant consequences for pastoral practice in Africa will be discussed in chapters three and four.

We can identify two stages in the evolution of the apostolic exhortations in the Church. The first stage was during the time of Pius XII when, in 1939, the pontiff issued a document under the name of *apostolic exhortation* addressed to priests and clerics serving in the military.<sup>89</sup> Pius XII issued two other documents as *apostolic exhortations*.<sup>90</sup>

Pope John XIII issued two documents labeled *apostolic exhortation*, one to the clergy on the Divine Office and the success of the Second Vatican Council,<sup>91</sup> and another to the bishops on preparing for the Second Vatican Council.<sup>92</sup> Under Pope Paul VI, the name “apostolic exhortation”

---

<sup>89</sup>Pius XII, *Apostolica adhortatio, ad sacerdotes et clericos in exercitus ordines adscitos*, in *AAS*, 31 (1939), pp. 696-701.

<sup>90</sup>The Apostolic Exhortation to the Clergy of the World on the Spiritual Perfection of Priests, September 23, 1950, in *AAS*, 42 (1950), pp. 657-702; Apostolic Exhortation to the First International Congress of Teaching Sisters, September 13, 1951, in *AAS*, 43 (1951), pp. 738-744.

<sup>91</sup>John XXIII, *Adhortatio apostolica, sacrae laudis*, in *AAS*, 54 (1962), pp. 66-75.

<sup>92</sup>May 20, 1963, in *AAS*, 55 (1963), pp. 440-441.

became the regular way of referring to papal documents which, in addition to encyclicals, address a matter of either universal or particular character.

The second stage of the evolution of apostolic exhortations saw the emergence of the title "post-synodal apostolic exhortation" under John Paul II, who has used it to refer to the documents made on the basis of the synodal deliberations.<sup>93</sup> We can conclude from this evolution that the nature of post-synodal apostolic exhortations is, as the synod itself, still unfolding:

But as yet, there is no official or standard theological explanation for this specific kind of papal document. Two tentative conclusions, however, can be drawn. First, they are, as the name implies, chiefly 'exhortative', even when the subject deals with issues of doctrinal significance. Second, the pope does not write exhortations when he wants to teach on matters of faith or morals with the full force of his Petrine charism.<sup>94</sup>

The synodal rule does not speak of a post-synodal apostolic exhortation but instead indicates that at the end of the work of the assembly, the general secretary, assisted by the special secretary, prepares a report which describes the treatment of the topic examined and the conclusions reached by the participants in the synod. This report is to be submitted to the Supreme Pontiff.<sup>95</sup>

The lack of a stipulation on a post-apostolic exhortation caused some problems during the first assemblies of the synod of bishops. As Hebblethwaite reported on the 1974 synod of bishops, the synodal fathers "simply dumped a series of confused propositions in the papal lap and invited the pope to sort them out."<sup>96</sup> In their synodal message, the participants of the synod declared: "We

---

<sup>93</sup>Some authors argue that Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii nuntiandi* "is really the first post-synodal apostolic exhortation, even though when it was issued, the term 'post-synodal' was not yet used." See J. M. Miller, *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, p.11.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>*Ordo* 1969, art. 40 - 41.

<sup>96</sup>"The Synod of Bishops," in A. Hastings (ed.), *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After*, London, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 206.

have preferred to offer the integral fruits of our exchange to the Holy Father with great confidence and simplicity, and to await a new impetus from him."<sup>97</sup> The "new impetus from him" came to be the post-synodal apostolic exhortation as we know it today.<sup>98</sup> As J.M. Miller recalls:

The term 'post-synodal' was carefully chosen: the 'post' is a reminder that the assembly itself does not issue the exhortation; and the adjective 'apostolic' explicitly affirms that the exhortation belongs to the papal magisterium. By adding 'post-synodal' to the title, the Holy Father suggests that he wishes to highlight the specifically collegial nature of this kind of apostolic exhortation: "Because of their collaborative nature, the documents resulting from recent synods are expressly called 'post-synodal'."<sup>99</sup>

If we place the synod of bishops in the context of the Second Vatican Council as Maurizio C. Bravi suggests,<sup>100</sup> and maintain together with Pope John Paul II that "the synod of bishops has contributed in a most noteworthy manner to the implementation of the teachings and the doctrinal and pastoral directives of the Second Vatican Council in the life of the universal Church."<sup>101</sup> then we can conclude that "it is a document whose purpose is to interpret, apply, and develop the

---

<sup>97</sup>Synod of bishops, Third Ordinary General Assembly, "Declaration of the Synodal Fathers," in *ORE*, 45 (1974), p. 3.

<sup>98</sup>The first document explicitly referred to as a post-synodal apostolic exhortation was *Reconciliatio et poenitentia* (1984). The documents published after the synods of 1974, 1977, and 1980 can be referred to as post-synodal apostolic exhortation only in retrospect.

<sup>99</sup>Miller, *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, p. 25. See also John Paul II, "Bishops Express Unity of the Church," in *ORE*, October 14, 1992, 41 (1992), p. 11.

<sup>100</sup>"[...] il testo ed il contesto conciliari costituiscono la fonte dottrinale più prossima per lo studio e la comprensione del Sinodo dei Vescovi. Creato ed istituito grazie ad un intervento *libero e sovrano* del Papa, non costretto, cioè dai dibattiti conciliari sebbene ad essi *relativo* nella modalità sopra spiegata, l'Istituto sinodale tiene un peculiare vincolo con la celebrazione conciliare, divenendo un necessario riferimento per l'approfondimento della natura giuridico-canonico, dei fini e dei compiti assegnati al Sinodo dal *motu proprio Apostolica sollicitudo* il quale, rispetto all'Istituti, si può considerare come la sua principale fonte normativa" (M.C.Bravi, *Il sinodo dei vescovi istituzione, fini e natura: indagine teologico-giuridica*, Roma, Gregorian University Press, 1995, p. 116).

<sup>101</sup>Address to the council of the general secretariat of the synod of bishops, April 30, 1983, in *ORE*, 21 (1983), May 23, p. 9.

achievements and reforms of Vatican II.<sup>102</sup> For that reason, just as the synod itself, a post-synodal apostolic exhortation is closely linked to the Second Vatican Council's ecclesiology of communion. This document is a fruit of the common responsibility of the bishops expressed in the synod of bishops. In this aspect, post-synodal apostolic exhortations are radically different from the papal encyclicals. From the synod the pope receives the "raw material" with which he formulates a message to the whole Church.

The propositions of the synod have no canonical status other than being recommendations of a merely consultative nature. For this reason, the pope is not juridically bound by them. That notwithstanding, the vote expressed in the propositions "if morally unanimous, has a qualitative ecclesial weight which surpasses the merely formal aspect of the consultative vote."<sup>103</sup> Once the pope accepts the propositions and incorporates them in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation, their status changes: they are elevated in status, becoming his. This is why the pope is free either to draw upon them verbatim or to change them as he sees fit in the formulation of the post-synodal apostolic exhortation.

The post-synodal apostolic exhortation, as the title explains, is exhortative in nature and not a legislative text.<sup>104</sup> Although not a decree, a post-synodal apostolic exhortation is a convergence of the bishops' collective input and the pope's personal contribution. The pope "needs the bishops"

---

<sup>102</sup>Miller, *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, p. 23.

<sup>103</sup>Address to the council of the general secretariat of the synod of bishops, April 30, 1983, in *ORE*, 21 (1983), May 23, p. 9.

<sup>104</sup>F.G. Morrisev, *Papal and Curial Pronouncements: Their Canonical Significance in the Light of the Code of Canon Law*, 2nd ed. revised and updated by Michel Thériault, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1995, p.13.

input in order to address doctrinal and pastoral issues in a relevant and convincing way [...]. From their recommendations he draws up guidelines suitable for the whole Church."<sup>105</sup> For this reason, "[i]t is, therefore, even more important that the documents, which appear after the synod, reflect the common thought of the synod assembly and of the pope who presides over it *ex officio*."<sup>106</sup> That notwithstanding, post-synodal apostolic exhortations are issued by the pope in his own name and are sealed with his authority. In addition "because they are issued by the pope, [post-synodal apostolic exhortations] are documents of the ordinary papal magisterium."<sup>107</sup>

In its capacity as "an appropriate document by the ordinary papal magisterium,"<sup>108</sup> the assent accorded to a post-synodal apostolic exhortation is proportionate to the degree of authority exercised in its genesis. This is in line with the *Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*, issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which indicated that one should "take into account the proper character of every exercise of the Magisterium, considering the extent to which its authority is engaged."<sup>109</sup>

Canon 752 mentions the conditions surrounding a doctrine that demands a religious submission of will and intellect: (1) the agent must be either the Supreme Pontiff or the college of

---

<sup>105</sup>Miller, *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, 1998, p. 34.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid.

<sup>108</sup>Cf. John Paul II, "Church Offers Help to Alleviate Causes of Tension," December 22, 1983, in *ORF*, January 9, 1984, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup>Francis A. Sullivan adds another criterion on assessing the authority of a document: "the source from which the document was issued. This could be an ecumenical council, a pope speaking *ex cathedra*, a regional council, an episcopal synod, a pope writing an encyclical letter, a Roman congregation, an episcopal conference, or an individual bishop in his diocese" (F.A. Sullivan, *Creative Fidelity: Weighing and Interpreting Documents of the Magisterium*, New York, Paulist Press, p. 4).

bishops: (2) exercising their authentic magisterium:<sup>110</sup> (3) and declaring upon a matter of faith and morals.<sup>111</sup> The Supreme Pontiff exercises his authentic magisterium referred to in c. 752 in documents like encyclicals, apostolic letters, and post-synodal apostolic exhortations. The level of obedience owed to the teachings of the magisterium in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation is, therefore, not the assent of faith but rather what the Second Vatican Council called a “religious submission of will and intellect.”<sup>112</sup> This kind of submission is the level of obedience accorded to the authentic teaching of the pope or bishops.

According to L. Örsy, “Such a ‘respect’ however, is not and cannot be, a surrender to God speaking; it is a response to the Church searching. Since there is human element in this search, there must be one in the response, too.”<sup>113</sup> For this reason, an exhortation like *Ecclesia in Africa* is not the last word. The underlying presumption in this statement is that:

the teaching in exhortations expresses a non-definitive exercise of the ordinary magisterium: one which does not propose doctrine infallibly or definitely. The response called for is not the assent of divine and Catholic faith which is owed to what is taught as divinely revealed. Nor is the faithful Catholic called to give the firm acceptance due to a doctrine that is definitively proposed.<sup>114</sup>

Consequently, the Christian faithful are “expected to accept what is *taught* in an exhortation and act in accordance with it. What the ordinary magisterium proposes in this way has a ‘real, though not unconditional, claim on the assent of the faithful’.”<sup>115</sup> For this reason, the pope can rightly appeal

<sup>110</sup>“Authentic” does not mean “genuine,” but “authoritative.”

<sup>111</sup>These include matters pertaining to Christian belief and the Christian way of life.

<sup>112</sup>*I.G.*, 25.

<sup>113</sup>L. Örsy, “Reflection on a Canon,” in *America*, 154 (1986), p. 397.

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup>J. M. Miller (ed.), *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, p. 43.

to the recipients of his exhortation to implement with great fidelity the decisions and orientations which, with the apostolic authority of the successor of Peter, he presents in the exhortation.<sup>116</sup>

Who are the recipients of *Ecclesia in Africa*? They are those mentioned in the opening greeting: "the bishops, priests and deacons, men and women religious, and all the faithful": only they are obliged by it and are called upon to implement the decisions and orientations contained in the exhortation.<sup>117</sup>

The post-synodal apostolic exhortation can be regarded as the last synodal intervention. The synodal reports, documents and propositions make available to the pope the collective wisdom of the local churches, enabling him to respond accordingly in the form of an exhortation.

#### 2.4.3 - The Message of *Ecclesia in Africa*: Bear Witness to Christ

In this section, we shall examine the message that Pope John Paul II conveys to the Church in Africa in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*.

Pope John Paul II officially signed *Ecclesia in Africa* and handed it to the Church in Africa at Yaoundé, Cameroon, on September 14, 1995, Feast of the Triumph of the Cross.<sup>118</sup> The document presents a generally positive outlook, filled with encouragement and hope, and is a text-book-like-

---

<sup>116</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, 141.

<sup>117</sup>In many post-synodal apostolic exhortations, special mention is made of the particular group addressed. The bishops at the African Synod requested the pope "to bring to the attention of the whole Church the results of the reflections" (proposition one).

<sup>118</sup>The same ceremony of publishing *Ecclesia in Africa* was repeated in Johannesburg, South Africa and in Nairobi, Kenya.

compendium of Church teaching. It is replete with 272 footnotes taken from some thirty ecclesial and papal documents. Many of these documents are from the African Synod itself. *Ecclesia in Africa* makes extensive use of the Bible as well, some ninety-six times. Of the biblical references, sixteen are taken from the Acts of the Apostles. Acts 1:8 alone (you shall be my witnesses) is either directly quoted or alluded to eight times and is used as the heading of chapters five and seven. As J.M. Miller noted:

When the Holy Father cites Sacred Scripture in his post-synodal apostolic exhortations, he draws very little on the methods of contemporary biblical scholarship [...]. His concern is not the original historical context or the stages of a text's formation. The pope's purpose in citing Scripture is not to distinguish different authors or traditions, as in historical exegesis, but [...] he opens up its meaning for today. Indeed, it is always the religious and spiritual message that catches his interest and it is that message which he seeks to convey in his writings [...]. This means that he reads and uses it in his documents in order to bring out the word of God into the present.<sup>119</sup>

Examining the way Acts 1:8 is used in *Ecclesia in Africa* will help determine the message of this document. Why is this verse quoted so often in the first place? Is there any link between this verse and the leitmotif of *Ecclesia in Africa*? What light does this, and other biblical verses, shed on reading and understanding of the message of *Ecclesia in Africa*? We hope that answers to these and other questions will help us grasp the message. Indeed, we hope that by examining Acts 1:8 we shall explore ways of developing other aspects which are not fully developed within *Ecclesia in Africa*.

The leitmotif of *Ecclesia in Africa* is built around Acts 1:8, that is, "You shall be my witnesses." To this scriptural idea the pope frequently returns throughout the exhortation, sometimes

---

<sup>119</sup>Miller, *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, p. 38. See also Terrence Prendergast, "A Vision of Wholeness: a Reflection on the Use of Scripture in a Cross-section of Papal Writings," in John M. McDermott, *The Thought of Pope John Paul II: A Collection of Essays and Studies*, Rome, Gregorian University Press, 1993, p. 83.

several times in the same paragraph. The allusions to Acts 1:8 are varied: in some places, only the first part of the verse is mentioned, that is, "You shall be my witnesses": in other places, it is the full verse that is quoted: "You shall be my witnesses to the ends of the earth." The word *witness* appears fifty-four times in the whole English text and of these, eleven times it appears as "bear witness."

The central message of *Ecclesia in Africa* is embodied in *bearing witness*. Indeed, the pope states in the exhortation that:

To bear witness to the gospel in word and deed: this is the task which the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops received and which it now passes on to the Church of the continent. "You shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8): this is the challenge. In Africa these should be the fruits of the Synod in every area of people's lives.<sup>120</sup>

This bearing witness to the gospel is the "task," the "challenge," and the "fruits" of the African Synod: it is the central idea which Pope John Paul II conveys in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*. In the rest of this chapter, we shall explain this conclusion in detail.

In *Ecclesia in Africa* the pope refers constantly and consistently to the evangelization of Africa as a Pentecost event, and consequently, to the evangelization of Africa as similar in some aspects to that of the early Church described in the Acts of Apostles. Thus, the pontiff observes:

The first missionaries who reached the heart of Africa undoubtedly felt an astonishment similar to that experienced by the Christians of the apostolic age at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit: [...] in your African homeland the Pentecost of Jerusalem was renewed [...]. It was certainly the same Spirit who moved those men of faith, the first [African] missionaries: [...]. It was the Holy Spirit who [...] moved the great King of Congo, Nzinga-a-Nkuwu, to ask for missionaries to proclaim the gospel. It was the Holy Spirit who sustained the life of those four first Angolan Christians who, returning from Europe, testified to the Christian faith.<sup>121</sup>

---

<sup>120</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, 56. Emphasis added.

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*, 28, 32.

The evangelization of Africa has been, in the course of almost two centuries, "an outstanding achievement by any standard."<sup>122</sup> Notwithstanding this success, the pope analyses what has become of Africa in the period following independence: "One common situation, without any doubt, is that Africa is full of problems [...] there is abject, tragic mismanagement of available scarce resources, political instability and social disorientation [...]. Africa has practically become an irrelevant appendix, often forgotten and neglected."<sup>123</sup> It is from such a perspective that the pope finally asks: "How can African Christians become ever more faithful witnesses to the Lord Jesus?"<sup>124</sup> After discussing the responses given by the synod fathers,<sup>125</sup> the pope gives his own response as bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed: this is the task which the African Synod received and which it now passes on to the African Church.<sup>126</sup> He, then, draws on Acts 1:8, "You shall be my witnesses," to conclude that this is the challenge, the fruits of the African Synod in every area of the people's lives. The whole of chapter three of the exhortation is dedicated to how this bearing witness to the gospel can be achieved in concrete life. For this reason, thirty-four propositions of the fifty-two in the whole document are found in this section of the exhortation.

---

<sup>122</sup>Ibid. 38. The pope here lists some of these achievements: the building up of the Church on the continent is confirmed by facts such as the noteworthy and rapid increase in the number of ecclesiastical circumscriptions, the growth of a native clergy, of seminarians and candidates for institutes of consecrated life, the steady increase of the gospel among the African peoples, and the high percentage of indigenous bishops who now make up the hierarchy on the continent.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid. 40.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid. 46.

<sup>125</sup>The synodal members identified several responses: profound evangelization (n. 47), balanced inculturation (48), honest dialogue (49), family life (50), and application of the gospel to concrete life (51).

<sup>126</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, 56.

Chapter four is mostly doctrinal in content, with discussions on themes like baptism, faith, family, dignity and the role of both men and women. Most of the quotations in this section are non-synodal documents like the papal encyclicals, letters and exhortations.

Chapter five — entitled “You shall be my witnesses in Africa” — takes up from where chapter three left off. The chapter systematically presents the agents of evangelization that will help in effecting the bearing of witness to the gospel in Africa. At the top of the list are the bishops, who are “to coordinate the commitment to evangelization” by establishing in the diocese the necessary structures, guiding the work of priests, religious and laity, using the different councils provided for by canon law.<sup>127</sup> The creation of basic Christian communities “which pray and listen to God’s word, encourage the members themselves to take on responsibility, learn to live an ecclesial life, and reflect on different human problems in the light of the gospel” will be of great importance.

Whereas the laity are to be helped to become increasingly aware of their role in the Church, the catechists are to be trained and treasured by both their bishops and priests. While the parents are to see to the Christian education of their children, dioceses are to develop a pastoral program for the family apostolate. The pastoral care of youth must clearly be part of the overall pastoral plan of dioceses and parishes.<sup>128</sup>

It is necessary to foster religious vocations to the contemplative and active life; formation of religious is to be updated; institutes are to be helped in acquiring juridical status and autonomy; and the document on mutual relations between bishops and religious in the Church, *Mutuae relationes*, is to be revised. Future priests should be formed in the cultural values of their country

---

<sup>127</sup>Ibid, 88.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid, 90-93.

and should receive adequate formation on the meaning and place of consecration to Christ in the priesthood. Conferences of bishops are to study the most suitable ways of promoting and encouraging the permanent diaconate. Bishops are to see to the ongoing formation of priests especially in the first years of their ministry. Finally, bishops should carefully pastor the Church which God redeemed with the blood of his own Son, fulfilling the responsibility entrusted to them by the Holy Spirit; to carry out their apostolic office as witnesses of Christ before all people; to exercise personally, in a spirit of trusting cooperation with the presbyterate and other pastoral workers, an irreplaceable service of unity in charity, carefully fulfilling their responsibilities of teaching, sanctifying and governing.<sup>129</sup>

The exhortation lists structures with which this new evangelization will be carried out: parishes, movements and associations of the faithful, Catholic schools, universities and higher institutes of learning, and the material means that conferences of bishops will set up.<sup>130</sup>

Chapter six lays down provisions for the achievement of justice and peace in Africa. The starting point is the Church itself, which must examine with care its procedures, possessions and lifestyle. The African conferences of bishops are to establish justice and peace commissions at various levels. The promotion of justice and peace is to be part of the pastoral program of each Christian community, with pastoral agents adequately trained for this apostolate. African Catholics are to bear witness to goodness, truth, justice and love of God in their daily life. In the promotion of integral human development, Catholics can also cooperate with the believers of other religions.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup>Ibid. 94-98.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid. 99-104.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid. 105-109.

The foundation of good government should be established on the sound basis of laws which protect the rights and define the obligations of citizens. Governments are to protect the common patrimony against all forms of corruption, and to undertake suitable initiatives to improve the conditions of international commerce. While rich countries must become clearly aware of their duty to support the efforts of the countries struggling to rise from their poverty and misery, a compassionate ear is to be lent to the anguished cries of the poor nations asking for help.<sup>132</sup>

The last chapter of *Ecclesia in Africa*, by way of summary, focuses on Africa's contribution to the universal mission of evangelization, thus the title: "You shall be my witnesses to the ends of the earth." Because Africans are to be missionaries to the whole world, the bishops, in their daily ministry to the flock entrusted to them, must not lose sight of the needs of the Church as a whole. For this reason, they will express this solicitude to the Church universal, especially when they deliberate and decide together as members of their respective conferences of bishops. In a pre-eminent way, the bishops will express their apostolic solidarity through the synod of bishops, "[f]or it is precisely by the means of fostering and strengthening solidarity that the Church can make a specific and decisive contribution to a true culture of peace."<sup>133</sup> This bearing of witness in Africa and the whole world is the message of the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*. Indeed, the pope himself observes that "[i]n all the discussions and recommendations made by the Special Assembly the overriding concern was to *bear witness to Christ*."<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup>Ibid. 110-114.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid. 127-139.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid. 127. Emphasis in the original.

**CONCLUSION**

At the beginning of this chapter, we set out to discuss how the petrine ministry was exercised throughout the African Synod. We have accomplished this by systematically analysing the *Lineamenta*, the *Instrumentum laboris*, the working session, and the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*.

By convoking an assembly for Africa of the synod of bishops, Pope John Paul II exercised his petrine ministry by providing an occasion for the heads of particular churches in Africa to come together and develop their pastoral solidarity. In the synodal process this solidarity was realized in different forms and at different levels. It was realized when the pope summoned the various members of the African episcopate to come together in Rome and, together with the other officials of the Roman Curia, he set up a commission to formulate the *Lineamenta* and suggest the theme for the African Synod. Later, this solidarity achieved a particular concretization when the African bishops, meeting in their conferences of bishops or through committees, engaged in a common journey of prayer, study and reflection on the *Lineamenta*. This concerted activity reached its first fruits with the evolution of the *Instrumentum laboris* – a document that expresses the consensus of the different conferences on the *Lineamenta*.

Opening the working session of the African Synod in Saint Peter's Basilica, Pope John Paul II drew on the liturgy of the day, the Second Sunday of Easter, to indicate his main goal in the exercise of his petrine ministry for the Assembly of Bishops of the African Synod. The pontiff pointed out that, because in the early Church the community of believers was of one heart and mind, the Apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and a great favour was accorded to

them all (Acts 4:32-33). In the same manner, the African synodal assembly could bear witness to the faith by being of one heart and mind and, after it, the whole community of believers in Africa.

The bearing of witness to Christ in word and deed was the overriding concern in all the discussions and recommendations made by the synodal members, becoming, thus, the principal message of the African Synod. In *Ecclesia in Africa*, Pope John Paul II constantly draws on Acts 1:8. "You shall be my witnesses," to indicate how this witness will be achieved in Africa and beyond to the whole world, in preparation for the next millennium.

Pope John Paul II personally followed with particular interest and affection the different stages of preparation. Since the convocation of the Special Assembly, the theme of the synod and his appeal for all the faithful to prepare for the Synodal Assembly figured prominently in his meetings with the people of Africa. The pope took advantage of the *ad limina* visits of the continent's bishops to ask for the co-operation of everyone in the preparation of the African Synod.

The evolution of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* was a unique moment in the exercise of the petrine ministry. The members of the synodal assembly asked Pope John Paul II to bring to the attention of the whole Church the results of their input, that is, the synodal reflections and prayers, discussions and exchanges. With the acceptance and incorporation of this input into his output – *Ecclesia in Africa*, the pontiff manifested the inter-connection between the bishops' *sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum* and the petrine ministry. Indeed, we can conclude that the petrine ministry's fruitful exercise requires the bishops' input.

The post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, although not a legislative text, is an important document because it brings together the bishops' collective input and the pope's personal contribution. The pope needs the bishops' input in order to address doctrinal and pastoral

issues in a relevant and convincing way. From their recommendations, the pope draws up guidelines that facilitate the exercise of his **petrine ministry**. For this reason, the synod of bishops is beneficial to both the bishops (to express, foster, and strengthen their episcopal solidarity) and the Roman Pontiff (in the exercise of his **petrine ministry**). By the means of such renewed solidarity, the bishops make a specific and decisive contribution to a true culture of peace; they set an example in the bearing of witness to the **gospel *cum et sub Petro***. In chapter three, we shall discuss in detail the canonical and pastoral issues that were raised at the African Synod.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **PRINCIPAL CANONICAL ISSUES**

#### **Introduction**

Much of what the African Synod addressed was not canonical in nature but falls in the domain of other disciplines, such as theology, social ethics, and anthropology. There was, however, much in the synodal process that was canonical in nature, that dealt with church structures, ministries, formation of priests and religious, and marriage, among other topics.

In this chapter, we will identify the principal canonical issues of the African Synod. These are the questions that were brought up with the greatest frequency throughout the synodal process, from the pre-synodal phase to the post-synodal apostolic exhortation of Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*. The issues to be identified are: (1) the nature and role of small Christian communities; (2) the identity and role of the agents of proclamation of the gospel in Africa, namely priests, religious and catechists; and (3) inculturation. We shall look at how each of these topics was treated in the *Lineamenta*, the *Instrumentum laboris*, in some of the speeches by the synod fathers, in the propositions, and in *Ecclesia in Africa*. In the fourth chapter, we shall return to each issue and see whether canon law and canon lawyers can be of service to the African church in implementing the directions and recommendations of the African Synod.

#### **3.1 - THE SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**

As it was reported in chapter one, since the late 1950s and early 1960s, “winds of change” have been blowing over the African continent, leading many countries to political independence from colonial powers. Together with the Second Vatican Council, these changes brought with them a continent-wide ecclesial consciousness that Paul VI reinforced by his visit to Africa in 1969,

during which he called on Africans to have an African Christianity, and to formulate Catholicism in terms congenial to the African culture.<sup>1</sup>

The emergence of small Christian communities in Africa is associated with this new consciousness. In this section, we shall identify the principal canonical issues related to the small Christian communities by analyzing the origin of small Christian communities in the African church and their treatment in the African Synod. The conciliar doctrine relating to small Christian communities and their status according to the CIC/83 will be discussed in Chapter Four.

### **3.1.1 - The Origin and Nature of Small Christian Communities in the African Church**

The history of the beginnings of small Christian communities in Africa is not yet complete. Specific and concrete descriptions of their origins, size, activities, and dynamics are not exact. There is a variety of small Christian communities because their development has taken place at different times and under different social circumstances. For this reason, they are varied both in form and in name: they are called "small Christian communities," "basic Christian communities," "living Christian communities," "vital Christian communities," and "small ecclesial communities."

According to J. Kelly, small Christian communities began in Tanzania during the 1960s among the Luo people of North Mara. Kelly reports that, towards the end of the 1960s, a Seminar Study Year on "The Church in Tanzania Today" was held, during which D. Zwack presented a

---

<sup>1</sup>Paul VI, Address to SECAM, in *AAS*, 61 (1969), pp. 575-578.

position paper in which he mentioned a type of small Christian community called the *neighborhood community*, or *local community*, that was operating among the Luo people in North Tanzania.<sup>2</sup>

In 1973, a plenary session of the AMECEA, comprised of Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, was held on the theme, *Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 1980s*. The deliberations centered on building self-ministering, self-propagating and self-supporting local churches. Basic Christian communities were considered one of the means of achieving this goal:

We believe that in order to achieve this we have to insist on building Church life and work on basic Christian communities, in both rural and urban areas. Church life must be based on the communities in which everyday life and work takes place: the basic and manageable social groupings whose members can experience real inter-personal relationships and feel a sense of communal belonging, both in living and working. We believe that Christian

---

<sup>2</sup>J. Kelly, "The Evolution of Small Christian Communities," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), p. 109. In the early 1960s, a French sociologist Marie-France Perrin Jassy from Sorbonne (Paris) was invited by the Maryknoll Missionaries to come and conduct a study on the phenomenon of the Luo people, who were leaving the Catholic Church in masses to a dissident movement in Kenya called *Legio Mariae* (not to be identified with the *Legion of Mary* in the Catholic Church). She was to find out the meaning and importance of the *Legio Mariae*, the religious needs of the Luo people, and the connection between the two. The subject of her research became the spontaneous attempts of the Luo people at forming Christian communities.

The results of Jassy's study showed that *Legio Mariae* was only one among many different African independent churches in the area, and that, although varied in form and name, they all had similar structures and activities. They were all divided into small local communities organized according to neighborhoods of about three miles wide and numbering between fifteen and one hundred adults, who would know each other personally as members of the same lineage. They were defined according to personal relationships between their members.

The life of the Church was centered upon the local community. The religious activities took place at the local level and were largely conducted by the lay leaders or the people acting as a group. The role of the ordained clergy was restricted to a few yearly sacramental acts like baptism, confirmation and Eucharist. Baptism was initiation into the community, while penance was a public rejection of a former life of sin before joining the community of the saved ones. Marriage was a commitment taken in front of the community. Other religious acts, such as praying for the sick, exorcism, and prayers for the dead, were high moments requiring the participation of the community as a whole. The results of Jassy's study among the Luo people were later used to found communities in Eastern Africa on an informal and spontaneous basis (Cf. M.F. Perrin Jassy, "Forming Christian Communities: An Evaluation of Experiments in North Mara, Tanzania," in *Gaba Publications*, 12 [1969], pp. 4-5.

communities at this level will be best suited to develop real intense vitality and to become effective witnesses in their environment.<sup>3</sup>

In 1976, another AMECEA plenary session was held on the theme, *Building Small Christian Communities*. The bishops agreed that:

the systematic formation of small Christian communities should be the key pastoral priority in the years to come within Eastern Africa. All pastoral action of the local Christian community must, to be effective, follow certain guidelines, have a certain continuity and submit to certain rules or norms. It cannot be merely a personal activity, but must be the activity of the Church, and its methods depend on the bishop who is the chief pastor of the local church.<sup>4</sup>

Several elements are worth noting in this declaration of the bishops. First, there is a change from *basic* Christian communities to *small* Christian communities. Second, there is need for *guidelines, rules or norms* for these small Christian communities. Third, the pastoral action of these small Christian communities is not a personal activity but the activity of the Church. Fourth, these small Christian communities depend on the bishop of the local church. We shall consider these elements later in this chapter to see their canonical consequences.

Some authors suggest that small Christian communities began elsewhere in Africa. For instance, in Ethiopia it is reported that for four hundred years there have been small Christian communities organized on the neighborhood level; these are groups of Christians who meet regularly at some venue after the Sunday liturgy to drink coffee and discuss religious matters.<sup>5</sup> In Central Africa, the decision to create small Christian communities was officially taken in the

---

<sup>3</sup>“Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 80s: AMECEA Plenary Conference, Nairobi, December 14-21, 1973, Preamble.” in *AFER*, 16 (1974), p. 10.

<sup>4</sup>“AMECEA Plenary Conference, 1976,” in *AFER*, 18 (1976), p. 250.

<sup>5</sup>Kelly, “The Evolution of Small Christian Communities,” p. 109.

Seventh Plenary Assembly of the episcopate of Congo in 1961 to combat the threat of communism that was spreading in Central Africa.<sup>6</sup>

What began as a local pastoral experience of some dioceses spread rapidly across Africa such that, at the time of the 1974 Synod of Bishops in Rome, the African bishops were already endorsing the "essential and fundamental role of small Christian communities."<sup>7</sup> In the next section, we shall examine the treatment of small Christian communities in the African Synod.

### 3.1.2 - The African Synod and Small Christian Communities

The *Lineamenta* to the African Synod mentions small Christian communities three times:

[...] small Christian communities [...] are places in which the formation of the lay faithful can and ought to be fostered and promoted (37);

[...] small, basic or so-called 'living' communities, where the faithful can communicate the Word of God and express it in service and love to one another; these communities are true expressions of ecclesial communion and centers of evangelization, in communion with their pastors (42);

The spread of new religious movements in Africa, on the whole, constitutes a pastoral challenge for the Church [...] those responsible in pastoral matters should analyze the nature of inculturation of Christianity in Africa, its capacity to constitute vibrant ecclesial communities (75).

The *Lineamenta* describes small Christian communities as places suitable for formation of the lay faithful and for living the Word of God, as an expression of ecclesial communion, as centers of evangelization, and as places to combat the new religious movements through inculturation.

---

<sup>6</sup>B. Ugeux, "Théologie et méthodes missionnaires actuelles: les petites communautés chrétiennes (ou communautés de base)," in *Quelle Église pour l'Afrique du troisième millénaire?*, Facultés catholiques de Kinshasa, 1991, p. 93.

<sup>7</sup>R. Luneau, *Paroles et silences du Synode africain*, Paris, Éditions Karthala, 1997, p. 95.

The *Instrumentum laboris* acknowledges both the existence and the variety of the small Christian communities in Africa, offering a general description and advantages for them:

Several Episcopal Conferences have adopted small Christian communities as a priority of their pastoral plan. Their form varies from country to country, but in general they bring together several families from an area of the town or village within the parish territory. The advantage of such communities is that they give Christians a sense of belonging and a sense of being united in a common purpose. The family and clan structure of traditional African society makes these small Christian communities particularly appropriate.<sup>8</sup>

The *Instrumentum laboris* recalls the words of Paul VI, who tried to delineate certain conditions for the basic communities of Latin America. He enumerated certain conditions for the ecclesial reality of these communities. Although his words refer directly to Latin America, some of these conditions apply to the African situation:

- that they remain firmly attached to the local church within which they exist and to the Entire Church, thus avoiding the very real danger of becoming isolated;
- that they maintain a sincere communion with the pastors whom the Lord gives to his Church, and with the Magisterium which the Spirit of Christ has entrusted to these pastors;
- that they constantly grow in missionary consciousness, fervor, commitment and zeal.<sup>9</sup>

During the working session of the African Synod, small Christian communities figured in many of the speeches of the members.<sup>10</sup> In the report *relatio ante disceptationem*, small Christian communities appear as places where the People of God can be church and can evangelize:

In the now well-known African experience of *small Christian communities* the whole People of God are mobilized to be church and to evangelize [...]. The small Christian community can

---

<sup>8</sup>*Instrumentum laboris*, 45.

<sup>9</sup>Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 58, in *AAS*, 68 (1976), p. 48. See also *Instrumentum laboris*, 45.

<sup>10</sup>P. Shouver reports that the subject of small Christian communities appeared twenty-seven times in the interventions of the synod (see P. Shouver, "Chronique d'un Synode," in *Spiritus*, 136 (1994), p. 345.)

derive theological enrichment and missionary motivation from the concept of the Church *family of God* to which all are called and destined to belong.<sup>11</sup>

The same document refers to small Christian communities as communities where common people seek to live the Christian message to the full in the daily concrete situations of their lives. Furthermore, they are means of evangelization through which Christ, the center of the evangelizing mission, is brought as close as possible to people at the grass-roots level. They are also said to be a means of human promotion<sup>12</sup> and the best way of "being church" in Africa.<sup>13</sup>

It was suggested that, due to the effectiveness of small Christian communities, the African Synod should recommend their creation in parishes throughout Africa, so that the ideal parish of the year 2000 be a community of communities.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, the African Synod was requested to affirm once more the importance of small Christian communities in the evangelization of Africa, because these communities have proved to be the best way of carrying out evangelization throughout the continent.<sup>15</sup>

In spite of their different opinions on the nature and name of small Christian communities, the bishops were united in affirming the necessity of these communities in Africa. In their post-synodal message the bishops stated:

The Church, the family of God, implies the creation of small communities at the human level, living or basic ecclesial communities [...]. It is such communities that will provide the best

---

<sup>11</sup>Thiandoum, "The Gospel, Inculturation and Dialogue," in *ORE*, April 20, 1994, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup>D. Kiwanuka Lote, "Ecclesial Communities are Instruments of Human Promotion," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup>A. Mavala, "The Laity and the Proclamation of the Word," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

means to fight against ethnocentrism within the Church itself and, more widely, within our nations.<sup>16</sup>

This wish was included among the propositions submitted to Pope John Paul II after the working session of the African Synod.<sup>17</sup> The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, repeats almost verbatim proposition 9 concerning the small Christian communities:

Right from the beginning, the Synod Fathers recognized that the Church as Family cannot reach her full potential as Church unless she is divided into communities small enough to foster close human relationships. The Assembly described the characteristics of such communities as follows: primarily they should be places engaged in evangelizing themselves, so that subsequently they can bring the Good News to others; they should moreover be communities which pray and listen to God's Word, encourage the members themselves to take on responsibility, learn to live an ecclesial life, and reflect on different human problems in the light of the Gospel. Above all, these communities are to be committed to living Christ's love for everybody, a love which transcends the limits of the natural solidarity of clans, tribes or other interest groups.<sup>18</sup>

In proposition 9, the bishops mentioned that "the small Christian communities have already been recommended by the African bishops at the 1974 Synod on Evangelization. The holy Synod [African Synod] recommends that such communities be created and given life in urban and rural pastoral care." This statement was dropped in the text of *Ecclesia in Africa*. This omission seems to suggest that John Paul II did not endorse the creation of small Christian communities in Africa as requested in proposition 9. However, the contrary appears to be the case, because, in the above quotation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, by restating the characteristics of the small Christian communities that are contained in proposition 9, speaks of these entities as a *fait accompli*.

---

<sup>16</sup>"Message of the African Synod," in *ORE*, May 11, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup>Propositions, 9, in "The Historical Background," in *ASDRP*, p. 90.

<sup>18</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, 89.

Elsewhere in *Ecclesia in Africa*, the existence of small Christian communities is assumed to be a reality already. Paragraph 23 of *Ecclesia in Africa* lists small Christian communities among those church bodies that were involved in the preparation of the synod, such as individuals, small communities, parishes, dioceses, and local, national and international bodies. Of interest is the appearance of these small communities and parishes as two different entities.

Small Christian communities are a *de facto* reality in the African church, and they exist alongside parishes. Moreover, the pope implicitly endorses their existence and recommends their creation. This is clear from their treatment in n. 89 of *Ecclesia in Africa*, where the pope affirms the view of the synodal fathers that “the Church as family cannot reach her full potential as Church unless she is divided into communities small enough to foster close human relationships.” In the next chapter, we shall return to the small Christian communities to see how canon law can be of service in implementing the related directives and recommendations of the African Synod.

### **3.2 - THE AGENTS OF PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL IN AFRICA**

The principal agents of the proclamation of the gospel are the bishops, helped by priests, religious men and women, catechists and laity, all according to their role and status. At the time of this Assembly (1994), the categories and numbers of the agents of proclamation of the gospel in Africa were as follows: 497 bishops; 20,768 priests (9,865 religious); 290 deacons, 50,049 religious women; 246,114 catechists; and 1,392 lay missionaries.<sup>19</sup> In this section, we shall limit our discussion to priests, religious men and women, and catechists.

---

<sup>19</sup>*In eam mentem*, 37. See also J.P. Schotte, “African Synod is a Special Moment of Grace,” in *ORE*, April 20, 1994, p. 4.

### 3.2.1 - Priests and Religious

The *Instrumentum laboris* observes that some of those who become priests or religious in Africa feel alienated from their culture. According to the responses from some of the African conferences of bishops, the training given to future priests and religious fails to root them well enough into their cultural inheritance. This has led them to live in a very insecure manner, perpetually "wearing a mask."

The *Lineamenta* calls for adequate formation of agents of evangelization so that the evangelizing mission of the Church may proceed according to the will and mind of Christ. The *Lineamenta* makes particular recommendations concerning the formation of priests, namely that a national *ratio institutionis sacerdotalis* be drawn up as soon as possible wherever it does not as yet exist to help all concerned to avoid ambiguities and errors, clarifying in bold relief the profile of the priest who is to be formed for the particular church.<sup>20</sup>

The *relatio ante disceptationem* notes that, in Africa today, the priest must define his image in terms congenial with the real living conditions of the people. This requires that recent official Church documents on priestly training need to be studied and reread in light of African local realities.<sup>21</sup> The same suggestion was made in relation to the document on the mutual relations between bishops and religious.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup>*Lineamenta*, 35.

<sup>21</sup>*Relatio ante disceptationem*, 9.

<sup>22</sup>M.T. Fish, "Seminarians Need New Formation Programs," in *ORE*, May 18, 1994, p. 8.

In some parts of Africa, a new approach to priestly formation is already underway, as one synod member reported. The formation time is longer compared to the traditional approach. The formation itself is offered to young adults, whether or not they have attended secondary school. Candidates live together in very simple houses in the midst of people and share their poor conditions. They partly gain their living by cultivating their own rice fields, at the same time looking after their house and their environment. The candidates remain close to the local people, attentive to and supportive of their conditions of life. It is such experience that is the foundation of their theological reflection. Educators help the candidates to link the gospel to this experience and to interpret life in the light of the gospel. The aim of this kind of formation is to form priests who are at the same time open to the entire Church and well-rooted in the living culture of their people: priests who are close to the people and ready to help them to incarnate their faith in their daily experience.<sup>23</sup>

It was noted that, in Africa, there is generally a low standard of education in many religious institutes, and this affects the whole of consecrated life. A new program of formation for religious is thus necessary, which would include five elements. 1) There should be careful discernment of the motives of the candidates desiring to enter religious life. 2) A national standard of education for admission to religious life should be established. The candidates should acquire basic Christian formation based on theological and spiritual knowledge before joining a particular congregation.

---

<sup>23</sup>A. Tsiahoana, "The Formation of Malagasy Priests," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 9. See also Z. Yohannes, "Inculturation and Formation," in *ibid.*, p. 10. See also, Fish, "Seminarians Need New Formation Programs," p. 8. This author sees as urgent the need to examine the training given for a celibate way of life in the seminarians and to face the issue of celibacy in all honesty. He suggests considering other forms of priestly commitment as they exist in the other rites in the Church. Another speaker recommended that all formation houses for priests be integrated within the local community instead of being large impersonal institutions. Cf. J. Diop-Yansunu, "The Life and Formation of Priests," in *ORE*, May 25, 1994, p. 5.

This could be given in a kind of preparatory seminary. 3) National catechetical and liturgical programs should be established for aspirants before they join any particular congregation to provide a common basis of formation for all religious in a country. 4) Each institute should have a well defined and approved charism and adhere to the spirit of the founder. 5) The pontifical and international institutes should come to an understanding with each diocesan bishop on the needs of the particular church, especially in recruitment and training of local candidates.<sup>24</sup>

While some of the above suggestions are contained in the current legislation of the Church,<sup>25</sup> there are others that are new and, therefore, need thorough canonical examination. For now, however, we can maintain, as was affirmed in the African Synod, that the essential elements of religious consecration – the evangelical counsels – must be secured, for they form a necessary condition for any form of inculturation. Stemming from these basic elements and with constant respect for them, consecrated life is called to discover and take on the religious values of a specific cultural tradition: “The charism is a gift which, by its nature, can be offered to all cultures; it can be lived according to the genius and nature of each culture with its real values.”<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup>A. Msarikie, “Religious Must be True Witnesses of Spiritual Renewal,” in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup>For instance, c. 578 prescribes the preservation and observance of the founding charism of the institute. Canon 631, § 1 notes that the principal function of the general chapter of an institute is to protect the patrimony of the institute and to foster appropriate renewal in accord with that patrimony. See also c. 586, giving the *raison d’être* of the autonomy of an institute as the preservation of the patrimony of the institute.

<sup>26</sup>E. M. Somalo, “Consecrated Life Calls for African Traditions,” in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 18. See also M. Zago, “Inculturation of Religious Life Expressed through Charisms,” in *ORE*, May 18, 1994, p. 6. This speaker acknowledged that inculturation has many other specific aspects for religious and must deal with particular problems, such as the ways of living vows and community life, the way to carry out their mission, the incarnation of the charism in the institute, relations with the family, the use of possessions, their life-style.

In proposition 18, the synod fathers outlined the profile of African future priests that summarizes the various interventions at the African Synod:

The Synod fathers affirm that today more than ever there is need to form our future priests to the true cultural values of their country, to a sense of honesty, responsibility, and integrity. They shall be formed in such a manner that they will have the qualities of the representatives of Christ, of true servants and animators of the Christian community under them, solidly spiritual, available, dedicated to evangelization, capable of administering the goods of the Church with efficiency and transparency and to live a simple life as befitting their milieu.

Seminarians should acquire affective maturity and should be both clear in their minds and deeply convinced that for the priest celibacy is inseparable from chastity. They should receive adequate formation on the place and the meaning of consecration to Christ in the priesthood.

Each episcopal conference, while maintaining the principal lines of the formation of priests as required by the universal Church, must study the special needs and context of their countries. The criteria for the admission of candidates should be established, and the process of screening candidates should be done, with great care and in consultation with the families and the small Christian communities.

In the above proposition, the bishops propose a profile of the African priest that is both in line with the entire Church and local realities. The emphasis laid on the role of episcopal conferences and small Christian communities is a matter that will require further examination. The bishops' profile of the African priest contains other noteworthy proposals, such as that of the priest being a servant and animator of the small Christian community and the process of consulting families and small Christian communities in the admission of priestly candidates.

*Ecclesia in Africa* acknowledges inculturation as both urgent and necessary. It reiterates almost verbatim proposition 18 in regard to the formation of priests, recommending that the formation program should give particular attention to the wholesome values present in the priests' surroundings. It cites the Second Vatican Council which encourages some kind of common life

among priests in the different forms suggested by real personal and pastoral needs.<sup>27</sup> In respect to religious and their relation to the bishops, *Ecclesia in Africa* adopts the request of the synod fathers to revise, if necessary, some points in the document *Mutuae relationes* in order to define better the role of religious life in the local church.<sup>28</sup>

### **3.2.2 - Catechists**

In this section, we shall briefly discuss the origins of the office of catechist in the African church and how the role is popularly conceived by the African people. Secondly, we shall explore how the role and identity of the catechist was treated in official church documents before the synod. This will lead to our principal concern: how the role and identity of the catechist were treated during the African Synod.

#### **3.2.2.1 - A Brief History of Catechists in the African Church**

The history of catechists in Africa is almost as old as the recent history of the African church. Very early in the new beginnings of Christianity in Africa, the rapidly growing number of Christian converts made it increasingly difficult for missionaries to render due pastoral assistance to all the converts in any given region. In trying to deal with the situation, missionaries sought the active cooperation of the first converts to help not only in being interpreters but also in teaching

---

<sup>27</sup>"In order that priests may find mutual assistance in the development of their spiritual and intellectual life, that they may be able to cooperate more effectively in their ministry and be saved from the dangers of loneliness which may arise, it is necessary that some kind of common life or some sharing of common life be encouraged among priests." (PO, 8).

<sup>28</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, 94.

religion. These men, and sometimes women, were, for that purpose, required to stay in constant touch with the missionaries.

The missionaries later commissioned these first converts to go back to their home areas and help in recruiting and teaching catechism to new converts, thus the name *catechist*. As a result, catechetical centers grew in size and number, becoming effective means of providing pastoral assistance to the Christians and, in many instances, being forerunners of future missionary centers. Working as catechists in such centers was one of the principal ways in which converts could take part in the apostolate:

The making of the African catechist was usually a simple process: In each village, the missionary picked out a man who could read a little and recite prayers from memory and appointed him as his helper, to teach the prayers, especially the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, and the *I Believe* to the catechumens, and to lead some prayers in the church during worship. Little by little his services increased from teaching prayers from memory to reading prayers or the New Testament, and giving regular instructions to the children preparing for the reception of the sacraments.<sup>29</sup>

The activities of the catechists varied from region to region making it almost impossible to speak of any overall uniformity. A comprehensive description of the catechist's role is offered by

A. Shorter:

A layman or lay woman, who shares in a particular way in the ministry of the word and in pastoral care by special appointment of the ordinary: a layman fulfilling pastoral and liturgical duties which are the priest's domain in Christian lands: the role of the catechist is to present and act *loco sacerdotis* in the out-centers: a helper of the priest: teacher of religion and priest's representative: a selected Christian who teaches religion: one who takes the place of the priest in so far as possible: representative of the Church where there is no priest: a layman looking after the spiritual welfare of all the community entrusted to him: a Christian layman completely and permanently at the service of the Church.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup>S.J. Emmanuel, *The Lay Catechist*, Thesis, Pontifical Urban University, Rome, 1978, p. 4. See also E. Kataza, "History of the Catechists in Eastern Africa," in A. Shorter and E. Kataza (eds.), *Missionaries to Yourselves: African Catechists Today*, London, Chapman, 1972, pp. 1-28.

<sup>30</sup>Shorter and Kataza, *Missionaries to Yourselves*, p. 105.

For many African Catholics, the portrait of the African catechist has been that of a quasi-pastor. His duties include liturgical and sacramental functions such as giving catechetical instruction, preparing the liturgy of the Mass, leading the Sunday celebrations in the absence of priests, preparing the faithful for the sacraments, especially baptizing those in danger of death, helping dying or sick people, and presiding at funerals.

The popular misconception of catechists as quasi-pastors is also due to the fact that the catechist's Christian community is usually referred to as a *sub-parish* or *out-station*. All these factors make the catechist appear before the people as part of the hierarchical structure of the Church; he is considered by many Christians as a substitute for or representative of the priest in his community and the visible link between the community and the priest. African catechists have generally been closer to the Christian faithful than the priest. The catechists live among the people, speak their language, and share their day to day life. As Francis Nolan reports:

unlike the fathers who had vast parishes to cover, he [the catechist] was always at hand to assist the dying. He knew all the local people, their marriage situations and their religious practices. He was the local teacher and the leader of the Church community. For most Christians he was the immediate representative of the hierarchical Church.<sup>31</sup>

### **3.2.2.2 - The Identity and Role of Catechists in the Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents**

There is a general concern in the Church to understand the ecclesial identity and ministry of the catechist. The catechist has not yet attained an identity of his own; he is usually referred to in relation to others, especially priests. He is usually identified from *above*: true co-operator of the

---

<sup>31</sup>Ibid, p. 7.

priestly order, collaborator of the priest, co-worker of the missionary, inseparable and indispensable companion of missionaries.

The catechist's identity does not stand on its own. This is demonstrated by the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that referred to him as a "true co-operator of the priestly order"<sup>32</sup> playing a role of "maximum importance" to the exercise of pastoral ministry. This conciliar teaching on the relationship between priests and catechists parallels, albeit in different order, that of bishops and priests described in *Lumen gentium*, where it says that priests are "prudent co-operators of the episcopal order."<sup>33</sup>

Notwithstanding the conciliar teaching on catechists, there has been difficulty in understanding their identity. As Cardinal J. Döpfner observed in the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (1970) on catechists, "no one knows exactly who they are or what role they play."<sup>34</sup> The same concern was expressed by Cardinal S.S. Kim in his report to the Commission for Catechists:

The role of the catechist has been conceived and practiced as a substitute and subordinate function. He is a substitute of minor quality. Because of this concept, the role of the catechist is squeezed between the hierarchical authority on the one side and the community to serve on the other [...]. As a result *the catechist has no real valid image of his role with which to identify*. The crisis of the role is a crisis of identity for catechists.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup>AG, 17.

<sup>33</sup>The conciliar teaching calls catechists *validi cooperatores ordinis sacerdotalis* (AG, 17) and priests as *ordinis episcopalis providi cooperatores* (LG, 28).

<sup>34</sup>Emmanuel, *The Lay Catechist*, p. 20. See especially the conclusion to chapter III of *Catechists in Africa, Asia and Oceania, Synthetic Study by the Permanent Commission for Catechesis and Catechists*, Rome, 1972.

<sup>35</sup>Emmanuel, *The Lay Catechist*, p. 21.

The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, in its 1970 Plenary Assembly, issued a statement that identifies the catechist not in relationship to the priest but with his own identity as a member of the lay faithful:

Not only because of the shortage of priests, as Vatican II declared, but particularly in the work of evangelization by helping to establish and nourish the Christian community, he [the catechist] comes from the community itself and through his special charism becomes its animator ... The catechist is not simply a supplier for the priest, but in his own right is a witness to Christ in the community to which he belongs.

[The catechist] is the lay person specially commissioned by the church according to the local needs to make Christ known, loved and followed by those who do not as yet know him and by the faithful.

The church guided by the Holy Spirit, calls certain of her faithful people as co-workers to the special vocation of the catechist. Inspired by the same Spirit, they respond to this call and thus receive from God a special charism, recognized by the church, enabling them to render witness to Christ.<sup>36</sup>

The statement of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples goes beyond the teaching of the Second Vatican Council to clarify the notion that catechists do not exist due to the shortage of priests; they are not just suppliers of priests. Being a catechist is a special vocation in the Church: a catechist is in his own right a witness to Christ. *Ad gentes*, 17 had stated, "in our days, when there are so few clerics to evangelize such great multitudes and to carry out the pastoral ministry, the role of catechists is of the highest importance."

The above statement of the Congregation marks the first official attempt to identify the catechist in his own right. However, when the Congregation states that the catechist is a lay person commissioned *according to local needs*, it leaves the identity of the catechist dependent on these needs. Although this opening may be good pastorally, juridically, it leaves the catechist obscure in

---

<sup>36</sup>*Omnis terra*, 30 (1970), p. 113.

the legal field. This has been the concern for the African church: who is a catechist, and what kind of formation and remuneration should be given to him or her.

### 3.2.2.3 - The Identity and Role of Catechists According to the African Synod

The African Synod dealt with the issue of catechists under the heading of agents of proclamation of the gospel in Africa. We have seen that at the time of this Assembly (1994), there were 246,114 catechists, comprising 73% of the total number of the agents of proclamation of the gospel in Africa. The *Lineamenta* refers to these people as “pastoral workers or agents serving the Catholic Church in Africa.”<sup>37</sup> The *Lineamenta*’s list of pastoral workers in Africa does not include the lay faithful who are not catechists. This is corrected to some extent by the *Instrumentum laboris*, which states that every Christian, including lay faithful, through baptism becomes co-responsible for the proclamation of the gospel.<sup>38</sup> However, when the *Instrumentum laboris* mentions how the Christian faithful participate in the task of proclamation, it states that the apostolic mission of the bishops “is shared by priests, men and women religious and lay persons, each in his or her own sphere.”<sup>39</sup> During the working sessions of the African Synod, this notion of the apostolate was criticized:

But according to Vatican II, it is not the apostolic mission of the bishops which others share, but the mission of Christ, which the bishops also share: for the church is a communion in which all are anointed by the Lord himself for the mission of the church, carried out through

---

<sup>37</sup>*Lineamenta*, 37.

<sup>38</sup>*Instrumentum laboris*, 26.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

many ministries (AA 2-3) and in which the Holy Spirit distributes graces among the faithful of every rank.<sup>40</sup>

At the working session of the African Synod, catechists were specifically mentioned in the *relatio ante disceptationem*. Highlighting the main issues that had emerged from grassroots consultation, this report stated:

[i]t remains true, nevertheless, that an admirable and gigantic work has been accomplished. Nor are we to forget their [missionaries] indigenous and indispensable auxiliaries, the catechists [...]. Catechists form a special category of honor among the laity. They have a long and glorious tradition in the Church in Africa and Madagascar. Their role is still valid. But this role needs to be re-evaluated and updated for the needs of today, planning also for the future. The Church in Africa and Madagascar would be at a great loss without their collaboration.<sup>41</sup>

This report acknowledges the role already played and still to be played by catechists in the evangelization of Africa. However, it recommends a re-evaluation and update of this role for both the present and the future, a sign that catechists are still needed as agents of proclamation in Africa.

Indeed, as Bishop M. Ouédraogo put it later during the working session of the African Synod:

Catechists have been the inseparable and indispensable companions of missionaries in the evangelization of Africa. They have contributed to rousing and animating Christian communities with solid and fervent bases. They are true apostles at the grassroots.

The quality of their family life has made them nurseries of priestly vocations. Their role is neither outmoded nor superseded. One must, on the other hand, do all to re-evaluate the vocation and mission of catechists, to make them more apt to serve the Church and the world today.<sup>42</sup>

Another speaker at the synod, Bishop A. Nobou from Ivory Coast, referred to the African catechists as dynamic agents of evangelization: "The African church is proud of its [...] catechists

---

<sup>40</sup>Mavala, "The Laity and the Proclamation of the Word," p. 10.

<sup>41</sup>H. Thiandoum, "The Gospel, Inculturation and Dialogue," in pp. 8, 10.

<sup>42</sup>M. Ouédraogo, "Catechists, the Indispensable Companions of Missionaries," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994 p. 7.

who transmit the message of Christ throughout the world."<sup>43</sup> Other speakers tried to delineate the activities of the African catechist. According to Bishop J.B. Ama, the teaching of catechism ought to be the first role of the catechist:<sup>44</sup> for Cardinal J. Tomko, it is the witness of a life in conformity with Christ's message of love and living a mature faith which is expressed in works of justice and charity.<sup>45</sup> The catechist, as a collaborator to the priests, is also involved in the whole apostolic endeavor,<sup>46</sup> especially as a builder of small Christian communities.<sup>47</sup> Notwithstanding these activities, Cardinal L. Rugambwa called for the re-definition of the role of the catechist.<sup>48</sup>

The most extensive description of the duties of the catechists was presented at the African Synod by S. Koroma – a catechist himself:

They [catechists] preside over the prayers of their local communities, teach Christian doctrine and attend to community development projects; they gather their people in the Church for divine worship on Sundays, admonish the lukewarm and the indifferent, settle family and village disputes and assist missionaries in important situations in the parishes; they act as traveling preachers and interpreters; they look after local outstations, hold services of the Word of God; they visit and take care of the sick and baptize the dying in case of necessity; they help in the organization of 'small Christian communities'.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup>A. Nobou, "The World Expects a Witness of Missionary Cooperation," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 12.

<sup>44</sup>J.B. Ama, "Distribute 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' on a Wide Scale," in *ORE*, p. 16.

<sup>45</sup>Tomko, p. 19.

<sup>46</sup>S.V.T. Bakot, "The Mission of Lay People is Renewal of Temporal Order," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup>Mavala, "The Laity and the Proclamation of the Word," p. 10.

<sup>48</sup>L. Rugambwa, "The Church Needs Trained Leaders to Confront Society," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>49</sup>S. Koroma, "Catechists: their Role and Formation," in *ibid.*, May 25, 1994, p. 5.

Koroma divides catechists into three main groups: (1) the catechist as a community leader and animator, (2) the catechist as a liturgist, and (3) the catechist as a teacher of religion. The catechist as a community leader and animator plays a more prominent role in communities without a priest. He leads the communities through its moments of life and death; he promotes human relationships among the members of the community, encouraging them to live according to the gospel. The catechist as a liturgist works closely with the priest: he prepares hymns for celebrations, especially the Eucharist; he teaches catechism to catechumens and prepares the community to receive sacraments. The catechist-teacher works mainly in schools as a teacher of religion.

The synod fathers meeting in small groups (*circuli minores*) discussed the identity and role of catechists. The Italian group saw the catechist as a community-animator;<sup>50</sup> for the English group the catechist was seen as a spiritual leader for the small Christian communities;<sup>51</sup> the French group saw the catechist as a mediator between the priest and the Christian community;<sup>52</sup> the Portuguese group saw him as a teacher of religion.<sup>53</sup> Notwithstanding the diversity of views on the identity and role of catechist, the general consensus for all groups was that the catechist should be treated as a collaborator with the priest.<sup>54</sup>

In their propositions drawn at the end of the working session, the synod fathers stated:

The role of the catechist has been and remains a determinative force in the implantation and expansion of the Church in Africa. The Synod recommends that catechists not only receive

---

<sup>50</sup>M. Zago, "Circolo minore Italiano," in *ORI*, April 28, 1994, p. 40.

<sup>51</sup>P. Harrington, "Circolo minore Inglese, 'B'," in *ibid*, p. 42.

<sup>52</sup>M. Ouédraogo, "Circolo minore Francese 'D'," in *ibid*, p. 45.

<sup>53</sup>J. dos Santos, "Circolo minore Portoghese," in *ibid*, p. 48.

<sup>54</sup>J.P. Schotte, "Le relazioni dei circoli minori," in *ibid*, pp. 40-49.

a sound initial preparation (for example, through a two-year course) but that they continue to receive doctrinal formation as well as moral and spiritual support. Regular meetings should be organized for catechists so that they can discuss together how best to prepare their classes and devise plans for pastoral action, and so on. Bishops should give special attention to catechists and to their conditions of life and work. The parish priest should also carefully respect the special place of the catechist in the community. Voluntary catechists also should receive adequate formation and encouragement.<sup>55</sup>

In this proposition, the bishops declared as paramount the presence and ministry of the catechists in the work of proclaiming and expanding the faith of the Church in Africa.<sup>56</sup> Hence, they recommended for catechists an on-going formation, moral and spiritual support, attention to their conditions of life and work, and due respect.

Number 91 of *Ecclesia in Africa* is devoted to catechists; it sums up and complements the observations made by the synodal fathers:<sup>57</sup>

‘The role of the catechist has been and remains a determinative force in the implantation and expansion of the Church in Africa. The Synod recommends that catechists not only receive a sound initial formation ... but that they continue to receive doctrinal formation as well as moral and spiritual support.’ Both Bishops and priests are to have their catechists at heart, seeing to it that they are guaranteed suitable living and working conditions so that they carry out their mission properly. In the midst of the Christian community the catechist’s responsibility is to be acknowledged and held in respect.

It is important to note the changes contained in this citation. While in proposition 13 drawn up by the synodal fathers it is only the bishops who should give special attention to the condition of the

---

<sup>55</sup>Proposition 14.

<sup>56</sup>The French original of proposition 13 is different and clearer than the English translation: “Le rôle des catéchistes a été et demeure une ressource déterminante en Afrique pour proclamer et répandre la foi de l’Église.” (Cheza, *Le Synode africain, histoires et textes*, p. 246).

<sup>57</sup>Elsewhere in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, John Paul II mentions catechists among the recipients of this document (n. 8); he calls them co-workers of the missionaries (n. 36) and contributors to the spread of the gospel among the African people (n. 38). He comments upon the necessity of their formation (nn. 53, 58), calls them effective assistants of the bishops and priests in the evangelization of the continent and the world (n. 56) and refers to them as co-workers of the priests in the local church (n. 88).

catechists, here it is both the bishops and the priests. In other words, both the bishops and priests should acknowledge the identity and work of the catechists in the Christian community with all the consequent implications this may mean, including their initial and on-going formation and their suitable living and working conditions. In chapter four, we shall examine in detail these canonical implications.

### **3.3 - INCULTURATION IN AFRICA**

The theme of inculturation recurred consistently in the discussions of the working session of the African Synod in Rome, not only as a topic on its own but also in relation to the other themes of the synod. Inculturation refers to the process by which the Christian faith is incarnated in the manifold cultures of the world. It includes all dimensions of the Christian tradition: the scriptures, Church doctrines, morals, and discipline. The African Synod used the term “inculturation” in this broad sense, but our focus will be on the canonical matters that the Synod identified as especially needing inculturation in Africa. The discussions at the Synod were centered not on the need and urgency of inculturation, since this was commonly accepted already, but on how to achieve it in the concrete.

There are two concrete issues that the African Synod addressed in terms of the need for inculturation – marriage and the liturgy. Before looking at these questions, however, we shall first discuss the magisterial teaching on inculturation of the gospel, with special reference to Africa, from the Second Vatican Council to the African Synod. This information will provide the context for understanding the synodal discussions on inculturation, in particular on marriage and the liturgy.

### 3.3.1 - The Magisterial Teaching on Inculturation in Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents

Although we have chosen to begin our analysis of the magisterial teaching with the Second Vatican Council, it should be noted that there is much pre-conciliar material on inculturation that relates to Africa. For instance, in his first encyclical letter, *Summi pontificatus*, Pius XII remarked:

Persevering research carried out with laborious study, on the part of her missionaries of every age, has been undertaken in order to facilitate the deeper appreciative insight into the various civilizations and to utilize their good qualities to facilitate and render more fruitful the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Whatever there is in the native customs, that is not inseparably bound up with superstition and error, will always receive kindly consideration and, when possible, will be preserved intact.<sup>58</sup>

In the discourse which he gave to the directors of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies, the same pontiff stated:

The herald of the Gospel and messenger of Christ is an apostle. His office does not demand that he transplant European civilization and culture, and not others, to foreign soil, there to take root and propagate itself. His task in dealing with these peoples [...] is to teach and form them: so that they are ready to accept willingly and in a practical manner the principles of Christian life and morality [...]. Catholic inhabitants of missionary countries, although they are first of all citizens of the Kingdom of God and members of his great family, do not, for all that, cease to be citizens of their earthly fatherland.<sup>59</sup>

This teaching laid the remote foundations of the conciliar teaching on inculturation to which we now turn.

After the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI visited Africa in 1969 and called on the African church to be first of all Catholic, meaning by that, "it must be entirely founded

---

<sup>58</sup>Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Summi pontificatus*, in *AAS*, 31 (1939), p. 429. English translation from T. Okure, p. 4.

<sup>59</sup>Pius XII, Allocution to the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies, in *AAS*, 36 (1944), p. 210; see also Okure, *ibid.*

upon the identical, essential, constitutional patrimony of the self-same teaching of Christ, as professed by the authentic and authoritative tradition of the one true Church."<sup>61</sup> He later urged:

The expression, that is, the language and mode of manifesting this one faith, may be manifold. Hence, it may be original, suited to the tongue, the style, the character, the genius and the culture of the one who professes this one faith [...]. An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favored by the Church [...]. And in this sense, you may, and you must, have an African Christianity. Indeed, you possess human values and characteristic forms of culture which can rise up to perfection, such as to find in Christianity, and for Christianity, a true superior fullness, and prove to be capable of a richness of expression all its own, and genuinely African [...] then you will be able to remain sincerely African, even in your own interpretation of the Christian life; you will be able to formulate Catholicism in terms congenial to your own culture; you will be capable of bringing to the Catholic church the precious and original contribution of "negritude," which she needs particularly in this historic hour.<sup>62</sup>

Although the word *inculturation* does not appear in the above quotation, it is clear that Pope Paul VI referred to what has recently come to be called inculturation. His call for inculturation in Africa is rooted in the Second Vatican Council's perception of the relationship between the Church and the contemporary world. Various conciliar statements demonstrate this new perception: "the Church or People of God [...] fosters and takes to herself, in so far as they are good, the abilities, the resources and customs of peoples. In so taking them to herself she purifies, strengthens and elevates them."<sup>63</sup> Such exchange between the world and the Church is possible because the latter, "in its sacraments and institutions which belong to this present age, carries the mark of this world which will pass."<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup>AAS, 61 (1961), pp. 576-578.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>LG, 13.

<sup>64</sup>LG, 48.

It is especially in the conciliar document on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, that the groundwork for inculturation is laid. The document acknowledges that “[i]t is one of the properties of the human person that he can achieve true and full humanity only by means of culture.”<sup>65</sup> This remark represents a new approach to the necessity of cultures in the proclamation of the gospel:

There are many links between the message of salvation and culture. In his self-revelation to his people culminating in the fullness of manifestation in his incarnate Son, God spoke according to the culture proper to each age. Similarly the Church has existed through the centuries in varying circumstances and has utilized the message of Christ, to examine and understand it more deeply, and to express it more perfectly in the liturgy and in various aspects of the life of the faithful.<sup>66</sup>

The Church has always profited from the riches hidden in various cultures; it learned early in its history to express the Christian message in the concepts and language of different peoples in an attempt to adapt the gospel to the understanding of all people.

Indeed, this kind of adaptation and preaching of the revealed Word must ever be the law of all evangelization. In this way it is possible to create in every country the possibility of expressing the message of Christ in suitable terms and to foster vital contact and exchange between the Church and different cultures [...]. With the help of the Holy Spirit, it is the task of the whole people of God particularly of its pastors and theologians, to listen to and distinguish the many voices of our times and to interpret them in the light of the divine Word, in order that the revealed truth may be more deeply penetrated, better understood, and more suitably presented.<sup>67</sup>

The Council presented inculturation as one means of adapting in every country the expression of the message of Christ. While the gospel message has to remain the same, its expression can and should be adapted from place to place. The invariable magisterial teaching is

---

<sup>65</sup>GS, 53.

<sup>66</sup>GS, 58.

<sup>67</sup>GS, 41.

that the nature of the Christian message has to be consistent. This means that inculturation *per se* is not intended to alter the Christian message but the means of its expression.

In 1975, Paul VI addressed the Fourth SECAM Meeting in Rome and inquired:

How can the word of God, the teaching of the Church and the postulates of faith be made easily accessible, clear and persuasive to the many and varied peoples of Africa and Madagascar? Does the Church in Africa retain a certain Christian religious form that was brought in from outside, and which makes it, as it were, a stranger and pilgrim among its peoples? Should new and more suitable means be sought, in theology and in pastoral practice, which with prudence and wisdom, will translate into their way of life and make perfect the worthy teachings, proper to the very ancient cultural traditions of your peoples?<sup>68</sup>

To these questions Paul VI answered: "There must be neither hesitation nor undue haste [...]. The way is open, therefore, for evaluating more deeply the elements of religion, provided that all those affecting the very nature of the Christian faith be safeguarded."<sup>69</sup>

John Paul II referred to inculturation as the "reflection of the incarnation of the Word, when a culture, transformed and regenerated by the gospel, produces from its own living tradition, original expressions of life, of celebration and of Christian thought."<sup>70</sup> As reflection, inculturation presupposes a reality changeless in its substance but changing in its expression.

When addressing the bishops of Mozambique who had gone to Rome for their *Ad limina apostolorum* visit in 1982, John Paul II said:

I wish to reaffirm here the Church's commitment to incarnating herself in the various civilizations and cultures [...]. It is, therefore, your task, according to the mind of Vatican II, to seek to translate the Gospel into forms suited to your culture, so as to make it well understood and, even more, well lived by your people, without – clearly – prejudice to that

---

<sup>68</sup>Okure, p. 38.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid. p. 39

<sup>70</sup>"L'inculturation que vous promouvez à juste titre sera justement un reflet de l'incarnation du verbe lorsqu'une culture, transformée et régénérée par l'Évangile, produit à partir de sa propre tradition vivante des expressions originales de vie, de célébration et de pensée chrétiennes" (*DC*, 77 [1980], p. 534).

necessary ecclesial unity and evangelical substratum, which must be present and firm in the diversity of peoples of the cultures.

It belongs to your judicious pastoral reflection, helped by serious and constant reference to the universal Church, to discern, amid the different cultural expressions of your people, those most apt for expressing the values of the Gospel. Furthermore, not alone must you absorb these suitable cultural expressions, but you must evangelize African culture itself, so that little by little one may come to recognize a true African culture.<sup>71</sup>

In his address to the bishops of Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo), John Paul II recalled that the Church fosters and takes to herself, in herself, in so far as they are good, the abilities, the resources and customs of peoples. In so taking them to herself, she purifies, strengthens and elevates them.<sup>72</sup> In the encyclical letter, *Redemptoris missio*, John Paul II reiterates this encounter between gospel and culture:

Through inculturation the Church makes the gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces people together with their cultures into her own community. She transmits to them her own values [...] at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within.<sup>73</sup>

### 3.3.2 - Theologians on Inculturation in Africa

Many theologians root inculturation in the mystery of the incarnation:

Genuine inculturation should be based upon the mystery of the incarnation, seen not only as mystery and as an event in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, but as a process to be carried on in history till the end of time. Thus, our understanding of the mystery of the incarnation should serve as the solid foundation for understanding inculturation.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup>John Paul II, "Inculturating Christianity in Africa: Address to the Mozambican Bishops," in Okure, p. 46. See also John Paul II, Allocution to the Bishops of Moçambique, in *AAS*, 74 (1982), p. 1230.

<sup>72</sup>Cf. "The Gospel and African Cultures," in *AFER*, 22 (1980), pp. 228.

<sup>73</sup>*Redemptoris missio*, 52.

<sup>74</sup>Okure, "Inculturation: Biblical and Theological Bases," in Okure, p. 57. See also SEDOS Seminar on Mission (1981), "Inculturation: Considerations and Questions," (SEDOS Seminar), in Okure, p. 103.

As incarnation presupposes the existence of two realities, the divine and the human, which become united to form a new and unique reality in Jesus Christ, inculturation too needs two realities that must be united and mutually enriched. These realities are the Christian faith – the Good News of Jesus Christ – and the reality of the peoples in their different cultures.<sup>75</sup> Because of this intimate unity of the two realities, inculturation – as John Paul II put it – has to do with “bringing Christ into the very center of African life, and lifting up all African life to Christ.”<sup>76</sup>

Theologians view the universality of the Church – the embracing of peoples from every tribe, tongue, nation, and culture – to favor and justify inculturation. Instead of adopting one culture as the norm to which all other cultures must conform, the Church, being universal, embraces all cultures in their concrete manifestations.<sup>77</sup>

P. Sarpong argues that the more universal a thing is, the more expressible in various forms it can be. For this reason, “Christianity’s claim to universality is validated only when it can be expressed in any [cultural] form ... Christianity must become African[ized] before it can influence Africans.”<sup>78</sup>

As T. Okure notes, for most Catholics Christianity means attending Mass, especially on Sundays, saying the rosary, going to confession and fulfilling the Easter duty of receiving Holy

---

<sup>75</sup>Okure, “Inculturation: Biblical and Theological Bases,” p. 57. See also SEDOS Seminar, in Okure, pp. 58-59.

<sup>76</sup>Okure, “Inculturation: Biblical and Theological Bases,” p. 57. See also SEDOS Seminar, in Okure, p. 59.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid. p. 57, 60.

<sup>78</sup>Sarpong, “Emphasis on Africanizing Christianity,” in Okure, p. 108. See also Magesa, “Authentic African Christianity,” in Okure, p. 112.

Communion.<sup>79</sup> Christianity, thus conceived, is but a set of external and imported practices to be performed, rather than a way of life to be adopted and lived (Rom. 6:1; Acts 9:2).<sup>80</sup> Proper inculturation must concretize Christ for the African people so that they can experience him as a living person, who exercises dynamic influence upon their lives. In order to achieve this transformation in the people, Okure concludes: "Whatever has been inherited, but is neither *a sine qua non* for salvation, nor biblical revelation, nor the heritage of Tradition and the authentic teaching of the Church may be dispensed with, if it can be replaced by something culturally more meaningful and more evangelical."<sup>81</sup>

Both the pontiffs and the theologians are in accord as to the need to distinguish between the changeless substance – the message – and its changeable expressions. The African Synod sought to determine the changeless substance and the changeable expressions, as we shall see in the next section.

### 3.3.3 - Inculturation in the Synodal Documentation

The *Lineamenta* roots inculturation in the mystery of the Incarnate Word.<sup>82</sup> Since by his incarnation the Son of God united himself in some fashion with every person, there is no authentic

---

<sup>79</sup>Okure, "Inculturation: Biblical and Theological Bases," p. 112.

<sup>80</sup>P.K. Sarpong, "Emphasis on Africanizing Christianity," in Okure, p. 108. See also L. Magesa, "Authentic African Christianity," p. 70.

<sup>81</sup>Sarpong, "Emphasis on Africanizing Christianity," p. 108. See also Magesa, "Authentic African Christianity," p. 77.

<sup>82</sup>*Lineamenta*, 49.

human value which is alien to Christ nor excluded from inculturation.<sup>83</sup> For this reason, inculturation is "the process through which the Christian faith is *incarnated* in cultures."<sup>84</sup> The *Lineamenta* concludes:

In this way inculturation exercises a double activity: faith takes from culture those elements which are suitable to illustrate her mysteries while culture seeks to appropriate to herself the truths revealed [...]. Therefore, if faith, on her part, has a place in the incarnational process, culture, on her part, is transformed in cooperation with grace.<sup>85</sup>

From the examination of the above text, it is clear that the *Lineamenta* presents inculturation as a normal phenomenon flowing from the incarnation of the Word by which an exchange results between the Word of God and the cultural values of peoples.<sup>86</sup> The gospel is thus prepared for and awaited obediently by culture; the gospel is in harmony with, rather than opposed to culture. The gospel is always sustained by the latter not merely by turning it into a handmaid and making a purely pragmatic use of it, but by carrying it in its bosom, as something that already was, but was to be made even greater by being made holy.

The *Lineamenta* does not determine which cultural elements are suitable for inculturation but gives three criteria and two principles to guide the discernment of those cultural values that are to be assumed. These criteria are: (1) the cultural elements' capability of contributing to the glory of God the Creator, (2) putting salvation in Christ into its proper perspective, and (3) being properly ordered to the Christian life. The two principles are: (1) compatibility with the gospel of the various

---

<sup>83</sup>Ibid. 48.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid. 50.

cultures to be taken up, and (2) communion with the entire Church.<sup>87</sup> For the *Instrumentum laboris* inculturation is based on the very mystery of incarnation, following the process which the Word of God obeyed in incarnation: taking flesh in the life and the beliefs of peoples who welcome Christ and the values of the gospel.<sup>88</sup>

The *Instrumentum laboris* identifies some areas that have to be addressed by inculturation in Africa. The first area is marriage which, when applied to the three criteria and two principles outlined above, would read: what are the African cultural values of marriage which can contribute to the glory of God, put salvation in Christ into proper perspective, are properly ordered to the Christian life, compatible with the gospel and are in communion with the entire Church?

The *Instrumentum laboris* approaches marriage by observing that a great number of Catholics are excluded from the sacraments because of their irregular marital situation. Still others are barred from coming into the Church by reason of already existing relationships. In view of these situations, the *Instrumentum laboris* recommends that all these problems be addressed so as to find possible pastoral solutions.<sup>89</sup>

Other areas identified by the *Instrumentum laboris* are health care, belief in ancestors, the communion of saints, and the African Traditional Religions. On health care the *Instrumentum laboris* observes that if the gospel is good news for every person, attention must be drawn to the belief in witchcraft and divination to see which ministry can cope with this preoccupation.<sup>90</sup> On the

---

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>*Instrumentum laboris*, 49.

<sup>89</sup>*Instrumentum laboris*, 68.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid. 71.

ancestors and the communion of saints it calls for a fresh understanding of the communion of saints and for the rituals which concern death and burial to be christianized in such a way that ancestors are brought into the Christian understanding of the communion of saints.<sup>91</sup>

The *relatio ante disceptationem* follows the other synodal documents in presenting inculturation within the framework of a theology of the incarnation: "inculturation has indissoluble links with the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ."<sup>92</sup> Although inculturation touches every aspect of life, this report identifies some necessary areas which need urgent attention in Africa. They include: (1) an African theology and possibly an African canon law which respects the principles of compatibility with the gospel and communion with the entire Church; (2) in the fields of worship and liturgy, the emergence of African liturgical rites as of right and not of concession; (3) a closer look at marriage and family in order to recover and promote the values of traditional African family, and to harmonize the various African customary laws of marriage with church laws on marriage; (4) a holistic and sacramental approach to sickness and healing; (5) an examination of initiation rites common to many African cultures whose powerful symbols might be adopted in Christian rites of initiation, the sacraments, sacramentals, and religious life.<sup>93</sup>

### 3.3.3.1 - Inculturation and Marriage

In Africa, marriage poses a challenge to evangelization. The Christian ideal of marriage is yet to take firm root among many African peoples and cultures. Many Africans who would like to

---

<sup>91</sup>Ibid, 72.

<sup>92</sup>*Relatio ante disceptationem*, 16.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid, 17.

become Christians feel themselves barred by the ideal and demands of Christian marriage. Many others who are already Christian are either not practicing or are excluded from the reception of the sacraments because of their marital state. As a result of being kept outside the formal structures of mainline Christianity, some of these Christians have joined religious sects.

The issues of marriage and family were extensively examined at the African Synod:

Whatever else the Church may achieve in Africa, she cannot be regarded as incarnate until the Christian ideal of family life has taken root among the African people. When it concerns the family (marriage), the important evangelization question under the subheading of inculturation facing the Church in Africa today is not 'how can African family life be changed into European Christian family life?', but, 'how can Christ be brought into every department of African family structures in both private and public life?' This is the fundamental challenge of the family apostolate in Africa today.<sup>94</sup>

Many Catholics in Africa perform traditional marriage rites outside the Church before the reception of the sacrament of marriage. After the traditional marriage, the parties are considered husband and wife with all the inherent customary rights and obligations, like raising a family. Many of these parties, for different reasons which are sometimes beyond their control, are not able to go to church for the sacramental marriage, even if in principle there is a wish to do this. Since the traditional marriage is not recognized by church law, they are consequently deprived of the reception of the sacraments.<sup>95</sup>

As reported to the African Synod by the National Secretary of the Commission for the Family in Mozambique, Christian marriage poses some difficulties in Africa:

Christian marriage is not well understood in the African context and it is as if the young must face the reality of a triple marriage: the traditional one, the Christian one and the civil one. They do not want to abstain from the first because it is the one effectively rooted in tradition

---

<sup>94</sup>J.E. Ukpo, "Give Life to an African Christian Marriage," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 12.

<sup>95</sup>R.S. Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki, "Christian Marriage and Traditional Marriage," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 10.

(and one should not underestimate the fact that marriage in Africa implies a definite covenant between two families prior to that between the two spouses). As to Christian marriage, since it has not reached the roots of traditional African culture, it remains a modality foreign to the African vision of the world.<sup>96</sup>

Many young people who would like to ratify their marriage legally must thus submit themselves to a tripartite procedure which involves traditional, civil, and canonical procedures. As expressed by one speaker:

Pastoral charity impels us to understand the bureaucratic obstacles that this triple procedure creates for young people who are frequently tempted to live their marriage illegally. How can the canonical and traditional procedure be adapted without irenicism, to facilitate, by all the pastoral means possible, the preparation of canonical marriage?<sup>97</sup>

To the above challenges is added the one of African extended families. Given the particular importance of the extended family in Africa,<sup>98</sup> many speakers at the African Synod suggested to the assembly to consider the possibility of introducing *ad licitatem matrimonii* the notions of the role of the extended family and marriage by stages, and to revise the *ratum et consummatum* notion of marriage.<sup>99</sup>

In their Synodal Message, the synod fathers identified marriage as one of the many concrete practical domains for inculturation.<sup>100</sup> They reaffirmed the Church's teaching on the unity and

<sup>96</sup>A.D. Cardoso, "Marriage and Family Life," in *ORE*, May 18, 1994, p. 4.

<sup>97</sup>A. Setele, "Christian Families Are Aware of their Culture," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 15.

<sup>98</sup>The role of the family vis-à-vis the African is thus expressed by H.O. Okeke: "The typical African is identified first by one's family: one comes from a family, lives in a family, is supported by the family and in turn supports the family; one marries into a family and is buried by the family; even after death, the dead and the living continue uninterrupted the link with the family. Thus the family is a web from which no African is free to escape" (H.O. Okeke, "Church-as-God's Family: From African Ecclesiology to African Canon Law," in *Studia canonica*, 32 [1998], p. 400).

<sup>99</sup>L.A. Sangaré, "Marriage in the Various Social and Cultural Contexts," in *ORE*, May 18, 1994, p. 8.

<sup>100</sup>Synodal Message, 19.

indissolubility of marriage as of divine origin, and acknowledged that most African cultures ideally uphold the same essential properties of marriage.<sup>101</sup> Notwithstanding this reaffirmation, they observed that “there is the problem of so many Catholics who are being excluded from the sacraments because they have contracted marriage in a form not recognized by the Church.”<sup>102</sup> They recommended, therefore, that episcopal conferences study all the questions concerning marriage from the point of view of theology, sacraments, liturgy, and canon law with special reference to cultural matters.

*Ecclesia in Africa* acknowledges that the doctrine concerning Christian marriage is among those doctrines hard to assimilate in Africa but which, nonetheless, must be maintained:

[...] when doctrine is hard to assimilate even after a long period of evangelization, or when its practice poses serious pastoral problems, especially in the sacramental life, fidelity to the Church's teaching must be maintained. At the same time, people must be treated with justice and true pastoral charity. Bearing this in mind [...] Episcopal Conferences, in cooperation with Universities and Catholic Institutes, should set up study commissions, especially for matters concerning marriage [...] in order to examine in depth all the cultural aspects of problems from the theological, sacramental, liturgical and canonical points of view.<sup>103</sup>

*Ecclesia in Africa* reaffirms the Catholic teaching on Christian marriage that must serve as the basis for any study: marriage is a state of life which between baptized persons becomes a sacrament of the New Covenant and, therefore, demands an indissoluble love.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Proposition, 35.

<sup>103</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, 64.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid, 83.

### 3.3.3.2 - Inculturation and Liturgy

Question 19 of the *Lineamenta* asked: "What do you consider as the most urgent fields/areas of inculturation in Africa today: theological, liturgical, moral, social, pastoral or catechetical?" The *Instrumentum laboris* responded that it is in the domain of liturgy that the great majority of attempts at inculturation have been undertaken.<sup>105</sup> The *Instrumentum laboris* presented several initiatives already undertaken in Africa such as a rediscovery of the importance of the Word of God, usage of the vernacular, use of African art in liturgical clothing and places of worship, sacred vessels, and the use of traditional values to express certain elements of the faith: drum strokes, hand clapping, dancing and body language.<sup>106</sup>

Inculturation, whose fruits are a proper liturgy and theological heritage, is an indispensable necessity for the survival of a local church. The *Instrumentum laboris* notes:

The Ethiopian and the Coptic Churches have survived only because from the outset inculturation was part of their being. In fact, in Egypt and in Ethiopia from very early times the Christian faith was presented (the bible, liturgy, etc.) in the Coptic and Ethiopian languages, even if they were the spoken tongue of only a minority of people. In our day Christianity lives on in the north of Ethiopia, with its proper liturgy (Ethiopian Rite) and its theological heritage.<sup>107</sup>

The *relatio ante disceptationem* acknowledges worship and liturgy as a privileged field for inculturation. It continues to state that the ancient rites of the Catholic Church, including those of Africa, in Egypt and in Ethiopia, are fruits of liturgical inculturation. For this reason, this document

---

<sup>105</sup>*Instrumentum laboris*, 58.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, 63.

notes that the emergence of new rites in the Church should be encouraged, and that they should be recognized as a right, not as a concession.<sup>108</sup>

The participants of the Synod assembly in Rome observed that inculturation has to influence all aspects of evangelization and Christian life especially in the areas of the sacraments, scripture, marriage, family and the liturgy.<sup>109</sup> The Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Cardinal Josef Tomko, noticed that the church in Africa is already living a faith which in many respects is already inculturated.<sup>110</sup> In Africa, the Mass is a celebration done with accompanying gestures, drums, dances, swaying and song. The Bible, also known as the *Great Message*, the *Sacred Book*, and the *Good News*, is especially venerated in various forms during the procession before the gospel.

Some mysteries of the Catholic faith are easily accepted into the African culture, such as Jesus' expiatory and propitiatory sacrifice on the cross and in the Eucharistic mystery. Some parts of the Mass, such as the consecration, the elevation and the Lamb of God are imbued with mystical realism and accompanied by profound veneration. The cultural understanding of *representation* facilitates the acceptance of the realities of the Christian faith because it attributes to the representative the authority and honor due to the person he represents. This holds true, for example, for the Vicar of Christ, for papal legates, bishops and priests.

---

<sup>108</sup>Ibid, 17.

<sup>109</sup>See P. F. Chakalpa, "The Five Themes of the Synod," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 15.

<sup>110</sup>See J. Tomko, "The Situation of the Church in Africa and Madagascar - Some Aspects and Observations," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 17.

There is a great acknowledgment that liturgical inculturation should go beyond mere adaptation, such as in the domains of music, dance, and the color of vestments,<sup>111</sup> to the revision of the sacramental theology itself.<sup>112</sup> To achieve this kind of inculturation a progress similar to what has been attained by the introduction of dialogue, namely, the changing of the method from that of *conversion* to *ecumenism* is necessary.<sup>113</sup> In other words, there has to be a dialogue between the gospel and the cultures, even though in liturgy, especially in the sacraments, by divine institution, there are some essential elements which do not change. The bishops in their Synodal Message requested that the principle of dialogue be applied to liturgical and sacramental inculturation. This call is warranted by the fact that customs and traditions, in so far as these constitute African cultural heritage, touch the lives of all the people.<sup>114</sup>

In proposition 34, the bishops, without giving the specifics, called for liturgical inculturation:

Inculturation of the liturgy, provided it does not change the essential elements, should be carried out so that our people can better understand and live our liturgical celebrations. It is, therefore, recommended that those parts of the liturgical celebration which can be changed in order to enhance an intelligent, conscious, and meaningful participation in it should be inculturated according to agreed norms. The different cultures should open themselves progressively to the values of the gospel. Liturgical rites in their turn should be carriers not only of artistic beauty but also of the Christian message.

Thanking God for the fruits which the efforts at inculturation have brought forth in the life of the churches of the African continent, *Ecclesia in Africa* refers to the recommendation of the

---

<sup>111</sup>A. M. J. Ortas, "Inculturation in the liturgy," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 10.

<sup>112</sup>G. Z. Wako, "Inculturation of Faith and Involvement of Community," in *ORE*, May 25, 1994, p. 6.

<sup>113</sup>Ortas, "Inculturation in the Liturgy," p. 10. According to this method, conversion of the other is not sought *per se* but as a fruit of dialogue.

<sup>114</sup>Synodal Message, 21.

synodal members to diocesan bishops and to the Episcopal Conferences of Africa to take note that inculturation includes the whole life of the Church and the whole process of evangelization. This inculturation includes theology, liturgy, the Church's life and structures. All this underlines the need for research in the field of African cultures in all their complexity. For this reason, *Ecclesia in Africa* states: "It will therefore be the task of competent authority to see to the inculturation of those liturgical elements which, following artistically worthy models, can be changed in the light of current norms."<sup>115</sup>

Following the above directive we conclude that *Ecclesia in Africa* endorses liturgical inculturation. The document states categorically: "In practice, and without any prejudice to the traditions proper to either the Latin or Eastern Church, 'inculturation of the liturgy, provided it does not change the essential elements, should be carried out so that the faithful can better understand and live liturgical celebrations.'"<sup>116</sup> We shall discuss in the next chapter these liturgical elements and the possibilities which the Church's present canonical discipline provides in the matter of inculturation.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, we have discussed the principal canonical issues which were addressed at the African Synod. The issues that were brought up with the greatest frequency throughout the synodal process were the nature of small Christian communities in Africa, the role and identity of

---

<sup>115</sup>*Ecclesia in Africa*, 62.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, 64. In n. 78, *Ecclesia in Africa* repeats this approval and its limits: "without of course compromising what is of divine right and the great discipline of the Church, confirmed in the course of centuries by remarkable fruits of virtue and heroism."

the agents of proclamation of the gospel (priests, religious, and catechists), and inculturation in Africa, especially in the domains of marriage and liturgy.

Our examination of the synodal documents showed that small Christian communities were spoken of as a *de facto* reality in the African church, existing alongside parishes. John Paul II endorses their existence and recommends their creation because, in his view, the Church as family cannot reach its full potential as Church unless it is divided into communities small enough to foster close human relationships.

The formation of the principal agents of evangelization in Africa fails to root them well enough into their cultural inheritance. Involvement of the local churches, especially the conferences of bishops and the small Christian communities, is needed in the elaboration of the formation programs.

In the synodal discussions, there was a general concern to understand the ecclesial identity and ministry of the catechist. An analysis of conciliar, CIC/83 and synodal documents showed that the catechist is a member of the lay faithful inspired by the Spirit, called and commissioned by the local church to be an animator of the Christian community through ministries that are proper to both his status and the needs of the local church.

The theme of inculturation recurred consistently in the synodal discussions, principally regarding the Christian ideal of marriage, which is yet to take firm root among many African people and cultures, and inculturation of liturgy, which has known the greatest number of attempts.

Many other issues were discussed at the African Synod, such as the laity, women, youth, justice and peace, dialogue, and means of social communications. So numerous and varied are such issues that a thorough review of each and every one of them would be beyond the scope of the

present study. In the next chapter we shall examine the extent to which the current legislation of the Church can be of assistance in the implementation of the directions and recommendations given on the principal issues that we have discussed in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN SYNOD**

#### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter we identified the principal issues of a canonical nature which were addressed by the African Synod. These were (1) the nature and role of small Christian communities, (2) the identity and role of the agents of proclamation of the gospel in Africa, namely priests, religious and catechists, and (3) inculturation. In this chapter we shall return to each of these issues to examine and explore the extent to which the current legislation of the Church can be of assistance in their implementation.

#### **4.1 - THE SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**

The African Synod discussed and mandated the creation of small Christian communities as an overall pastoral plan for Africa. Beyond this endorsement, however, the African Synod did not give any comprehensive details on the guidelines, rules or norms for such communities and their creation. The details were rightly left to the local churches to work out, taking into consideration their local needs and circumstances. In this section, therefore, we seek to present some of the *general* canonical elements which should be taken into consideration in the implementation of the synodal mandate on small Christian communities in Africa. A study of these communities is intimately connected to that of the parish. For this reason, we shall discuss the nature of the parish both in the conciliar documents and CIC/83. The conclusions taken from this study will help us in proposing a juridic status for small Christian communities.

#### 4.1.1 - The Parish in the Conciliar Documents

Small Christian communities have sprung up in most parishes around Africa. They are looked upon by many as a new *modus operandi* of the parish, that is, a new paradigm or way of being Church at the parish level. Hence, a good canonical analysis of these communities cannot lose sight of the parish.

The Second Vatican Council's first major document, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, admits that:

[...] because it is impossible for the bishop always and everywhere to preside over the whole flock in his Church, he cannot do other than establish lesser groupings of the faithful. And among these, parishes, set up locally under a pastor who takes the place of the bishop, are the most important, for in some way they represent the visible Church constituted throughout the world.<sup>1</sup>

In this document the council does not speak of small Christian communities as these communities have now come to be known, especially in Africa. In other documents, however, the Council does mention local communities that can be construed to mean small Christian communities: groupings of the faithful – *fidelium coetus*<sup>2</sup> and church communities.<sup>3</sup> What is important and noteworthy is that the Council mentions such entities mainly in reference to the parish.

In the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, the Council again admits the possibility of other lawful manifestations of the Church beyond the parish:

This Church of Christ is truly present in all legitimately organized local groups of the faithful, which in so far as they are united to their pastors, are also quite appropriately called Churches in the New Testament. For these are in fact, in their own localities, the new people called by God, in the power of the Holy Spirit and as the result of full conviction (cf. I Thess. 1:5) [...].

---

<sup>1</sup>SC, 42.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>44, 10.

In these communities, though they may often be small and poor, or existing in the diaspora, Christ is present through whose power and influence, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is constituted.<sup>4</sup>

Although the conciliar teaching permits the establishment in the diocese of *groupings of the faithful*<sup>5</sup> or *legitimately organized local groups of the faithful*,<sup>6</sup> parishes remain the most significant because they represent, make present, and realize the Church universal. Parishes are the local materialization of the Catholic Church: “The ecclesial community, while always having a universal dimension, finds its most immediate and visible expression in the parish. It is here that the Church is seen locally.”<sup>7</sup> This means that although the parish is not the only community envisaged within the diocese, nevertheless, according to the conciliar teaching, the parish *is* the basic community in the Catholic Church below the diocese.

#### 4.1.2 - The Parish in CIC/83

The CIC '83 puts into legal terms the elements of the parish used by the Second Vatican Council. Thus, c. 374, § 1, stipulates that each diocese or particular church is to be divided into distinct parts or parishes (*distinctas partes seu paroecias*).

The constitutive elements of a parish, according to canon 515, can be laid out in a linear fashion as:

- I. a definite community of the Christian faithful

---

<sup>4</sup>LG, 26.

<sup>5</sup>SC, 42.

<sup>6</sup>LG, 26.

<sup>7</sup>John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles laici*, December 30, 1988, n. 26, in *AAS*, 81 (1989), pp. 393-521.

2. established on a stable basis
3. within a particular church
4. whose pastoral care is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor
5. under the authority of the diocesan bishop.

The first constitutive element of a parish is a *definite community* of the diocese – *determinata dioecesis pars* – that is, the specific section of the diocese:<sup>8</sup> a concrete group of the faithful – *fideliū coetus*;<sup>9</sup> a kind of cell;<sup>10</sup> a legitimately organized local group of the faithful.<sup>11</sup> This element – *certa communitas christifidelium* – highlights the *personalistic* rather than the institutional aspect of the parish which was key in the CIC/1917.<sup>12</sup> This community of Christian faithful is described in cc. 96, 102 and 204, § 1. Christ's faithful are those who, since they are incorporated into Christ through baptism, are constituted the people of God.<sup>13</sup>

The second element requires a parish to be established on a *stable* basis through a decree by the diocesan bishop.<sup>14</sup> Such a decree is the juridic act which constitutes a group or a territory of the

---

<sup>8</sup>C*D.*, 30.

<sup>9</sup>S*C.*, 42.

<sup>10</sup>A*A.*, 10.

<sup>11</sup>I*G.*, 26.

<sup>12</sup>The CIC/1917 described the parish with the following elements: a territorial section of the diocese, with a proper church edifice, to which a Catholic population was assigned under the leadership of a proper pastor responsible for the care of souls (c. 216). Catechumens, though not in full manner, can also be part of a parish community (c. 206).

<sup>13</sup>“While *theologically* the term [Christ's faithful] includes all the baptized, even those not in full communion with the Catholic church, *in this canon and in the Code* it refers only to those in full communion” (*The Canon Law, Letter and Spirit*, p. 115); see also *Communicationes*, 13 (1981), pp. 147-148; 14 (1982), p. 157, at c. 201.

<sup>14</sup>Canon 515 § 2.

faithful as a parish community. This juridic act of erection confers on the community a new status: a juridic entity which is the subject of rights and duties according to canon law.

The third element stipulates that the erection of a parish must be done within a particular church, that is, a diocese or some other jurisdictional structure equivalent to them in the Latin church<sup>15</sup> or an eparchy and some other similar structures in the Eastern churches.<sup>16</sup> Hence, parishes belong to particular churches. A parish is not an independent entity of the particular church, but a kind of constitutive cell of a particular church.<sup>17</sup> It is the most immediate and visible expression of the particular church: it is there that the Church is seen locally.<sup>18</sup>

Pastoral care is the fourth element of a parish. The formal and basic objective for which a parish exists is the care of souls – *cura animarum*, expressed in detail in cc. 519, 528-530. The parish is not merely an organization or institution set up to serve the spiritual needs of the faithful but a community existing for the salvation of its members.

Since the purpose for which a parish exists is pastoral care, its proper pastor is a priest. This explains why c. 150 requires that, "An office which carries with it the full care of souls, for which the exercise of the order of priesthood is required, cannot be validly conferred upon a person who is not yet a priest."<sup>19</sup> The immediate pastoral care of the faithful falls on the priest to whom the

---

<sup>15</sup>Cf. c. 368; John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution, *Spirituali militum curae*, April 21, 1986, in *AAS*, 78 (1986), pp. 481-486.

<sup>16</sup>CCEO, cc. 177, § 1, 279, 311, 313; Congregation for Eastern Churches, *Declaration interprétative du Décret du 27 Juillet, 1954*, April 30, 1986, III, n. 4, in *AAS*, 78 (1986), pp. 784-786.

<sup>17</sup>*AA*, 10.

<sup>18</sup>*Christifideles laici*, 26.

<sup>19</sup>See also c. 521 § 1: "To be validly appointed a parish priest, one must be in the sacred order of priesthood."

parish is entrusted.<sup>20</sup> This is always the case even when the Code of Canon Law provides other options such as several neighboring parishes being entrusted to the same pastor,<sup>21</sup> or one or several parishes being entrusted to a team of priests.<sup>22</sup>

The fifth element stipulates that the pastor's task, which fundamentally consists of the exercise of the functions enumerated in cc. 528-530, be exercised under the authority of the diocesan bishop.<sup>23</sup> Thus, paragraph two of c. 515 states that "The diocesan bishop alone can establish, suppress or alter parishes."

#### 4.1.3 - Quasi-Parish

The traditional and ordinary way of dividing a particular church is by parishes.<sup>24</sup> However, due to "special circumstances" that impede erecting a *definite* community into a parish, a quasi-parish can be established. In the CIC/1917 the term quasi-parish was used to mean divisions of

---

<sup>20</sup>The *Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, approved by John Paul II in *forma specifica* on August 15, 1997, restated this thus: "It is unlawful for the non-ordained faithful to assume titles such as 'pastor', 'chaplain', 'coordinator', 'moderator', or other such similar titles which can confuse their role and that of the pastor, who is always a bishop or a priest". (cf. 4. art. 1. § 3).

<sup>21</sup>Canon 526, §1.

<sup>22</sup>Canon 517.

<sup>23</sup>"[...] definir al párroco como *pastor propio* de la parroquia quiere decir sencillamente que a él corresponde de modo inmediato la cura pastoral de los fieles de la comunidad; tarea que ejerce bajo la autoridad del Obispo diocesano, y que consiste fundamentalmente en el ejercicio de las funciones señaladas en los cc. 528-530." *Comentario exegético al código de derecho canónico*, (= *Comentário exegético*) vol. II/2, Segunda edición, Pamplona, EUNSA, 1997 p. 1229. See also J.M. Huels, "Interpreting an Instruction Approved *in forma specifica*," in *Studia canonica*, 32 (1998), pp. 24-25.

<sup>24</sup>Canon 374, § 1.

apostolic vicariates and prefectures in mission territories which had not yet been established as dioceses:<sup>25</sup> the parish priests of such ecclesiastical communities were likewise called quasi-pastors.<sup>26</sup>

The CIC/83 introduced a new understanding of the quasi-parish, whose constitutive elements are almost similar to those of the parish.<sup>27</sup> Thus a quasi-parish is:

1. a definite community of the Christian faithful
2. within a particular church
3. entrusted to a priest as its pastor
4. but due to particular circumstances, has not yet been erected as a parish.<sup>28</sup>

A quasi-parish is a *definite* community of the Christian faithful within a particular church, just like the parish. However, a quasi-parish has for its pastor a priest who is not appointed a parish priest and, due to particular circumstances, the community is not yet erected as a parish. For this reason, a quasi-parish does not have the stability or perpetuity that the parish enjoys through juridic personality.<sup>29</sup> The quasi-parish is by nature a transitional or provisional structure.

As R. Page says, it is neither the exceptions nor the differences that constitute the basis of the juridic status of the quasi-parish; it is the fact that a quasi-parish is similar to the parish just as its pastor is similar to the parish priest. The same author suggests that if by c. 526, § 1 "the care of

---

<sup>25</sup>Canon 216, §3 (CIC/17).

<sup>26</sup>Canon 451, §2 (CIC/17).

<sup>27</sup>Canon 515, §1.

<sup>28</sup>Canon 516, §1.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. c. 120.

a number of neighboring parishes can be entrusted to one parish priest." nothing impedes neighboring quasi-parishes being entrusted to one priest.<sup>30</sup>

Canon 516, §1 does not enumerate the particular circumstances which can necessitate the erection of quasi-parishes. Some authors, such as A.S. Sánchez-Gil, suggest special circumstances like lack of priests, material resources for a parish, opposition by civil authorities to the erection of new parishes, pastoral needs for immigrants, nomads and fugitives.<sup>31</sup> J.A. Janicki mentions communities that lack a resident pastor (parish-priest), financial resources, territorial boundaries or a need for natural grouping by way of rite, nationality, or language.<sup>32</sup>

Canon 516, §2 establishes that the diocesan bishop is to provide in another manner (*alio modo*) for the pastoral care of certain communities that cannot be erected into parishes or quasi-parishes. Again, the canon does not specify such communities, leaving the matter open to the diocesan bishop to determine. J.A. Janicki considers communities like hospitals, prisons, migrant camps, homes for the elderly, airport oratories and similar institutions among those referred to in the canon.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup>R. Pagé, *Les Églises particulières, la charge pastorale de leurs communautés de fidèles selon de Code de droit canonique de 1983*, Tome II, Montréal, Éditions Paulines, 1989, pp. 27-28. See also A. S. Sanchez-Gil in *Comentario exegético*, vol. II/2, pp. 1211-1212.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid, p. 1211. R. Pagé contends that such groups as refugees, emigrants, and students can be granted the status of quasi-parishes because they do not have enough stability required for a parish (*Les Églises particulières*, p. 28).

<sup>32</sup>J.A. Janicki, "Parishes, Pastors, and Parochial Vicars," in *American Commentary*, p. 417.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

#### 4.1.4 - Towards a Juridic Status of Small Christian Communities

An overall plan for the creation of small Christian communities in the whole of Africa is an unrealistic project. This is because, as the 1974 Synod of Bishops noted, "they differ greatly among themselves both within the same region and even more so from one region to another."<sup>34</sup> This means that a thorough juridic expression for small Christian communities would still be premature. Indeed, as J.M. Huels notes:

As a general rule it is preferable for the universal law to say too little rather than too much on any matter, especially regarding something as new to the Church [...]. The best code for a universal Church is one which establishes general principles and essential norms while allowing the particular churches to specify the details. The code is apparently following this principle in regard to [...] new developments in parish life, such as the division of parishes in some areas of the world into "base communities".<sup>35</sup>

In the following section, we shall discuss this concern and, based on magisterial teaching on the subject, offer some concrete suggestions for the creation of small Christian communities.

The magisterial teaching on small Christian communities show one major canonical concern: that they be rooted in the Church and be in communion with its pastors. This concern has to be addressed wherever small Christian communities are created. *Lumen gentium* notes that the Church of Christ is truly present in all legitimately organized local groups of the faithful in so far as they are united to their pastors.<sup>36</sup> In other words, the legitimacy of local groups of the faithful consists in their union with the pastors of the Church. This is a practical requirement taking into consideration the reality that small Christian communities have neither one single overall pattern nor a fixed form.

---

<sup>34</sup>*Evangelii nuntiandi*, 58

<sup>35</sup>J.M. Huels, "Parish Life and the New Code," in *Concilium*, 185 (1986), p. 69.

<sup>36</sup>*LG*, 26.

In so far as they are united to their pastors, small Christian communities can adapt different patterns and forms. In the words of Carolee Chanona, "There will never be two basic Christian communities alike."<sup>37</sup> This reality, however, raises questions in the canonical field: if small Christian communities have no fixed nature, with each region having its own form of communities, how can the universal law regulate them? What are their constitutive elements? Can *unity with their pastors* be considered their only constitutive element? Let us examine the opinion set forth in the magisterial teaching.

The 1974 Synod of Bishops devoted considerable attention to small communities, or *communautés de base*. Number 58 of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* discusses their union with the pastors:

In some regions they appear and develop, almost without exception, within the Church, having solidarity with her life, being nourished by her teaching and united with her pastors. In these cases, they spring from the need to live the Church's life more intensely, or from the desire and quest for a more human dimension such as larger ecclesial communities can only offer with difficulty, especially in the big modern cities which lend themselves both to life in the mass and to anonymity [...]. In still other cases they bring Christians together in places where the shortage of priests does not favor the normal life of a parish community. This is all presupposed within communities constituted by the Church, especially individual Churches and parishes.<sup>38</sup>

Paul VI noted another kind of small Christian community that emerges with a spirit of opposition to the Church, and especially to its pastors:

In other regions, on the other hand, *communautés de base* come together in a spirit of bitter criticism of the Church, which they are quick to stigmatize as "institutional" and to which they set themselves up in opposition as charismatic communities, free from structures and inspired only by the Gospel. Thus their obvious characteristic is an attitude of fault-finding and of rejection with regard to the Church's outward manifestations: her hierarchy, her signs. They are radically opposed to the Church. [...]. The difference is already notable: the communities which by their spirit of opposition cut themselves off from the Church, and

---

<sup>37</sup>M. Hebblethwaite, "Christian Cells," in *The Tablet*, 242 (1988), p. 498.

<sup>38</sup>*Evangelii nuntiandi*, 58.

whose unity they would, can well be called *communautés de base*, but in this case it is a strictly sociological name. They could not, without a misuse of terms, be called ecclesial *communautés de base*, even if, while being hostile to the hierarchy, they claim to remain within the unity of the Church. This name belongs to the other groups, those which come together within the Church in order to unite themselves to the Church and to cause the Church to grow.<sup>39</sup>

As the pope notes, what marks the legitimacy of small Christian communities is their union to the Church through unity with its pastors. For this to happen, the pope makes a number of recommendations for small Christian communities:

1. that they seek their nourishment in the Word of God and do not allow themselves to be ensnared by political polarization or fashionable ideologies, which are ready to exploit their immense human potential;
2. that they avoid the ever present temptation of systematic protest and a hypercritical attitude, under the pretext of authenticity and a spirit of collaboration;
3. that they remain firmly attached to the local Church in which they are inserted, and to the universal Church, thus avoiding the very real danger of becoming isolated within themselves, then of believing themselves to be the only authentic Church of Christ, and hence of condemning the other ecclesial communities;
4. that they maintain a sincere communion with the pastors whom the Lord gives to His Church, and with the magisterium which the Spirit of Christ has entrusted to these pastors;
5. that they never look on themselves as the sole beneficiaries or sole agents of evangelization or even the only depositaries of the Gospel but, being aware that the Church is much more vast and diversified, accept the fact that this Church becomes incarnate in other ways than through themselves;
6. that they constantly grow in missionary consciousness, fervor, commitment and zeal;
7. that they show themselves to be universal in all things and never sectarian.<sup>40</sup>

The above annotations show that union with the Church through its pastors is a constitutive element of small Christian communities.

---

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

The 1977 Synod on Catechesis also discussed small Christian communities showing their legitimacy by their unity to the parish. John Paul II expressed a concern in the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae* that some people want to do away with the parish in favor of small Christian communities. He, therefore, noted:

It is true that catechesis can be given anywhere, but I wish to stress, in accordance with the desire of very many Bishops, that the parish community must continue to be the prime mover and pre-eminent place for catechesis. Admittedly, in many countries the parish has been as it were shaken by the phenomenon of urbanization. Perhaps some have too easily accepted that the parish should be considered old-fashioned, if not doomed to disappear, in favor of more pertinent and effective small communities. Whatever one may think, the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people, even for the non-practicing. Accordingly, realism and wisdom demand that we continue along the path aiming to restore to the parish, as needed, more adequate structures and, above all a new impetus through the increasing integration into it of qualified, responsible and generous members.<sup>41</sup>

According to John Paul II, the parish is a major point of reference for the Christian people that cannot be allowed to disappear in favor of small Christian communities. Small Christian communities are not intended to replace or oppose the parish.

The 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, convened to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, returned to the debate of small Christian communities and stressed the importance of their unity with the Church. In its *Final Report*, under the section dealing with the Church as communion, it states: "Because the Church is communion, the new basic communities, *if they truly live in unity with the Church*, are a true expression of communion and a means for the construction of a more profound communion. They are thus a cause for great hope for the life of the

---

<sup>41</sup>*Catechesi tradendae*, 67.

Church."<sup>42</sup> When small Christian communities live in unity with the Church, they express an ecclesial reality of communion.

In 1987, another Synod convoked to examine the vocation and mission of the laity treated "small basic or so-called living communities, where the faithful can communicate the Word of God and express in service and love to one another; these communities are true expressions of ecclesial communion and centers of evangelization, *in communion with the pastors*."<sup>43</sup>

In his encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, John Paul II discusses at length the small Christian communities which he calls:

... a sign of vitality within the Church, an instrument of formation and evangelization, and a solid starting point for a new society based on a *civilization of love*.

These communities decentralize and organize the parish community, to which they always remain united. They take root in less privileged and rural areas, and become a leaven of Christian life, of care for the poor and neglected, and of commitment to the transformation of society. Within them, the individual Christian experiences community and therefore senses that he or she is playing an active role and is encouraged to share in the common task. Thus, these communities become a means of evangelization and of the initial proclamation of the Gospel, and a source of new ministries. At the same time, by being imbued with Christ's love, they also show how divisions, tribalism and racism can be overcome.<sup>44</sup>

The magisterial teaching presented above shows that unity with the Church through its pastors should be a constitutive element of small Christian communities. From this conclusion flows one basic principle, namely that a juridic status for small Christian communities must be conceived in relation to that of the parish. It is in the parish that they have both their birthplace and their immediate *communio* with the pastors of the church. Hence, small Christian communities do not

---

<sup>42</sup>Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, *A Message to the People of God and The Final Report*, Washington, DC, 1985, II, C, 6. Emphasis added.

<sup>43</sup>"Synod 1987. The Synod Propositions," in *Origins*, 17 (1987-1988), p. 503; *Christifideles laici*, 26. Emphasis added.

<sup>44</sup>*Redemptoris missio*, 51.

need a juridic status independent of that of the parish. As long as they remain united to the parish, they can adopt different forms and norms in accordance with the needs of each local church. John Paul II sums this up in the following words:

Every community, if it is to be Christian, must be founded on Christ and live in him, as it listens to the word of God, focuses its prayer on the Eucharist, lives in a communion marked by oneness of heart and soul, and shares according to the needs of its members (cf. Acts 2:42-47). As Pope Paul VI recalled, every community must live in union with the particular and the universal Church, in heartfelt communion with the Church's pastors and the Magisterium, with a commitment to missionary outreach and without yielding to isolationism or ideological exploitation. And the Synod of Bishops stated: "Because the Church is communion, the new *basic communities*, if they truly live in unity with the Church, are a true expression of communion and a means for the construction of a more profound communion".<sup>45</sup>

The 1977 Synod on Catechesis proposed that the parish should be renewed "by making it a community of communities."<sup>46</sup> Ten years later, the Synod on the laity also saw the emerging parish as a community of communities: "We note with great satisfaction that the parish is becoming a dynamic community of communities, a center where movements, basic ecclesial communities and other apostolic groups energize it and in turn are nourished."<sup>47</sup>

If the emerging African parish is a community of communities, or as some call it, a communion of communities, will it remain the same in its juridic structure? An answer to this question is contained in c. 515 which defines a parish. From our discussion of this canon, it is possible to see that the juridic nature of the parish will not necessarily change even when the parish

---

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Proposition 8.

<sup>47</sup>"Synod 1987, Message to the People of God," in *Origins*, 17 (1987-1988), p. 388. As J.P. Vandenakker observed, the phrase *community of communities*, which appeared in the propositions and Message to the People of God of the Synods of 1977 and 1987 respectively, did not appear in either of the two papal Apostolic Exhortations that followed. See *Small Christian Communities and the Parish*, Kansas City, Sheed and Ward, 1994, p. 185.

eventually emerges as a community of communities or a communion of communities. In other words, the constitution of the parish as set out in c. 515 does not exclude the possibility of dividing it into small Christian communities. A parish community divided into smaller communities can still be “a certain community of Christ’s faithful stably established within a particular Church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor.”

Just as the diocese is divided into parishes, the parish can be subdivided into smaller communities. That is, just as the diocese – *a portion of the people of God* entrusted to a bishop<sup>48</sup> – can be divided into distinct parts or parishes<sup>49</sup> without ceasing to be *portion of the people of God*, so also analogously the parish – *a certain community* of Christ’s faithful entrusted to a pastor<sup>50</sup> – can be divided into smaller parts without ceasing to be *a certain community*.

A parish divided into small Christian communities will continue to have the parish priest as its proper pastor. He will exercise the pastoral care of all the small Christian communities in his parish under the authority of the diocesan bishop, with the assistance of lay members of Christ’s faithful, in accordance with the law.<sup>51</sup> The assistance of lay members, something foreseen by law and already in practice,<sup>52</sup> may take different forms. For instance, some representatives of the small

---

<sup>48</sup>Canon 369.

<sup>49</sup>Canon 374.

<sup>50</sup>Canon 515.

<sup>51</sup>Cf. c. 519. The parish priest would become a kind of *animator* or *coordinator* of the small Christian communities. This role is not foreign to him, as the CIC/83 indicates in many ways in referring to his obligations (for examples, see cc. 519, 528, 529, 532, and 536).

<sup>52</sup>Canon 129, § 2.

Christian communities will be members of the parish council, financial council and other parish organs.

In concluding this section, we can paraphrase the words of John Paul II that realism and wisdom demand that we continue along the path aiming to restore to the parish, as needed, more adequate structures and, above all, a new impetus through the increasing integration into it of small Christian communities.<sup>55</sup> When the parish is strong and secure, there will be a firm basis for determining the juridic elements of small Christian communities by the local churches themselves.

## **4.2 - THE AGENTS OF PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL IN AFRICA**

The principal agents of the proclamation of the gospel in Africa discussed at length in the synodal deliberations were priests, religious men and women, and catechists. Much of the discussion focused on the formation of priests, religious men and women, and the status and role of catechists in the Church. In this section we shall, therefore, discuss the canonical applicability of the recommendations made with respect to each of these groups of people by analyzing the conciliar and post-conciliar documents on the formation of priests and catechists in light of CIC/83.

### **4.2.1 - Formation of Priests and Religious in Africa**

From the documents of the African Synod there is a general consensus that there is need to renew the programs of priestly and religious formation because the current programs do not ground

---

<sup>55</sup>*Catechesis tradendae*, 67. See also Pontifical Council for Culture, "Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture," in *Origins*, 29 (1988-1999), p. 78.

African priests well enough into their cultural setting. The synod, therefore, suggested that the official Church documents on priestly training need to be studied and adapted to the African local realities.

Although the formation of religious varies according to their manner of life and each institute's charism, the most fundamental aspects of their formation are the same. The Second Vatican Council in its decree on priestly formation, *Optatam totius*, noted in this regard: "Because of the very unity of the Catholic priesthood this priestly formation is necessary for all priests, diocesan and religious and of every rite. Wherefore, while these prescriptions directly concern the diocesan clergy, they are to be appropriately adapted to all."<sup>54</sup> For this reason, our discussion will focus on the general components of priestly formation.

#### 4.2.1.1 - The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents on the Formation of Priests

The council fathers outlined in *Optatam totius*, the general requirements for formation of priests which, though fundamentally the same, are adaptable to different times and circumstances:

Since only regulations of a general nature can be made, owing to the wide diversity of peoples and countries, each nation or rite should have its own *Program of Priestly Training*. This should be drawn up by the episcopal conferences and should be revised at regular intervals and approved by the Holy See. In every such program the general regulations will be adapted to the circumstances of time and place, so that priestly training will always answer the pastoral requirements of the particular area in which the ministry is to be exercised.<sup>55</sup>

The call for national programs gives to respective conferences of bishops the opportunity to adapt (*accomodentur*) the whole course of priestly formation to local conditions. Note 2 of the conciliar text enumerates the content of the adapted program: the general organization of the

---

<sup>54</sup>Second Vatican Council, Decree *Optatam totius*, October 28, 1965, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 713-727.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

seminary, administration, and all the elements of formation including spiritual formation, the duration of the course, and the common life of students. The adaptation of the formation of religious is to be undertaken in a similar manner by the competent superior for religious, being guided by the Apostolic Constitution *Sedes sapientiae*.<sup>56</sup>

To maintain a certain fundamental unity, these formation programs have to be approved by the Holy See.<sup>57</sup> The conciliar decree "does not seek to limit the authority of the individual bishops over their seminaries and hand it over to the bishop's conference; rather the norms, which hitherto came directly from Rome, are now to proceed from the episcopacy of the particular country."<sup>58</sup> This is why in order to avoid local stagnation, the decree calls for periodic revision of the programs so that they be adapted to the circumstances of time and place.

The conciliar decree "divides the initiative in seminary legislation between the center which lays down the basic principles and gives the final approbation, and the periphery, where the details of implementation are settled."<sup>59</sup> In like manner, in the task of elaborating the program, the bishops can be assisted by advisors like rectors and professors of seminaries (priests and lay people).<sup>60</sup> In

---

<sup>56</sup>See the General Statutes attached to the Apostolic Constitution *Sedes sapientiae*, art. 19.

<sup>57</sup>Some council fathers wanted recognition (*recognoscenda*) instead of *approval* of such programs by Rome, but the Commission refused the first term for being too strong: "Recognoscere est plus quam approbare." See *Schema decreti de institutione sacerdotali, textus emendatus et modi, Conc. Vaticanum II*, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1965, p. 41.

<sup>58</sup>H. Vorgrimler (gen. ed.), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. II, Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1968, p. 379.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup>In a *modus* submitted by 53 council fathers, the collaboration of priests and lay people in working out the program had been requested to appear in the text of the decree. The Commission, however, replied that this express mention would be superfluous as it is already included in the conciliar text (see *Schema decreti de institutione sacerdotali, textus emendatus et modi, Conc. Vaticanum II*, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis,

the case of interdiocesan or regional seminaries, article 7 of the same decree gives the responsibility of drawing up the program to the bishops of the territory concerned.

*Optatum totius* further decreed that “[t]he duty of fostering vocations falls on the whole Christian community.”<sup>61</sup> This conciliar teaching opens the door to proposition 18 of the African Synod, which intends to involve conferences of bishops and the small Christian communities in admitting candidates for the priesthood in Africa. The bishops had urged that:

each episcopal conference [...] study the special needs and context of their countries. The criteria for the admission of candidates should be established, and the process of screening candidates should be done with great care and in consultation with the families and the small Christian communities.

The duty of fostering vocations and screening candidates is no longer the sole responsibility of bishops, priests, or religious, but of the whole Church community, including small Christian communities.

The conciliar decree did not pronounce the last word on the training of priests but opened the door to other organs of the Church:

The *Propositions* [not of African Synod] do not exhaust all that Vatican II wanted to offer on a question so important for the life of the Church; rather, they constitute, as it were, a beginning of a long journey which will have to be completed by post-Conciliar Commissions, by the commission for the revision of canon law and especially by the conferences of bishops of individual nations.<sup>62</sup>

Following the conciliar call, the Congregation for Catholic Education issued the *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* to guide conferences of bishops in their work of drafting

---

1965, p. 41).

<sup>61</sup>*OT*, 2.

<sup>62</sup>G. Garraro, *Relatio*, in *Acta synodalia*, 3-3-7, p. 537.

their local programs of priestly formation. These fundamental principles were published in 1970.<sup>63</sup> and have since been followed by other documents from the same Congregation on various issues of priestly formation such as on the teaching of philosophy in seminaries,<sup>64</sup> priestly celibacy,<sup>65</sup> teaching of canon law in the seminary,<sup>66</sup> theology,<sup>67</sup> liturgy,<sup>68</sup> and spiritual formation.<sup>69</sup>

The CIC/83 repeats the major principles found in the conciliar and post-conciliar documents: in each country there is to be a Program of Priestly Formation. It is to be drawn up by the Episcopal Conference, taking account of the norms issued by the supreme ecclesiastical authority, and it is to be approved by the Holy See; moreover, it is to be adapted to new circumstances, likewise with the approval of the Holy See. This Charter is to define the overall principles governing formation in the seminary and the general norms which take account of the pastoral needs of each region or province.<sup>70</sup>

According to this canon, the drawing up of the program of priestly formation by the conferences of bishops is obligatory.<sup>71</sup> The norms referred to in the canon are found in the *Ratio fundamentalis*

<sup>63</sup>*Ratio*, in *AAS*, 62 (1970), pp. 321-384.

<sup>64</sup>January 20, 1972, in X. Ochoa, (ed.), *Leges Ecclesiae post Codicem iuris canonici editae*, vol. VI, Rome, 1966-1987, pp. 214-219.

<sup>65</sup>April 2, 1974, in *ibid.*, pp. 563-599.

<sup>66</sup>April 2, 1975, in *ibid.*, vol. V, pp. 7012-7016; *CLD*, vol. VII, pp. 955-963.

<sup>67</sup>February 22, 1976, in *ibid.*, pp. 7155-7175; *Origins*, 6 (1976-1977), pp. 173-190.

<sup>68</sup>June 3, 1979, in *ibid.*, vol. VI, pp. 7764-7785; *CLD*, vol. IX, pp. 821-871.

<sup>69</sup>January 6, 1980, in *ibid.*, pp. 7857-7867; *CLD*, vol. IX, pp. 871-894.

<sup>70</sup>Canon 242, §1.

<sup>71</sup>When it was suggested to the Code Commission that the expression *there is to be (habeatur)* be replaced by *there can be (haberi potest)* so as not to make such a program obligatory, the response of the Commission was that if anything else, a conference could officially adopt with a few adaptations the *Ratio fundamentalis* provided by the Congregation of Catholic Education, or one of another country: "*Maneat textus uti est, ne evacuetur norma. Nihil impedit ut conferentia episcopalis simpliciter adoptet Rationem fundamentalem institutionis parvis cum additionibus, vel Rationem institutionis in alia natione apparata, cum opportunis adaptationibus. Quod interest est ut propria Ratio habeatur et vigeat in singulis nationibus.*" See *Communicationes*, 14 (1982), pp. 162-163.

*sacerdotalis*, which was revised and reissued by the Congregation for Catholic Education on March 19, 1985, as well as in subsequent documents already issued at the time the Code was promulgated or which were issued afterward.<sup>72</sup>

The canon recognizes the need for constant adaptation of the program, either due to changing local circumstances or to subsequent orientations coming from the Apostolic See. The canon refers to the general content of such program as principles governing formation and general norms, leaving their details to the conferences of bishops. According to W.H. Woestman, "the running of the seminary, the spiritual formation, the syllabus of studies, the students' daily life and discipline, and their pastoral experience" are to be adapted to the local circumstances.<sup>73</sup>

The code calls also for a seminary rule of life designed to implement the general principles of the *Ratio fundamentalis* and the programs drawn up by the conferences of bishops. It is to be approved by the diocesan bishop or, in the case of an interdiocesan seminary, by the bishops concerned. This rule develops in greater detail those points of discipline affecting the daily life of the students and the good order of the entire seminary.<sup>74</sup>

The code mentions too the need for doctrinal formation to reflect "a general culture which is appropriate to the needs of the place and time."<sup>75</sup> This means that "[t]he student should be educated not only in the culture of the place where he trains, but also in that of the place where he

---

<sup>72</sup>For a list of the major documents issued on the subject, see W.H. Woestman, *The Sacraments of Order and the Clerical State: A Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1999, pp. 213-290.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid. p. 120.

<sup>74</sup>See c. 243.

<sup>75</sup>Canon 248.

is going to minister."<sup>76</sup> With different emphases, the canon distinguishes three types of languages to be studied in the seminary: (1) the native language, which the seminarians must be accurately taught (*accurate linguam patriam edocentur*), (2) the Latin language (*linguam latinam bene calleant*), and (3) suitable knowledge of other languages (*congruam habeant cognitionem alienarum linguarum*).

The duration of the formation program and its modality (successive or simultaneous discipline)<sup>77</sup> is open to adaptation. The minimum duration, however, has to be "at least six full years, in such a way that the time given to philosophical studies amounts to two full years and that allotted to theological studies to four years."<sup>78</sup> The duration of seminary training may also be adapted to local needs, exceeding, if need be, six years.

By way of conclusion, we can say that both the conciliar and post-conciliar documents pave the way for the particular Churches to have programs of priestly formation adapted from time to time to their local needs. The directive that the Holy See approve these programs may seem like a restriction; however, the legislation approved so far indicates that the Holy See has encouraged even greater participation by the conferences of bishops.<sup>79</sup> As Barry notes:

The process of change is never completed at any particular time; progress is made only gradually. Certainly, we would feel more comfortable if greater clarification could have been

---

<sup>76</sup>A. McGrath, "Formation of Clerics," in *Canon Law: Letter and Spirit*, p. 142.

<sup>77</sup>*Ratio fundamentalis sacerdotalis*, 60.

<sup>78</sup>Canon 250.

<sup>79</sup>For a comparative study of such programs, see J.A. Barry, *Ecclesial Norms for Priestly Formation*, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1982; Idem, "The Implementation by Episcopal Conferences of the Conciliar Decree, *Optatam totius*," in *Studia canonica*, 18 (1984), pp. 291-384. Barry concludes from his study that "the orientations of *Optatam totius* and of the subsequent documents of the Holy See were carefully taken in consideration." (Barry, *Ecclesial Norms for Priestly Formation*, p. 237).

given on all dimensions of formation. However, since the major thrust of the ecclesial legislation on seminaries is to accommodate priestly formation to the local needs and situations, greater initiatives must still be taken in the particular churches. Were law to cover all points of formation, the temptation would rather be to do more than the legislation demands.<sup>80</sup>

African conferences of bishops must take the initiative to experiment with the possibilities which the current legislation offers because the task of training priests can no longer be relegated to the supreme ecclesiastical authority of the Church alone. The CIC/83 gives many instances where the conferences of bishops can legislate. They include regulating the formation of permanent diacons;<sup>81</sup> establishment of an interdiocesan seminary;<sup>82</sup> priestly formation;<sup>83</sup> determining the participation expected of permanent deacons in the liturgy of the hours;<sup>84</sup> specifying clerical dress for the area;<sup>85</sup> norms for the priests' council;<sup>86</sup> cooperating with conferences of major religious superiors;<sup>87</sup> providing for Catholic universities and faculties;<sup>88</sup> establishing higher institutes for religious studies;<sup>89</sup> raising the age for priesthood and permanent diaconate.<sup>90</sup> There is no need,

---

<sup>80</sup>Barrv, *Ecclesial Norms for Priestly Formation*, p. 238.

<sup>81</sup>Canon 236.

<sup>82</sup>Canon 237, §2.

<sup>83</sup>Canon 242, §1.

<sup>84</sup>Canon 276, §2, 3<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>85</sup>Canon 284.

<sup>86</sup>Canon 496.

<sup>87</sup>Canon 708.

<sup>88</sup>Canon 809.

<sup>89</sup>Canon 821.

<sup>90</sup>Canon 1031, §3.

therefore, to formulate new universal laws for priestly and religious formation, but for conferences of bishops and dioceses to utilize the opportunities already given by the law in order to assist religious and priests as agents of proclamation.

#### **4.2.2 - The Catechists**

In the previous chapter, we noted that there is a general concern in the Church to understand the ecclesial identity and ministry of the catechist. This concern is particularly germane in the African Church where catechists comprise the majority of the agents of evangelization (73 %). We noted that the catechist is usually referred to in relation to others, especially priests, as if he has no identity of his own: his role has been conceived of as a substitute for the priest and subordinate to him. In this section we shall clarify the identity and ministry of the catechist according to CIC/83.

##### **4.2.2.1 - The Identity and Ministry of the Catechist According to CIC/83**

The CIC/83 attempted to put into legal terms the conciliar and post-conciliar doctrine on the role and ministry of the catechist. Put in linear form, c. 785 of CIC/83 offers a description of catechists:

1. they are lay members of Christ's faithful
2. who have received proper formation
3. who are outstanding in their living of the Christian life
4. and are under the direction of missionaries;
5. they present the gospel teaching
6. engage in liturgical worship
7. and [engage] in works of charity

According to the canon, the catechist is first and foremost a lay member of Christ's faithful.

The condition of being *Christ's faithful*, which the catechists have in common with all the other

members of the people of God, is the starting point and basis for their identity. Indeed, because of this condition, catechists are equal in dignity and action to the other members of Christ's faithful.<sup>91</sup> That is, they *share* the priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ, and *carry* on the mission of the Church, according to their condition. Seen in this way, the catechist's identity is not based on his relation to another member of Christ's faithful such as a priest, but in what he is in himself. In other words, the true basis of the identity of the catechist is a positive one: his being a member of Christ's faithful.

Looking at the conciliar description of Christ's faithful, the Second Vatican Council referred to lay faithful as all the faithful *except* those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church: they are the faithful who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ, are placed in the people of God, and in their own way share the priestly, prophetic and kingly function of Christ, and to the best of their ability carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.<sup>92</sup>

The 1987 Synod of Bishops on the vocation and mission of the lay faithful pointed out the need for a definition of the lay faithful's vocation and mission in positive terms. In giving a response to the question, "Who are the lay faithful?", the Synod manifested its intention of asserting that the lay faithful fully belong to the Church and to its mystery.<sup>93</sup>

As members of the laity, catechists can be either men or women who are distinct from priests and religious, but who share in their own way in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and kingly function.

---

<sup>91</sup>Canon 208.

<sup>92</sup>*LG*, 31.

<sup>93</sup>See *Christifideles laici*, 9.

The canon enumerates their apostolate as presenting the gospel teaching, engaging in liturgical worship, and in works of charity. This structural division of the apostolate of catechists corresponds to that of the obligations and rights of the lay members of Christ's faithful mentioned in Book II, Title II of CIC:83. Thus we find cc. 225 and 226 detailing their prophetic office, cc. 229 and 230 their priestly function, and cc. 227 and 228 their royal office. Catechists are already included in the obligations and rights of the lay members of the Christ's faithful: hence, c. 785 says nothing new in relation to these specific parts.

Canon 785, however, presents three other elements that *seem* to distinguish catechists from other lay members of Christ's faithful: (1) catechists receive a specific formation, (2) are expected to be outstanding in their Christian life, and (3) work under the direction of the missionary. The canon speaks of proper formation (*debite instructi*) but, unlike the canons on priestly formation which state in detail the content and extent of such formation, it does not give the details of the proper formation that is required of catechists.<sup>94</sup> Paragraph two of the canon mentions that this proper formation be received in schools founded for this purpose: where there are no such schools, formation can be undertaken under the direction of the missionaries. Thus, the content of this formation is left to particular laws and customs.

The canon calls for commitment by catechists in the form of outstanding Christian living (*vita christiana praestantes*), just as elsewhere in the code special qualities are required of Church

---

<sup>94</sup>The canons on priestly formation stipulate the types of programs required: national programs (cc. 242-243), integration of seminary programs (c. 244), spiritual formation program (cc. 245-247), academic program (cc. 248-254), and pastoral program (cc. 255-258). *AG*, 17, which is the source of c. 785, states that the catechists' formation must be in keeping with cultural progress, with special reference to the Bible and the liturgy, and also catechetical method and pastoral practice. *AG*, 26 adds that their doctrinal training should be such that they understand both the universality of the Church and the diversity of the peoples, cultures and religions.

ministers.<sup>95</sup> As a lay minister engaged in the Church's mission, the catechist is called to strive for outstanding Christian living.

The activity of the catechist is not autonomous but, as c. 785 states, is carried out under the direction of a missionary.<sup>96</sup> The catechist plays an integral part in the missionary activity of the Church. In co-operation with and under the supervision of the missionary, he exercises his ministry of presenting the gospel teaching and organizing liturgical worship and works of charity.<sup>97</sup>

Elsewhere the CIC/83 says catechists can be extraordinary ministers of baptism (c. 861 § 2) and holy communion (c. 910 § 2); they can assist at marriage (c. 1112); they can be ministers of some sacramentals (c. 1168); they can preside over some liturgical functions (c. 230 §§ 2-3), and

---

<sup>95</sup>Bishops are to be outstanding in strong faith, good morals, piety, zeal for souls, wisdom, prudence and human virtues (c. 378 § 1, 1°); priests and deacons are to have sound faith, right intention, requisite knowledge, good reputation, moral probity, proven virtue and other physical and psychological qualities (c. 1029).

<sup>96</sup>These missionaries are understood in the sense of c. 784. However, since *AG*, 17 considers catechists as *true co-operators of the priestly order*, we can state further that these missionaries are especially the clergy.

<sup>97</sup>There is ambiguity in the English translations of "*doctrinae evangelicae proponendae*." The American commentary of the CIC translates it as "devote themselves to expounding the gospel teaching" and the commentary of the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland translates: "they present the gospel teaching." The *doctrinae evangelicae proponendae* should not be construed as giving the homily (which may only be given by a cleric according to c. 767 § 1) but *preaching* in its generic sense. As J.M. Huels remarks, "The word 'preaching' is a generic category that includes various kinds of speaking about the Word of God by a Christian person in a public context, whether in church or outside church, in the liturgy or outside liturgy." (J.M. Huels, "Interpreting an Instruction Approved *in forma specifica*," in *Studia canonica*, 32 [1998], p. 27).

Bishop A. Pilla discusses various forms of preaching: the homily at liturgy by the priest or deacon; lay preaching at liturgy; catechesis, mystagogy, theological argument; and didaskalia (see "Ministry of the Word," in *Origins*, 25 [1995-1996], pp. 277, 279-287, especially pp. 281-285). J.H. Provost identifies four types of preaching in the Code: evangelization, catechising, preaching in church (whether in liturgy or apart from it), and the homily (see "Lay Preaching and Canon Law in a Time of Transition," in N. Foley [ed.], *Preaching and the Non-Ordained*, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 1983, pp. 134-158, especially pp. 139-143. See also L.A. Robitaille, "An Examination of Various Forms of Preaching: Toward an Understanding of the Homily and Canons 766-767," in *CLSA Proceedings*, 58 [1996], pp. 308-325).

be ministers of the word including preaching (c. 766). The CIC/83 establishes that ecclesiastical authority may entrust an office or an ecclesial service to the members of Christ's faithful.<sup>98</sup> This provision opens the way for catechists to be admitted by the pastors to those ecclesiastical offices and functions which, in accordance with the provisions of law, they can discharge.

We can conclude that the catechist is a member of the lay faithful inspired by the Spirit, called and commissioned by the local church to be an animator of the Christian community. This understanding gives catechists an identity of their own: members of the lay faithful, inspired by the Spirit, called and commissioned by the Church to carry out ministries that are proper to both their status and the needs of the local church.

The CIC/83 does not explicitly mention the remuneration of catechists. Canon 231 §1, however, recognizes that lay people who are pledged to the special service of the Church "have the right to a worthy remuneration befitting their condition, whereby [...] they can becomingly provide for their own needs and the needs of their families." According to E. Caparros, the canon establishes its own contours: (1) availability to a competent authority of the Church, and (2) an effective commitment through work.<sup>99</sup> The same author holds that to belong to this category of lay people, the juridic relationship of the work alone is not enough. Neither is the availability to the Church in a benevolent or voluntary manner sufficient without a stable relationship of work. For instance, people who offer themselves to the Church to work in the ministries of lector and acolyte do not

---

<sup>98</sup>Canon 228 § 1.

<sup>99</sup>E. Caparros, "De las obligaciones y derechos de los fieles laicos," in *Comentario exegético*, Vol. II/1, p. 201.

receive any right to sustenance or remuneration from the Church.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, in the case of catechists, both the availability to the Church and a stable office involving employment by the Church are equally necessary. Unlike lectors and acolytes, catechists are “lay people who are pledged to the special service of the Church” (c. 231, § 1).

The conciliar document, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, the source of c. 231, is more descriptive than the canon. It speaks of “the laity, single or married, who in a definitive way or for a period, put their person and their professional competence at the service of institutions and their activities [...] offering their personal service to associations and works of the apostolate [...] above all, in the Catholic communities of the missions and of the young churches.”<sup>101</sup> According to Caparros, these are the faithful who with a certain stability commit themselves to functions of direct service to the Church. They include catechists, professionals, technical people, artists or people to whom the competent authority entrusts ecclesiastical ministry.<sup>102</sup> Particular churches are “to provide a certain number of *full time catechists* so that these can devote their time intensely and in a more stable way to catechesis.”<sup>103</sup>

The canon mentions that the laity who are pledged to the special service of the Church have the duty to acquire the appropriate formation which their role demands.<sup>104</sup> In 1997, the Congregation

---

<sup>100</sup>Cf. c. 230, § 1.

<sup>101</sup>*A.A.*, 22.

<sup>102</sup>E. Caparros, “De las obligaciones y derechos de los fieles laicos,” in *Comentario exegético*, p. 202. For a thorough study of the compensation of the laity at the service of the Church, see J. de Otaduy, “El derecho a la retribución de los laicos al servicio de la Iglesia,” in *Fidelium iura*, 2 (1992), pp. 187-206.

<sup>103</sup>Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, Vatican City, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1997, n. 233.

<sup>104</sup>Canon 231, § 1.

of the Clergy issued a *General Directory for Catechesis* to be used in the formation, among others, of catechists.<sup>105</sup> Referring to the formation of catechists, the Directory observes: "diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the formation of lay catechists."<sup>106</sup> As it was noted, "[i]f lay persons are bound to obtain the proper formation to assume a special role in Church service, they have a corresponding right to the opportunities in which they can do this."<sup>107</sup> To this duty, therefore, c. 231 adds a corresponding right of a worthy remuneration befitting their condition (§ 2).

As the conciliar Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, put it, "remuneration for labor is to be such that man may be furnished the means to cultivate worthily his own material, social, cultural, and spiritual life and that of his dependents."<sup>108</sup> The canon under discussion adds that this remuneration must be given "with regard also to the provisions of the civil law" of the place. The canon also prescribes that these lay people "have the right to have their insurance, social security and medical benefits duly safeguarded." Speaking specifically of the pastoral care of catechists in a particular church, the *General Directory for Catechesis* notes:

To ensure the working of the catechetical ministry in a local Church, it is fundamental to have adequate pastoral care of catechists. Several elements must be kept in mind in this respect. Indeed efforts must be made [...] to attend to the *personal and spiritual needs of catechists as well as to the group of catechists as such*. This activity is principally and fundamentally the responsibility of the priests in the respective Christian communities.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup>*General Directory for Catechesis*, n. 233.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>107</sup>J.H. Provost, "The Christian Faithful," in *American Commentary*, p. 169.

<sup>108</sup>GS, 67.

<sup>109</sup>N, 233.

In this section, we have addressed a general concern in the Church to understand the ecclesial identity and ministry of the catechist. Our conclusion is that catechists are members of Christ's faithful, called and commissioned by the Church to carry out ministries that are proper to both their status and the needs of the local church. For this work, catechists should receive both proper formation<sup>110</sup> and befitting remuneration.

### **4.3 - INCULTURATION: CANONICAL PERSPECTIVES**

From the synodal discussions we identified marriage and liturgy as principal areas that were addressed which are canonical in nature. The invariable synodal teaching is that the nature of Christian marriage and of liturgy has to be safeguarded. Its expression, however, must be evaluated more deeply and be translated into terms and ways congenial to African culture. In this section we shall, therefore, limit our discussion to pertinent canonical perspectives on inculturation in the areas of marriage and liturgy.

#### **4.3.1 - Inculturation and Marriage**

In their synodal discussions, the bishops noted that, in most African cultures, the essential properties of traditional marriage are usually the same as those of Christian marriage. The bishops, however, treated what they referred to as the *problem* of so many Catholics who are being excluded from the sacraments because they contracted marriage in a form not recognized by the Church.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup>The formation of catechists comprises different dimensions. For a detailed discussion, see the *General Directory for Catechesis*, nn. 238-247.

<sup>111</sup>Proposition 35. It should be noted that in Africa there are different groups of Catholics barred from receiving the sacraments due to their marital condition. A. Hastings identifies them: "First, there are couples

At the heart of this problem is a doctrinal issue whether tribal marriage between two (baptized) Catholics is a sacrament. In this section, we shall try to address this concern by discussing the nature of Christian marriage according to the Second Vatican Council and the CIC/83.

#### 4.3.1.1 - *Status quaestionis*: The Complex Nature of Marriage in Africa

In Africa, Christian marriage poses a challenge to the Church and its evangelization. It is a challenge because “[i]t offers the greatest obstacles to the growth of Christian life, and yet equally it is the essential vehicle of that growth.”<sup>112</sup> B.H. Okonkwo rightly observed: “[i]n the whole of Africa, there is a steady decline in Church marriage. While the number of baptisms, with traditional names, is on the increase almost everywhere, there is, unfortunately, the steady tendency to avoid Christian marriage.”<sup>113</sup> The causes of this phenomenon seem to include the ideal and demands of the Christian marriage that are yet to be embraced by many people both in theory and practice. And this is prevalent both among Christians and missionaries, as A. Hastings reports: “Almost all

---

living together who have not been married even according to native custom, but have simply eloped. These unions are sometimes permanent, sometimes temporary. Secondly, couples married according to native custom or civil law but in circumstances that cannot be accepted, e.g., because one has been married in Church already – customary law admitting polygamy and divorce. Thirdly, a Catholic married by native custom to a non-Christian. Fourthly, a Catholic married by native custom to a Protestant. Fifthly, two Catholics married by native custom when there was no objective reason against their being married in Church” (A. Hastings, *Church and Mission in Modern Africa*, London, Burns and Oates, 1969, p. 170).

<sup>112</sup>Ibid, p. 162.

<sup>113</sup>B.H. Okonkwo, *The Role of Matrimonial Consent in Igbo Traditional Marriage, in the Light of the New Canonical Legislations: A Comparative Study*, (Dissertation), Rome, Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1985, p. 53. A. Hastings reports that most of the African parishes whose register he checked showed a relative decrease. For instance, one parish with an annual average of 53 marriages about fifteen years ago has since sunk (with a rapidly rising population: infant baptisms almost doubled in the meantime) to an average of 23. See *Church and Mission in Modern Africa*, p. 176.

missionaries feel that there is something deeply wrong with our approach to marriage in Africa."<sup>114</sup>

A great number of people are impeded in becoming Christians by irregular marital situations. and of those who are already Christians (Catholics), many are either not practicing at all or are excluded from the reception of the sacraments of the Church because of their marital state. In the first category we find many who are impeded due to already existing relationships (like polygamists), while in the second category we find those whose marital union was contracted in a form not recognized for Catholics by church law (like those of tribal marriages).<sup>115</sup>

In addition to the above difficulties is the independence mentality whereby many Africans look at political independence across the continent as the beginning of a series: "The people now wish to be self-made and not 'foreign-made', even in Church matters. We have up till now, adopted styles of life, theological systems, forms of organization and liturgical practices which are self-expressions of churches in other parts of the world."<sup>116</sup> No wonder that strong appeals have been made by some to remove Christianity from Africa just as the colonialists were overthrown.<sup>117</sup>

As it was noted in the African Synodal deliberations, many Africans undergo three successive marriages – tribal, civil and Christian marriages – while others simply marry in only one of the three and face the negative consequences of not being recognized as married by tribe, state, or Church for not marrying in the respective society. Moreover, all three of these stages of marriage

---

<sup>114</sup>Ibid. p. 163.

<sup>115</sup>For specific examples, see *ibid.* pp. 162-184.

<sup>116</sup>Okonkwor. *The Role of Matrimonial Consent in Igbo Traditional Marriage*, p. 54.

<sup>117</sup>For instance, on March 23, 1974, Colonel M. Gaddafi, President of Libya, spoke to a Pan-African Conference at Benghazi, calling on Africans to get rid of Christianity altogether because, in his view, it is used as a means to destroy the African man. See W. Buhlman, *The Missions on Trial*, Slough, St. Paul Publications, 1978, p. 73.

involve financial expenses affordable only by a few, hence, the temptation, or necessity (they think) for many to live in irregular unions.

Across the continent of Africa, tribal marriage usually includes betrothal, giving of dowry and traditional ceremonies that vary from tribe to tribe. As A. Hastings notes, once the tribal marriage is concluded, "[i]n the eyes of the people there has been a real marriage, guaranteed by the dowry, and manifested by ceremonies signifying the consent of both parties and their families to the union. The ceremony in church is seen as a religious extra, a blessing upon the union: but if not added, then, in the eyes of the Church, they are not married but living in concubinage, they are excluded from the sacraments, maybe until death, and their children will be illegitimate [...]."<sup>118</sup> For many people married only in a tribal way, a Church wedding is an additional marriage reserved for people with extra money to spare.<sup>119</sup>

#### 4.3.1.2 - The Nature of Christian Marriage According to Vatican II and CIC/83

Even though the Second Vatican Council did not *define* marriage, in the strict sense of this term, the conciliar understanding of the nature of marriage is clarified in the way it referred to it. In the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, marriage is an intimate community of life and conjugal love (*intimas communitas vitae et amoris coniugalitatis*), an institution (*institutum matrimonii*), a Christian vocation (*vocatio Christiana*), a marital covenant (*foedus coniugale*), an unbreakable covenant (*foedus indissolubile*), a sharing of the whole of life

---

<sup>118</sup>*Church and Mission in Modern Africa*, p. 168. According to a survey conducted by Hastings in one African parish, 75 baptismal records of children were marked illegitimate.

<sup>119</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 177.

that is indissoluble (*totius vitae consuetudo et communio perseverat, suumque valorem et indissolubilitatem servat*).<sup>120</sup>

The CIC/17 approached marriage differently. According to this code, “The primary end of marriage is the procreation and nurture of children: its secondary end is mutual help and the remedying of concupiscence.”<sup>121</sup> The object of marital consent was the mutual giving and accepting (*mutua traditio et acceptatio*) of the perpetual and exclusive right over the body for acts which are of themselves suitable for the generation of children (*ius in corpus perpetuum et exclusivum, in ordine ad actus per se aptos ad prolis generationem*).<sup>122</sup> According to this pre-conciliar view, it was the right to sexual acts that the spouses gave and accepted from each other.

According to the teaching of Vatican II, the spouses give and accept their own persons (not only their bodies): they mutually give and accept one another's whole life, a reciprocal gift of themselves to each other. The conciliar view holds that the gift of the spouses' bodies to one another is subordinate to the gift of their total selves to each other. The conciliar teaching gives a new perspective on the traditional doctrine on marriage when it describes it as a covenant, a partnership and a communion of life and love.<sup>123</sup> It is mutual giving of two persons, thus giving a new object for matrimonial consent: *communio totius vitae*, that is, the whole relationship and life of the spouses. As T. Mackin puts it:

---

<sup>120</sup>GS, nn. 47-50.

<sup>121</sup>“Matrimonii finis primarius est procreatio atque educatio prolis; secundarius mutuum adiutorium et remedium concupiscentiae” (c. 1013).

<sup>122</sup>CIC/17, c. 1081 § 2.

<sup>123</sup>GS, 48.

By this mutual giving and accepting an institution (*institutum*) is created which is not a temporary one, but permanent (*firmum*). And such is the nature of this institution that once created by the self-giving consent, its existence is invulnerable to any subsequent acts of choice by the spouses or by any other merely human agent (*non ex humano arbitrio pendet*).<sup>124</sup>

In the CIC/83, an attempt was made to translate the conciliar teaching on marriage into legal terms. Canon 1055 gives a quasi-definition of marriage:

*The marriage covenant, (by which a man a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life, and which of its own very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children), between the baptized has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.*<sup>125</sup>

The main thrust of this canon, notes C.J. Scicluna, is to declare that Christ the Lord has raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament, the part in italics: between the parentheses is a description of marriage.<sup>126</sup> Our discussion of this canon will be limited to the thrust of this canon, that is, that the marriage covenant between the baptized has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament. This discussion will help us respond to the synodal problem of Catholics being excluded from the sacraments because they contracted (tribal) marriage in a form not recognized by the Church. Tracing the development of c.1055 will be helpful here.

The first draft of this canon (c. 242, §1 of the schema) retained c. 1012 of CIC/17, which states:

§ 1. Christ the Lord has raised the marriage contract itself between baptized persons to the dignity of a sacrament.

---

<sup>124</sup>T. Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, New York, Paulist Press, 1982, p. 268.

<sup>125</sup>Emphasis added.

<sup>126</sup>C.J. Scicluna, *The Essential Definition of Marriage According to the 1917 and 1983 Codes of Canon Law*, Lanham, University Press of America, 1985, p. 296.

§ 2. Consequently, a valid marriage contract cannot exist between baptized persons without its being by that very fact a sacrament.<sup>127</sup>

As can be observed, the origin and initial draft of this canon did not contain the subordinate clause which describes the nature of marriage but only the declaration that marriage between the baptized is a sacrament.

The declaration that marriage between the baptized is a sacrament because Christ raised it to this dignity was not debated during the drafting process. Indeed, early in the drafting process of this canon, a need was felt to leave the text intact as it appeared in CIC/17.<sup>128</sup> Debates focused more on the failure to use in the text the term *covenant*, as in the conciliar documents, instead of the pre-conciliar term, *contract*.<sup>129</sup>

Later attempts to introduce into the text a descriptive notion of marriage highlighting the covenant aspect of it proved fruitless as different consultors held different views. Thus the original text of the schema was maintained.<sup>130</sup> P.J. Connolly holds:

The assertion that marriage between the baptized has been raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament was not publicly challenged during the entire revision process: however, objections were raised against the second paragraph of canon 242 which asserted the absolute identity of every valid marriage contract between baptized people with the sacrament of marriage. The general objection was that such an automatic sacramentality should not be

---

<sup>127</sup>§1. Christus Dominus ad sacramenti dignitatem exivit ipsum contractum matrimoniale inter baptizatos. §2. Quare inter baptizatos nequit matrimonialis contractus validus consistere, quin sit eo ipso sacramentum.

<sup>128</sup>“Canon 1012, 1. qua edicitur sacramentalis dignitas contractus matrimonialis duorum baptizatorum, necnon § 2. qua affirmat realem identitatem huius contractus valide initi et sacramenti, intactae remanserunt” (*Communicationes*, 3 [1971], p. 70).

<sup>129</sup>For these criticisms, see the report of the marriage *coetus* of February, 1977, in *Communicationes*, 9 (1977), pp. 117-120.

<sup>130</sup>One group of consultors had suggested categorically to retain the original text: “*Aliqui consultores tenent formulam schematis non esse mutandam*” (*Communicationes*, 9 [1977], p. 121).

canonized in light of post-conciliar theological thinking, especially on the role of personal faith in the celebration and reception of the sacraments.<sup>131</sup>

In February 1977, the *coetus* acknowledged that there are theological debates on the assertion that the marriage contract between the baptized is a sacrament. The *coetus*, however, decided unanimously that such debates were a matter for theology and not for canon law, since the latter must be based on accepted theological presuppositions. For this reason, the consultors, after considering whether to drop the word *quare* (hence) from the canon, decided to leave the canon intact.<sup>132</sup>

In order to highlight the kind of marriage that is a sacrament, c. 243 of the 1977 schema was reduced to a clause inserted into c. 242 of the schema: "by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life which of its very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of offspring."<sup>133</sup> There are five elements of this notion of marriage. The marriage covenant which Christ raised to the dignity of sacrament: (1) must be between a baptized man and woman, (2) is a partnership of whole life, (3) ordered to the well-being of the spouses, (4) is ordered to procreation, and (5) is ordered to the upbringing of children.

Up to this point it seems that if a baptized man and woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole life, which is ordered to the good of the spouses and the procreation and

---

<sup>131</sup>P.J. Connolly, *The Nature of Marriage as Proposed in the Codex iuris canonici and in the Codex canonum Ecclesiarum orientalium*, (Dissertation), Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1995, p. 145.

<sup>132</sup>See *Communicationes*, 9 (1977), p. 122.

<sup>133</sup>The discussion of the revision process of c. 243 of the 1977 schema which became a clause inserted into now c. 1055 lies outside the scope of this study. For a thorough discussion of this revision, see Connolly *The Nature of Marriage*, pp. 145-151.

education of offspring, they necessarily have a sacramental marriage. For a baptized man and woman, contracting marriage is the same thing as entering a covenantal marriage, a sacrament.<sup>134</sup> One might then conclude that a tribal marriage between a baptized man and woman establishes a partnership of the whole life, which is ordered to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring and, therefore, is a sacrament. However, this is not the case. Canon 1055, §2 treats another necessary juridical reality: the validity of the marriage. "Consequently, a valid marriage contract cannot exist between baptized persons without its being by that very fact a sacrament."

In the Catholic Church, marriage is a juridic act, and for a juridic act to be valid "it is required that it be performed by a person who is legally capable, and it must contain those elements which constitute the essence of the act, as well as the formalities and requirements which the law prescribes for the validity of the act."<sup>135</sup> For a tribal marriage between two Christians to be counted *valid* in the eyes of the Catholic Church, it must be between legally capable persons, it must contain those elements which constitute the essence of Christian marriage, and must be done with formalities and requirements which the law prescribes for the validity of marriage. The canons on marriage (1055-1165) give the details on each one of these components.<sup>136</sup>

---

<sup>134</sup>For theological, historical and canonical discussions on the meaning and significance of this affirmation, see *Commission théologique internationale: textes et documents (1969-1985)*, Paris, Cerf, 1988, pp. 173-216; D. Baudot, *L'Inséparabilité entre le contrat et le sacrement de mariage: la discussion après le Concile Vatican II*, (Dissertation), Roma, Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1987; J.B. Sequeira, *Tout mariage entre baptisés est-il nécessairement sacrement? Étude historique, théologique et canonique sur le lien entre baptême et mariage*, Paris, Cerf, 1985.

<sup>135</sup>C. 124, § 1.

<sup>136</sup>The discussion of what is meant by legally capable persons, elements which constitute the essence (of Christian marriage), and the formalities and requirements which the law prescribes (for the validity of marriage) lies outside the scope of this study. For a study of c. 124 see J.M. Kuziona, *The Nature and*

By way of conclusion, we can state that a tribal marriage *could* be recognized – at least in principle – as valid by the Catholic Church. Indeed, this is already foreseen by the law, since each episcopal conference has the faculty to prepare its own proper marriage rite, which must always conform to the law which requires that the ordained minister or the assisting lay person, according to the case, must ask for and obtain the consent of the contracting parties and give them the nuptial blessing.<sup>137</sup> For instance, if an ordained minister or assisting lay person with proper delegation is present at a tribal marriage and asks for and obtains the consent of the contracting parties, the marriage, if it be between baptized man and woman, is both valid and sacramental.

#### 4.3.2 - Inculturation and Liturgy

On March 29, 1994, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued an instruction on inculturation of the liturgy based on the norms which were given in Articles 37-40 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. The instruction – *The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation: IV Instruction on the Correct Implementation of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy* – was prepared by the order of Pope John Paul II who approved it and ordered that it be published.<sup>138</sup>

---

*Application of Juridical Acts According to Canon 124 of the Code of Canon Law*. (Dissertation). Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1998.

<sup>137</sup>SC, 77; *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, in civitate vaticana, Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1996, n. 42. Cf. cc. 1108, 1112.

<sup>138</sup>Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation: IV Instruction on the Correct Implementation of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy*, January 25, 1994, in *AAS*, 87 (1995), pp. 288-314; English translation published in *ORE*, April 6, 1994.

The purpose of this instruction is "to help bishops and episcopal conferences to consider or put into effect, according to the law, such adaptations as are already foreseen in the liturgical books."<sup>139</sup> The instruction claims that the principles expressed in general terms in the conciliar articles 37-40 of *SC* "are explained more precisely, the directives are set out in a more appropriate way and the order to be followed is clearly set out, so that in future this will be considered the only correct procedure."<sup>140</sup>

According to the instruction, "[t]he constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had in mind an inculturation of the Roman rite when it gave norms for the adaptation of the liturgy to the mentality and needs of different peoples."<sup>141</sup> This means that the Roman rite as presented in the new *editio typica* of the liturgical books is the *terminus a quo* of inculturation. Some authors think differently, however. For A.J. Chupungco, a type of adaptation that has the Roman rite as the object of change is not called inculturation but acculturation. For him, inculturation involves "reinterpretation and transformation of a pre-Christian rite in the light of Christian faith as this is celebrated by the Roman liturgy."<sup>142</sup> J.V. McCabe agrees with him, asserting that inculturation involves "pre-Christian rites which are adopted or brought into the Roman rite liturgical family by endowing them with Christian meaning [...]. With inculturation, we are dealing with the idea of christianising a particular

---

<sup>139</sup>N. 3.

<sup>140</sup>N. 3.

<sup>141</sup>N. 52.

<sup>142</sup>See *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy*, Ramsey, Paulist Press, 1982, p. 81. This author describes liturgical inculturation as "the process whereby the texts and rites used in worship by the local church are so inserted in the framework of culture, that they absorb its thought, language, and ritual patterns." See also A.J. Chupungco, *Liturgies of the Future: The Process and Methods of Inculturation*, New York, Paulist Press, 1989, p. 29.

culture."<sup>143</sup> Another author not named but reported in *ORE*, noted in a similar way: "we have often been content with a mere translation of the Roman texts [...] what is needed is the progressive elaboration of a liturgical language and a eucology composed directly in the national language."<sup>144</sup> Moreover, the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops of 1985, although referring to inculturation in general, made a similar observation: "Inculturation, however, is different from a mere external adaptation, as it signifies an interior transformation into Christianity and the rooting of Christianity in various human cultures."<sup>145</sup>

The different understandings of and approaches to liturgical inculturation lie outside the scope of this study which, notwithstanding the ongoing debates, seeks to offer some concrete canonical plan of action.<sup>146</sup> For this reason, in this section we shall avoid discussing the debates on what liturgical inculturation is supposed to be and examine the procedures presented in the instruction, together with the pertinent law for their implementation.<sup>147</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup>See J.V. McCabe, "The Challenge of Liturgical Inculturation: Directions," in *Spearhead*, 92 (1986), p. 9.

<sup>144</sup>*ORE*, October 20, 1982.

<sup>145</sup>See the concluding declaration, n. D. 4.

<sup>146</sup>Notwithstanding diversity in approaches and understanding, we can say that what both the instruction (and thus *SC*) and the different authors convey is basically the same truth: liturgical inculturation attempts to *carry over* the same idea from the general (Roman rite) to the particular expressions in the local churches.

<sup>147</sup>By law, we mean here not only the canons of the code but also the liturgical law as contained in liturgical books in the context given by the Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments: "*libri liturgici vim retinent, ut ait c. 2 ipsius Codicis.*" Cf. Decree, *Promulgato Codice* (Variationes in novas editiones librorum liturgicorum ad normam Codicis iuris canonici nuper promulgati introducendae) of September 12, 1983, in *Notitiae*, 20 (1983), p. 540-555.

#### 4.3.2.1 - A Plan of Action for Liturgical Inculturation

The Second Vatican Council, in its Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, established the goal of liturgical renewal and inculturation: “The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy.”<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, the Council stated:

Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit.<sup>149</sup>

This and similar conciliar declarations – especially SC 37-40 – are key indicators of liturgical inculturation proposed by the Second Vatican Council.<sup>150</sup> According to Chupungco:

*Sacrosanctum concilium* 37-40 is the magna carta of liturgical flexibility and pluralism in the Western Church [...]. It is the magna carta whose breadth of vision broadens the horizons of the Church as a universal community and firmly upholds the right of the local liturgies to come to being. SC 37-40 expresses the Church's recognition of its own pluralistic structure, of its being Roman in tradition and international in expression, of its doctrinal unity in cultural diversity.<sup>151</sup>

According to the Council, and “provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved,”<sup>152</sup> liturgical inculturation can be carried out in accord with the provisions of law. In addition to the

---

<sup>148</sup>SC, 14.

<sup>149</sup>SC, 37.

<sup>150</sup>Other key conciliar statements implying liturgical inculturation are in SC, 65: the recommendation for the churches in the missions to incorporate “initiation elements in use among individual peoples, to the extent that such elements are compatible with the Christian rite of initiation”; and in AG, 10: “If the Church is to be in a position to offer to all the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God, then it must implant itself among all these groups in the same way that Christ by his incarnation committed himself to the particular social and cultural circumstances of the people among whom he lived.”

<sup>151</sup>Chupungco, *Liturgies of the Future*, p. 10.

<sup>152</sup>SC, 37.

instruction on implementing liturgical inculturation, provisions on legitimate adaptations are also contained in the *editiones typicae* of the liturgical books.

The conferences of bishops have a responsibility to (1) consider carefully and prudently what elements taken from the traditions and cultures of individual peoples may properly be admitted into divine worship; (2) introduce into the liturgy such elements as are not bound up with superstition and error, provided they are in keeping with the true and authentic spirit of the liturgy; (3) determine whether the introduction into the liturgy of elements borrowed from the social and religious rites of a people, and which form a living part of their culture, will enrich their understanding of liturgical actions without producing negative effects on their faith and piety.<sup>153</sup>

According to the instruction, the following points should be kept in mind in the planning and execution of the inculturation of the Roman rite: (1) the goal of inculturation, (2) the substantial unity of the Roman rite and, (3) the competent authority.<sup>154</sup> The goal of inculturation is that laid down by the Second Vatican Council: "Both texts and rites should be so drawn up that they express more clearly the holy things they signify and so that the Christian people, as far as possible, may be able to understand them with ease and to take part in the rites fully, actively and as befits a community."<sup>155</sup>

The substantial unity of the Roman rite "is currently expressed in the typical editions of liturgical books, published by authority of the supreme pontiff and in the liturgical books approved

---

<sup>153</sup>Nn. 31-32; SC, 37, 40.

<sup>154</sup>See c. 838.

<sup>155</sup>SC, 21.

by the episcopal conferences for their areas and confirmed by the Apostolic See."<sup>156</sup> These *editiones typicae* safeguard the liturgical tradition, while allowing at the same time legitimate progress: "[t]he work of inculturation does not foresee the creation of new families of rites."<sup>157</sup> As John Paul II pointed out, inculturation does not imply that particular churches have a new task to undertake: nor is it intended to mean the creation of alternative rites: the adaptations still remain part of the Roman rite: "It is a question of collaborating so that the Roman rite, maintaining its own identity, may incorporate suitable adaptations."<sup>158</sup>

As to the authority behind liturgical inculturation, the instruction states:

Adaptations of the Roman rite, even in the field of inculturation, depend completely on the authority of the church. This authority belongs to the Apostolic See, which exercises it through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments; it also belongs, within the limits fixed by law, to episcopal conferences and to the diocesan bishop. "No other person, not even if he is a priest, may on his own initiative add, remove or change anything in the liturgy."<sup>159</sup>

The instruction adds: "[i]nculturation is not left to the personal initiative of celebrants or to the collective initiative of an assembly."<sup>160</sup> The role of the Apostolic See is indispensable to the extent

---

<sup>156</sup>N. 36.

<sup>157</sup>N. 36.

<sup>158</sup>John Paul II, discourse to the plenary assembly of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, January 26, 1991, n. 3; in *AAS*, 83 (1991), p. 940.

<sup>159</sup>Cf. *SC*, 22: cc. 838 and 846, §1; John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor bonus*, nos. 62 and 64.3, in *AAS*, 80 (1988), pp. 876-877; *Vicesimus quintus annus*, nn. 19-21.

<sup>160</sup>N. 37. The instruction explains on this point: "The situation is different when, in the liturgical books published after the constitution, the introductions and the rubrics envisaged adaptations and the possibility of leaving a choice to the pastoral sensitivity of the one presiding, for example, when it says 'if it is opportune,' 'in these or similar terms', 'also', 'according to circumstances', 'either ... or', 'if convenient', 'normally', 'the most suitable form can be chosen.' In making a choice, the celebrant should seek the good of the assembly, taking into account the spiritual preparation and mentality of the participants rather than his own or the easiest solution. In celebrations for particular groups, other possibilities are available. Nonetheless, prudence and discretion are always called for in order to avoid the breaking up of the local church into little 'churches' or

that even "concessions granted to one region cannot be extended to other regions without the necessary authorization, even if an episcopal conference considers that there are sufficient reasons for adopting such measures in its own area."<sup>161</sup>

What are the concrete areas that can be inculturated and what cannot be? *SC*, 21 makes a distinction between immutable elements divinely instituted and elements subject to change, without saving what the latter actually include. The changeable elements "not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become pointless." The instruction specifies the changeable elements, like the language of proclamation of the Word of God,<sup>162</sup> music, singing in local language, and musical instruments.<sup>163</sup>

On gestures, the instruction, while maintaining that some of them are unchangeable,<sup>164</sup> suggests: "Each culture will choose those gestures and bodily postures which express the attitude of humanity before God, giving them a Christian significance, having some relationship if possible, with the gestures and postures of the Bible."<sup>165</sup> Other changeable elements are art, shape, location,

---

'chapels' closed in upon themselves."

<sup>161</sup>N. 37.

<sup>162</sup>N. 28. Cf. *SC*, 35 and 36: c. 825, §1.

<sup>163</sup>Cf. *SC*, 118, 120. Notwithstanding this, steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or sing together in Latin those parts of the ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them, especially the Our Father. *SC*, 54; cf. *Roman Missal*, General Instruction, 19.

<sup>164</sup>Among the unchangeable gestures include: (1) those which belong to the essential rites of the sacraments and which are required for their validity as stipulated in c. 841; (2) the gestures and postures of the celebrating priest which express his special function, he presides over the assembly in the person of Christ. (cf. *SC*, 33; C. 899, §2).

<sup>165</sup>N. 41. Such forms of external expression (hand clapping, rhythmic swaying and dance movements on the part of the participants) can have a place in the liturgical actions of these peoples on condition that they

decoration of the altar, the place for the proclamation of the word of God and for baptism, and all liturgical furnishings, vessels, vestments and colors.<sup>166</sup> However, “[t]he introduction of devotional practices into liturgical celebrations under the pretext of inculturation cannot be allowed “because by its nature, [the liturgy] is superior to them”.<sup>167</sup>

For the celebration of the Eucharist, the General Instruction on the Roman Missal allows legitimate differences and adaptations according to the prescriptions of the Second Vatican Council: “in accordance with the constitution on the liturgy, each conference of bishops has the power to lay down norms for its own territory that are suited to the traditions and character of peoples, regions and different communities.”<sup>168</sup> For the celebration of the other sacraments and for sacramentals, the Latin typical edition of each ritual indicates to the episcopal conferences,<sup>169</sup> or to diocesan

---

are always the expression of true communal prayer of adoration, praise, offering and supplication, and not simply a performance (cf. n. 42).

<sup>166</sup>N. 43; Cf. *Roman Missal, General Instruction*, 259-270, 272, 287-310; cc 1235-1239, especially 1236; *De benedictionibus: Ordo benedictionis baptisterii seu fontis baptismalis*, 832-837.

<sup>167</sup>SC, 13.

<sup>168</sup>*Roman Missal, General Instruction*, 6, 22, 26, 50, 56, 232, 242, 263, 288, 290, 304-305, 308; cf. also *Ordo Lectionum Missae, editio typica altera, Praenotanda*, 111-118. Cf. *De Sacra Communione et de Cultu Mysteriorum Eucharistici Extra Missam*, n. 21.

<sup>169</sup>Cf. *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum, Praenotanda Generalia*, 30-33; *Praenotanda*, 12, 20, 47, 64-65; *Ordo*, 312; *Appendix*, 12; *Ordo Baptismi Parvulorum, Praenotanda*, 8, 2325; *Ordo Confirmationis, Praenotanda*, 11-12, 16-17; *De Sacra Communione et de Cultu Mysteriorum Eucharistici Extra Missam, Praenotanda*, 12; *Ordo Paenitentiae, Praenotanda*, 35b, 38; *Ordo Unctionis Infirmorum Eorumque Pastoralis Curae, Praenotanda*, 38-39; *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium, editio typica altera, Praenotanda*, 39-44; *De Ordinatione Episcopi, Presbyterorum et Diaconorum, editio typica altera, Praenotanda*, 11; *De Benedictionibus, Praenotanda Generalia*, 39.

bishops,<sup>170</sup> the possible adaptations which concern texts, gestures and sometimes the ordering of the rite.

### **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter we have examined and explored the extent to which the current legislation of the Church can be of assistance in the implementation of the principal issues which were addressed by the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. These issues were (1) the nature and role of small Christian communities, (2) the identity and role of the agents of proclamation of the gospel in Africa, namely priests, religious and catechists, and (3) inculturation.

The African Synod mandated the creation of small Christian communities as an overall pastoral plan for Africa. In this chapter, we presented some of the general canonical elements which should be taken into consideration in the implementation of the synodal mandate on small Christian communities in Africa. Our discussion of these elements allows the drawing of two general conclusions and the formulation of some principles.

The first conclusion is that small Christian communities intimately belong to the parish, where they have both their birthplace and their immediate communion with the pastors of the Church. From this conclusion flows one basic principle, namely that a juridic status for small Christian communities must be conceived in relation to that of the parish. Indeed, small Christian communities do not need a juridic status independent of that of the parish.

---

<sup>170</sup>Cf. *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum*, Praenotanda, 66; *Ordo Baptismi Parvulorum*, Praenotanda, 26; *Ordo Paenitentiae*, Praenotanda, 39; *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, 36.

The second conclusion is that, in so far as they are united with the parish through its pastors, small Christian communities can adopt different forms and norms in accordance with the needs of each local church. This is not only a practical requirement but also the consistent teaching of the Magisterium of the Church. From this conclusion comes one principle, that union with the Church through its pastors is the constitutive element of small Christian communities.

The synodal discussions on the identity and role of the principal agents of the proclamation of the gospel in Africa (priests, religious men and women, and catechists) focused on formation. The task of training priests and religious is no longer the sole responsibility of the supreme ecclesiastical authority of the Church alone, but of the *whole* Church. For this reason, conferences of bishops and dioceses should participate in this task and experiment with the possibilities which the current legislation of the Church offers and have programs of priestly and religious formation adapted to their local needs. There is no need, therefore, to formulate new universal laws for priestly and religious formation, but for conferences of bishops and dioceses to utilize the opportunities already given by the law.

As regards catechists, our discussion concluded that they are members of Christ's faithful, called and commissioned by the Church to carry out ministries that are proper to both their status and the needs of the local church. For this work, catechists should receive both proper formation and befitting remuneration.

Our discussion of the canonical perspectives of inculturation was limited to marriage and liturgy. From the synodal bishops' observation that in most African cultures the essential properties of marriage are usually the same as Christian marriage, we considered whether tribal marriage between two baptized Catholics is a sacrament. Our discussion of the conciliar documents and c.

1055 revealed that a *valid* tribal marriage between a baptized man and woman which establishes a partnership of the whole of life, and is ordered to the good of the spouses, the procreation and education of offspring, is a sacrament. Episcopal conferences should use the faculty to prepare their own proper marriage rites which takes tribal marriage into consideration. This will reduce the number of people in Africa who are excluded from the reception of the sacraments of the Church because they contracted marriage in a tribal form not recognized as valid for Catholics by the church law.

According to the Council and the subsequent teaching of the Church, liturgical inculturation can be carried out in accord with the provisions of law. Bishops and episcopal conferences should implement liturgical inculturation as foreseen in the liturgical books. In carrying out this task, they should keep in mind the goal of inculturation, the substantial unity of the Roman rite and the competent authority.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

On January 6, 1989, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, Pope John Paul II convoked a Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. The historical circumstances in the African church gave occasion to the pope to convoke a Special Assembly for Africa, determining its objective as promoting an organic pastoral solidarity within the entire African territory and nearby islands. This objective is in response to the great concern of the Church in Africa: making the gospel message effective in the lives of the people. This concern has been raised by a greater awareness of the fact that, in Africa, evangelization has been more a task of proclamation than one of witness, since it lacks deep roots in the lives of many Catholics. There have been various attempts to address this concern, of which we identified three: inculturation, an African council, and the African Synod.

As with any other synod, the African Synod followed the usual regulations and agenda. Although every synodal assembly has its specific agenda, the ultimate agenda of all synods is the same: to assist the pope in his petrine ministry. The opinion set forth in chapter one is that, by convoking the assembly of the synod of bishops for Africa, John Paul II exercised his petrine ministry and, by providing an occasion to the heads of particular churches in Africa to come together, he promoted pastoral solidarity among them.

In chapter two, our analysis of the *Lineamenta*, the *Instrumentum laboris*, the working sessions, and the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, revealed both the exercise of the petrine ministry and the promotion of pastoral solidarity in the African episcopate. This solidarity was realized in different forms and at different levels. For example, it was realized when the pope summoned the various members of the African episcopate to come together in Rome and, together with officials of the Roman Curia, formulated the *Lineamenta*. Later, this solidarity

achieved another level when the African bishops, meeting in their respective conferences, engaged in a common journey of prayer, study and reflection on the *Lineamenta*. This concerted activity reached its first fruits with the evolution of the *Instrumentum laboris*, a document that expresses the reactions of the different conferences of bishops on the *Lineamenta*. Throughout this process, John Paul II exercised his petrine ministry by personally following with particular interest and affection the different stages of the African Synod. The theme of the synod and the need for all the faithful to prepare for the synodal assembly always figured prominently in the Pontiff's meetings with the people of Africa.

The evolution of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* was a unique moment in the exercise of the petrine ministry and the promotion of pastoral solidarity in Africa. The pope drew from the bishops' concerted input in addressing doctrinal and pastoral issues in Africa. In this way, the synod of bishops is beneficial to both the bishops and the Roman Pontiff. We concluded chapter two by showing that the synod of bishops helps the bishops to express, foster, and strengthen their episcopal solidarity, while at the same time the pope is helped in the exercise of his petrine ministry.

In chapter three, our examination of the synodal documents showed that some issues with canonical implications were addressed at the African Synod: the existence of small Christian communities alongside parishes; the formation of the principal agents of evangelization in Africa (priests, religious, and catechists) involving local churches especially the episcopal conferences and the small Christian communities; the ecclesial identity and ministry of the catechist; the Christian ideal of marriage; and inculturation of liturgy.

In chapter four, we suggested the extent to which the current legislation of the Church can be of assistance in the implementation of the principal synodal issues. We concluded that, in most instances, there is no need for new legislation, but only for the Church in Africa to implement the existing law of the entire Church, make use of the opportunities it presents, and experiment when necessary. With respect to small Christian communities, we have seen that they intimately belong to the parish where they have both their birthplace and their immediate communion with the pastors of the Church. Consequently, the juridic nature of the parish will not have to change even when the parish eventually emerges as a community of communities or a communion of communities. In other words, the constitution of the parish as set out in canon law does not exclude the possibility of dividing it into small Christian communities. A parish divided into smaller communities will still be a parish.

The task of training priests and religious is not the responsibility of the supreme ecclesiastical authority of the Church alone, but of the whole Church. For this reason, the universal law of the Church offers many opportunities to conferences of bishops and dioceses to formulate programs of priestly and religious formation adapted to their local needs. As regards catechists, we concluded that they are members of Christ's faithful, called and commissioned by the Church to carry out ministries that are proper to both their status and the needs of the local church. For this reason, catechists should receive both proper formation and befitting remuneration. This formation and remuneration, however, is not sufficiently elaborated in the current legislation of the Church. Thus, there is need for particular law on this.

Since in most African cultures the essential properties of the traditional marriage are mostly the same as those of Christian marriage, there is a strong doctrinal basis for considering as a

sacrament a tribal marriage between a baptized man and woman that establishes a partnership of the whole of life and is ordered to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring. However, the recognition of such marriage at this time is not possible due to the requirement of the canonical form in the universal law. In order to reduce the number of couples in Africa who are excluded from the reception of the sacraments of the Church because they contracted marriage in a tribal form not recognized as valid for Catholics by the church law, episcopal conferences should use the faculty granted them to prepare their own proper marriage rites which take tribal marriage into consideration. As regards inculturation of liturgy, bishops and episcopal conferences should implement it in accord with the provisions of law. There is no need to formulate new universal laws but for conferences of bishops and dioceses to utilize the opportunities already given by the law.

As we noted above, the synod of bishops enables the pope to respond to different situations in the Church. It makes available to the pope the collective wisdom of the local churches from which he may make appropriate decisions for the particular churches involved. It is here that the perfecting of the synod of bishops, which Paul VI foresaw, may be realized.<sup>171</sup>

There are two different ways of responding to people's needs: by care-taking or by care-giving. In the first way, one stands in for the others, doing things for them so that they do not have to do them for themselves; one gives them the things he or she thinks are good for the recipients, stands up for them and stands in for them. In the second way, one does not leap in for the others or take care of them, but moves ahead of them in order to clear the way for them to do things on their own and take care of themselves.

---

<sup>171</sup>See footnote 10, p. 4.

The relationship of the Roman Pontiff to the synod of bishops, as presented in cc. 343 and 344, is of a care-taker standing in for the bishops and their particular churches by convening the synod, ratifying the election of members, determining topics for discussion, determining the agenda, presiding over the synod, and concluding it. For instance, according to the general secretary's report, on December 6, 1988, John Paul II summoned to a meeting representatives of the African episcopate to present their suggestions on the possible theme for the African Synod. In their suggestions, these prelates expressed their primary concern as redressing the African present ills, not as addressing an abstract, general and theological subject of evangelization. Yet the Pontiff chose the latter model as the theme of the African Synod.<sup>172</sup> Furthermore, on January 26, 1993, John Paul II met with all the African cardinals in Rome and, having considered the demands of the synod itself, the need for freedom from undue pressures, and the current socio-political instability of many African nations, he decided to hold the working sessions of the synod in Rome. This deprived the African church of the challenge of holding the synod in Africa.

In general, any care-giving that goes beyond what is truly necessary tends to accomplish the very opposite of what it most truly intends to accomplish. It deprives its recipients of the opportunity of learning how to care for themselves, creating a reliance on the caretaker where independence and self-reliance could otherwise develop. Those whose needs and wants are always being met by someone else are denied the chance to explore their own personal capacities to take care of themselves and to reap the rewards that come from doing so – rewards of security that come with knowing that one is able to fend for oneself.

---

<sup>172</sup>See above on p. 72.

In contrast to the care-taking that characterizes the synod of bishops as it functions today, there is care-giving that does not take burdens off the shoulders of its recipients. It helps people to pick up their own burdens and hoist them on their own shoulders. Care-giving makes it possible for the care-receiver to assume his or her own proper responsibilities.

The attitude of care-giving is seen in the Gospel narrative of the man at the pool of Bethesda.<sup>173</sup> Jesus as care-giver realizes that the man has been sick for a long time and he asks him: "Do you want to be healed?" The man replies that he has no one to put him into the water. Jesus does not take him into the pool nor does he take his pallet, but gives him the order which empowers him to "rise, take up your pallet, and walk." Jesus does not assume the role of care-taker, but care-giver.

The synod of bishops that meets for special sessions, (for instance, to deal with matters which directly concern a definite region or regions)<sup>174</sup> could be granted deliberative power. Since bishops are *habiles* to exercise legislative power for their respective dioceses and in councils and conferences of bishops,<sup>175</sup> they can be permitted to exercise it in a synod that has been convoked to deal with their regions. The very fact that the law envisions the possibility of a deliberative synod for bishops<sup>176</sup> presupposes the fact that the bishops are capable of exercising their legislative power in the synod.

---

<sup>173</sup>Jn. 5:1-9.

<sup>174</sup>For the other types of synods that deal with matters which concern the whole Church this may not be the case. Since a synodal assembly is hardly representational of the world episcopate, it could not acquire a deliberative power to discuss and pass universal laws on matters concerning the entire Church.

<sup>175</sup>Cf. c. 391.

<sup>176</sup>Cf. c. 343.

The synodal law on special assemblies could be made such that it empowers the convoked particular churches through their bishops to respond personally to their challenges at home. The pope will still exercise his petrine ministry, because he will see what is lacking in a particular region and convoke those concerned to address the issue with binding effects. This will gain more acceptance for the synodal conclusions, since the people of God can more readily implement decisions for which their local pastors are directly responsible. The pope will contribute to this process as a care-giver who provides the pastors of the local churches with the occasion to meet and, if need be, to evaluate the effectiveness of their decisions in light of the mission of the entire Church. However, in order for all of this to happen, the nature itself of the synod of bishops will have to be reexamined to accommodate such changes as to allow the bishops to exercise legislative power in synods. Thus, the synod will not be a merely consultative organ for the benefit of the petrine ministry, but a true collegial body expressing the *communio* of the bishops among each other and with their head, the pope.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I - SOURCES

- Acta et documenta Concilio oecumenico Vaticano II apparando, series I (Antepreparatoria)*, Civitate vaticana, Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1960.
- Codex iuris canonici, Pii X Pontificis Maximi iussu digestus, Benedicti Papae XI autoritate promulgatus*, Romae, Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1917.
- Codex iuris canonici: schema Patribus commissionis reservatum*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1980.
- Codex iuris canonici: schema novissimum iuxta placita patrum commissionis emendatum atque Summo Pontifici praesentatum*, Città del Vaticano, Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1982.
- Codex iuris canonici, auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus, fontium annotatione et indice analytico-alphabetico auctus*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1989.
- Code of Canon Law Annotated*, Latin-English edition of the *Code of Canon Law* and English-language translation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Spanish-language edition of the commentary prepared under the responsibility of the Instituto Martín de Azpilcueta edited by F. CAPARROS M. THERIAULT, and J. THORN, Montréal, Wilson and Lafleur Limitée, 1993.
- Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition*, translation prepared under the auspices of the Canon Law Society of America, Washington, DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1983.
- Codex canonum Ecclesiarum orientalium, auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus*, Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1990; English translation, *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, Latin-English Edition*, translation prepared under the auspices of the Canon Law Society of America, Washington, DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1992.
- Commentario exegético al código de derecho canónico*, vols. I-V, obra coordinada y dirigida por A. Marzoa, J. Miras y R. Rodríguez-Ocaña, Segunda edición, Pamplona, EUNSA, 1997.
- CONGREGATIO PRO DOCTRINA FIDEI, *Documenta inde a Concilio Vaticano Secundo expleto edita (1966-1985)*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1985.
- CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, *The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation: IV Instruction on the Correct Implementation of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy*, (nn. 37-40), January 25, 1994, in *AAS*, 87 (1995), pp. 288-314.
- CONGREGATION FOR EASTERN CHURCHES, *Declaration interprétative du Décret du 27 Juillet, 1954*, April 30, 1986, in *AAS*, 78 (1986), pp. 784-786.

CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis*, Vatican City, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1997.

CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE PEOPLES, *Catechists in Africa, Asia and Oceania, Synthetic Study by the Permanent Commission for Catechesis and Catechists*, Rome, 1972.

FIRST VATICAN COUNCIL, *Pastor aeternus*, in Denziger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, ed. XXXIV, Barcinone. Herder. 1967, nn. 3050-3075.

INSTRUCTION ON CERTAIN QUESTIONS REGARDING THE COLLABORATION OF THE NON-ORDAINED FAITHFUL IN THE SACRED MINISTRY OR PRIESTS, Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

*Instrumentum laboris, Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa: "The Church in Africa and her Evangelizing Mission towards the year 2000, 'You Shall Be my Witnesses' (Acts 1:8),"* Vatican City, Vatican Press, 1993.

JOHN XIII, *Adhortatio apostolica, sacrae laudis*, 1962, in *AAS*, 54 (1962), pp. 66-75.

JOHN PAUL II, Allocation at the End of the Synod of Bishops of Africa, May 8, 1994, in *ORE*, May 11, 1994, pp. 1-2.

-----, Allocation to the Seventh Meeting of the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops for the Special Assembly for Africa, February 9, 1993, in *ORE*, February 17, 1993, p. 8.

-----, Allocation to the Bishops of Moçambique, in *AAS*, 74 (1982), pp. 1126-1233.

-----, *Adhortatio apostolica postsynodalis, Ecclesia in Africa*, in *AAS*, 88 (1996), pp. 5-82; English translation, in *The Church in Africa*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 1985.

-----, Address to Zaïrean Bishops During their *ad limina* Visit, April 21, (1983), in *AAS*, 75 (1983), pp. 629-635.

-----, "Africa, Exult in All Your Sons and Daughters Who Have Believed in Christ's Resurrection," in *ORE*, April 13, 1994, pp. 1 and 8.

-----, "An African Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: "The Church in Africa towards the Third Millennium," in *ORE*, January 16, 1989, p. 1.

- JOHN PAUL II. Angelus message, "Africa Urgently Needs Solidarity," February 27, in *ORE*, March 2, 1994, pp. 1-2.
- , Angelus message, "Africa Is Ready for the Gospel," March 6, 1994, in *ORE*, March 9, 1994, p. 1.
- , Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor bonus*, in *AAS*, 80 (1988), pp. 841-930.
- , Apostolic Constitution, *Spirituali militum curae*, April 21, 1986, in *AAS*, 78 (1986), pp. 481-486.
- , Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles laici*, December 30, 1988, in *AAS*, 81 (1989), pp. 393-521.
- , "Bishops Express Unity of the Church," in *ORE*, October 14, 1992, 41 (1992), p. 11.
- , "Council for the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops," in *AFER*, 31 (1981), pp. 258-261.
- , Discourse to the Pontifical Council for Culture, January 17, 1987, in *AAS*, 79 (1987), pp. 1201-1205.
- , Discourse to the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, January 26, 1991, in *AAS*, 83 (1991), p. 938-943.
- , Encyclical *Slavorum apostoli*, June 2, 1985, in *AAS*, 77 (1985), pp. 779-813.
- , Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, December 7, 1990, in *AAS*, 83 (1991), pp. 249-340.
- , Lettre au président de la Conférence épiscopale du Rwanda, in *Au coeur de l'Afrique*, 189 (1996), pp. 67-69.
- , "The Christian Community Ought to Witness to the Vitality and Richness of the Church," April 21, 1983, in *ORE*, May 30, 1983, p. 4.
- , "Parish: Model of Church Community," in *ORE*, March 17, 1993, p. 7.
- , "Synod is 'Indirectly Deliberative'," in *ORE*, November 5, 1990, pp. 7-8.
- Message of the African Synod by the Synodal Fathers, May 6, 1994, in *ORE*, May 11, 1994, pp. 6-9.
- Ordo synodi episcoporum celebrandae*, in *AAS*, 59 (1967), pp. 91-103; English translation in *CLD*, vol. 6, pp. 400-411.

*Ordo synodi episcoporum celebrandae recognitus et auctus*, in *AAS*, 61 (1969), pp. 525-539; English translation in *CLD*, vol. 7, pp. 323-337.

*Ordo synodi episcoporum celebrandae recognitus et auctus nonnullis additamentis perficitur*, in *AAS*, 63 (1971), pp. 702-704; English translation in *CLD*, vol. 7, pp. 338-431.

PAUL VI. "*Africae terrarum*, A Message from Pope Paul VI to the Countries of Africa," in *AFER*, 10 (1968), pp. 71-84

-----, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 58, in *AAS*, 68 (1976), p. 48.

-----, "Address to SECAM," in *AAS*, 61 (1969), pp. 573-578.

-----, Motu proprio, *Apostolica sollicitudo*, in *AAS*, 57 (1965), pp. 775-780; English translation in *CLD*, vol. 6, pp. 388-393.

-----, Allocution *Quali siano*, September 21, 1963, to Officials of the Roman Curia, in *AAS*, 55 (1963), p. 799.

-----, *Africae terrarum*, in *AFER*, 10 (1968), pp. 71-84.

PIUS XII. Allocution to the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies, in *AAS*, 36 (1994), pp. 207-211.

-----, Encyclical Letter, *Summi pontificatus*, in *AAS*, 31 (1939), p. 413-453.

-----, *Apostolica adhortatio, ad sacerdotes et clericos in exercitus ordines adscitos*, in *AAS*, 31 (1939), pp. 696-701.

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE, "Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture," in *Origins*, 29 (1998-1999), pp. 65-84.

*Schema canonum libri II de populi Dei*, Romae, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1977.

*Schema decreti de institutione sacerdotali, textus emendatus et modi*, Concilium Vaticanum II, Romae, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1965.

SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, October 28, 1965, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 673-701; English translation in *Church Documents, Conciliar and Post-Conciliar*, CD-ROM, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1995.

- SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree on the training of priests, *Optatam totius*, October 28, 1965. in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 713-727. English translation in *Church Documents, Conciliar and Post-Conciliar*, CD-ROM, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1995.
- , Decree on the apostolate of the laity, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, November 18, 1965, in *AAS*, 59 (1966), pp. 837-864. English translation in *Church Documents, Conciliar and Post-Conciliar*, CD-ROM, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1995.
- , Decree on the Church's missionary activity, *Ad gentes divinitus*, December 7, 1965, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 947-990. English translation in *Church Documents, Conciliar and Post-Conciliar*, CD-ROM, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1995.
- , Decree on the ministry of priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, December 7, 1965, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 991-1024. English translation in *Church Documents, Conciliar and Post-Conciliar*, CD-ROM, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1995.
- , Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, December 7 1965, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 1025-1120. English translation in *Church Documents, Conciliar and Post-Conciliar*, CD-ROM, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1995.
- , Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, November 21, 1964, in *AAS*, 57 (1965), pp. 5-71. English translation in *Church Documents, Conciliar and Post-Conciliar*, CD-ROM, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1995.
- , Constitution on the sacred liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, December 4, 1963, in *AAS*, 56 (1964), pp. 97-138. English translation in *Church Documents, Conciliar and Post-Conciliar*, CD-ROM, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1995.
- Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, April 11, 1994, in *ORE*, 20 April 1994, pp. 4-13.
- Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, April 11, 1994, in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, pp. 4-21.
- , April 19, 1994, in *ORE*, May 18, 1994, pp. 4-11.
- , April 21, 1994, in *ORE*, May 25, 1994, pp. 5-11.
- Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa: *Lineamenta*, St. Paul Publications Africa, Nairobi.
- The Canon Law, Letter & Spirit: A Practical Guide to the Code of Canon Law*, translation prepared under the auspices of the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland in association with the Canadian Canon Law Society, Collegeville, MN, The Liturgical Press, 1995.

*The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, commissioned by the Canon Law Society of America, edited by J.A. Coriden, T.J. Green and D.E. Heintschel. Washington, DC, New York, Paulist Press, 1985.

## II. BOOKS

ANTON, A., *Primado y colegialidad: sus relaciones a la luz del primer Sínodo extraordinario*, Madrid. B.A.C., 1970.

ARBUCKLE, G.A., *Earthing the Gospel: An Inculturation Handbook for the Pastoral Worker*, Marvknoll, NY. Orbis Books, 1990.

AZEVEDO, M. C., *Basic Ecclesial Communities in Brazil: The Challenge of a New Way of Being Church*, translated by J. DRURY, Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, 1987.

BARREIRO, A., *Basic Ecclesial Communities: The Evangelization of the Poor*, translated by B. CAMPBELL, New York, Orbis Books, 1982.

BAUSCH, W.J., *The Christian Parish: Whispers of the Risen Christ*, Notre Dame, Fides/Claretian, 1980.

BARRY, J.A., *Ecclesial Norms for Priestly Formation*, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1982.

BLOCHLINGER, A., *The Modern Parish Community*, translated by S. GEOFFREY, New York, P.J. Kenedy, 1965.

BERTRAMS, W., *Il potere pastorale del Papa e del collegio dei vescovi: premesse e conclusioni teologico-giuridiche*, Roma, Herder, 1967.

-----, *The Papacy, the Episcopacy and Collegiality*, Westminster, The Newman Press, 1964.

BEYER, J., G. FELICIANI and H. MÜLLER, *Comunione ecclesiale e strutture di corresponsabilità: dal Vaticano II al nuovo Codice di diritto canonico*, Roma, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1990.

BOFF, L., *Ecclesiogenesis: The Basic Communities Reinvent the Church*, translated by R. BARR, Marvknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1986.

BOURGEOIS, H., H. DENIS and M. JOURICE, *Les évêques et l'Église: un problème*, Paris, Les Éditions du CERF, 1989.

BOYD, M., *The Underground Church*, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1968.

- BRAVI, M.C., *Il sinodo dei vescovi: istituzione, fini e natura: indagine teologico-giuridica*, Roma, Gregorian University Press, 1995.
- BRENNAN, P.J., *Re-Imagining the Parish*, New York, Crossroad, 1990.
- BROWN, M., *The African Synod, Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, New York, Orbis Books, 1996.
- BUHLMAN, W., *The Missions on Trial*, Slough, St. Paul Publications, 1978.
- BUDIMA, J.G., *Théorie critique et modernité négro-Africaine, de l'école de Francfort à la 'Doctus spes africana'*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1993.
- CARLEN, C., *Papal Pronouncements, A Guide: 1740-1978*, Michigan, Pieran Press, 1991.
- CASTELLI, J. and J. GREMILLION, *The Emerging Parish: The Notre Dame Study of Catholic Life Since Vatican II*, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1987.
- Certain Explanations on the Order of the Synod of Bishops*, Vatican City, September 27, 1994.
- COMBLIN, J., *The Meaning of Mission: Jesus, Christians, and the Wayfaring Church*, translated by J. DRURY, Marvknoll, NY, Orbis, 1977.
- CHAMBERLAIN, G. and P.J. HOWELL (eds.), *Empowering Authority, the Charisms of Episcopacy and Primacy in the Church Today*, Kansas City, Sheed and Ward, 1990.
- CHEZA M., *Le synode africain: histoire et textes*, Paris, Éditions Karthala, 1996
- , *Les évêques d'Afrique parlent: documents pour le synode africain*, Paris, Editions du Centurion, 1992.
- CHUPUNGCO, A.J., *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy*, Ramsey, Paulist Press, 1982.
- , *Liturgies of the Future: The Process and Methods of Inculturation*, New York, Paulist Press, 1989.
- CLARK, S.B., *Building Christian Communities*, Notre Dame, IN, Ave Maria Press, 1972.
- , (ed.) *Patterns of Christian Community*, Ann Arbor, MI, Servant Books, 1984.
- CONGAR, Y.M. (ed.), *La collegialité épiscopale. Histoire et théologie*, Paris, Cerf, 1965.
- CONGAR, Y.M. and B. DUPUY, *L'épiscopat et l'Église universelle*, Paris, Cerf, 1967

- CONNOLLY, P.J., *The Nature of Marriage as Proposed in the Codex iuris canonici and in the Codex canonum Ecclesiarum orientalium*, (Dissertation), Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1995.
- CROLLIUS, A.R., and NKERAMHIGO, (eds.), *Inculturation*, vol. 5, Rome, Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1984.
- CURRIER, R., *Restructuring the Parish*, Chicago, Argus Press, 1967.
- DE PAOLIS, V. et al., *Collegialità e primato*, Bologna, Centro Editoriale Dehoniano, 1993.
- DELHAYE, P. and J.P. RENARD (eds.), *Commission théologique internationale: textes et documents (1969-1985)*, Paris, Cerf, 1988.
- DOLAN, J., *The History of the American Catholic Parish: From 1850 to the Present*, 2 vols., New York/Mahwah, Paulist Press, 1987.
- DOOHAN, L., *Lay's Mission in the Local Church*, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1986.
- DORTEL-CLAUDOT, M., *L'Église, ses structures, son gouvernement. Évolution historique et situation actuelle*, Lyon, Faculté de théologie de Fourvière, 1971.
- DOYLE, D.M., *The Church Emerging from Vatican II*, Mystic, Twenty-Third Publications, 1992.
- DULLES, A., *Models of the Church*, (Expanded edition), New York, Doubleday, 1987.
- EMMANUEL, S.J., *The Lay Catechist*, Thesis, Pontifical Urban University, Rome, 1978.
- EXTRAORDINARY SYNOD OF BISHOPS, *A Message to the People of God and the Final Report*, Washington, DC, 1985.
- FAGIOLO, V., *La collegialità episcopale per il futuro della Chiesa: dalla prima alla seconda assemblea del sinodo dei vescovi, opera collettiva*, Florence, Vasecchi Editore, 1969.
- FESQUET, H., *Le synode et l'avenir de l'Église*, Paris, Le Centurion, 1972.
- FLORISTAN, C., *The Parish: Eucharistic Community*, translated by J. BROWN, London, Sheed and Ward, 1965.
- FOLEY, D.R., *The Synod of Bishops: Its Canonical Structure and Proceedings*, Washington, DC, The Catholic University of America, 1973.

- FRASER, IAN and MARGARET, *Wind and Fire – The Spirit Reshapes the Church in Basic Christian Communities*, Dunblane, Scotland, Basic Communities Resource Center, 1986.
- GALLO, J., *Basic Ecclesial Communities: A New Form of Christian Organizational Response to the World Today*, Doctoral Dissertation, Boston University, 1989.
- GEANEY, D.J., *The Prophetic Parish: A Center for Peace and Justice*, Minneapolis, Winston, 1983.
- GHIRLANDA, G., *De ecclesia particularibus deque earundem coetibus*, Roma, Gregorian University, 1986.
- , *De suprema Ecclesiae auctoritate*, Roma, Gregorian University, 1986.
- , "Hierarchica communitio." *Significato della formula nella "Lumen gentium"*, Roma, Università Gregoriana editrice, 1980.
- GICHIAWA MWANIKI, F., *The Small Christian Communities and Human Liberation: With Special Reference to the AMECEA Countries*, (Dissertation), Rome, Pontificia Universitas Lateranense, 1986.
- GRICHTING, W.L., *Parish Structure and Climate in an Era of Change: A Sociologist's Inquiry*, Washington, DC, The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 1969.
- GROOTAERS, J., *Primauté et collégialité*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 1986.
- GUTIERREZ, J.L., *Estudios sobre la organización jerárquica de la Iglesia*, Pamplona, EUNSA, 1987.
- HAMER, J., *The Church is a Communion*, London, Chapman, 1964.
- HASTINGS, A. (ed.), *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After*, London, Oxford University Press, 1991.
- , *Church and Mission in Modern Africa*, London, Burns and Oates, 1969.
- HEALEY, J. and D. SYBERTZ, *Towards an African Narrative Theology*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications, 1995.
- HEBBLETHWAITE, P., *Inside the Synod: Rome*, New York, Paulist Press, 1967.
- , *Pope John Paul II and the Church*, Kansas City, Sheed and Ward, 1985.
- , *Synod Extraordinary*, New York, Doubleday, 1986.

- HEBGA, M. *Afrique de la raison: Afrique de la foi*. Paris. Édition Karthala. 1995
- HERMAN, R.R., *A Cultural Approach to Christian Community*. Akron, OH. Bread of Life. 1991.
- HOFFMAN, V., *Birth of a Living Church*. New York, Crossroad. 1988.
- ISICHEI, E., *A History of Christianity in Africa*. Grand Rapids, MI, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1995.
- KALILOMBE, P.A., *From Outstations to Small Christian Communities*, Eldoret, Kenya. Gaba Publications. 1984.
- KALONJI, N., *Les communautés ecclésiales de base: foyers d'un christianisme africain?*, Doctoral Dissertation, Rome, Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1983.
- KILIAN, S.J., *Theological Models for the Parish*, New York, Alba House, 1977.
- KUZIONA, J.M., *The Nature and Application of Juridical Acts According to Canon 124 of the Code of Canon Law*, (Dissertation). Ottawa. Saint Paul University, 1998.
- LAPPOINTE, E., *Une expérience pastorale en Afrique australe*, Paris, Editions L'Harmattan, 1985.
- LARSEN, E., *Spiritual Growth: Key to Parish Renewal*, Liguori, Liguori Publications, 1978.
- LATOURELLE, R. (ed.) *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives*, 3 vol, New York, Paulist Press, 1988.
- LAURENTIN, R., *Le premier synode*. Paris. Éditions du Seuil. 1968.
- , *Le synode permanent: naissance et avenir*. Paris. Éditions du Seuil. 1970.
- , *L'enjeu du synode, suite du Concile*. Paris. Éditions du Seuil. 1967.
- , *Réorientation de l'Église après le III<sup>e</sup> synode*. Paris. Éditions du Seuil. 1977
- LECKEY, D.R., *Lay Stiring the Church: Prophetic Questions*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1987.
- LEITE, S.A., *A comunhão na constituição hierárquica da Igreja*, Porto, Livraria Apostolado da Imprensa, 1992.
- LEGRAND, H., J. MANZANARES, A. GARCIA, (eds.), *The Nature and Future of Episcopal Conferences*, Washington, DC., Catholic University of America Press, 1988.

- LOBINGER, F. *Building Small Christian Communities*. South Africa. Lumko Missiological Institute. 1981.
- LOSIGO, K., *Perspectives écclesiologiques en Afrique noire francophone*, Doctoral Dissertation. Rome. Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1991.
- LUBAC, H. *Les églises particulières dans l'Église universelle*. Paris. Aubier. 1971
- LUNEAU, R. *Paroles et silences du synode africain*. Paris. Éditions Karthala. 1997
- LYONS, B., *Parish Councils: Renewing the Christian Community*, Techny, IL, DWP. 1967.
- MACEOIN, G. and N. RILEY, *Puebla: A Church Being Born*, New York, Paulist Press, 1980.
- MACKIN, T., *What is Marriage?*, New York, Paulist Press, 1982.
- MANDEFU, K., *L'impact d'un discours anthropocentrique sur les communautés ecclésiales vivantes*, Doctoral Dissertation, Rome, Pontificia Facoltà, Teologica Teresianum, 1990.
- MARCOUX, M., *Cursillo: Anatomy of a Movement*, New York, Lambeth Press, 1982.
- MARINS, J. et al., *Basic Ecclesial Communities: The Church from the Roots*, Philippines, Claretian Publications, 1983.
- MARTY, M., *Death and Birth of a Parish*, St. Louis, Concordia, 1964.
- MCBRIEN, R.P., *Catholicism*, (Study edition), San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1981.
- MACGARY, C., *A Light on Our Path: A Pastoral Contribution to the Synod of Africa*, Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa, 1993.
- , *What Happened at the African Synod?*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 1995.
- MACORD, P.J., *A Pope for all Christians? An Inquiry into the Role of Peter in the Modern Church*, New York, Paulist Press, 1976.
- MATENKADI, F.A., *Les catéchistes, au coeur des églises d'Afrique à la lumière du canon 785 du Code de 1983*. Kinshasa. Éditions Le Sénégal. 1998.
- MBYEMEIRE, J.P., *A Theological Analysis of the Problem of Justice and Peace, the Contribution of the Special Synod for Africa and the Church in Uganda*, Dissertation in Dogmatic Theology, Rome, Urbanian University, 1997.

- MCDERMOTT, J.M., (ed.), *The Thought of Pope John Paul II: A Collection of Essays and Studies*. Rome, Gregorian University Press, 1993.
- MEYENDORFF, J. (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter*, New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992.
- MILANO, G.P., *Il sinodo dei vescovi*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1988.
- MILLER, J.M., *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, Huntington, IN, Our Sunday Visitor Division, 1998.
- MORRISEY, F.G., *Papal and Curial Pronouncements: Their Canonical Significance in Light of the Code of Canon Law*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. revised and updated by Michel THÉRIAULT. Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1995.
- MUGALU, J., *Philosophy, Oral Tradition And Africanistics*, New York, Peter Lang, 1995.
- MUGAMBI, J.N.K., *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War*, Nairobi, East African Educational Publishers Ltd., 1995.
- MURPHY, F.X. and G. MCEON, *Synod 1967*, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1968.
- NIEBUHR, H.R., *Christ and Culture*, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1951.
- NEUNER, J. and J. DUPUIS, *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, Glasgow, Collins, 1983.
- NEUNER, J., H. ROOS and K. OKOLO, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church*, Cork, Mercier Press, 1967.
- NYABENDA, M., *'L'Église-famille de Dieu:' la réponse du synode africain à la 'Nouvelle évangélisation' et son ambiguïté*, Ottawa, Université Saint-Paul, 1995.
- *L'Image 'Église-famille de Dieu' pour l'Église du Burundi: étude historique et théologique*, Ottawa, Université Saint Paul, 1998.
- O'DONOHUE, J., *New Wine and Old Bottles: A Study of the Concepts of Traditional Africa and of Their Continuing Influence Today*, Uppsala, Uppsala University, 1994.
- O'HALLORAN, J., *Living Cells: Developing Small Christian Communities*, Dublin, Dominican Publications, 1984.
- , *Signs of Hope: Developing Small Christian Communities*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1991.

- OKOLO, C.B., *The African Synod: Hope for the Continent's Liberation*, Eldoret. AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1994.
- OKONKWOR, B.H., *The Role of Matrimonial Consent in Igbo Traditional Marriage, in the Light of the New Canonical Legislations: A Comparative Study*, (Dissertation). Rome. Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1985.
- ÓRSY, L., *The Church: Learning and Teaching*, Wilmington, Glazier, 1987.
- OSEGBOUN, R.F., *The Catechist According to the African Synod (1994)*, Edo-Ekiti, Hope Paper Mill Ltd., 1996.
- PAGÉ, R., *Les églises particulières, la charge pastorale de leurs communautés de fidèles selon de Code de droit canonique de 1983*. Tome II. Montréal. Éditions Paulines, 1989.
- , *Les églises particulières, leurs structures de gouvernement selon le Code de droit canonique de 1983* Tome I Montréal Éditions Paulines, 1985
- PARISH PROJECT, *Parish Development: Programs and Organizations*, Washington, DC, NCCB, 1980.
- , *The Parish Project Reader: Selected Articles From the Parish Ministry Newsletter 1979-1982*, Washington, DC, NCCB, 1982.
- , *Parish Life in the United States: Final Reports to the Bishops of the United States by the Parish Project*, Washington DC, NCCCB, 1983.
- PERRIN, J. M.F., *Basic Communities in the African Churches*, translated by J.M. LYONS, Marvknoll, NY, Orbis, 1973.
- PHILIPS, G., *Primauté et collégialité*, Leuven, University Press, 1986.
- PROVOST, J., *The Church as Communion, Permanent Seminar Studies No.1*, Washington, DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1984.
- RAHNER, K. and J. RATZINGER, *The Episcopate and the Primacy*, New York, Herder and Herder, 1962.
- , *The Shape of the Church to Come*, translated by E. QUINN, New York, Seabury Press, 1974.
- RATZINGER, J., *Called to Communion*, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1996.
- REESE, T.J., *Inside the Vatican*, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1996.

- REESE, T.J., *Conference of Bishops: Historical, Canonical & Theological Studies*. Washington, DC. Georgetown University Press, 1989.
- , (ed.), *Episcopal Conferences as an Expression of the Communion of the Churches*. Washington, DC. Georgetown University Press, 1989.
- SARAFF, G., *Karol Wojtyła e il sinodo dei vescovi*, Roma, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1980.
- SCAAF, Y., *On their Way Rejoicing: The History and Role of the Bible in Africa*, Carlisle, The Paternoster Press, 1994.
- SCHATZ, K., *Papal Primacy; from Its Origins to the Present*, Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1996.
- SCHINELLER, P., *A Handbook on Inculturation*, New York, Paulist Press, 1990.
- SCHILLEBEECKX, E., *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord*, translated by J. BOWDEN, New York, Crossroad, 1981.
- , *The Church with a Human Face: A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry*, translated by J. BOWDEN, London, SCM Press, 1985.
- SCHMAUS, M., *Dogma vol. 4: The Church: Its Origin and Structure*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1972.
- SCICLUNA, *The Essential Definition of Marriage According to the 1917 and 1983 Codes of Canon Law*, Lanham, University Press of America, 1985.
- SHORTER, A., *Christianity and African Imagination after the African Synod: Resources for Inculturation*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 1996.
- , *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1988.
- SHORTER, A., and E. KATAZA (eds.), *Missionaries to Yourselves: African Catechists Today*, London, Chapman, 1972.
- SUENENS, L.J., *Corresponsibility in the Church*, New York, Herder and Herder, 1968.
- SULLIVAN, F.A., *Creative Fidelity: Weighing and Interpreting Documents of the Magisterium*, New York, Paulist Press, 1996.
- SWEETSER, T.P., *Successful Parishes: How They Meet the Challenge of Change*, Minneapolis, Winston Press, 1983.

- Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, (SECAM): History, Objectives, Members, Activities*, SECAM Press Office, Accra-Ghana, April, 1994.
- Synodus episcoporum: Bulletin Édition Française*, Vatican City, Bureau de Presse du Saint Siège, 1994.
- TERRY, C., *Exploring Our Christian Life in the Light of the African Synod*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 1994.
- THILS, G., *Primauté pontificale et prérogatives épiscopales: "Potestas ordinaria" au Concile du Vatican*, Louvain, E. Warnv, 1961.
- TILLARD, J.M.R., *Église d'églises: eccésiologie de communion*, Paris, Cerf, 1987.
- TOMKO, J., *Il sinodo dei vescovi: natura-metodo-perspettive*, Rome, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1985.
- TORRES, S. and J. EAGLESON (eds.), *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities*, translated by J. DRURY, Marvknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1981.
- TWINOMUGISHA, S., *Ecclesiological Meaning of Small Christian Communities in Uganda Today*, Doctoral Dissertation, Rome, Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1991.
- UGEUX, B., *Les petites communautés chrétiennes: une alternative aux paroisses?* Paris, Cerf, 1988.
- UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE, *Principles of Inculturation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Department of Education, August 31, 1994.
- VANDENAKKER, J.P., *Small Christian Communities and the Parish*, Kansas City, Sheed and Ward, 1994.
- VORGRIMLER, H. (ed.), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. II, Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1968.
- WALSH, V.M., *The Theological and Juridical Role of the Bishop: Early Twentieth Century and Contemporary Views*, Rome, Lateran University, 1971.
- WHITEHEAD, E.E. and JAMES D., *Community of Faith: Models and Strategies for Developing Christian Community*, Minneapolis, Winston Press, 1982.
- WOESTMAN, W.H., *The Sacraments of Order and the Clerical State: A Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1999.

### III - ARTICLES

- ABENG, N. B., "La pastorale de la famille - l'inculturation - l'écclésiologie. Après le synode des évêques pour l'Afrique." in *Revue Africaine de Théologie*, 35 (1994), pp. 51-64.
- "African Synod: *Lineamenta* and Questions," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 322-329.
- AFRICAN SYNOD COMMUNICATION WORKING GROUP (NAIROBI), "Some Proposals for the African Synod," in AFRICA FAITH & JUSTICE NETWORK, *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, New York, Orbis Books, 1996, pp. 43-44.
- AGUILAR, M. I., "An African Theology of Praxis Through Small Christian Communities," in *AFER*, 37 (1995) 3, pp. 142-155.
- , "The Social Experience of Two Gods in Africa," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 32-43.
- ALBERICHI, E., "Is the Universal Catechism an Obstacle or a Catalyst in the Process of Inculturation?" in *Concilium*, 204 (1989), pp. 88-97.
- ALBERIGO, G., "Istituzione per la comunione tra l'episcopato universale e il vescovo di Roma," in *Il Cristianesimo nella storia*, 2 (1981), pp. 235-266.
- ALCALA, M., "Iglesia en el mundo: relanzamiento del Vaticano II a proposito del sinodo," in *Razon y fe*, 190 (1974), pp. 413-427.
- , "Karol Wojtyła y el sinodo episcopal romano," in *Estudios eclesiasticos*, 57 (1982), pp. 155-182.
- AMA J.B., "Distribute 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' on a Wide Scale," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 16.
- ANANDARAYAR, A., "Parish and Its Pastors in the New Code of Canon Law," in *Indian Theological Studies*, 22 (1985), pp. 79-99.
- ANCEL, A., "El sacerdote según el Vaticano II," in *Seminarios*, 12 (1966), pp. 335-349.
- ANTON, A., "Episcoporum Synodus in quantum «partes agens totius catholici episcopatus»," in *Periodica*, 57 (1968), pp. 495-527.
- , "Verso una collegialità più effettiva del sinodo dei vescovi," in *Rivista del clero italiano*, 64 (1964), pp. 290-302; 482-499; 562-576.

- APOCHI, M., "In Search of Effective Evangelization Methodology: Lessons From Acts 13: 16-41: 14: 15-18 and 17:22-31," in *Jos Studies*, 5 (1995) 1, pp. 28-41.
- ARIAS, J., "Il sinodo dei vescovi quale istituto di comunione," in *Ius Ecclesiae*, 1 (1991), pp. 356-365.
- , "La función consultiva," in *Ius canonicum*, II (1971), pp. 217-244.
- , "Lo sviluppo istituzionale del sinodo dei vescovi," in *Ius Ecclesiae*, 4 (1992), pp. 189-213.
- ARINZE, F., "The Challenge of New Religious Movements," in *Origins*, 20 (1990-1991), pp. 748-753.
- ARRIETA, J. I., "El sínodo de los obispos: criterios que enmarcan su evolución normativa," in *Ius canonicum*, 24 (1984), pp. 51-85.
- Attachment to a Report to the United States Bishops, "Effective and Affective Collegiality" in *Origins*, 25 (1995-1996), p.134-136.
- AUSTIN, R. J., "The Particular Church and the Universal Church in the 1983 Code of Canon Law," in *Studia canonica*, 22 (1988), pp. 339-358.
- AZEVEDO, M.C., "Basic Ecclesial Communities: A Meeting Point of Ecclesiologies," in *Theological Studies*, 46 (1985), pp. 601-620.
- BAKOT, S. V. T., "The Mission of Lay People is Renewal of Temporal Order," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 9.
- BALKE, V., "The Parish Pastoral Council," in *Origins*, 16 (1986-1987), pp. 821-825.
- BARANOWSKI, A. R., "Small Christian Communities and the Parish," in *Church*, 5 (1989), pp. 38-40.
- BARCELON, E., "Identidad teológico-jurídica en el nuevo código," in *Ciencia Tomista*, 111 (1984), pp. 551-573.
- BARRY, J. C., "Law in the Post Conciliar Church," in *Studia Canonica*, 5 (1971), pp. 259-278.
- , "The Implementation by Episcopal Conferences of the Conciliar Decree, *Optatam totius*," in *Studia canonica*, 18 (1984), 291-384.
- BATE, S. C., "God's Family: Inculturation in *Ecclesia in Africa*," in *Grace and Truth*, 12 (1995), pp. 24-29.

- BAUDOT, D., *L'Inséparabilité entre le contract et le sacrement de mariage: la discussion après le Concile Vatican II*, (Dissertation). Roma. Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1987.
- BAUM, G., "The Synod of Bishops," in *Catholic Mind*, 65 (1967), pp. 2-4.
- BEDIAKO, K., "The Significance of Modern African Christianity - A Manifesto," in *Studies in World Christianity*, 1 (1995) 1, pp. 51-67.
- BERTRAMS, W., "Commentarium in litteras Apostolicas 'Apostolica sollicitudo' Pauli Papae VI." in *Periodica*, 55 (1966), pp. 115-132.
- , "De doctrina Concilii Vaticani I subiectum suprema Ecclesiae potestatis ulterius exulta in doctrina Concilii Vaticani II," in *Euntes docete*, 20 (1967), pp. 59-69.
- , "De gradibus communionis in doctrina Concilii Vaticani II," in *Gregorianum*, 47 (1966), pp. 286-305.
- , "De missione divina et de consecratione episcopali tamquam constitutiva officii supremi ecclesiae pastoris," in *Periodica*, 65 (1976), pp. 187-242.
- , "De origine et significatione notionis 'hierarchica communio'," in *Periodica*, 69 (1980), pp. 23-30.
- , "De Synodi episcoporum potestate cooperandi in exercitio potestatis primatialis," in *Periodica*, 57 (1968), pp. 528-546.
- , "Struttura del sinodo dei vescovi," in *La Civiltà cattolica*, 116 (1965), pp. 417-423.
- BERUTTI, C., "Adnotationes in motu proprio 'Apostolica sollicitudo'," in *Monitor ecclesiasticus*, 90 (1965), pp. 531-549.
- BEYER, J., "De natura postestatis regiminis seu iurisdictionis recte in Codice renovato enuntianda," in *Periodica*, 71 (1982), pp. 93-145.
- , "Paroisse, église locale, communion," in *L'année canonique*, 25 (1981), pp. 179-199.
- BIRONDO, R., "Basic Christian Communities: The Experience of the Philippines," in *The Clergy Review*, 70 (1985), pp. 249-252.
- BLUEHER, R., "A Response to a Paradigm Shift: The North America Forum for Small Christian Communities," in *Pace*, 21 (1991), pp. 115-118.
- BOCHKEL, D., "Pour un renouveau de la paroisse," in *DC*, 68 (1971), pp. 785-790.

- BOFF, C., "The Nature of Basic Christian Communities," in *Concilium*, 44 (1981), pp. 53-58.
- BOHN, B.J., "Report on All-African Bishops Symposium," in *AFER*, 11 (1969), pp. 397-401.
- BRAMBILLA, F.G., "La parrocchia nella Chiesa: riflessione fondamentale," in *Theologia*, 13 (1988), pp. 18-44.
- BURKE, T.J., E.B. METZGER, et al., "Eucharistic Famine: A Pastoral Appeal to the 'African Synod'," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 178-183.
- CADORETTE, C., "Basic Christian Communities: Their Social Role and Missiological Promise," in *Missiology*, 15 (1987), pp. 17-30.
- CAPELLINI, E., "La tutela dei diritti delle comunità territoriali: diocesi e parrocchia," in *Monitor ecclesiasticus*, 113 (1988), pp. 85-104.
- CARDOS, A.D., "Marriage and Family Life," in *ORE*, May 18, 1994, p. 4.
- CARLSON, R., "The Parish According to the Revised Code," in *Studia canonica*, 19 (1985), pp. 5-16.
- CHAKALPA, P.F., "The Five Themes of the Synod," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 15.
- CHEPKWONY, A.K.A., "Theological Trends In Africa," in *AFER*, 34 (1992), pp. 2-17.
- CHEZA, M., "Bilanz der Afrikanischen Synode," in *Concilium*, 32 (1996) 2, pp. 202-205.
- CHIONA, J., "'Pre-Marriage and Marriage Catechesis,' African Intervention at the 1980 Synod of Bishops," in *AFER*, 23 (1981), pp. 49-51.
- CHUKWUMA, O., "The Synod of Bishops/Special Assembly for Africa: Is this Another Roman Program for Africa," in *AFER*, 34 (1992), p. 208-223.
- CLAVER, F., "Basic Christian Communities in the Wider Context," in *Pastoral Review*, 23 (1986), pp. 362-368.
- CROLLIUS, A.R., "What is so New About Inculturation?" in *Gregorianum*, 59 (1978), pp. 721-738.
- COCCOPALMERIO, F., "Il concetto di parrocchia nel Vaticano II," in *La scuola cattolica*, 106 (1978), pp. 123-142.
- , "La parrocchia nel nuovo Codice," in *Orientamenti pastorali*, 31 (1983), pp. 143-168.

- , "Quaedam de conceptu paroeciae iuxta doctrinam Vaticano II," in *Periodica*, 70 (1981), pp. 119-140.
- , "Quaestiones de paroecia in novo codice (pars I)," in *Periodica*, 73 (1984), pp. 379-410.
- , "Quaestiones de paroecia in novo codice (pars II)," in *Periodica*, 76 (1984), pp. 47-82.
- , "Quaestiones de paroecia in novo codice (pars III)," in *Periodica*, 77 (1988), pp. 219-287.
- COLELLA, P., "Brevi osservazioni sul sinodo dei vescovi," in *Il diritto ecclesiastico*, 80 (1969), pp. 353-368.
- COLLINS, R. F., "Small Groups: An Experience of Church," in *Louvain Studies*, 13 (1988), pp. 109-136.
- COLOMBO, C., "Il significato della collegialità episcopale nella Chiesa," in *Ius canonicum*, 19 (1979), pp. 13-28.
- CONGAR, Y. M. and B. DUOLY, "L'épiscopat et l'Église universelle," in *Concilium*, 108 (1975), pp. 55-64.
- CONNOR, B., "Social Communications and the Synodal Exhortation," in *Grace and Truth*, 12 (1995), pp. 21-23.
- , "Some Reflections on the Social Message of the Synod," in *Grace and Truth*, 12 (1995), pp. 30-36.
- CORBOY, J., "Church as *communio* and Family of God," in *JCTR Bulletin*, 27 (1996), pp. 7-9.
- CORECCO, "Parlement ecclesiale ou diaconie synodale?" in *Communio*, 1 (1972), pp. 32-44.
- CORIDEN, J. A., "Highlights of the Revised Code," in *The Jurist*, 44 (1984), pp. 28-40.
- COSTA, M.F., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Civil Wars in Africa," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 262-263.
- COSTALUNGA, M., "De episcoporum conferentiis," in *Periodica*, 57 (1968), pp. 217-280.
- COTE, R.G., "Statement of the Third World Theologians, a Comment," in *AFER*, 19 (1977), pp. 223-228.
- DAVIES, C. C., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at African Synod on Youth," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 254.

- DAVIS, C., "The Parish and Theology," in *The Clergy Review*, 49 (1964), pp. 265-290.
- DEFOUR, G., "Pour une catéchèse au diapason du Synode africain. L'homme en quête de son authenticité comme image de Dieu," in *Telema*, 83/84 (1995), pp. 67-77.
- DE-JONG, D. H., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at The African Synod on the Family," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 219-220.
- DE MUELENAERE, M., "Cultural Adaptation and the Code of Canon Law," in *Studia canonica*, 19 (1985), pp. 31-59.
- DERRY, P. P., "Christian and Customary Marriage in Ghana," in *AFER*, 23 (1981), pp. 37-41.
- DILLON-MALONE, C., "New Religions in Africa," in *Concilium*, 161 (1983), pp. 55-60.
- DIOP-YANSUNNU, J., "The Life and Formation of Priests," in *ORE*, May 25, 1994. p. 5.
- D'MELLO, J. I., "The Dual Religious Marriage Celebration in India," in *Studia canonica*, 22 (1988), pp. 381-424.
- D'ORS, A., "Iglesia universal e iglesia particular," in *Ius canonicum*, 28 (1988), pp. 295-303.
- DRANDUA, F., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Evangelization," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 207-208.
- DULLES, A., "Catholic Ecclesiology Since Vatican II," in *Concilium*, 188 (1986), pp. 3-13.
- DUNDERDALE, E., "The Canonical Form of Marriage: Anachronism or Pastoral Necessity?" in *Studia canonica*, 12 (1978), pp. 41-55.
- EDELE, A., "Establishing Basic Christian Communities in Lusaka, Zambia," in *Pro vita mundi Bulletin*, 81 (1980), pp. 21-25.
- EKWUNIFE, A., "African Culture: A Definition," in *African Christian Studies*, 3 (1987), pp. 5-18.
- ETHERINGTON, N. A., "The Historical Sociology of Independent Churches in South East Africa," in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 10 (1979), pp. 108-126.
- ETSOU-NZABI-BAMUNGWABI, F., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Christian Witness," in *36 (1994)*, 36 (1994), pp. 259-260.
- FALUSI, G.K., "African Levirate and Christianity," in *AFER*, 24 (1982), pp. 300-308.

- FANIRAM, J.O., "A Council or Synod for Africa: The Overlooked Aspect," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 59-67.
- FARIS, J.D., "The Codification and Revision of Eastern Law," in *Studia canonica*, 17 (1983), pp. 449-485.
- FERNANDEZ, A., "El sinodo de los obispos y la colegialidad episcopal," in *Scripta theologica*, 1 (1969), pp. 403-444.
- FERRARA, V., "Il sinodo dei vescovi tra ipotesi e realtà: natura teologico-giuridica del sinodo," in *Apollinaris*, 42 (1969), pp. 491-556.
- FISH, M.T., "Seminarists Need New Formation Programs," in *ORE*, May 18, 1994, p. 8.
- "Foi. culture et évangélisation en Afrique à l'aube du 3e millénaire. Special Colloque Post-Synodal. CERAO: Conseil Pontifical de la Culture, Actes du Colloque, Abidjan 18-20 avril 1996," in *Revue de l'Institut catholique de l'Afrique de l'ouest*, 14-15 (1996).
- FORSTER, P., "Missionaries and Anthropology: The Case of the Scots of Northern Malawi," in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 16 (1986), pp. 101-120.
- GANOSCY, A., "How Can One Evaluate Collegiality vis-à-vis Papal Primacy?" in *Concilium*, 4 (1971), pp. 84-94.
- GASI, J. A., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on the Pastoral Care of Nomads, Refugees and the Displaced," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 251-252.
- GATARE, T., "Évangéliser les Rwandais aujourd'hui. Quelle mission pour quelle église?" in *Revue africaine de théologie* 83 (1996), pp. 3-18.
- GELINEAU, J., "Tradition - Invention - Culture," in *Concilium*, 162 (1983), pp. 10-18.
- GHIRLANDA, G., "De hierarchica communione ut elemento consitutivo officii episcopalis iuxta Lumen gentium," in *Periodica*, 69 (1980), pp. 31-57.
- , "De natura, origine, et exercitio potestatis regiminis iuxta novum Codicem," in *Periodica*, 74 (1985), pp. 109-164.
- , "De notione communionis hierarchicae iuxta Vaticanum Secundum," in *Periodica*, 70 (1981), pp. 41-68.

- GHIRLANDA, G., "Movements Within the Ecclesial Communion and their Rightful Autonomy." in *The Laity Today*, 32-33 (1989-1990), pp. 46-71.
- , "Reflessioni sulla 'Nota explicativa praevia' Lumen gentium." in *Gregorianum*, 69 (1988), pp. 324-331.
- GIBLIN, M., "Taking African History Seriously: The Challenge of Liberation Theology." in *AFER*, 30 (1988), pp. 285-298.
- GOMEZ, F., "Notes on the History of the Parish," in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 3 (1988), pp. 242-248.
- , "The Parish: Reality-Problems-Expectations." in *East Asia Pastoral Review*, 3 (1988), pp. 203-211.
- GONZALEZ DEL VALLE, "Decentralizacion y comunio: planteamientos doctrinales." in *Ius canonicum*, 24 (1984), pp. 491-508.
- GOODWIN, L., "The Trouble With Basic Christian Communities." in *AFER*, 23 (1981), pp. 338-343.
- GRASSO, D., "Osservazioni sulla teologia della parrocchia." in *Gregorianum*, 40 (1959), pp. 297-314.
- , "The Process of Inculturation in the Light of the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*." in *Omnis terra*, 262 (1995), pp. 436-442.
- GREEN, T. J., "Subsidiarity During the Code Revision Process: Some Initial Reflections," in *The Jurist*, 48 (1988), pp. 771-799.
- GROOTAERS, J., "Laity in the Field: Polarities and Convergences." in *Pro Vita Mundi Bulletin*, 110 (1987), pp. 2-34.
- , "La collegialità ai sinodi dei vescovi: un problema non risolto," in *Concilium*, 4 (1990), pp. 38-50.
- GUINEY, J., "Comparing BCCs in S. America and Africa." in *AFER*, 30 (1988), pp. 167-180.
- HANIG, A., "Explicatio notae explicativae." in *Ephemerides Iuris Canonici*, 21 (1965), pp. 177-184.
- , "Basic Christian Communities in Africa and Latin America," in *AFER*, 26 (1984), pp. 222-232.

- HEALEY, J., "A Missionary Reflects on the African Synod: 'You Shall Be My Witnesses,'" in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 347-358.
- , "The Option for Small Christian Communities," in *Pro Vita Mundi Bulletin*, 12 (1989-1990), pp. 11-12.
- , "Today's New Way of Being Church: Pastoral Implications of the Small Christian Community Model of Church in the World Toward the 21st Century," in *African Christian Studies*, 7 (1991), pp. 63-77.
- , "Five African Parables (Life Stories) on the Main Topics of the 1994 African Synod," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 45-58.
- , "BCCs in the 1987 Synod of Bishops' Documents," in *AFER*, 30 (1988), pp. 74-86.
- HEARNE, B., "Priestly Ministry and Christian Community," in *AFER*, 24 (1982), pp. 221-233.
- , "Small Christian Communities - Let's Go Ahead!" in *AFER*, 26 (1984), pp. 262-273.
- HEBBLETHWAITE, M., "Basic Communities and the Parish," in *The Tablet*, 242 (1988), pp. 435-436; 465-467; 498-499 and 527-530.
- , "Christian Cells," in *The Tablet*, 242 (1988), pp. 498-499.
- HEBBLETHWAITE, P., "What is the Synod of Bishops?" in *The Month*, New Series, 38 (1967), pp. 7-25.
- HEBGA, M., "The Particular Church and the Universal Church: Sociological and Ecclesiological Considerations," in *Indian Theological Studies*, 17 (1980), pp. 47-63.
- HEIJKE, J.P., "The African Bishops's Synod of 1994," in *Exchange*, 25 (1996) 2, pp. 136-162.
- HETSEN, J., "The Brazilian CEBs Sixth Assembly," in *AFER*, 30 (1988), pp. 40-43.
- HEWITT, W.E., "Christian Base Communities (CEBs): Structure, Orientation and Sociological Thrust," in *Thought*, 63 (1988), pp. 162-175.
- HINFELAAR, H. F., "Evangelization and Inculturation," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 2-18.
- HOEBEN, H., "Basic Christian Communities in Africa," in *Pro vita mundi Bulletin*, 81 (1980), pp. 19-21.

- HOLMES-SIEDLE, J., "Over-view of Small Christian Communities in East Africa," in *AFER*, 21 (1979), pp. 273-285.
- HOUSSIAU, A., "L'approche théologique de la paroisse," in *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 13 (1982), pp. 317-328.
- HUELS, J. M., "Interpreting Canon Law in Diverse Cultures," in *The Jurist*, 47 (1987), pp. 249-293.
- , "Interpreting an Instruction Approved *in forma specifica*," in *Studia canonica*, 32 (1998), pp. 5-46.
- , "Parish Life in the New Code," in *Concilium*, 185 (1986), pp. 64-72.
- HUIZING, P., "The Central Legal System and Autonomous Churches," in *Concilium*, 185 (1986), pp. 23-31.
- , "The Structure of the Synod of Bishops," in *Information Documentation on the Conciliar Church*, Dossier. 67-2, p. 7.
- ISHENGOMA, R., "The Need to Tap the Potential in African Women," in *AFER*, 38 (1996), pp. 96-101.
- JESTER, L., "Transcultural Marriage - A Basis for a New Impediment," in *Studia canonica*, 11 (1977), pp. 339-349.
- JOHNSON, J. G., "The Synod of Bishops: An Exploration of Its Nature and Function," in *Studia canonica*, 20 (1986), pp. 275-318.
- KALANDA, P. L., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Inculturation," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 213-215.
- KALILOMBE, P., "Cry of the Poor in Africa," in *AFER*, 29 (1987), pp. 202-213.
- , "Religious Congregations Facing the 21st Century," in *AFER*, 29 (1987), pp. 298-314.
- , "Building Christian Communities," in *Lumen vitae*, 32 (1977), pp. 175-196.
- KALINGA, O. J. M., "Jordan Msumba, Ben Ngemela and the Last Church of God and His Christ," in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 13 (1982), pp. 207-218.
- KARLEN, H., "Canonical Form and Traditional Marriage," in *AFER*, 23 (1981), pp. 58-60.

- KASTFELT, N., "African Resistance to Colonialism in Adamawa," in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 8 (1976), pp. 1-12.
- KATAZA, E., "History of the Catechists in Eastern Africa," in A. SHORTER and E. KATAZA (eds.), *Missionaries to Yourselves: African Catechists Today*. London. Chapman, 1972, pp. 1-28.
- KAUFMANN, F. X., "Sinodo dei vescovi: né concilium, né sinodo. Framenti di una critica dal punto di vista del 'movimento sinodale'." in *Concilium*, 4 (1990), pp. 87-98.
- KEITA, L., "La tribu contre l'état en Afrique." in *Quest*, 9 (1995) 1, pp. 131-137.
- KELLY, J., "The Parish: New Life from Old Roots," in *Clergy Review*, 64 (1979), pp. 45-59.
- , "The Evolution of Small Christian Communities," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 108-120.
- KERKHOFS, J., "Basic Communities in the Church," in *Pro Vita Mundi Bulletin*, 62 (1976), pp. 2-32.
- KIBANGA, M.T., "Eglises et démocratisation en Afrique," in *Revue africaine de Theologie*, 35 (1994), pp. 119-125.
- KIMARYO, R., "The African Synod: Has Enough Awareness Been Created Among the People?" in *AFER*, 34 (1992), pp. 195-207.
- KIRIMA, N., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on the Family," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 217-219.
- KIRISWA, B., "Small Christian Communities in a Kenyan Parish," in *AFER*, 24 (1982), pp. 90-93.
- KIWANUKA, D., "Ecclesial Communities are Instruments of Human Promotion," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 11.
- KLAUCK, H. J., "The House-Church as a Way of Life," in *Theology Digest*, 30 (1982), pp. 153-157.
- KLOPPENBURG, B., "O sinodo dos bispos: representação e acção do collegio?" in *Revista eclesialística brasileira*, 26 (1967), pp. 339-347.
- KOLOMA, S., "Catechists: their Role and Formation," in *ORE*, May 25, 1994, p. 5.
- KOMONCHAK, J., "The Theological Debate (1985 Synod)," in *Concilium*, 188 (1986), pp. 53-63.
- KORIR, C.K.A., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on the Lay Faithful," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 241-243.

- KPIEBAYA, G., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Evangelization," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 209-210.
- KPODZRO, F. K., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on the Role of the Church in Africa," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 260-261.
- KRAMER, P., "Episcopal Conferences and the Apostolic See," in *The Jurist*, 48 (1988), pp. 134-145.
- KRIEGISCH, R., "Christian Initiation and Inculturation," in *AFER*, 30 (1988), pp. 29-39.
- LABANDEIRA, E., "La remonstratio y la applicacio de las leyes universales en la Iglesia particular," in *Ius canonicum*, 24 (1984), pp. 711-740.
- LABAYEN, J. X., "Basic Christian Communities," in *AFER*, 30 (1988), pp. 135-144.
- LA DUE, W., "Structural Arrangements for the Parish - A Brief History," in *The Jurist*, 30 (1970), pp. 314-327.
- LANGENFELD, C. F., "The African Synod: An Interview with Archbishop Wilfrid Napier," in *Grace and Truth*, 12 (1995), pp. 3-14.
- , "The Church - God's Family - The Quest for Life," in *Grace and Truth*, 12 (1995), pp. 37-45.
- LAPOINTE, E., "Understanding Christian Marriage in a Culturally Changing Lesotho," in *Studia canonica*, 15 (1981), pp. 249-262.
- LAURENTIN, R., "Sinodo e curia," in *Concilium*, 7 (1979), pp. 137-153.
- LEBULLU, L. J., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Inculturation," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 212-213.
- LEFEBVRE, C., "Le synode épiscopal de 1974: Évangélisation du monde contemporain," in *L'Année canonique*, 20 (1976), pp. 127-133.
- LEGRAND, A.M., "Synode et conseils de l'après-Concile," in *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 98 (1976), pp. 193-233.
- , "Reflections on Conferences and Diocesan Bishops," in *The Jurist*, 48 (1988), pp. 130-133.
- , "Enjeux théologiques de la valorization des Églises locales," in *Concilium*, 6 (1970), pp. 49-58.

- LETTMANN, R., "Episcopal Conferences in the New Law," in *Studia canonica*, 14 (1980), pp. 347-367.
- LUKEBANA-TOKO, W., "L'heure des religieux dans une Afrique abandonnée. Sentir avec *Ecclesia in Africa*," in *Aube nouvelle*, 36 (1996), pp. 3-15.
- LULENDO, T., "L'Église en Afrique et son rôle prophétique en notre monde," in *Aube nouvelle*, 35 (1996), pp. 16-21.
- LWAMINDA, P., "The African Synod and the Family," in *CUEA African Christian Studies*, 11 (1995) 2, pp. 46-53.
- LYNCH, J., "The Parochial Ministry in the New Code of Canon Law," in *The Jurist*, 42 (1982), pp. 383-421.
- MAGESA, L., "Christology, African Women and Ministry," in *AFER*, 36 (1996), pp. 66-88.
- , "The Expatriate Worker In Africa," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 92-103.
- , "Redemptoris missio, Centesimus annus and the African Synod," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 314-329.
- , "Authentic African Christianity," in *AFER*, 37 (1995) 4, pp. 209-220.
- MAJAWA, C., "Tongue of the African Church," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 112-122.
- MALIEKAL, J., "The Celebration of Catholic Marriage in India," in *Studia canonica*, 17 (1983), pp. 387-415.
- MALONEY, R., "Egypt, Ethiopia: Africa's Senior Churches in Dialogue with Rome," in *AFER*, 30 (1988), pp. 91-96.
- MANZANARES, J., "De conferentiae episcopalis competentia in re liturgia, in schemate codificationis emendata," in *Periodica*, 70 (1981), pp. 469-497.
- MARCUZZI, P., "Verso una nuova definizione giuridica di parrocchia," in *Salesianum*, 43 (1981), pp. 831-848.
- MATEKA, M., "The African Synod and Inculturation," in *Grace and Truth*, 12 (1995), pp. 15-20.
- MATTAN, J., "The African Synod and the Call to Dialogue - An Indian Response," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 184-200.

- MAY, J., "Parishes in the Laity's Life," in *Origins*, 17 (1987-1988), pp. 353-356.
- MAYALA, A., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on the Lay Faithful." in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 238-239.
- , "The Laity and the Proclamation of the Word," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 10.
- MAZOMBWE, M. J., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Justice and Peace." in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 225-226.
- MBA, C. S., "Trial Marriage in Nigeria, a Fact or a Fiction: A Customary Law Appraisal," in *Studia canonica*, 21 (1987), pp. 299-314.
- MBOGU, N.I., "Christology in Contemporary Africa: A Prolegomenon for a Theology of Development," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 214-230.
- MBOGU, N.I., "The Church in Africa on the Eve of the First African Synod," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 298-313.
- , "Major Social Issues In Africa: A Challenge to the African Synod," in *AFER*, 34 (1992), pp. 224-248.
- MBUY, T. H., "How Prepared is the African Church for the Synod?," in *AFER*, 34 (1992), pp. 198-207.
- MCCABE, J.V., "The Challenge of Liturgical Inculturation: Directions," in *Spearhead*, 92 (1986), pp. 6-11.
- MCCREADY, W., "The Local Parish Community and Religious Socialization," in *Chicago Studies*, 20 (1981), pp. 253-266.
- MCGARRY, C., "The *Lineamenta* for the African Synod: Christological and Ecclesiological Perspectives," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 330-346.
- MCHENRY, F., "The Essence of Inculturation of Christianity in Africa," in *AFER*, 37 (1995) 4, pp. 228-237.
- MEJIA, R., "Foreign Missionaries at the Eve of the African Synod," in *AFER*, 35 (1993), pp. 144-152.
- , "Presence of the Lay Christians in the Preparations for the Synod of Bishops on Africa," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 166-177.

- MENDONÇA, A., "The Effect of Recourse against the Decree of Removal of a Parish Priest." in *Studia canonica*, 25 (1991), pp. 139-153.
- , "The Importance of Considering Cultural Contexts in Adjudicating Marriage Nullity Cases With Special Reference to Countries of South East Asia," in *CLSA Proceedings of the Fifth - Seventh Annual Convention*, October 16-19, 57 (1995), pp. 231-292.
- METZ, J. B., "Base-church and Bourgeois Religion," in *Theological Digest*, 29 (1981), pp. 203-206.
- , "Unity and Diversity: Problems and Prospects for Inculturation," in *Concilium*, 204 (1989), pp. 79-87.
- MEYER, B., "The Initial Self-Understanding of the Church," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 27 (1965), pp. 35-42.
- MGULLUNDE, M.E.A., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Evangelization," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 199-200.
- MICHAEL, S. M., "Christianity and Cultures," in *Indian Missiological Review*, 5 (1983), pp. 181-203.
- MKHORI, F. E., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on the Dichotomy Between the Professed and Lived Christian Faith," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 253.
- MONSI-AGBOKA, L., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Inculturation," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 215-216.
- MORRISEY, F. G., "Decisions of Episcopal Conferences in Implementing the New Law," in *Studia canonica*, 20 (1986), pp. 105-122.
- MORRISEY, F. G., "Is the New Code an Improvement for the Law of the Catholic Church?," in *Concilium*, 185 (1986), pp. 32-41.
- , "La formation des séminaristes et le respect de la personne," in *Studia canonica*, 21 (1988), pp. 19-20.
- , "Preparing Ourselves for the New Law: Law Alone Will Not Hold the Church Together," in *Studia canonica*, 7 (1973), pp. 113-128.
- , "The Revision of the Code of Canon Law," in *Studia canonica*, 12 (1978), pp. 177-198.
- , "The Significance of Particular Law in the Proposed Code of Canon Law," in *CLSA Proceedings*, 1981, pp. 3-17.

- MORRISEY, F. G., "Ten Years of Liturgical Legislation (1963-1973)," in *Studia canonica*, 7 (1973), pp. 289-308.
- MONSENGWO, P. "Un Synode spécial de l'Épiscopat africain." in *Revue africaine de théologie*, 25 (1989), p. 5
- MPONGO, L., "Contemporary African Celebration of the Blessing of the Baptismal Water in the Roman Rite," in *Concilium*, 178 (1985), pp. 62-69.
- , "Un Synode au lieu d'un Concile Africain: Qu'est-ce à dire?," in *Revue Africaine de Théologie*, 35 (1994), pp. 35-50.
- MPUNDU, T. G., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Justice and Peace," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 223-224.
- MSARIKIE, A., "Religious Must be True Witnesses of Spiritual Renewal," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 5.
- MTEGA, N. W., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on the Spirituality of the Clergy in Africa," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 258-259.
- MUKUCHA, K. W., "Inculturation du Christianisme: vie de famille - vie de communauté," in *Aube nouvelle*, 35 (1996), pp. 22-28.
- MULLER, H., "The Relationship Between the Episcopal Conference and the Diocesan Bishop," in *The Jurist*, 48 (1988), pp. 111-129.
- MUNDUALA, T. J., "L'Église-famille et les jeunes: avenir de l'évangélisation en Afrique au III<sup>e</sup> millénaire," in *Aube nouvelle*, 36 (1996), pp. 3-12
- MURNION, P.J., "The Complex Task of the Parish," in *Origins*, 8 (1978-1979), pp. 434-441.
- , "Parish Renewal: State(ments) of the Question," in *The Parish Project Reader*, America, 146 (1982), pp. 14-17.
- MURPHY, T., "The Leadership Needed for Parish Renewal," in *Origins*, 12 (1982-1983), pp. 610-613.
- MURRAY, D., "The Legislative Authority of the Episcopal Conference," in *Studia canonica*, 20 (1986), pp. 33-48.

- MURRAY, D., "The Church Missionary Society and the Female Circumcision Issue in Kenya 1929-1932," in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 8 (1976), pp. 92-104.
- MUSHEMBA, S., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Evangelization," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 210.
- MVENG, E., "The African Synod: Prolegomena for an African Council?" in *Concilium*, n.1 (1992), pp. 112-128.
- , "The Historical Background of the African Synod," in *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, New York, Orbis Books, 1996, pp. 20-31.
- MWAUNGULU, R.T., "The Inculturation of Religious Life in Africa According to the 1983 Code." Seminar paper, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1988, pp. 1-52.
- NAPIER, W.F., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Dialogue," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 231-233.
- NDINGI, R.S.N., "Christian Marriage and Traditional Marriage," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 10.
- NEW PEOPLE EDITORIAL STAFF (NAIROBI), "An Open Letter to the Holy Father," in AFRICA FAITH & JUSTICE NETWORK, *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, New York, Orbis Books, 1996, pp. 61-67.
- NJENGA, J., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Priestly and Religious Formation," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 234-235.
- NJUE, J., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Women," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 254-256.
- NOBOU, A., "The World Expects a Witness of Missionary Cooperation," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 12.
- NTAKARUTIMANA, E., "Kindsein im heutigen Zentralafrika. Zwischen 'Tradition' und 'Modemität'," in *Concilium*, 32 (1996) 1, pp. 118-125.
- NYAMITI, C., "The Problem of Evil in African Traditional Cultures and Today's African Inculturation and Liberation Theologies," in *CUEA African Christian Studies*, 11 (1995), pp. 39-75.
- O'BRIEN, N., "Basic Christian Communities and the Parish - A Six-Year Parish Experiment," in *Furrow*, 35 (1984), pp. 92-102.

- OGER, L., "Inculturation: To Evangelize as Christ Did. Can this Be Done Without Compromising Ourselves?" in *AFER*, 39 (1994), pp. 19-31.
- O'HALLORAN, J., "The Ecclesiology of Small Christian Communities," in *The Outlook*, 21 (1988), pp. 102-106.
- OKEKE, H. O., "From 'Domestic Church' to 'Family of God'. The African Christian Family in the African Synod," in *Neue zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 52 (1996) 3, pp. 193-207.
- , "Church-as-God's-Family: From Africa Ecclesiology to African Canon Law," in *Studia canonica*, 32 (1998), pp. 397-414.
- , "Mass Evangelization: The Challenge of the African Synod," in *Jos Studies*, 5 (1995) 1, pp. 1-12.
- OKOGIE, A. O., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Evangelization," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 202-203.
- OKOLO, C. B., "The African Synod: A Forum to Discuss Major Issues Facing African Christians," in *AFER*, 35 (1993), pp. 153-169.
- OKOYE, C., "The Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops - the *Instrumentum laboris*," in *AFER*, 35 (1993), pp. 170-191.
- OKOYE, "The Synod Of Bishops/Special Assembly for Africa: Is This Another Roman Programme For Africa?" in *AFER*, 34 (1992), pp. 208-223.
- ONCLIN, W., "The Collegiality and the Individual Bishop," in *Concilium*, 8 (1965), pp. 44-49.
- ONUNWA, U. R., "The Church and Politics in Africa: A Quest for Stable Democracy," in *CUEA African Christian Studies*, 11 (1995) 4, pp. 14-26.
- OPENIBO, V., "*Ecclesia in Africa*: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II: An African Woman's View," in *Sedos Bulletin*, 28 (1996) 1, pp. 3-9.
- O'ROURKE, J. J., "The Office of Bishop and its Relationship to the Particular Churches and the Universal Church," in *Studia canonica*, 5 (1971), pp. 227-243.
- ÖRSY, L., "Collegiality in the Diocese," in *The Clergy Review*, 52 (1967), pp. 506-511.
- , "Vatican II and the Revision of Canon Law," in *The Clergy Review*, 53 (1968), pp. 83-100.
- , "*Novus habitus mentis*: New Attitude of Mind," in *The Jurist*, 45 (1985), pp. 251-258.

- ÖRSY, L., "Reflection on a Canon," in *America*, 154 (1986), pp. 396-399.
- ORTAS, A.M.J., "Inculturation and Liturgy," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 10.
- OTADUY, J., "Le derecho a la retribución de los laicos al servicio de la Iglesia," in *Fidelium iura*, 2 (1992), pp. 187-206.
- OTTENWELLER, A., "Parish Renewal: A Process, Not a Program," in *Origins*, 8 (1978-1979), pp. 672-676.
- OTUNGA, M. M., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Pastoral Care of Nomads, Refugees and the Displaced," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 249-251.
- OUEDRAOGO, C., "Catechists, the Indispensable Companions of Missionaries," in *ORE*, April 24, 1994, p. 7.
- PAGE, R., "Le conseil paroissial de pastorale," in *Studia canonica*, 14 (1981), pp. 419-439.
- PASSICOS, J., "La paroisse vue par le canoniste," in *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 13 (1982), pp. 18-30.
- PERRIN, J.M.F., "Forming Christian Communities: An Evaluation of Experiments in North Mara, Tanzania," in *Gaba Publications*, 12 [1969], pp. 4-5.
- PAULIN, C. H., "The Parish in Transition," in *East Asia Pastoral Review*, 3 (1988), pp. 212-232.
- PILARCZCK, D., "Does the Church Flourish in its Parishes?" in *Origins*, 16 (1986-1987), pp. 681-686.
- PILLA, A., "Ministry of the Word," in *Origins*, 25 (1995-1996), pp. 277-287.
- "Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 80s: AMECEA Plenary Conference, Nairobi, December 14-21, 1973," in *AFER*, 16 (1974), pp. 8-254.
- PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE, "Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture," in *Origins*, 29 (1998-1999), pp. 65-84.
- POTTMAYER, H., "Pour un christianisme pétri dans laalebasse en Afrique," in *L'actualité religieuse dans le monde*, 137 (1995), pp. 129-139.
- "Pour une église participative en Afrique," in *Église et mission* 280 (1995), pp. 178-233

- PROVOST, J., "Lay Preaching and Canon Law in a Time of Transition," in N. FOLEY (ed.), *Preaching and the Non-Ordained*, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 1983, pp. 134-158.
- , "The Impact of the Proposed Book II *De populo Dei* on the Local Church," in *Studia canonica*, 15 (1981), pp. 371-379.
- , "The Revised Code: A New Way of Thinking about Church and about Priests," in *Louvain Studies*, 9 (1982), pp. 226-235.
- , "Structuring the Church as *Communio*," in *The Jurist*, 36 (1976), pp. 191-245.
- , "The Working Together of Consultative Bodies - Great Expectations?," in *The Jurist*, 40 (1980), pp. 257-281.
- QUENUM, A., "Comment vivre l'Exhortatio Apostolique post-synodale: *Ecclesia in Africa*?" in *Revue de l'Institut catholique de l'Afrique de l'ouest*, 13 (1996), pp. 3-10.
- RABEMAHAFALY, V., "Mission pastorale et évangélisatrice en Afrique: promotion de la justice et de la paix - voix des pères synodaux," in *Pentecôte d'Afrique*, 23 (1996), pp. 6-15.
- RAHNER, K., "The Episcopal Office," in *Theological Investigations* 6, London, Darton, 1974, p. 354.
- RATZINGER, J., "The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council," in *Communio*, 13 (1988), pp. 239-252.
- , "Le implicazioni pastorali della dottrina della collegialità dei vescovi," in *Concilium*, 1 (1965), pp. 44-73.
- RENKEN, J. A., "Canonical Issues in the Pastoral Care of Parishes Without Priests," in *The Jurist*, 47 (1987), pp. 506-521.
- ROBITAILLE, L.A., "An Examination of Various Forms of Preaching: Toward an Understanding of the Homily and Canons 766-767," in *CLSA Proceedings*, 58 (1996), pp. 308-325.
- ROUFFETTE, R., "Une Église réformatrice le premier synode épiscopal," in *Études*, 327 (1967), pp. 695-716.
- RUETHER, R., "Basic Communities: Renewal at the Roots," in *Christianity and Crisis*, 41 (1981), pp. 234-237.

- RUGAMBWA, L., "The Church Needs Trained Leaders to Confront Society," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 7.
- RUZOKA, P. R., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Root-Causes of Human Suffering in Africa," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 256-258.
- RYAN, P., "The Papal Exhortation: Moving Forward on the Theme of Justice," in *CUEA African Christian Studies*, 12 (1996), pp. 46-54.
- , "Vatican II: The Re-Discovery of the Episcopate," in *The Irish Theological Quarterly*, 33 (1966), pp. 208-241.
- SANGARE, L.A., "Marriage in the Various Social and Cultural Contexts," in *ORE*, May 18, 1994, p. 8.
- SANKS, T.H. and H. S. BRIAN, "Liberation Ecclesiology," in *Theological Studies*, 38 (1977), pp. 3-38.
- SARRAF, Y. I., "La dignité de la femme passe par sa liberté: le synode africain donne le ton," in *Telema*, 83:84 (1995), pp. 20-22.
- SCHAULL, R., "The Christian Base Communities and the *Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*," in *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, 12 (1991), pp. 201-213.
- SCHILLEBEECKX, E., "Il sinodo dei vescovi, eventuale atto della collegialità stretta, ma non conciliare," in *Information documentation sur L'Eglise conciliare*, 9 (1967), pp. 1-6.
- SCHLICK, J., "Paroisse et dynamique communautaire dans le code de 1983," in *Praxis juridique et religion*, 1 (1984), pp. 194-213.
- SCHONECKE, W., "Exhortation apostolique 'L'Eglise en Afrique': Justice et paix," in *Dialogue*, 187 (1996), pp. 51-54.
- SCHOTTE, J.P., "African Synod is a Special Moment of Grace," in *ORE*, April 20, 1994, pp. 4-7.
- , "'Listening to Africa' Is Theme of the *Lineamenta* for Synod," in *ORE*, July 30, 1990, pp. 10-11.
- SCHOEVER, P., "*Ecclesia in Africa* - Point de vue d'un missionnaire," in *Sedos Bulletin*, 28 (1996) 1, pp. 10-20.
- SEOUEIRA, J.B., *Tout mariage entre baptisés est-il nécessairement sacrement? Étude historique, théologique et canonique sur le lien entre baptême et mariage*, Paris, Cerf, 1985.

- SESANA, R. K., "An African Synod Without Africa?," in *AFER*, 35 (1993), pp. 134-143.
- SETELE, A., "Christian Families Are Aware of their Culture," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 15.
- SILVA, J. A., "A Message of Hope for Africa," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 267-280.
- SHOUVER, P., "Chronique d'un synode," in *Spiritus*, 136 (1994), p. 345.
- SOMALO, E.M., "Consecrated Life Calls for African Traditions," in *ORE*, May 4, 1994, p. 18.
- SOME, J. B., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on the Family," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 220-221.
- "Special Synod for Africa Will Provide a Powerful Image of Ecclesial Communion," in *ORE*, February 17, 1993, p. 8.
- "Symposium 'The Reception of the *communio*-Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council,'" in *Revue africaine de théologie*, 34 (1993), pp. 241-244.
- Synod of bishops, Third Ordinary General Assembly, "Declaration of the Synodal Fathers," in *ORE*, 45 (1974), p. 3.
- "Synode Africain. Exhortation Postsynodale. Texte et postes pour la lecture. *Ecclesia in Africa*," in *Au coeur de l'Afrique*, 61 (1995), pp. 8-150.
- TANNER, N., "The African Church and the First Five Ecumenical Councils," in *AFER*, 33 (1991), pp. 201-213.
- TAPSOBA, B., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at African Synod on the Family," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 221.
- "Synod 1987. Message to the People of God," in *Origins*, 17 (1987-1988), pp. 385-387.
- "Synod 1987. The Synod Propositions," in *Origins*, 17 (1987-1988), pp. 499-509.
- THIANDOUM, R., "The Gospel, Inculturation, and Dialogue," in *ORE*, April 20, 1994, pp. 8-12.
- THILS, G., "Le synode des évêques: image de l'unité dans l'Église ou de la communion qu'est l'Église," in *Revue théologique de Louvain*, II (1987), pp. 212-221.
- THOMAS, R., "The Revised Code of Canon Law and the Parish Priest," in *The Priest*, 39 (1983), pp. 29-32.

- TSIAHOANA A., "The Formation of Malagasy Priests," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 9.
- TILLARD, J.M.R., "The Horizon of the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome," in *One in Christ*, 12 (1976), pp. 5-33.
- TOMKO, J., "A Retrospective Look at the 1983 Synod of Bishops," in *ORE*, December 27, 1983, p. 4.
- TOMKO, J., "Le synode des évêques et la collégialité," in *Studia canonica*, 18 (1984), pp. 239-252.
- , "The Synod of Bishops and the Second Vatican Council," in *AFER*, 161 (1967), pp. 145-160.
- , "The Situation of the Church in Africa and Madagascar - Some Aspects and Observations," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, pp. 17-21.
- TUHO, C. V., "Rôle du chrétien," in *Revue de l'Institut catholique de l'Afrique de l'ouest (RICA)*, 12 (1995), pp. 55-63.
- TWAL, F., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on the Catholic Church in North Africa," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 264-265.
- UGEUX, B., "Théologie et méthodes missionnaires actuelles: les petites communautés chrétiennes (ou communautés de base)," in *Quelle Église pour l'Afrique du troisième millénaire?*, Facultés Catholiques de Kinshasa, 1991, p. 93.
- UKPO, J.E., "Give Life to an African Christian Marriage," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 12.
- UKPONG, S. J., "Option for the Poor: A Modern Challenge for the Church in Africa," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 350-365.
- UMIOREN, U. E., "Enculturation and Inculturation: The Gospel of Liberation and the Culture of African Womanhood," in *CUEA African Christian Studies*, 11 (1995), pp. 45-55.
- VALERA, E., "Theology of Struggle: The Philippines' Ecclesial Experience," in *New Theology Review*, 5 (1992), pp. 62-83.
- VANGHELWE, R., "The African Synod: Experiences and Impressions," in *Louvain studies*, 20 (1995), pp. 65-72.
- WAKO, G.Z., "Inculturation of Faith and Involvement of Community," in *ORE*, May 25, 1994, p. 6.

- WAMALA, E., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on the Protection of the Environment," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 263-264.
- WESTLEY, R., "Base Communities in the United States," in *Concilium*, 9 (1975), pp. 35-42.
- WHITE, A., "Seeking a Theology of Parish," in *Priests and People*, 5 (1991), pp. 130-133.
- WINTER, M., "The Survival of the Parish Structure," in *The Clergy Review*, 55 (1970), pp. 366-374.
- WINTERSIG, A., "Le réalisme mystique de la paroisse," in *La maison Dieu*, 8 (1936), pp. 15-26.
- WOLDEGIORGIS, Y., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on the Lay Faithful," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 239-241.
- YAGO, B., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Justice and Peace," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 222-223.
- YOHANNES, Z., "Inculturation and Formation," in *ORE*, April 27, 1994, p. 10.
- ZAGO, M., "Inculturation of Religious Life Expressed Through Charisms," in *ORE*, 18 May, 1994, p. 6.
- ZIYAYE, T. G., "AMECEA Bishops and Others Speak Out at the African Synod on Evangelization," in *AFER*, 36 (1994), pp. 205-206.
- ZOUNGRANA, P., "La situation économique et financière des diocèses d'Afrique et ses retombées sur la pastorale," in *Telema*, 83:84 (1995), pp. 5-6.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Joseph Matovu Wamala was born on March 17, 1964, in Kampala, Uganda where he received his primary and secondary education. In 1983 he entered Saint Mbaaga's Major Seminary, Ggaba, to study for priesthood. In 1989 he went to Moçambique where he completed his theological studies at St. Augustine's Major Seminary, Matola, with a Baccalaureate in Theology awarded by the Urbanian Pontifical University, Rome. He was ordained for the Archdiocese of Maputo, Moçambique, on December 8, 1991.

From 1992 to 1995 he was chancellor of the Archdiocese of Maputo and parochial vicar of the cathedral parish. In 1995 he studied canon law at Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada, and obtained a Licentiate Degree in canon law from Saint Paul University and Master's Degree in canon law from the University of Ottawa in 1997.