

# PCP-II's CHRISTOLOGY AND ECCLESIOLOGY: AN UNFINISHED SYMPHONY<sup>1</sup>

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*Councils have to arrive at a consensus, which unavoidably leads to compromises and ambiguities. PCP-II (the Plenary Council of the Philippines, 1991) is not an exception. Its Christology and Ecclesiology need a "selective reading" to discover the new perspectives. After a short introduction describing the history of the Council, the study traces the three approaches to Christology: a dogmatic, a spiritualizing and a historical one. The challenge is to focus on the man of Nazareth and discipleship. In the same way, PCP-II's Ecclesiology highlights the Church as a community of disciples, making an option for the poor. The hierarchical Church is safeguarded, but the pastoral concern prevails which makes PCP-II's message a Pentecostal event.*

## INTRODUCTION

**C**hurch councils are often presented as final dogmatic or legal decisions reacting against particular errors or abuses in the Church. A critical study of Church councils, however, would tell us a different story. Church councils were the start of a struggle of minds in which the Church leadership tried to redirect the Church when faced with

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1. The Documents of PCP-II (The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines) mentioned in this study are: -

*Working Papers for Nationwide Dissemination and Consultation* (August to October 1990), Manila, CBCP (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines), 31 July 1990. The seven commissions received additional articles, suggestions and remarks. This material was not published. - Final Drafts (PCP-II, 1991): *Christian Life; Religious Concerns; Social Concerns; Church and Society; Laity; Religious; and Clergy* - The Final Text of the *Acts and the Resolutions Approved* was distributed during the last week of the Council. This text, after additional suggestions, was edited and published in 1992 by the CBCP as *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines*. We mainly quoted from the Final Drafts and the final text, published in 1992. - *The National Pastoral Plan: In State of Mission – Towards a Renewed Integral Evangelization* was published by the CBCP in 1993.

particular questions or new challenges caused by the constant changes in the Church and the world. The guidelines given by the councils are mostly the result of a long process of discussion and reflection. They give answers that are contextual and in need of being tested within the developing life of the Church. Vatican II Council, the source of inspiration of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II), is a good example of a compilation of texts that were intended to put the Church on a course of *aggiornamento* (i.e., bringing up-to-date or renewal), yet the texts contain a number of compromises that allow an alternative interpretation. The Roman Curia and some conservative forces in the Church believe that Vatican II is only a *ressourcement*. There is nothing new under the sun. The so-called new ideas of Vatican II are in fact only re-discoveries “of what the Church always taught.”<sup>2</sup> After almost fifty years, Vatican II seems to end up in a sort of stalemate. Its new ideas have been overruled by the “new” Codex, the “new” Catechism and a flood of papal and curial documents.

This introduction is needed to avoid an overly optimistic reading of the PCP-II documents. PCP-II is the result of “the working history” (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of Vatican II. In 1988, the bishops sought to place the Philippine Church into the footsteps of Vatican II. PCP-II had to bring about a new Pentecost (*Acts* 670). Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi in his homily at the opening of PCP-II presented its objectives as “the revitalization of the Church and the renewal of our Catholic Faith.” He noted that “it does not befit us to produce mere cosmetic changes. We need a new Evangelization” (*Acts* LXVIII). I will have to keep these objectives in mind in my presentation. I intend to show that PCP-II indeed offers a vision of the Church which can lead to revitalization and renewal. Beautiful things were said during the Council but it remained an “Unfinished Symphony” because it partly failed in its implementation and hence needs itself “revitalization.” Many bishops went home after PCP-II, but the enriching experience was soon forgotten and it was business as usual. Rome was very fast. They needed “only” one year to approve the

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2. Wostyn, Lode L., *In Search of a Human Jesus and a Human Church* (Quezon City: Maryhill School of Theology, 2010), 2-4.

PCP-II *Decrees*, but the momentum for implementation got partly lost in this period of waiting.

A process of revitalization of PCP-II needs a careful study of the genesis of its three documents. The Council started with a hodgepodge of ideas that eventually morphed into seven documents. After four drafts, the documents were brought together in the final document, the *Acts*. The writing of this document was an almost supernatural act, performed by Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, assisted by Bishop Teodoro Bacani, Francisco Claver and some consultants. They had to do it in twelve days. A second document, the recommendations, was discussed before the final document was available. This resulted in recommendations that were not clearly rooted in the theological reflection of PCP-II. It became still worse. Rome edited the recommendations and made them into juridical Decrees. Finally, some members of the Council produced a third document, the posthumous *National Pastoral Plan*, published in 1993. In this long process of arriving at consensus documents, we may expect that we will have a mix of ideas: traditional doctrinal statements of the first drafts survived in the later drafts and were incorporated in the final text that had changed its models of interpretation and adopted a more historical and experiential language. A selective reading will be needed in order to bring out the new vision that is often surrounded by statements of a time-tested Catechism. I make an attempt to present such a selective reading for two themes of PCP-II, *Christology* and *Ecclesiology*.

My presentation will focus on three issues. First, I will recall some events of the Council's history that are important for understanding the shift of ideas which took place in its seven documents. This will be followed in Parts Two and Three with an analysis of the *Christology* and *Ecclesiology* that we will meet in the Acts of the Council. We will also witness ecclesiology-in-action by reporting some of the conflictual situations during the Council, but mostly omitting the names of the actors. I feel sorry that I can only briefly mention the most important contributions of the Council: (a) the theme of the Church of the Poor; (b) the reflection on the social and political situation; and (c) the discussion around religious freedom. The Council developed elements of a "Philippine Liberation Theology" in its elaboration on these issues. My presentation of

PCP-II's Christology and Ecclesiology will hopefully bring out the foundation on which this theology of liberation was developed.

### THE HISTORY OF PCP-II<sup>3</sup>

The first Plenary Council of the Philippines was held in Manila in 1953. It was attended by 30 "Fathers of the Church" (bishops), some priests and religious. No lay people participated. The decrees of this Council never became operative because the Vatican II Council came very soon after them. The calling of a second Council was decided upon by the bishops in two CBCP meetings in 1988 and received the Roman approval in the same year. In 1989, a preparatory committee organized an extensive survey that led to the decision to take up seven themes during the Council: (a) Christian life, (b) religious concerns, (c) social concerns, (d) church and society, (f) laity, (g) religious, and (h) clergy. Seven commissions were established, each composed of three bishops (one acting as chairman) and several experts. In the *Directory of the Council*, it was made clear that the Council is a gathering of bishops. They have deliberative voting right. Other members can be summoned, but they have only consultative voting right. The president of the Council, elected by the CBCP, was Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi, assisted by three vice-presidents, a secretary general, Archbishop Oscar Cruz, and by the bishops-chairmen of the seven commissions.

An instruction was given concerning the seven position papers. They had to be written in three sections: (a) exposition (the doctrinal foundation); (b) the conclusion (logical implications of the doctrine); and (c) the practical recommendations based on the two previous sections. This instruction followed the neo-scholastic method of theologizing: first, the deposit of faith; second, some theological elaboration; and finally, suggestions for Christian practice.<sup>4</sup>

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3. De Archutegui, Pedro. "Historical Overview of the Preparation and Celebration of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines" in Bernier, Paul and Gabriel, Manuel G., eds.. *Journeying with the Spirit. A Commentary on PCP-II*. (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1993), 1-12 (Abbreviated: *Journeying*).

4. Wostyn, Lode L. *op. cit.*, 5-17

But only one commission (Christian Life) followed the instruction, an event marking a shift in methodology which was a memorable point of renewal during PCP-II. The other six commissions wrote their document within liberation theology's reflection-action spiral of *see* (the situation), *discern* (a meeting of our questions with the Judeo-Christian Tradition which results in formulating a Christian message), and *act* (the proposals for Christian practice). Throughout PCP-II, there was a feeling that the "seeing" part of the documents was insufficiently developed. It was finally decided to bring the "situationers" together in one document that became Appendix One (pp. 275-91) to the *Acts*.<sup>5</sup> The weakness of the situationers made difficult the task of developing a Christian vision, rooted in an experiential faith. "The doctrine" did not seem to connect with the real questions people have in the present-day situation. It remained an "imported" answer from the Catechism and Christian doctrine, not a statement rethought in the context of today's challenges in the Philippines. The feeling that the teaching of PCP-II was not really inculturated explains the shift to a more experiential approach in the later drafts.

The Council ran for four weeks, from January 20 to February 17, starting and ending with a Mass in the Cathedral. A remarkable addition to the liturgical celebration was the *Profession of Faith* and the *Oath of Fidelity*, imposed by the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) in 1989. Pius X, the creator of the Anti-Modernist Oath, must have given his blessing, although already residing in heaven after being declared Saint. A day-to-day description of the Council can be found in the Introduction to the *Acts*.<sup>6</sup> The composition of the Council reveals a heavily clerical presence.<sup>7</sup> Bishops, clergy and religious together constituted 65 percent of the whole Council. Of the 138 lay members, the great majority came from the "mandated organizations" – which shows that the other third of the Council was heavily elitist and quite traditional in its outlook. Msgr. Francisco Claver points out that this composition of the Council should not

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5. Claver, Francisco. "Our Word – The Philippines: Lights and Shadows" in *Journeying*, 13-22.

6. *Acts and Decrees of PCP-II*. (Manila: CBCP, 1992), LIV-LXVI.

7. Claver, Francisco. *Art. Cit.*

lead to a total negative evaluation of its final documents. According to him, “the Council was a dialogue between the actual delegates and the largely absent authors of the working papers, adding another absent group: the people of the BECs and their experience at renewing the Church according to Vatican II ideas.”<sup>8</sup> I also witnessed during the Council a large contribution from the theologians attending the proceedings. Some of them were bishops, while others were priests, religious and lay. During the study and discussion of the drafts, suggestions, oral and written, were made. Many of these were picked up and integrated in the re-writing of the text. These additions sometimes resulted in a juxtaposition of different theological approaches. The final text as a whole, however, offers a changed and renewed vision on Christianity and the role of the Church.

A Council is not without intrigues. I kept a report of some because they reveal the very human nature of the PCP-II. The Holy Spirit is not around all the time. One example had no influence on the Council. Jerry Montemayor, former president of the Federation of Free Farmers, was a staunch supporter of President Marcos. Each time we met a passage in the *Acts* which mentioned the People’s Revolution of 1986, we got a loud protest. The steering committee finally invited Cardinal Sin to make an appearance in the Council to elaborate on the importance of Edsa I. His presentation of the event was rather miraculous and was met by a passionate repudiation of Montemayor. However, the continuous applause of the Council members forced him to leave the stage.

Another example is the less innocent intervention of Opus Dei members which could have meant the end of the Council.<sup>9</sup> The first draft of the Commission on the Clergy was unacceptable for them. They secretly sent it to Rome, accompanied by some papers. Archbishop Talamayan, summarizing the Opus Dei position, delivered a critique on the floor of the Council. Rome sent its reply via the Nunciature with reactions from the Congregation for Bishops, the Congregation for the Clergy and the Vatican Secretary of State. Most of Rome’s objections, however, were answered already in the final draft of the working paper on the Clergy. Fr. Arevalo and

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8. *Ibid.*, 21.

9. Bernier, Paul. “Agents of Renewal: Clergy” in *Journeying*. 118-130.

others took care of its defense on the floor. The task of bringing the documents together was now imposing itself. Informed of the *Opus Dei* machination, members of the Commission on the Clergy realized that such intervention would lead to the rejection of their document. But the bishops could not afford to reject the whole package of documents because nothing would be left to discuss afterwards, resulting in the Council participants being told to go home and to come back after a few months. The bishops had no choice but to have the documents voted upon together, along with the document on the Clergy. We will present the key idea of that document in the context of ecclesiology.

However, the decision to come up with one document caused a regrettable detachment of the recommendations from the working papers. The delegates had to discuss the recommendations while the final document had still to be written. The final document was only presented during the last days of the Council. The recommendations, lacking the support of the theological foundations elaborated in the *Acts*, suffered then another setback during the Roman edition of the text which turned them into juridical statements.

## THE CHRISTOLOGY OF PCP-II<sup>10</sup>

The Second Part of the *Acts*, “Envisioning a Church Renewed,” starts with the basic question of Christian life: “We are followers of Christ, his disciples.... How? ... The answer cannot be abstract. For it leads us back to the person of Christ, Jesus of Nazareth... Jesus who preached and worked miracles. Who was crucified....” I took out the sentences that were added to the Creed. They point to the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, and to discipleship – “We have to *retell his story* to ourselves, that we may, more credibly, more authoritatively, tell it to others” (nn. 34-36).

This shift in approach in the final document (The Way of Jesus, nn. 37-61) is remarkable. A reader of the final text, who goes looking for the historical Jesus in the drafts of the position papers on *Christian*

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10. Wostyn, Lode L. “The Way of Jesus” in *Journeying*, 23-32. Co, Maria Anicia “The Call of Jesus Today” in *Journeying*. 33-44.

*Life* and on *Religious Concerns*, will search in vain. We find instead two very different approaches. The final draft on the “Doctrinal Basis for a Genuine *Christian Life*” is dogmatic theology. In the draft, we find the following statements: (a) “Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word, gives testimony of Himself when He said ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life’” (Jn 14:6) (p. 7); (b) “He possesses life of all eternity. This life flows from His very intimate relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit, who together form the community of Three Persons in one God – the source of all life” (p. 7); (c) “Christian life is Trinitarian: man’s sharing or participation in the eternal and living relationship of love between the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit” (p. 8); and (d) “Living in Christ requires a faith which receives and follows Christ’s teachings, just as Christ Himself obeyed his Father...” (p. 9).

The document, however, seems to confess that something must be wrong with its own approach because we are told that “our theology until the recent past, has been too dogmatic, our liturgy too rubric-minded, our morality too legalistic and juridical that Christians are no longer satisfied with such legalistic approaches to Christian spirituality”(p. 16). I indeed wonder what ordinary people understand when they are confronted with the dogmatic language of the document on *Christian Life*.

The document on *Religious Concerns* attempts to make its Christology more personal, but it ends up by presenting a sort of spiritualizing, kerygmatic message, viz: “Faith is the loving acceptance into ourselves of Jesus Christ who stands at the door and knocks (See: Rev 3:20). It is our ‘*Tuloy po kayo*’ to Jesus, our Lord and Savior, and a personal surrender of our whole selves to his person, a commitment to follow him and his way. It is then a very personal relationship to Him, and through Him to the Father and the Spirit (...) ... Faith is thus Christocentric and Trinitarian” (p. 6). To make sure that nothing goes wrong after this personal encounter, we are told that “faith has an intellectual component. The person who believes accepts the person of Christ, yes but he/she also accepts his teachings” (p. 7). And faith is also social, because it is a personal relationship with the Trinity, hence “it unites us not only to the Trinity, but also to all who are united to the Trinity” (p. 7). I wonder how I will recognize the one knocking at my door, if I have not met him

by listening to the story of Jesus of Nazareth? I also keep looking for “belief in his teachings” after having met in the Gospels one of the greatest storytellers of human history who enjoyed paradoxes and riddles. I finally can easily identify with what is written in the document about social apostolate and a preferential (not exclusive or excluding) option for the poor and oppressed, but I am not so sure that we need to be told of our relationship with the Trinity to motivate our social apostolate. Moreover, why add the words “not exclusive or excluding”? Should it not be obvious that nobody is “excluded?” Rich and poor should make the same option and commit themselves to bring about a society of justice, care and love.

The final text, “The Way of Jesus” (nn. 37-61), does better by returning to the starting point of all Christology: the historical man of Nazareth. The “dangerous memory” of Jesus is indeed present. Jesus underwent a process of human growth. After being a disciple of John the Baptist, he started to preach in parables with “the Reign of God” as the central theme (39). He gave testimony of love of preference for the poor (48-52). He addressed God intimately as *Abba*, a Father filled with love and compassion (39, 54). He clashed with the religious powers of Israel and was crucified as a criminal and died, a victim of injustice (54-55). The dangerous memory of Jesus, providing a painful realism to the proclamation of the Good News (56), is a challenge to our society that does not honor its poor but prays to the God of capitalism and serves the power of guns, goons and gold.

The dangerous memory of Jesus of Nazareth, the prophetic man of Spirit, the healer, the storyteller about God’s Reign, the founder of a movement and the socio-political activist, gets partly lost, however, because of a lack of critical exegesis and the concern to make dogmatically correct statements. PCP-II intended to present an outline of a renewed understanding of Christian life and the Church in terms of discipleship. It never planned to enter as well into a detailed exegesis of Bible texts. Yet, the theme of discipleship demands that we somehow make a distinction between the historical remembrance of Jesus and the faith interpretation of the evangelists. Without this distinction, we may meet in the Gospels a Jesus who is so divine that we lose our human master. After all, nobody of us humans can follow the second person of the Holy Trinity; we can

only find inspiration in somebody who lived his life to the full as a human person. And it is about this human person whom Christology confesses: (a) "Jesus was human to the extent that only God could be as human as he was" and (b) "God somehow disappeared in the depth of Jesus' humanity." It makes a difference to quote, for example, the Johannine text, "I and the Father are one," when we add the preface "John makes Jesus say..." After all, the same John also quotes Jesus as saying: "The Father is greater than I" (Jn 10:30 and 14:28).

The categories "priest-prophet-king" (nn. 57-61) may also push away the man of Nazareth. What can serve as a "faith interpretation" (as used, for example, by Calvin) should preferably not be used as categories to describe the historical figure. Jesus was not a priest (*hierens*) and quite critical of the priesthood. He refused to accept kingly messianic titles. He may somehow have accepted the reaction of disciples who saw him as a prophetic figure. It is only after Easter, in the faith reflection of the "Hebrews' community," that Jesus is described as a *hierens*, but then as the priest of the end-time who will abolish the need for all further sacrifices. The concept of priest as *Alter Christus*, which was added in the final text on the Priesthood, cannot also make an appeal on Scripture. I certainly cannot support a sentence, quoted from *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II, stating that "in the person of bishops, to whom the priests render assistance, the Lord Jesus Christ, supreme high priest, is in the midst of the faithful" (515). This is self-aggrandizement, not theology.

This brings me to a second critical observation: the concern to make dogmatically correct statements undermines the theme of discipleship. Let me quote some passages: (a) "Faith is a personal acceptance of the person of Christ as Lord and Savior. It is a person's 'Please come in' to Christ who stands at the door and knocks" (64); (b) "This faith includes believing his words, and accepting his teachings.... Whoever believes Jesus, must also strive to know and accept the truth he (Jesus) continues to teach through his Church" (65); (c) "We sometimes decisively break off (by mortal sin) our relationship with God our Father, with Jesus our Savior, and the Holy Spirit our friend, or at least diminish (by venial sin) the intensity of this relationship" (81); and (d) "Jesus was sinless but bore our sufferings (...). He accepted, in love and obedience to his Father, the

consequences of sin which is death by crucifixion (...). This is the Paschal Mystery of Jesus by which he brought us into his Passover from suffering to glory, from death to life..." (84). St. Anselm would be happy with this "doctrine of satisfaction." It leaves us, however, with a rather cruel God, Father, who had to be paid because of Adam's original sin and a miserable Jesus who paid the bill. The theme of discipleship could have avoided this shortcut of "the Paschal Mystery" – seeing in "the rhythm and pattern of life" (85) as well as in the constant dying and rising to new and fuller human life of Jesus – a pilgrim road that we have to walk as disciples.

My critique of some passages of "The Way of Jesus" and "The Call of Jesus Today" (nn. 62-86) is not intended to downplay the contribution made by PCP-II in developing a new vision on *Christian Life*. What makes Christianity different from other religious traditions is the way of Jesus, the prophetic peasant of Nazareth. We are "people of the way" (Acts 9:2). We believe that in a very concrete person – in his practice of healing, of storytelling, of community building and table fellowship, of socio-political and religious protest – God has manifested his/her care for us. Jesus' *Abba* cared – so Jesus cared – and it is in the same caring for ourselves and our neighbors, especially the poor, in the same table fellowship, in the same healing practice, in the same protest against injustice – that we too will share in the fullness of human life and happiness which Jesus' *Abba* is offering. PCP-II reminds us that discipleship of Jesus of Nazareth, "expressing our faith through deeds of justice and love, is particularly urgent in the Philippines where the exercise of faith often seems to be restricted to the realm of religious activities and private morality" (80).

## THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF PCP-II

The text on the Church, "Discipleship in Community – The Church" (nn. 87-144) also starts with the right question: "How must we as a Church act and relate to our world? What kind of a Church must we be to meet the challenge of our society as we turn into the third millennium?" (87). And again it is stated: "The answer to this is not abstract. For it leads us back to the concretely vivid model of

the early Christian communities which, fired by the love of Jesus and inspired by his word and spirit, gathered to worship, to pray and to serve. That early model is programmatic for the task of envisioning a Church that is renewed" (88).

PCP-II proposes a model that is "programmatic" – the Church as a community of disciples. This model, however, is not found in the drafts on *Christian Life* and *Religious Concerns*. They contain some scattered ideas about the Church but no attempt is made to develop a "programmatic" model of Church as an essential element of our being Christian. *Christian Life* (p. 13) states that "Christian life is meant to be shared; hence, by nature, it is ecclesial, that is, communitarian." "The Church's current thrust towards *Base-Level Ecclesial Communities* (BECs)" is mentioned and is presented as "the key Vatican II image of the Church as People of God" without supporting it with Vatican II texts. It is, however, added that BECs should be established "under the prudent guidance of pastors within the communion of the parish and the diocese, even of the universal Church," along the idea that the "Christian family is the miniature Church." *Religious Concerns* does not do better. It succeeds in discussing "the renewal of the Church" without elaborating on ecclesiology. We have to do it with a lonely text that states: "Renewal must also seek to build up the Church, so that it becomes a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, a community of Christ's disciples, a visible mystery of communion and mission, and *the* (sic) sacrament, in Christ, of universal salvation both signifying and serving the union of persons with God, and the unity of all humankind." This long sentence is supported with some Vatican II quotations (and a misquotation of *Lumen Gentium* 1).

An ecclesiology had still to be written within 12 days of the composition of the *Acts*. The final text gives us some solid ideas, guided by the model of community of disciples, yet mixed up with elements taken from other models: communion, body of Christ, people of God, hierarchical society, etc. Consider these quotes: (a) "Christ calls us to form a Christian community... a communion of life, love and truth..." (89); (b) "They were of one heart and mind..." (Acts 4:32-35) (90); (c) "Paul used the image of *body of Christ* in which there is a unity in diversity... different charisms and ministries but there is only one body" (92); (d) "There is equality in Christian

dignity of all the members... notwithstanding the diversity of ministries and charisms.” (95); (e) “This equality in Christian dignity does not do away with the ecclesiastical hierarchy... yet this hierarchy is a hierarchy of service...” (96); (f) “All share a responsibility for the Church’s mission” (97); and (g) “Participation is a very important aspect of the Church as communion... This means enabling the laity to participate more fully in the life of the Church and its task of mission” (98-99). A warning follows: “If heavier emphasis is laid on the laity now, it is not to set them against the hierarchical part of the Church nor to form them into a so-called ‘Church of the People,’ understood as having no place for hierarchical authority and office” (100).

Further, the final text says that the Church is a community-in-mission; it exists for the world (102-105). The Church in the Philippines has a special responsibility towards Asia. We are in a new age of mission, manifested by Filipino missionaries, the potential of Filipino migrant workers, and the Filipino-Chinese apostolate. This missionary task should incorporate the task of inter-religious dialogue, yet we should not overlook that “the Church is the ordinary means of salvation and that she alone possesses the fullness of the means of salvation” (*Redemptoris Missio* 56 and *Decree on Ecumenism* 3 which affirms that “the fullness of eternal glory” is still ahead!). The interreligious dialogue should be a dialogue of life. We participate in the three-fold mission of Christ: priest-prophet-king, but let us not overlook that the common priesthood and ministerial priesthood differ in essence (*Lumen Gentium* 10), that pope and bishops are the authoritative teachers, and that lay people only reign in the order of creation!

My anthology of abbreviated texts shows that there is no one synthetic model of ecclesiology in this section.<sup>11</sup> The model of communion, for example, becomes a synonym of “community of disciples” (103). A critical study of “Communio” shows that this model has been manipulated to send us to dizzying heights of the

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11. Tagle, Luis Antonio G., “Discipleship in Community” in *Journeying*, 56. Ocampo, Renato A., “Pastoral Implications of BECS: A Commentary on the PCP-II Text” in *Landas* 8 (1994), 27-37. Moreno, Antonio F., “PCP-II Ecclesiology: A Critical Evaluation” in *Landas* 8 (1994), 38-53.

Trinity, and at the same time instruct us that there is no communion without obedience to the Holy Father.<sup>12</sup> The text also wavers between the biblical models and the hierarchical society of the Council of Trent. Notwithstanding these ambiguities, PCP-II's *Church as Community of Disciples* opened the way towards the development of a Filipino-inculturated ecclesiology by launching the model of the "Church of the Poor," already in the process of being operative in the birth and growth of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs).

In the Philippines today, God calls us most urgently to serve the poor and the needy. We have to become the "Church of the Poor." This "means a Church that embraces and practices the evangelical spirit of poverty... and whose members and leaders have a special love of the poor" (the text qualifies: "a love of preference for the poor – it is not an exclusive or excluding love") (125-126). I like to add: the "Church of the Poor" does not exclude any person; hence, it is ready to pass on the ownership of the Church to the poor. Their participation in the leadership of the Church would create true communities of disciples, following in the footsteps of the poor peasant of Nazareth. BECs will become "Church," the nuclei containing all the fundamental elements of the Church.

I recommend the reading of the whole text (125-136), but I only highlight some sentences:

- (a) The "Church of the Poor" is one where, at the very least the poor are not discriminated against....
- (b) It will mean that the pastors and other Church leaders will give preferential attention and time to those who are poor....
- (c) It will be in solidarity with the poor themselves and with others to lift up the poor from their poverty.
- (d) It will not only render preferential service to the poor but will practice preferential reliance on the poor who themselves will become evangelizers....
- (e) Its pastors and leaders will courageously defend and vindicate the right of the poor and the oppressed, will not compete for the most prosperous parishes or offices, and will not ambition for titles and honors....

Our vision of a Church, *Community of Disciples* and *Church of the Poor*, is today finding expression in one ecclesial movement: the

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12. Comblin, Jose'. *The People of God* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004), 201.

fostering of BECs. They are visibly a significant expression of ecclesial renewal and a potential of evangelization. PCP II has this to say: “We are an imperfect Church living amidst and ministering to a very imperfect society” (142). Thus, “in order to be renewed as a Church, we must leave behind many ways of thinking, speaking and acting which no longer serve and perhaps even obstruct our evangelizing mission” (143).

The text on ecclesiology is followed by a short reflection on Mary; and in Part Three, we have the presentation on “A Renewed Integral Evangelization.” This part is then split up in two sections: (a) announcing the message of salvation (154-237) and announcing the message of liberation (238-401). The first section consists of some texts of the final drafts on *Christian Life* (pp. 15-21) and *Religious Concerns* (pp. 8-16) and focuses on inner-Church renewal. It seems to re-introduce a dualism in our vision of evangelization. In a first step, we have to prepare the dish of our Roman-Catholic message in an updated version through catechesis (doctrines and laws), sacraments and worship. In a second step, we then offer this pre-cooked doctrinal, legal and liturgical dish to the outside world through social apostolate. This was certainly not the intention of the authors of PCP-II who quoted the Synod of Bishops of 1971: “Action on behalf of justice... fully appears to us as a constitutive dimension of preaching the gospel (165-166; see: 182-185).

The model of “Church of the Poor,” shaped by the prophetic fire of its master, Jesus of Nazareth, should have kept together the two aspects of evangelization: inner-Church renewal and mission in the world. The very action of the BECs, bringing a message of liberation to society, has also to shape the Church’s catechesis, sacraments and liturgy. A Filipino catechism, rooted in the experience of the poor, would be very different from the one that had to be guided by the “Universal” Catechism (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*). In the *Acts*, only the second section, “Announcing a Message of Liberation,” is linked up with the “Church of the Poor,” and its pastoral and missionary action. It is in my opinion the most challenging part of PCP-II. Its vision of the Filipino nation: *That all may have life (mabigyan ng buhay)* (253-255) should be proclaimed again and again in our churches. In my study, I cannot cover this pastoral and missionary reflection. I feel bad because my presentation becomes a

“discerning” without “acting,” but I had to limit myself to the Christology and Ecclesiology of PCP-II.<sup>13</sup>

Focusing on ecclesiology, I still have to briefly develop the main elements of Part Four on “The Community of Disciples: Workers of Renewal.” The text of “The Lay Faithful” (404-474) starts with a selective and intelligent quoting of the description of the laity in Vatican II (*Lumen Gentium* 31). By dropping the part where it is stated that the laity are the specialists in temporal affairs, the text avoids the dualism of *priests in charge of the Church, laity will take care of the world* (404). The remaining pages, however, do not fully succeed in undoing the bad feelings that the clergy continues “lording it over others.” PCP-II could have recognized this feeling by attending to a healing process of the laity, including a time for grieving.<sup>14</sup> The Church still needs a long conversion process to arrive at a genuine co-responsibility and teamwork with the laity, mentioning in a special way women lay.

The part on the *Religious* (448-506) starts by avoiding another dualism that has been with us for many centuries: *the laity are the ordinary soldiers, religious life is a state of perfection*. Religious life is described as a distinct form of discipleship, receiving a particular gift (charism) of committing themselves through the profession of vows within a community. The religious, in trying to be disciples of Jesus in a radical prophetic and missionary way, should be found at the cutting edge: in situations where the Gospel did not have a chance of being heard or of touching the hearts and minds of people.

I already presented the conflict during PCP-II about the document on the *Clergy* (507-573).<sup>15</sup> The final draft was theologically an excellent text but unacceptable to a great number of bishops and laity. Only a skeleton of this draft is left in the *Acts*, which had to make a compromise between two models of the priesthood: a cultic and a ministerial or pastoral. It could not avoid stating that the priest

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13. Quevedo, Orlando B., “The Directions of Pastoral Renewal in the Philippines” in *Philippiniana Sacra* 29, no. 85 (1994). 99-107. This document gives us an excellent summary of pastoral imperatives formulated by PCP-II.

14. De Mesa, Jose’, “Following of Jesus and Lay Empowerment” in *Journeying*, 80-91.

15. Bernier, Paul, *Art. Cit.*

is the representative of Christ the Head, and hence somehow an *Alter Christus*. However, the text makes a spectacular jump and concludes that being representative of Christ the Head, means service or ministry; “hence we can appropriately call ordained ministers servant-leaders of the community” (518). I wish the Council had elaborated on this new model, which is as old as the New Testament. The Council eventually settled for a compromise wherein bishops are “the high priests and the servant-leaders of the community” (559). Filipino priests, celebrating the year of the priesthood in 2009, must have forgotten the model of “servant-leader” and accepted the model proposed by Rome: the devout John Vianney (+1859), *le Cure d’Ary*, the sacramental prisoner of the confessional. An army of 5000 priests marched around the Convention Center to display the power of the *Alter Christuses*.

I have still to mention the *Decrees*. I consider them a Roman disaster. The recommendations, sent to Rome, were a poorly structured compilation of various statements. The Roman editors did not only recreate them into a collection of juridical statements; they also threw out things that did not please them and changed the meaning of some recommendations.<sup>16</sup> A few examples will do:

*Article 2.2* “dioceses and parishes shall be run as *collegial* bodies” became *consultative* bodies.

*Article 6.2* recommending the “Misa ng Bayang Pilipino” was thrown out.

*Article 8* The centrality of the Eucharist and the Bible in Catholic piety shall be given greater emphasis. The Bible did not survive!

*Article 11* All Catholics should be given... instruction on the doctrines.... Rome added a book not yet around at the time of PCP-II: “and in accord with the text of the Catechism for the Universal Church and the prescriptions of canon 775.

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16. Cleary, Bernard. “Review or Rewrite? A Critique on the Decrees of PCP-II,” Unpublished paper presented to the clergy of Kabankalan.

## CONCLUSION

My study only touched two topics of PCP-II: Christian Life and the Church. A short summary, written by Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, can help the reader to put my study into the broader picture of the Council that intended to mainly develop a pastoral reflection: "PCP-II projected the endterm of renewal by way of a vibrant and gripping vision: ... a Church that is truly a Community of Disciples, a Church of the Poor, a Participatory Church, an Inculturated Church, a saving and liberating Church that serves and mirrors the Kingdom of God."<sup>17</sup> I conclude by recalling an experience during the Council that illustrates this pastoral concern. We religious could freely roam around; and during one morning of the last week, I joined the group of Northern Luzon. We discussed a part of the "Message of the Council to the People of God in the Philippines." The text read: "Inspired by the renewal of Vatican II, we, in the Filipino Church, started our search for renewal." The bishops had to speak first, and one bishop proposed to change the text: "Inspired by the renewal of Vatican II and the new Code of Canon Law..." I, being much too fast, raised my arm and asked the Monsignor what the Codex had to do with the renewal of the Church. A storm of protest broke out. I was battered by five bishops and a canon lawyer wanted to give me his copy of the Codex. After this Episcopal storm, a lay person raised his hand, pointed to his Bible, and asked in an almost whispering voice: "The Codex? What kind of book is that? Is it not enough to have Jesus and the Bible?" Other lay and religious supported this remark and the proposal of the bishop was thrown out and not included in the Message. This experience was for me a sort of summary of the trajectory we have been travelling after Vatican II and during PCP-II. The impetus of Vatican II got imprisoned in laws, encyclicals and decrees and finally in the Universal Catechism of the Catholic Church. There is nothing new in the Church. Vatican II was only a *ressourcement*. PCP-II did not agree. Let me read the last lines of the Conclusion

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17. Quevedo, *art. cit.*, 102.

(emphasis added): “The Council is a veritable Pentecostal event for us, the Church of the Philippines (...). *And we pray, finally, that the Spirit of Pentecost remains with us in our journeying to our new reality: a Church totally for others and totally for God, true disciples of the Lord, Jesus Christ in whose name and constant company, we go*” (671).

I can only repeat this prayer 20 years after PCP-II.

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