

*Communication Habits for the Pilgrim Church:
Vatican Teaching on Media and Social Communication*

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Abstract

This study examines the communication habits of the pilgrim Church with focus upon Vatican documents on mass media and social communication. Attention is given to the historical context of Vatican Councils I and II. As the Church engaged modernity, it shifted ecclesial organization from closed to become open. This study documents the importance of sociology, especially communication theory and cybernetics for Catholicism today.

It is argued that the pivotal event in the Roman Catholic Church's self-exploration for self-awareness and realization was the Second Vatican Council. At that Council, the Church re-examined itself and its own identity to come to grips with the modern world. The teachings of the Council were concerned mainly with the pastoral dimension of the Church and its self-realization. Reflexivity is an important theme of this study as it speaks about understanding the very identity of the modern Church. It is explained that the process of communication within the Roman Catholic Church is itself linked to this insight of reflexivity.

The first chapter shows that behind the pilgrim Church lies an emerging vision of the threefold offices of priest, prophet, and king. The history behind the Roman Catholic Church's transition from the First to the Second Vatican Council is provided. John Henry Cardinal Newman influenced nineteenth-century Catholic theology with his own study of the threefold office. In chapter four we return to the threefold office and examine the contribution of John Paul II. It includes an analysis of how the politics of the magisterium shapes Catholic social teaching. Chapter two examines the text and context of the Second Vatican Council's pastoral decree "Inter Mirifica". Chapter three provides a documented history of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Social Communication and its teachings. Chapter five develops major tenets of a critical analysis of the communication of the post-Vatican II Church: attention is given to the discursive aspects of religious authority, argumentation, bureaucratization, and market culture. Chapter six takes a step towards examining the pragmatics of contemporary Vatican teaching.

This study concludes that there are three basic sociological and theological aspects of the pilgrim Church. These include a ritual approach to communication, the generational experience of Catholics and their respective attitudes toward Church teaching, and the important link in the faith's praxis between reflexivity and forming habits of communication.

Résumé

Cette étude analyse les habitudes de communication de l'Église catholique-romaine et particulièrement les documents préparés par le Conseil Pontifical des Communications Sociales créé en 1987 et faisant suite à la Commission des Communications Sociales mise en place après la promulgation du décret *Inter Mirifica* par le Concile Vatican II (décembre 1963). Elle comprend six (6) chapitres concernant l'importance du contexte plus spécifiquement ecclésiologique de ces documents tel que mis en place par le premier Concile du Vatican (1870) et par le second Concile du Vatican (1962-1965). L'attention porte sur l'importance de la sociologie et notamment des communications et de la cybernétique pour la compréhension du catholicisme romain aujourd'hui.

Le premier chapitre rappelle l'importance de la vision centrale qui préside à la compréhension de l'Église : celle du Christ comme prophète, souverain et prêtre, une vision traduite dans les fonctions ('munera') respectives d'enseignement ('munus docendi'), de gouvernement ('munus gubernandi'), et de sanctification ('munus sanctificandi') et que le cardinal John Henry Newman mit de l'avant au 19^e siècle. Cette vision se retrouvera à nouveau avec insistance dans les enseignements du pape Jean-Paul II (1978-2005), comme le chapitre 4 le mentionne. Au chapitre 2, le décret *Inter Mirifica* est analysé, alors que le chapitre 3 fournit des informations sur la composition de la Commission puis du Conseil Pontifical Communications Sociales ainsi que sur les principaux documents promulgués par ces instances. Le chapitre 5 comporte une analyse critique de ces documents, notamment la question de l'exercice de l'autorité, la facture argumentative, le dilemme bureaucratisation/démocratisation, ainsi que la logique et les lois du 'marché'. Le chapitre 6 signale la portée des analyses précédentes pour une approche pragmatique (au sens de la linguistique) de l'Église aujourd'hui.

La conclusion porte sur les trois aspects principaux suivants : une approche rituelle de la communication, l'impact du flux générationnel sur l'enseignement de l'Église, et le lien étroit entre réflexivité et transformation des habitudes de communication dans l'Église catholique-romaine aujourd'hui.

Contents

	Page
Abstract	ii
Résumé	iii
Acknowledgements	vi
Abbreviations	vii
 Introduction	 1
 1. Ecclesiology as Communication in the Modern Era: Vatican Councils 1 and 2	 17
1.1 The First Vatican Council's Vision of the Church	19
1.2 The Second Vatican Council	37
1.3 Catholic Ecclesiology and System Theory	47
 2. Vatican II and the Church's Teaching on Social Communications	 56
2.1 Church and Media Before Vatican Council II	58
2.2 Vatican Council II and Media	62
2.3 The Critiques of <i>Inter Mirifica</i> and Their Evaluation	75
2.4 <i>Inter Mirifica</i> 's Sociological Vision	82
 3. The Communications Legacy of Vatican II: Charting the History of PCSC	 99
3.1 <i>Communio et Progressio</i>	102
3.2 World Communications Days and the Activities of the PCSC	110
3.3 PCSC and Pope John Paul II	114
3.4 Pontifical Council for Social Communications	116
3.5 <i>Aetatis Novae</i>	118
3.6 <i>Ethics in Advertising</i>	124
3.7 <i>Ethics in Communications</i>	126
3.8 The Internet and Cyberspace	128
3.9 PCSC's Ethical Discourse	136
 4. The Mass Media and the 'Munera' Revisited	 139
4.1 Marshall McLuhan	143
4.2 Pope John Paul II	158
4.3 The 'Munera' and Social Communication	164
 5. Critical Analysis of the Vatican's Documents on Communication	 169
5.1 Religious Authority	172

5.2 Argumentation	190
5.3 Bureaucratization and Apparent Democratization	207
5.4 Marketing Culture	223
6. Toward a Pragmatics of Vatican Teaching	230
6.1 John Hardon	231
6.2 Michel de Certeau	235
6.2.1 The Inaugurating Rupture	239
6.2.2 Certeau's Cognitive Analysis of Faith	241
6.2.3 Difference and the Communication Structure of Christian Language	244
6.2.4 Action as the Primary Function of Christian Discourse	250
6.2.5 A New Complexio Oppositorum	252
6.2.6 Certeau's Analysis and Vatican Texts on Mass Media	253
6.3 Peter Hebblethwaite's "The Fourth Man"	260
6.4 Karl Rahner	264
6.5 Theology in the Global Situation of Media Culture	269
Conclusion	277
1. The Ritual Approach to Communication According to James W. Carey	286
2. Generations and the Church's Teaching Office	292
3. Reflexivity and Habitus	300
Bibliography	313
1. Primary Sources	313
2. Secondary Sources	313
3. Other Sources	325
3.1 Communications and Sociology	325
3.2 Discourse Theory and Linguistics	331

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Under the supervision of Dr. Maurice Boutin, my research in the area of philosophy of religion combined insights from practical theology, interpretive sociology, discourse theory, applied linguistics, and church history. My study is interdisciplinary in the sense that it required me to read material by scholars outside of religious studies. This has helped me to identify the general issues that they raise that have implications for the questions of communication within religious ethics. The foundations for this project began in a course taught by Dr. Boutin on differentiation in Western philosophy as understood within the radical hermeneutics of the Italian philosopher of religion Marco Maria Olivetti. This course introduced me to the basic structure of language and the work of Kant, Hegel, Husserl, and Lonergan. In that course, I learned that each social group has its own particular history which it rewrites along with the various changes it is experiencing. These changes produce new meaning effected by the documents of the past which are both the occasion and the material of it. This insight carried into my study of another seminar with Dr. Boutin on meaning and interpretation in the philosophy of religion. My course paper focused on Raymond Williams' hermeneutics and the Vatican II decree *Inter Mirifica*, an essay in which I attempted to determine what the concept of ideology can teach us about the Catholic vision of media literacy. Later along the journey of my doctoral program, Dr. Boutin enriched my study of practical theology and Vatican social policy by introducing me to the literature of applied linguistics and critical discourse analysis. CDA has helped me to dig deeper into the pastoral documents issued by the Vatican on mass media. As I have studied the discursive and hermeneutic aspects of the history of the Second Vatican Council and the Magisterium's subsequent teaching for media and social communication, Dr. Boutin has challenged me to break out of my comfort zone in how I think about research and to never be satisfied with superficial readings of the text.

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Abbreviations

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis
CELAM - the Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference for Latin America
CPA - Catholic Press Associations
ICOSCs - International Catholic Organization for Social Communications
OCIC - the International Catholic Organization of the Cinema and Audiovisuals
PCSC - the Vatican's Pastoral Commission for Social Communications and the Pontifical
Council for Social Communications
SAR News - South Asian Religious News Service
UCA News - Union of Catholic Asian News
UCIP - the International Union of the Catholic Press
UNDA - the International Catholic Organization for Radio and Television
WACC - World Association for Christian Communications
WCCCD - World Council of Churches Communication Department

Introduction

During the twentieth century, the Roman Catholic Church re-examined itself and its own identity in order to come to grips with the modern world. Indeed, self-discovery and reflexive action is possible only in the condition of modernity. In earlier periods of Christian history, believers lived in an atmosphere of timeless beliefs without an urge to take stock of them. In modernity social actors and religious organizations can and must take cognizance of, and reflect rationally on, rules that had previously been only implicit for them. Reflexivity assumes a subject, an object, and a medium of reflection. The work of reflexive modernization, for social bodies such as the Roman Catholic Church, entails communication about the self with the self and with others. Twentieth-century Catholic ecclesiology before Vatican II was of two kinds: textbook ecclesiology, which stressed the institutional, juridical, and hierarchical aspects of the Church, and 'progressive' ecclesiology, which understood the Church as the whole People of God, always in need of renewal and reform. One must be careful about a purely pejorative understanding of the expression 'pre-Vatican II theology'. There is no uniform pre-conciliar theology that we can point to. There were theologies of the textbooks or manuals, but also the theology of individuals, such as Karl Rahner. While the theology of individual theologians was not yet accepted at official levels, they were in fact laying the foundation for the sixteen documents of Vatican II.

In Western history the rise of freedom to communicate and the right to public information is tied to the Enlightenment, and in particular, the French Revolution. The French revolution awoke in the world the idea of citizen's rights and made of equality, liberty, and fraternity the most powerful revolutionary movement up to that moment in history. It is widely agreed that the

French Revolution (1789) ended medieval Roman Catholicism once and for all, but it was met throughout the nineteenth century by several counterpart religious movements in Western Europe, such as Integralism, Fideism, and Ultramontism. In this study, we will encounter similar movements in the Church that challenge its openness to media. We shall also encounter opposite movements that manifest the seed of the Enlightenment and of freedom of expression in the Church, such as Modernism. Not a single school of thought so much as a cluster of movements, modernism emphasized the inner religious experience in the genesis of faith, and correspondingly downplayed the traditional role of ecclesiastical authority. Between the two World Wars, Catholicism lived at once under the impact of Modernist crisis and under the power of new movements within the Church: liturgical, biblical, social action, lay, ecumenical, missionary, and theological. These movements were to surface, now with official approval, in the years during or just following the Second World War. They were the forerunners of the renewal and reforms of the Second Vatican Council. In this study we shall encounter their respective influences upon Catholic media and Church communication strategies and policies.

In 2000 Michael H. Barnes edited for the College Theology Society a collection of papers entitled *Theology and the Social Sciences*, which shows that the years since the close of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) have witnessed a veritable explosion of theological exploration and development at the intersection of theology and the social sciences. The Council fathers themselves provided the intellectual justification for this when they instructed in *Gaudium et Spes* (December 7, 1965) that “sufficient use should be made, not only of theological principles, but also of the research findings of secular sciences, especially psychology and sociology: in this way the faithful will be brought to a purer and more mature living of the Christian faith” (#62). The Council members therefore charged the Church with the task of

incorporating the findings of the social sciences into the fabric of the Church's reflections on its own nature and mission. After Vatican II, many Catholic theologians embraced the Council's mandate enthusiastically, often using the findings of sociology and communication studies as a basis on which to advance the Council's call for the "continual reformation of which the Church always has need" (Barnes 2000, xiv-xv).

It will be argued throughout this study that the pivotal event in the Church's self-exploration for self-awareness and realization of its identity was the Second Vatican Council. Shortly after that Council concluded, the influential German theologian Karl Rahner, difficult though it was, tried to look back in his book *The Church After the Council* (1966) and to express his opinion of what really happened. He was aware that history tends to shroud events in mystery, and so, it is necessary to pause and evaluate, question, express gratitude for, and ask what exactly occurred during its proceedings. He referred to it as far and away the most productive of all the Church's ecumenical councils to date. It was a Council which undertook the greatest tasks so far and the most far-reaching themes. Though the technical possibilities of the 1960s were greater than earlier eras, it still was not to be assumed that it would cover so much ground. Much of the business had already been worked over and basically outlined during the preliminaries to the Council. But when one realizes what pre-conceptions many people had, especially in Roman circles, prior to the Council, a smooth course was not to be expected. Some participants, for example, believed beforehand that the Council had as its task merely to codify a little more solemnly than before the old dogmatic assumptions, and that the real job could in effect be finished before the opening of the Council (Rahner 1966, 16-17).

Rahner recalls that it happened otherwise, and it would be a sign of short-sightedness and ingratitude if we looked back on what happened at Vatican II as merely what could have been

assumed, and to evaluate everything as having been inevitable. For everything at the Council was re-worked from the ground up. Naturally, it was necessary to make a preliminary selection and to impose a thematic limitation on the tasks of the Council, and it need not be denied that we can by hindsight detect here and there a certain fortuitousness in the inclusions or exclusions. But just as no former Council had consisted of the enormous assembly of the entire Church, so no former Council had as its objective the full scope of the task of the Church. One has only to glance at the themes Rahner finds in the Council and his arrangement of them in order to realize the magnitude of the task undertaken at Vatican II. First, the Council considered the fundamental self-understanding of the Church. Second, it looked at the inner life of the Church; her ministry of administration (*munus regendi*), her priestly ministry (*munus sanctificandi*) and her teaching ministry (*munus docendi*). Third, Rahner found that the Council addressed the Church's mission to those outside the Church: non-Catholic Christians, Jews, and other world religions. This mission also includes the Church's relation with the secular world, issues pertaining to national governments and technological achievements in communications (Rahner 1966, 17-18).

The twenty-first council of the holy Roman Catholic Church ventured to tackle problems and to come to grips with questions vital to her being. That fact alone is of inestimable theological significance for the Church's self-understanding in theory and practice. It has demonstrated specifically that the collegial-synodal principle of the Church is not violated in the institution and office of the papacy. Further, the Council has shown that, though this principle has been somewhat de-emphasized in the past it has remained a real power in the Church. The Church has shown by the very fact of the Council her mysterious unity, a unity of personal and collegial structure subsiding only by the power of God and that cannot be measured by the standards or norms of any other existing secular or social organization. The Church is, in truth, a

mystery of faith which surmounts all the problems implicit in other structures, whether authoritarian or democratic. Rahner even speculates that this sort of conciliar system might prove to be meaningful in the secular socio-political context as a device for debate and final appeal when the mass society of tomorrow will seek to resolve the conflicting claims of freedom and unity (1966, 11-12). The Church offers a sociology by which to evaluate affairs in the secular order.

Rahner notes that the Second Vatican Council was a constitutional community which demonstrated and took its own initiative. It was a Council which was respected by the *primus* of the Church, who as its head according to Roman Catholic understanding worked with it as with the larger community of his brother bishops, not as a random gathering of 'yes-men'. This working together of the pope and the Council has never been adequately institutionalized in correct procedural norms, and consequently there were during the Council many hours of darkness and many painful experiences which were almost necessarily unavoidable. It is proved both by history and by experience that the Church never guides herself but is guided, in fact as in theory, by the power of the Spirit – she remains One not merely literally, but rather in the incomprehensible plurality of her personal and collegial structure through the miracle of the Spirit (Rahner 1966, 12-13).

Rahner described the Second Vatican Council as one of freedom and love. The Council, within which the freedom of God's grace joined all the participants in steadfast devotion to Our Lord Jesus Christ, explored the growing understanding in faith of the dogmas of the Church while remaining equally loyal to the already accepted faith of the Church. Rahner recalls the freedom that he felt in the Council as a participant behind the scenes, despite the pomposities, the human weaknesses, and the prejudices characteristic of all men, even of those doing the work of

God. The truly miraculous and astonishing thing about this Council, Rahner found, was that genuine unanimity was reached in freedom. Common declarations and common agreement were achieved. It is not just to be assumed that this sort of unanimity can be expected in the present day. One can easily get the impression nowadays that freedom has caused, at least in the field of theology, discord, and that only by the show of authority can one make any appreciable advances in thought or activity. But the Council demonstrated that with the grace of God this is not necessarily so. Naturally, such unity in freedom is achieved only with great effort, and here and there a step on the way may seem at first sight to be merely a bad compromise. Rahner finds that such friction and compromise is the way that true freedom is realized. Vatican II was proof that in the Church unity and fidelity to her own historical mission have not frozen into immobility, nor had freedom of thought degenerated into empty rhetoric and idle ramblings (Rahner 1966, 13-14).

Most importantly, Rahner hoped that future Catholics would remember that Vatican II was a Roman Catholic Council, which means that the Christian faith was the norm and law for its procedure and teachings. This Council was in every sense of the word catholic, and yet, in a way until recently almost inconceivable, almost entirely a Council of ecumenical responsibility. Rahner noted that this was not made true simply by the presence of observers from other Christian communities and Churches who played a real role in the proceedings, nor simply because there was a decree on ecumenism, nor because the Council avoided the old controversies and theological pitfalls which lie in the way to the realization of the unity of all Christians, nor because we silenced our own faith and denied our own insights in order to create something new because we believe that no final or permanently valid doctrinal categories are to be found. This ecumenical spirit, Rahner reasoned, is manifested not just in the effort to take into account non-

Catholic Christians and their theologies in the conciliar expressions as far as it was possible without compromising the Church's own doctrinal convictions, but above all because the Council endeavored in its doctrinal understanding to engage extensively with all Christians by expressing more clearly old verities in new ways. Examples of this ecumenism can be found with reference to such things as declarations on the significance of the local congregation as Church, on the salvation of the non-Christian, on the hierarchy of significance among even defined truths of the faith, on the Scripture which serves the Church and her teaching office, on the plurality of equally valid theologies in the one Church, or on the significance of the historical-critical theology.

For Rahner, the teachings of the Second Vatican Council are concerned mainly with the Church and its self-realization. It was a Council concerned with ecclesiology, the formal study of the Church – with a unity of theme that no previous Council ever had. Even the First Vatican Council, which defined the primacy of papal authority, treated completely unrelated matters along with this question. When we say that the Second Vatican Council was an ecclesiological Council, therefore, a Council concerned with the formal study of the Church, we are not by any means stretching a point. In fact the Second Vatican Council was a Council of the Church reflecting on her own nature (Rahner 1966, 38-39). Turning back on itself, its own plurality of histories and traditions, the modern Church began to pursue its own reflexivity in terms of self-consciousness, self-awareness, and self-reference. The Church was not only the subject, but also the object, of the conciliar pronouncements. As such, ecclesial reflexivity involves interrogation and criticism of Catholic traditions.

Reflexivity seems like a harmless endeavor of itself; but if we consider the terrifying, threatening, unknown future facing the Roman Catholic Church, we pause in alarm, and ask

ourselves in dismay whether the Church has nothing more important to speak about than how she understands herself: for she exists not for herself, but for God, for her Lord, for humankind and its destiny (Rahner 1966, 39). First, it should be noted that the Church speaks about all fundamental realities and truths when she speaks about herself. Second, the Church had to speak about herself because the First Vatican Council had initiated this self-reflection in its own *Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*, and the abrupt suspension of that Council because of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War left this self-reflection incomplete. These reasons are true enough, but Rahner argues for yet a grander one. He notes that in any dialogue or discourse, the Church must always consider herself the first and last problem. Like humanity, the ultimate problem is its own existence. No problem is finally solved, no perspective ensured of its place, until the problem of itself is solved. The very obviousness with which ecclesiology became almost automatically the key theme of the Council shows, therefore, how much man and the Church, with all their ability of reflection and all their responsibilities towards others, uncannily consider themselves to be the ultimate problem. Rahner observed that this is both a fear and a consolation for the Church. "It is a fear, because we ask ourselves whether man and the Church are not acting too self-reliantly; and it is a consolation, for we believe that ultimately we find our direction from God" (Rahner 1966, 39-40).

All inquiry into one's self opens out into the future. And the Church's life of faith is still in progress. This means that what she says today, if said truth-fully, can perhaps in the unknown tomorrow be said again in a different way, for tomorrow the Church will have greater age, greater maturity, new perspectives, and new circumstances. What she says about herself today implies also a recognition of what she intends to be tomorrow (Rahner 1966, 40-41). Cybernetics, concerned as it is with inquiry into circularity and recursive processes, serves as an

important frame, both explicitly and implicitly, for the chapters in this study. Cybernetics defines the study of communication and control in the organism and the machine. While cybernetics was originally concerned with circular relationships in systems that could be observed, it more recently focused on applying cybernetic principles to the understanding and language of cybernetics itself – the cybernetics of cybernetics or second order cybernetics. This second order type of cybernetics is concerned with observing, rather than merely observed, systems. The observer(s) and the responsibilities emanating from any act of observation are reflexively made part of any system of description. In this process of critique, the boundaries of identity are softened and the possibilities of new identities are revealed. Reflexivity involves a consideration of the Church's past, present, and future and the role they play in shaping its identity.

My goal in this study is to examine the institution of the Roman Catholic Church, in particular the Vatican, in the light of sociological analysis and theories of communication. In doing so, much attention will be given to research provided by previous initiatives. In 1973 Patrick Granfield first published his influential book *Ecclesial Cybernetics: A Study of Democracy in the Church*. It argued that the Church needs cybernetic reform through democratization. The faithful should have a more effective voice in the decision-making process, authorities should be more open and responsive to input of all kinds, and the system itself should develop a more refined communications network. The book proved to be the first of many important contributions that Granfield made to Roman Catholic Ecclesiology. His book was unique because it combined ecclesiology with sociological insights about Roman Catholicism from the perspective of communications theory. His work was evidence that the relationship between the Church and the outside secular world had entered a new and stimulating phase. That great council has been referred to as a providential event, whereby the Church began its more

immediate preparation for the year 2000 and a new millennium of Christianity. Unfortunately, the optimism held by Granfield and the Council Fathers of Vatican II during the 1960s has given way to a Roman Catholic Church that is today on the defensive about its place in the modern world. In the last several years there has been, due to scandals, a marked loss of confidence in the Vatican and its leaders have not been successful in restoring it. An immense credibility gap exists between officials and members of the Roman Catholic Church. Vatican II represented the attempt of the Church to reshape ecclesial structures to take account of the changed political, economic, and social realities of the modern world. Steps taken toward the gradual implementation of this renewal have been delayed and it is likely to be a long revolution that extends over several generations of Catholics.

Periods of intense intellectual disturbance and political re-adjustment are not uncommon in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church is no stranger to conflict and from the beginning it has met and overcome severe opposition. A Church that has survived the fall of the Roman Empire, the end of the Middle Ages, and the challenge of the Industrial Revolution must have a great adaptability. From this vantage point, the current crisis will certainly not see the demise of the Church. It will certainly be a long time before the Church which has been given the Second Vatican Council will be the Church of the Second Vatican Council, just as it took a number of generations after the close of the Council of Trent before she became the Church of the Reform of Trent. But that does not at all alter the Church's responsibility its members have been invited to fulfill: to do what Vatican II said it will do, to become that which the Council Fathers with the entire world as their witness recognized the Church to be, to make deeds out of words, to make spirit out of rules, to make true prayer out of liturgical forms, and reality out of ideas. The Council could hardly be more than the beginning of this task, but this is a great deal,

and it is more than one can express in mere words. Karl Rahner observed in *The Church After the Council* that “it would be difficult judgement indeed, both for sheep and shepherd, for us all, if we confuse word and deed, beginning and fulfillment. We have in the Council, just as Elijah did of old, wandered through the desert and have come nearer to God upon the holy mountain. If we would like to stretch out, tired and sleepy, under the broom tree of a conciliar triumphalism, then an angel of God may, yea he must, by means of the frightful dangers and anxieties of our time, by means of persecution, apostasy, and pain of heart and spirit, wake us up out of our sleep: Rise up, a long road lies ahead of you (see 1 Kings 19,7)” (Rahner 1966, 29). Vatican II urged the pilgrim church to move forward in time, on the path of the future and the Kingdom of God.

At Vatican II, in the pastoral Decree *Inter Mirifica*, the Council Fathers set out to interpret and understand the technologies of the modern world’s social communications revolution. They were concerned about the future prospects for Christianity and what would become of the Church in a media-saturated society. The Vatican wanted to promote sound professional training for Catholics working in the media. This included the help of national centers, seminary courses, and university departments that would provide scientific programs in the media. The Vatican wanted the Catholic press, including diocesan newspapers, to broaden its horizons by bringing a knowledge of the Church to the world and a knowledge of the world to the Church. Liberated from purely regional concerns the Catholic media should increase their dialogue with the world and reveal the Christian message to others. The Vatican argued that considerable support from Catholics and institutional support from bishops are needed if the Church is to have influence over the media.

The Church’s interest in media originates in its desire to propagate the faith. Today, secular advertising messages urge people to buy goods or services, or to accept a point of view.

The word 'advertising' comes from the French word *avertir*, which means to notify. Advertisers pay for or buy advertising that tells people about the advantages of a product, a service, or an idea. Advertising reaches people through mediums, or media. Advertising messages are carried to large audiences in society by means of mass communications. The most important media include newspapers, magazines, television, radio, movies, and more recently the Internet. Advertising is an important industry that seeks to make people aware of things they need and to make them want these things. It tells what products or services are on the market, and how they can be obtained. Advertising suggests that we enjoy more nourishing foods, more attractive clothes, and more comfortable homes. In doing all these things, it is widely believed that advertising, 'the voice of business', helps us to improve our way of living.

Sociologically, the Vatican has become interested in research of the subject and methods of advertising rhetoric and social communication because it wants to understand how to effectively reach people in terms of evangelism and apologetics, for the propagation of the Gospel. Vatican research initiatives into the topic of media have been influenced by Catholic intellectuals such as Marshall McLuhan. It is very important to recognize, following McLuhan's work, that understanding the nature of mass media depends on understanding the history of media. From the time of Gutenberg and his invention of the printing press, communications technology has shaped social organization and culture in the West. Mass media influence the basic kinds of human associations that can develop in any time period. The age of mechanics was ushered in by the printing press, the age of electronics by the telegraph. McLuhan argued that communications technology is an extension of thought, of consciousness, and of human perceptual capacities. Psychologically the mass media has shaped human sensory organization and thought. From a cybernetic perspective, human beings become units of information, each

person contributes to the new world's sentence. The history of the modern West is the history of a bias of communications and a monopoly of knowledge founded on print. Thus, the history of the mass media is not just another avenue of historical research; rather it is another way of writing the history of Western civilization.

In this study, attention is given to chronicling the history and activities of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Social Communications. Following the mandate of Vatican II' text *Inter Mirifica*, the Pontifical Council is the Roman Curial office involved in questions regarding social communications so that, also by these means, human progress and the message of salvation may benefit secular culture and mores (*Pastor Bonus*, 169). It is from this context that we will best understand the relation between Church and media after Vatican II. This Council provides official Vatican interpretations of the Catholic doctrines and pastoral action concerning media. It is also an ideal pre-text for understanding the organizational culture of the Vatican bureaucracy in the media age. The ministry of social communications is an expression of the Church's ongoing effort to interpret the 'signs of the times' in light of the Gospel. It is also the privileged site for teaching believers about Jesus, the 'Perfect Communicator'.

This study provides a social scientific study of Catholic institutional and intellectual history. In particular, this social scientific and historical work focuses on Catholic ecclesiology, the pioneering interest of Vatican II in the sociology of communications, and the ongoing work of the PCSC. Attention will be given to the recent papacies of John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II and their respective influences over the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. Focus will be given to Paul VI, the pope who completed Vatican II, helped approve *Inter Mirifica*, commissioned *Communio et Progressio*, and guided the early work of the PCSC. This study also chronicles the contributions of Pope John Paul II to the more recent work of the

PCSC. Consideration will also be given to the influence of significant trends in continental theology and sociological theory that have impacted Vatican pastoral teaching on social communication over the past forty years.

In sum, this study provides a sociological analysis of the system of organizational communication in the modern Vatican. The first chapter examines the reflexive modernization of Roman Catholic ecclesiology best illustrated by the shifts in church organization that occurred between the first and second Vatican councils. Chapter two describes how the council Fathers of Vatican II engaged the sociology of media and communications research in the Pastoral Decree *Inter Mirifica*. Chapter three chronicles the texts prepared by the Roman Curia on church and communications during the forty years after Vatican II. Chapter four examines the role of mystification in Vatican theories of communications and media. Chapter five provides a theological profile of modern Vatican communications theology; focusing in particular on reflexive aspects such as authority-claims, modes of argumentation, bureaucratization, and market commodification. Chapter six moves toward the pragmatics of Vatican communications policy. The conclusion discusses how the 'pilgrim church' is building habits of social communications in accord with the ideals of Vatican II.

Assuming that the theological setting of Vatican II was post-conservative in its orientation, I will sketch the sociological-linguistic contours of the Open Church model that emerged in the post-conciliar era. In keeping with reflexive approach, due attention will be given to the interpretive, political, and rhetorical nature of the Vatican's corpus of teaching on social communications. Reflexivity requires that we recognize the socially constructed nature of the Vatican's teaching. Whereas Vatican I emphasizes the agency of the papacy, Vatican II argues for the agency of the entire Church. This new image of the Open Church, derived from the

teaching of Vatican II as well as from the Pontifical Council for Social Communications and its interpretation of *Inter Mirifica*, will be examined in this study. It is important to ascertain to what extent the corpus is manipulative or asking believers to serve power driven goals. Karl Rahner asserts:

In an age of cybernetics, of social super-organizations, certain questions can no longer be entrusted paternalistically merely to the wisdom, the circumspection, and the experience of ecclesiastical leaders – questions, for example, as to how the Church as a whole ought to live and act; how the central Roman authority ought to be structured; how a diocese ought to be organized; how the broad “politics” of spirit and culture ought to be influenced. Surely the Church leaders have the final decision in such matters, but the contemplation and study preparatory to all questions relating to the actual self-realization of the Church are today acutely in need of scientific method and systematic carrying through.

(Rahner 1966, 103)

In sum, this sociological analysis seeks to understand why the Vatican is trying to modernize itself and cast a new image of the Church as cybernetic and open.

The larger significance of this kind of study is related to turn towards reflexivity in media studies, communications, and sociology. A concern with risk and anxiety about the well-being of the Church means that it is not enough for Catholic theologians and Church historians to simply provide pastoral reflections on passing cultural trends. Then, the Church would merely be made in the image and likeness of those institutions from today’s marketplace. Instead, CDA proposes to unmask ideological manifestations that disguise power and economic arrangements in religious discourse. In Pierre Bourdieu’s writing, the task of unmasking the ‘real’ basis of social

arrangements is understood to have a freeing, emancipating aspect. Choice is believed to be enhanced when the ties that bind are disclosed and the structures which conceal are revealed. Bourdieu suggests that sociology unmasks "self-deception, that collectively entertained and encouraged form of lying to oneself which, in every society, is at the basis of the most sacred values and, thereby, of all social existence. It teaches with Marcel Mauss, that 'society always pays itself in the false coinage of its dreams'" (1990, 188).

In *The Enchantment of Sociology*, Kieran Flanagan observes that this project of unmasking is also the province of theology. Seeing and not seeing 'reality' relate to the conundrums between theology and sociology. Flanagan points out that theology often fails to scrutinize the cultural consequences of its transactions. Within contemporary culture are processes that seem to signify the impossibility of religious belief. These cultural processes relate to the power to commodity, to manufacture images, to erect icons and to mark culture with an intensity in the marketplace that enfeebls. Flanagan finds that religious belief seems to have sunk, less due to secularization than to a failure to discern contemporary culture and find a means of connecting to it. Of course, the answer is not the popular resurgence of dogmatism and fundamentalism, but instead a commitment to the distinctive sociological work of self-awareness in knowing about the identity of the Church. Further study is required of the reflexive basis of the reproduction of religious belief. To quote Flanagan, "This is not to suggest that holiness would be increased in some way through sociological means, but rather that a greater understanding of possibilities of engagement with culture would emerge" (1996, 226).

Chapter One

Ecclesiology as Communication in the Modern Era: Vatican Councils 1 and 2

The Gregorian University and the Jesuit Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture have jointly sponsored, since 1981, annual Cavalletti conferences on the study of theology and social communication. This conference series became the source for Patrick Granfield's well-known anthology entitled *The Church and Communication* published in 1994. The book includes a collection of essays by international contributors from rich and varied backgrounds in theology, philosophy, communication, history, and art. No comparable work on this topic exists. The book focuses on current developments in Roman Catholic ecclesiology and the significance of new conceptions and cultural patterns of communication for ecclesiology and for the life of the Church. The overriding and unanimous message that all the contributors make is that ecclesiology and communication need each other. In his thirty-year career as theologian at Catholic University of America, Granfield has promoted the in-depth study of the centrality of communication in the Church. His work began with his own book *Ecclesial Cybernetics* (1973), in which he argued that cybernetics, the science of communication and control, could help the Church better understand its mission in the challenging last quarter of the twentieth century.

Keeping Granfield's example in mind, this chapter explains why ecclesiology is a religious form of organizational communication and it historically documents the paradigm shift in Church communications between the Councils of Vatican I and II. Attention is given to the Roman Catholic Church's transition from a nineteenth-century monarchical institution into a religious community that addresses the social concerns of the modern world. As the Vatican critically engages the topic of communications technology, the organizational structure of the Roman Catholic Church has begun to transform, in its orientation, from a closed society into an open society.

The collaboration between theology and the social sciences is an essential feature of the Post-Vatican II Church. Prior to the Second Vatican Council, neither fundamental ecclesiology,

nor dogmatic ecclesiology, made significant use of the social sciences to understand how the human element functions in the life of the Church. The sociological work of Protestants such as Ernst Troeltsch (1864-1920) and Max Weber (1865-1923) was seldom read in a Roman Catholic context. There was no attempt to study, by means of empirical methods, the concrete ways in which the modern Roman Catholic Church and its organizational structures should function so as to become a credible sign of God's presence in the modern world. The traditional scholastic method for discussing the Church's ecclesiastical structure was strictly historical and theological (Phan 2001, 60). Among the earliest works by Roman Catholic theologians that mentioned the need of making use of the social sciences in ecclesiology are Jerome Hamer, "Ecclésiologie et Sociologie,"¹ and *The Church is a Communion* (1964), especially chapter XI entitled "Psychological and Sociological Implications of Communion," and also Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church* (1957), at least indirectly through his emphasis on the role of the laity. The first works that made systematic use of the social sciences for ecclesiology are Jeremiah Newman, *Change and the Catholic Church: An Essay in Sociological Ecclesiology* (1965), and Mary Virginia Orna, *Cybernetics, Society, and Church* (1969).

Thomas P. Rausch is among those who think that pre-Vatican II Catholicism was very different from that of today. In his influential book *Catholicism in the Third Millennium* (second edition, 2003), Rausch sketches a historical portrait of the Church's past and present as it enters the twenty-first century. He notes that the biggest shift in ecclesiology was brought about by historical consciousness. The classicist perspective, dominant from 1850 to 1950, infused the institutional model of the Church with a timeless reality and meaning. This viewpoint assumed that because the Church was founded by Jesus Christ, it acquired a divine quality, which elevated everyone and everything it touched. The meaning of the Church qua divine institution, visible and perfect society, immune to change was viewed as the one and only true meaning of the church in the late nineteenth century. The age of Tridentine Catholicism created a neo-Scholastic

¹ *Social Compass* 7 (1960): 325-339.

worldview focused on the static, unchanging, nature of theology. In this chapter, I will explain the First Vatican Council's vision of the Church and then discuss the reflexive shift that occurred in the Church's self-understanding.

1.1 The First Vatican Council's Vision of the Church

The Roman Catholic Church in the middle of the nineteenth century considered itself very much as a traditional society under siege. Deeply suspicious of the modern world, it was on the defensive. The only really acceptable model for theology was that of the dogmatic manuals of the Roman schools, a textbook theology that relied on neo-scholasticism. This textbook theology demonstrated traditional positions by citing biblical proof texts and numbers from Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, a catechetical compendium of papal and conciliar teachings. Meanwhile, in many Roman Catholic universities, students were required to read a popular book by James J. Walsh called *The Thirteenth: Greatest of Centuries*. The sense that the Catholic Church had its attention fixed firmly on the past rather than on the future could not have been more clearly illustrated by these examples.

In a very real sense the Roman Catholic Church had never completely recovered from the shock of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. But there were other causes for the Church's distrust of the modern world as well. The scientific revolution and the rationalism of the Enlightenment, or Age of Reason, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the accompanying assaults on Church doctrine, authority, and ritual left the Church on the defensive; both movements presupposed an autonomous human reason that left no room for revelation or the transcendent. Then, political revolutions occurred in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including the French Revolution. The latter sought to change the nature of Church government by forcing the clergy to obey a civil constitution that stripped the pope of any juridical authority over the Church in France. Finally, it attempted to restrict the practice of Christian faith itself (Rausch 2003, 3-5).

The anti-modern viewpoint of the Vatican began with the papacy of Gregory XVI (1831-46). Pope Gregory XVI was a devout and ascetic monk who would have liked to govern the Church as an abbot governs a monastery. His idea of riding the storm that was brewing in Europe was to sit still and play for safety, and in particular to strike the best bargain he could for the preservation of the papal states, which were at this time threatened by revolutionary movements (Vidler 1974, 71). He was the first and only Camaldolese monk elected pope and the last person elected who was not yet a bishop. He wrote a defense of papal sovereignty and infallibility in 1799, became a Cardinal in 1826, and was prefect of the Propagation of the Faith. He centralized much Church activity in the Holy See, especially missionary activity. Pope Gregory was a determined reactionary who resisted attempts at reform of papal government and insisted that the independence of the Church required maintenance of the Papal States, twice calling on Austrian troops to suppress revolts (McBrien 1995, 591).

Pope Gregory XVI is best remembered for having denounced and forbidden the use of railways in the Papal States, calling them 'camino di ferro, camino di inferno' in Italian, which means 'railroad, hell's road' in English. He also banned street-lights, lest people gather under them to plot against the authorities. He denounced freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, and the separation of Church and state. His papal encyclical *Mirari vos* (Latin, "You wonder") issued June 25, 1834, condemned the social and political principles espoused in *L'Avenir* (French, "The Future"), the Catholic newspaper edited by the liberal French Catholics, including Father Félicité Robert de Lamennais (d. 1854), who advocated the ideals of social liberty, separation of Church and state, and freedom of religion and of the press. Suspicious of all innovation, Gregory's pontificate became a by-word for obscurantist repression. The negative

reputation that he created for the papacy left its imprint on the Church's pastoral theology for several generations (McBrien 2000, 336-39).

The nineteenth century was an age of ideology in Western philosophy. It represents the most explosive and revolutionary period in the revolution of formal thinking since the collision of rationalism and traditional Christianity. The Vatican feared that movements of social dissent in modern Europe would destroy the Church. In 1863 Pope Pius IX (1846-78), considered quite liberal in the early days of his pontificate, published his *Syllabus of Errors*, a list of eighty concepts and movements he considered typical of modern civilization. Among the errors condemned was the proposition that "the Roman Pontiff can and should reconcile himself and reach agreement with 'progress', Liberalism, and recent departures in civil society" (DS 2980). Even the territory of the Church considered its own was under attack. In 1870 Garibaldi seized the Papal States for what was to be the newly united Italian state. The loss of this vast area of central Italy ruled by the popes for more than a thousand years was traumatic (Rausch 2003, 4-5).

The popular Church historian Philip Hughes argues in his book *The Church in Crisis: A History of the Twenty Great Councils*, that the Vatican Council of 1869-70 should be understood in relation to the French Revolution of 1789. At the First Vatican Council, the various conservative forces in the Church gathered to promote an anti-modern mood in the Church; the world that the Revolution and Napoleon had left was unacceptable to the Vatican (Hughes 1961, 294-324). In response, a nineteenth-century intellectual and political movement called Ultramontanism (Latin for 'beyond the mountains') in those European countries beyond the Alps (France, Germany, Spain, England) had exalted the papacy as the bulwark against political liberalism and modern philosophical and scientific trends. Until their defeat and destruction

during the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the Western European ecclesiastical structures, especially in Germany and France, were rooted in feudalism and contained limits that held in check centralizing forces in the Church. After the revolution, governments sought to subsume the now weakened Church under claims of national sovereignty. By means of concordats the popes succeeded in arranging ecclesiastical structures in new ways and securing a degree of civil freedom for Catholics². Later generations of Catholics called Integralists would remember these achievements of papal intervention as a hallmark of Roman Catholic identity. The French Roman Catholic movement of *Intégrisme* hailed an ultraconservative papacy that challenged modernism within Church and society.

Because of this Integralist success in reaction to the spiritual and intellectual insecurity within the Christian faith, many Roman Catholics looked to the papacy for reassurance. Since many Catholics saw the pope as the guardian of the Church's political independence and the source of its internal security, they wanted papal authority strengthened, even at the expense of the local churches. Initially, even many liberal Catholics were strongly Ultramontane. They did not, however, support the program of political restoration and intellectual defensiveness pursued by Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846) and Pope Pius IX (1846-1878). This restorationist, anti-modern, integrist movement for 'altar and throne' sought to oppose the Enlightenment and liberalism through the strengthening of papal authority. The movement found its programmatic voice in several influential journals, e.g. *Civiltà Cattolica* and *L'Univers*. The European Ultramontane movement provided strong support and incentive for the doctrines of papal primacy and infallibility at Vatican Council I (1869-1870).

² Hermann J. Pottmeyer in Richard McBrien's *HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 1994, p.1278.

The First Vatican Council presented the Roman Catholic Church as a Papal monarchy with a closed internal network of social communications. Vatican I's teaching regarded the Roman Catholic Church as a visible representation of Christ, a religious society inhabited by the faithful. Although not a theological consultant for Vatican I, Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890) sketched a model for ecclesiology that explains the First Vatican Council³. Toward the end of his life, Newman presented a brilliant synthesis of the Church's three offices in the Preface to the third edition of his book *Via Media*. Following the doctrinal expression *triplex munus*, Newman argued that Jesus Christ, who combined in himself the holy offices of prophet, king, and priest conferred upon the Christian Church the three tasks of teaching, ruling, and worshipping – that is to say, the prophetic, the regal, and the priestly offices. What does this mean exactly? As a worshipping community, the Church is priestly. As a community of thought and education, it is prophetic. As an organized society equipped with governing functions, it is regal. From the beginning, Newman says, all three functions were exercised in the Church, but they achieved maturity in succession. In the first centuries the Church appeared principally as a community of worship. Worship led naturally to confession and, on occasion, to heroic acts of martyrdom. In the next few centuries, a class of cultivated intellectuals emerged, creating schools of learning. Finally, by the Middle Ages, the Latin Church developed a well-established ecclesiastical polity under the hegemony of the bishop of Rome (Dulles, 2002, 110).

According to Newman, the three functions are not really separable. None of them operates except by interaction with the other two. The health and growth of the Church result from cooperation and creative tension among all three functions. Popular religion is the broad base that gives vitality to the whole organism. Theological reflection gives clarity and identifies aberrations. Ecclesiastical authority coordinates the life and doctrine of the Church. It prevents the excesses of popular piety and the extremes of critical thought from relapsing into pagan

³ To explain Newman's ecclesiology, I rely upon the research of Avery Cardinal Dulles, the author of a book on Newman and also of the essay "The Threefold Office in Newman's Ecclesiology" for the anthology *Newman After a Hundred Years*, edited by Ian Ker and Alan G. Hill, 1990, pp.275-99.

superstitions or misrepresenting the Church's faith. Newman held that constituencies in the Church bear each of the respective offices. He apportions the three offices among different classes in the Church. For him, the regal office is concentrated in the pope and the Roman Curia; the prophetic is vested in the theologians; and, the sacerdotal, is exercised by local pastors and laity. The different functions of the Church, Newman holds, arise out of different concerns, all legitimate. "Truth is the guiding principle of theology and theological inquiries; devotion and edification, of worship; and of government, expedience". The three offices use different means: "the instrument of theology is reasoning; of worship, our emotional nature; of rule, command and coercion". Newman held that the three offices are liable to different corruptions. Reasoning tends to rationalism and scepticism; devotion to superstition and enthusiasm; and power, to ambition and tyranny (Dulles 2002, 110).

According to Newman, the Church's three offices – prophetic, regal, and priestly – are mutually complementary. No one of them is unequivocally superior to the other two. Dulles explains the reasoning behind Newman's position:

The laity and the pastors embody, on the whole, the devotional principle; the theologians, the rational; and the papacy and its curia, the regiminal. It is normal for there to be a certain tension among the three. Popular devotion is impatient with theology for being too critical and academic, and with the hierarchy for being too political and authoritarian. Theologians bristle at the exuberance of popular piety and complain about the restraints imposed upon them by the hierarchy. The hierarchy is on guard against the credulity of uneducated believers and the rationalism of theologians. Despite these tensions, each Church office is partly dependent on the other two. Without the reverence of simple piety neither the theologians nor the ecclesiastical Magisterium could sustain a communion with the Object of the Church's faith. Popular devotions however are kept within the bounds of orthodoxy by the critical scrutiny of theologians and the vigilance of hierarchical authorities. The Magisterium is indebted to theologians for its

principles, concepts, and technical vocabulary. The theologians depend on the guidance of the Magisterium to provide secure grounding for their study and speculation. (Dulles 2002, 110-111)

Dulles in his examination of the threefold office finds that Newman develops an ecclesiology of checks and balances. Without minimizing the pastoral authority of hierarchical leaders, he proposes a complex system that is evidently indebted not only to biblical authors such as Paul but also to British political experience. Although the Church is, from one point of view, a structured hierarchical society, it is also a people whose members vitally interact. All the members of the Church whether lay or clerical, whether simple believers or learned theologians, must learn from one another and be solicitous for the good of the entire organism (Dulles 2002, 111).

Admittedly, Newman's theory of the threefold office of the Church did not originate with him. The depiction of Jesus Christ as prophet, king, and priest was a patristic theme that Newman would have learned from reading Eusebius of Caesarea. St. Jerome, a secretary to Pope Damasus and the creator of the Vulgate Bible, was the first to explain the threefold office in the context of the papacy and the Roman Church. Since Calvin the threefold office has been standard in much Protestant theology, most notably in the field of Christology. The doctrine of the threefold Church offices, though extensively used in the Christology of the Roman Catechism published after the Council of Trent (1566), was generally neglected until the nineteenth century, when it became prominent in ecclesiology thanks to the influence of several canon lawyers. The German canonist Ferdinand Walter in his *Lehrbuch des Kirchenrechts* (1829) defended the threefold division of powers in preference to the twofold distinction of the power of order and the power of jurisdiction, which had become common since the Middle Ages. The threefold division was promoted even more vigorously by the Austrian canonist George Phillips (1804-1872), a convert from Protestantism, particularly in his seven volume *Kirchenrecht* (1845-1872). Combining Calvin's threefold partition of the function of Christ with a "body of Christ" ecclesiology derived from Johann Sebastian Drey and Johann Adam Möhler, Phillips set the

pattern for many works on ecclesiology. Paralleling the work of these canonists, the theologian Heinrich Klee in his *Katholische Dogmatik* (1834-1835; 4th edition, 1861), analyzed the functions of the Church under the headings 'magisterium', 'ministerium', and 'regimen'. Johann Baptist Franzelin and Louis Billot argued that the power of jurisdiction may be taken in a broad sense, as including both teaching and ruling, and thus that the two powers of order and jurisdiction include the three functions of sanctifying, ruling, and teaching. On the other hand, I. Salaverri objected to the reduction of Church teaching to mere jurisdiction on the ground that the two are specifically distinct (Dulles 1990, 393-394).

During Newman's lifetime, the threefold division of office came into increasing prominence in official Roman Catholic teaching on ecclesiology. In each of the two schemas on the Church prepared by Vatican I (drafted by Clemens Schrader and Joseph Kleutgen respectively) the threefold division, formulated in language reminiscent of Phillips and Klee, is juxtaposed to the classical twofold division of power of order and jurisdiction. Both schemas insist that Christ bestowed the ecclesiastical office and its powers on the hierarchy alone. A generation later, Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Satis cognitum* (1896) taught that the three powers of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling were given by Christ to the apostles and their successors. Pope Pius XII in his encyclicals *Mystici corporis* (1943) and *Mediator Dei* (1947) likewise restricted the triple office to members of the hierarchy (Dulles 1990, 394). After Vatican I, the increasing tendency to limit the three offices to the pope and the bishops gave rise to some misgivings on the part of theologians.

Newman's treatment of the three offices is highly original. It differs markedly from the continental tradition of Catholic theology and canon law, exemplified by authors such as Ferdinand Walter, George Phillips, Heinrich Klee, Johann Baptist Franzelin, Clemens Schrader, and Joseph Keutgen. Like Newman, these authors distinguish the offices of sanctifying, ruling, and teaching, but unlike him they ascribe all three offices in their fullness to the pope and bishops (Dulles 2002, 112). After Newman, Friedrich von Hügel in his two volume work, *The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends*, proposed

a philosophy of religion in which the institutional, rational, and mystical elements dialectically interact, but he did not develop this theme ecclesiologicaly. Newman seems not to have been aware of the theology of the three offices as it was being formulated by Catholics of his day in Germany, Austria, and Italy. He never refers to the work of Walter, Phillips, Klee, Passaglia, Franzelin, Schrader, or Kleutgen on this subject. Nor does he clarify his own position with reference to the view, increasingly prevalent in his lifetime, that the three offices are conferred upon the popes and the bishops by ordination and canonical mission. Newman's apportionment of the offices among different classes (theologians, devout laity, and popes) seems difficult to reconcile with the outlook of the continental theologians just named (Dulles 1990, 397). His important ecclesiological depiction of the *triplex munus* supplements the fragmentary, incomplete definitions and statements issued by Vatican I.

The sociological importance of the *triplex munus* is discussed in Dulles' book *Models of the Church*, with reference to his own treatment of the institutional model of the Church. Throughout the history of Christianity from its very earliest years, Dulles explains, the Church has always had an institutional side. It has had recognized ministers, accepted confessional formulas, and prescribed forms of public worship. The institutional outlook reached its culmination in the second half of the nineteenth century, and was expressed with singular clarity in the first schema of the *Dogmatic Constitution of the Church* prepared for Vatican I. In a significant paragraph, which Dulles focuses upon, the schema asserted not only that the Church was a perfect society, but that its permanent constitution had been conferred upon it by the Lord himself: "we teach and declare: The Church has all the marks of a True Society. Christ did not leave this society undefined and without a set form. Rather, he himself gave to it existence, and his will determined the form of its existence and gave it its constitution. The Church is not part nor member of any other society and is not mingled in any way with any other society. It is so perfect in itself that it is distinct from all human societies and stands far above them". Dulles adds:

In this institutional ecclesiology of Vatican I the powers and functions are divided into three: teaching, sanctifying, and governing. This division of powers leads to further distinctions between the Church teaching and the Church taught, the Church sanctifying and the Church sanctified, the Church governing and the Church governed. In each case the Church as institution is on the giving end. The Church teaches, sanctifies, and commands, in each case identifying the Church itself with the governing body or hierarchy. (Dulles 1987, 36-37)

When viewed according to each of these respective functions, the Church has somewhat different analogates in the secular order. From the point of view of its teaching function, it resembles a school in which the masters, as sacred teachers, hand down the doctrine of Christ. Because the pope and bishops are considered to possess a special "charism of truth" (since Irenaeus), it is held that the faithful are in conscience bound to believe what the pope and bishops declare. The Church is therefore a unique type of society, one in which the teachers have the power to impose their doctrine with juridical and spiritual sanctions. The same is true of the second Church function, that of sanctifying. The First Vatican Council infers that sanctity was a kind of substance inherent in the Church. The pope and bishops, assisted by priests and deacons, are described somewhat as if they were engineers opening and shutting the valves of grace. The third function, government, is likewise in the hands of the hierarchy. There is one important difference to note. Whereas in teaching and sanctifying, the hierarchy has the merely ministerial function of transmitting the doctrine and grace of Christ himself, ruling is something they do in their own name. They govern the flock with pastoral authority, and as Christ's viceregents impose new laws and precepts under pain of sin. (Dulles 1987, 37-38)

A characteristic of the institutional model of the Church, in the terms outlined by Dulles in his treatment of Vatican I, is the hierarchical conception of religious authority. The Church is not conceived as a democratic or representative society, but as one in which the fullness of power is concentrated in the hands of a ruling class that perpetuates itself by cooption. This vision is clearly set forth in the Vatican I schema: "But the Church is not a community of equals

in which all the faithful have the same rights. It is a society of unequals, not only because among the faithful some are clerics and some are laymen, but particularly because there is in the Church the power from God whereby to some it is given to sanctify, teach, and govern, and to others not." (Dulles 1987, 38-39)

Operating in terms of a classical world view in which everything remains essentially the same as it was when it began and in which origins are therefore all-important, the First Vatican Council's ecclesiology attaches crucial importance to the action of Jesus Christ in establishing the ministerial offices and sacraments that presently exist in the Church. The Council of Trent taught that the seven sacraments and a hierarchy consisting of bishops, priests, and ministers, were instituted by Christ. Vatican I affirmed the same of the papal office. By the same logic, the dogmas of the modern Church were affirmed to be part of the original deposit of faith, complete with the apostles (Dulles 1987, 39-40).

The beneficiaries of Vatican I's institutional model of the Church are its own members. Catholics of the nineteenth century belonged to a perfect society that was subordinate to no other and lacked nothing required for its own institutional completeness. The Church was portrayed as the sacred school that instructs faithful regarding the truths they need to know for the sake of their eternal salvation. It is the refectory or inn where they are nourished from the life-giving streams of grace, which flows especially through the sacraments. It is the hospital where they are healed of their illnesses, the shelter where they are protected against the assaults of the enemy of their souls. Thanks to the governing authority of the shepherds, the faithful are kept from wandering in the desert and are led to green pastures. The Church gives its beneficiaries eternal life. The Church has been compared to a loving mother who nourishes her infants at the breast, or more impersonally, to the boat of Peter, which carries the faithful to the farther shore of heaven, provided they remain on board. They have only to be docile and obedient, and to rely on the ministrations of the Church. According to the Vatican I schema, "It is an article of faith that outside the Church no one can be saved...Who is not in this ark will perish in the flood". The

council of Pius IX gave Catholics an identity with its own stabilizing mindset and purpose for loyalty to the Church. (Dulles 1987, 41)

The theology of the First Vatican Council should be regarded and understood as a development in the historical lineage of the Council of Trent. It is part of the Counter-Reformation, but it is also part of the earliest legacy of Western or Latin Christianity. The dominant form of Roman Church structure dates back to the initiatives of Gregory VII (1073-85) of the High Middle Ages. Nearly everything we associate with the modern papacy can be traced back to his papacy. A detailed account of Pope Gregory's reforms can be found in R.W. Southern's *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (1990). Southern notes that "there are no words which convey the spirit of the medieval papacy so brilliantly as the trenchant statements of the papal position inserted in the volume of Pope Gregory's letters" (1990, 102). Among these statements we find the following: "The pope can be judged by no one; the Roman church has never erred and never will err till the end of time; the Roman church was founded by Christ alone; the pope alone can depose and restore bishops; he alone can make new laws, set up new bishoprics, and divide old ones; he alone can translate bishops; he alone can call general councils and authorize canon law; he alone can revise his own judgements; he alone can use the imperial insignia; he can depose emperors; he can absolve subjects from their allegiance; all princes should kiss his feet; his legates, even though in inferior orders, have precedence over all bishops; an appeal to the papal court inhibits judgement by all inferior courts; a duly ordained pope is undoubtedly made a saint by the merits of St. Peter". (Southern's quotation taken from *Gregorii VII Registrum*, M.G.H. *Epistolae Selectae*, ii, ed. E. Caspar, pp. 201-8)

Of course, much of Pope Gregory VII's contribution can be traced back to his own predecessors such as Pope Gregory the Great at the end of the sixth century, to Pope Leo I (440-61), and to Pope Damascus (366-384). The Church of the Middle Ages embodied the romanticism of these earlier popes. The medieval Church paid great respect to the secretary of Pope Damascus, the brilliant Jerome, whom Erasmus referred to as the great humanist scholar of the early Church. St. Jerome can be credited with sketching the ideology behind the papal

institution. This Doctor of the Church brought intellectual credibility and erudition to Latin theology. Amidst the fame of the Greek church, Jerome served as the West's translator of the Bible, official historian, and papal advisor and legislator in ecclesial disputations. It was Jerome who emphasized the importance of clerical celibacy and monasticism in Western spirituality and ecclesial order. Today, Jerome's contribution to the Roman Church is often overlooked and forgotten, but it is certain that the Vatican's history would be very different without him. Jerome was a scholar that gave the Catholic Church its dedication to classical sources and to the importance of hierarchy in social order. It is no wonder then why modernity is such a threat to Western Christianity and its hierarchical model of organization and structure. The Vatican's commitment to hierarchy stretches back to the earliest historical roots of Western civilization. (Chadwick 1993, 213-216)

Dulles provides a critical analysis of Pius IX's ecclesiology in his chapter "Vatican II and Communications" for volume three of René Latourelle's *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives (Twenty-five Years After, 1962-1987)*. Dulles argues that Vatican I implicitly advocated a theory of communications concerned foremost with the institutional relationships inside the Church structure between those who administer the Word and those to whom they minister. There is a sharp distinction between the hierarchy as authoritative teachers (*ecclesia docens*) and the rest of the faithful as learners (*ecclesia discens*) (Dulles 1987, 530). Vatican I viewed communications as a descending process beginning from God and passing through the papal and episcopal hierarchy to the other members of the Church. Vatican I held that communication takes place primarily through the written and proclaimed word and that the proper response to the word is one of submission and faith. In this model, channels of communications in the Church are papal encyclicals, decrees of Roman Congregations, pastoral letters, catechetical instruction, seminary training, and sermons. The assumption seems to be that the teaching of the Church is contained in clear, concise statements that have been issued by legitimate authority in proper form, and that it is widely available, at least to the clergy, in printed texts. Scripture and tradition are depicted by Vatican I as fully entrusted to the

hierarchical magisterium, which is charged to safeguard and interpret the deposit of faith, especially by the issuance of binding decrees. The content of this religious communications is the doctrine of faith and morals contained explicitly or implicitly in the deposit of faith, including whatever is needed to defend the faith. Response to this authoritative hierarchical teaching varies according to the nature of the doctrine and the manner of its proposal. It may call for an assent of divine and Catholic faith, or for ecclesiastical faith, or for a lesser degree of assent called "religious submission of mind" (*obsequium animi religiosum*). The hierarchical model of communications presupposes that the official teaching is in written texts that are widely accessible. It is less concerned with oral culture and more with print culture (Dulles 1987, 530-532).

The final vote at Vatican I on the infallibility decree took place on July 18, 1870. Fifty-seven members of the minority had left Rome the day before so as not to have to vote against a measure they knew would go through by an overwhelming majority. The voting and solemn definition itself, proclaimed by the Pope, took place in a devastating thunderstorm. Rain bucketed down on to the dome of St. Peter's, and the dim interior was lit up by lightening flashes. Hostile commentators took the thunder as a portent - God, they said, was angry. Cardinal Manning scathingly noted: "They forgot Sinai and the Ten Commandments". Some German Catholics, led by the historian and theologian of Munich, Joiaann Döllinger (1799-1890), had refused to accept the Vatican decrees. In England the group of Roman Catholics associated with Lord Acton (1834-1902) also challenged papal power. (Duffy 2006, 300-1)

Many of those who publicly questioned Vatican I's teachings about papal power were ultimately excommunicated from the Church. The Vatican decided to reward the devout loyalty of the Ultramontane group, those members of the Church who saw the unity of the Catholicism as inextricably tied to uniformity. For them, one faith meant one discipline, one liturgy, one code of canon law, one pyramid of authority presided over by a pro-active and interventionist papacy.

This form of Catholic spirituality was a nineteenth-century form of absolutism, reveling in what Cardinal Manning called 'the beauty of inflexibility'. Consequently, the Vatican could give no coherent or positive value to diversity and independence. Under Pius IX all of the bishops of the Church were increasingly thought of as junior officers in the Pope's army, links in the line of command which bound every Catholic in obedience to the Pope. (Duffy 2006, 305)

It is sometimes forgotten that the business of Vatican I never was completely finished. On July 19, the Franco-Prussian War broke out, and the Council was postponed *sine die*. In the event, it never reassembled, and the first business of the Second Vatican Council almost a century later would be to officially declare Vatican One closed. The French garrison was withdrawn from Rome on August 4, leaving the Pope defenseless. Within a month, Napoleon's empire had come to an end, and King Victor Emmanuel had invaded the Papal States. On September 19 Pio Nono locked himself into the Vatican, instructing his soldiers to put up a token resistance to the royal troops, to make clear that he had not surrendered the city. Pio Nono never again set foot outside of the Vatican and withheld the customary '*Urbi et Orbi*' blessing of the city and the world, as a protest against his status as the Prisoner of the Vatican (Vidler 1974, 155-6). The end of the Vatican's temporal power caused many to react in a defensive manner. Across Western Europe ardent Ultramontanes denounced all who did not go along with them as minimizers of the faith. Considerable courage was required by Catholics to resist this kind of pressure. As a result, most church historians regard Vatican I as the climax of the Ultramontane movement. It is important to note that the Liberal Catholic and Ultramontane movements began in their origins as one movement but diverged and became opposed to each other. The prophetic personality who inspired both movements was Lamennais. The definitions of Vatican I increased the tension between modern Europe and Church leadership. On the one hand, the declaration of

papal primacy favoured the centralization on Rome and increased the prestige and strength of the papacy at a time when it had lost its temporal power. On the other hand, the policy of Pius IX made the Church into a closed corporation. James Bowling Mozley (1813-1878) observed in his University of Oxford sermon *The Roman Council* that "closed corporations are proverbially inaccessible to new ideas, and blind to new facts; they are averse to any enlargement of mind from without, and their natural tendency is to be the whole world to themselves" (1879, 24). The strategy of Pius IX's pontificate left its impress on the Roman Church for years to come. The First Vatican Council's doctrinal teaching and prescribed methods for Church leadership instigated a bitter anti-modernistic attitude throughout Catholicism that regarded all progress as a crisis. By choice the Roman Catholic Church became an isolated fortress surrounded by an alien world made up not only of other Christian churches and other religions, but also of atheists, secular scientists, and governments that had overthrown such traditional values as monarchical rule and the union of Church and state in the name of liberalism and democracy (Vidler 1974, 146-156).

After Vatican I, the Catholic Church moved to the fringes of the political, cultural, and intellectual life of modern European society. The label 'integralism' refers to nineteenth and early twentieth century ultra-conservative movement coming in the wake of Vatican I, across Europe that opposed ecumenism, modern biblical studies, and modern theology. After Pius IX, Leo XIII, had a more open or friendly attitude to the modern world, but there was no substantial change in the authoritarian pattern that was canonized at Vatican I. Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) that encouraged a more critical form of Catholic scholarship. In response, *intégrisme* developed in France to protect against the possibility of doctrinal deviations in Catholic teaching. Similar reactions followed in Italy, Germany, England, and even the New

World. These movements secretly investigated and censured scholars whose work was disapproved. After the condemnation of Modernism by Pope Pius X in 1907, the French *Intégrisme* achieved some organizational permanence as the *Sodalitium Pianum* (1909), essentially a spy network to monitor and then discredit theologians, biblical scholars, and even bishops considered dangerous to the Catholic faith (McBrien 1995, 671, 1278).

In his book, *The Catholic Tradition: Before and After Vatican II, 1878-1993*, Timothy G. McCarthy laments that anti-modernism defined Catholic identity at the start of the twentieth century. Ecclesial attitudes such as integralism and the legacy of Vatican I both encouraged Pope Pius X to define and then condemn Modernism in three separate documents. The decree *Lamentabili* (July 3, 1907) branded Modernism a “synthesis of all heresies”. The decree was a syllabus of errors consisting of sixty-five proscribed theses taken from publications in philosophy, theology, social theory, and above all, biblical criticism. The encyclical *Pascendi* (September 8, 1907) condemned Catholic Modernism as a full-fledged philosophical and theological system. Pius X ordered bishops throughout the world to see to the orthodoxy of biblical studies and scholastic philosophy in the seminaries and to extinguish the modernism movement by ridding seminaries and parishes of those sympathetic to it. The official Vatican oath against modernism was promulgated by the decree *Sacrorum antistitum* on September 1, 1910. It was imposed on all clergy and was to be renewed on an annual basis. Church authority confronted modernity in all its spheres. Roger Haight judged that from the vantage-point of 1990, the encyclical *Pascendi* was “a document that was politically brilliant, deadly effective, intellectually dishonest, and totally comprehensible in the historical situation”. The historical situation was one of fear. Both Pius X and Pius XII feared the modernists would bring the hostile

elements of modernity inside the Church. "What was feared, then, were internal forces that would change the very structure of the church" (McCarthy 1994, 58-59).

Pope Pius X's successor, Benedict XV denounced the practices of the Integralists in his first encyclical *Ad Beatissimi* (1914) and in 1921 Pope Benedict XV then suppressed the *Sodalitium Pianum* permanently. Although the organized form of Integralism ceased to exist, its spirit lived on in those movements that sought to suppress and punish those who proposed ideas about Catholicism different from their own. During the first half of the twentieth century two popes, Pius X and Pius XII, condemned any theology that carried the ideals of modernism, and two other Popes, Benedict XV and Pius XI, tried to ease the tension arising from the debate over Modernism. Nonetheless, the condemnation of Modernism cast a pall over the intellectual and devotional life of the institutional Church during these four pontificates. The atmosphere in the Church was one of suspicion and of underground accusations. Writing was done sometimes under pseudonyms and some people used a double language. Modernists within the Church were marginalized, even excommunicated (Comby and MacCulloch 1996, 197).

Of course, Modernism is a polemical term the content of which depends on who uses it. Modernists hoped to make the Catholic Church more habitable for men of contemporary culture. They wanted Christianity to move from classical consciousness to historical consciousness. One Church historian, Émile Poulat, saw the modernist crisis as "all the fortunate or unfortunate efforts aimed at reconciling received knowledge with the continuing demands of faith". The 'progressives' wanted to put scientific disciplines at the service of the Christian religion, while at the same time defending the unchanging requirements of faith. Science had an intellectual priority and Christianity had to adapt itself. This was Christianity's only chance at survival in the modern world. The Church had to be transformed from within (McCarthy 1994, 43).

Between 1878 and 1962 the Roman Catholic Church solidified its identity and mission by challenging the intellectual, economic, and political views of society. This was a remarkable time lag and a scandal to non-Catholics. The Church was positioned against the world, its values and goals. It became very difficult to defend the Christian tradition under modern conditions (Vidler 1965, 32-55). The Church maintained that the world needed to be re-christianized. During this period, the Church also strengthened its institutional, intellectual, and devotional life by officially stabilizing these dimensions in such a way that the Church as institution, especially as manifested by the papal office, was the dominant image of the Church as a whole. The intellectual and devotional dimensions of Catholic tradition were locked in a timeless philosophy and theology called neo-Thomism. However, the issue of ecclesial modernization did not go away and eventually the stalemate ended.

1.2 The Second Vatican Council

Not until the middle of the twentieth century did official Catholicism embrace modernity, when the Roman Church leadership officially and decisively entered the age of historical consciousness. The reason for this watershed is the achievement of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), especially the reforming and renewing agenda which it imposed on a hesitant church. In acknowledging that in a world that was continually developing, the Church had to keep abreast of things, the Council raised great hopes. It was the product of an underground movement dubbed *nouvelle théologie* among Catholic intellectuals, which was held in disrepute for a long time by Church authorities, but finally received its ecclesiastical recognition and total approval during Vatican II.

In his book, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, church historian Alec Vidler interprets the Vatican's transition at Vatican II. He notes that during the 1960s

The world at large was beset by something more than just fermentation and effervescence. In addition to the recent memory of two world wars and threats of

more wars, revolutionary political changes and transfers of power, and the global Cold War, there were many unprecedented occurrences ranging from men walking on the moon to breakdowns of law and order in universities all over the world. The fundamental question of the relevance of Christianity within such a context became of considerable importance. (Vidler 1974, 269)

In this climate, the Church of Rome was infected with the universal restlessness and passion for change and innovation. Sensitive to a whole range of issues, Pope John XXIII (1958-63) summoned the Second Vatican Council to deal with the issue of 'updating' the agenda of the Church. The Council began its meetings in October 1962. In four sessions, spread over the autumn of each year during the period 1962-65, more than 2,450 bishops from all over the world met at Rome to discuss the future direction of the Catholic Church. The death of John XXIII on June 3, 1963 did not interrupt the work of the Council, which was continued by his successor Paul VI (1963-78).

In *How to Read Church History*, Jean Comby and Diarmaid MacCulloch observe that Vatican II was the culmination of twenty years of pastoral and theological research and a kind of break with the Church that had grown out of the Council of Trent. The agenda set before the Council was enormous. In general terms the Council considered the place of the Christian faith in the modern world, particularly the relation between Christians and non-Christians and between Catholics and other Christians. The importance of evangelism was affirmed within a context of respecting the identities and integrities of Non-Christians. Particular attention was paid to the nature of the Church itself, and the relation of the bishops and pope. Among Church leadership was perceived a need to update the Church's image so that it did not further lose credibility and become a kind of relic or museum. It was not only that the documents finally adopted by the Council represented definite changes of teaching and policy with regard to such matters as the bases of dogma, the nature of the Church and its governance, religious liberty, and ecumenical relations. What Pope John XXIII had done was to reveal to an astonished world, and in the first instance to the Church itself, that there were innumerable Roman Catholics of every

rank and provenance who had been waiting, consciously or unconsciously, for release from the centralized authoritarian straitjacket which for too long had been imposed on them (Comby and MacCulloch 1996, 224-225). Vatican II in all sixteen of its constitutions, decrees, and declarations, was concerned mainly with reforming the Church's method of communications. It was a Council concerned with ecclesiology, the formal study of the Church – with a unity of theme that no previous Council ever had. Even the First Vatican Council, which defined the primacy of papal authority, treated completely unrelated matters along with this question. At Vatican II the Church was not only the subject, but also the object, of the council's pronouncements. It was a Council of the Church reflecting on her very nature. Vatican I had initiated this self-reflection in its own Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ, and the abrupt suspension of the Council because of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War left this self-reflection incomplete. To continue this reflexive project Vatican II reworked everything from the ground up. After Vatican II the Roman Catholic Church increasingly came to see itself more as a community of believers than as a divinely ordained and hierarchically ordered society. The laity were given an increasingly important place in the life of the Church. The Council also followed the example of Leo XIII in stressing the social aspects of the Christian faith, including its implications for human rights, race relations, and social justice. Within the Church the idea of collegiality became of increasing importance. This expresses the notion that the Church is itself a community of member churches, with authority dispersed to some extent among its bishops, rather than concentrated in the pope.

According to Carlo Falconi, Vatican II is a landmark in the history of Roman Catholicism.

With it, in fact, Pope John XXIII put an end to his predecessors' authoritarian monologue and gave the word to the whole Church, bishops, priests, and laymen included; he dealt a blow at Roman centralization and the privileges of the Curia, opening the way to recognition of the pluralism and federalism of the national and constitutional churches; he reconstructed the primacy of the Church's spiritual

mission, subordinating to its pastoral ends the legalism of its lawyers and the temporalism of its diplomats; he gave an impulse to the progressive secularization of the ecclesiastical community by extending greater responsibilities to laymen; and, finally, he brought the Catholic Church in a certain sense into the vanguard of ecumenism, thrusting it towards an embrace not only with other Christian communities but even with other faiths (*The Popes in the Twentieth Century*, 1967, p.313).

Vatican II had balanced the one-sided emphasis of Vatican I on the authority of the papacy with a new stress on the complementary authority of the bishops. More than that, the public docility and uncritical submissiveness of the hierarchy toward the pope and of other ranks in the Church toward the hierarchy began to disappear, and cardinals and bishops were seen to be standing up to the papacy, and priests to their bishops, with a confidence and independence that had been unheard of in modern times. Roman Catholicism had all at once become Critical Catholicism (Vidler 1974, 270-272).

As Avery Dulles recalls, Pope John XXIII and Vatican Council II, which he had so largely inspired, registered a dramatic change of attitude, as the Church opened its windows to the world outside. A pastoral pope wanted Roman Catholicism to be in tune with the times and its dogmas presented in a language reflective of modern thought. The apostolic constitution convoking Vatican II reads almost as though it were a rebuttal of Pius XII's *Darkness Over the Earth*. Pope John declared: "Distrustful souls see only darkness burdening the face of the earth. We, instead, like to reaffirm all our confidence in our Saviour, who has not left the world he redeemed". Vatican II, Pope John predicted, would be "a demonstration of the Church, always living and always young, which feels the rhythm of the times and which in every century beautifies itself with new splendor, radiates new light, achieves new conquests...". In his opening address at the first session in 1962, Pope John returned to these same themes. He firmly disassociated himself from those who "in these modern times...can see nothing but prevarication and ruin". In a general way the Council was intended to be a pastoral council which sought to

speak to contemporary men and women. While being deeply doctrinal, it would not propose any definitions or condemnations. It would not fulminate with anathemas, as did councils of the past, such as Vatican I (Dulles 1987, 91).

After Pope John's death, Pope Paul VI continued the *aggiornamento* program for the duration of the Council's proceedings. The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, the most novel and distinctive contribution of Vatican II, outlines a completely new Catholic understanding of the relationship between the Church and the world of our day. It recognizes the "legitimate autonomy" of human culture and especially of the sciences; it calls upon the Church to update itself – including its doctrine and institutional structures – so as to appropriate the best achievements of modern secular life. It affirms that the Church respects the accomplishments of the world and learns from them, lest it falls behind the times and become incapable of effectively heralding the Gospel. Finally, it asserts that the Church should consider itself as part of the total human family, sharing the same concerns as the rest of men. Thus in Article 3, after asserting that the Church should enter into conversation with all men, the Constitution teaches that just as Christ came into the world not to be served but to serve, so the Church, carrying on the mission of Christ, seeks to serve the world by fostering the brotherhood of all men. The same theme is recapitulated in the text's conclusion, Article 92. (Dulles 1987, 91-92)

The theological method accompanying Vatican II's type of ecclesiology differs from the more authoritarian types of theology at Vatican I. Vatican II's approach has been called 'secular-dialogic': secular, because the Church takes the world as a properly theological locus and seeks to discern the signs of the times; dialogic, because it seeks to operate on the frontier between the contemporary world and the Christian tradition (including the Bible), rather than simply apply the latter as a measure of the former. The official statement of the Church simply registers and sanctions ideas that had been previously developed by theologians such as Karl Rahner. Dulles argues that the new secular thrust in Catholic ecclesiology was also indirectly prepared by

pioneering thinkers such as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955). Teilhard wrestled to achieve a reconciliation between science and the Church. There must be an ultimate unity, he felt, between theology and science, between religion and technology, between the Church and the world. His synthesis was Christo-centric. He maintained that all the energies in the universe were ultimately converging on Christ, and hence on the Church as the "consciously Christified portion of the world". The Church, he held, is the main focal point of the energies of love in the world; it is the "central axis of universal convergence and the exact meeting point that emerges between the universe and the Omega point". According to Teilhard, the Church is necessary to prevent the vital energies of the world from becoming uselessly dissipated. On the other hand, the world is necessary to the Church, lest the Church should "wither like a flower out of water". The Church is divinely called to be a progressive society, the spearhead of the axis of evolution; in order to fulfill this vocation, it must be open to everything good that emerges from the dynamism of the human spirit as found in science and technology. According to Dulles, Teilhard's view was moderately ecclesio-centric, but he still found evidence of a thrust toward Omega in the movement of the world even beyond the borders of the Church. (Teilhard's thought as outlined by Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* 1987, 93-94)

At Vatican II's conclusion, many Catholics shared the impression that a new era was beginning for the Church. From this time on people talked of 'before the Council' and 'after the Council'. Change in theology and church life was one of the key issues of the Council. As the writer Garry Wills put it, the Council "let out the dirty little secret It forced upon Catholics, in the most startling symbolic way, the fact that the church changes" (1972, 21). Catholics had become impacted by historical consciousness and this is found explicitly in the documents. According to Vatican II, "the human race has passed from a rather static conception of reality to

a more dynamic, evolutionary one" (*Lumen Gentium*, article 5). Vatican II acknowledges the effect of humanity's new self-understanding on today's social organizations that makes participation the key-concept for all institutional changes. This change in the Church emerged through the dynamics of the conciliar process. One Canadian participant in Vatican II, Gregory Baum, though he disagreed with this democratic understanding of the 'open church', surveyed and critiqued the literature assembled by its advocates in his book *The Credibility of the Church Today: A Reply to Charles Davis* (1968). Baum observed that those who participated in Vatican II's proceedings, bishops and their advisors, became listeners, were drawn into dialogue, became ready to change their ways, and had a new experience of fellowship and joint responsibility. Vatican II attempted to modify ecclesiastical institutions by making them correspond to modern anthropology. The liturgy (in the vernacular) was to make men into listeners and brothers. Participation was the key concept that inspired all the changes in institutions, whether those dealing with worship, ministry, religious life, or ecclesial government. Institutions in the Church must allow Christians to participate; and it is through the very process of participation that men are renewed, made sensitive to the Spirit, and open to one another. This ideal of participation in ecclesiastical institutions exists, so far, mainly on paper. An example of this trend can be found in the proceedings of the Canon Law Society of America, 1965, 1966, and 1967. It is discussed at length by F. Klostermann in "Structures of the Church of Tomorrow". (IDO-C [North America] 1967, doss. 28 & 29 – Baum 1968, 219)

Among some Roman Catholics deeply concerned about ecclesial reform and renewal we find the desire to introduce into the Church structures the democratic processes from modern society. A democratic Church would be a vast conciliar system, including parish councils, diocesan councils, national councils, and more universal councils, in which the representatives of

various groups in the Church can make their voices heard and contribute to the making of public policy. This is discussed in the writing of H. Heimerl, "Outline of a Constitution for the Church": *Concilium* 28 (1967, 59-68) and in the conclusions of the Canon Law Society of America, 1967: "Towards Constitutional Development in the Church" (IDO-C [North America], 1968, doss. 1). According to these plans, final decisions of church matters would be made by the bishops and the pope through processes that involve the lower clergy and the people and at the same time preserve the special role and power of the episcopal college. Foreseen was legislation in the Church protecting the rights of individual Christians and their societies against undue interference by higher superiors. The principle of subsidiarity was thought to be guaranteed by law. For the better functioning of the Church there will be law courts to which Christians may appeal if they have not been justly treated according to the common law of the Church (Baum 1968, 193-195, 218). Back in 1968, Baum observed that

Canon law societies and individual canon lawyers have already worked out various projects for the institutional church of the future, and outlined the nature and form for which constitutional law should take in this Church. In all these, modern concepts of government play a great role. These projects may vary as to the amount of independent action they ascribe to the hierarchy in the process of decision making. Some canonists think it desirable, and possible, that the Catholic Church adopt a constitution, parallel to civil society, which limits the power of the ecclesiastical government according to canon law. In other words, there are Catholic theologians and canonists who believe that it is in harmony with the Catholic understanding of the Church's divine foundation and the apostolic

succession of the episcopal college (pope and bishops) to advocate the creation of a constitutional papacy and constitutional episcopacy. (Baum 1968, 193-194)

Vatican II's ecclesiology stresses the egalitarian aspect of the ecclesial institution. Since the Church is no longer exclusively identified with the hierarchy, triumphalism, elitism, and separatism have to some extent been rejected. Vatican II's form of ecclesiology contains basic insights that logically lead to some form of ecclesial democratization. This democracy is in many ways non-clerical. The laity as a subsystem in the Church has been officially emancipated by Vatican II. For the first time in the history of general councils we have a pastoral and authoritative recognition of the laymen's role-capacity in the Christian assembly. The precise relationship of this democratization to the Church's self-understanding and the *munera* formulae is as yet unresolved.

The interpretation of the structural development that is taking place in the Church is clearly based on the historical experience of Western society. From a highly diversified and many-leveled feudalism, Western society passed into the age of absolute monarchy. Then, under the pressure of national life, the king created councils or parliaments and permitted the people or their representatives to have an increasingly greater share in the making of his own decisions. Eventually the affirmation of the citizen's power transformed, sometimes through violent revolution, these deliberative councils into legislative assemblies. This was the common road of Western society to constitutional monarchies and the republican state. The Church has become a kind of spiritual republic in which all members are involved in policy making and the perfection of the ecclesiastical organization. (Baum 1968, 194-96)

Some hard-line critics of Vatican II said that the Council had tried to 'protestantize the church'. Liberal commentators found fault with this line of thinking. There is still no mistaking a Catholic Mass, the whole world over. But the liberal majority at the Council did say that in some ways Vatican II was a long-overdue response to the call for reform launched by Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. Since Rome's corruption had deafened even the pope to that call, Luther seceded from the church and started a movement that rocked the world. History books call it the Reformation, while some Catholic history books called it the protestant revolt. Most likely Luther would have applauded the efforts of Vatican II to give the church back to the people. Insofar as members of the Council majority succeeded in making the church less a church of laws and more a church of love, making it more free, more humble in the face of history, and more at the service of humankind, they probably succeeded in facilitating a Roman Catholic reformation. (Sullivan 2002, 105)

The Council ended on a hopeful note for the future. After all the voting was over, all the amendments made, and all schemata had been given their final re-writes, Paul VI was anxious to demonstrate that the Roman Curia had not subdued his own reforming spirit. He announced that he would institute a synod of bishops that would meet on a regular basis. He hoped that regular synods would enhance the participation of the bishops in setting policies for the church (though no one used the word 'democracy'). The pope also announced a reform of the Holy Office, which he signaled by changing its name to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Pope Paul VI presided over the final public session of Vatican II on December 7, 1965. He took the occasion to remove the excommunication levied in 1054 against the patriarch of Constantinople. And, that night, the pope thanked the *periti* for their yeoman service. He also urged them to go

on talking to their bishops, as they had learned to do so well in Rome during Vatican II (Sullivan 2002, 69-70).

1.3 Catholic Ecclesiology and System Theory

The renewal in Catholic theology promoted by Vatican II is an outgrowth or by-product of scholarship by Church historians and social scientists. The social sciences and humanities supported the developments in ecclesiology which emerged from the Second Vatican Council. Research in the disciplines of sociology and informatics has influenced Catholic attempts to understand the institution of the Church and its role in the modern world. Along these lines, some Roman Catholic intellectuals have begun to use insights gleaned from linguistics and communications theory, anthropological and cultural studies, as well as interdisciplinary inquiries into symbol and myth, in their attempt to penetrate more deeply the sociology of the Roman Catholic Church. After doing a PhD thesis on semiotics and the Church, theologian Patrick Granfield first used the term "ecclesial cybernetics" in an article which appeared in *Theological Studies* (December 1968). Granfield argued that the recently developed science of cybernetics is today essential for a thorough understanding of the modern Church (Phan 2001, 60-62). A recent appraisal of Granfield's contribution is provided by Peter C. Phan in his essay, "Social Science and Ecclesiology: Cybernetics in Patrick Granfield's Theology of the Church", which was written for Michael Horace Barnes' contributing volume for the College Theology Society, entitled *Theology and the Social Sciences* (2001).

Granfield's first break away from the traditional mold of ecclesiology took the form of a thorough application of cybernetic theory to the understanding of the Church. In line with his dictum that contemporary ecclesiology must make use of resources other than philosophy, Granfield provides a general introduction to cybernetics written for churchmen. He notes that

although it was the French scientist André Ampère, who actually coined the word 'cybernetics', it was the mathematician Norbert Wiener who gave it wider application and in the process interpreted its current meaning for society. Wiener authored among many other influential works, two famous books, *Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (1948) and *The Human Use of Human Being: Cybernetics and Society* (1954). Inspired by Wiener, Granfield argues that the Roman Catholic Church structure needs cybernetic reform through democratization. In practice, this means that the faithful should have a more effective voice in the decision-making process, that the authorities should be more open and responsive to input of all kinds, and that the Roman Catholic Church's system itself should develop a more refined communications network. The inspiration for this position is twofold: first, the contemporary democratic experience with its stress on participation in decision-making and on the universal co-responsibility of all citizens for the common good; and second, the vision of the Church suggested by Vatican II with its principles of liberty and collegiality and its recognition of the charismatic role of all members of the Body of Christ (Granfield 1973, xii).

Granfield argues that the post-Vatican II Church is changing with the forces of a changing world and must look for solutions to cope with this change in the field of cybernetics. The beginning of the Second Industrial Revolution happened when the computer was invented and allowed for unprecedented exchanges of information in society. According to Wiener, "it is the purpose of cybernetics to develop a language and techniques that will enable us to attack the problem of control and communication in general, but also to find the proper repertory of ideas and techniques to classify their particular manifestations under certain concepts" (1954, 17).

Through the pioneering efforts of Wiener, as well as others like Claude E. Shannon, Warren Weaver, W. Ross Ashby, and John von Neumann, cybernetics made immense progress

in the twenty years after World War II. Soon a consideration of the implications of cybernetic theory moved from the domain of strict technology to include research in biology and the social sciences. A cybernetic analysis of the Church, therefore, could be viewed as a normal and predictable development, and a necessary one as well, if today's Roman Catholic Church is to manifest in its operation the fullness of prudence which Aquinas calls the proper virtue of the ruler (Granfield 1973, 1-2). Cybernetic analysis is concerned with a functional ecclesiology emphasizing communication and control, information, and power.

Granfield's groundbreaking book *Ecclesial Cybernetics: A Study of Democracy in the Church* (1973) explains the fundamental sociological concepts relevant to a cybernetic analysis of the Roman Catholic Church. In religious studies, there have been similar studies for Islam by Ziauddin Sardar and for Buddhism by Joanna Macy; and yet within Church history, Granfield's vision remains unique. The description of cybernetics as system analysis or system theory reveals the central point of Granfield's study of the Church's network of communication and control: namely, the system or structure of the Church itself (1973, 5). The Church is a kind of system organized around a complex of interacting elements. First, the Roman Catholic Church as a system constitutes a whole, a unit, with an undivided oneness. Second, the system of the Church has a multiplicity of interdependent parts that inter-relate and interact. Third, these parts within the Church are bound together by internal communications which organizes them into a unity. Fourth, the Church system is distinct from its environment, the world of other systems that surround it. Communication welds multiplicity within the Church system into a whole composed of interdependent parts held together by communication and distinct from an environment made up of other systems. Granfield notes that systems for the sake of functional precision are classified in terms of their relationship to their environment as either closed or open (1973, 5).

Granfield explains the basic differences between a closed and an open system. A closed system is static because it is isolated from its environment. There is no informational exchange between the two. Closed systems receive no input from outside, nor do they make any output. Since they are actually existing or alive, they are necessarily related to other systems, but their ongoing interaction is minimal if it is present at all. A completely closed system, as far as its surroundings are concerned, is inert. Internally, it has either achieved equilibrium or tends toward it inexorably (1973, 6). In contrast, an open system is dynamic because it is in constant interaction with its environment. The information exchange, i.e. the reception of inputs and the production of outputs, is unending. There is a dependence of the system on its environment. Therefore, for a system to be separated from its environment may mean the destruction of the system. Depending on its adaptive capabilities and a beneficial environment, Granfield notes that the open system can avoid equilibrium indefinitely (1973, 6).

Since the Second Vatican Council there is among Catholics a growing awareness that the Church is an open system composed of living beings themselves open systems who organize through communication. There is interplay both between the whole system and the environment and between the parts and their own particular environment, which is composed of other parts and the external ecosystem. The Church is more than a collection of individuals; rather it is a structure made up of roles. The roles are the parts of the individual's activities involved in the social process. The structure is formed by the sets of roles that are related to one another. The structure then comprises the regularly observable activities that make up the system (Granfield 1973, 7). The parts of the Church, through their role activity, form the ecclesial structure as an open system.

Before cybernetic analysis, these facts were described in terms of office (role) and institution (structure): the members of the Church have their various offices or duties, that is, activities incumbent upon them; they are divided into laymen and clerics, with some clerics having governing roles within the Church hierarchy; a tight network of communication and control on both the natural and supernatural levels forms the members into an institution that is the Church. From a perspective grounded in sociology, the Roman Catholic Church is a complex, organizational system. In cybernetic terminology, it is a nonlinear, multiple-loop feedback system with variable elements. Granfield's primary focus is the control system known as the hierarchy, the clerical elite of the ecclesial system. For despite the liberating vision of Vatican II, the institutionalism of the Church, medieval in origin, is still operative, the clergy and the laity play a minimal role in its official governance. It is the bishops under the leadership of the Pope who make all the major legislative, executive, and juridical decisions in the Church. The extent of the power of the hierarchy is even more impressive when one realizes that the bishops are not selected by their constituents, have no direct accountability to them, and usually remain in office for several decades (Granfield 1973, 34).

As an open system, the Church exists in an environment referred to as the world. Pope Paul VI argued that "the Church is not separated from the world but lives in it" (*Ecclesiam Suam*, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 [1964]: 627). There is no Church apart from humanity. The Church exists in the world as part of the social process, in a kind of human interaction. According to Granfield's cybernetic analysis, the Church's interaction with its environment enables the realization of two goals: homeostasis and evolution. Homeostasis is the ability of the open system to regulate itself so that it achieves a steady state despite the changes inside and outside. Evolution is the ability of the open system to improve itself in order to achieve quantitative and qualitative

changes transcending its original datum. The two functions are anti-entropic: the one preserves the system, the other perfects it. Both are modalities of the open system's environmental interaction (Granfield 1973, 9). In brief, Granfield's cybernetic analysis of the Church gives great importance to its environmental context for "the People of God," as the Church calls itself.

Like any other social system, the Roman Catholic Church must contend with the forces of entropy. The Catholic Church must manifest its stability by adapting to fluctuating change in the environment. The Church has social techniques to help it achieve homeostasis and evolution. First, there is recruitment so that there is a constant flow of new members to provide for new growth as well as for replacing the activities of dying members. Second, there is the education and training of new members for special role activities on all levels of the life of the Church's system. This educational operation is a constant preoccupation of Catholicism in its schools and its parishes. Third, there is the reform and the renewal of Church structures so that members might be re-trained for role activity more in harmony with the goals of the ecclesial system. This purifying and updating of role activity affects the hierarchy as well as the rest of the faithful. Together, the three anti-entropic techniques of recruitment, education, and reform help the ecclesial institution to regulate itself within its particular environmental context (Granfield 1973,17-18).

What is the danger of entropy that threatens the cybernetic system of the Church? According to Granfield, 'entropy' is the "tendency to the most probable condition of things, it is a random state of statistical uniformity of energy" (1973, 14). Entropy, formulated in the Second Law of Thermodynamics, reaches its maximum when the system becomes totally undetermined and undifferentiated. It is the very anti-thesis of order and organization. In the stages of entropy leading to this terminal state, there is a steady decrease in energy output, integration, and development. The flow of information is gradually reduced. Information and entropy are related

in inverse proportions: the more information in the system, the less entropy; the more entropy, the less information (Granfield 1973, 14-21). Negative entropy is the characteristic of open systems. Contrary to closed systems which move inexorably to self-destruction, open systems avoid entropy or organizational dissolution by performing anti-entropic functions, that is, interacting with the environment for self-maintenance and self-development. The circular process of input and output, aptly described by the expression 'feedback-loop', functions in open systems continuously.

On the basis of contemporary democratic experience with its stress on church participation in decision-making and on the co-responsibility of all citizens for the common good and of Vatican II's teaching on freedom, collegiality, and the role of the laity in the Church, Granfield proposes that the Church needs cybernetic reform via democracy. It is taken as a given by Granfield that the Church is an open cybernetic system functioning through interaction with its environment by way of a feedback loop of inputs and outputs. This system theory approach provides a global analysis of the basis of communication at the universal level (the papacy, the college of cardinals, the Roman Curia, and the college of bishops) and the local level (the bishop, the diocesan curia, the synod and the council, the clergy and the laity). Granfield concludes that the Church is clearly susceptible to cybernetic analysis. There is an imbalance in its role structure, authoritative outputs are almost solely within the exclusive competence of the hierarchy, with little significant participation by the lower clergy or laity. Within the Church, even after Vatican II, there remains little democratization.

The epochal breakthroughs by Shannon and Weaver (1949) who identified noise in communication with entropy opposed to information in signals, by Wiener (1948) who determined that feedback is the essential lifelike process, and by molecular biologists who

revealed that information encoded in DNA is the basis of life – all these new insights forever removed noise from its trivial status and gave it a central place in social analysis, both as indicator and problem (Klapp 1978, 4). Noise is communicational entropy. Granfield demonstrates that information theory can be applied to ecclesiology. He argues that the reduction of noise, the chaos from which Christians try to construct meaning, should become a major goal of the Church's leadership. It is an irony that despite Granfield's background in semiotics that he provides this issue little attention. Also, it is unfortunate that he tends to focus mainly on the papacy in his analysis of the Church. The post-Vatican II Church must deal with the cycle between two modes of adaptation to the constant communication flow: opening, or scanning for desired information; and closing, or defending against noise. Movements like modernization can help the Church achieve momentum as a society functioning in the open mode. Theologians like Granfield help the Church leadership to devise strategies for coping with communication imbalance amidst the flood of new developments in information technology.

The Roman Catholic Church, existing as a human society within history, can be studied with the tools of secular historiography, social sciences, and more recently, the science of communications. Gregory Bateson (1904-1980) was an English anthropologist who applied cybernetics to anthropology, and who in doing so came up with the famous phrase: "Information is a difference that makes a difference". Vatican II articulated the idea of media as a machine à gouverner or the application of information technology to the art of Church administration. Historically, religions with a strong central governing authority, like the Roman Catholic Church, have both declared their official positions on spiritual matters (for instance, in the catechism) and monitored information from any and all sources to gauge its accordance with the official position. At Vatican II, the Catholic Church began to create a structure of ideas that

enable believers to adjust to media culture. Information technologies, particularly radio and television, surely played a hand in promoting the global social changes of the past century, including the Church liberalizations wrought by Vatican II. The entire Council was very well covered by most of the world's press, including the global broadcast by satellite of Pope John XXIII's opening of the first session of the Council. The Council's decision expressed in the document *Inter Mirifica* to get involved with media use is attuned to the aggiornamento the Church hierarchy longed to experience. The new medium of the Internet now being used to disseminate the Church's teachings is generally perceived as being, if not democratic, at least very anti-hierarchical. As public information sources multiply through the Internet, it is likely that the number of sites claiming to belong to any particular religion, but in fact disseminating information that the central authority of that religion deems heretical, will multiply. In the next chapter, we will examine how media culture influenced the proceedings of Vatican II.

Chapter Two

Vatican II and the Church's Teaching on Social Communications

In his book *The Runaway Church*, Peter Hebblethwaite, journalist and a former Jesuit priest, observed that a problem is not acknowledged to exist in Rome until an official body or a Curial bureaucratic committee has been set up to deal with it (1975, 135). In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Roman Catholic Church began to concern itself with sociological developments in the new realm of information technology and communications. In the span of a relatively short time period, the Council fathers successfully managed to address a topic never before considered by the Vatican in the long history of the Church. The objective of this chapter is to show how the Second Vatican Council worked on developing an official document that specifically offers a Roman Catholic perspective on social communications. At the height of the Cold War, the Vatican leadership needed to consider the social implications of satellite technology, television, film, radio, news-services, and advertising for Roman Catholics living around the world. Science and technology had begun to introduce new ways for seeing popular culture and human behaviour. The Council Fathers responded positively to this challenge, they encouraged the freedom of speech in church and society, and they began to articulate the role of the Church in the public sphere. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the history behind the group of churchmen that authored the Vatican II document *Inter Mirifica*, as well as to point out some of the important passages from the document itself.

As widely reported in the Catholic press and even some secular newspapers on

March 4, 2004, the Pontifical Council for Social Communications happily celebrated its fortieth anniversary. The council's annual assembly took place in the Vatican from 8 to 12 of March on the theme: "*Inter Mirifica: Forty Years Later*", in memory of the document from the Second Vatican Council on mass media. Cardinal Eugenio Araujo Sales, archbishop emeritus of Rio de Janeiro, an original member of the council, presided over the opening mass in the chapel of the Teutonic College. According to the council president, Archbishop John Foley: "each member and each consultant of the pontifical council was to make a presentation of the most significant event or events in communications in the last forty years and to express a 'dream' for the next decade in communications. These reflection may be published and used as a source document to mark the fortieth anniversary of *Inter Mirifica* and of this particular department of the Vatican".¹

Inter Mirifica: Decree on the Media of Social Communications, a Vatican II document, was promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963. The title *Inter Mirifica* comes from the first two words of the document in Latin which mean "among the wonderful". The first paragraph of the Decree states:

Among the wonderful technological discoveries which men of talent, especially in the present era, have made with God's help, the Church welcomes and promotes with special interest those which have a most direct relation to men's minds and which have uncovered new avenues of

¹ March 4, 2004, news reported, on-line story available, *Independent Catholic News*

<www.indcatholicnews.com> and *Catholic Exchange* <www.catholicexchange.com>.

communicating most readily news, views and teachings of every sort. The most important of these inventions are those media which, such as the press, movies, radio, television, and the like, can, of their very nature, reach and influence, not only individuals, but the very masses and the whole of human society, and thus can rightly be called the media of social communication.

Forty years later, it remained a significant event in Church history worthy of attention.²

2.1 Church and Media Before Vatican II

In this chapter on the history of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications in light of the Second Vatican Council, I rely upon important information provided by Giuseppe Alberigo's monumental series *History of Vatican II*. It is from this source, as well as numerous books and articles that we can understand how the Church has studied media and communications in society. There have been popular books about the events of Vatican II written by eyewitness reporters and observers, such as Bishop Butler, Malachi Martin, Robert Blair Kaiser, Ralph Wiltgen, Michael Novak, and Francis Xavier Murphy (who used the pseudonym Xavier Rynne while working for *The New Yorker* magazine as a news dispatcher).

Before I begin with the Vatican II proceedings that shaped the document *Inter Mirifica*, it will first be necessary to set the background for the Church's interest in communications. Hubert Jedin and Konrad Repgen's *History of the Church*, particularly

² March 4, 2004, available on-line via *Independent Catholic News* <www.indcatholicnews.com> and *Catholic Exchange* <www.catholicexchange.com>.

chapter 13 of volume 10, *The Church in the Modern Age* (1980) provides a detailed history of the Church's involvement with information and mass media written by Michael Schmolke. The current Pontifical Council for Social Communications has had a number of precursors over the decades. The first such office set up within the Vatican was the Pontifical Commission for the Study and Ecclesiastical Evaluation of Films on Religious and Moral Subjects, which was established on January 30, 1948 by letter protocol # 153.561 from the Secretariat of State of Pope Pius XII. Bishop Martin John O'Connor was nominated president and the following persons were designated as members: Rev. Mons. Maurizio Raffa, representing the Sacred Congregation of the Council; Rev. Mons. Ferdinando Proserpi, representative of the Office Catholique International du Cinématographe and provisional secretary of the new commission; Mr. Giacomo Ibert and Architect Ildo Avetta. Several months later, on September 17, 1948, Pope Pius XII approved the statutes of this new Office of the Roman Curia, which was renamed the Pontifical Commission for Educational and Religious Films. One would have needed to be clairvoyant to see the remarkable future of this minute office, composed of a president and four members and housed in a single room in the Palazzo San Carlo in Vatican City, in a wing overflowing with the Information Office's vast archives on the Second World War. Despite these modest beginnings, this small commission would write a new page in the history of the Roman Catholic Church's pastoral and cultural activity.

The Pontifical Commission for Educational and Religious Films examined the complex educational and pastoral problems of the audiovisual era just coming into being and quickly realized that action was going to be needed. Through their president, Bishop O'Connor, they informed Mons. Giovanni Battista Montini (at that time Deputy Director

of the Pope's Secretariat of State) of their conclusions, namely that to be pastorally effective, the Commission would have to study the problems raised by motion pictures as a whole and engage bishops and believers alike in an apostolate in this field which could respond to the changed conditions of society. Thus, the original five-man Commission was replaced by the Pontifical Commission for Cinema, the statutes of which were approved by the Pope on January 1, 1952. With this measure, the new Office of the Curia took on the character of a study organism endowed with an ample College of Experts recruited from various nations, while higher prelates from the dicasteries of the Roman Curia concerned with pastoral problems related to the development of modern techniques in the entertainment world were called to take part in the Commission itself. The Commission was also given larger premises and provided with a Secretariat directed by Mons. Albino Galletto, nominated Executive Secretary on 1 October 1950. Two years later, on 1 October 1952, Mons. Andrea Maria Deskur was designated Undersecretary.

The first meeting of Experts, which was held in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in the Vatican on 26 and 27 April 1953, emphasized the need for in-depth study in the educational domain of problems arising from the development of all audio-visual media and their growing effect on the spiritual life of the world and the ministry of the Church, and above all warned of the impact that television would have on society. After consultation with the bishops and the Catholic organizations concerned, the name of the Commission was once more changed, this time to the Pontifical Commission for the Cinema, Radio, and Television, the statutes of which were approved by the Pope on 31 December 1954 and published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. The College of Experts was considerably enlarged and divided into three sections: film, radio, and television, and

working groups were set up to prepare the material required for Pope Pius XII's address on *The Ideal Film*, delivered to meetings on both 21 June and 28 October 1955, and for his encyclical letter *Miranda prorsus* on the motion picture, radio, and television, published on 8 September 1957. Pope Pius XII defended the positive value of public opinion, since it belongs naturally to society, and he argued that something essential to the Church's life would be missed if it were absent. Also, Pius XII took an interest in exploring the implications of new technology, such as radio, for those inside and outside the Church. Ahead of his time, this astute Pontiff had an appreciation of the benefits and potential dangers of communication technology. He initiated the Church's interest in dialogue on the topic of communications with scientists and engineers.

At the same time the Pontifical Commission took an active part in the preparation and implementation of international Catholic congresses, organized annually by the International Catholic Organization for Radio and Television (UNDA), with the goal of forming a permanent basis for collaboration and exchange of information with professional bodies and the corresponding pastoral organisms of the various countries involved. The international position of the small Curia Office was so well established when John XXIII acceded to the Papacy that the new Pope had no hesitation in dedicating to it one of his first solemn documents, the motu proprio *Boni Pastoris*, with which the Pontifical Commission was aggregated to the Secretariat of State and made a permanent Office of the Holy See. This took place on 22 February 1959. Then some months later, on 16 December of the same year, the Pope instituted and approved the statutes of the Vatican Film Library, entrusting its management to the Pontifical Commission.

In *Le Choc des Médias*, published with the series *L'héritage du Concile*, Michel Boulet documents the Curia's preparations for a media document to be drafted as a schema in advance of Vatican II. On June 5, 1960 an action by the Vatican, the *motu proprio Superno Dei Nutu*, established within the Pontifical Commission a Preparatory Secretariat for the Press and the Entertainment World as one of the twelve preparatory organs for the Second Vatican Council. It was the Preparatory Secretary's task during the two years of its existence to identify the problems raised by the press and the audio-visual media and, while recognizing the individual character of each sector, to assemble all this material into a single study which would yet leave room for future developments in which the different instruments of social communication, as they were called from then on, would find their proper place and receive due consideration within the Church's renewed ministry (Boulet 1986, 1-15).

2.2 Vatican II and Media

The twenty-first ecumenical council of the Catholic Church, first announced by Pope John XXIII, on January 25, 1959, began on October 11, 1962, and the first session ended on December 8 of the same year. After pope John's death (June 3, 1963), pope Paul VI reconvened the Council for the next three sessions, which ran from September 29 to December 4, 1963; September 14 to November 21, 1964; and September 14 to December 8, 1965. A combined total of 2,865 bishops and prelates took part in the Council proceedings. The total number of participants at Vatican II exceeded 3,000, including theologians and other experts. These experts, called *periti* in Latin (as distinct from the bishops' private advisers), numbered about 200 in the first session and 480 by the end of the council. They would produce sixteen texts by the Council's end (McBrien

1995, 1299-1306).

The Secretariat for the Instruments of Social Communications, created in 1960, was one of the ten commissions and two secretariats set up to prepare the Council. Its task was complex and ambitious: to formulate the Church's doctrine on media, to train the Christian conscience with regard to the right use of these media, and to make propositions for bringing the cinema, radio, and television into line with faith and morals, and for making use of them to spread the Gospel. The Secretariat worked in three sections: one for journalism, one for the cinema, and one for radio and television. A draft schema was drawn up which comprised an introduction, four sections and a final exhortation. The first section dealt with the Church's doctrine on the media (the teaching of the Church, the objective moral order, the duties of citizens and of civil authority); section two dealt with the apostolate (spreading truth and Christian doctrine, the means of achieving this); section three was devoted to discipline and order (Church discipline, the organs of Church authority); and section four offered some observations on certain media (the press, the cinema, radio and television, and other forms of communication). The proceedings of "The Discussion of the Modern Media" at Vatican II is historically documented by Mathijs Lamberigts in Giuseppe Alberigo's *History of Vatican II* (1997, 268-280).

The total number of delegates (or "Fathers") at Vatican II greatly exceeded the number attending any of the preceding twenty councils. Vatican II was not only the largest in terms of numbers but also the most ecumenical (meaning, 'the whole wide world') in terms of nations and cultures. Vatican I, for example, was dominated by Europeans, including European bishops in mission territories. Vatican II was more

international, it included 1,809 participants from Europe, 489 from South America, 404 from North America, 374 from Asia, 296 from Africa, 84 from Central America, and 75 from Oceania. All speeches and discussions were conducted in Latin, however. Cardinal Richard J. Cushing of Boston offered to pay for a system of simultaneous translation, similar to the one used at the United Nations, but the Vatican declined. This was also the first ecumenical council in history to have available to it electric lights, telephones, typewriters, and other modern means of communication and transportation (although it did not yet have access to computers and satellite technology were not yet available). It was also the first council to be covered by newspapers, magazines, radio, and television from all over the world, although the media were not allowed in St. Peter's during the sessions. They tended to rely upon press handouts that often reflected the views of the conservatives and on the reports of friendly bishops and theologians or *periti* (McBrien 1995, 1299-1306).

As Alain Woodrow recounts in "The Church and the Media: Beyond *Inter Mirifica*" written for Austen Ivereigh's anthology honouring John Wilkins, *Unfinished Journey: The Church 40 Years After Vatican II* (2003), it was unexpectedly announced in Rome that the schema on social communications would be presented to the bishops during the first session of the Council, in November 1962. There were 2,153 Fathers present on Friday, November 23, 1962, the twenty-fifth general congregation, for the discussion on the communication schema. The decision to bring the discussion forward (although the schema came last but one in the printed volume of draft texts) was to give the Fathers an 'easier' schema to discuss after their lengthy examination of the liturgy and controversial, not to say acrimonious, discussion of the 'sources of Revelation'. It was

even suggested that, since the subject of this schema was not a theological one, the bishops should accept the draft without a great deal of argument.

Woodrow notes in his historical reconstruction of the council debates that Archbishop Stourm of Sens drew attention to the crucial role played by the media in today's world and its prodigious power, through information and entertainment, over the public. Some speakers, such as Archbishop D'Souza of Nagpur and Cardinal Léger of Montreal, pointed out that the rights of the Church were unduly stressed, while other speakers, such as Bishop Enrique y Tarancón of Solsona and Bishop Ménager of Meaux, objected that the role of laypeople – who had more qualifications and experience than clergy in this field – was not adequately acknowledged. So, it is clear that opinions on the draft were divided: some welcomed the optimistic tone of the document, others wanted to denounce the misuse of the media and 'image worship' in modern civilization. Cardinal Suenens recommended the establishment of professional ethics for journalism. Cardinal Bea suggested merging the world's Catholic news agencies. Bishop Höffner of Muenster praised the cooperation between German Catholics and Protestants in the domain of social communications. After barely two and a half days of debate in St. Peter's, it was proposed that the schema be approved in substance but drastically pruned, a decision welcomed with relief by the vast majority of the Fathers. In the interval between the first and second sessions the commission reduced the schema to its bare bones (cutting its forty pages down to nine), while attempting to address the more important criticisms that have been raised. It became clear during the second session that none of the major schemas, apart from the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, would be ready for promulgation, so that the Council would have only one finished document to present to

the public at the conclusion of two whole sessions. The Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication was hurried through in order to provide a second finished document, mainly to appease those who accused the Council of being all talk and no action (Woodrow 2003, 210-211).

Woodrow explains that "the new shortened text pursued two broad goals: first, to set forth the Church's teaching on the supremacy of the moral law, the right to be informed, public opinion and the forming of conscience; second, to stress the importance of the mass media for the Church's pastoral work, namely the preaching of the Gospel to all men of goodwill and establishing the Kingdom of God throughout the world"(2003 211). Joseph Famerée has written about the council debates on communications media for volume three of Giuseppe Alberigo's series *History of Vatican II*. Famerée concurs with René Laurentin, an eyewitness theologian and Vatican II participant, who noted in his own commentary of the council debates that readers of the communications schema were uneasy on the eve of the vote, for they saw that the shortened text had retained the defects of the old version: triteness, moralism, and the trifling role given to the laity. Despite the shortness of time, contacts made in high places gave hope that the moderators would put off the vote in order to allow for further study. Antoine Wenger reported that during a meeting of French bishops at Saint-Louis on Wednesday, November 13, Msgr. Schmitt, Bishop of Metz, had harshly criticized the schema which he found uninspired and lacking in doctrinal perspective. According to interviews conducted by Noël Copin, a journalist of the Paris daily *La Croix*, the criticisms of bishops publicly opposed to the schema took the same line: lack of theological perspective (nothing, for example, on the unity of the world that is willed by God and made possible by communications

technology), lack of philosophical reflection (on human significance of recourse to technology in connection with the idea of dialogue), lack of sociological basis (no analysis of the social phenomenon of 'propaganda' or of the economic stakes in the media). In short, the schema contained too much morality and too few dynamic ideas (Famerée 2000, 179).

In his book *The Second Session*, Xavier Rynne a reporter for *The New Yorker* wrote that on Monday, November 25th, 1963, the Council was asked to vote on the revised final text of the schema on communications media debated at the first session. If approved, the text was to be promulgated by the Pope as a conciliar decree on December 4th, at the closing ceremony. The rather large number of *iuxta modum* votes on this occasion – favourable but with conditions – 503 to 1598 in favour (with 1 invalid vote) indicated that a large number of the Fathers still had reservations and were not satisfied with the final version. The belief was widespread that the adverse vote would have been even larger, except for the fact that many bishops had not even troubled to read the text much less give it serious consideration. The same was true of the debate on the floor in 1962. Many thought that the subject merited some attention, but was hardly worth the precious time of an ecumenical council. Some bishops felt that it was so unworthy and compromising as to be voted down (Rynne 1964, 255-256).

In light of these criticisms, no means were spared in the attempt to prevent the Council's approval of *Inter Mirifica*. Woodrow reports that a mimeographed petition containing signatures by ninety bishops and 1 head of a religious order, mostly continental prelates such as Cardinals Frings, Gerlier, and Alfrink, gave five reasons why the schema for *Inter Mirifica* fell short of the standards expected of a conciliar decree.

First, although the drafted schema claims inalienable rights for the Church, it disregards the fact that all communication springs from a search for the truth and the desire to express it. Second, the text describes the media in a technical fashion as a means of addressing people, rather than as a means for true communication and genuinely human dialogue. Third, no mention is made of true Christian and human education, which is not a matter of remote abstract knowledge, but rather implies a sympathetic concern for the fate of others. Fourth, Catholic laypeople are regrettably not given their due but kept under clerical tutelage even where they are more competent than the clergy. Finally, the petition argued that many problems concerning the media were not to be addressed by the Council but by national or regional bishops' conferences (Woodrow 2003, 212-213).

Rynne reports that this petition was distributed to Fathers as they entered the basilica on Monday to cast their votes. Bishop Reuss, Auxiliary of Mainz, was behind the move. As he was entering the basilica, the Secretary General Archbishop Pericles Felici discovered what was being done and tried to seize the papers from the priests who were distributing them. Bishop Reuss protested and declared that he was entirely within his rights. Failing to put a stop to the distribution, Archbishop Felici summoned the papal gendarmes, rushed in anger into the basilica and lodged a complaint with Cardinal Tisserant, Dean of the Sacred College and President of the Board of Council Presidents (Rynne 1964, 256).

According to Rynne, during the course of the debate that morning, Cardinal Tisserant denounced the distribution of the petition as a tactic "unworthy" of the Council. Later on he took the microphone again to state that one of the bishops – whom he did not name – claimed that he had not signed the document. This precipitate action on the part

of Cardinal Tisserant caused considerable murmuring among a large number of bishops, who asked themselves why nothing similar had been said during the voting on the schema on Mary when Father Balic's pamphlet had been surreptitiously distributed among the Fathers, or when Archbishop Dino Staffa's statement against the collegiality of the bishops had been passed out in the council hall. Later a number of bishops wrote to Cardinal Tisserant protesting his action. Cardinal Tisserant's contention was that the request to vote 'Non placet' was irregular and irrelevant since the schema had already been approved by a two-thirds majority in a preliminary vote. To some the whole incident was but another sign that a minority was prepared to infringe the Council's freedom of action when it suited their purposes (Rynne 1964, 256-257).

Xavier Rynne said that the criticism of the final version of the Communication Decree was summed up in a statement issued and circulated on November 16 by three influential American newsmen, John Cogley of *Commonweal*, Robert Blair Kaiser of *Time* and *Life*, and Michael Novak, correspondent for *Boston Pilot*, the *Kansas City Catholic Reporter*, and other papers. The statement was also countersigned under the words: "This statement is unworthy of consideration", by four notable theologians: the American Jesuit John Courtney Murray, the German ethicist Bernard Häring, C.S.S.R., the French Jesuit Jean Daniélou and the Argentinian Jesuit Jorge Mejia (Rynne 1964, 257).

Looking back at that event during the council debates on media and communications, Alain Woodrow explains that this group of professional journalists presented five specific criticisms in a one page memo circulated before the vote for approving *Inter Mirifica*. First, they said that the moralistic approach of the schema

contradicted the intrinsic value of a work of art and denied the integrity of the Christian artist. Second, they charged that the drafted text portrayal of the human 'right to be informed' only concerned the moral obligation of those who pass on information (the journalists), not of those who are the sources of the information; thus, the real problem of authoritarian secrecy, and its victims, was conveniently ignored. Third, they complained that the Catholic press was presented as though it possessed some quasi-infallible doctrinal authority lacking in the secular press, implying that the latter contributed nothing to the formation of public opinion in the Church. Fourth, they argued that the schema appeared to interpose an ecclesiastical authority between the journalist and his employer, compromising the integrity of the laymen working for the media. Finally, they pointed out that two important passages in the schema granted governments control over the media; such control not only threatened the freedom of the press but was expressly forbidden by the constitutions of a number of countries, among them the United States. The declaration ends by saying that the decree might well be cited some day as a classic example of the inability of Vatican II to face up to the world around it. In sum, both of the protest groups attacking the *Inter Mirifica* schema called for a radical revision of the text or, failing this, its removal from the agenda since, in its present state, it could only "astonish those competent in the field" and "bring discredit to the Council" (Woodrow 2003, 212-213).

It could be argued that the Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, debated during the same session contained weightier insights on religious communication than *Inter Mirifica*. The document on liturgy in some sense incarnated the spirit of the Council, and its reforms enfolded the Council's dream of *aggiornamento* making the

Council a part of the ordinary life of Christians. Its general objectives were to make the liturgy more dynamic, simple, intelligible, and participatory. With regards to communications, this document introduced the vernacular as part of the process of adapting liturgy to the "the genius and traditions of peoples". Much scorn had been poured on the argument for the universal retention of Latin as the language of the liturgy: the unity achieved by having a dead language was not worth the price of incomprehension, it was claimed. The Council said the Latin language was to be preserved, but the competent, territorial ecclesiastical authorities could allow the use of the vernacular. Until Vatican II, the Catholic Church presented Latin as its 'living language', its instrument of universal communication. Of course, the priority given to Latin was the inheritance of a historical situation in Europe. This history is expertly documented by social scientist Françoise Waquet in her book *Latin: Or the Empire of a Sign* (2002). During the interval between the Council of Trent and Vatican II, a time-span of some four hundred years, Latin was viewed as the distinctive characteristic of the Catholic Church, both by its members and its detractors. In the eyes of many, the Roman Catholic Church became the 'stronghold of Latin'. The linguistic change in the liturgy embraced by the bishops at Vatican II was an expression of *aggiornamento*, and a move in Roman Catholicism towards contemporary culture and away from classical culture. Of course, mass media as *Inter Mirifica*'s topic, was thought to be of a very different order of importance than the topic of liturgy (Waquet 2002, 72-77).

While *Sacrosanctum Concilium* enjoyed enthusiastic support, the same cannot be said for *Inter Mirifica*. Although the protestors were not able to prevent the vast majority from voting in favour of the *Inter Mirifica*, they did manage to stir up a minority of 'non

placet' votes larger than for any other conciliar document. The final vote was taken on 4 December 1963, at the last public assembly of the second session, with 1,960 Fathers in favour, 164 against, and 27 abstentions (Woodrow 2003, 213, Rolfes 2004, 227). According to René Laurentin, "the announcement of this definitive result elicited only some furtive and delayed applause, in contrast to the warm ovation that followed upon the definitive vote on the liturgical schema, three days before" (Famerée 2000, 185). Indeed, the approval of the decree did not halt the critics of the text. On the contrary, certain commentaries gave the clear impression that the Council had just committed some unpardonable gaffe. For example, the Belgian expert B. Rigaux predicted that "this vote will cost the Church hundreds of millions, because it will meet with opposition from all the journalists" (Famerée 2000, 185). Despite this talk of it being a disaster, the decree *Inter Mirifica*, together with the constitution on the liturgy, was solemnly promulgated by the Pope on 4 December, 1963. Each document was signed "*Ego Paulus, Catholicae Ecclesiae episcopus*" - "I, Paul, Bishop of the Catholic Church" - followed by the names of all the other Council Fathers (Wiltgen 1978, 135-136). Thomas J. Burke and Stanley I. Stuber provided what is now a corroborating commentary on *Inter Mirifica* for Walter Abbott's *The Documents of Vatican II* (1967). They noted that in approving and promulgating the communications decree, Paul VI said that the document was "not of small value" and that it demonstrates the capacity of the Church "to unite the interior and the exterior life, contemplation and action, prayer and the active apostolate". One theory advanced for the pope's action in allowing *Inter Mirifica* to go through was that he thought it would be a good way to get rid of the measure and remove it from the Council's agenda, allowing events and experience to determine whether it should be

applied or not. Since there was no question of it being regarded as infallible – this was expressly made clear on the council floor – the communications document became, as Gustave Weigel said, the “official and authentic doctrine of the Church”; but, it did not or would not become the ‘irreformable’ and once-for-all-times doctrine of the Church. He told a United States Bishops’ press panel session that the communications decree merely “gathers and officially states a number of points previously stated and taught on a less official level” (Abbott 1967, 317-318).

The prediction of most churchmen was that *Inter Mirifica* would be enforced loosely, if at all. One can speculate that if this pastoral decree had been discussed later in the Council, after the many sessions devoted to the Church in the modern world and to religious freedom, the texture of the document might have been somewhat richer. As it stands, it is ironic that the Church, which is basically concerned with communicating truth and life to the world, and has shown, especially in the time period after the Council, an awareness of the importance of mass means of communication, issued the slightest document of the entire council on the means of social communication (Abbott 1967, 332-335).

In the biography, *Pope Paul VI: The First Modern Pope*, Peter Hebblethwaite notes that the Fathers who rejected the communications schema surely did so for varied motives: a minority because they did not find it strict enough at the level of morality, a majority because they found it too weak. As the text was studied, and despite the very short time of about ten days, criticisms continued to pile up. Some Fathers had come to realize that the problems of the media had been completely evaded; the schema, introduced as an interlude during the first period, had been hastily voted on without any

new discussion, in order that the second period might end with the promulgation of at least one more decree along with the liturgical constitution. Pope Paul VI was wisely silent about *Inter Mirifica*. The true conciliar document on communication was yet to be written. The only practical consequence of *Inter Mirifica* was that in obedience to it Paul VI set up the PCSC. Its first not very exciting task was to produce something better than *Inter Mirifica* (Hebblethwaite 1993, 470-471). In a commentary of the Conciliar documents, the German Roman Catholic theologian Karlheinz Schimidhüs offered a similar assessment. According to him,

Inter Mirifica was treated as a stop-gap between deliberations which seemed a good deal more vital to the Fathers. Overall, it represented a compromise between two irreconcilable attitudes: one which would have little time wasted over this matter, and another which would not neglect a subject of such importance from the pastoral point of view. Small wonder if the result was hardly worthy of that pastoral importance and really left everyone dissatisfied. The main weakness of the Decree are, first, that having been discussed and disposed of so early in the day it does not take account of the insights into the nature of the Church and her relationship with the world which the Council subsequently reached, and can therefore well be called a 'pre-conciliar' document; and, second, that it looks shabby when one considers the present state of discussion among intellectuals. In short, it is worthy neither of the Council nor of the learned world. (Vorgimler 1967, 94-95)

2.3 The Critiques of *Inter Mirifica* and Their Evaluation

As we have seen, many critics think that the Second Vatican Council handled the topic of mass media in a disastrous fashion. It is often said that *Inter Mirifica* is the least satisfactory of the final sixteen conciliar documents. While it is certainly important for us to document and observe these criticisms, we should also attempt to evaluate them. Despite all these episodes and all the defects of the conciliar decree on the media, we must call attention to its merits and novelty. J. Dupont noted that “the decree at least draws attention to this area which had hitherto been overly neglected by pastors. From this point of view, it can be useful as a starting point, as a first testimony to a concern on the part of the bishops, although the latter are still rather poorly informed” (Famerée 2000, 188). Let us first consider the text’s contribution to the Church’s ministry in social communication.

Even if it did not live up to its announced purpose, the text did have a noble twofold purpose, as Archbishop Stourm explained during the 67th general assembly on November 14, 1963: to formulate, for the first time at a council, the official teaching of the Church on questions of importance to contemporary humanity - public morality and public opinion, news, formation of consciences - and to give a better understanding of the importance of the media for pastoral practice and the universal establishment of the reign of God. The plan was a vast one and at the very heart of Christianity. The introduction to the report pointed in addition to “the positive and constructive spirit” that had governed the composition of the schema. In justifying the right to information and in locating the role of the state in the area of freedom of the press, the Church was displaying a significant movement beyond its attitude in the nineteenth century and even in the first

half of the twentieth. Furthermore, for the first time in so solemn a manner, it was stating its interest in, and pastoral concern regarding the real manifestation of civilization represented by the new possibilities of global communication (Famerée 2000, 188).

In his essay "The Decree of the Means of Social Communication: Success or Failure of the Council?" André Ruzkowski notes that there are two possible attitudes for those who hoped that the highest authority of the Roman Catholic Church would speak out on social communications. The general public, including believers concerned over the role of the media in their lives, would have appreciated some solid doctrinal teaching on a question that was still relatively new. On the other hand, there were those, still few in number, who were already involved in various practical efforts at ensuring a Christian presence in the new world of mass media, and who hoped for something other than simple doctrinal statements. For them, the main point was to gain recognition for communications as one of the major concerns of the Church. This would lead to an indispensable institutionalization within the Roman Catholic Church, which would then provide more official backing for what had until that point been the spontaneous and unorganized efforts of the pioneers already involved in all sorts of projects throughout the world. From the point of view of the latter group, the Second Vatican Council offered a unique opportunity to demonstrate the interest of the Church in social communications and its determination to provide itself with the structures indispensable for any effective action in this field, for a pastoral action that also presupposes the establishment of a doctrinal basis. One should not forget that many experts from around the world agree that the theory of communications is only in its very early stages; therefore, the Council Fathers did not yet have at their command the elements necessary to produce such a

doctrinal statement. This is why they gave up the original idea of approving the doctrinal constitution that had been drafted by the preparatory commissions and instead adopted the formula of a short decree predominantly pastoral in approach. Although the end result, the finished text *Inter Mirifica*, was a disappointment for those who would have liked some in-depth doctrinal statements, it fulfilled the expectations of those working on the commission who saw the decree as a recognition of their efforts and the most authoritative encouragement to continue working within an institutional framework approved by the Council (Ruszkowski 1989, 549-550).

Inter Mirifica further institutionalizes the topic of social communication in the Roman Catholic Church; in so doing, it provides a foundation for all future development. Reference to institutionalizing tends to be unfashionable at the present moment. Everybody will agree that an institution is not a final end in itself and that it becomes pointless when it seeks to exist for itself alone and thus forgets the true reasons for its existence. However, it is totally unrealistic to imagine that it is possible to provide an effective presence in the social sphere without a minimum of organization, and thus of institutional order. Certain opponents of the Church as institution would also do well to consider whether they could have acquired the skills needed in order to challenge it, and also the framework that makes such opposition possible, were it not for the Church itself as an institution with its schools, hospitals, seminaries, universities, and publications. Thanks to *Inter Mirifica*, social communications were solemnly established as one of the major concerns of the Church, so they would henceforth be allotted a proper place on its "agenda" (Ruszkowski 1989, 550-551). Beginning with its first article, *Inter Mirifica* stresses the acceptance by the Church, among the "marvelous technical inventions" (*inter*

mirifica), of everything that encourages humanity's intellectual and spiritual life and opens up new paths for communication. The second article states that in view of the importance of this question, the Council has found it necessary to define its principles in this connection, following the positions previously taken up in the teaching of the popes and the bishops. Cardinal André-Marie Deskur, one of those chiefly responsible for the drafting of the decree (he was at that time Secretary of the Vatican's Commission for Film, Radio, and Television) emphasized the consequences of the conciliar text for the Catholic Church in his report to the 1983 Synod of Bishops:

Moreover, it was necessary to take into consideration a perspective that seems to be becoming constantly more firmly established in the sphere of the pastoral ministry of social communications: the need for the Catholic Church to play an active part in communication activities. The Church must therefore follow more faithfully the guidelines of *Inter Mirifica* and *Communio et Progressio*, and thus bring a more practical pastoral approach to its specific task of transmitting the message of salvation, by observing the rules of communications.

For Deskur, the Council "legitimized" the efforts of those pioneers who had for years been hoping to see social communications recognized as a special sphere for pastoral ministry (Ruszkowski 1989, 551-552).

Inter Mirifica does not confine itself to a general statement on the place of communications in the concerns of the Church; it also formulates a number of essential points of its doctrine (chapter 1, #3-12) and of its action (chapter 2, #13-21). Among the points of doctrine, the decree discusses the human right to information in article 5. The

text has the following to say concerning the controversial issues of the use of mass media:

The first of these issues is information, or the search for news and its publications. Because of the progress of modern society and the increasing inter-dependence of its members on one another, it is obvious that information is very useful, and, for the most part, essential. If news of facts and happenings is communicated publicly and without delay, every individual will have permanent access to sufficient information and thus will be enabled to contribute effectively to the common good. Further, all of them will more easily be able to contribute in unison to the prosperity and the progress of society as a whole. There exists therefore in society a right to information on the subjects that are of concern to men either as individuals or as members of society. The proper exercise of this basic human right requires that the content of the communication be true and – within the limits set by justice and charity – complete. Further, it should be communicated honestly and properly. This means that in the gathering and in the publication of news the moral law and the legitimate rights and dignity of man should be upheld. All knowledge is not profitable, but on the other hand “love builds” (1 Cor. 8:1)."

The journalists who spoke out against this text - in place of which they would have preferred to see an exaltation of the “freedom of information”, reserved to themselves and their publications - were reluctant to recognize the relevance of a solemn

declaration of the fundamental right of each individual and each society to receive the information it needs in order to survive and develop. Such declaration was made in terms that were even more precise and more juridical than those used by the United Nations in its draft declaration on the Freedom of Information in 1948. As Jacques Cousineau remarked, "it is the Catholic Church, thanks to Vatican II, that has been the first international organization to speak out authoritatively on one of the vital and most burning problems of contemporary society" (quoted in Ruszkowski 1989, 552). Other points of doctrine, both of moral (#4-7) and social order (# 8-12), are outlined in the decree in the hope of further development either within the framework of the promised pastoral instruction or in various contributions of the magisterium. The fact that the accent is placed on the moral aspect is explained by the need to define the attitude of the Church as a society with regard to the use of the media (Ruszkowski 1989, 553). *Inter Mirifica* is a pastoral decree that specifies guidelines of action for the universal Church. In particular, there are five basic points to be noted. First, the decree encourages "Catholic undertakings in the fields of press, cinema, radio, and television" (# 14). The pioneers of such enterprises, in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church, would no longer be seen as free-lance operators who have to fend for themselves. So long as they are serious about their tasks, and competent, they have the right to the support of the Christian community, including the Church authorities. Second, the decree encourages "a full overall training" in order to "acquire the competence needed to use these media for the apostolate" through the provision of sufficient schools, institutes, and faculties (# 15). The period of self-taught experts who thought they could do everything is over. The Church accepts that it has a responsibility for the formation of experts in the domain of

social communications. Third, the decree encourages media literacy “in Catholic schools at all levels, in seminaries and lay apostolate associations” for the acquisition of “instruction and practical experience tailored not merely to the character of each medium but the needs of each group” in order to become discerning and informed “recipients” (# 16). The way is thus opened, Ruszkowski notes, toward a fundamental orientation of modern pastoral work: that of offering contemporary men and women the enormous service of preparing and training for personal growth in a society dominated by mass media. Fourth, the decree encourages “financial contributions to help pastoral work in the communications field. This is one of the reasons for the annual organization of a World Communications Day (#17 & 18). The Council Fathers recognized that there must be at least a minimum of financial resources if this work is to be carried out properly. Finally, *Inter Mirifica* formally establishes in the Catholic Church “an operational structure on the various levels of its hierarchy: which includes a pontifical commission (# 19), diocesan activities and projects (#20), national offices (# 21), and international organizations recognized by the Holy See (# 22)”. Within this structure, projects that already exist could be reorganized and new offices set up. Ruszkowski explains that Vatican II set in motion a process that foresaw a coordination of the expansion of what can be considered the “clerical bureaucracy” (in the hierarchical chain of pope-bishop-parish priest), and also the support and encouragement of projects originating with the various people involved, whether priests, male and female religious, or lay people (Ruszkowski 1989, 553-554).

Of course, the situation varies considerably from one continent to another or even one country to another, and it would seem that it will continue to evolve for some time to

come. It depends among other things on the more general question of the place of lay people in the Church. On the international level, the Vatican retains its full authority with regard to the ecclesial structure, through the PCSC, while the ICOSCs (International Catholic Organizations for Social Communications) which coordinate the action of the national offices on this level (#22), must be 'approved' or 'recognized' by the Holy See and are dependent on it. Vatican II's renewal of the central government of the Church has tried to make the bureaucracy more international in membership and orientation. The exercise of collegial leadership encouraged by Paul VI with the creation of the synod of bishops was conceived to limit Roman centralization. Historically, there is a certain tension between the universality of the Church and the message of the Gospel on the one hand, and the local Churches on the other. The speed of communications and growth of the media might appear to facilitate a universal language in the Church as in the world. Often this is not the case. Particularities increasingly assert themselves, above all when there is suspicion that the universal language is that of the dominant West. The Vatican has established patterns of governing the Church in a Romanized fashion, and this tends to ignore or contain local interests (Ruszkowski 1989, 555).

2.4 *Inter Mirifica's* Sociological Vision

Inter Mirifica represents the early history of the Vatican's communications apostolate. At the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church recognized for the first time in a major conciliar meeting the profound influence of the mass media in society and the importance of using the media in the mission of the Church. *Inter Mirifica* officially put mass media and communications on the agenda of things to be done by the Church. This decree argues that Christianity is pre-eminently a religion of communication,

placing central emphasis on divine self-communication, the incarnation, and the task for the Church to continually communicate itself in various cultures. Written scriptures and the intergenerational communication of tradition are central to Catholic life. The vitality of the Church depends very much upon adapting the Gospel witness to the forms of communication of a particular era. In the past, Catholicism has been relatively quick to incorporate new forms of language and communication, for example the use of visual media in icons and architecture, or popular drama, and the quick adoption of print media in the early Renaissance. Thus, *Inter Mirifica* asks Catholics to begin to think about what it might mean if the Catholic Church were to become fully acculturated into the new world of popular mass media (McBrien 1995, 270).

Christian ethics and moral theology can benefit from discovering the reflexive dimension of ecclesiology. Prior to Vatican II, the Church climate was more conducive to the control and assessment of personal moral responsibility than it was to a social form of responsibility. The new perspective requires a capacity to include the conditions of the social context into an assessment of moral obligation and to work with those outside the Church in carrying out social goals. According to the teachings of Vatican II, humans are the listeners of the Word, and this means that the modern instruments of communication should be in the service of the word, and interpersonal dialogue. From the vantage point of the Church, the purpose of the modern theological renewal in Roman Catholicism is to bring the message of the Gospel further into the lives of the laity. In his address to the bishops, during the ceremonies on December 8, 1965 marking the end of Vatican II, pope Paul VI remarked: "We seem to hear from every corner of the world an immense and confused voice, the questions of all those who look toward the Council and ask us

anxiously: 'Have you not a word for us?'...These pleading voices will not remain unheeded". In *Road to Renewal* Bernard Häring fulfills the pledge of Paul VI and presents a clear, practical, and documented discussion of how the average Catholic can make the renewal of Vatican II a part of his or her day-to-day renewal, and in chapter fifteen, he looks at the topic of media and social communications (1968, 153-159).

In regards to the media of social communications, *Inter Mirifica* makes an appeal to the Christian spirit of responsibility and expresses the hope that information services in the fields of film and television be improved and better organized (#19-22). Häring argues that

In the open and pluralistic society of our day external prohibitions, controls and vigilance are not enough. Our time compels us to have recourse to and to advance the spirit of responsibility which for that matter is deeply rooted in the Gospel. Indeed the Gospel itself strongly recommends it. Responsibility is a religious concept which is emptied of its true meaning when man forgets to live in the presence of God and to assume the duties as well as the possibilities incumbent upon him as he seeks to respond generously and with gratitude to God's invitations.

(Häring 1968, 156)

Inter Mirifica sees in the media of social communications a gift of the Creator who places these laws and powers in nature and gives man the capacity to exploit them (#1). "Therefore we are duty bound to use them in such a way that through them God may be accorded the honour due Him. That the salvation of mankind be effected through a sense of personal responsibility does not merely mean that man should try to act rightly case by

case, here and now; it also involves the obligation to form an upright conscience opportunely and to procure the necessary faith by which this can be done" (#9). "Moreover responsibility is not a negative concept only concerned with the avoidance of evil. Christian responsibility is both positive and constructive. The Christian is enjoined to exploit the possibility of good, the more so when he knows that it is only in this way that he can effectively resist evil in the long run" (#13). *Inter Mirifica* expressly cites the responsibility of all who participate in the dialogue that has been developed through the modern media of social communications (Häring 1968, 157).

Inter Mirifica argues that "special responsibility falls on professional groups such as journalists, writers, actors, theatre and film directors and producers, financial backers of such enterprises, distribution agents and critics" (#11). It is assumed that Christians should not hand over such powerful means to Satan, but consider them as an authentic vocation and opportunity to advance their cause, since they represent the great portals to the whole of modern life (Häring 1968, 157). "Whoever dedicates himself to such activity must do so conscientiously, by acquiring at one and the same time the necessary technical competence and a solid professional moral education in conformity with Christian principles (#15). Häring points out that the decree also cites the common responsibility of the various professional groups who have such media at their disposition or who make use of them (#11). The more these groups are able to convince their members to respect the moral law in their professional work, the more will their activity acquire prestige and the less will public authorities be obliged to impose silly or narrow-minded controls that somehow always fall into the opposite excess. (Häring 1968, 157).

According to *Inter Mirifica*,

The reader and the spectator is not only responsible to himself as regards the choice of reading matter and of programs and the proper moderation and self-control that should be observed in their use; but he is co-responsible also with regards to the average level of the content of the media of social communications. He is in effect responsible for deciding the quality of the merchandise which they survey and present. It is he who finances the program" (December 4, 1963, #9).

Häring contends that the reader or spectator, by giving his preference to a book, film, or transmission in addition to his financial assistance, is also contributing his acquiescence and manifesting his approval. Häring argues that in our democratic society the reader or spectator who has the opportunity has the duty to intervene directly according to his capacities in the presentation of programs; in our modern day democratic society, there are or should be, Häring maintains, powerful and effective means at our disposal for fostering the good and its influence and for expelling what does not merit consideration (1968, 158). *Inter Mirifica* teaches that "the entire People of God are responsible to see that effective use of these media of social communication is made with the evangelization of all mankind in view" (#13).

When *Inter Mirifica* speaks of ecclesiastical authority it does not primarily have controls and prohibitions in mind but rather the formation of Catholics from school level on to the various associations of the lay apostolate (#16). The Church's hierarchy has the duty of forming the conscience of the faithful, and deepening its sensibility by teaching each one to bear witness to Christ in his place. According to Häring, the task of the Church hierarchy, with which competent lay-persons are duty bound to cooperate, is to

inform the faithful opportunely by helping them to select what is good and to reject what is trivial or harmful (1968, 158). The laity needs to cooperate with the Church authority by placing their own technical, economic, cultural and artistic talents at the service of the good”(#13). Häring argues that users of media must learn to discuss these things knowledgeably, and when necessary make their views known to the directors of radio and television networks, theatre owners and publishers. He cites the decree’s admonition that the “responsible use of these means presupposes maturity of judgement which everyone is also bound to acquire and constantly refine through an ever deeper comprehension of what the reader or spectator reads, feels, or sees” (#10). Häring contends that it would be a mistake to leave the initiative in this matter to the hierarchy alone.

Inter Mirifica contends that the world’s public authorities should be responsible for the media (#12). The judgement of Church authorities in these fields does not claim to be infallible, yet it is “always the surest source of information and by compliance with it the Christian always derives the best advantage for himself and for the community” (Häring 1968, 158). Public authorities are obliged to intervene wherever the professional groups have not measured up to their responsibility and do not offer the proper guarantees. What is at stake here in fact, Häring observes, is the protection of the weak, especially of the youth. Such a requirement belongs to the realm of the common good and is not to be constructed as a violation of individual freedom or of the freedom of special professional groups. In Häring’s opinion, the greater the sense of responsibility exhibited by the listener, reader, and viewer, and above all by professional groups as such, the more scope will all persons have for a true freedom within which to develop their talents (1968, 159).

According to two Catholic theologians Philip J. Rossi and Paul A. Soukup, moral imagination serves as a useful shorthand for that process of posing and mulling over issues demanding action and judgements of right and wrong. The moral imagination also refers to the ideas and possibilities that occur to us in judging courses of action. The moral imagination allows us to safely engage ethical issues and actions in a provisional, hypothetical way: "If such and so were to occur, how would I, how should I respond?" "If thus and so were to demand my attention and action, what course of action would be better?" Imaginatively entering those situations prepares us to decide the all-too-real, non-hypothetical cases of human living. In this way, Rossi and Soukup argue, mass media and their products serve the moral imagination and thus serve moral judgement (1994, 3-7). The Vatican's PCSC argues, in its corpus of pastoral teaching documents, that it is possible for all Christians to understand and evaluate the workings of modern communications technology, in relation to the fundamental dynamic of moral imagination towards inclusiveness, solidarity, and communion. This project of media literacy can help Catholics to rethink the idea of society and exercise new forms of personal and communal agency.

The Council Fathers understood that the future expressions of Roman Catholicism would continue to be shaped in part by new forms of mass media, which had the ability to create an audience of isolated individuals into a wider body called the 'electronic Church' – a worldwide movement of evangelical Christianity had begun to form because of technological development. The first preacher to demonstrate television's potential for religious propagation was a Roman Catholic, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, whose *Life is Worth Living* series became a commercially sponsored part of ABC network's

programming in 1952. When he stopped broadcasting, he did so because of ecclesiastical opposition rather than a decline in popularity. In the 1950s Protestants such as Billy Graham made preaching on the radio and television into a powerful form of evangelism. These developments in ministry encouraged the Council Fathers at Vatican II to make a positive statement about electronic communications. *Inter Mirifica* encouraged the Church to approach radio and television as important instruments for evangelism. It became possible to regard Catholicism as sympathetic to modern media culture (Edwards 2004, 781).

Paul VI, the pope who found a way to continue Vatican II and to guide its initial stages of implementation, should in fact be credited with initiating the revival of Roman Catholic preaching and evangelism. Pope Paul VI wisely and strategically remained silent during the Council's heated controversy about weaknesses in *Inter Mirifica*, an official text which has been apologized for ever since. In obedience to that conciliar document, pope Paul VI later established the Vatican's PCSC and authorized the text *Communio et Progressio* (1971). He was a Church leader who consistently found a way to manage chaos. To his credit, Vatican II under his guidance recovered the true tradition of pastoral communications in the Church. The ministry of preaching should be understood as public discourse on a religious subject by one having the authority to do so. It involves proclaiming the word of God within Christian worship or as an invitation to conversion and worship, which has traditionally been a communicative role for bishops, priests, and deacons; most recently, it has also been practiced by the laity. In light of *Inter Mirifica* and the modern revolution in social communications, styles of preaching have been changing to better serve the ongoing challenge of evangelization (Hardon 1985,

336-337).

Homiletics is the branch of pastoral theology dedicated to the art and science of effective preaching. O.C. Edwards Jr.'s *A History of Preaching* (2004) provides a detailed account of this subject. The tradition of preaching in Church history dates to the New Testament. Preceded by John the Baptist (Mk 1:1-8), Jesus proclaimed the good news of God (Mk 1:14-15) and sent the Twelve to preach (Mk 6:7-13). Peter (Gal 2:7-8), Paul, and other Christian missionaries proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus crucified and risen from the dead as Christ, Lord, and Son of God (Rom 1:1-6, 15-16; 10:14-18; Gal 1: 15-16). Great Christian preachers have included St. Ephraim (306-73 AD), St. John Chrysostom (347-407 AD), St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), and pope Leo the Great (440-61 AD). Mention should also be made of the Latin Father Tertullian whose preaching can be found in his *Apology*. Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, wrote about the work of preachers and teachers in his accounts of the early Church. Catholic preaching, as we know it in the format of the liturgical homily, dates historically to the coming of the medieval Mendicant Orders (Edwards 2004, 3-116).

John Stott in his *I Believe in Preaching* (1982) remarks that medieval friars helped to magnify the ecclesial office of preaching, revolutionize the technique of preaching, and stimulate a growing demand for sermons. Although St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) was a man more of compassionate service than of learning and insisted that "our acting and teaching must go together", he was nevertheless as deeply committed to preaching as to poverty: "Unless you preach everywhere you go, there is no use to go anywhere to preach" was his motto from the very beginning of his holy ministry. Francis' contemporary Dominic Guzman (1170-1221) laid even greater emphasis on preaching.

Combining his own personal austerity with evangelical zeal, Dominic travelled widely in the cause of the Gospel, especially in Italy, France, and Spain, and he organized the 'black friars' into an Order of Preachers, the Dominicans. A century later, the Franciscan preacher St. Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444) made this statement: "If of these two things you can do only one - either hear the mass or the sermon - you should let the mass go, rather than the sermon... There is less peril for your soul in not hearing mass than in not hearing the sermon" (Stott, 1982, 21-22). Franciscan and Dominican theology, and Roman Catholic theology in general, not to mention Reformation theology, have all given significant attention to the proclamation of the Word.

According to the influential liturgical scholar James F. White, the importance to the Church of preaching is closely linked to the centrality of Scripture in Christian worship (1991, 157-68). Preaching is a form of communication based on the conviction that God is central in the process. The preacher speaks *for* God, *from* the Scriptures, *by* the authority of the Catholic Church, *to* the people. The corporate memories contained in Scripture give the Church its self-identity. Without reiteration of these memories the Church would simply be an amorphous conglomeration of people of goodwill, but without any real identity. Through the proclamation of the Word, the Christian recovers and appropriates in his life the experiences of Israel and the early Catholic Church: escape from slavery and captivity, and conquest and hope for a messiah, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and mission. The Church's survival depends on reinforcing these memories and hopes just as did Israel. Scriptural events enacted through the work of preaching give human history meaning and give the Church clues for interpreting the present and future as well as past events. In the events narrated in Scripture, the Christian

community discerns meaning that illumines all history (White 1991, 158). Preaching is a verbal sacrament that can have a profound effect on people, inspiring and uplifting them, enlightening their minds, opening their hearts. *Inter Mirifica* argues that preaching, teaching, and explaining God's Word is an important means of deepening faith and commitment, and of exhorting people to follow God's commandments as protection against sin.

Inter Mirifica, written by bishops and their advisors from industrialized European nations, tends to present communications as a process of transmission involving instruments for social interaction. This approach dominates contemporary dictionary entries under terms such as "imparting", "sending", "transmitting", or "giving information to others". In this model of communications, there is a sender or information source, and also a message recipient at a different location, that is, a destination. It also entails the encoding of a message or messages onto a carrier or medium, which is then decoded in order for meaning to be conveyed. All social communication of transmission occurs within a context or contexts. Context could refer to the physical, emotional, and mental circumstances in which messages are formed, transmitted, or interpreted, including the socio-economic-political circumstances, the mental or emotional state of the sender or recipient, and the history of exchange between them. The transmission view of communication leads to an emphasis on language as an instrument of practical action and discursive reasoning, of thought as essentially conceptual and individually reflective, and of symbolism as being pre-eminently analytic (Carey 1992, 35). *Inter Mirifica's* analytical presentation of an instrumental approach to social communication is illustrated by its constant usage of this vocabulary: 'senders', 'receivers', and 'exchanges'.

Inter Mirifica is an expression of what communication scholars refer to as technological determinism: it argues that social change is being determined by technological invention. In contrast, Marxist social theory held that the economy was the determining role in society. Studies in media and communications have brought to the Vatican's attention possibilities not caused by economic forces, but instead by inventors and users of new technologies, it is now necessary for the Church to become familiar with in order to grasp the social situation. It is possible that *Inter Mirifica* mystifies what is being reported about the media, i.e. reduces the reader's understanding of the events and participants referred to. Much of this has been explored by the linguist and communications scholar Kieran O'Halloran in his book *Critical Discourse Analysis and Language Cognition* (2003). O'Halloran's focus is on the consumption of newspaper hard news text, in which he explores the possibility of manipulating someone reading a text for gist. It is possible to inquire whether the Vatican text *Inter Mirifica* imposes a viewpoint on the media in a manner that could manipulate readers and believers. This is a research question that will be kept in mind throughout the duration of this study.

Inter Mirifica's model of communication as transmission could in itself be construed as manipulative in its basic orientation to human interaction. Sociologist, journalist, and American communications scholar James W. Carey notes that already "in the nineteenth century but to a lesser extent today, the movement of goods or people and the movement of information were seen as essentially identical processes and both were described by the common noun 'communication'" (1992, 15). The centre of this instrumental idea of communication is the transmission of signals or messages over distance for the purpose of governance or control. It is a view of communication that

derives from one of the most ancient of human aspirations: the desire to increase the speed and effect of messages as they travel in space. From the time upper and lower Egypt were unified under the First Dynasty down through modern times and the invention of the telegraph, transportation and communication were inseparably linked. Although messages might be centrally produced and controlled through monopolization of writing or the rapid production of print, these messages carried either in the hands of a messenger or between the bindings of a book still had to be distributed, if they were to have their desired effect, by rapid transportation. The telegraph ended the identity, but it did not destroy the metaphor. The basic orientation to communication is formed from the metaphor of geography and transportation; it remains grounded, at the deepest roots of our thinking, in the idea of transmission. Communication is a process whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people (Carey 1992, 15).

In its modern dress the transmission view of communication arises at the onset of the age of exploration and discovery. We have been reminded rather too often by post-colonial critics that the motives behind this vast movement in space were political and mercantilist. Certainly those motives were present, but their importance should not obscure the equally compelling fact that a major motive behind this movement in space, particularly as evidenced by the Puritans in New England, was religious. The desire to escape the boundaries of Europe, to create a new life, to found new communities, to carve a New Jerusalem out of the woods of Massachusetts, were primarily motives behind the unprecedented movement of white European civilization over virtually the entire globe. The vast and, for the first time, democratic migration in space was above all an attempt to

trade an old world for a new and represented the profound belief that movement in space could be in itself a redemptive act (Carey 1992, 15-16).

In his overview of a "Cultural Approach to Communication", Carey notes that modern transportation, particularly when it brought the Christian community of Europe into contact with the heathen community of the Americas, was seen as a form of communication with profoundly religious implications. This movement in space was an attempt to establish and extend the Kingdom of God, to create the conditions under which godly understanding might be realized to produce - using Augustinian jargon - a heavenly though still terrestrial city. The moral meaning of transportation, then, was the establishment and extension of God's Kingdom on earth. The moral meaning of communication was the same. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the telegraph broke the identity of communication and transportation but also led a preacher of the era, Gardner Spring, to exclaim that his own generation was on the "border of a spiritual harvest because thought now travels by steam and magnetic wires" (Carey quoting from Perry Miller. *The Life of the Mind in America*. New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1965, pp. 48). Similarly, in 1848 "James L. Batchelder could declare that the Almighty himself had constructed the railroad for missionary purposes and, as Samuel Morse prophesied with the first telegraphic message, the purpose of the invention was not to spread the price of pork but to ask the question 'What Hath God Wrought?'" (Miller 1965, 52). This new technology entered public discussions not as a mundane fact but as divinely inspired for the purposes of spreading the Christian message farther and faster, eclipsing time and transcending space, saving the heathen, bringing closer and making more probable the day of salvation (Carey 1992, 16).

Carey remarks that as the nineteenth century wore on and religious thought was increasingly tied to science, the new technology of communication came to be seen as the ideal device for the conquest of space and populations. According to the American cultural historian Perry Miller,

The unanimity (among Protestant sects), which might at first sight seem wholly supernatural, was wrought by the telegraph and the press. These conveyed and published the 'thrill of Christian sympathy, with the tidings of abounding grace, from multitudes in every city simultaneously assembled, in effect almost bringing a nation together in one praying intercourse'. Nor could it be only fortuitous that the movement should coincide with the Atlantic Cable, for both were harbingers of that 'which is the forerunner of ultimate spiritual victory...' The awakening of 1858 first made vital for the American imagination a realizable program of a Christianized technology" (Carey quoting from Miller, p. 19).

Carey's sociological study of the telegraph and the press, influenced by his own Irish Catholic background, remains one of the most insightful of those offered by cultural historians today (Carey 1992, 17).

As the forces of science gained ground in the twentieth century, the obvious religious metaphors fell away and the technology of communications itself moved to the center of thought. The superiority of communication over transportation was assured by the observation of one nineteenth-century commentator that the telegraph was important because it involved not the mere "modification of matter but the transmission of thought" (Carey 1992, 17). Communication was viewed as a process that would - sometimes for

religious purposes - spread, transmit, and disseminate knowledge, ideas, and information farther and faster with the goal of controlling space and people. Moreover, as can be seen in much of contemporary popular commentary and even in technical discussions of new communications technology, the historic religious undercurrent has never been eliminated from our thought. From the telegraph to the computer the same sense of profound possibility for moral improvement is present whenever these machines are invoked. And we need not be reminded of the regularity with which improved communication is invoked by an army of teachers, preachers, and columnists as the talisman of all our social troubles (Carey 1992, 17-18).

It is from this historical and cultural legacy that the Vatican is teaching about social communication in its decree *Inter Mirifica*, the contemporary equivalent of Trent's decree on printing bibles. The Council Fathers, in effect, recognized that changes in the media of communications in the modern period present totally new conditions, opportunities, and problems for proclaiming the Christian faith. Detecting pastoral teaching that is likely to mystify in reading for gist is not necessarily a function of the PCSC, the Vatican office responsible for interpreting *Inter Mirifica* and producing further teaching in order to elaborate the conciliar text's salient features. *Inter Mirifica* has led to subsequent follow-up documents by the PCSC over the past forty years. Non-critical readers of these documents may not detect how the Vatican's mystification of media power can be manipulative. Indeed, the eyes of faithful docility often invites believers to read for gist, something akin to minimum effort, causing them to overlook absences in the pastoral texts. O'Halloran argues that the idealized reader fails to partake of mystification analysis. A discourse bias such as technological determinism may prompt

readers to invest little or no effort into critiquing inequalities of power in their understanding of social communications. Of course, this is one of the main reasons why *Inter Mirifica* received objections and strident criticisms during the debates and voting at the Second Vatican Council. Theologians and bishops who would contribute to the authorship of *Gaudium et Spes* in later session were some of the more vocal critics of *Inter Mirifica*. On the other hand, these objections by themselves do not prove that *Inter Mirifica* is a manipulative pastoral document. The wholesale rejection of *Inter Mirifica* as oppressive rather than liberating can be explained as the result of partial representation that fails to highlight the substantial positive contribution of the conciliar document to the Church as a whole. In the next chapter, the growth in Church ministry inspired by *Inter Mirifica* will be critically examined and the dynamic, evolutionary thrust of Church teaching on social communications that will be emphasized

Chapter Three

The Communications Legacy of Vatican II: Charting the History of PCSC

The PCSC enables Church leaders to receive help from experts analyzing controversial and difficult problems associated with information technology and mass communications. The Vatican posits that people in leadership positions in all sectors of the Church need to understand the media, apply this understanding in formulating pastoral plans for social communications together with concrete policies and programs in this area, and make appropriate use of the media. This chapter examines the collaborative effort of the Vatican Pontifical Council for Social Communications and how this study commission helps ecclesial decision-makers to assimilate the vast amount of diversified input coming into the cybernetic Church. The study commission can be a valuable research tool for the Vatican's decision makers, supplying them with theoretical data and practical recommendations required for the ongoing work of renewal. Study commissions are not meant to supplant ecclesial authority but to assist it. The presupposition is that if the Church hierarchy is well-informed, they are more likely to govern wisely. If study commissions are used wisely, they can become both a valuable source of information and an example of functioning co-responsibility in the decision-making process for the Vatican today. Also, such study commissions can help the Church to foster media policies of secular governments and non-governmental organizations. This chapter will document and chart the development and growth of the Church's involvement with mass media, in particular the Curia office named the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. Relying upon historical information provided by the Vatican website,

as well as numerous books and articles, I will examine the legacy of the Vatican's study commission for the topic 'social communications'.

As noted in chapter two, the Second Vatican Council ushered in a new era for Roman Catholicism. The age of Tridentine Catholicism had come to an end, and the Church begins a new partnership with the world. Perhaps no better example of this change is the Index of Forbidden Books (*Index Librorum Prohibitorum*), which was abolished by Pope Paul VI in 1966 because it was then regarded as inconsistent with the freedom of inquiry encouraged by the Second Vatican Council. Established in 1557 by Pope Paul IV and overseen for four hundred years by the Curia, the Index was widely regarded as a symbol of the Vatican's hostility to free inquiry and the modern world. The ecclesial reforms enacted at Vatican II caused the Roman Catholic Church to re-examine its own approach to communications (McBrien 1995, 661).

To enact the mandate of *Inter Mirifica*, Pope Paul VI, in his *Motu proprio* "*In fructibus multis*" (April 2, 1964), transformed the Pontifical Commission for Cinema, Radio, and Television into the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, entrusting it with the responsibility of delving into and studying problems in the worlds of cinema, radio, and television. Pope Paul personally attended the first plenary of this new commission on September 28, 1964. He also visited the Commission's headquarters, now enlarged and refurbished. In addition, in the following years the Holy Father approved the Regulations for the audiovisual transmission of Ceremonies and Places directly under the authority of the Holy See (13 August 1965), at the same time instituting a Service for Audiovisual Assistance within the Pontifical Commission, and later he promulgated the Regulations of the Press Office of the Holy See, also within the

competence of the Commission, under the direction of Mons. Fausto Vallainc, formerly Director of the Vatican II Press office. In view of the increase in the Commission's activities Pope Paul VI also thought it opportune to nominate a Vice-President in the person of Bishop Agostino Ferrari Toniolo on April 23, 1969 (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

The Pontifical Commission took on the character of a post-Council Office composed of members *ad quinquennium* chosen from among the cardinals and professionals who served as presidents of nationally appointed commissions for social communications, and of 36 ecclesiastical and lay consultants chosen for the same period from among professional and pastoral users of the media. The presidents of the three international Catholic organizations for the cinema, for radio and television, and for the press – OCIP, UNDA, UCIP (*Union Catholique Internationale de la Presse*) became members *durante munere* (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

Pope Paul VI gave special audiences to the participants from the plenaries, which became the focal point of apostolic activities in social communications. The first task of this particular post-Vatican II Council Commission was to prepare a Pastoral Instruction in accordance with the Council Decree *Inter Mirifica*. This project took over six years of work culminating in the promulgation of *Communio et Progressio* on 23 May 1971. Meanwhile, on 7 January of the previous year Mons. André-Marie Deskur had been nominated Secretary of the Pontifical Commission, while Father Romeo Panciroli, MCCI, formerly an official of the Commission, was made Undersecretary. Once the decree was promulgated, the Commission set to work to implement the directives of the new Pastoral Instruction, under the guidance of its new President, Archbishop Edward

Heston, who on 8 September 1971 succeeded Mons. O'Connor, the latter being named President Emeritus after having directed operations tirelessly for no less than 21 years. At the same time, Archbishop Ferrari Toniolo was designated Representative of the Holy See to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

3.1 *Communio et Progressio*

The papal instruction on communication *Communio et Progressio* is a 23,000 word text that provides a detailed examination of the mass media. It takes a global approach by insisting in its opening sentence that the chief aims of media and social communications are "the unity and advancement of men living in a society". The common brotherhood of men, mutual understanding, and the assessment and comparison of differing views are listed as some of the positive benefits of communication. The Church, therefore, should guarantee open public opinion, freedom of speech, and the rights to know and inform. "Since the Church is a living body," the document says, "she needs public opinion in order to sustain a giving and taking between her members". Arguing against suppression of information, the instruction insists that secrecy should be used sparingly. Reference is also made to developments in satellite transmissions and the immense opportunities they present for effective religious instruction. A theme repeated throughout the *Communio et Progressio*'s teaching is that social communications are vehicles to "multiply contacts within society and to deepen social consciousness" (Granfield 1973, 242-243).

Communio et Progressio is the Catholic Church's longest and most detailed treatment of the mass media and communications. It develops many of the issues posed

in *Inter Mirifica* and introduces a number of others, particularly with reference to the Church itself. Like *Inter Mirifica*, it addresses all people of good will as well as Catholics. The communications specialists who prepared the document planned it as a careful exposition of the Church's position on communications, with a two-fold grounding: first, in a doctrinal discussion of a Christian view of communication, and second, in a formal analysis of the role of communication in human society (Soukup 1993, 72). A churchman and communications scholar, Paul A. Soukup argues that this document is clearly a policy statement by the Roman Catholic Church concerning all forms of media pertaining to social communications. In *Communio et Progressio's* doctrinal section, the document lays out the groundwork for a theological approach to mass media, finding in the doctrines of Trinity, creation, and incarnation a basis for a distinctly Christian view of social communications. From its thematic statement that communication exists to serve the unity and advancement of people living in society, it develops a strong claim for freedom of public opinion; it establishes the right to be informed and to inform – including freedom of speech, access to the means of communication, and the human right to communicate. It encourages educational and cultural uses of mass communications, justifying the autonomy of artistic expression while noting that artists face moral problems when they portray evil. This document also offers some basic guidelines for advertising (Soukup 1993, 73).

Michel Boulet reviews the main ideas of *Communio et Progressio* in his book *Le Choc des Médias* for the series *L'héritage du Concile*. The authors of *Communio et Progressio* boldly state that “communications media can be seen as powerful instruments for human progress (#21). They recognize that communicators have “a most important

part” to play in formatting public opinion, gathering up different views and transmitting them (#27). They also state that “those whose job it is to give news have a most difficult and responsible role to play” (#36). *Communio et Progressio* provides numerous practical instances of the importance attributed by the Church to the profession of communicator, first of all by highlighting the spheres in which communicators exercise their activity. In article #136, the document observes that “the press, of its power and nature, is of towering importance...and has a deep influence”. In article #142, the document remarks that “the cinema is a part of contemporary life. It exerts a strong influence on education, knowledge, culture, and leisure. The artist finds in film a very effective means for expressing his interpretation of life and one that well suits his times”. Article #148 declares that “radio and television have given society new patterns of communication. They have changed ways of life”. In article #158, the document notes that “the theatre is one of the most ancient and lively forms of human expression and communication...Today, it commands a large audience, not only of those who go to plays, but also of those who follow drama on radio and television” (Boullet 1986, 76-92).

In connection with artistic creators, the authors of *Communio et Progressio* quote a passage from Paul VI’s address to the producers of social communications media on April 6, 1967: “It is a fact that when you writers and artists are able to reveal in the human condition, however lowly or sad it may be, a spark of goodness, at that very instant a glow of beauty pervades your whole work. We are not asking of you that you should play the part of moralists. We are only asking you to have confidence in your mysterious power of opening up the glorious regions of light that lie behind the mystery of man’s life (#55). Still, or in response to the Pope’s words, according to *Communio et*

Progressio, “communicators breathe life into the dialogue that happens within the family of man” (#73). The text quotes Paul VI again (from his allocution to the Officers of the Catholic Association of Italian Journalists, on January 24, 1969) regarding the fact that journalists are obliged to pay continual attention to, and carry on, an uninterrupted observation of the world: “You must continually stand at the window, open to the world; you are obliged to study the facts, the events, the opinions, the current interests, the thought of the surrounding environment” (#75). As Boulet explains, the document here is agreeing that the media are an important force of social progress that promotes the growth of human interests (1986, 81-91).

Following the line of the *Instruction of the World Council of Churches* (Uppsala, 1968, p. 381), *Communio et Progressio* recommends paying attention to dramatists and journalists who devote “all the force of their genius and...all the depth of their talent” to describing “in significant terms the frequent alienation of man from God while asserting human liberty” (#36). The role of critics is considered irreplaceable “in getting communicators to maintain the highest standards of integrity and service and continually to make progress” (#78). In encouraging “those who have the means” to contribute financially to the creation and running of communications, it also calls on them to respect “the proper liberty of the communicators, the artists or what we have called the recipients” (#80).

As regards Christian experts and specialists, it is recognized that “the excellence which they bring to their professional duty is itself a powerful testimony to Christianity” (#103), and that Catholic communicators “have the right to expect” from their Church “the kind of spiritual help that meets the special needs of their important but difficult

role" (#104). The concern of the Church to collaborate is clearly stated in article #105: "Fully aware of the importance of their profession and of the special difficulties it involves, the Church is very willing to undertake a dialogue with all communicators of every religious persuasion. She would do this so that she may contribute to a common effort to solve the problems inherent in their task and do what is best for the benefit of man (for the common good)". In the section devoted to the right to receive and provide information, *Communio et Progressio* calls on recipients to show understanding toward the conditions in which information professionals work, but it also reminds them that they have "the right and the duty" to demand a "rapid and clear correction" of any false or distorted news, "to protest whenever omissions or distortions occur,...[and] to protest whenever events have been reported out of context or in a biased manner" (#41). A wider knowledge among the public of this recommendation would certainly have a beneficial influence on the workings of both the written and spoken news services (Boullet 1986, 84-85).

Speaking of the spiritual possibilities of enriching contemporary culture offered by the media, *Communio et Progressio* encourages recipients to add "the exercise of personal reflection and an exchange of views with others" as a condition for using the media "to deepen and refine their cultural life" (#50). In other words, recipients are called on not to remain passive, but to become active. And this is the crux of the whole orientation. However, the clearest formulation is found in article #81, which states in unequivocal terms that "the recipients can do more to improve the quality of the media than is generally realized; so their responsibility to do this is all the greater. Whether or not the media can set up an authentic dialogue with society depends very largely upon

these recipients. If they do not insist on expressing their views, if they are content with a merely passive role, all the efforts of the communicators to establish an uninhibited dialogue will be useless". If recipients remain passive, the Church warns, then they lose their capacity to influence the media, and they will have only themselves to blame for the dubious quality of the programmes that they are offered. If they become active, then they can improve this quality for the common good. *Communio et Progressio* encourages a kind of Catholic activism to reform the media according to Christian values (Boullet 1986, 87-90).

Communio et Progressio echoes *Inter Mirifica*'s call for education and training for both producers and recipients of communication. It grounds its appeal in the need to develop human qualities, to serve others, to strive for justice, and to become better members of society. The pastoral instruction also stresses the issue of dialogue as fundamentally important to society – it asks that both producers and recipients actively seek to increase dialogue with each other and within society. Finally, *Communio et Progressio* asks for cooperation. In one of its few appeals to civil authority, the document calls for cooperation between citizens and governments, noting that government has a positive role – not to censor but to guarantee free speech for all citizens, as well as the free expression of communicative initiatives, and the free exercise of religion. The document urges all the world's national governments to work together for international communication and development, particularly in emerging nations (Soukup 1993, 73).

When it turns its attention specifically to the Roman Catholic Church, *Communio et Progressio* raises a number of new issues and gives details to some points raised earlier by *Inter Mirifica*. Most importantly, the document applies its conclusions regarding

public opinion and dialogue to the Church hierarchy itself. The authors realized that human communication and dialogue are essential to strengthening the bonds of union in the Church. The text asks church officials to foster public opinion within the church, but cautions that doctrine should not be confused with opinion. Local churches are asked to provide pastoral care for communication professionals, cooperation in reporting news about the church, theological reflection on communication, literacy, media education programs, and communication programs as part of basic pastoral training in seminaries. Finally, *Communio et Progressio* invites the Church, both local and universal, to make greater use of the media in evangelization and education, paying particular attention to quality. Catholics working in each sector of the communications industry – the printed word, the cinema, radio and television, and the theatre – receive words of support and advice. The document concludes with a very practical section addressing the need for equipment, trained personnel, and professional organizations for the endeavour of Catholic ministry of social communications (Soukup 1993, 73-74).

Communio et Progressio can be regarded as the 'magna charta' for Roman Catholic ministry in the realm of social communications. Aside from *Inter Mirifica*, the pastoral decree on social communications, it draws from other Vatican II texts such as the Constitution on the Church in the modern world, the Decree on Ecumenism, the Declaration on Religious Freedom, the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, and the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church. When the Vatican's PCSC came to work on the text of the pastoral instruction *Communio et Progressio*, it therefore had at its disposition the whole corpus of conciliar documents and did not have to confine itself to *Inter Mirifica*. *Communio et Progressio* appeared after seven years of

work on May 23, 1971. The ins and outs of its entire history have been examined and documented by Fr. Enrico Baragli, S.J. in his monumental work *Comunicazione, comunione e Chiesa* (Rome, 1973).

André Ruskowski remarks that Fr. Baragli, in a well-documented article on the tenth anniversary of *Communio et Progressio*, criticizes the fact that those responsible for the document introduced three subjects that were not found in the Decree *Inter Mirifica*: a theology of the mass media, and the questions of information and public opinion within the Church. In order to judge the validity of this criticism, one must consider whether the conciliar documents taken as a whole would justify the inclusion of these questions, since it would be surprising if the Vatican's Pastoral Instruction were to contradict the documents of the Council simply out of fidelity to a text that was approved at a relatively early stage of the conciliar work. Despite all their shortcomings, it is the conciliar documents as a whole – with *Inter Mirifica* in first place – and *Communio et Progressio*, which, in the words of Pope Paul VI as cited by Baragli, provide “an irreplaceable guide for anyone who works in this sector of the apostolate” (Ruskowski 1989, 555-556).

Communio et Progressio could be regarded as a symbol of Pope Paul VI's influence on the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications during his entire pontificate. Many of his social policies were progressive and he looked to the United Nations as the Church's dialogue partner. The UN shared his goals of world peace and a catholicity of humankind. Of the UN, Paul VI said in his speech before the U.N. General Assembly on December 4, 1964, “You are the bridge between peoples... We are tempted to say that your character to some extent mirrors in the secular world what our own Catholic Church wants to be in the spiritual order: one and universal”. The Vatican's

renewed critical attitude toward world affairs began in 1967 when Pope Paul VI issued his first and only social encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. This encyclical develops the promise of Paul VI's United Nations speech during 1965. It is addressed to all men and women. It provides them with a vision of a common human culture for 'spaceship earth', which nevertheless respects cultural, ethnic, and national diversities. The Wall Street Journal characterized the papal text as 'souped-up Marxism'. By calling "development the new name for peace" and insisting that in the long run the North-South divide would prove more menacing than the East-West conflict, Paul VI was prophetic and ensured his support from the Third World. *Populorum Progressio* called upon all world leaders to address the following modern needs: feed the hungry, care for the health of all people and all peoples, educate humanity, and free the enslaved. This novel synthesis reflects the Vatican's commitment to humanism and Enlightenment ideals. With *Populorum Progressio* the Roman Catholic Church became truly Catholic, universal, and planetary. However, its vision of society failed to address the complexities of the newly emerging post-industrial, information economy, and these are taken up by *Communio et Progressio* (McCarthy 1994, 252-253).

3.2 The World Communication Days and Other Activities of PCSC

In accordance with *Communio et Progressio*'s teaching, the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications drew up a program of personal contacts with the most important production centers of news and entertainment for the media. The bishop conferences in the various continents were invited to prepare on local, national, and continental levels and in collaboration with the Pontifical Commission, an in-depth study of their situation in the field of social communications and a program of priorities for the

future, to be elaborated at appropriate regional and continental meetings. The Episcopal Conference of Latin America (CELAM) was the first to launch such a program in 1972, followed by the Pan-African Episcopal Committee in 1973 and the Asian Bishops' Conferences in 1974 (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

Aside from policy documents like *Inter Mirifica* and *Communio et Progressio*, there are numerous occasional statements (e.g. annual messages and addresses) that have been issued by the Church on social communications in order to commemorate the particular circumstances each year of World Communications Days. On a vast scale, all over the Roman Catholic world and in many non-Catholic environments much work was accomplished through the World Communications Days celebrated annually since 1967 and dedicated to selected themes for study. The texts of the papal speeches prepared for each World Communications Day between 1967 and 2005 can be found on the Vatican's website. In his book *Church and Social Communication: Basic Documents*, Franz-Josef Eilers remarks that each of these world days has been the occasion for various papal messages and numerous articles, which means that there is now a good quantity of doctrinal material available to encourage in-depth research (1993, 198-199). The themes taken up over the years for the annual Communications Day in the Roman Catholic Church have considered social communications in relation to the progress of peoples, the family, youth, human unity, the proclamation of the truth, the proclamation of spiritual values, evangelization in the contemporary world, reconciliation, fundamental human rights and duties, publicity, the recipients of messages, the protection and development of childhood within the family and within society, family duties, responsible human freedom, the aged, the promotion of peace, the encounter between faith and culture, the

Christian promotion of youth, the role of the media in the Christian formation of public opinion, and the promotion of justice and peace. These are just a few of the topics taken up by papal addresses for World Communications Day over the past forty years (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

On April 12 1972, Professor Federico Alessandrini, formerly the Vice-Director of the "*Osservatore Romano*", became head of the Vatican press office. On May 2, 1973 Archbishop Heston died suddenly in the course of duty travel and was succeeded as President of the Commission by Mons. André-Marie Deskur on the following 24 September. At the same time Father Romeo Panciroli and Father Karlheinz Hoffmann SJ were nominated Secretary and Undersecretary respectively, and on 25 September Father Antonio Stefanizzi SJ was appointed Technical Consultant to the President, while the Rev. Mouned El Hachem became Delegate in charge of the Vatican Film Library. The President, Mons. Deskur, was elected titular Bishop of Tene on June 17, 1974, and he was ordained by Paul VI approximately two weeks later, on 30 June 1974 (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

More work came to the Commission during the celebration of the Holy Year of 1975 and the faithful, immediate, and worldwide diffusion of the Christian message of reconciliation and renewal which Pope Paul VI had chosen to be the theme of the Jubilee. The Commission was responsible for the organization and supervision of the transmission of events via satellite television. For the first time in history the ceremony of the opening of the Holy Door was seen not only by a few thousand fortunate pilgrims but by millions of people, including many in the most remote corners of the earth. The Commission played an important part in the financing and coordination of these

broadcasts, with the collaboration of the Pontifical Representations (coordination), the generosity of the Knights of Columbus (funding), and the technical assistance of RAI-*Radiotelevisione Italiana* (the Italian radio and television network) and of *Telespazio* (satellite communications company). Worldwide television is today a consolidated reality: every year there are global telecasts of the Midnight Mass of Christmas, the Papal message and the “*Urbi et Orbi*” blessing on 25 December, the *Via Crucis* at the Colosseum on Good Friday, the Holy Mass, the Pope’s message and the “*Urbi et Orbi*” blessing on Easter Sunday. Further world television link-ups are also effected on other occasions of special or exceptional importance for the life of the Church. Approximately seventy countries over the five continents are hooked up every year (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

The Rev. P. Panciroli was appointed Director ad interim of the Press Office of the Holy See on June 3, 1976, with the Rev. Don Pierfranco Pastore, Editor-in-chief of the Vatican Radio program “*Four Voices*” and Consultant to RAI on religious programs, as his assistant. Father Panciroli was confirmed Director of the Vatican press office on September 5, 1977, while retaining his existing post as Secretary to the Pontifical Commission, and at the same time Don Pierfranco Pastore was officially made Assistant Director (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

In 1978 the Vatican press office and the Audiovisual Service of the Commission were called to cope with no less than four exceptional events: the death of Pope Paul VI; the elevation to the Papacy of Cardinal Albino Luciani (John Paul I); the death of Pope John Paul I only 33 days after his election, and the subsequent election as Pope of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (John Paul II), Polish, well known to the Pontifical Commission

through his friendship with the President, Bishop Deskur. Both John Paul 1 and John Paul II, a few days after their election, were to express their deep appreciation of the news media, and granted audiences to newspaper reporters and radio and television journalists (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

3.3 The PCSC and Pope John Paul II

Pope John Paul II expressed special interest in work of the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications early in his pontificate and his pontificate developed the initiatives of his predecessor Pope Paul VI. Pope John Paul II urged the PCSC to continue its research in the Cold War era with an affirmative attitude to new media technologies. This would be reflected in the papal appointments to this study commission. On 25 February 1980 Pope John Paul II, having elevated the Rev. Agnellus Andrew O.F.M. to the titular Bishopric of Numa, nominated him vice-president of the Media Commission, to work alongside Bishop Deskur, the president, who had suffered a stroke in October 1978 and was in poor health. Bishop Andrew, who had been president of UNDA, placed his vast knowledge of the problems inherent in social communications at the service of the Commission. He was to resign in the second half of 1983, on reaching retirement age (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

Under John Paul II, the pastoral tasks of the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications multiplied every year that passed. Despite shortage of staff and limited financial means, the Pontifical Commission asserted the ever-increasing need for studies, reports, and other undertakings, so that the Church would keep up with the vertiginous development of the media in the world. In fact, technology, especially in electronics and communications, is advancing with great strides, challenging its users with innumerable

problems of research, planning, and appropriate action. Mons. John P. Foley, the new president appointed on 9 April 1984 and named titular Archbishop of Neapolis in Proconsolare on the same date, was ready to take up the gauntlet (Bishop Deskur was nominated president emeritus and elevated to archbishop). Archbishop Foley inspired the Office with new energy, proposing new technical means and fresh pastoral approaches, aided in his task by the new secretary, Mons. Pierfranco Pastore, appointed on 4 December 1984. At the same time the Pope nominated Dr. Joaquín Navarro-Valls as director of the Press Office of the Holy See, with Mons. Giulio Nicolini as vice-director, while archbishop Romeo Panciroli, who on 6 November 1984 had been made titular Archbishop of Noba, became Apostolic Nuncio to Liberia (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

At the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Commission in March of 1985, in accordance with the statutes of the Vatican Film Library, Mons. Enrique Planas was designated official delegate to the Library, a post which had been vacant since 1980. Later that year, during the course of the meeting of the executive committee of the International Federation of Film Archives held in London at the beginning of October, the Vatican Film Library was admitted to the organization as observer member while waiting for full membership on fulfillment of the necessary conditions. This was finally granted on 26 April 1997. The consistory of 25 May 1985 was an occasion of particular joy for the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, for on that date the president emeritus, Archbishop Deskur, was created a cardinal of the Holy Roman Church (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm). It should not be forgotten that those in religious orders, such as the Divine Word Missionaries, Paulists,

and Jesuits have been pioneers of Catholic involvement in the media. In this context, it is impossible to avoid mention of the efforts of the Society of Jesus, which ensures the running of the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture founded in London in 1977. For the years 1985-1987, the activities of this centre included research and publication in five sectors: (1) religious communication in contemporary culture; (2) the Church and new communications technologies; (3) communication and education; (4) the use of participatory mini-media and alternative media; and (5) the philosophies and politics of communications (Ruszkowski 1989, 574). Jesuits have also launched at the Gregorian University courses on Vatican instruction in Roman Catholic communications.

According to the Vatican website, a close and continuous collaboration has always linked the pontifical agency for studying media with many dicasteries and the Roman Curia. The presentation to the world of the information contained in all the documents of the papal magisterium and in some of the more important acts of the congregations and offices, often engaged the Commission for Social Communications in an enterprise that was time consuming and difficult. Among the fruits of this close collaboration two pastoral documents should be mentioned: *Guide to the Training of Future Priests Concerning the Instruments of Social Communication*, published by the Congregation for Catholic Education on 19 March 1986, and *Instruction on Some Aspects of the Use of the Instruments of Social Communications in Promoting the Doctrine of the Faith*, published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 30 March 1992 (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

3.4 The Pontifical Council for Social Communications

With the apostolic constitution *Pastor Bonus* promulgated by Pope John Paul II at

the consistory on 28 June 1988, the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications became on 1 March 1989 the Pontifical Council for Social Communications and as such, an office of the Roman curia in its own right. In accordance with Article 169 of the above-mentioned apostolic constitution, the Office “will deal with questions concerning the instruments of social communication, so that also by these means the message of salvation and human progress may serve the growth of civilization and morality”. The apostolic constitution specifies that “in the performance of its functions, the Pontifical Council shall proceed in close liaison with the Secretariat of State”. At the same time the Press Office of the Holy See becomes “the special office” under the First Section of the Secretariat of State for the publication and distribution of “official communications concerning both the acts of the Supreme Pontiff and the activities of the Holy See”. In 1989, on the 25th anniversary of the promulgation *Inter Mirifica*, the Pontifical Council for Social Communications published two important documents: *Pornography and Violence in the Communications Media: A Pastoral Response* (7 May 1987), and *Criteria for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Cooperation in Communications* (14 October 1989). Both documents were the fruit of approximately three years of work engaging members, consultants and experts of the Office (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

Following the departure of Father Karlheinz Hoffmann, whom the Superiors of the Society of Jesus had designated for a new pastoral ministry in Germany, Mr. Hans-Peter Rithlin, the spokesman for the Swiss Bishop Conference and consultant of the Pontifical Council, was nominated undersecretary on 21 May 1991. Between 1995 and 1996, the Vatican’s Pontifical Commission for Social Communications delegated Fr.

Virgilio Fantuzzi, SJ, a theology professor at the Vatican's Gregorian Pontifical University and a writer for "*Civiltà Cattolica*", to author a text celebrating "*100 Years of Cinema*". The purpose of this pastoral document is to offer training to Roman Catholics in the interpretation of the motion picture medium. Fr. Fantuzzi's text presents a kind of curriculum for the training of children, young people, and adults in the interpretation of the values expressed through the cinema. As a form of media literacy, the document seeks to develop a didactic method for creating a critical-participatory attitude among users of audio-visual media. Educators can help instill skills so that people can appreciate the spirituality of film. This consists of developing strategies for identifying the narrative modalities employed in films and in analyzing how viewers grasp the message. Second, this teaching method focuses upon exploring the values presented in cinema. Overall, Fr. Fantuzzi's document addresses the need for educators to acknowledge the religious topics found in entertainment and the arts (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

3.5 *Aetatis Novae*

In 1987, in view of the changed technological conditions in the field of social communications, the Pontifical Council proposed to the Plenary Assembly that a possible supplement to *Communio et Progressio* be prepared, based on answers to a questionnaire already addressed to the bishop conferences in 1986. As a result, five years later, 22 February 1992 saw the publication of a pastoral instruction on social communications entitled *Aetatis Novae*. This document marks the twentieth anniversary of the Pontifical Commission's very first document, *Communio et Progressio* (1971). *Aetatis Novae* reiterates many of the salient themes presented in *Inter Mirifica* and *Communio et*

Progressio. Aetatis Novae asks the Catholic Church hierarchy to apply the teachings of Vatican II and post-councilar documents to "new and emerging realities" in the information society. Compared to the two previous documents, *Aetatis Novae* is narrower in scope: on the one hand, it addresses the Church hierarchy or church communicators, and on the other, it fails to adequately ground its claims or fully describe the changed social context of communication on which it bases its recommendations. It does deal with some matters of importance: the economic domination of international and/or global communication by a few trans-national corporations, the negative effects of products from the global communications industry on local cultures, the defence of the right to communicate, and the church's own ministry to form and offer pastoral care to communicators. One new element in the 1992 text is an insistence on the urgency of pastoral planning for religious communication in each diocese or region. The pastoral text goes so far as to include a lengthy appendix outlining such a plan (Eilers 1993, 120).

Aetatis Novae is signed by the president of the PCSC, archbishop John P. Foley and his secretary Pierfranco Pastore. The pastoral document argues that

Today's revolution in social communications involves a fundamental reshaping of the elements by which people comprehend the world about them, and verify and express what they comprehend. The constant availability of images and ideas, and their rapid transmission even from continent to continent, have profound consequences, both positive and negative, for the psychological, moral, and social development of persons, the structure and functioning of modern societies, intercultural communications, and the perception and transmission of values, world

views, ideologies, and religious beliefs. (#4)

Unlike *Communio et Progressio*, *Aetatis Novae* does not carry a special note of approval by the Pope because it is not a papal instruction. Also, *Aetatis Novae* is not as elaborate as *Communio et Progressio*. In fact, many things seem to be repetitions or are quotations from already existing documents. The pastoral text of 1992 does not pretend to say the final word on a complex, fluid, rapidly changing situation, but simply wishes to provide a working tool and a measure of encouragement to those in ministry confronting the pastoral implications of "revolutionary technological change" (Soukup 1993, 74-75).

Against the strong mass media orientation of former Church documents, *Aetatis Novae* affirms that these mass media *by no means* detract from the importance of alternative media open to people's involvement and allowing them to be active in the production and even in designing the process of social communications itself. *Aetatis Novae* calls the Church hierarchy to take steps to preserve and promote folk media and other traditional forms of expression, recognizing that in particular societies these can be more effective than newer media in spreading the Gospel. In the corpus of Catholic magisterial documents, only *Communio et Progresio* had mentioned the traditional folk arts which could be preserved and spread through modern media. Here, *Aetatis Novae* goes a step further (Eilers 1993, 20).

It should be noted that less preparation went into drafting the text of *Aetatis Novae* which makes it similar to *Inter Mirifica* issued at Vatican II. The preparation of the document published on February 22, 1992 began with a meeting of invited experts to Nemi near Rome in February 1989. In contrast, *Communio et Progressio* required very elaborate preparation over a period of seven years between 1964 and 1971, a long process

based upon the international cooperation of a working group including seven bishops from different continents and the presidents of three international Catholic organizations of press, radio, and television. The 1971 papal instruction was widely regarded as the '*magna charta*' of Christian communication and a document with the most concrete, positive, professional approach to mass media and Church. The Vatican recognized that this text deserved re-appraisal twenty years later and celebrated it in *Aetatis Novae* (Eilers 1993, 121).

Aetatis Novae reiterated that the PCSC is aware that those who work in journalism, radio, television, films, and the whole system of informatics, who listen honestly to the voice of their conscience and sincerely aspire to further the progress of their art, know how difficult it is amid the conditioning of everyday life to keep faith in their true vocation as Christian communicators of truth and goodness. Moreover, Catholics must cope with a lack of material means which, however much they may desire it, hampers their contribution to the spread of a free information mindful of the spiritual dimension and to a public entertainment of quality showing faith in the betterment of the individual and society and stimulating people to work for it. To all these the PCSC offers its assistance and make available its full pastoral and professional commitment.

It is possible to characterize *Aetatis Novae* as a corrective or update to the text *Communio et Progressio*. For a general audience, the relative brevity of *Aetatis Novae* is something of an improvement over the thoroughness of *Communio et Progressio* which examines many issues of technical concern to media professionals which were, perhaps, best suited to an appendix. *Aetatis Novae* directly cites text passages and paraphrases from previous Church documents on communications. Thus, the document serves as a

kind of summary or compendium of basic Catholic teaching on the media. It also challenges some implicit assumptions posited in *Communio et Progressio*. In particular, *Aetatis Novae* prefers balance to enthusiasm in its general tone. This emphasis on balance extends to the humanistic benefits mass media can potentially yield to society and the Church.

Besides the more nuanced language, there is an expression of a greater awareness of the considerable role of the mass media in personal formation. It becomes equally evident that "the first *Areopagus* of the modern age is the world of social communications which is unifying humanity and turning it into what is known as 'a global village'. The means of social communications have become so important as to be for many people the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration in their behaviour as individuals, families and within society at large" (#1). As a result of this insight, *Aetatis Novae* has notes of urgency more pronounced than any of its predecessors. The need for pastoral planning

May be even greater now than previously precisely because, to some degree at least, the great contemporary '*Aeropagus*' of mass media has more or less been neglected by the Church up to this time. As Pope John Paul II remarks: "Generally, preference has been given to other means of preaching the Gospel and of Christian education, while the mass media are left to the initiative of individuals or small groups and enter into pastoral planning only in a secondary way". This situation needs correcting. (#5)

Beyond strong language, the document has a host of concrete suggestions many coalesced into a specially prepared Appendix on "Elements of a Pastoral Plan for Social

Communications". This appendix includes a call for media education and related spiritual formation for Catholics of all classes, and insists that realistic provision is made for financing (#23). The document goes even farther on this latter point: "Recognizing the validity, and indeed the urgency, of the claims advanced by communications work, bishops and others responsible for decisions about allocating the Church's limited human and material resources should assign it an appropriate, high priority taking into account the circumstances of their particular nations, regions, and dioceses" (#20).

In addition to these general principles, the document offers another notable innovation in interpretive norms. It will also be of great importance in the Church's approach to media and the culture they do so much to shape to bear always in mind that "It is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message and the Church's authentic teaching. It is also necessary to integrate that message into the 'new culture' which is being created by modern communications....with new languages, new techniques and a new psychology" (#11). Today's evangelization ought to well up from the Church's active, sympathetic presence within the world of communications (#11).

In *Aetatis Novae*, the PCSC urges further study and research in the ongoing work of implementing the Vatican's guidelines. As an international information-processing unit, the Roman Catholic Church needs a highly developed system of social communication. This is especially true of a democratized Church in which local communities are given greater autonomy and flexibility. The move toward decentralization, however, should not affect the Vatican's fundamental oneness of the Church creed, code, and cult. For the unity and catholicity of the ecclesial system are reflected anew in the bonds of electronic communication. These bonds bring together the

many believing communities. For example, with the help of communication satellites, the Vatican is no farther away from the parishes of the world than the nearest television set. Using Aristotle's conclusion that the size of the political community is determined by the range of one man's voice, we find today that electronically, the whole world is practically a single community. As a result, the Roman Catholic Church, always one Body, benefits tremendously from the communicative intimacy provided by modern media technology (Granfield 1973, 242-244).

3.6 Ethics in Advertising

During the 1990s the PCSC continued to develop its pastoral system for questions pertaining to mass media. On 3 December 1994 the secretary, Mons. Pastore, was elected titular bishop of Forontonia and ordained by Pope John Paul II on 6 January 1995. In 1995-1996, as a Roman Catholic contribution to the celebration of the centennial of the invention of the motion picture, the PCSC and the Vatican Film Library set up an ad hoc committee to respond to the demands for more thorough research into the role of cinema as an influence on values at the threshold of the twenty-first century. The documentation prepared by the committee was dispatched to the various Roman Catholic bishop conferences in the world that disseminated the suggestions and programs it contained in appropriate places (www.Vatican.va/roman_curiam/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

Since one of the most important aspects of social communications is advertising with its power of persuasion and often of psychological pressure, the PCSC proposed to the plenary assembly that a pastoral document be drawn up to treat the subject in the most suitable way. After three years of preparation involving members, consultants, experts, and numerous bishop conferences, the document entitled *Ethics in Advertising* was

published on 22 February 1997, provoking a remarkably favourable impression for the seriousness, simplicity, and restraint with which the subject had been handled. The text was authenticated by the president John P. Foley and his secretary Pierfranco Pastore and was issued on the date of the feast of the chair of St. Peter the Apostle (www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs.htm).

Ethics in Advertising was written to stimulate a balanced discussion within the Church about the benefits and harm caused by modern advertising in the mass media. The topic of advertising is enormously important for the Church because a significant amount of human and material resources are devoted in today's world to advertising. This text recalls Pope Paul VI's observation that "no one today can escape the influence of advertising" (#1). This text focuses upon the economic, political, cultural, and moral and/or religious benefits of advertising. The Vatican text affirms that advertising is positive and can bring about much that is good. Catholic moral teaching regards advertising as an instrument that can be used well or badly, and there is nothing intrinsically good or evil about the profession of advertising. The document explores harm brought about by negative advertising with regards to the economic, political, cultural, and moral and/or religious dimensions of modern life.

The basic theme is moral action that promotes the common good and human progress. The 1997 pastoral document on ethics in advertising refers back to Vatican II's *Inter Mirifica* in order to prescribe some basic ethical and moral principles for assessing ethics in advertising. Attention is given to the importance of truthfulness in advertising, the dignity of the human person, and the responsibility of those who work in the advertising profession. The text concludes by offering some basic ethical guidelines. The

Vatican pastoral document refers to the important role of public authorities in civil government and their duty to regulate and enforce basic laws and policies in advertising industry. Second, the text refers to the duty of the Church to promote education and pastoral planning with regards to the opportunities and dangers of advertising. Third, the pastoral text affirms the importance of the freedom of speech and communications, as well as the duty of each and every advertising professional to act responsibly and even to make reparations when necessary. Ethics in Advertising recalls that “since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has frequently addressed the question of the media and their role and responsibilities. She has sought to do so in a fundamentally positive manner, viewing the media as “gifts of God” which, in accordance with his providential design, bring people together and “help them to cooperate with his plan for their salvation” (February 22, 1987, #1).

3.7 Ethics in Communications

The next document prepared by the PCSC is entitled *Ethics in Communications* and was published on June 2, 2000 by its president John P. Foley and its secretary Pierfranco Pastore. The pastoral text is structured around three themes. First, it discusses the Catholic ideal of social communication that serves the human person, with respect to the media’s respective economic, political, cultural, educational, and religious dimensions. Second, it discusses, in lights of these five dimensions, the dangers posed by social communication and how mass media can violate the good of the human person. The text’s third section presents relevant ethical principles for further study and pastoral analysis of these problems.

Given the importance of public discussion about the good and evil potentially

caused by the mass media, the Church brings to its study of ethics in media

A vision of human persons and their incomparable dignity and their inviolable rights, and a vision of human community whose members are joined by the virtue of their solidarity in pursuit of the common good of all. The Church stands forth as an 'expert of humanity' whose expertise leads her necessarily to extend her religious mission to the various fields of human endeavour. She may not keep the truth about the human person and the human community to herself; she must share it freely, always aware that people can say no to the truth – and to her (#3).

The Church brings to this public conversation about 'media ethics' a long tradition of moral wisdom rooted in divine revelation and human reflection. Part of this is a substantial and growing body of social teaching, whose theological orientation is an important corrective to the "atheistic solution, which deprives man of one of his basic dimensions, namely the spiritual one, and to permissive and consumerist solutions, which under various pretexts seek to convince man that he is free from every law and from God himself. More than simply passing judgment, this tradition offers itself in service of the mass media. For example, the Church's culture of wisdom can save the media culture of information from becoming a meaningless accumulation of facts" (#5).

The Church also brings something else to the conversation about media ethics. Her special contribution to human affairs, including the world of social communications, is "precisely her vision of the dignity of the human person revealed in all its fullness in the mystery of the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. Christ the Lord fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling" (#5). Jesus is the model and standard

for the Church's ethical teaching about social communications.

The document states that mass media "call for a new ethic", for the application of established moral principles to new circumstances - a task in which everyone has a role to play, including the Church. Ethics in the media is not the business only of specialists, rather the reflection and dialogue that this document seeks to encourage and assist must be broad and inclusive (#28). The document portrays the Church as relevant to the modern world and as a teacher which encourages society's development.

The Church's approach to the means of social communications is fundamentally positive, encouraging. She does not simply stand in judgment and condemn; rather, she considers these instruments to be not only products of human genius but also great gifts of God and true signs of the times. She desires to support those who are professionally involved in communication by setting out positive principles to assist them in their work, while fostering a dialogue in which all interested parties today, that means nearly everyone can participate (#4).

The document is evidence of the Vatican's interest in promoting a Catholic vision of public participation, freedom of expression, and personal responsibility in the realm of media and social communications.

3.8 The Internet and Cyberspace

Studying communications within the Catholic Church has become a necessary, but difficult task. The media are now one of society's most important institutions. Media exercise influence in virtually all aspects of social and political life. Today media play a central role in the shaping of culture. Communications technology is the primary way by

which people interact with their world and between each other. The Church documents we have looked at show the Vatican's fascination with Western society's development in the media age. Managed by President Foley, the PCSC has devoted special attention to studying the 'global village' created in the 1970s by broadcast satellites. Foley helped the Roman Catholic Church leadership to articulate a Christian vision for social communications that encompassed the forms of broadcast radio, television, print, and cinema. He encouraged the Church to approach the issue of mass media regulation and to consult with like-minded organizations such as the United Nations. Foley successfully built on the lineage left by his predecessor, André-Marie Deskur, who in *Communio et Progressio*, helped Catholics to understand mass media as gifts of God contributing to human progress in the drama of salvation history.

During the last half of the 1990s and continuing into first years of the twenty-first century, the PCSC prepared additional texts to address the emergence of the Internet. The appearance of the Internet meant that it had to analyze the media's globalization and consolidation and to address the privatization and market liberalization of the media caused by the Internet. Not surprisingly, the Internet's tendency toward profit creation and the commodification of nearly everything came into direct conflict with the Church's vision of ideal communications. President Foley believed that the Internet was a concern not just for the United Nations and for nation-states, but also for the Roman Catholic Church. The pastoral texts *The Church and the Internet* and *Ethics in the Internet* both explore the implications of the Internet for Christian belief and practice. The Internet is the latest and in many respects the most powerful in a line of media - telegraph, telephone, radio, television - that for many people have progressively eliminated time and

space as obstacles to communication during the last century and a half.

Computer mediated communication means the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church must confront the emerging amalgam of television, telephone, and conventional publishing, created by cyberspace. The Internet has enormous consequences for all individuals, nations, and the world. The 'information superhighway' is a term coined to capture the notion of a world of information present in digital form via the Internet. This technology emerged from the military industrial complex in the social milieu of the Cold War. The early history of the Internet is characterized by state funding, military interest, and scientific research. It was created by the government of the United States during the 1970s as a means of sharing information and protecting military communications in the event of a nuclear attack. During the 1980s the Internet developed quickly, first into an academic exchange network, then as a means of mass electronic communication available in principle to anyone having access to a personal computer and a telephone line. By 1997 an estimated forty million people had access to the world wide web. Between 1993 and 1997 the number of accessible pages on the Web grew from around 130,000 to more than thirty million. Growth of the internet was further spurred by commercial participation and computer software development. Issues of competition and access rights have become central concerns over the future of the Internet. The world wide web has the capacity to someday become a truly universal and affordable source of information. Commercial involvement can stimulate innovation, access, and diversity. In terms of sociology, the Internet could lead in theory to egalitarian sharing of information and consumer goods among the global population. Sceptics and critical observers complain that more than 96 percent of Internet sites are located in the world's most affluent nations

and that this technology typically offers only trivial information and advertising to its users. Nonetheless, there is hope that the invention of the Internet represents another stage in the evolution of democracy and freedom for humanity (Marshall 1998, 324-326).

Issued on February 28, 2002 by president John Foley, *The Church and the Internet* text looks at the opportunities and challenges of this recent form of social communications: "The Church's interest in the Internet is a particular expression of her longstanding interest in the media of social communications" (#1). The Church views such media as an outcome of the historical scientific progress by which humankind advances. "The Internet is bringing about revolutionary changes in commerce, education, politics, journalism, the relationship of nation to nation and culture to culture - changes not just in how people communicate but in how they understand their lives" (#2). This document examines the Internet's implications for religion and especially for the Roman Catholic Church. Like other forms of social communication, the Church wants to encourage the right development and right use of the Internet for the sake of human development, justice and peace, for the up-building of society at the local, national, and community levels in light of the common good and the spirit of solidarity (#3). In particular, the document calls upon parishes, dioceses, religious congregations, and church-related institutions, programs, and organizations of all kinds to become involved in education and training with regards to the effective use of the Internet. The text offers words of encouragement to several groups in particular: Church leaders, pastoral personnel, educators, parents, and especially young people (#11).

At a more theoretical level, *The Church and the Internet* document takes an interest in the development of an anthropology and a theology of communication (#9).

From a sociological perspective, the Internet is relevant to many activities and programs of the Church. The document calls upon the Church to understand and use the Internet as a tool of internal communications. This requires keeping clearly in view its special character as a direct, immediate, interactive, and participatory medium (#6). So, the Vatican's concern for today's Internet relates to communication in and by the Church herself, since as a *communio*, a communion of persons and Eucharistic communities arising from and mirroring the communion of the Trinity, the essence of the Church is communication. As such, the document argues that the Church's practice of communication should be exemplary, reflecting the highest standards of truthfulness, accountability, sensitivity to human rights, and other relevant principles and norms (#6). In reflecting upon the Internet, the document recalls *Communio et Progressio's* maxim that Jesus Christ is the "perfect communicator", the norm and model of the Church's approach to communication, as well as the content that the Church is obliged to communicate (#12). All of the document recommendations arise from the Church's commitment to Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever, as the pope's message for the 35th World Communications Day (2002) recalls.

A companion document entitled *Ethics in Internet* was issued along with *The Church and the Internet* on February 28, 2002 by president John Foley and secretary Pierfranco Pastore. While *The Church and the Internet* speaks specifically about the Church's use of the Internet and the Internet's role in the life of the Church, *Ethics in Internet* argues that the Catholic Church, along with other religious bodies, should have a visible, active presence on the Internet and be a partner in the public dialogue about its development. Governments face important choices and decisions for the legal regulation

of the Internet. Taking a diplomatic approach, the document declares that "the Church does not presume to dictate these decisions and choices, but it does seek to be of help by indicating ethical and moral criteria which are relevant to the process - criteria which are to be found in both human and Christian values' (#18).

Ethics in Internet notes that the "technological configuration underlying the Internet has a considerable bearing on its ethical aspects: people have tended to use it according to the way it was designed, and to design it to suit that kind of use" (#8). A prominent feature of Internet communication is decentralization. Framing the Vatican's social concern for the Internet, the document *Ethics in Internet* argues that "the virtue of solidarity is the measure of the Internet's service of the common good" (#15). Here, the text draws upon the heritage of Catholic social teaching in order to apply the message of the social Gospel to current circumstances. To declare that media should be understood as tools in the hands of humans, as the Vatican document does, involves a normative statement. The Catholic vision of the common good is a Thomistic political commitment to subsidiarity now applied to ethical questions with reference to the Internet. That "communication should be between human beings and to the advantage of human development", is an idea previously expressed by *Communio et Progressio* (#6). *Ethics in Internet* argues that the ethical ideal for social communication originally sketched in *Inter Mirifica* remains valid for cyberspace.

A Catholic dedication to public affairs and social policy leads the PCSC to argue that state governments and international organizations can serve as the best guardian for the world's population in this era of globalization and cyberspace: "The Internet's transnational, boundary-bridging character and its role in globalization require

international cooperation in setting standards and establishing mechanisms to promote and protect the international common good" (#17). The document observes that

Many difficult Internet-related questions call for international consensus: for example, how to guarantee the privacy of law-abiding individuals and groups with keeping law enforcement and security officials from exercising surveillance over criminals and terrorists; how to protect copyright and intellectual property rights without limiting access to material in the public domain - and how to define the 'public domain' itself; how to establish and maintain broad-based Internet repositories of information freely available to all Internet users in a variety of languages; how to protect women's rights in regard to Internet access and other aspects of the new information technology" (#17).

The PCSC finds a "growing sense of international solidarity" that offers the United Nations system in particular "a unique opportunity to contribute to the globalization of solidarity by serving as a meeting place for states and civil society and as a convergence of their varied interests and needs" (#17). The document concludes by noting that "the Church cannot impose answers" to the world's problems. The Church's social ministry calls upon Catholics to be of service to the world's development by working to redeem and sanctify the Internet.

The companion documents *The Church and Internet* and *Ethics in Internet* represent a bold effort by the PCSC to address issues of Catholic faith and morals in the context of cyberspace. They question to what extent there needs to be a specific cyber-ethic or whether such a thing can even exist. With regards to traditional media ethics the

Internet does not appear to function according to patterns of instrumental and interchangeable systems of signs; and yet, it is increasingly intrinsic to all forms of social communications. For this reason, the PCSC emphasizes reference to the person of Jesus Christ "who fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling" (*Gaudium et Spes*, #22). Gerald O'Collins in his essay 'Jesus the Communicator' for *America* magazine (April 7, 1984, 260-61) explains that Christology enriches itself by confronting the New Testament with contributions from various disciplines such as philosophy, history, and most recently, communication studies.

In summarizing the history and development of the PCSC, we have sketched the 'state of the art' of Christian communications. The kind of general talk about Jesus the Communicator may fail to grip our attention. The Vatican is not trying to package and market a Jesus-technique for communications, guaranteed to work in every situation. To the contrary, the PCSC is attempting to sketch an ecclesiology for the cybernetic era. Communication is essential for Christianity, since at the heart of Christian life and theology is Jesus Christ who lived, died, and rose to communicate new life to humankind. A global revolution in communications, and developments in the field of communication studies, can help to interpret, appreciate and share more effectively the lived experience of Jesus who came to redeem humanity through suffering and apparent failure (O'Collins 1984, 260-261). In a reflexive mode, the PCSC assumes that the primary means of Christian communication is the Church itself; its ongoing study of the instruments of social communication is helping the Roman Catholic Church to re-construct its own identity for modern society. President Foley has guided the PCSC in its dialogue with like minded organizations, such as the World Federation of Advertisers, the World

Council of Churches, the United Nations, and the World Summit of the Information Society. The PCSC is helping the Church to carry out Vatican II's commitment to social ministry in the modern world and the renewal of Catholic life. No longer dedicated to the practices of censorship and secrecy, the Vatican is poised to lead the Roman Catholic Church into the cybernetic age.

3.9 PCSC's Ethical Discourse

The grammar of the Vatican's social teaching has gradually begun its own transition from focusing on the Decalogue to embracing the rhetoric of human rights and democracy. This contribution is part of the legacy of pope Leo XIII (1810-1903) who established a close connection in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) between the life of Christ and the Church's understanding of economics and labor. At what level does Christianity actually provide the foundation for human rights and freedoms? The basic notion of natural law was thought to have been expressed in the Decalogue. Church historians have always regarded the Divine Mosaic Law as central in the Western tradition of ethics, and Roman Catholic religious education did focus on the Old Testament's narrative of the Ten Commandments received by Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20: 2-17 and Deuteronomy 5: 6-21). Human rights and 'love for thy neighbor' are two aspects of the same gesture going beyond the Old Testament.

In this perspective, let us examine the 'state of the question' regarding mass media policy and the Vatican. How do we stand with regard to *Inter Mirifica* and, second, what does the future hold? Helmuth Rolfes, a Catholic theologian from Germany, offers insightful observations regarding "A Re-Appraisal of *Inter Mirifica* 40 Years Later", the subtitle of his article "Does the Church Have a Doctrine of Social Communication,"

published in the journal *Communicatio Socialis* (37/3: [2004]: 219-44). Rolfes refers not just to analytical possibilities but also to those riskier social and political possibilities that border between the Church's interests and those of competing institutions.

According to Rolfes, the relationship of the Church to the media fundamentally changed with the Second Vatican Council. From *Inter Mirifica* on, and then particularly in *Communio et Progressio*, the Catholic Church did set out the guidelines for the official teachings on social communication and for the first time the attempt was undertaken to formulate an explicit theory of social communication. The expression 'social communication' was then taken as proper technical term in the theological language of the official Church. In line with the spirit of the Council this helped theologians to gradually understand the basic significance of social communication for the maintenance and advance of society. Central orienting lines for a post-councilar theory of social communication were indicated and effective in the subsequent official Vatican documents on social communication with various accentuation. According to Rolfes, this provides material for a clear answer to the question about the magisterium's teaching on social communication.

The media landscape has changed since the Second Vatican Council, and Rolfes agrees that it will continue to change. Therefore, new challenges require new answers also from the Church, and this cannot simply be deduced from positions previously taken. According to Rolfes, two major points should be emphasized concerning the general meaning of social means of communication: the first point is that a "liberal society" requires that the official Church begins to adapt its perspective to include the use of the modern media for evangelization into the different tasks of Church preaching and to work

out corresponding pastoral planning strategies. The basis for such efforts must of course pertain to what has doctrinal validity. Rolfes finds that the Church has been reluctant concerning such demands. For instance, and quite particularly, the guidelines for the Church's training of priests in social communication and the pastoral plan of *Aetatis Novae* have barely been implemented; also the development of the Internet remains a challenge in spite of various activities already existing within the Church.

The second point lies in the demand for a developed media philosophy. This demand can be traced back already to *Inter Mirifica*, it became a theological direction in *Communio et Progressio*, and it stands now on the agenda of official Church statements on social communication. Rolfes points out that the demand is a pastoral reaction to a communication landscape in which the freedom of human communication is endangered in various ways and also scorned. The formulation of ethical principles for social communication becomes ever more urgent with regards to the development of the media in the recent past. The Church's reaction to this development has been the frequent use of 'ethics' as a keyword in three documents issued by the PCSC with the titles: *Ethics in Advertising* (1997), *Ethics in Social Communication* (2000), and *Ethics in Internet* (2002). And yet, answering media-ethical questions remains a task for the future.

Chapter Four

The Mass Media and the 'Munera' Revisited

As the end of the twentieth century drew near, there were sophisticated projections of the *Year 2000*, *Mankind 2000*, and announcements of an 'electronic revolution'. In the past, industrial exhibitions and addresses by prominent figures at world's fairs have been employed to enlist the support of public opinion on behalf of science. During the 1990s, the *Commission on the Year 2000*, *The World Future Society*, *Rand Corporation*, and even the Vatican became agencies of prophecy; the public was invited to participate in such elaborate devices as the "World Future Game" of R.B. Buckminster Fuller. The language of futurology contains an orientation of secular religiosity that surfaced when technology was invoked. This futurist mentality has much in common with the outlook of the Industrial Revolution heralded by Enlightenment philosophers and nineteenth-century moralists as a vehicle of general progress, moral as well as material. Images of the future predicted a radical discontinuity with history and the present human condition. The dawn of the new era was alternatively termed the 'post-industrial society', 'post-civilization', 'the technetronic society' or 'the global village'. The new breed of humans inhabiting this future were called 'post-modern', 'post-literate-electronic' and 'the protean personality'. This futurist ethos identified electricity and electrical power, electronics and cybernetics, computers and information with a new birth of community. It would seem that the first task of the Vatican is to demythologize the rhetoric of the electronic sublime. It could be argued that technology is merely technology, a means for communications and transportation over space, and nothing

more. However, the Vatican tended to argue that the emergence of electronics is the dispensation of grace. In some instances, the Roman Catholic Church even succumbed to the temptation to regard this technology as the arrival of the apocalypse.

In this chapter, we will examine how Vatican teaching has mixed media studies and sociology with a futurism that mystifies the power of communications technology. Over the past forty years, the Vatican has argued that the recent cybernetic revolution in human history can be regarded as a recent phase in salvation history. The Church hierarchy wants the rest of the Church to become accustomed to using the instruments of social communication, such as computer information technology and mass media. The Vatican calls on members of the Church, especially the laity, to generate a humane and Christian spirit into newspapers, magazines, books, films, radio, and television. The ecclesiastical history of the Church in the twentieth century cannot be written without reference to the findings of modern science, and in particular the discovery of electronic communication. Indeed, the Church took an open attitude toward the telegraph as it developed in the late nineteenth century and this attitude extended to other electronic communication inventions. In 1931 Pope Pius XI commissioned Marconi to build the Vatican's own short wave radio station. In 1949 Pope Pius XII appeared in two separate filmed messages telecast in the United States. In 1950 Vatican Radio began to use its own transmitters and the international telephone lines to reach about 15 to 20 nations with live broadcasts. On June 6, 1954 Pope Pius XII inaugurated the creation of Eurovision - eight European nations linked via radio and coaxial cable; this date marked the beginning of live TV telecasts to Europe of papal celebrations. By 1974 the Vatican had begun worldwide satellite telecasts of papal ceremonies. The Church's official broadcasts have

been coordinated by the Curial agency responsible for these duties and now called the PCSC. Mention should also be made of the long history behind the Catholic Press and Church journalism funded by Christian media organizations such as WACC, UNDA, OCIC, religious orders, dioceses, and parishes around the world. There is a rich heritage and legacy to Roman Catholicism's interest in social communications (Schmolke 1980, 410-436).

Theological and pastoral reflection upon social communications began during the twentieth century. Prior to this century the Vatican often engaged in polemics against journalism and the media, a leadership habit that probably dates back to the Protestant Reformation. A change began with the first really mass media encyclical, the film encyclical *Vigilanti cura* of Pius XI in 1936. As regards content, this encyclical introduced binding control institutions: based upon the model of the American Legion of Decency there arose in many countries after the Second World War Catholic offices for evaluating films whose activity was beneficial in their informative ingredient but meanwhile out-of-date in their aim of moral guidance. The pacemaker function of *Vigilanti cura* was the fact that there was now a media encyclical at all. It was followed in 1957 by *Miranda prorsus*, a second encyclical on the audio-visual media. Actual progress in the theoretical confrontation of the Church with the mass media was made by an address of Pius XII in 1950 to the Third International Congress of the Catholic Press in Rome. Pius XII recognized and described mass communication as a social function in presenting public opinion - "natural echo", "common response" - as unalterable by natural law for the functioning of society. At the Second Vatican Council, the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church renewed its interest in 1963 with electronic equipment and

the mechanisms of communication through the pastoral decree *Inter Mirifica* (Schmolke 1980, 410-436). Over the past forty years, the PCSC has studied the topic of 'mass communication in theory and organization' in greater depth.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the efforts of John XXIII (1958-63), Paul VI (1963-78), John Paul I (1978), John Paul II (1978-2005), and today of Benedict XVI (2005-...) have forced the Church to confront anew the world and its needs. Vatican II left Roman Catholics with a rich heritage and these popes have assisted the Church's transition into spiritual leadership of the modern world. At times the Church has struggled to move from its focus upon classical culture to that of modern society (Granfield 1980, 11-16). However, many in the Church feel that the full promise of Vatican II has not yet been realized. Already in 1970s Catholic theologians were looking for further change, such as David Tracy, Hans Küng, and Johann Baptist Metz who together edited the book *Toward Vatican III: The Work That Needs to Be Done* (New York: Seabury, 1978). More recently, Church historians and religious scholars began to re-examine the major theological and pastoral principles of the council in light of the fortieth anniversary of Vatican II in 2002. In particular, mention should be made of the multiple volume work edited by Giuseppe Alberigo and translated into English by Joseph A. Komonchak entitled the *History of Vatican II* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, Leuven: Peeters). As a generation passes, many aging theologians who were influential participants at Vatican II have written memoirs that re-construct the history and interpret for Catholics the significance of that landmark event.

As the Church travels along the paths marked out by the Second Vatican Council, the PCSC has helped awaken in Catholics a deeper openness to the modern world.

Theologians such as Avery Dulles have taken note of this new sector in Catholic social ministry. In his article entitled "Vatican II and Communications" written for volume three of René Latourelle's important series *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives, Twenty-five Years After (1962-1987)*, Dulles concluded that while Vatican II "had little to say directly about the media of communication", the Council Fathers did "provide a theological vision" for social communications "that we shall do well to ponder" (1989, 546). According to the vision of Vatican II, Dulles argues that "the Church should use a large variety of media and methods in its encounter with the different publics that make up its own membership and that of the surrounding world" (1989, 547). Vatican II, Dulles posits, took a position that the Church should be present to the world of modern times with its new techniques of communication and at the same time remain faithful to the message of Christ. Interest in the science of human communication in its latest theories and styles is an important resource for re-constructing Catholic ecclesiology for this technological era in history. Dulles urges the Church to have an attitude of readiness to take advantage of new modes of social communication. He argues in his more recent book *The New World of Faith* that electronic styles of communication are engendering a new mentality from which people accustomed to print culture are estranged. For the gospel message to be heard by this generation, it must be transmitted as far as possible into images and a language that can be disseminated by film, radio, television, computers, and websites (Dulles, 2000, 115).

4.1 Marshall McLuhan

Cybernetics (see #3.8) is the study of the mechanisms of communication both human and electronic, i.e. in both brains and computers. The cybernetics revolution refers

to radical changes in communication as a result of the development of complex electronic equipment. The Canadian oracle of the cybernetics revolution was Roman Catholic Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980), founder of the Centre for Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto in 1963, and its director for fourteen years. He was at the height of his influence in the sixties. In his article "The New Life Out There" for the *New York Herald Tribune*, (Nov. 21, 1965), cultural critic Tom Wolfe described McLuhan as "the most important thinker since Newton, Darwin, Freud, Einstein, and Pavlov". The first of his media books to attract widespread public attention, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, was published in 1962, and his best known book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* in 1964. During the seventies his popularity waned, and his whole scheme has been subjected to severe, even hostile, criticism. Nonetheless, Marshall McLuhan's name will be included among the century's pioneers of communication theory. History is not likely to forget his expressions like 'the global village', 'the medium is the message' (as well as 'the massage'), and 'hot and cool' communication. Instead of regarding his theories as passé, we need to come to grips with them. McLuhan's legacy for today's generation is often phrased as a religious and prophetic one, Paul Levinson said: "The handwriting for coming to terms with our digital age was on the wall of McLuhan's books" (1999, 2). In 1993, the journal *Wired* took McLuhan as its 'patron saint' of the 'brave new world' of information technology, art, and communication.

In his book *Using Media in Religious Education*, catechist Ronald A. Sarno argues that McLuhan inspired Pope John XXIII to modernize how the Catholic Church communicates with humanity (1987, 106-108). The Pontiff wanted McLuhan's help for

the Council's task of *aggiornamento* and the correlation of Christianity with the language of communications media, and McLuhan was officially appointed to the Vatican's Social Communications Committee. But in many ways this was a nominal position, and he complained that the Church of the 1960s no more understood the implications of electronic media than the sixteenth century Church had grasped the Gutenberg revolution. McLuhan could have worked on the Vatican study commission's instruction designed to implement *Inter Mirifica*, but he did not. He was upset that he had not been consulted earlier by the Vatican. A devout Christian who converted to Roman Catholicism early in his life, McLuhan wanted to help the Church with the study and understanding of the media. Though critical of texts such as *Inter Mirifica* and *Communio et Progressio*, the work of McLuhan could be regarded as a form of Christian humanism or Catholic apologetics. He thought modern man had entered a new era in religious communication and was concerned about the impact of so-called 'electric' consciousness on the Church. As a consultant and educator, McLuhan's work influenced other Churchmen such as Walter J. Ong, a pioneering literary scholar who has explored the differences between oral and literate cultures, and Pierre Babin, an expert in religious pedagogy and creator of the Center for Research and Communication in Lyon, France. Much like Jacques Ellul, a scholar from the same time period, there was a deeply Christian side to McLuhan's serious exploration of the mass media.

When asked by readers whether he was an optimist or a pessimist, McLuhan would invariably respond that he was an apocalyptic. This characteristically snappy comeback not only reminds people of McLuhan's devout Catholicism, but gives a hint as to why the man was so loathe to take explicit moral or political stances with regards to

the electronic society that he helped to bring to public consciousness. To the unending consternation of his many critics, McLuhan placed himself in the position of media seer who divined the technological 'signs of the times' at an ironic and fatalistic remove from the secular stage of social action and historical conflict. But McLuhan was not so much a technological determinist as a technological exegete: he read the mediascape through the sociological filters of his own extraordinary imagination, allowing analogies as much as analysis to lead him forward. This research method allowed McLuhan to give intellectual voice to a hunch much deeper than the socio-political discourse of what most mass media theorists can articulate: the hunch that human being and human civilization are right now undergoing a tumultuous transformation, one so total and irrevocable it can barely be seen (Davis 2004, 299).

According to the Canadian media scholars Rowland Lorimer and Mike Gasher, McLuhan thought that modernity was caused in Western civilization by the invention of printing. They examine McLuhan's contribution in their book *Mass Communication in Canada* (2001, 12-14). Much like his University of Toronto colleague, Harold Innis, McLuhan examined the 'bias of communications'. Innis, a Canadian economist, thought that the dominant means of communication shapes a society, its economic life, politics, and culture. A student of English literature, McLuhan first studied the impact of printing, capturing its influence on society by coining the term 'typographical man' referring to humanity after the invention of printing with movable type (in the West) by Johann Gutenberg in 1454. McLuhan, and many scholars since, have demonstrated how the printed book transformed humanity so that all Western societies came to accept logical, linear thought, as well as individualism, conceptuality, science, and indeed monotheism.

The printed book was a tremendously powerful means of communicating ideas and knowledge in early modern Europe (McLuhan 1962). McLuhan's breakthrough book, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, develops a mosaic approach as the only practical means of revealing casual operations in history. Printing with movable type created print culture, which dominated the Western world until electronic communication was developed and harnessed by such pioneering men as Guglielmo Marconi (radio transmission) and Canadians, Reginald Fessenden (radio transmission) and Alexander Graham Bell (telephone).

After examining print culture, McLuhan turned to electronic society in 1964, revealing its dynamics to an unbelieving world. An important chapter in McLuhan's book *Understanding Media* is titled "Media as Translators" and argues that the mass media interpret and re-interpret experience for humans. McLuhan was the first real analyst of the sociological impact of new media of communication (radio, TV, photography, film) on what we think of as modern societies, although certain British modernists, such as Wyndham Lewis, preceded him and had a parallel concern. McLuhan expressed his ideas in a distinctive, aphoristic way referring to them as probes. And while many scholars dismissed them, his ideas had a great impact in the 1960s in North America and Europe, spreading to politics, the advertising world, even the media. McLuhan's revealing observations made the media and their influence an important issue. In the same way Sigmund Freud and Arthur Schopenhauer identified the unconscious as an unknown force affecting our behaviour, or Albert Einstein posited power at the level of atoms that was awesomely powerful, so McLuhan was telling us that the media were transforming society before our very eyes though we could not observe it - until his theory revealed it.

As the quintessentially sophisticated US journalist of the period, Thomas Wolfe, observed 'What if he is right?' McLuhan argued that the electronic media created for the very first time in history the possibility of instant communication between any two points on the globe: he referred to this reality as the 'global village'. Back in the 1960s, when hardly a single computer existed and not even a single non-military communications satellite flew above us, McLuhan's writing was particularly prescient (Lorimer and Gasher 2001, 12-14). As it turned out, his forecast was vindicated because the Internet and the World Wide Web are now the primary means of communication, and so his students are just now beginning to understand the significance of instant worldwide communication and of electronic communication as an 'outer-ed nervous system'.

One of the first Roman Catholics to understand the significance of McLuhan's observations for the faith was catechist John A. Hardon, S. J., who wrote about the moral impact of social communications in the opening chapter, "Dawn of a New Age", of his insightful Church history book *Christianity in the Twentieth Century* (1971). In that book, Hardon critically observes that

So much is being said nowadays about the communications age that it may be difficult to recognize the forest from the trees. Phrases like "the fall of the tyranny of print, the medium is the message, participation mystique, putting on one's environment, hot and cold personalities", are familiar. But their frequent use and exploitation have blurred the significance of what historians of the next century may well consider the greatest single development in man's culture since the Stone Age. (1971, 28-29)

Hardon pondered the line of thinking McLuhan's work had introduced to the modern

Church. What changes are being introduced by the new media that are bound to have lasting influence on Christian thought? It is not too much to expect this influence to be at least as great as that exercised by the discovery of print and the dissemination of books which accompanied the Protestant Reformation (Hardon 1971, 28-29). Hardon found that the first immediate effect of electronic media - the telephone and telegraph, radio and television, radar and computer, photography and film and their derivatives - is to collectivize those who come under its influence. Fantastic words like "tribalization" and "mass participation", Hardon reasoned, vaguely suggest something of what occurs: millions of persons simultaneously find themselves equally involved in seeing, hearing, and feeling the influence of a single man or woman with whom they establish instant rapport. This reality is one side of the involvement. Instinctively they also sense that unseen multitudes of others are equally captivated by the same experience- which now takes on cosmic proportions (Hardon 1971, 29).

McLuhan argued that what makes this collectivized experience revolutionary is that it comes on the heels of half a millenium of isolating literacy. Western man has been suddenly plunged into an intense, depth participation with others.

From a coldly rational culture that had come to worship books, people are now exposed to people, with all the terrifying possibilities of such exposure. Visual contact with lifeless print is now extended to warm intimacy with living persons, where the whole man, body and spirit, thought and emotion, becomes profoundly absorbed - and the absorption is active, not merely passive; and communitarian to a degree that staggers the imagination" (Hardon 1971, 29).

Two hundred million people joined with Pope Paul VI when he addressed the United Nations in 1964; five hundred million witnessed the spectacle of the first astronaut setting foot on the moon in 1969 (Hardon 1971, 29). Today, the live feed of Internet and television make all new instantaneous and disseminated globally.

The news media have increased the impact of sheer impressions by geometric proportion. When I read a page, I get only so much data per unit of time. When I watch the television screen, I am bombarded with countless data all at once. To call this multi-sensorial is to say very little; myriad-sensorial would be nearer the truth. Never before has so much power been so easily available for divinizing or demonizing the human spirit, depending on the virtue or treachery of the one who directs the media. He determines their ideology and their influence is inevitable, provided they are shrewdly adapted to differences of place, person, and time, and exploited with maximum awareness of human needs and wants. This influence includes the printed word. The modern press was at first unwilling but is now becoming an enthusiastic partner of the electronic media (Hardon, 1971, 29-30). Those who predicted, with Oswald Spengler, "the death knell of Western literate man," have been surprised. Electronics has not suppressed literacy nor killed human desire to read. Instead it joined forces with communication and everything from radio transmitters to film studios is constantly altered to fit the changing needs of modern society. Always in focus is the impact which the media can make on the people for whom they are intended, not to mention those unintended bystanders and eavesdroppers. Indeed, the new concept of communication created by the science of electronics is revolutionary (Hardon 1971, 30-31). Critical words like 'exploitation' and 'manipulation' are really out of place to describe what those

who control the media are doing. There is always some rational purpose behind whatever message they present or portray. It may be as harmless as selling an article of clothing or advertising a new car. Or it may be the broadcast of a battle scene or the mass demonstration of thousands of students. But given the magnitude of the audience and the variety of people who witness the advertisement or the spectacle, an impact is made on a large segment of society for which those who direct the media are responsible. Hardon argues that their responsibility is only part of the problem and is not our direct concern. What is relevant for our purposes is that agencies so powerful in shaping the minds and wills of humanity are exercising their influence, to say the least, with small regard for the principles of Christianity (Hardon 1971, 32-34). However, it is not just.

McLuhan's theory of communications offers nothing less than an explanation of human culture, past, present, and future. *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and *Understanding Media* reflect the synthesis of literature and science. Both books show off McLuhan's appallingly encyclopaedic erudition, his exasperating method and the scatter-shot sweep of his theory of culture and communications. The whole is so chaotic that even friendly critics despair. The basic premise is that there have been three Ages of Man - the Pre-literate or Tribal, the Gutenberg or Individual, and the present Electric or Re-tribalized. Each age, says McLuhan, is shaped by the form of the information available. By information, McLuhan means not only the standard media such as print and TV, but also clothes, clocks, money, and any artefact that conveys meaning. Stearn's book *McLuhan: Hot and Cool*, McLuhan confesses that "in the sense that these media are extensions of ourselves - of man - then my interest in them is utterly humanistic" (1967, 276). His argument is that these information modes or media alter our sensory life - that is, what we

see, hear, feel, taste, smell, and therefore know. For example, the development of such 'media' as tools and language among the low-brow hominids led to the explosive development of the brain and to human differentiation from other species - not the other way around. McLuhan sees each medium as a similar extension and modifier of human being: just as the caveman's axe is an extension of the hand, so the book is an extension of the eye, and electric circuitry - the telegraph, telephone, and television - is an extension of the central nervous system. Each such extension, McLuhan maintains, changes the balance among the five senses - making one sense dominant and altering the way one feels, thinks, and acts toward information. As a result, a new environment is created, spatial relations are re-conceptualized. It is a triple play: new *media* to new *sensory balance* to new *environment*. This, he says, is why the medium is the message, why the effect is important, why the fact that the TV image is composed of phosphor dots is more important than whether the dots are carrying our favourite television show (Crosby and Bond 1968, 169-170).

The sociologist Scott Lash argues among other things in his book *Critique of Information* that McLuhan's reading of communications history in the West focuses upon how the mass media bring about societal fragmentation and the revival of oral culture in the second half of the twentieth century (2002, 176-190). McLuhan's imagery for that oral culture is of priests from early Christianity who became powerful as the Roman Empire collapsed. He refers to 'hubris', the Greek idea in which creativity led to blindness: in *Understanding Media* (1964) he argues that the Faustian expression and creativity of the Gutenberg age of Phoenician-Roman-Euclidean linearity led to its own blindness and downfall. He preferred "priestly power" based in pre-alphabetic writing in

stone and brick, in the hieroglyph and stained-glass window, over and against the combination of alphabetic writing and papyrus depicted by “military power”. McLuhan thought that priestly power was the stuff of the illuminated manuscript, which radiates impulses. Mechanized writing replaces the priestly scriptor of the monastic community. There was truly something interactive, dialogic among the priests; participation in electronic communities is dialogic too in what McLuhan calls not “active”, but “reactive media”. The medieval classroom was a “scriptorium with a commentary”. Manuscript writers left “interlines” for interpretation and commentary in textbooks. These were “scholastic regimes of oral disputation” (*Understanding Media*, 174).

W. Terrence Gordon’s biography, *Escape into Understanding*, offers an insightful interpretation of McLuhan’s religious background. Gordon notes that McLuhan repeatedly tried to stimulate dialogue within the Vatican’s PCSC on the effect of television on the liturgy but to no avail (1997, 282). With his former student Walter Ong, McLuhan shared his concern that the clergy were as ignorant as their parishioners about the impact of technology. He identified the problem as the Gutenberg legacy of visual space, the source of literate mankind’s demand for connectedness as a condition for the world making sense. That demanded fostered neglect of the dynamic and creative disconnections McLuhan called resonant intervals. The problem reached into the bureaucracies of the Catholic Church that were marching into the late twentieth-century with no understanding of the rationale of electronic technology. “There was no one at the Council of Trent who understood the psychic and social effects of Gutenberg,” McLuhan wrote to Ong, adding that “the Church is no better off now, humanly speaking” (Gordon 1997, 222). The urgency of the question for McLuhan made him impatient and irritated

that the Church could provide nothing more than ineffectual cosmetic changes to liturgy: "Cat-gut and cat-calls cum Gregorian. The mass gets longer, limper, lumpier". This complaint did keep him from attending mass daily, reading Scripture every morning, and praying confidently (Gordon 1997, 223).

For McLuhan, the electronic revolution was terminating the Church's marriage to the West. McLuhan wrote to Lawrence K. Shook, summoning all his key precepts to describe the conundrum of the Church in the electronic age, citing Scripture again in linking Christianity to media analysis:

There has been a tremendous 'rip-off' of the human flesh and bones, as it were, a fantastic 'hi-jack' job performed by electric engineering...Although the Church began, and continues, with a communication theory or doctrine, Western philosophy has had none since the Greeks. That is, in Western philosophy I have been able to find no doctrine of the changes which man inflicts upon his entire psyche by his own artefacts. The Old Testament is full of awareness of these changes, which St. Paul, Romans I, calls 'vain imaginings' etc. Christianity is itself a theory of communication, an announcement of change in the structure of the human being, body and soul, since Christ. (Gordon 1997, 223)

With this last observation, McLuhan emphasizes not so much the tension between the Church and electronic hegemony as a second one intersecting it - the tension between the Church as an institution and the dynamics at the core of Christianity: "There is one vast paradox related to the fact of the Christian involvement in the Graeco-Roman intellectual matrix because this matrix resists all possibility of change, while the Christian thing is

concerned with change at every level and in every facet" (Gordon 1997, 224).

McLuhan did not believe that he had made any progress either in understanding the matter himself or communicating his thoughts to others, in spite of two years of energetic discussion and much correspondence. He viewed electronic man's discarnate state as sinister and predicted it would soon create chaos in the ranks of theologians. But he continued to ask his questions. Considering the Church and literacy, he wrote:

Let me make a little note here about the Church and literacy. Alphabetic man is the only one who ever tried to transform other cultures into his form. Oral societies never try to convert anybody. The early Church began with a liaison with the Graeco-Roman and the alphabetic. Ever since, the Church has made inseparable the propagation of the faith and of Graeco-Roman culture, thus ensuring that only a tiny segment of mankind would ever be Christian. Would it appear to you, now that literacy is technologically expendable, that the Church can also dispense with Graeco-Roman forms of literacy and hierarch? I have been able to find no ecclesiastic or theologian for whom this is a meaningful question. (Gordon 1997, 224)

McLuhan regarded Vatican II as a response to the pressure exerted by television on the general population. The nineteenth century bureaucrats who assembled at the Second Vatican Council in 1962 were naturally as unaware of the causes of their problems and reforms as the representatives of the Church at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century. There was not a single individual at the Council of Trent who understood the effects of print on the spiritual schism and the psychic distress of the

religious and political life of that time. At the Second Vatican Council, the participants paid no attention to the causes of their problems in their new policies and prescriptions (McLuhan and Szklarek 1999, 58). TV had made the twentieth century's inhabitants into inner-seekers and had obsolesced hardware institutions and centralized authority. It was transforming politics and culture and changing the face of religion (McLuhan and Szklarek 1999, 175). It was reviving charismatic experience because when time and space have been eliminated by electric communication, the Church becomes one as never before (McLuhan and Szklarek 1999, 177). So far as the traditions of the Church are concerned, the present situation puts all knowledge and authority on an oral and personal basis. The habit of written communiqués and doctoral promulgation, which is inevitable under slower conditions of inter-communication, becomes an embarrassing impediment. In McLuhan's analysis, the electric situation ends all distance and ends the bureaucratic means of centralism. The Magisterium is now experienced simultaneously in the entire visible Church. A complete decentralism occurs which calls for new manifestations of teaching authority such as the Church has never before expressed or encountered (McLuhan and Szklarek 1999, 134).

From a cybernetic perspective, the second law of thermo-dynamics says that energy and disorder increase as the system undergoes spontaneous change. McLuhan was aware of the entropy that mass media bring into the Church. He noted that electrical communications brought disturbance and environmental noise into the Church. He thought that the PCSC needed to devote more criticism to the psychic effects of TV. As long as people persist in ignoring the subliminal and hidden effects of media on psyche and society, they will attribute these things to the 'will of God'. During the year of 1973,

McLuhan engaged in a written correspondence with Pontifical study commission member Fr. John W. Mole. Together, Mole and McLuhan discussed their mutual and respective criticisms of the Vatican's two pastoral documents about communications, *Inter Mirifica* and *Communio et Progressio*. McLuhan argued that the Commission needed to give more attention to the media's reshaping of consciousness for those inside and outside the Church. McLuhan grasped the role of negative entropy in the Church caused by electric consciousness (McLuhan and Szklarek 1999, 136-140). All new media, he argued, have an extraordinary ability to rewire the people who are using them and the cultures in which they circulate.

McLuhan's brilliant insights on theology, the Church, and the 'global village' have begun to be retrieved for the current generation. When McLuhan died in 1980, his famed explorations of media were often perceived as irrelevant and naïve. However, the arrival of the computer driven information revolution, along with its strange geographies of cyberspace, virtual reality, the Internet and the Web, has for some people reinvigorated the writings of McLuhan. The Vatican, and in particular the members of the PCSC, would be wise to consult McLuhan's ideas. The Internet offers the possibility of extending consciousness without verbalization, of getting past the fragmentation and the numbing effect that makes the Tower of Babel the counterpart to Pentecost, of providing a way to universal unity understanding (Gordon 1997, 305). McLuhan's thoughts on language are linked to his reflections on spiritual questions as early as his undergraduate days at the University of Manitoba. His amazing meditations on Pentecost at that time, written more than thirty years before the printing of *Understanding Media*, and are closely tied to one of the least quoted passages in this book, the closing chapter eight on

“The Spoken Word”. It is a speculation on the potential of electronic technology for recreating the Pentecostal experience in the global village. Tongues of fire empowering believers on the day of Pentecost is not simply part of the imaginary that McLuhan carried with him both before and after his conversion to Roman Catholicism. Fire is the ancient symbol of becoming, of the process of transformation, of transcendence, and so of the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of a medium, combined at Pentecost in language (Gordon 1997, 304).

4.2 Pope John Paul II

In an interview taken from *McLuhan: Hot and Cool* in 1968, McLuhan claimed that “the Christian concept of the mystical body - all men as members of the body of Christ - this becomes technologically a fact under electronic conditions” (Horrocks 2001, 3). Such observations give credence to the forty year ministry of the PCSC. They also seem to have motivated pope John Paul II. During his long pontificate, John Paul II worked to cultivate a Church ‘in touch’ with insights from modern communications, image, and media. He supported the work of the PCSC and had been a good friend of its first president, bishop André-Marie Deskur. He also appointed the current president John Foley who has played an instrumental role in the growth of PCSC.

Pope John Paul II came along in 1978 to promote the liberal reforms of the Catholic Church begun by pope John XXIII at Vatican II. He interpreted the council as a shift, not a change, in the catechesis and presentation of traditional Catholic teaching on faith and morals. He was familiar with the effects of technology and structural decentralization on society and Church in post-war Europe. Much like McLuhan, he probed the dramatic changes which took place in the sphere of information and

communication during the late twentieth century. Both viewed the Church as a mass medium able to gather enormous flocks and thus create a mass audience for face-to-face communications. He used global transportation and electronic media to reach the worldwide population inside and outside the Church. Also, many commentators think that his strategy of diplomacy and decentralized communications helped bring about the break-up and collapse of the former Soviet Union. One of the biggest gainers from the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe has been the Catholic Church, long suppressed but never destroyed by the communist regimes.

McLuhan noted that Vatican II introduced Protestant elements into the Church. For him, the pope is obsolete as a bureaucratic figure, but he also argued that the pope as a role-player is more important than ever because of his authority (McLuhan and Szklarek 1999, 208-209). John Paul II rhetorically re-constructed the global vision of the Catholic Church at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2005) once described Pope John Paul's marketed, staged journeys throughout the world as a hegemonic form of testimony and confession. The pope's televisual rhetoric was dedicated to the project of 'globalatinization' using capitalistic-mediatic instruments such as airplane jets, TV, and digital culture (Vattimo, 1998, 24-25). This insight by Derrida contains a bit of truth and need not indicate a negative thing about Catholic spirituality. Contrary to the widespread negativity and cynicism of many futuristic doomsayers, the Church strives to be emancipated from the 'future shock' mindset. The motto of John Paul II "Be Not Afraid!" was addressed to all people inside and outside the Church, and was an exhortation to overcome fear and cynicism in the present world situation. He pastorally taught about the religious significance of information technology.

For him, the new inventions of electronic communications were sacramental and pointed to the redemption and sanctification of humanity.

John Paul II was fascinated by the fusion of media technology, by the fact that new mass media are closely interlinked together, feeding data, images, and symbols back and forth to one another. This dense interpenetration transforms the individual media into a system. Combined with globalization, media fusion reduces the clout of any single medium, channel, publication, or technology relative to the others. But it endows the media system as a whole with an enormous power that permeates the planet. What is at work, therefore, is not 'videocracy' but 'media fusion' to rebut Jacques Derrida. John Paul II articulated the Church's strategy for the media age when forms of information technology de-massify social communications. He did not regard this new phenomenon as threatening to bring about a crisis of culture and democracy. Rather, he praised the access to leisure culture such technology promised. In theory, new forms of information technology could bring about an end to class society and class struggle, instigating a digital democracy and a spiritual blessing for humanity.

On February 22, 2005 John Paul II issued the apostolic letter *The Rapid Development* and addressed to those responsible for communications in society and in the Church. He asserts that "the rapid development of technology in the area of the media is surely one of the signs of progress in today's society" (#1) and he celebrates the fruitful progress in the wake of *Inter Mirifica* some forty years before. Credit and praise are given to the members of the PCSC. The Church, he recalls, is not only called upon to use the mass media to spread the Gospel, but today more than ever, to integrate the message of salvation into the 'new culture' that these powerful means of communication create

and amplify; the use of techniques and the technologies of contemporary communications are an integral part of its mission in the third millennium (#2). The present moment is “an age of global communication in which countless moments of human existence are either spent with, or at least confronted by, the different processes of the mass media” (#2). He wants the Church to become aware of the role that the media play in “the formation of personality and conscience, the interpretation and structuring of affective relationships, the coming together of the educative and formative phases, the elaboration and diffusion of cultural phenomenon, and the development of social, political, and economic life” (#3). In doing so, John Paul II gives public recognition to the social science of communications and its contribution to human development.

John Paul II wanted the topic of communications to receive the same serious reflection by the Church as is devoted to other major ecumenical issues. This apostolic letter reflects upon the meaning of social communications and the importance of a missionary commitment: “The world of mass media also has need of Christ’s redemption. To analyze with the eyes of faith the processes and value of human communications, the deeper appreciation of Sacred Scripture can undoubtedly help as a ‘great code’ of communication of a message which is not ephemeral, but fundamental for its saving value” (#1). Salvation history recounts and documents the episodes of communication of God with humankind, a communication which uses all forms and ways of communicating. As the ‘perfect communicator’, Jesus Christ is the means by which communication between God and humanity reached its perfection. In Jesus, John Paul finds the perfect example of how to communicate with the Father and with humanity, whether in moments of silence and recollection, or in preaching in every place and in

every way (#5). Thanks to humanity's redemption in Jesus Christ, the communicative capacity of believers is healed and renewed. "The media permit the manifestation of the universal character of the People of God, favouring a more intense and immediate exchange among local Churches, and nourishing mutual awareness and cooperation" (#6). The media have become an integral aspect of the Church's well-being, and the apostolic letter "gives thanks to God for the presence of the powerful media which, if used by believers with the genius of faith and in docility to the light of the Holy Spirit, can facilitate the communication of the Gospel and render the bonds of communion among ecclesial communities more effective" (#6).

It is important to acknowledge earlier research by the Catholic communication scholar Margaret B. Melady, who authored *The Rhetoric of John Paul II: The Pastoral Visit as a New Vocabulary of the Sacred* (1999). Melady noted that the Polish pope had a perceptive sense of the concerns of the faithful and that he knew how to dramatically and creatively identify with his audience and characterize their interests. In assessing John Paul II's vision, the Church's pastoral teaching about Christ and the media should be supplemented by the work of McLuhan. Like the media guru from Toronto, John Paul II recognizes that the mass media have caused such a psychological change in social attitudes that there is now a need for pastoral renewal to make the Roman Catholic Church effective in today's communications environment. Our's is an era of transition from a civilized to an advanced technological society. "New media technologies create further opportunities for communication understood as service to the pastoral government and organization of different tasks of the Christian community" (#7). The Church willingly employs these media to furnish information about itself and to expand the

boundaries of evangelization and catechesis. John Paul II reminds communicators that “while the content being communicated must obviously be adapted to the needs of different groups, the goal must always be to make people aware of the ethical and moral dimension of the information (#9). He addresses the spirit of the great transition in a pastoral manner hoping to inoculate the Church from a ‘future shock’ mentality typical of counter-cultural movements. He encourages the Church to learn from the scientific advances of the modern world, and to consider science as the basis for promoting the great transition in social communications. Like McLuhan, John Paul believed that an electronic culture of global citizenship would face some tremendous growing pains; that is how we must see the current crisis if we are not to succumb to it; as very narrow straits with a wider world beyond (Davis 2004, 404). In a bit of science fiction that seems even more prophetic now than when McLuhan first wrote it, with the coming of planetary electronic culture, “we shall at once move into a phase of panic terrors...Terror is the normal state of any oral society, for in it everything affects everything all the time (Davis 2004, 404). Christians are inextricably involved with the rest of humanity in the process of world history, which at the present time is bringing the whole human family into a common stream, fraught with new possibilities of disorientation and social conflict or, alternatively, of a universal human solidarity. The apostolic letter calls upon Christians to further involve themselves with this process, casting their influence on the side of justice, peace, and unity. The mass media themselves constitute the crossroads of great social questions, and “the great challenge of our time for believers and for all people of good will is that of maintaining truthful and free communication which will help consolidate integral progress in the world. Everyone should know how to foster an attentive

discernment and constant vigilance, developing a healthy critical capacity regarding the persuasive force of the communications media” (#13). Human weakness and social troubles make communication a challenge today. Although great obstacles are potential blocks to communication, there is no reason for reducing it to propaganda. John Paul II directly appeals to the example of Saint Francis of Sales, the patron saint of journalists, for help.

4.3 The ‘Munera’ and Social Communication

This apostolic letter *The Rapid Development* refers to the Church’s teaching ministry (*munus docendi*) and its role in social communications. John Paul refers to the

Vast work of formation needed to assure that mass media be known and used intelligently and appropriately. The new vocabulary they introduce into society modifies both learning processes and the quality of human relations, so that, without proper formation, these media run the risk of manipulating and heavily conditioning, rather than serving people. This is especially true for young people, who show a natural propensity towards technological innovations, and as such are in even greater need of education in the responsible and critical use of the media. (#11)

John Paul II commends the subject of social communications to the official teaching ministry called in contemporary usage the “Magisterium”. As the official teachers of the Church, the bishops together with their head, the bishop of Rome, have power to establish Catholic doctrine. Their teaching is not simply their own; it bears the authority of Christ and is the doctrine of the Church, it keeps the flock of Christ in the path of truth and in a vibrant community of faith and love.

John Paul II's apostolic letter also refers to authority in the Church, (*munus regendi*) in great detail. The institutional structures of this government correspond to some extent to the ruling office of Jesus Christ. Jesus saw the necessity of an authority that would hold his followers together in a single fellowship, faithful to the mission to which he had assigned them. From the very day of Pentecost the Church was governed by the apostles and persons whom they brought into association with themselves. The apostolic letter's treatment with the Church's government pertains mainly to the theme of co-responsibility. This is a general principle John Paul urges to be followed inside and outside the Church. The term was coined by Cardinal Suenens at Vatican II and is a consequence of the Council's decision to make the 'People of God' the central concept of the Church. Co-responsibility means that all believers should actively participate and have power in Church order and government. John Paul II places significant emphasis on the fundamental options of dialogue and participation: "I would like to recall our attention to the subject of media access, and of co-responsible participation in their administration. If the communication media are a good destined for all humanity, then ever-new means must be found - including recourse to opportune legislative measures - to make possible a true participation in their management by all. The culture of responsibility must be nurtured" (#11). John Paul II wants the Church to help build a culture of participation through involvement, shared information, and an egalitarian ownership of the media of communications. Co-responsibility means that a digital democracy is possible in society today, and the mass media possesses "great possibilities for promoting dialogue, becoming vehicles for reciprocal knowledge, of solidarity and peace" (#11).

The reflection upon the role of public opinion in the Church and of the Church in public opinion arouses great interest for the Pope. John Paul II argues that “this communication must tend towards a constructive dialogue, so as to promote a correctly informed and discerning public opinion within the Christian community” (#12). Hence, the importance of fostering confidentiality, prudence, and justice in all social communications, since both creativity and constraint are necessary for the Church to maintain its own governance in the modern world.

John Paul II enthusiastically reminds that the Second Vatican Council proposed that co-responsibility and collegiality become the basis of Church government. The Church is the whole People of God and not just the hierarchy. “Everything which has been said so far concerning the People of God applies equally to the laity, religious, and clergy” (*Lumen Gentium*, #30). In the apostolic letter, John Paul II gives significant attention to the Church’s priestly office (*munus sanctificandi*). The Catholic ministry of sanctification is as expressed in the liturgy. The inner life of the Church is dedicated to the worship and praise of God. This worship carries forth into society where believers act to transform and sanctify daily life. From the perspective of pastoral sociology, the Church is interested in the human ecology of communications and the conditions of existence created by mass media.

During the early days of media research, the primary concern among sociologists was ‘effects’ or how communication determined individual behaviour. This research considered the uses of mass communication, offering insight into such topical questions as: Does mass communication exert dangerous influences? Who controls its effects on children? What is the role of television in social disorder? On the contemporary political

scene, the agenda of 'effects research' often plays the role that religion held during the Victorian era, that of scolding or judging mass media for being immoral and unethical. Much of this sociological study is paternalistic and has tended to condemn popular culture. But it is too simplistic to argue that the mass media have created a vast wasteland in society. Moreover, the task of the Church is not to condemn the media, but, rather, to redeem and sanctify its place in society. A pastoral approach to communication means that Church is concerned with understanding the moral behaviour of human beings and not just the programming and wiring of robots and machines. And it is difficult to legislate morality by censorship. Interest groups, government regulatory bodies, and sociologists all tend to advocate a form of censorship. While there is great value in scientifically studying the empirical effects of media on humans, it is also important to consider Catholic spirituality as a solution for human ecology. Today, the Church's priestly office is overlooked by many because of the de-sacralizing tendencies of the Enlightenment which found repugnant the very notion that God would intervene in present time or use physical objects and actions to accomplish the divine will.

According to Richard McBrien, the principle of sacra-mentality is central to Roman Catholic identity (1994, 1187-1201). The institutional-sociological approach to ecclesiology would seem to deny salvation to anyone who is not a member of the Church. In order to bring together the external and internal aspects of human experience into some intelligible synthesis, Catholic theologians have appealed to the concept of the Church as sacrament. Henri de Lubac in his book on Catholicism made a major contribution to this theory. The divine and the human in the Church, he argued, can never be dissociated. "If Christ is the sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ; she

represents him, in the full and ancient meaning of the term, she really makes him present. The Church not only carries on his work, but she is his very continuation, in a sense far more real than that in which it can be said that any human institution is its founder's continuation" (1950, 29). De Lubac saw that "all the sacraments are essentially sacraments of the Church"; they are intrinsically social and derive their efficacy from the Church; they in turn build up the Church and make it the sacrament that it is (Dulles 2000, 63-64). It was Otto Semmelroth who coined the term '*ursakrament*' in the 1950s to characterize the Church in his book *Die Kirche als Ursakrament* (Frankfurt am Main: Josef Knecht, 1953). Catechist Michael Warren has argued that this understanding of sacrament is very important in determining how Catholics approach popular culture, in his book *Seeing Through the Media: A Religious View of Communications and Cultural Analysis* (1997).

Chapter Five

Critical Analysis of the Vatican's Documents on Communication

In the wake of Vatican II, concerned Catholics have been led to criticize the council's reforms and to even ponder to what extent the Church leadership's fascination with communications technology and cyber-speech has created institutional chaos and 'double-speak'. This chapter is not arguing that religion is the 'opium of the people'; it rather shows the socially constructed properties of the Vatican's discourse in the years after 1965 when the Council's teachings began to be implemented.

The history of the Roman Catholic Church in the modern age is - among other things - the story of believers facing the revolutionary changes in daily life caused by the development of industrial society, the discovery of electricity, the inventions of mass media, and information technology. This revolution continues and shows no signs of slowing down. Reference to secular events and happenings of the twentieth century provides discursive context for studying Church history, and the Vatican has struggled to come to grips with an emerging culture facilitated in large part by electric communication. Christianity entered a new era in its history, which in time will bring about a new understanding of Christianity. During the twentieth century, there was a knowledge explosion in the sciences, which brought more information and deeper insight into the human condition. It also has challenged traditional forms of religious authority and sacred belief.

Self-reference, although a topic studied by some philosophers and known to a number of other disciplines, has received comparatively little attention until recently. In

volume twenty-one of the *Martinus Nijhoff Philosophy Library* entitled, *Self-Reference: Reflections on Reflexivity*, the editors Steven J. Bartlett and Peter Suber provide the first general bibliography of works on self-reference, comprising more than 1,200 entries (1987). 'Reflexivity' is the generic name for all kinds and species of circularity: it includes the self-reference of signs, the self-application of principles and predicates, the self-justification and self-refutation of propositions and inferences, the self-fulfillment and self-falsification of predications, the self-creation and self-destruction of logical and legal entities, the self-augmentation and self-limitation of powers, circular reasoning, circular causation, cyclic and spiral recurrence, feedback systems, mutuality, reciprocity, and organic form. Self-reference "includes the fallacious, the vicious, the trivial, and the question begging, but also the sound, the benign, the useful, and the inescapable. It ranges from the prosaic to the numinous, from the paradoxical to the self-evident, from science to religion. It is reality and appearance, native to the processes of the world and to our knowledge and discourse about them" (Bartlett and Suber 1987, 259). Because this diversity is unified by a common structure, that structure deserves a more general name than "self-reference", which has frequently served in the past. Usage in logic and mathematics has already favoured "reflexivity" as the general term, and usage in philosophy and the sciences is moving in that direction.

So far, we have argued that the Church itself was the main subject matter of the Second Vatican Council (see introduction). This chapter focuses on reflexivity or that property of language by which it can be used to talk about language itself. In looking at this design feature of the Church's teaching on social communication, the meta-linguistic properties inform us about the context of the corpus of documents prepared by the PCSC,

particularly about four aspects of the Vatican's pastoral discourse: (1) its modes of argumentation, (2) its authority claims, (3) its ideology of bureaucracy, and (4) its colonization by the marketing strategies of modern capitalist society. This reflexive analysis will help us to critically understand the post-Vatican II Catholicism that emphasizes the 'love of neighbour' and a responsibility for the Church to bring salvation and humanization to the modern world in the realm of social communications and mass media. Self-consciousness, or "reflexivity" as we now call it, in the application of theory defines the current state of research in religious studies and fundamental theology. A reflexive ecclesiology will critically take into account its own position and inter-textual construction within wider historical, cultural, and social discursive relations.

The pluridisciplinary field of investigation offered by the linguistic articulation of religious belief and thought - a notion condensed by Belgian language scholar Jean-Pierre van Noppen into the neologism "theo-linguistics" - raises a number of issues for religious studies that are, at least, far from being exhausted. What is going on when language is used in a religious context? Contemporary views of discourse applied to religious language make it possible to sketch a general orientation of the Vatican's communication policies, particularly critical discourse analysis (CDA) with its methodology for deconstructing the manifestations of power. In *Religious Language and Critical Discourse Analysis: Ideology and Identity in Christian Discourse Today* (2000), the British literary scholar Noel Heather observes: "As in the Book of Acts, the development of the church, and consequently of the discourse within which it is associated, is messy" (279). The Vatican's discourse contains some elements which have been misunderstood and misapplied; but the reforms of Vatican II as a whole cannot be indicted with deliberate manipulation of the laity. The rhetoric of

religious renewal and reform has intrinsic limitations, even contradictions, and this can be self-deceptive for the Church leadership.

5.1 Religious Authority

The first aspect of reflexivity that concerns us here is the religious authority claims of the Vatican pastoral documents issued by the PCSC, the Curia office that is responsible for promoting a Christian presence in the media, including the press, cinema, radio, and television, as well as for managing the Catholic media. Pope John Paul II devoted much of his long papacy to restoring the authority claims of the Magisterium. The Roman Catholic Church in the decades since the Second Vatican Council's end (1965) has often been characterized as besieged by theological conflict in its ranks. The issue is not exactly one of Curia versus the world, or Latin bishops versus Northern bishops, or even of traditionalists versus innovators, although cultural, social, and temperamental factors have played their part in theological differences. The fundamental struggle during the Second Vatican Council and in the years after has been between non-historical orthodoxy and other theologies. This could also be characterized as a conflict between essentialists and existentialists, or between a notional and a pastoral kind of theology. Non-historical theology insists upon the view that 'truth is unchanging' and does not seem to notice that language changes, that intellectual viewpoints and methods do change, that new facts (even about ancient happenings) are discovered, that the human manner of understanding even the same sentences change. At Vatican II, the Church began to seriously confront that critical problem raised in modern philosophy by Hume, Kant and others. Roman Catholic authority could no longer hide in the world of principles, ideals, theories, platitudes, and perfections of what Michael Novak once labelled "non-historical orthodoxy" (1964,

52-70). The tendency to quote Vatican documents like biblical fundamentalists is put in check by attempts to dissociate their meaning from sheer uniformity.

In the "General Introduction" to *The Liturgy Documents* (1991), John M. Huels presents some hermeneutical guidelines for reading Vatican documents. To understand the authority claims of official ecclesial documents such as those issued by the Vatican, requires a critical study of their composition. Knowing something about the canonical weight of these documents and the literary forms of their content is useful to those who seek to understand and apply them. Some documents are not legally binding, but provide helpful guidelines. Even in properly legal or juridical church documents, Huels finds that individual laws have different literary forms and varying degrees of perceptive force. Some laws of the Church are quite forceful commands that admit little or no exception. Others are more susceptible to adaptation because of various needs and circumstances. All Church laws and moral teachings must be seen in light of the theology on which they are based.

Canon law, of which pastoral teaching is a part, frequently is viewed negatively by pastoral ministers, despite the fact that the law is intended to reflect the reforms of Vatican II and the post-conciliar era. To a great extent, this reputation is not deserved. The law itself is seldom the problem; rather, it is the rigid way the law is applied. The mind-set of some people remains that of the prevailing legalism of pre-Vatican II days. They trivialize the importance of the law by a mindless literalism that elates all documents and laws, no matter what their degree of authority, to the same level as doctrines of faith. In contrast, those who are able to identify the weight of canonical documents and the perceptive force of the juridical norms in them are better

equipped to apply the law in a pastoral spirit proper to good canonical interpretation. (Huels 1991, xiv)

The *triplex munus* is a traditional way for explaining the work of Jesus and his Church in terms of his three offices as prophet, king, and priest (see #1.1 & 4.3). The seed for the *triplex munus* or threefold office of Christ and his Church was growing slowly for a millennium and a half until harvested during the period of the Reformation. It sprouted occasionally in the work of John Chrysostom, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas and even appeared in the Catechism of the Council of Trent (Peters 2000, 184-185). Vatican documents on social communications articulate a pastoral ministry that relies upon the Church offices for teaching and governing. The Latin text speaks of *munera* for “functions” because Jesus gave the successors to his apostles the ability to teach and govern with divine authority in the Catholic Church. A fundamental self-understanding for the Church arises from her teaching ministry (*munus docendi*) and pastoral leadership (*munus regendi*), as well as her ministry of sanctification (*munus sanctificandi*). These functions apply to the internal life of the Church, as well as to the mission of the Church to those outside. The *triplex munus* formulae was fleshed out in *Lumen Gentium* to explain Catholic ecclesiology by the Fathers at Vatican II. Though originally cultivated for Protestant orthodoxy by John Calvin, the formulae represents an ecumenical understanding of Christian ministry fully endorsed by the Vatican.

In this section, the emphasis is on Jesus Christ’s pastoral office and the Church’s government (*munus regendi*). In *Theology and Church*, Kasper critically examines the religious basis for the pastoral office of Jesus Christ (1992, 89-91). He notes that salvation and redemption do not have to do with the private and personal sphere alone; they also

have a social and political dimension, even though they are not in themselves political entities. He explains that the shepherd and king symbols used in the Old and New Testaments pick up one of humanity's primal hopes. For life and salvation are possible only in an order of liberty, peace, and justice. 'Kingdom', 'city' and 'country' have never been merely political concepts; they are religious symbols too, and have been so from time immemorial. The king or ruler therefore counts as God's representative - even as God's son. He represents the sacral cosmic and political order within which alone salvation is possible. This is the Church's ideal figure, the benevolent king who, god-like, rules over his people, as a shepherd pastures his flock (Kasper 1992, 90).

According to the New Testament, the way in which this human hope is fulfilled is certainly paradoxical: Jesus Christ is not only the Messiah on the cross, he is also the king on the cross (Mark 15:2,9,12,18, 26). This Christian interpretation of royal rule by way of the *titulus crucis* is brought out again in John, in the scene with Pilate: "Are you the king of the Jews?" In his answer Jesus defines the nature of his kingship in two ways. It is a kingship that "is not of this world", and its task is "to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:33-37). Jesus' kingly, pastoral office is therefore implemented in service, in poverty, in powerlessness, suffering and death; it is fulfilled in the powerless and defenceless proclamation of the truth (Matt. 28:18), and is given effect in an anticipatory way in liturgical acclamation. In this sense Jesus Christ is "king of kings and lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:19). Kasper recalls that it is Augustine who shows the positive form Jesus' royal dignity can take in the *City of God*, a book which offers a much misunderstood and misinterpreted teaching about the two cities. *Civitas dei* and *civitas terrena*, the city of God and the earthly city, are in conflict with one another, and have been so since the beginning

of history. But the two are not simply identical with church and state. The distinction cuts right across church and state because the two cities are intermingled. What defines the two are two modes of love: love of self and love of God. For Augustine, the city of God is therefore to be found everywhere where there is love. Kasper finds a similar answer in Thomas Aquinas answering the question whether Jesus Christ is the head of all human beings, and not merely the head of the church: Christ is not only the head of all those who acknowledged him in faith, he is also the head of all who, without knowing him, are joined with him in love (*Sth III* q.8, a.3). Political theology of Jesus' pastoral office is deeply rooted in Scripture and has been developed by the Church doctors in the Roman Catholic Tradition (Kasper 1992, 89-91).

What is at issue here is not a limited theological sector, such as political ethics. Kasper finds that politics is now a fundamental theological concern: it posits a definition of theology as a whole no longer in terms of the relationship between faith and reason, or dogma and history, but from a new relationship between theory and praxis. Faith then appears as the configuration of a socially critical freedom and the Church as the place of that freedom. John Paul II has emphasized on numerous occasions that the political significance of the Gospel - if 'political' is understood in a comprehensive sense - is that through word and deed it works towards a global "civilization of love" (Kasper 1992, 91).

Whether and how far the teaching of the PCSC presents a political theology is a complicated question that would lead far a field. But the question must at least be mentioned: in what sense does "Jesus, the Perfect Communicator" taught by *Inter Mirifica* and *Communio et Progressio* have a political significance?

The following analysis of the teaching corpus issued by the PCSC is based upon

norms outlined by John M. Huels in *The Pastoral Companion : A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry* (1995). According to him, the power of governance is the lawfully granted, public power necessary for validly performing an act that is legislative, executive, or juridical. It is exercised by a representative of a diocese, parish, or religious institute for the common good and public good of the Church. Governance implies an unequal relationship between a superior and subjects, between the one who has power and the others who do not. It regulates the social action of the faithful, their relationship to the external and visible society of the Church (Huels 2002, 18-19).

When studying Vatican teaching on social communication, it is not sufficient to know only their classification by nature and weight. One must also consider their literary forms. Anyone familiar with biblical scholarship knows that the sacred scriptures have a variety of literary forms. The same is true with the canonical documents of the Church. Often, various styles or forms of writing exist within the same document or papal speech. The literary forms of pastoral documents on social communications can be classified according to three broad categories: 'theological principles', 'juridic norms', and 'administrative policy'. Theological principles are easily recognizable: they appear as a rule at the beginning of a document and provide foundational information - scriptural, doctrinal, historical, ritual – but they may appear also at other places, for example at the beginning of a new section of a document or in the same paragraph of a text on juridical norms or even administrative policy. They serve as the theoretical underpinning for the normative material of the document with regards to faith and morals and provide the rationale for the Church's pastoral teaching on mass media and social communications and its adoption.

Theological principles are the interpretive key for understanding and implementing the norms and moral teaching of texts. Good pastoral guidance does not result from mere slavish adherence to the juridic norms and moral teaching. Rather, the juridic norms, moral teaching, and administrative policies must always be seen in light of the theological foundation on which they are based (Huels 1991, ix-xiv). Some examples of theological principles are found in documents such as *Inter Mirifica*, #1-3; *Communio et Progressio*, # 6-18; *Aetatis Novae*, #6; *Ethics in Advertising*, #14-18; *Ethics in Communications*, # 1-5 and 20-26; *Ethics in Internet*, #1-6 and 18; *Church and Internet*, #1-4; and John Paul II's *The Rapid Development*, # 1-6 and 13-14.

Most of the norms in canonical documents and Church texts are 'juridic' in nature, that is, they are guidelines for action. They tell pastoral planners what is to be done in the ministry of the Church, they give general and specific rules for discipline and actual execution of Church ministry. The key to identifying the weight of juridic norms is to examine verbs used in them. Some are very strong and admit no exceptions such as 'must', 'it is necessary to', and 'is to' - or negatively, 'must not', 'is not permitted to', 'is not to' and the like. Often Church texts simply use the third-person present tense as a form of command. People working in communications or educating youth in the proper use of media are directed to do something in descriptive fashion. Although the text seems merely to be describing in the third-person what takes place or ought to take place, in reality it has the effect of prescribing an action that must take place or a goal to be pursued. When verbs like these are used, a prescriptive rule is indicated, a moral teaching whose observance is considered to be mandatory or for believers. Another form of juridic norm can be a 'mild command' that states what is pastorally and ethically optimal and desirable as a general

rule, without requiring that it always be performed exactly as specified in each and every situation. The verbs used are milder such as 'may', 'is preferable', 'is desirable', 'is fitting', 'is optimal', 'is proper' and are referring to worthy ideals. For example, the documents issued by PCSC emphasize the importance for all believers of having access to adequate education for living in a media saturated culture.

The term 'genre' is simply the French word for 'type' or 'kind'. According to the linguistic scholar John M. Swales, a genre is

A recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form, and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognizable purposes. (1990, 58)

Swales contends that genre analysis adds to our understanding of how language is used within an important discourse community. As a model of applied linguistics, genre analysis draws on linguistic and socio-linguistic theory to clarify the nature of language and language learning. It is shared by linguistics, anthropology, and literary criticism.

Although pastoral instructions issued by the PCSC do belong to a historically stable genre with conspicuous distinguishing features, the very genre of pastoral documents issued by Vatican II is a novelty in the history of Church councils. *Inter Mirifica* is a conciliar decree,

not a constitution. Conciliar constitutions are the most solemn and formal type of document issued by an ecumenical council. Decrees too are doctrinal and pastoral statements concerning a Church matter, but they are more transitory in value (McBrien 1995, 362 and 401). The degree to which *Inter Mirifica* is binding, its method, and its interpretation are therefore controversial in a way that has not yet been fully clarified. This is even more true for texts following *Inter Mirifica* and prepared by the PCSC. It is important to remember that a curia agency such as the PCSC is organized in order to assist the pope's work in matters of service and governance beyond the diocese of Rome, and that each diocese curia comparably assists the diocesan bishop in local affairs.

When scrutinizing the authority claims of the Curia, it is important to recall that sometimes an institution, such as the Vatican, can lose its public memory and forget its very identity, and consequently adopt roles or agendas foreign to its purpose. Sometimes the Curia might even tell 'lies' in order to promote the organizational culture of the Church amidst social changes in the environment. In his book *Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit* (2000) historian Garry Wills suggests that the strategy of doctrinal dishonesty can be traced back to Jerome, who held that deceit could be used by pastors for the soul's edification. For example, Jerome found in the Bible that the apostles had used edifying lies to instruct people. In exchanges with Augustine, Jerome argued that Saint Peter and Saint Paul were only pretending to differ during a conflict between them at Antioch, a clash described by Paul in his letter to the Galatians. Jerome based his study on personal experience as secretary to Pope Damasus. Later in the middle ages, Jerome was revered for his doctrinal orthodoxy and special allegiance to the papacy (Wills 2000, 277-292). While the Protestant churches tend to favour the work of Augustine, the Vatican has always had a special place

for St. Jerome in its institutional memory and identity. Jerome is a symbol for the importance of loyalty to authority.

What kind of background information would allow us to make sense of the genre of pastoral instructions issued by the Vatican? The genealogical excavation of pastoral discourse is the product of historian and philosopher Michel Foucault's study of the science of government in Western civilization. Foucault (1926-84) was concerned with problems of power and its legitimation and he ridiculed the idea that power is a huge, monolithic structure because he was distrustful of grand general theories that attempt to provide explanations of power. His historical research examined technologies of power, ensembles of knowledge, instruments, persons, systems of judgement, buildings, and spaces bound together by certain presuppositions and objectives (Bell 2001, 21). In his study of Western models of government, Foucault situated the Roman Catholic Church's pastoral discourse from a historical perspective within the evolution of statecraft. In the early Church, pastorship required a particular type of knowledge, knowledge of the individual, their needs, actions, and conduct, and of their soul. To achieve this knowledge Christianity appropriated from the ancient Greeks and Romans, and employed, albeit in a modified form, two practices, namely self-examination and the guidance of conscience. Foucault argued that all types of discourse, such as pastoral teaching, are intermeshed with connections of both power and knowledge, whereby knowledge both constitutes and is constituted as an effect of power. Truth effects are created also within pastoral discourse, or in other words, doctrine arises from the Church's own formation of discursive procedures for the production, regulation, and diffusion of pastoral statements. Thus, genealogy helps us to understand what is and what is not deemed as Christian pastoral

teaching (Bell 2001, 21).

Foucault completely upsets traditional expectations of history as something linear - a chronology of inevitable facts that tell a story which makes sense. Instead, he uncovered the under-layers of what is kept suppressed and unconscious in and throughout history - the codes and silent assumptions of order, the structures of exclusion that serve to legitimate the epistemes by which societies achieve their identities. Foucault studied the writings of patristic Church fathers such as Jerome, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Cyprian, and monastic authors such as Benedict and Cassian. In his essay entitled, "Why Study Power? The Question of the Subject", Foucault states that "Christianity is the only religion which has organized itself as a Church. And as such, it postulates in principle that certain individuals can, by their religious quality, serve others not as princes, magistrates, prophets, fortune-tellers, benefactors, educators, and so on, but as pastors". Because of early Christianity's marginal status, discursive strategies for constructing and regulating power relations seem to have been all important, whereas other forms of power (economic, political, military) were largely unattainable. The efficacy of such strategies resided not so much in threats of physical force, but in equally coercive threats pertaining to the individual's access to salvation. Foucault has argued that the emergence of Christianity was marked less by a radical change in the ethical code than by the creation and dissemination of new power relations (Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 214-215).

From its earliest beginnings, Christian technology was geared toward the excavation of guilt. In the patristic era, Foucault identified a new form of power in the West, which he called 'pastoral power' and he offered the following definition of it: pastoral power is a form of power whose ultimate aim is to assure individual salvation in the next

world. It is not merely a form of power that commands; it must also be prepared to sacrifice itself for the life and salvation of the flock. Therefore, it is different from royal power that demands a sacrifice from its subjects to save the throne. It is a form of power that does not look after just the whole community, but each individual in particular, during its entire life. Finally, this form of power cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies a knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it. Foucault explains that this form of power is salvation oriented (as opposed to political power). It is oblique (as opposed to the principle of sovereignty); it is individualizing (as opposed to legal power); it is co-extensive and continuous with life; it is linked with a production of truth - the truth of the individual herself (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 214-215). Foucault's concept of 'pastoral power' helps us to understand the genre of pastoral instructions exemplified by the documents of the PCSC.

For Foucault, 'discourse' is not just another word for 'speaking', but a historically situated material practice that produces power relations. Discourses exist within, support institutions and social groups, and are bound up with specific knowledges. So the discourse of pastoral theology produces particular practices (or rituals), knowledges (or doctrines/beliefs), and power relations (or degrees of authority in the faith community). For Foucault, pastoral power creates normativity in the Christian community. As a norm, pastoral discourse is a type of operation of power that establishes and promotes a set of behaviour for Christians. While the normal might be statistical, norms tend to be morally established and have the force of imperatives. Foucault's diverse inquiries into knowledge and power have provided the foundation for much recent work on the human subject. They

also help readers of Church documents to understand the complexity behind recent attempts to find an identity politic in Church teaching, or an affirmative political strategy based on the assertion of a common cause through shared characteristics such as those forces of identity found in a religious community.

The development of Christian technology has helped the message of Jesus survive two thousand years of history. Throughout church history, the Vatican's construction of authority has focused on stabilizing the institution of Roman Catholicism. For example, the word 'propaganda' has its origin in the seventeenth century Roman Catholic Church's *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, which was literally aimed at propagating the faith. Catholic political theory is determined by fateful forces in modern history. The most important is the historical connection between Catholicism as a civilization and feudalism. Catholicism was the architect of medieval and feudal civilization and continues to cling to this sociology. As a historic religion, Catholicism will have to adjust its authority claims in order to escape the 'death sentence' of irrelevance. Over the years, critics inside and outside the Church have complained that the Vatican represents the height of spiritual arrogance in the name of Christ, the sin of identifying human purposes with the perfection of Jesus. The Catholic theory of the Church as a divine institution lends itself particularly to the temptation of confusing relative with eternal values. Since the Church is the incarnation of Christ, it is supposed to incarnate the spirit of Christ in every historical situation. It does not do justice to the fact that though the Church may delight in the law of God after the inward man, there is a law in its members which wars against the law that is in its mind. That war is an eternal one in the life of the church. Whenever the Church imagines that the battle has been won, its very own confidence will prove it to have been

lost. There is the ever present danger that the Vatican will begin to parody the truth of religious faith and become the self-perpetuating Establishment of the sort that Jesus preached against (Niebuhr 1959, 198-199).

Michael de la Bedoyere edited a collection of essays, *Objections to Roman Catholicism*, many of which were written by Catholic authors. They shared the conviction that "the vital unchanging truths of their faith may be better seen and understood and that ancient traditions and customs of value and even necessity in their times, but largely irrelevant in the world today, should soon take a back place or be frankly given up" (Bedoyere 1966, 7). An enigma for many observers in the modern world, the Catholic Church's teaching seems to have the nature of an arcane discipline; her worship, conducted by a carefully chosen and anointed priesthood, is redolent of mystery with its precise ceremonial, its ancient liturgy, its melodies chanted in traditional modes, long since left behind in the onward development of European music. But apart from this worship, there is another aspect of Catholic religious life which seems to underline this historical remoteness and mystery. It is the authoritarian power the Church exercises over its members. In Catholic spiritual life, conformity and guilt have held an important place. Likewise, the Index of Prohibited Books maintained by the Holy Office prior to the Second Vatican Council shows that the Church had been a clerical caste system that unites its authority with paternalist sentiment. Such policy gave credence to Voltaire's notion that the Vatican was a force promoting superstition and credulity in Europe. Fear existed that Catholics would lose their faith if they began to think for themselves. The Catholic heresy is the temptation to believe that it is the Church, and not God, who is the final judge over human affairs. Catholic theology in the modern era has often resembled a 'school of fear' in

which 'prophets of doom' have portrayed the mass media as a threat to Roman Catholic identity.

In the last years before his death in 1984, Foucault suggested that the disciplinary society was entering into a crisis and that the old order of human authority was crumbling amidst technical and social revolutions. Civil and communal wars raged around the globe, and technological marvels challenged the status quo. Crises and change in Catholicism have been critically reported by Roman Catholic priest and psychiatrist, Eugene Kennedy in his numerous books such as *The Return to Man: Man and Religion in the Space Age* (1972), *Tomorrow's Catholics, Yesterday's Church: The Two Cultures of American Catholicism* (1988), and *The Unhealed Wound: The Church and Human Sexuality* (2001). Churches have been looked upon as havens of stability and conservatism in comparison with the flux of secular life and institutions. Kennedy observed in the wake of the 1969 moon landing that earth-bound authorities, including the Vatican, became disoriented in the age of space travel that sweeps all of these away. In the universe of outer space exploration into which the human future stretches beyond any imaginable measuring of it, the familiar directional orientations - up and down, out and in - no longer have any meaning. The perception of the horizon is an earthbound event; all horizons disappear in space and we are left shorn of the roots that hold us on earth, challenged to imagine what is truly present just before us: a unified and seemingly limitless universe. God and heaven are no longer up there, we are no longer able to think accurately of ourselves as down here. If prayers do not rise as clouds of incense to a heaven-bound God, then our relationship with God, and our way of communicating with God, must indeed be re-imagined. Any place can be the center of the world in such a transformed environment. Indeed, any place is the

center of our newly perceived universe. Of course, we are not yet accustomed to these notions; we do not, in a way, really know what is happening to us or bothering us: "It is the future that troubles us, not in the pallid terms of commercial futurists like Alvin Toffler and John Naisbitt, who speak mostly of scientific changes that have already taken place, but in the redesign of our basic spiritual geography"(Kennedy 1988, 73).

The dawning of the space age of rockets, artificial communication satellites, and space exploration ships was eventide for institutional structures that patterned themselves on the hierarchical or pre-Copernican model of the universe. What has been insisted upon under different names to support the claims of both state and church is the same, now invalid, ladder-like idea of our spiritual and material world. What in the realm of the state was termed the divine right of kings was described in the Catholic Church as a God-given hierarchical structure. This, of course, instilled great confidence in those at the highest levels of such a structure because it legitimated their claims to authority. Their authority came from above and so could not be challenged by persons who, by the mysterious decrees of Providence, were destined to live below (Kennedy 1988, 74). The assuredness of ecclesiastics can be caught in the tone of the sixth canon of the Council of Trent: "If anyone says that in the Roman Catholic Church there is not a hierarchy, instituted by divine ordination and consisting of bishops, priests, and deacons, let him be anathema" (Kennedy 1988, 74). That same certainty of status may be noted in those who defend the notion of hierarchy as an eternal truth worthy of incorporation into the creed, and never, in any circumstances, to be transformed. It is still so insisted upon by many who think that in defending that concept, they are proclaiming the nature of God's Kingdom. This hierarchical conception has been defended vigorously in recent years by Joseph Cardinal

Ratzinger, the former prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, once the Holy Office, who has become pope Benedict XVI. Hierarchy was also reasserted by his friend and predecessor, pope John Paul II. Such a castle-like structuring of the Church depends on the pre-Copernican projection of a universe in which the world sits first row center, viewing a stage on which all performances of nature and history are conducted solely for its benefit (Kennedy 1988, 75).

Kennedy critically comments that such an imaginative slide of cosmic reality is divided into gradations of being, descending from the highest to the lowest, from the king to the peasant, from the pope to the layperson. But he notes in his chapter "Moonstruck" that this long inaccurate and unworthy idea of a divided universe did not finally begin to collapse imaginatively until human astronauts probed space and were finally able to stand on the moon and allow us to look with them on television as they viewed the blue-green earth in, not at the center or apart from, the heavens. The unity of the universe and of human beings was reclaimed in that moment, for all divisions that depended on the separation of heaven from earth such as body and soul, intellect and emotion, and in the institutional church were expressed in states of life that ranged from most to least perfect, were healed for good by that perception from the moon. Kennedy argues in *The Return to Man* that the human journey into outer space is a journey to understand ourselves (Kennedy 1988, 75 and 1973, 159-176). Yes, pope John XXIII grasped this intuitively during the momentous pioneering years of manned space exploration. He repeatedly emphasized a new sense of human unity and in *Pacem in Terris* he wrote presciently of the new order of human relationships that was coming into being. What he understood, at least in a general way, was that this fresh start called for a new and deepened spiritual sense of

ourselves (Kennedy 1988, 75). One of the themes that pope John XXIII is credited by historians with introducing into the consciousness of the Catholic Church was that it could no longer perceive itself as an extension of Western Europe, interpreting everything in the world according to its own experience. He stressed the sense of universality and interdependence necessary at a time when the world could be viewed from space. While other popes built on this notion, particularly in their encyclicals on labour, none of them have understood or applied this understanding to the central structure of the Church as an institution (Kennedy 1988, 76).

The message of the PCSC is grounded in post-Vatican II attempts to reform the Curia and to call for a greater place in society and church by the Catholic layman. The obstacles the Church faces today can be overcome through greater decentralization of government. The antagonism inside the Vatican between the Curia and those who wish to promote greater freedom often leaves the layperson to fend for themselves. The authority claims of the documents from the PCSC reflect the hope of creating a spirituality based neither on a naive and unthinking orthodoxy, nor upon an uncritical acclamation of doctrinal uniformity, nor especially on fixation at an infantile level of timid docility, self pre-occupied with apprehensions about guilt, rules, and conformity, but rather on an apostolicity that is active, informed, and responsible. The tactics and logistics of the Church's campaign in the present-day world require a vanguard that promotes the individual Catholic's freedom. This spiritual authority would manifest the profound differences found between tomorrow's Catholics and yesterday's Church. But it would remain what Foucault called *Parrhesia*: a fearless speech that proclaims the truth about the world.

The transposition of Catholic authority into a kind of integral humanism is an implicit theme to be found in the pastoral documents of the PCSC. Believers are called to witness by service and by no other mode of existence. Integral humanism posits that all men and women are naturally good; they will respond to the good and reject evil if they are shown the difference. The function of Jesus' Church at this stage in human history is to bear witness to that difference, not to make superhuman efforts at Catholicizing politics, economics, literature, science, education, social life, or any other aspects of human society. To witness by service to men and women - without any distinction of creed or race - this is the task of the Church in today's world where a new unity among human beings has emerged; a world which of itself excludes Christianity and the central authority of the pope as the Vicar of Christ and the center of world unity (Martin 1987, 475-504). For the PCSC, the Church has to set out once more to attract men and women to the faith, but in a different way. Roman Catholics must break out of their isolation, which in large part has been caused by their own deficiencies.

5.2 Argumentation

The second reflexive aspect to be considered is the mode of argumentation found in the pastoral documents issued by the PCSC. The characteristic of the closed Church has been an admiration for fiat, secrecy, and minimal dialogue. John Courtney Murray, a theological advisor at Vatican II, provided the Council with some of the most important contributions to Roman Catholic social teachings about religious liberty, democracy, and Church and State relations during the twentieth century. There should be religious liberty both within society and the Church itself. Sociologically it is well known that many Roman Catholics want a style of organizational communication in the Church structured around

democracy, shared modes of decision making, and equal participation. However, the laity is not alone in the quest for a more collegial Church; many bishops and theologians are also debating the issue.

It is important to understand how Vatican II challenged Roman Catholicism's confessional boundaries and promoted freedom for a new understanding of the Gospel and the Church. In *A Survey of Catholic Theology, 1800-1970*, T.M. Schoof observes that since the middle of the nineteenth century, theological movements have transformed the Church from a centralized structure into an open society. This development has consequences for how the Vatican conducts its official policy of communication, whether in its apologetics, policies, or management. The rhetoric of solidarity or 'co-responsibility' was advocated by Leo Josef Cardinal Suenens at Vatican II (see #1.2 & 2.2). According to Karl Rahner, "the decisive point in the document on the Church is the description of the function of the entire Episcopate as a body - the College of Bishops - as a body, not as individual bishops, nor even as a sum of individuals" (Novak 1964, 103). To enact the collegiality of bishops for the universal Church would be to modify the recent system of government in the Church, whereby the pope, theoretically alone, but in actual fact through the recommendations of the Roman Curia makes all the decisions for the universal Church. The desire to promote parliamentary procedure shows a real move towards a contextual theology that draws from modern discourses of democracy.

The following analysis draws upon insights taken from argumentation theory, which has a long history closely interwoven with that of rhetoric rooted in the work of Aristotle. After Vatican II in 1965, Roman Catholicism has tended to embrace what is a revisionist or situational approach that combines cultural-linguistic and apologetic types of

communication. The cultural-linguistic model suggests that religious tradition shapes us to the extent that belief, confession and faith precede human reason, and therefore determine expression. On the other hand, the Vatican's method is also apologetic and correlational to the extent that includes human experience as the basis for its relevance and form of expression. All the Vatican's argumentation is historically situated and conditioned by modes of human knowing. The revisionist approach served as the mandate for pope John XXIII and was the inspiration for the Second Vatican Council; it continued to serve as the programme for popes Paul VI and John Paul II. Aidan Nichols documents the Catholic interest in narrative theology in his book *Catholic Thought Since the Enlightenment* (1998, 176-181). The rise of revisionist narrative in theology was prompted by the influence of existentialism and *nouvelle théologie* among Catholics in Western Europe. The Church has devised intercultural strategies to cope with Europe's de-Christianization.

Lumen Gentium, the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* at Vatican II, speaks about a Church that changes. It implies that far from being a perfectly complete Church, the church after Vatican II recognizes itself as journeying 'toward' the fullness of truth, who is God. Throughout history it has not been customary for the Vatican to admit that the Church changes its mind. But the Second Vatican Council was a clear example, according to moral theologian Bernard Häring, of the hierarchical Church admitting that it is a learning as well as a teaching church. Vatican II based its social ethics on personalism, rather than on the natural-law concept that previously dominated Catholic thought. Affected by a new historical situation and new reflection on scripture and tradition, the Church's official teaching has changed in an extraordinary way.

Ecumenical councils in Church history have been polemical and juridical, but

Vatican II was primarily pastoral in orientation: it intended to bring out the enduring relevance of the gospel by proclaiming Jesus' word and Jesus himself in order to meet the needs, hopes, joys, and fears of all people. Instead of simply repeating the Church doctrine, pope John XXIII argued in his opening speech that the Council must re-clothe doctrine to meet the needs our era 'demands'. For him, "it is one thing to have the substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith (the Christian gospel originating with Christ and handed on over the ages) but quite another to formulate and re-clothe it: and it is this that must - if need be with patience - be held of great importance, measuring everything according to the forms and proportions of a teaching of pre-eminently pastoral character" (Sarno 1987, 106-108). With the latter distinction, pope John XXIII effectively paved way for accepting legitimate, though differing cultural expressions of the Christian gospel. This insight would prove very important for the PCSC. It encouraged its members to adapt Church teaching to the milieu created by the images, languages and idioms of information technology and mass media (Sarno 1987, 106-108). In our day the communications explosion offers people varied world views so that no single tradition can hold undisputed primacy over communities and individuals. While people are making important choices and decisions, especially those that orient their whole lives, they do know that there are other points of view and that the evidence that justifies their decisions may not be conclusive. In many ways, pope John XXIII foresaw that pluralism was an inevitable fact of modern life (Sarno 1987, 106-108).

In the hopes of showing Christianity's intellectual integrity in the modern age, Vatican II encouraged all believers to reconsider the relationship of science and Christian belief. *Gaudium et Spes, The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*,

encouraged Roman Catholics to embrace human activity in the universe and to confront the challenges posed by modern technology and science. It became possible to argue that the products of science can offer solutions to evils such as world poverty, hunger, disease, and war. In a time of utopian hopefulness, it became commonplace for Catholics to believe that the sins of medieval religion, such as superstition and exploitation, could be corrected by liberalism and humanism. Like the advent of the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century, the twentieth century - in particular the 1960s - witnessed the development of technology and the event of men landing on the moon. Christian renewal means that believers should embrace a never-ending pursuit of learning so that they will be on fire to help build, develop, and solve problems arising in the modern world. Vatican II encouraged Catholics to view the Church as a community in favour of human development. It became important for theologians to reflect upon the meaning of technological change, cybernetics, and the rise of automation and robotics. In the decades after Vatican II, the PCSC has continued to examine the implications for the Church of social communication in the space age. It has argued the historical figure of Jesus should be re-imagined as the 'perfect communicator', thus helping to develop a Christology for the technological world.

According to free lance writer Erik Davis, there is a messianic and utopian orientation in modern culture's fascination with science and technology. In classical anthropology, what is called 'oral communication' has tended to be designated as opposed to 'modern' discourse and assumed to be both of the past and immutable. Marshall McLuhan developed this viewpoint in his book *War and Peace in the Global Village*, to describe the emerging electronic society as "a resonating world akin to the old tribal echo chamber where magic will live again" (1968, 72). While the 'oracle from Toronto' often

went overboard with his rhetorical flair, one of his students, the methodical scholar Walter Ong, has given detailed and rigorous shape to McLuhan's vision of the electric re-tribalization of the West. In his landmark book *Orality and Literacy* (1982), Ong argues that electronic media are leading us into a time of 'secondary orality', an era that, despite important differences, bears some striking similarities to the cultural logic of oral societies. In particular, Ong draws attention to the new power of participatory mystique, group identification, repetitive formulas, and the ethos of 'living in the moment'. Given that human societies are mixtures of participation and causality, McLuhan's futuristic vision should probably be tempered with the notion that electronic media are simply shifting the relative balance between orality and literacy, causality and participation (Davis 2004, 209). Catholic intellectuals such as McLuhan and Ong were deeply aware that modern communication media, the makers of the modern world, had brought about a global-village atmosphere in twentieth-century Western culture and society.

In "*Speak That I May See Thee!*" *The Religious Significance of Language*, Harold Stahmer argues that the return of speech in human communication thanks to the media is something that both Ong and McLuhan grasp (1968, 247-283). Post-typography and the emergence of electronics is the latest phase in human history of the evolution of human consciousness. Ong argues that modern means of communication have annihilated our old understanding of both time and space in favour of spontaneity. Voice is now 'real' and gives rise to greater human presence and dialogue. His works *The Presence of the Word* (1967), *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology* (1971), and *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (1977) critique the closed-system mind-set fostered by writing and print and explain the latest trend toward an open-system mind-set

conspicuously exemplified in television and in the surge of ecological concern across the globe. He observes that an open-end style of activity characterizes the Church's entire existence today. Public airing of unresolved questions has become a way of life, from the Second Vatican Council to countless discussion groups proliferating in the wake of mass media and electronic communications of which rapid transport, the precondition for large-scale discussion groups, is a product, since it is inoperable without the system of telecommunication. Since Vatican II new outlets for discussion have opened in the Church. Christian groups hitherto isolated from one another have entered into fruitful contact, and conversations between Christians and non-Christians have become more frequent and meaningful. In sum, openness does not mean lack of organization, lack of principle, or lack of resistance. For the human being at least, it means on the contrary the strengthening of religious organization, principles, and resistance where needed, so that interaction with the outside can be strong and real. Indeed, paradoxical as it may seem, Ong argues that openness means strengthening closure itself; openness calls for a strengthening of closure because of the dialectical relationship of the two in human consciousness (Ong 1977, 305-341).

For the PCSC, pastoral theology is a public discourse that advocates freedom and open society. The French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) distinguished between closed and open societies. Closed societies like closed minds, closed systems of law or closed religions, are static; the open ones are dynamic. The members of a closed society are determined by group attachments in the form of tribalism or patriotism, and outsiders are excluded. In contrast, an open society accepts the ideal of moral universalism (Copleston 1974, 202-215). In the final chapter of *The Two Sources of Morality* Bergson remarks that

modern technology has made possible the unification of humankind in one society. This might of course be brought about by the triumph of an imperialism which would simply represent the closed mentality writ large. But we can also imagine a truly human society in which man's free response to the highest ideals would be the uniting factor including all, rather than the tyrannical force and power of world-imperialism. In such a society obligation would not disappear, but it would be transformed by human response to ideals which are ultimately the expression of an influx of divine life as mediated to society by persons who have opened themselves to the divine life (Copleston 1974, 202-215). Bergson and later Karl Raimund Popper contributed to the emergence of the open society debate. In his own classic statement of freedom and anti-authoritarianism, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Popper argues that from the time of Plato onward, the heart of Western civilization has been an ongoing struggle between skepticism and certainty (Berman 1996, 288). The PCSC works from the open society paradigm best articulated by Bergson and Popper.

In *The Open Church: Vatican II, Act II*, theologian and journalist Michael Novak argues that popes John XXIII and Paul VI helped to make the Catholic Church a place of prophecy in the modern world. Moving away from the old scholastic, non-historical orthodoxy, Novak explains that the open society increasingly compels humanity to find resources of energy and insight in an open Church. It is the same human hunger to understand, that same root of dignity and freedom that propels the open society and drives forward the life of the Church: it is that hunger to embrace one's destiny intelligently that Christ came to fulfill (1964, xiii). The open society has much to gain from an open Church. The open society needs sources of moral insight and prophetic witness to religious reality.

There is already too much conformity, spiritual mediocrity, and standardization in the open society. It does not need a fawning, dependent, religious organization, but a religious community that knows its own mind and speaks it with a prophetic, relevant voice and offers insight rather than enforcement of its own conceptions. Otherwise the Church's voice is only another one in the wind - and a hateful one at that, if it uses force to support its arbitrariness. The open society is, at its best and in principle, a community of reasonable discourse with its own rules and style of presentation different from those of medieval or Renaissance cultures. When these rules and styles are learned, they will not be found to inhibit, but rather to enhance, the Gospels (Novak 1964, 360-361).

According to the rules of public discourse, one speaks most effectively in a low key, presenting considerations that may persuade, rather than ultimatums that attempt psychological coercion. One speaks from personal authenticity, with convictions already interiorized, rather than as the spokesman of a system from which one draws a salary. One speaks from beliefs one has chosen critically instead of accepted without recognizing alternatives. Freely accepted and fully assimilated belief compels attention. The fanaticism and arbitrariness of the 'true believer' are not in the least esteemed. In the open society of the twentieth century - a society founded on the concrete rights of persons, rather than on abstract ideas, the Church can live under conditions highly favourable to her inner necessities. No previous form of life was so well adapted to manifesting the Gospel of freedom, free community of believers, service of believers to their neighbours. In the open society, the privileges and postures of princes and lords seem a trifle ridiculous. Political pressure as an instrument of the Gospel is condemned both by the Gospels and by political tradition in the West. The generosity of the free body of believers proves more fruitful for

the material needs of the Church than State support. The free competition of ideas in the universities and in the mass media sends the faithful ever deeper into an examination of their faith (Novak 1964, 360-361).

Both the open Church and the open society draws their force from the same source: the unrestricted drive to understand, and the quest for insight. Insight has two moments: one, the moment of intuition; the other, the moment of reflective judgement as to whether the intuition meets the claims of the facts. So, discourse both in the open society and in the open church has two moments: the moment of bringing others to see as one oneself sees, and the moment of presenting the evidence to support one's own vision. Without the first moment, argument is obscure and blind. Without the second, it is groundless. Communications among humans requires both moments. That is why an open Church has an important role to play in an open society. It brings into such a society a new source of insight: the Word of God and a long intellectual tradition. It also brings into such a society persons living interiorly according to the deepest laws of the human spirit: fidelity to understanding, humble charity, affirmation. The lives of such persons are moreover the best evidence for religious claims. Besides, the devotion of religious men to understanding pushes the members of an open society ever further in their own quest for understanding. The human desire for love and understanding of the presence of God in the world today. To the open society, the open Church brings a new range of vision. It raises the mind and heart beyond the daily pragmatic task of building up the earthly city, which is the human vocation in history according to Genesis 1:28: "increase, multiply, and possess the earth". The open Church raises the mind and heart not for escape, but for renewed commitment. The PCSC argues that Catholic faith is committed to this world, not to a platonic other

world, though it does not try to make itself believe that understanding and love end with death (Novak 1964, 361-362).

The Second Vatican Council and the decades of reform since then have furthered the vision of an open Church in an open society, as a new achievement in the human pilgrimage through history. The Vatican's pronouncements on communications evoke a spirit of creativity and hopeful optimism: neither the open societies of our day nor the Church are yet faithful to themselves. The PCSC is looking at a perspective far into the future rooted in the Kingdom of God. In the pursuit of the drive to understand, open society as well as Church find their proper identity and also their complementarity. Modernity is a project that calls for risk and trust in the building of open social orders. In the tangles and complexities of concrete human historical events, it is rarely totally clear what the next step in the evolving project should be. And yet, that is the risk, burden, and joy of being human. The Church is called to share in this risk and to provide an open narrativity that encourages human advancement (Novak 1964, 361-362). In the information society it is very important to provide a Christian presence that gives voice to human hopes and fears.

The rhetorics of informatics, mathematics, and even engineering are replete in the Vatican's dialogic model of persuasion. Following Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, two technicians from Bell laboratory who co-authored the famous work, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (1948), it became customary for the Church to refer to the transmission model of senders and receivers of communication: 'Who says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect?' In this model, information is first encoded by senders into signals to be then decoded by receivers. Shannon and Weaver tended to minimize, or even ignore, the problem of noise or distorted communication, and this tendency can also

be found in Catholic teachings. The Roman Catholic Church is mainly interested in the “morality of truthful speech” in society. In John A. Hardon’s *The Catholic Catechism: A Contemporary Catechism of the Teachings of the Catholic Church* (1981), the morality of human communication is addressed within the Decalogue. Hardon’s synopsis refers to the work of advertising and the role of public opinion in Church and society, and he also summarizes the Vatican teaching about the human right to public information, education, culture, and leisure (411-418), and thus brings to a popular audience the Roman Catholic vision of communication as symbolic exchange. He places his treatment of social communication within the eight commandment that prescribes against lying and mental reservation. Aside from the many works of ethicist Bernard Häring, Hardon’s catechism is one of the few Catholic handbooks that give detailed attention to moral issues in communications.

In terms of communication strategies, some in the Church, such as Maureen Sullivan, find hope in the possibility of calling a Vatican III Council as a means to further the Church’s reform and renewal. She explains this aspiration in her book, *Vatican II: 101 Questions and Answers* (2002, 119). It was hoped that Vatican II Council would complete the work begun at Vatican I, Sullivan notes, especially with regard to the relationship between the pope and the bishops. The word that describes their ultimate goal is collegiality, a code word for more democracy in the Church, or at least greater sharing by the bishops with the pope in the governance of the universal Church. On account of its emphasis on the need to work out the implications of collegiality, Vatican II corrected Vatican I to a certain degree. However, based on certain developments since the end of Vatican II in 1965, one may wonder whether a genuine vision of collegiality has been

developed, and more importantly, whether Vatican II's vision has been borne out in the concrete lived experience of the Church. Furthermore, few of those who advocate more collegiality in the Church have written much about the duty of bishops to be collegial with their own priests and people (Sullivan 2002, 119).

In Sullivan's estimation, the aspiration of making collegiality operable in the Church is a matter of unfinished business. The Second Vatican Council opened its first session on October 12, 1962, with a group of over 2,400 cardinals, bishops, abbots, and theologians - all men! It would not be until the second session that some women would receive invitations to be auditors for the remaining Council sessions. This was after Cardinal Suenens urged his fellow bishops to invite women to attend the Council as auditors, commenting: "Unless I am mistaken, women make up one half of the world's population" (Rynne 1964, 117). In critiquing the Church's failure to represent the concerns of women, Sullivan laments that the Vatican's hierarchy and male clergy have a patriarchal worldview that has caused the alienation of Catholic women and their exclusion from liturgical worship. Sullivan refers to a 1997 report from the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations which stated that many women leave the Catholic church because the Church is insensitive to their desire to participate fully in its life and mission (2002, 120-121).

Sullivan is not alone in her criticisms of the Roman Catholic experience since the Council adjourned. In his book, *The Catholic Revolution: New Wine, Old Wineskins, and the Second Vatican Council*, the Catholic sociologist Andrew Greeley argues that the modest changes introduced at the Council were too much for the rigid structures of old nineteenth-century Roman Catholicism to absorb.

The Catholic Revolution began on October 13, 1962 when Cardinals Lienart and Frings rose to demand a free vote for the members of the commissions that would draft the texts of conciliar documents. With the support of Pope John XXIII, this event became the equivalent of the storming of the Bastille. The Council Fathers began to realize that they could collectively overcome the entrenched power of the Roman Curia. It would be possible to change the Church, not drastically, it seemed to them, but in certain important areas like liturgy, ecumenism, the interpretation of Scripture, attitudes toward Jews, and religious freedom. (Greeley 2005, 1-4).

With the realization that they had the power to remake the Church, the bishops were swept by what Greeley calls "an extended moment of collective behaviour" (2005, 191). However, they poured new wine into old wineskins and the wineskins burst. The changes the Council mandated persuaded the lower clergy and the laity that 'unchangeable' Catholicism could change.

Greeley finds that in the three decades since the Catholic Revolution, the conflict has continued between the leadership and the lower clergy and laity, which do not in general accept the right of the leaders to give orders on certain issues. Neither side has budged and the leadership does not even perceive what has happened because it is convinced that the real problems are Western society's consumerism, materialism, secularism, and obsession with sex. The Church had postponed change too long and had not sufficiently tried to adjust its rhetoric and style for the late twentieth-century well-educated Catholics. Greeley assumes that the Catholic Revolution was probably over

by 1972. However, he argues that the changes are permanent because the laity and the lower clergy, loyal to the basic doctrines of the Catholic heritage and to the images and stories of the Catholic imagination, no longer accept the Church's right to control their sexual lives (2005, 2 and 193).

From a sociological perspective, there has been a nearly complete collapse of communication between the Vatican and the Church's lower clergy and the laity. Greeley argues that Catholics remain stubbornly loyal to their religion because of the appeal of the sacramental and communalism of the tradition. The communication break between the higher and lower orders in the Church remains because the former do not understand that in certain matters they have lost all credibility with the latter. Nonetheless, Roman Catholicism survives and the gap will narrow only when the Vatican leadership begins to reshape its style of interacting with the laity and the lower clergy in a way that skilfully emphasizes the beauty and charm of the Catholic heritage rather than its own claim to absolute authority (Greeley 2005, 2).

The Vatican rhetoric is an important area that requires further research and should interest anyone concerned about the implementation of Vatican II, in particular, Catholic theologians, church historians, and sociologists. According to Ong, McLuhan, and Granfield, the Church leadership needs to critically apply the insights of information theory in its quest for effective communication, evangelization, and apologetics. Orrin E. Klapp's *Opening and Closing: Strategies of Information Adaptation in Society* (1978) shows that it is possible to provide a wider assessment of the Church's change in communication strategies. Prior to Vatican II, the Church was primarily interested in discussing the proper limits of freedom, fought via censorship the dangers of 'obscenity'

and 'heresy', and viewed public speech in a skeptical, if not totally negative manner, as evidenced by the history of the Vatican's Index of Forbidden Books, Catholic boycott groups and pressure groups such as the National Legion of Decency and Offices for Decent Literature, as well as by the legal climate supported by the Code of Canon Law (Gardiner 1961). Church authority promoted coercion in its communication strategies except when Catholic evangelization in mission territories was at stake. The Vatican's top policy makers and expert advisors in matters of scientific management strategies are gradually learning the grammar of cyber-speech. From a semiotic perspective, the PCSC wants the Church to be able to 'open' as it scans for desired information, and then to 'close' in order to defend against 'noise'. The reduction of 'social noise', the chaos from which Catholics try to construct meaning, is a major goal of both individuals and groups in the Church.

We cannot understand the Vatican's present argumentation strategy without taking the historical context into account. According to the Catholic theologian Robert Schreiter,

It has been said that the twentieth century began in August, 1914 with the Great War in Europe. It could equally be said that it ended in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall. But the conditions leading up to 1989 had begun much earlier. The OPEC oil embargo is often seen as marking the time when economic power and concomitant modes of production began to shift. New technologies, especially in communications, began to move the wealthiest economies away from being based on heavy industry to a new basis in information, high technology, and services. This new reality is captured in the concept of globalization. (1997, 126)

Schreiter confirms that

The mode of universality in this globalizing reality is lodged in communication, signified in media and communications technology. Those who have access to this technology may participate in the globalized reality and the power it brings. It operates by network rather than hierarchy, and is characterized by the compression of time and space. The network of communication occurs also in a global hyper-culture, wherein signifiers of consumption (cola drinks, denim jeans, pop music, and video entertainment) are drawn largely from American culture and circulated worldwide. This hyper-culture is then received into local cultures, often in different ways, creating homogeneity on the one hand, and provoking new intensifications of the local on the other. (Schreiter 1997, 127)

As the Vatican looks from its observation tower and monitors all the main movements of humankind, its very own mode of expression and pastoral teaching mirrors the activities of the secular world. The centralized Vatican leadership, in particular the Curia, confronts the flows of global hybridity that lurk in the local expressions of the universal Church in this era of media globalization. 'Flow' is a term that has come to be used in sociology, anthropology, and communication science to denote cultural and ritual movements, a circulation of information that is patently visible and yet hard to define (Schreiter 1997, 15). Flows move across geographic and other cultural boundaries like a river. How does this relate to the Vatican and its teaching on media and social communications? We should recall that during the 1970s and 1980s new trends denoted as liberation, local, and contextual theologies erupted where the Enlightenment theologies of Europe and North America failed to respond to the needs of people. Now, flows of globalization sweep across

the world and are generating a similar response. For our purposes, a global theological flow is a kind of circulating movement that - to use the conceptual analysis of Peter Beyer - can be understood as anti-systemic global movements (Schreiter 1997, 16).

In his book *Religion and Globalization* (1994), Beyer argues that religion's holism and commitment to particular cultures give it moral power against what appear to be alienating and impersonal global systems. Religion proposes answers to problems created by global systems. Catholic social teaching on media and communication can provide the *telos* a global system lacks, and offers a vision of coherence and order (Schreiter 1997, 16). On the other hand, religious answers to economic or political problems may result in a lack of specificity either to the problems or to the settings in which it is manifest. Vatican social policy draws its rhetoric and argumentation from discourses of global theological flows that, while not uniform or systemic, represent a series of linked, mutually intelligible discourses that address the failures or contradictions of global systems such as the communication networks of media and internet (Schreiter 1997, 16).

5.3 Bureaucratization or Apparent Democratization

The third reflexive property of Catholic theo-linguistics concerns the bureaucratization of the Vatican's pastoral discourse. Here, particular reference to the ideologies of bureaucracy found in the Roman Catholic Church should be made. The great achievement of Max Weber's sociological work is his critique of the 'iron cage' and ideal dynamics of bureaucracy in modern institutions. Feminist writers have suggested that Weber's account of rationality in modern organizations is underlain by a gendered sub-text, although his bureaucratic theory tends to banish sexuality from the life of organizations. Sociologists are increasingly aware that critical analysis of social life must include a

consideration of how the social may be structured by the sexual. Often, when the sexual is ignored in analysis of organizations, it tends to mask or hide the presence of a patriarchal structure, or a particular form of masculinity which excludes the personal, the sexual and indeed the feminine, often associating them with the chaos and disorder standing in opposition to Weberian notions of rationality. CDA provides a social-semiotic framework to examine the pervasiveness of sexualized relationships and institutionalized attitudes in the organizational arena. Drawing on the work of Foucault, it suggests that sexuality and power are intertwined in everyday social interaction and bureaucratic organizations.

Over the past centuries, the Enlightenment's driving force has been movements of sexual liberation challenging the heritage and customs of all world religions, in particular Christianity. Vatican bureaucracy struggles to promote a fortress of a-sexuality amidst the passion of traditional society shaped by the rhetoric of sexual ideologies of liberation. Today, the most controversial topics are the Roman Catholic Church's approach to sex and gender, and this is crucial when so much of tele-communications today portrays a vision of living machines that posit what Augustine called *Libido dominandi*, or the rebellious unity of sexual liberation and political control. Roman Catholic teaching on sexuality such as birth control, divorce, and abortion, is one area left largely untouched by the reforms of Vatican II. In 1968, to the dismay of the modernizers, pope Paul VI issued the infamous encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. Abortion and all forms of artificial birth control were condemned, a position uncompromisingly reaffirmed under the pontificate of John Paul II. How do we reconcile this with the Vatican II rhetoric of collegiality, reform, and *aggiornamento*? The present Vatican bureaucracy of the Curia is a clerical caste deeply committed to a patriarchal vision of society and Church. Social institutions such as the

Roman Catholic Church are defined by their preferred 'orders of discourse' in a particular time period of history. How does the Vatican handle the modern democratic impulse towards equality and freedom? Using CDA, it is possible for religious scholars to identify and understand hegemonic struggles over the structuring of orders of Roman Catholic discourse during the twentieth century. Norman Fairclough refers to the discourse of "apparent democratization" as a dominant trend in recent discursive change affecting the Western social order. By democratization, he means "the removal of inequalities and asymmetries in the discursive and linguistic rights, obligations and prestige of groups of people" (1992, 201). Within the Church an important aspect of this apparent democratization is gender relations and sexuality. Sometimes this power shift towards substantive democracy involves 'synthetic personalization' or the simulation of private, face-to-face, discourse in public mass-audience discourse (such as in radio and television). In an effort to manage this thrust towards democracy, the Second Vatican Council challenged the Church to reform its established ecclesial bureaucracy.

The Enlightenment set out to prove that humans could release passion from the bonds of religion, custom, and morals and in so doing bring about a regime of universal brotherhood. It is possible to view modern Church history, and in particular, the rise of liberal Christianity, within this lineage, although the Vatican has been committed for centuries to a counter-Enlightenment perspective. Patrick Granfield has observed that the complexity and intransigence of the official Church's central administration are legendary. The present pope, Benedict XVI, and future popes should continue Vatican II's work to improve the cumbersome Curial bureaucracy by periodically re-organizing the congregations, secretariats, commissions, tribunals, and other offices with an eye to greater

efficiency and pastoral sensitivity. The internationalization process begun by recent popes should continue, especially in respect to middle-management positions and diplomatic posts where Italians still predominate. Younger personnel whose theological views represent the broad spectrum of legitimate contemporary thought should be employed. Likewise, the number of women - admittedly a minority at the Vatican - must grow to hold more power in the Church. No women presently hold any important executive or decision-making positions in the curial congregations. Christians from other denominations or even the World Council of Churches should be invited to participate as consultants in the work of the Curia. Granfield maintains that the Curia should reflect the reformed papacy of Vatican II: pastoral, service-oriented, and responsive to the signs of the times (175-195, 1980).

It is widely accepted by historians of Roman Catholicism that the Curia was opposed to the reforms inaugurated by popes John XXIII and Paul VI. However, Catholicism's reconstruction was made possible by the sociological phenomenon labelled by Émile Durkheim as 'effervescence', or the hopeful experience of collective behaviour. Sociologist Andrew Greeley argues that the Second Vatican Council was a 'Catholic revolution' in which the bishops of the world, in the euphoria generated by their freedom from the obstructions of the Roman Curia, introduced relatively modest changes to the Church that were too much for the rigid structures of nineteenth-century Catholicism to absorb. Greeley's insight helps us to recognize that in Roman Catholicism, there are often two bureaucratic structures: one is the 'official' leadership, and the second is an underground or unofficial mass constituency. There is more in the Church than bishops and cardinals and that is why pastoral initiatives do not always spring from above. As Herbert

McCabe observed, "A dialectical tension exists between the framework of the Church and its points of growth, and this seems to be a condition of Christian existence" (Hebblethwaite 1975, 195). Therefore, it is necessary to look for alternative approaches to the Vatican's pastoral instruction on social communication. We need to look for oppositional readings, and this can be done through critical discourse analysis of the respective Curial department's corpus of documents. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian philosopher and linguist (1895-1975), critical readers should be able to find multiple interpretations in a given text. His ideas are summarized in Stuart Sim's book *Introducing Critical Theory*. Bakhtin saw documents as "inter-textual" - a concept further developed by structuralist theorists like Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva. Texts and written documents are not independent unitary creations, but products that rely on "inter-textuality", that is, on references to an entire complex web of past and present discourses. In a given text, there exists a relationship between two or more voices with their respective viewpoints, cultures, and perhaps historical moments (Sim 2001, 76-77). The process of discovering a plural quality of meaning in a particular document is something Bakhtin called "heteroglossia". Heteroglossia works against the unifying tendencies with society as generally advocated by the ruling establishment. Ironically, Vatican II is caricatured by some as a new Pentecost that unleashed hurricanes in the city of the Church. Bakhtin identified a similarly disruptive influence within the institution of the carnival, with its love of uncontrolled parody, whereby socio-political authority is mercilessly mocked and 'made strange'. The wildly satirical work of Rabelais (1494-1553) was for Bakhtin a prime example of the carnivalesque approach to authority (Sim 2001, 76-77).

How far does the Vatican's PCSC account for a struggle of various contrasting, incongruous, and even opposite interpretations? The conciliar and post-conciliar documents on mass media constitute sites of competition among the Church's various theological factions. Inter-textual discursive analysis searches for a multiplicity of voices in this corpus of teaching. In these documents it is obvious that rival discourses compete for a dominant influence in shaping the text's viewpoint. In general, there are two different theological opinions in the Church about mass media. The more traditional or pre-Vatican II viewpoint wants the Church - as 'holder of the knowledge' - to control the official interpretation of what constitutes Christian communication. The second group wants to encourage more creativity with reference to mass media. Instruction by the PCSC shifts away from the more narrow, reactive approach to mass communication that tended to characterize earlier Vatican teaching. This has led in turn to an idealistic or utopian view of the media that sees them only in purely instrumental terms and not as a social structure. At the same time, the Council's teaching continues to acknowledge the traditionalist position that holds that the Church's contribution resides in its ability to train the minds and hearts of people in Christian principles.

Fairclough argues that apart and beyond dialogue there is an important relationship between intertextuality and hegemony. The concept of intertextuality points to the productivity of texts, to how texts restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones. Institutions such as the Vatican carry within themselves implicit ideological assumptions which are literally structured into the social-semiotic of Christian language and imagination. Following Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams used the term 'structures of feeling' to express the existential, dynamic nature of ideology in culture and

society. Hegemony is never a once-for-all achievement; it has to be continually renewed, defended, and modified. Every kind of governing power is forced to engage with counter-hegemonic forces in ways that prove partly constitutive of its own rule. In *Marxism and Literature*, Williams, the father of British Cultural Studies, argues that hegemony - an inherently relational as well as practical and dynamic notion - deeply saturates the consciousness of a society (1977, 128-135). The concept of 'structures of feeling' helps us to understand the subordination of the erotic Roman Catholic Church community to the Vatican's asexual bureaucracy of established religion. In sum, intertextuality highlights the effect that discourse structures have on power relations and sexual politics within the Vatican's corpus of pastoral documents on the topic of media and communications. In the name of truth, Curial voices, the administrative part of the Church, speak a traditional theological language that tends to exclude or subordinate the ideas and opinions of sub-cultures for women, homosexuals, and non-celibates. The old ascetic ideal of clerical celibacy within the Church is an assumption about value that has historical roots in Latin theology pre-dating medieval institutions and far-back to the time of Jerome (Chadwick 1993, 240).

Very few Church leaders question the sexual structure of the Church, the rare exception being the Anglican Bishop John Shelby Spong who wrote *Living in Sin? A Bishop Re-Thinks Human Sexuality* (1983) and publicly questioned the *status quo* in the established Western churches. Organized religion has taught people of faith that sex is something that should be kept hidden. In its ideal of the celestial celibate, the Church has adopted, in the eyes of many, a grim, Gothic righteousness that imposes sexual fascism on the laity, condemning divorce, masturbation, and homosexuality. Psychiatrist Eugene

Kennedy in his book, *The Unhealed Wound: The Church and Human Sexuality* (2001), critically examines the asexual syndrome in the Roman Curia, in which he finds a leadership that takes delight in the bureaucratic gratifications which result from authoritarian “use of power by men over other men” (140-163). The term ‘asexuality’ characterizes those who rationalize, often theologically, abusive activities in their own management of Church affairs. Disordered flows of interaction characterize the asexual syndrome of the Curia. Its communication style rejects dialogue and focuses on finding fault, sin, and human flaws rather than giving praise or encouragement. The asexual style clothes itself in total secrecy, binding those whom it investigates to silence about the nature and content of the Vatican’s study commission procedures or hearings into which questionable theologians may be drawn to ‘explain’ their writings, teachings, or pastoral ministry. The principle of curial style is expressed in the dramatic oratory of Bishop Fulton J. Sheen: “Right is right when nobody else is right, and wrong is wrong when everybody is wrong” (2001, 67). To be fair, it should be noted that Sheen was himself frequently the victim of Vatican sexual politics. Vatican asexual communication works through subjugating, humiliating, and shaming its listeners.

The lofty ideals of collegiality, including freedom of expression and participative communication, as well as the culture of dialogue have all been restricted by the papacy of John Paul II and his director of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. During that administration, Vatican disciplinary initiatives against theologians became infamous in the cases of Hans Küng and Charles Curran. More recently, the Vatican’s crusade against homosexuals has also violated the liberty and autonomy of clergy and religious. John Paul II’s goal of restoring pre-Vatican II society is

an expression of the Church's asexuality. The legacy of asexual communion gradually developed, according to Eugene Kennedy, when

Bishops and abbots were becoming part of the emergent administrative structure of the West; in due course, they became 'peers' - peers, that is, of the barons and counts and viscounts and dukes and kings, just as the pope came to be regarded as the peer of the emperor...Small wonder that the sacrament of orders became widely as well as dangerously associated with masculinity understood as power...It is fair to suggest that pre-occupation with power and jurisdiction has bedevilled the ordained ministry to this day.

(Kennedy 2001, 146-147, quoting Franz Josef von Beeck who was in turn quoting from Southern's *Western Society and the Church of the Middle Ages*)

Sexuality's place in the cultural history of Catholicism was the subject of a critical investigation by Canadian literary scholar Roberta Imboden, *The Church, A Demon Lover: A Sartrean Analysis of an Institution* (1995). Imboden found that the New Testament message of love has been distorted in the process of being mediated by the institution of the Roman Catholic Church. She argues that the Vatican has embraced a sado-masochistic structure of domination, rather than the New Testament's vision of love as reciprocal, sovereign, and free. Special attention is devoted to John Paul II's papacy and the work of Cardinal Ratzinger, both of whom established a new inquisition that attacked theologians such as Edward Schillebeeckx, Hans Küng, Leonardo Boff, and ecclesial peace activists like Archbishop John Quinn. To transcend the Vatican's authoritarianism and postulate a 'new' Church, Imboden advocates a form of liberation theology in dialogue with Jean-Paul

Sartre's work. Throughout her book, Imboden affirms that the Gospel message encourages a critique of power structures in Church and canon law.

In contrast with the regulated uniformity of the official Church, CDA uncovers inter-textual voices within official documents, perhaps an underground sub-culture within Catholicism that echoes the 'spirit of Vatican II' and mocks the official reports. It is important to recall that in their drafting and composition, the Curial documents on the communications media were all written by theological advisors grappling with various alternative faith movements in the Church that value liberty and spontaneity. The implementation of reforms would be a subject for debate forever after 1965. For some clergy and laity, the decisions of the Second Vatican Council were not being put into practice quickly enough. More and more priests left the Church out of a concern to re-integrate the priesthood into the human condition through marriage, work, and political activity (Comby and MacCulloch 1996, 234). A passion for change and innovation challenged law and order all over the world. 1968 was a year of political turmoil: Vietnam had been wracked by its fiercest fighting; street battles between police and demonstrators disrupted the Democratic National Convention in Chicago; snap elections in France put an end to the student uprising in Paris; and last, but not least, the Warsaw Pact forces invaded Czechoslovakia, crushing freedom in Prague. Amidst these events, old Church institutions were put into question and Christians spoke out in their churches as never before. The faith took on the role of protest in Western society, which can be recalled from a sample of slogans from that era like: "The street is in the Church", "the Holy Spirit is on the barricades", or "God is not conservative" (proclaimed by the archbishop of Paris, Mgr. Marty). In the wake of all this, the Vatican was accused of giving its backing to the

established order (Comby and MacCulloch 1996, 234).

It is important to point out that, in spite of their differences, both the secularist Enlightenment and Christian traditions agreed that passion was the cause of the French revolution. The Jacobins worked to suppress the Jesuits so that the Jacobins could take over French society. In Western Europe, centuries later, sexual attitudes, sexual taboos, and sexual practices have been used by dominant groups in society to keep others subordinate. The Vatican's reluctance to fully accept the ideals of collegiality, dialogue, and decentralization was made clear in the twentieth century on the topic of human sexuality. Paul VI's encyclicals on the issues of priestly celibacy (1967) and on birth-control (1968) increased dissent within the Church and put the teaching office of the Vatican in question. Published on June 29, 1968, *Humane Vitae* created a "bombshell effect"; from the very moment of its publication, everything seemed to run downhill for his pontificate. "No papal teaching document has ever caused such an earthquake in the church as did the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*", wrote Bernard Häring shortly afterward. Paul VI had disagreed with the findings of a commission that had been appointed by the previous pope, John XXIII. In acting alone, Paul VI alienated himself from the rest of the Church, and this caused his own pessimism and gloom. It was in fact his very last encyclical, after producing them at a rate of one a year in the first five years of his pontificate. Two streams of Catholic reaction to *Humane Vitae* were evident from the beginning, and there is no sign the two have ever converged since. One disagreed with the pope's teaching and insisted that this is not binding on the Roman Catholic faithful; the other agreed with the pope and urged that what the pope wrote was an irrevocable doctrine about Christian marriage. In sum, the text was widely criticized inside and outside the Church, and its non-infallible

character was emphasized and taken advantage of by those who disagreed with it (Hardon 1971, 245-257).

Fear and prejudice characterized the pre-Vatican II attitude towards sexual morality. As a general pattern, the location in which the various hierarchies (and theologians) lived almost always determined how they reacted to *Humanae Vitae*. In those countries where artificial birth control was common and the social pressure for contraception strong, the bishops and commentators reflected both the practice and the pressure. A classic example is Scandinavia, which at that time had a high index of birth limitation. The United States would seem to be an exception, but more recent events suggest that pastoral instructions contained in *Humanae Vitae* were only minimally followed up by individual bishops in their dioceses. Those leaders who seriously tried to implement *Humanae Vitae* paid dearly at the hands of the image-makers and opinion-shapers in society (Hardon 1971, 253). The media played a major role in the *Humane Vitae* controversy, centering especially on the conflict between conscience and Church authority. Some made it their set policy to defend the Church against the pope; they assumed that Roman Catholics in general wanted contraception, and that the pope, on principle, was against it. Before the encyclical, the confrontation between Rome and the West was built up to dramatic proportions, but after the document was published, the opposition seemed to be fixed: only by then the issue was more than contraception, it was the locus and even the existence of visible authority in the Catholic Church (Hardon 1971, 253-254). The conflict between sexual freedom and authority in the Church has continued to be an important issue in ecclesial life after 1968. Indeed, the demand for sexual freedom by Catholics caused a crisis in the post-conciliar Church, and this situation continues today. The legacy of *Humane Vitae* stretched into the

papacy of John Paul II who made the topic of population control a central issue in his own ministry. There has been no more ardent defender of *Humanae Vitae* and traditional sexual ethics than pope John Paul II (Kennedy 2001, 26-33). As such, he was a 'restorationist' conservative who opposed liberalism in Catholic moral teaching. It remains to be seen just how far the current pope, Benedict XVI, will carry this asexual agenda. His efforts will be severely challenged by the widespread 'expressive revolution' that is gripping world religions and for our purposes here should be understood as a social force that portrays the Christian Church as an 'erotic community'.

The celibacy issue remains controversial for popular culture and so does the issue of woman's ordination inside the Church. Eugene Kennedy has written extensively about the Vatican's approach to sexual morality in "Sex and the Pre-Copernican Man" (chapter 7 of *The Return to Man*) and "Sickness Against Health: The Asexual Core of Institutional Authoritarianism" (chapter 10 of *Tomorrow's Catholics, Yesterday's Church*). Kennedy does not wish to suggest Catholicism is to be totally identified with Vatican disciplinary policies. Indeed, his psychological criticism here arises from surveying the trustworthy reactions of Catholics - the *sanior et major pars fidelium*, the healthier majority of believers - which includes, along with a great number of laypeople, many bishops, priests, and religious who remain loyal to the Vatican. Not extremists, they constitute the great moderate centre of Catholic culture, and they keep the world and the Church going. Their feelings are not only reliable guides to moral judgment and belief, but they are also filled with information about events that rouse them. Here we encounter the *sensus fidelium*, the sense of believers, not as an abstraction but as the reliable, living responses that arise from the everyday common sense of the Catholic community. The widespread anguish of

millions of Roman Catholics suggests that they perceive quite accurately the unhealthy objectives as well as the gratification associated with such Vatican administrative procedures (Kennedy 1988, 113-114).

In a noteworthy 1993 public address, "*Humanae Vitae* and the Crisis of Dissent", commemorating the text's twenty-fifth anniversary, Avery Dulles observed that the encyclical alienated many in the Church and left a long-lasting "ripple effect" (Steinfels 2003, 259). A clear recession in religious observance followed, together with a decline in Christian influence on behaviour, at least in the West. All Western countries experienced a sharp decline in vocations for priesthood and religious life, decline in weekly Church attendance, declines in the number of baptized, substantial declines in those seeking catechesis, fewer marriages performed within the Church, while at the same time, the divorce rate climbed sharply (Comby and MacCulloch 1996, 236-237). In the opinion of many people, *Humane Vitae* made the chasm between faith and culture grow wider. So, when the Church opted to silence dissenting theologians, such as Charles Curran, it still had to address the secular world (Hebblethwaite 1975, 209-226). In the aftermath of *Humanae Vitae*, the Church needs to creatively re-interpret its approach to human sexuality. In his book *Towards a New Catholic Morality* (1970) John Giles Milhaven explained the importance of responsible disobedience to Church teaching on abortion, contraception, homosexuality, and divorce. A Catholic theologian, Milhaven was a pioneering voice who thought that the post-conciliar Church was at a turning point in its history. His work treated the Church's tradition with sympathy, but concluded that what passed for Catholic moral teaching one hundred years ago is now inadequate for our times. The Curial leadership also needs to accept that the 'sexual revolution' is a phenomenon

socially constructed by new forms of technology and the programmes of the news and entertainment media. The communications media do reflect the changing status of modernity's sexual activities and attitudes.

The private world of sex has been thrown in an unprecedented way into the public domain over the past forty years by the mass media. This has forced Roman Catholics, like everyone else, to engage in institutional reflexivity about sex. It seems there is good reason to regard *Humae Vitae* as a turning point. Sociologist Anthony Giddens argued in his book *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (1992) that the invention of effective contraception was a turning point for Western society: once sex is separated from reproduction, sexual pleasure and variety can come to the fore. Reliable birth-control paved the way for the 'sexual revolution', women's liberation and the emergence of 'plastic sexuality', that is a sexuality you can play with (see Gauntlett 2002, 106-107). Giddens notes that whilst contraception, before the rise of AIDS, had a direct impact on heterosexual sex, homosexual lives also became more open and less riddled with anxiety. Once reproduction came under control, hetero-sexuality lost its primacy in the West. Giddens argues that modernity's long revolution enables choice and diversity to prosper as more areas of life come under social control. Of course, he admits that this diversity has not yet been reached, as gay men and lesbians continue to face prejudice, abuse, and violence from those people still "un-reconstructed" by the forces of modernity. Giddens posits an optimist vision of Western society, in which relationships are centered in the mutual satisfaction of emotional needs, unlike in the marriages of traditional cultures that (we are told) were often primarily for economic and symbolic necessity. In contrast, Giddens finds that relationships are now becoming consciously

constructed, analyzed, or broken-up, according to how the participants are feeling. The transformation of intimacy encourages an intimate and democratic partnership of two equal 'soul mates'. The traditional idea of 'marriage for life' is replaced by the 'pure relationship' of modernity, in which communication between equal partners of whatever sex ensures the couple are oriented toward mutual satisfaction. This ideal life relationship comes from reflexive modernity in which people's actions are oriented toward the achievement of personal satisfaction. Extrapolating from this reflexive analysis, Giddens envisions a period in late modernity where all social institutions and organizations become more personalized and democratized.

What would happen if the Church as institution were to take up again the pastoral self-examination that was and remains the work of Vatican II? Great anxiety would enter the lives of the Curia's ecclesiastical bureaucrats, who preserve their jobs by maintaining the tension between abstract pronouncements on sexuality and human experience of sexuality. Their very careers depend on maintaining a time lag between intellectual advances and the institution's absorbing them fully into itself. The PCSC tries to grapple with the fact that Christians borrow their orientation from the lifestyle of modernity. Mass media poses a challenge to the Church's teaching and the docility of believers. The mass media industry promotes global democratization and secularization, two things in tension with the Church. Media are a threat to the Church because they are a location where meaning is produced.

The PCSC is a Vatican Curial agency that serves to facilitate the Church's gradual adaptation to the global media culture. This agency with its pastoral observers and spokesmen reflects the Church's new identity on a wide variety of contemporary issues.

Roman Catholic intellectuals such as E. Michael Jones seek solutions and strategies for their quest of christianizing the libidinal power of information technology. In the cybernetic Church, it may be possible someday for believers to technologically break free of gender constraints. Since the Church is also a social system, then it too can evolve and achieve higher levels of human development through spontaneous self-organization. Feminist scholars such as Sadie Plant (author of *Zeros + Ones: Digital Women + the New Techno-culture*) and Donna Haraway (author of *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Re-Invention of Nature*), have argued that media and information technology plays an instrumental sociological role in breaking down traditional gender roles. This is just one of the possibilities cybernetics offers to users of future technology (Lafontaine 2004, 195-220). While the Curia fears for the future, the sex power wielded by techno-science enables today's progressive Catholic intellectuals and strident critics influenced by the feminist views of Uta Ranke-Heinemann, the freedom to envision a future Church as an erotic community.

5.4 Marketing Culture

The fourth reflexive feature to be examined is the colonization of Christian teaching by marketing discourse. During the twentieth century, advertising transformed itself from a mere commercial accessory to a powerful cultural industry in its own right; it became the primary societal medium for constructing and representing a world of desires, aspirations, and identities. As a result of the 'linguistic turn' in the social sciences, scholarship has begun to concentrate on the relevance of language in processes of social change, and it is possible to understand the hegemony of these 'hidden persuaders' of mass consumerist society over religion and theology. Critical discourse analysis examines

documents using linguistics, from an avowedly politically committed perspective following the legacy of modern theorists such as Gramsci, Voloshinov, Bakhtin, Althusser, Foucault, or Baudrillard. Presently, the most influential CDA linguist is Norman Fairclough. Fairclough extends the work of earlier critical linguists like Roger Fowler and looks at language within a 'conflict' understanding of society. For him, ideology is pervasively present in language; the ideological nature of language should therefore be one of the major themes of modern social science. He has been particularly interested in the hegemonic complexities of language functions in advertising, news broadcasting, and politics. In the area of religion, literary scholars and linguists such as Noel Heather and Jean-Pierre Van Noppen have extended Fairclough's insights into the realm of religious studies and theology.

CDA is very helpful for understanding the influence of marketing culture also upon the language used by the PCSC. Today's 'pick and mix' mentality - part tell/part sell - inspires the linguistic repertoire at the heart of contemporary advertising strategy and its construction of discourse; it is a new guise of the agent/patient pattern of behaviour. Market consumerism encourages the Roman Catholic Church to target social majority outlooks, and the Vatican teaching on communications exploits ideas about 'ideal communication' and Jesus as 'perfect communicator' to enhance Catholicism's prestige. The Vatican's interest in media commodifies worship services, pastoral work, and devotional activity in Church conceived of as a producer/seller of TV, radio, computer programs, and most recently e-commerce. Catholic pastoral ministry is situated within a managerial context: the Church becomes a community of production, whether of media literacy, Catholic journalism, or religious music, and the Vatican is cast as a department of

human resources. The pastoral enthusiasm of the PCSC for media is replete with PR speak, and its discussion of the mass media is constructed around Lockean understandings of property rights and a Smithian advocacy of capitalism's market economy. Pastoral ministry is cast as producing goods and services, Catholic social teaching is modified into a manifesto for the capitalist transformation of undeveloped countries. The Vatican's technological optimism helps the Church to maintain its influence in the age of hyper-capitalism and information technology: to avoid becoming a relic of the past, it adapts to the times and encourages contemporary Roman Catholic identity to adopt the business Church frame model (Milbank 1997, 283).

Critical language awareness reveals that the PCSC's teaching has been colonized by wide-spread advertising rhetoric that regards the addressee of religious discourse as a worshipper-consumer shopping for a religious self (Lyon 2001, 79-96). Mass media have become the ultimate manifestation of the connection between progress and technology. From the Internet to cell-phones, electronic computers, and communications satellites, modern technologies have created a cornucopia of consumer products that ushered in the age of personal consumption. Through the notion of transference, business promoters of consumer culture promise that humans can master their lives. Media draw inspiration from the promise of better living through technology. The marketplace is full of goods that promise comfort and abundant opportunity for consumers who can dispose of items when styles change. Manufacturers can render a perfectly usable product obsolete by simply changing its outward form, without the introduction of new technology. Planned obsolescence, often based on nothing more than stylistic changes, has become part of the engine that runs the consumer society (McCurdy 1997, 207-232).

Free-market rhetoric and advertising are pervasive in contemporary society, and it does not leave the Church untouched. The Vatican's very interest in social communications, information technology, and mass media is a symptom of modern religious identity becoming colonized by the spirit of democratic capitalism. Global capitalism, marketing, and the phenomenon of consumerism have all become central to the social life of the technologically advanced societies in the later twentieth century. It is widely believed by many that free-market economics holds things together, culturally and socially. Consumption now affects the ways in which people build up, and maintain, a sense of who they are, and of who they wish to be. This includes the lifestyles of members in the Church also structured around the daily activity of consumption.

Max Weber's *The Sociology of Religion*, in chapter fifteen entitled, "Judaism, Christianity, and the Socio-Economic Order" was one of the first studies to examine modern religion's connection to the acquisitive life. Since that time consumer conduct has become the moral focus of life, the integrative bond of society, and the basis of systemic policy and government for nations and communities. Because of advertising and marketing, consumerism now works in tandem with mass media and information technology. The rise of media power is but another stage in the decline of religious power. All planning with regard to major institutions, including religious, now takes place against the backdrop of an all-pervasive economic system based on the globalization of deregulated capital. Not so long ago, the Roman Catholic Church and the Catholic faith determined human life and social existence, more or less unquestioned, in a large part of Western Europe. As the power of religion declines, the power of the market grows. Catholic faith communities in Europe now struggle with the fact that the transmission of the Christian tradition has been

flagging in recent years (Boeve 2003, 56-59). This has led not only to diminished theological engagement and a massive decline in Church attendance; it has also had its effects in the cultural domain: culture has become, to use the lingua franca of Anthony Giddens, 'de-traditionalized'; traditional Christian culture is now "worn out". Because a chasm has opened between the Church and society, even convinced Christians are having problems reflecting on the plausibility and relevance of their faith (Boeve 2003, 51-64). This phenomenon is a long-term consequence of the Second Vatican Council's mandate to re-contextualize Christianity in the modern world.

During the years of the 1980s and 1990s, the media spectacle of John Paul II as a holy, heroic, cool celebrity travelling the globe to meet leaders and youth left a lasting impression of how Roman Catholicism became colonized by the cult of image. Norman Fairclough's CDA research refers to such hegemonic behaviour as the aestheticization of public identity (*Analyzing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Routledge, 2003). The 'aestheticization' of fields such as politics or business implies a shifting away from the perception that these fields operate according to purely rational principles. The aestheticization of public identities is the more or less self-conscious ability to create particular 'images'. It can be traced back to the Nazi period, for instance the aesthetic management of the massive rallies the Nazis organized in Germany in the 1930s. More recently, analysts have pointed to a more pervasive 'aestheticization' of social life, the private lives of consumers as well as public life. The preoccupation with 'image' is an aspect of this, and one can trace it across politics, more recently education (the image of the 'successful' academic), and into the individualism of consumerized private life. The 'very' identification of the 'expert' is the social construction of an aesthetic processes

(Fairclough 2003, 183 and 212).

Religious scholar Malachi Martin observed in his many books that the Vatican now functions as a multi-national conglomerate involved in the stock ownership and management of properties, so that it can serve as a power broker. Similar criticisms are made of trends in the Scottish Church by John Drane, a practical theologian and member of the Scottish Churches Council, who published a critical analysis of organized Christianity entitled *The McDonaldization of the Church: Spirituality, Creativity, and the Future of the Church* (2000). The Vatican's ongoing study commission on media, cybernetics and communications shares in the legacy of revisionist, liberal Catholicism's romanticizing of capitalism and information technology (Novak 1991, 333-360). It also draws from the discourse of progress and development that has become hegemonic in much policy literature issued by the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and even the United Nations. Christian belief is now expressed in a digital vocabulary, with technologized concepts such as outcome based education, task forces of Biblical computeracy, virtual reality, social facilitation, catechetical facilitation, strategic planning, and computer programmatic pastoral development. Modern capitalism has brought about speed, and Paul Virilio, a French philosopher and Roman Catholic, has argued in his books that the sheer velocity of information, images, and technological metamorphosis is dissolving our sense of historical time. The Church has been hit by the 'information bomb', and pastoral ministry now must become 'cheaper, faster, better', like all modern commodities. The Church's prophetic task, we are told, is to help humanize capitalism by facilitating dialogue among all peoples and their governments to work together at the national and international levels. It is hoped by the Vatican that technocracy and the expansion of

techno-science will make the world a better place. Consumer Christianity textually interpellates pastoral ministry into the discursive order of advanced capitalism's project of development. It is possible to borrow the idea of *chronotopia*, derived from the ancient Greek understanding of time or speed and utopia or good place (Armitage and Roberts 2002, 43-56). The Vatican bureaucracy, namely PCSC has embraced the social imaginary of popular contemporary business literature broadly centered on cyberspace and the particular social imaginary of the *chronotopia* found in cyber society. This business and management literature describes the speed paces, social desires, and organizational concerns of today's rich and famous entrepreneurs like Bill Gates. It is also associated with the inventions, discoveries, use, and application of cybernetic or techno-industrial techniques, information, electronic communications, and techno-scientific systems and methods such as the Internet. In sum, *chronotopianism* has become a leading discourse within all Roman Catholic pastoral documents on social communications, information technology, and the mass media.

Chapter Six

Toward a Pragmatics of Vatican Teaching

So far, this study focused on official church teaching issued by the Vatican on media and social communications. The Church's teaching has sometimes ignored the social sciences or distorted their methods, partly because it did not agree with the current forms of social analysis or theory. Paul Lakeland criticizes the Church's teaching because it does not always respect the type of social analysis needed to talk coherently about society. For him, the Church teaching offers a 'piecemeal approach to social problems' (Lakeland in Barnes 2000, 255). The Vatican did not develop social theory (most religious traditions did not either), and its teaching on media is a hybrid depending on the sciences for its own forms of truth (Barnes 2000, 255).

The official documents issued by the PCSC tend to mix analytic and didactic approaches. Do they claim more than they show? Or do they rather show above and beyond any claiming and proving? Is such deictics or indexicality a genre of argumentation attuned to communications today? The PCSC has slowly developed its own discourse-fashioned view of both religious doctrine and practice and developed a growing awareness of the process of communication, not only of the content of what is usually called a religious message. The Vatican's interest in the sociology of media and communication began with the rise of radio in the 1920s and television in the 1950s, and it continued in the decades after Vatican II when computers, satellites, and the Internet revolutionized human interaction. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides a shift of the traditional *lex orandi/lex credendi* outlook into propositional and emotional truth as

essential aspects of religious discourse. Let us refer to the reflections of John Hardon, Michel de Certeau, Peter Hebblethwaite, and Karl Rahner concerning such a shift.

6.1 John Hardon

Aside from his influential catechism, John Hardon has written about the history of Roman Catholicism from the vantage point of communications in his book, *Christianity in the Twentieth Century* (1971). Using his interpretation, it can be argued that Vatican documents addressing atheism provide a pre-text and context for thinking about the mass media. The time period following the Second World War witnessed how mass communications such as press, cinema, radio, and television collectivized society away from the Christian faith in Europe and North America. And yet, no part of the Christian world has been spared by what Hardon calls the propaganda of information technology. When in 1948, a conference on freedom of information and the right to communicate was held in Paris, a draft text for an international convention was drawn up. But the United Nations, in spite of repeated efforts, did not succeed in sanctioning the agreement. In the years since then, little has changed. Consequently, all that exists of the right to freedom of information is the rhetorical statement of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (1949, *Human Rights*, 277).

The inability of nations to agree on this simple declaration explains many things in the history of Christianity in the twentieth century: The dribblets of

Information about the expulsion of religious communities from France in

1903 and the confiscation of Church property in 1906; the squelched knowledge about Pope Benedict XV's efforts to prevent and then terminate the First World War; the labelling of Christians as rebels while the Church was persecuted in Mexico, from 1917 on, and in Spain, during the so-called Civil War (1936-1939); the conspiracy of silence on the heroic sufferings of bishops, clergy, and people through two generations of agony in Russia and satellite territories; the incredible saddling of guilt on German Catholics and Protestants for the Nazi genocide of Jews under Hitler; the indifference to the 'holy war' waged against Christians in Islamic countries like Sudan and Biafra, commonly pictured as a purely political (and domestic) affair; the creation of an image of evangelical Protestants as "Bible fundamentalists" and religious fanatics; the misrepresentation of almost every major issue of Vatican II by sustaining the polarity between 'conservatives' (with the Pope) and 'liberals' (against the Pope) in the Roman Catholic Church; and the saturated secularity in thousands of pages of daily print and hours of news media in cities where Christians, except under protest, are given little else ever to see or hear.

(Hardon 1971, 49)

In short, the media is for Hardon a new kind of ideological atheism that challenges the religious psychology of Christians and distorts their language of faith.

In Hardon's estimation three sociological factors have stood together in the way and prevented the implementation of the "freedom of information and ideas" proposed by the United Nations and as a result, have adversely affected world religions - in particular,

Christianity: money, monopoly, and vested ideology (1971, 50). Media news services are business enterprises. Long before radio and television became standard media in the 1930s and 1940s, the sales of news was subject to all the pressures of economic competition. In the news market, controversial events and personalities are the most sellable commodities for business. Either they could be actually controversial and perhaps newsworthy; or they could be shaped and developed into matter for controversy. The several years of confrontation in the press between Suenens and Paul VI, or Hans Küng and the Roman Curia are examples of such development (Hardon 1971, 50). News services and media, both global and national, are subject to the laws of economy in yet another way. During the twentieth century, the instruments of social communications were either completely in the hands of government (as in Soviet countries or today in China) or practically controlled by a relatively small number of people (as in France or North America). In either case, the news and entertainment media monopoly serves to edit, filter, and accommodate information to the preferences of those in charge. Hardon refers to the former Vice President of the United States, Spiro Agnew, who made some critical comments during 1969 about the media monopoly in politics, that could be underscored in the area of religion: "A small group of men, numbering perhaps no more than a dozen...decide what forty or fifty million Americans will learn of the day's events in the nation and the world. We cannot measure this power and influence by traditional democratic standards, for these men can create national issues overnight" (Hardon 1971, 51). Similar arguments have been made by historians of journalism and the press, such as Ben H. Bagdikian, in his book *The Media Monopoly*, which has gone through six editions since it was first published in 1983. Some regard such warnings about the chilling effects

of corporate ownership and mass advertising on journalism as alarmist. However, it is important to recall that the Internet and world wide web has drastically reduced the number of corporations controlling most of the world's media (daily newspapers, magazines, radio, television, books, and movies) to even fewer owners.

Hardon contends that the history of Western Christianity during the twentieth century cannot be written without taking stock of the corresponding power of the secular press and communications media over religion. The ideology of thoughtful persons and organizational bodies would necessarily affect whatever information they relayed to the consumer. But when this cultural agenda is opposed on principle to the Christian ethos, then the outcome and historical results are predictable. During the second half of the twentieth century, some countries like Canada, Mexico and France, began to take measures to protect their citizens against at least some of this influence. In 1959 the Mexican Chamber of Deputies approved recommendations of a special committee. One of its provisions was to prohibit broadcasts "contrary to social customs or showing violence or crime in a favourable light" (Hardon 1971, 50). In France civil authorities have had a similar precautionary ruling since 1949 to protect French culture. In Canada the federal government legislated media policy which mandates first priority to Canadian cultural content since the 1970s. Needless to say, such protective measures were aimed especially at curbing the globalizing tendencies of wealthy American media companies. The textbook *Television and Society* provides evidence that some specialists in mass communications have been perfectly frank:

The fact that nation after nation, knowing full well what United States media practices are, should specifically write into their own laws and

codes provisions to prevent such things in their own countries speaks more loudly than anything they may say directly about United States programs themselves. If real exchanges of programs with such nations are to occur, in the kind of worthwhile dialogue which television makes possible, some revision of our current television value systems is in order. (Skornia 1965, 197).

The 1930s were the dividing line between a pre- and post- television world. Since then, an uneven struggle has been taking place between competing philosophies - the religious viewpoint which believes in certain truths that created Western civilization, and the atheist position which, in Bertrand Russell's words, must prevail if the future welfare of humankind is to be insured. "The whole system of Christian ethics," he is being quoted, "both in the Catholic and in the Protestant form, requires to be re-examined as far as possible without the preconceptions to which a Christian education predisposes most of us" (quoted in Hardon 1971, 51).

6.2 Michel de Certeau

During the 1990s, English translations of Certeau's work made possible by the efforts of Graham Ward, Ian Buchanan, Tom Conley, and Jeremy Ahearne brought renewed attention to its relevance for religious studies. In particular, credit should be given to Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt for his translations and commentaries. These scholars have shown the significant role Certeau occupies in twentieth century Catholic history. In 1996 a special issue of *New Blackfriars* was edited by Graham Ward to celebrate the influence of Certeau on anglophone theology. Trained in the Jesuit tradition, Certeau (1925-1984) was familiar with the currents of Catholic theology in the 1950s and

1960s. An editor and a contributor for journals such as *Concilium*, *Christus*, he also edited and published a book containing a collection of letters by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Deeply influenced by the *nouvelle théologie* movement in France, he builds on the works of the French Jesuit Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) in stressing the historical conditioning of religious language and experience, particularly de Lubac's historical studies such as *Corpus Mysticum* (Paris, 1949), which show the intimate connection between changes in belief and changes in the language of belief. Certeau also shared Lubac's concern for the social aspects of Catholic dogma, as well as his abiding interest in the Church's dialogue with atheism, humanism, and secular culture.

For Jean Collet, a programme advisor to the Institut National de l'Audio-visuel in Paris and professor of cinema and communications at the Universities of Paris VII and Dijon, there is a link between the amazing development of communications media and the rise of atheism and religious indifference. Collet discussed this in his essay "Images of Indifference, Indifference to Images: Audio-Visual Media and Contemporary Indifference" (*Concilium* [1983]: 80-85). In particular, he finds that there is a 'crisis of otherness' in the modern world. Such a crisis is thoroughly analyzed by Michel de Certeau. In his biography of Certeau entitled *Le marcheur blessé* (2004), Francois Dosse explains how Certeau contributed to discourse analysis particularly in *Le quotidien réinventé* and *Le jeu des arts de faire entre stratégies et tactiques*. Certeau was a pioneer in the discourse analysis of Roman Catholic society and history. From his contribution, it is possible to sketch a grammar of Christian believing. He reminds us that ecclesiological practice is also political and that semiotics might help the Church to break down the barrier between textual interpretation and cultural interpretation and to cease to operate

on a governing binary of Christ and World. Certeau examines how the modernized Roman Catholic Church became preoccupied with its own self and more with the world.

Armand and Michèle Mattelart note in their primer text, *Theories of Communication: A Short Introduction* (1998), that “in counter-point to Michel Foucault’s analysis of social networks of observational and disciplinary technology”, Certeau considers it indispensable to explore the social “network of anti-discipline” (127). The fact is, as Don Cupitt observes in his book, *Mysticism after Modernity* (1998), that the Christian tradition is not monolithic: it does not speak with one voice, and it always has its own internal Other, an anti-tradition of radical dissent (106). Communication scholar, John Fiske, observes in *Understanding Popular Culture* (1989) that “too many theorists in the past have emphasized the centralized production that is characteristic of both the financial economy and bourgeois critical industry, and have ignored the tireless but quiet activity of a very different kind of production that Certeau called ‘consumption’” (142). He recalls that Certeau used two metaphors: one of the reader as poacher encroaching on the terrain of the cultural landowner (or text-owner) and “stealing” what he or she wants without being caught and subjected to the laws of the land (rule of the text), and one of the text as a kind of supermarket where the reader selects and rejects items and then combines his or her selection into a creative “meal” (1989, 143). Indeed, Certeau grasped the idea of what is now called the ‘cafeteria Catholic’ years in advance of the demographic trend. Here, mention should be made of Certeau’s distinction between reading and decipherment. Decipherment is “learning how to read someone else’s language on the other’s terms; reading is the process of bringing one’s own oral, vernacular culture to bear on the written text” (Fiske 1989, 108). An example of reading

in contrast to decipherment is the non-practicing Catholic who lives in society opposed to the discipline or the 'official language' of the Church's tradition, or *vice versa*, the devout Catholic who lives in secular modernity.

Certeau brings linguistic analysis to bear upon contemporary Roman Catholic faith and practice. In *Reading the Popular*, communications scholar John Fiske points out that Michel de Certeau was a student of Jacques Lacan and so uses language as a model in his work. He argues that theories of language that stress *langue* over *parole* (Saussure) or competence over performance (Chomsky) are theories that foreground language's strategic function as an agent of social control. *Parole* is an instance of *langue* at work (Fiske 1991, 136). Certeau utilizes linguistic theory as a means to study social conflict and popular resistance. His theory focuses upon the utterance, or the tactical uses of language, which is the way in which discursive resources can be appropriated by, and used for, the interests of the weak. It is important to understand that an utterance is the momentary, tactical language of the speaker, not an actualization of the socially determined language system. The two ways of understanding the potential of the speech act are crucially different: an utterance is the resistive appropriation of the language system; *parole* is an exemplary, rule-abiding act that gives it a concrete realization (Fiske 1991, 136). The linguistic system can be tactically appropriated when the oppressed perform utterances that put the accents and turns of phrase from the strong in the service of the weak. The Church can use this kind of analysis to invent pastoral solutions that discover Christian meanings in the modern age. For example, at Vatican II, the Church decided to selectively speak the strong language and grammar of secular modernity in order to empower the weakness of faith. The Church can devise strategies of discipleship

that creatively adapt, evade, or when necessary, manipulate the dominant lifestyles and cultural homogeneity of secular culture.

6.2.1 The Inaugurating Rupture

Theology Digest, a journal run by the School of Divinity at St. Louis University, published Certeau's public address delivered at St. Louis University in 1971: "The Inaugurating Rupture: or How is Christianity Thinkable Today" (*Theology Digest* 19/4 [Winter 1971]: 334-345). In that lecture, Certeau begins with the issue of dogma's relation to Christianity's place in history and notes that Christianity has an essential relation to the historical event of Christ Jesus, the event which makes faith possible and is presupposed in all consequent discursive elaborations of Christian experience. That event has had a series of intellectual and historical social forms which have had two apparently contradictory characteristics: the will to be faithful to the inaugural event; and the necessity of being different from these beginnings. In looking at the Christian traditions, Certeau argues that the event of Jesus should be regarded as permission of a simple experience. This conception of permission clarifies the relationship that links the successive and different forms of Christianity to an inaugural event: whatever types of transmission or of reading of the 'origins' exist, they never repeat the Gospel, but they would be impossible without the Gospel (Certeau 1971, 334-336).

Certeau was a pioneering scholar in historiography who researched the history of the Jesuits and in the process helped to conceptualize the agenda of historical research during the 1960s. For him, the early Church documents of the Christ-event give us in writing only the reverse side of what is essential. They all speak of an event which they efface by substituting different consequences for it. But they manifest the nature of this

event by virtue of the fact that they refer to it as that which 'permits' new possibilities. The event of Jesus Christ is 'historical' not because of its preservation outside time owing to a knowledge of it that supposedly has remained intact, but because of its introduction into time with various discoveries about it for which it 'makes room'. The many successive creations of faith relate to new situations (Certeau 1971, 334-336). They also specify, in proportion to the distance from the origins, on the one hand the meaning of the initial break (a meaning expressed in other languages than the first ones), and on the other hand the rules of a fidelity that is defined in terms of compatibility and incompatibility. Fidelity to religious tradition is not a repetition or an objective survival of a past. Each explication of belief postulates the reference to a past event which makes other expressions possible. The index of 'the' Christian tradition allows for a multiplicity of interpretations, each different and yet each permitted by experience (Certeau 1971, 334-336).

Certeau critically observes that the 'whatness' of Christian belief is never in any way to be identified with the sum total, or with a theoretical corollary, or with a practical conclusion, of the work done during the time elapsed since the start of such belief. Of course, he notes, it leaves each time the objective trace of a 'fidelity'. But this fidelity itself is not of an objective kind; it is linked with the absence of the object or of the particular past which inaugurated it. Certeau warns us that the past is not our security. The Christian language begins with the disappearance of its 'author'. The first statement of fidelity is found in Sacred Scripture, which by condition of its teaching, was made possible only after the death of the "Son of Man", Jesus. Jesus effaces himself to give faithful witness to the Father who authorizes him, and to 'give rise' to different but

faithful communities which he makes possible. There is a close bond between the absence of Jesus (dead and not present) and the birth of the Christian language (objective and faithful testimony of his survival). In sum, Jesus is the archê that cannot be objectified in knowledge, but can only be registered in his effects upon Christian communities which issue from him. As the *sine qua non* of Christianity, the condition for its possibility, Jesus appears within the Church only in being disseminated in a multiplicity of interpretations (Certeau 1971, 334-336).

6.2.2 Certeau's Cognitive Analysis of Faith

The second part of the 1971 lecture presents Certeau's cognitive analysis of modern Christianity and pertains to the spiritual experience of Jesus and its opening of a new dimension for humanity. The death of Jesus, his disappearance from the historical scene, 'allows' or 'permits' the Christian community to begin, and it 'makes room' for a plurality of Christian experiences and Christian languages striving to be faithful to the Jesus-event that is irreducible to a particular knowledge or experience. It is the condition - not the object - of the operations which flow from it. The event is lost precisely in what it authorizes; it somehow dies to its own historical specificity, but this happens in the very discoveries which it provokes. The process of the death (the absence) and the survival (the presence) of Jesus continues in each Christian experience: what the event makes possible is different each time as a new remoteness from the event and a new way of erasing it (Certeau 1971, 337-339).

The empty tomb is the condition of possibility for a spiritual knowledge, i.e. a 'verification' which expresses itself and extends into the era of the word and the Spirit. Each Christian language refers to the same event, but does not give us what disappeared

to make it possible. The initial event becomes an inter-location: something said-between, implied by all the Christian languages but given by no one of them. The founder disappears; he is impossible to grasp and 'hold', to the extent that he is incorporated and takes on meaning in a plurality of 'Christian' experiences, operations, discoveries, and inventions. Christian manifestation suppresses the possibility of identifying Jesus with an object, a knowledge, an experience. This manifestation is no more than a multiplicity of practices and discourses which neither 'preserve' nor repeat the event. The Christian event is an inter-location (something 'said-between') insofar as it is neither said nor given anywhere, except in the form of those interrelations constituted by the network of expressions which would not exist without it (Certeau 1971, 337-339).

The rigorous formulation between the plurality of Christian languages and the 'inter-location' which they designate, this relationship is expressed in the enunciation "Not without you", or in the liturgical formula: "Let me never be separated from you." Certeau refers to Martin Heidegger who suggested the category of 'not without you' that enters in various ways into the functioning of the Christian experience: in the organization of the faith community, since no one is a Christian without others, and also in the Gospels, where Jesus is not without the Father nor without the disciples, though neither the Father, nor the disciples are to be identified as being himself. Through community practice and Trinitarian theology the death of Jesus becomes the condition for the new Church to arise and for new languages of the Gospel to develop. The true relation of Jesus to the Father (who gives him his authority) and to the Church (which he 'permits') is verified (manifested) by his death. The Jesus-event is extended (verified) in the manner of a disappearance in the differences which that event renders possible. Our

relation to the origin is in function of its increasing absence. The beginning is more and more hidden by the multiple creations which reveal its significance (Certeau 1971, 337-339).

With regards to Christianity's historical manifestation and multiplicity, Certeau argues that the relation of the beginning of the Jesus-event to its verification has no other form but a plural one. The structure of the manifestation is pluralist in its scriptural form just as in the form of the community. There has been a loss of anything immediately given in the image or in the voice. Already vanished are those idols that could freeze our view and give us truth in the singular. Faded away and gone are those 'primitive' objects that could delimit Christian knowledge and enable the Church to possess it in ownership. The kenosis of presence gives rise to a plural, communitarian language. A series of places, works, or historical formulations which the absence of Jesus has made possible are the only traces of the incarnate God. These spaces are a new dimension open to our enunciation and practice: they are an unveiling which relates to our situation, a discovery which opens a future an experience made possible by an event, but never identical with a past, with a doctrine, or with a law (Certeau 1971, 337-339).

Certeau affirms that Christianity today is still capable of opening a new space. It can make possible a change in the practice of speaking and in the relation of a speaker to others and to social language; it 'permits' today a faith as the discovering of a living necessity (linked to the disappearance of an objective security because this truth has the form of a creative, risked freedom); it 'works' creating always other figures of the same movement. All these aspects are ultimately its real 'verification', whatever the manner or the place. This new space should not to be regarded as a common culture, nor as an

ideology, nor even as a practical programme. Certeau speaks of a syntax of these spaces, since they are joined together among themselves. This inter-connection is due to the relation - which organizes them all - between a singularity which gradually disappears insofar as it 'permits' these spaces open to our enunciation and practice, and their very multiplicity which reveals its meaning in the act of becoming differentiated (Certeau 1971, 337-339)

The notion of repeating differently is crucial to how Certeau answers the question of how Christianity is thinkable today. Bauerschmidt infers from the viewpoint of Certeau that Christianity is clearly not thinkable today in the same way it was in the past; it must always be thought differently, yet in such a way that it perpetually repeats the difference of its founding event. Bauerschmidt argues that for Certeau Christianity is a practice of alterity: one is faithful to the event of Jesus Christ precisely in accepting the risk of being Christian differently. Risk is an aspect of modern times that cannot be avoided even in religion. Nonetheless, it is this religious event which constantly returns in permitting new 'spaces' in which Christianity is enacted differently, not only differently from the way in which it was enacted in the Church's past, but in a heterogeneous plurality in the present (Ward 1997, 138).

6.2.3 Difference and the Communication Structure of Christian Language

The third main point in Certeau's St. Louis University lecture from 1971 is that the different Christian appearances and languages are not an unrelated plurality. They form a communitarian network of witnesses and authorities, but each of them is limited. In the Church, every figure of authority is stamped by the absence of that which founds it. Whether it is a question from the Bible, or tradition, or councils, the pope or anything

else among the Christian 'authorities', that which permits them all is missing. Each form of authority reveals what it is not, because it refers to God as historically manifested in Jesus. It is impossible for any one to be the whole, the 'central', or the unique authority. Only an irreducible plurality of authorities can indicate the relation which exists among them and what each one postulates as 'Christian'. Certeau notes that neither the pope, nor the Bible, nor any particular tradition is sufficient authority to itself. Yet as different, they are necessary to it. A necessary relation of each one to others establishes and signifies its relation to the other (God) who authorizes it. The plural constitutes the manifestation of the Christian meaning (Certeau 1971, 339-341).

Christian language, de Certeau argues, must have a communitarian structure that allows for difference. This idiom's connection of witnesses, signs or different roles announces a 'truth' which cannot be reduced to unity by one member or by a particular function. Because this 'truth' belongs to no one theological group or individual authority in the Church, it is proclaimed by several. Because this 'truth' is the ungraspable condition of that which makes it possible, it leaves behind only a multiplicity of signs: an historical network of interconnected places, rather than a hierarchical pyramid. The quality of non-identity is characteristic of the language of the New Testament. Historical-critical Bible scholars such as Ernst Käsemann have shown that the New Testament canon is indeed a 'connection of opposites'. For example, the Gospel of Mark cannot be reduced to that of John any more than to the Epistles of Jude or Paul. Paul would not be more "Christian" without Jude or Peter, who are so different from him and in certain respects his opposite. This network of texts obeys another kind of coherence than that found in philosophical discourse: it does not reduce the many to one. On the contrary, the

plural is maintained because it is this inter-connected, but not unified, difference that permits the other. They are the condition of a future and of an historical manifestation. The plural indicates the 'Christian' relation with regard to which each apostolic text offers a distinct treatment by speaking in its own way of the faith in the dead and risen Jesus (Certeau 1971, 339-341).

According to Certeau, this heterogeneity of Christian authorities can be seen within the canon of Scriptures as well as the boundary drawn between the canon itself and subsequent authorities. There is a law for development in Christianity that is based upon the permissive function of the limit. By his death, Jesus 'made room' for the Christian communities and the Church. If the corpus of the testament is closed (limited), it is because it has to allow, outside of itself and after itself, other compilations: patristic, liturgical, theological, and so forth, which will become multiple and often more and more different. The canonization and formal 'closing' of the New Testament makes differences possible and even preserves the necessity of such religious differences. The corpus of Scripture would not be Christian without this reference back to others (Certeau 1971, 339-341).

To recognize the Bible's limits is to recognize the necessity of other testimonies. As Certeau explains, the limit has a permissive function. In every synchronic space (e.g. between contemporary communities, languages, theologies) and in diachronic development (e.g. between successive generations, periods, and Church ages of Christianity), the limit plays a role of differentiation which constantly restores a Christian relationship with the other as necessary but ungraspable. By recognizing its limits and its proper task, each collective or individual testimony or authority manifests that it is not

possible to be Christian without the other - in the form of faith (relationship with God) or charity (relationship with humanity). Like Jesus, it must 'make room' for others. This acceptance of limits applies not just to authorities within Christianity, but to all of Christianity's authority as a whole (Certeau 1971, 339-341).

According to Certeau, the Jesus-event does not permit everything to be reduced to one common element. There is a need for the Church to overcome its temptation towards uniformity. There are examples throughout Christianity's history of movements that tried to create conformity but simply brought about a reduction of faith to something else. Certeau recalls that some have tried to reduce Christianity to *sola scriptura*; others, in opposition, identified it with the pronouncements of an individual (the pope) or limited it to an institutional body (as did the Catholic traditionalists) or to a body of doctrine (as does fundamentalism). These movements are all theological variations coming from the same structure: identification. None of them is compatible with the structure of limit. In this structure, each one of the above-mentioned authorities is necessary, but Christianity cannot be identified with any one of them alone. Every confession of faith is regulated socially, theoretically, and practically by the limit. The limit is the ultimate law of death (the irreducible existence of the Other is manifested in the experience of one's own limit and death), of solidarity (each one is needed by the others), and of meaning, which cannot be identified with an individual presence or with knowledge, or with an objective property because it is given by the very relationships of faith and charity as an inter-location (Certeau 1971, 339-341).

Certeau finds that the death of Jesus, the development of the Church, the Spirit of the risen Jesus within the relationships of charity designate three aspects of the same law.

This interconnection is the basis for organizing faith communities and authorities. This law defines the faith community by differentiating the members of the Church who are necessary to one another but never reducible to one another. This law establishes each community in a necessary relation with the others. Certeau argues that Christianity must recognize its own limits. A clear separation of groups or 'Christian' ways of speaking is the means of avowing what they do not have, what they miss, and by this very fact, of confessing the necessity of the others and the meaning of the Christian faith. Faith communities tend to look for differentiation of 'dialogue'. The revelation of their differences would bind them to their limits. Every group in the Church that wants to constitute itself as the whole refuses, along with its limits, any articulation with others and want to be all. Today a Christian group protects itself often by hiding in particularity, by speaking as the testimony of all good wills, by identifying itself with positions held in common, by announcing only the insignificant truths of humanity. This poor universalism is a mask; it is a compensation against the fact of the Christian particularity (Certeau 1971, 339-341).

Whenever it is a question of faith or of God, every Christian, every community, and Christianity as a whole is called on to be the sign of that which is lacking. This 'lack' is not some wide region to conquer or to be filled in. It is a limit by means of which every witness publicly confesses his relation with the 'author' of the faith and with the others (believers or non-believers). This is so because, since Jesus, an internal law links his death to the necessity of making room for others. It expresses an essential covenant of Christianity with the unforeseeable or unknown spaces which God opens. Certeau points out that the important thing is not to speak about the death of God, but to accept the limits

of Christianity and the death of universalism as a way of recognizing our bond with the others and, through them, with God. Indeed, "God is greater than we". The problem is less the death of God than the death of Christianity's ideological reassurance of the Church's missionary totalism (Certeau 1971, 339-341). Recognizing limits enables the social, liturgical, theoretical articulation of Christian language, and identifies Christianity as a necessary relation to the necessarily different. It refers to the act which made the Gospels possible and which they recount, the death of Jesus. For Jesus to die, is to 'make room' for the Father and at the same time 'make room' for the polyglot and creative community of Pentecost, for the plurality of the Scriptures, for the multiplicity of the future Christian generations. For Certeau, Christians must have a sense of the boundaries of their community in order not to exclude, but to register the alterity of experiences which are not Christian (Certeau 1971, 339-341).

Christianity must recognize that there are other spaces that open to encounter the other and that Christian discourse cannot position nor name. The gesture of making room for the multiplicity of Christian languages in relation to the invisibility of the Spirit inaugurates a structure of communication where a plurality of members (or of authorities) is the only revelation of spiritual meaning. With this gesture begins a history in which, each time, to 'permit' means to 'disappear', and at last, to die. Whether it be in a personal itinerary, pedagogical transmission, educational task or social organization, the mark of spiritual truth is henceforward the effective relation between the fading away of a singularity and that which it makes possible. It is to say that a spiritual or a religious authority may be recognized according to the nature of its relationships with other such authorities in a plurality of authorities (Certeau 1971, 339-341).

6.2.4 Action as the Primary Function of Christian Discourse

The fourth and final section of Certeau's published lecture stresses that in order to move forward the inter-location of Christian experience must embrace risk and become a doing by which the boundaries that necessarily delimit the Christian speech are perpetually transgressed. The Christian movement is always the recognizing of a particular situation and the necessity of a new step forward. There is always a necessary risk in being different: it requires simultaneously a place and a 'further', a 'now' and an 'afterwards', a 'here' and an 'elsewhere'. In the Gospel, it is to this category that belongs the relationship, established by his death, between Jesus living and Jesus resurrected. He had to be 'here' in order that it might be possible for him to be 'not here' but 'elsewhere'; he had to be present so that his disappearance might become the sign of a different future (Matthew 28:1-8). The newness of Christianity is an expression of the relativity of its non-dualistic placement in the world (Certeau 1971, 341-345).

Within Christian experience, Certeau observes that the boundary or limit is a place for action that ensures the step from a particular situation to a progress opening a future and creating a new past, from being a 'there' to being 'elsewhere'. The Church's action in modernity is that of working on emerging social and intellectual frontiers. A particular place - the present - is required if there is to be a departure. "Both elements, the place and the departure, are interrelated, because it is the withdrawal from a place that allows one to recognize the enclosure implicit in the initial position, and as a result it is this limited field which makes possible a further investigation". Certeau critically observes that boundaries are the place of the Christian work, and their displacements the

result of this work. These faith boundaries break and slowly change due to perpetual transgression via praxis. Praxis is necessary for the Church to pass from one place to another, in order for something to be done and not just said, in order to transcend, whereas speech and institutions circumscribe each place successively occupied. The Church's praxis is linked to the particular circumstance of an act, but insofar as the critical step makes them out of date (Certeau 1971, 341-345).

The inter-location of Christian experience depends upon praxis. Certeau observes that praxis is silence in relation to speech. It belongs to an order different from the institutionalized or theological statements from which it starts and that it may condition. It is impossible to contain praxis within such statements as their content or object. Pastoral praxis is not a 'thing' that can be 'expressed' in a 'formula'. From Certeau's own perspective, it would be a mistake to think that the necessary relationship between speech and practice must involve a verbal formulation that would be a description or an analysis of the experience. Any account of analysis of a particular praxis must be 'unfaithful' to that action when it simply speaks of it. As a general rule, the more frequently a thing is said, the less it is done. At least, the relation of saying to doing is not the relation of container to contained, or of formulation to experience. In the mechanics of Christian discourse different elements can be broken down and delimited. The outgoing implied by doing is related to the defining or limiting of positions required by saying, just as departure is related to place, though neither can be reduced to the other. So, the relation between praxis and speech consists of distinct, yet dynamic boundaries (Certeau 1971, 341-345).

Certeau argues that the primary function of Christian discourse is action. He

stresses that the inter-location of Christian experience is not primarily a saying, but a doing, by which the boundaries necessarily delimiting Christianity are transgressed. Within the Gospels, there is a close connection between decision and truth: "He who does the truth will come to the light". His actions are the way of knowing (John 3:21). According to Certeau, Christian praxis is not merely the 'application' of a doctrine and its putting into practice, or its justification. Even less is it an object determined and already depicted by a particular language. Furthermore, praxis is not a consequence of knowledge, rather it is a beginning and a risk. Praxis is essential to Certeau's interest in the project of self-determination or 'the art of making' in an insecure environment. If the Church is to survive in the modern world, then it must continually devise strategies and tactics that give meaning to the Christian fable (Certeau 1971, 341-345).

6.2.5 A New *Complexio Oppositorum*

Certeau is not scandalized by what the findings of social sciences reveal about religion. As the history of religions did gradually show as it became more and more sensitive to the contribution of sociology, the practice of Christians has always been and still remains something other than official laws and theological teachings. One cannot identify Christianity with the representations traditionally circulated in its name. Certeau wants to drive a wedge between such representations and the multiple practices through which they are appropriated. This is cause for scandal only to a certain elite or certain clergymen who are inclined to identify truth with what they say, or who believe that ideas alone guide history. Such a literalist mindset could be found among the neo-scholastics of a century ago, and more recently among fundamentalists in the Catholic Church during Pope John Paul II's so-called restoration movement. Certeau argues that praxis always

brings about, in relation to what is present and pointed out, gradual or abrupt displacements which will make possible other laws or other theologies. Action is for Christianity a permanent divergence, but a divergence with a relation to an institution, the Church, which is the reference point of new faith movements, and which will then be changed by such movements (Certeau 1971, 341-345).

Certeau reminds theologians that Christian discourse is not transparent, nor is it the simple 'reflection' of what is being done. Language follows rules of organization one can set forth in a series of dogmatic or exegetical treatises and it keeps the necessary role of specifying, criticizing, and elucidating the Christian initiative. Yet without practice, language would become merely the indefinite repetition of the same thing. The new level from which language directs the implications of practice results in a critical divergence from former levels. Certeau finds a resulting connection between the different functions of praxis and language. Such discursive connection is a coordination between necessary grounding points (languages, theories, institutions) and critical divergences (inventions, 'prophetic' actions, or displacements hidden within each Christian experience). Both of these functions are equally necessary. Here, Certeau identifies a new form of *complexio oppositorum* that does not deal any more only with the connection between different languages of faith, but with the relation of speech and action (Certeau 1971, 341-345).

6.2.6 Certeau's Analysis and the Vatican texts on Mass Media

Certeau's penetrating analysis sketches the pragmatics of Christian communications in the modern age. When it comes to an objective, readable, communicable, and understandable Christianity, action articulates the immense silence of Christian experiences, works, and departures with regard to those things that limit and

specify such experiences. In Church history, the practice of Christianity has often not stopped to relate such experiences (prophets, new missions, social movements, political protests) to the limiting factors of institutions or theologies. The multiform operation of practical steps is brought to light when we see how such steps sometimes diverge from orders and instructions already received and in force. For example, one section of Church teaching on media advocates freedom of speech, while another section tends to advocate censorship in the name of promoting morality. Seeing this divergence then 'makes room' for yet further elaborations of praxis and teaching. Directives in Church will be interpreted variously according to local contexts of readers and their respective experience. Praxis is irreducible directly to language, yet finds its meaning in language and provides new levels of meaning to language. Formed by its separation from, and transcendence of, language, the Church's praxis is fundamentally a necessary and permanent conversion (Certeau 1971, 341-345).

In its vitality and lucidity, Christian language converts the Old Testament into the New Testament. Certeau finds that this conversion needs to be suited to the actual and current grounding points, the idioms, theories, and institutions of the particular culture. Christian praxis holds on equally to the effectiveness of a realistic determination of just where we are and the necessity of stepping forward from that position. That this conversion takes place today in the data of the sacred, in political life, in the arena of a profession, or in the field of a science, is of little importance because it cannot be isolated to any one of these sectors (Certeau 1971, 341-345). Because the Church was a Jewish sect in its origins, the religious culture of Judaism has been fully adopted by Christianity. Certeau's emphasis on the internal link between confession and community gives the

Church an "Israel-like" view, and the abiding importance of Israel means that the Church must see itself within the messianic 'people of God paradigm'. The very attention to catechesis is a Christian expression of the abiding Rabbinic mind at work within the Church.

Like the PCSC, Certeau is arguing that Jesus is the perfect communicator for the modern era. Through the double movement of determining social location and then moving slowly forward into the unknown future, the Christian faith articulates the conversion of the Old Testament into the New Testament. The praxis of Jesus with its fulfillment in the silence of his death is the point of articulation between these two languages of the Old and New Testament; between the two halves of the Bible, it is the opening up of an action. And yet, Jesus does not cease to hold to the uniqueness of the Jewish institution, while he creates the beginning of another meaning for it. This action by Jesus creates a 'distance' with respect to the old law; it brings about a displacement which gives birth to a new law. In re-Judaizing Christianity, the new practice of the 'letter' of the old law opens up that letter to a spirit from which another scripture (another 'letter') is now set forth. Thus, New Testament Scripture does not mean a replacing of the former truth by a new one. Jesus does not replace one religion by another. It is always the same religion, it cannot exist without including the Old Testament. But a new practice changes the nature of the relationships of that religion with its institutions, laws, or texts. Certeau argues that this type of religious conversion inaugurated by the act of Jesus is to be continued indefinitely, to be reproduced with respect to the same (Jewish) institutions or to others. In terms of social communications, Certeau finds that the essential function of modern Christianity is not the creation of new content, new institutions, or new

Scriptures, but the conversion of relationships with respect to each institution (Certeau 1971, 341-345).

For Certeau, Christian action or praxis has its own specific logic. So far, it has been pointed out that the logic of Christianity is neither without the event of Jesus nor the same as that event. It is structured around a particular form that is manifest in relation to various contents. Certeau argues that the logic of action is an important cognitive feature of Christian discourse. He notes that the organizational structure of the New Testament, especially the Gospels, points to the movement of transcendence by the way the Gospels indicate the process of Christian action or conversion. In the Gospels, the confrontation or dialogues are not governed by binary structure. There is no exact opposition of one position (which is good) against another (which is bad or annulled). Certeau examines their logic in the following way. First, the framework of the Gospels is not the logic of 'the one *or* the other'; it does not situate the 'truth' as one of two contrary terms: for example, either circumcised or uncircumcised; either Jew or Greek; either Jewish or heathen; either clean or unclean. Second, Certeau says it is not the logic of 'the one *and* the other' that pretends to overcome differences, to give a synthesizing statement, or to reconcile all the former positions within a new and particular truth. Third, Certeau declares that the logic of action is the logic of "*neither* the one *nor* the other". Examples of this kind include neither Jewish nor heathen, neither circumcised nor uncircumcised but spiritually circumcised; neither clean nor unclean but pure in heart, neither the tradition of the Pharisees nor the power of Pilate but reference to another kind of 'truth' (Certeau 1971, 341-345).

The Gospel's dialogues or confrontations imply a movement of transcendence

that creates, proportioned to a given term and to its juxtaposed contrary, a third hypothesis but without determining it. The logic of action opens a future without fixing its outcome. It 'permits' a spiritual action, but without identifying it with an objective statement, institution, or law. It makes necessary a risk, a conversion, a doing which cannot be a priori specified or said within a text. Dialogues and confrontations from the Gospels make room for a decision which will be the unforeseeable decision of the Christian reader of the Scriptures. Certeau thinks the Gospels imply a logic of action that involves a necessary form of spiritual displacement. As a living language, Christian discourse must have its actual, contemporary production proportioned to the living experiences, the risks undertaken, and the real communications among the community of believers. Otherwise, the Christian language would only be the consequence of a past - perhaps a beautiful museum or a glorious cemetery. Jesus counselled his disciples to "leave the dead to bury their own dead" (Luke 9:60). In today's media culture, the Christian language must be adapted to the common formats of expression found in telecommunications and information technology. It must become a fable among other stories aired via mass media (Certeau 1971, 341-345).

In closing his lecture concerning the cognitive aspects of modern Christian discourse, Certeau concludes that in the modern age, religious life is based upon both risk and trust and cannot exist without them. The Christian faith has no security other than the living God discovered by communities which are alive and which undergo the experience of losing objective securities. In the existential situation of modernity there is no life without risks. In Certeau's final analysis, Christianity can only be thinkable if it is alive. Fortunately, the death and resurrection of Jesus within a multiplicity of Christian

languages has made and continues to make faithful freedom a possibility. As Certeau insisted, only new departures will manifest Christianity as alive. So the existential question for modernity is no longer to know whether God exists, but how is it possible for believers to exist together as Christian communities. For Certeau, it is impossible for a community to be Christian without a common risk, without the creation of a new divergence in relation to the past and present of life in the human situation. The logic of Christian risk must be taken precisely out of fidelity to others: Jesus, the community, the unnameable. Otherwise, the Christian religion is no longer alive, no longer thinkable, but instead becomes a dead language, a cemetery for an ancient community, and its institution a museum of the past (Certeau 1971, 341-345).

The 1971 lecture at St. Louis University, "The Inaugurating Rupture: or How is Christianity Thinkable Today?", has been re-assessed and translated since its original publication in *Theology Digest* by Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt for general readers in an anthology entitled *The Postmodern God* (1997). As we have found, the central idea of Certeau's lecture is the continual need for reflexivity in the modern Church, which is the "lost body of God". Reflexivity breeds an ecclesial awareness which is a blend of a mourning and a desire for security amidst risk. If the Church is in exile, then believers must find tactics and strategies to subvert or 'circum-navigate' the order of modernity. Certeau's lecture inaugurates his spiritual itinerary, an Abrahamic journey into deepening exile or the land of the other. Theologically - the idea of the infinite dispersal of Christianity, following the event of Christ, led Certeau into ways the official Church would regard as heterodox. When Certeau died in 1986 he was still working on a book concerned with the anthropology of believing. One of the abiding questions Certeau

wrestled with was what makes religious belief 'believe-able'. His work frequently charted the changes in Christian belief structure, and in doing so, was working with Nietzsche's observation that "belief in the Christian God has become unbelievable" (Ward xxx). If the media age is proposing secular forms of discipline, then it is a duty of Christians to find networks of anti-discipline amidst the images and codes distributed by information technology.

From a critical-sociological perspective, Certeau asks the ecclesial hierarchy to consider how - given that the determination of what is Christian is always relative to 'place' and given that that place, formerly 'religious', is now 'civil' - one can continue to be a believer in the absence of a distinctively Christian 'place'. To adhere to the Christian tradition today is a matter of lived practice rather than theoretical construct. Believers do not possess a discourse of 'truth' and power, but they can participate in the Christian fable, a religious language without power in the modern world. It is precisely in this 'weakness' of the fable that its power lodges, as it calls into question the strategically defined 'reality' of systems of meaning. The fabulous tale of the empty tomb of Jesus introduces the non-site of difference into a system of places. This weakness of believing is the pragmatics of Christian communication for the cybernetic empire of the modern world, a fable for the recited society, a means of spiritual resistance amidst material networks of conformity and control.

In the document *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council used the term 'pilgrim church' in order to denote imperfection and the reality of change amidst the journey of faith. Likewise, Certeau believes that the fate of believers in modernity is to become wanderers, those who leave in answer to the call to follow, without the burden of

'truth' or 'power' or 'authority' or even 'identity'. Reflexivity brings about the re-Judaization of Catholicism, the u-topic ('no place') empty tomb is the enacted space of the pilgrim city; the 'new Israel' now joins the 'old Israel' in its diaspora wanderings. Leaving the security of its homeland (which actually was a place of captivity), the Church, like Israel carrying the Ark of the Covenant, bears its fabulous and disruptive tale of Christ as it journeys across alien territory toward the unnameable. For Certeau, this kind of approach to modern Christianity - one that risks the 'weakness of faith' - offers the possibility of faith in a world from which God has become absent (Bauerschmidt 212-213). For the Church to sustain and develop its narration of the Christian faith in today's recited society - a media landscape that is not at all Christian in orientation - it will have to embrace the risk of the Jesus event amidst the tensions of human language and experience, between particularity and universality, between continuity and rupture, between tradition and innovation. This is the apologetic task of the 'pilgrim church', as it seeks to make the faith credible for believers living in exile.

6.3 Peter Hebblethwaite's "Fourth Man"

Prodigious effort has been made by scholars such as Certeau in order to explain the achievements of Vatican II from a sociological perspective. It is obvious from his work that the process of assimilation of Church and modernity has been neither smooth nor harmonious, that gaps have opened up between the centre and the periphery, doctrine and life, conscience and authority. As is well known by those who follow the news, there has been intense political polarization within the Roman Catholic Church between various factions. Francois Roustang described the emergence of a "Third Man" who observed the quarrels between "progressives" (First Men) and "conservatives" (Second

Men) and turned away bored (*Le troisième homme*: *Christus* [October 1966]: 561-67). The "Third Man" neither hoped for reform with the progressives nor sought to resist it with the conservatives; he preferred to "cultivate his own garden", as Voltaire suggested at the end of his book *Candide*. To say that he lapsed would be to put it melodramatically. It was simply that he no longer cared about the Church and ceased to identify with it. It is a spiritual version of Timothy Leary's hippie motto; 'Tune in, turn off, and drop out!'

Journalist and veteran commentator on Vatican affairs, Peter Hebblethwaite identified ten years after the Council ended, yet another ecclesial position in his book *The Runaway Church* (1975). Employing the observation of Roustang, Hebblethwaite chronicled what many saw as a new way of belonging to the Church: the "Fourth Man". Contrary to the Third Man, the Fourth Man remains within the Church while recognizing that they are in conflict with it on major points (1975, 227-241). He remains in the Church out of personal conviction and cannot conceive of leaving it because he thinks of the Church as 'all humanity' in so far as it has recognized, however falteringly, its vocation in Christ. Those who fit the Fourth Man description can no more leave the Church than they can take leave of humanity. To do so would be a form of spiritual suicide. At the same time, the Fourth Man is always at odds with the Church. Optimists urge him to bide his time, carry the cross, and be patient with the Church during its continual reforms and implementation of the Second Vatican Council. However, he does not see why such bureaucratic follies should be allowed to obscure the Gospel. His membership and adhesion to the ecclesial institution is a form of critical belonging, and he sees criticism not as self-indulgence but as a personal duty if his identification is to be

combined with integrity. This loyal opposition performs a watchdog function in the Church (Hebblethwaite 1975, 236-238).

Today, the pilgrim church in exile needs the Fourth Man for its own survival. Hebblethwaite regarded this figure as a potential agent or catalyst of change who gives dynamism to the Church because the 'people of God' is supposed to be a movement or a journey of faith. This movement could become false, if the Roman Catholic Church absolutizes a moment of the journey, thereby betraying both its origin and pilgrim destination. Hebblethwaite thinks that the Fourth Man can have some confidence in the Church's future. The ancient legal maxim *consuetudo contra legem* operates in the Church - what is actually done overrides the law, and the law eventually catches up (1975, 239). Since the Church, despite the efforts of the Curia and canon law, cannot enforce all its demands, precedents are still being created. As long as questions continue to be asked, and as long as the Church remains a voluntary association, then the pilgrim church will move forward on its journey. It is not a matter of re-inventing the Church as though it had no history, but of recognizing that the tradition is much wider and richer than many have supposed. The pilgrim church has an unfinished quality: it knows that it is still in the making, and that the possibilities are more open-ended than many imagine. This insight was grasped by the first modern missionary pope, Paul VI, who gave affirmation and support to the disputed Vatican II text, *Inter Mirifica*, and personally promoted its necessary sequel *Communio et Progressio*, the manifesto for the PCSC.

As John Shelby Spong, formerly an Anglican bishop, observed in his book, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die: A Bishop Speaks to Believers in Exile* (1998), the only Churches that grow today are those that do not, in fact, understand the issues and can

therefore traffic in certainty. They represent both the fundamentalist Protestant groups and the rigidly controlled conservative Catholic traditions. The churches that do attempt to interact with the emerging world are for the most part the liberal Protestant mainline Churches that shrink every day in membership, and the silent liberal Catholic minority that attracts very few adherents. They tinker with words, re-define concepts, and retreat slowly behind the rear guard protection of a few pseudo-radical thinkers. According to this mindset, the Roman Church is to see itself as a 'counter-cultural' community, a faithful remnant that aims to live out a life of radical obedience. As we have seen, the theology of the Church in exile has been sketched by Michel de Certeau. He and others rejected a triumphalism of certainty with respect to theological truth claims, and it could be argued that they are reacting against their own past, which was in most cases of a more conservative orientation. However, some are also reacting to a growing gap between the sacred and the profane and are troubled by the modern world's indifference to religion and atheism. The weakness of belief means that Christianity is flexible, nimble, and creative, and therefore able to adapt and survive.

From a sociological perspective, the Catholic Church is at a crossroads, as its status in the West changes. This is not entirely new or foreign to the Church. Indeed, early Christianity entered the world as a minority faith, a sect of Judaism. As we said earlier, the work of Jerome played an important role in making Christianity into an establishment religion. The triumphal ambition of Christendom Jerome founded has faded away with the emergence of technological modernity and the end of the Constantinian era in the West. Church believers now know that life is both lonely and full of alienation. The sociological and theological problem that the Church must now avoid

is both ghettoization and absorption. Church leaders and believers must find a way to understand their ecclesial institutions and structures in a diaspora context. Most acute is the problem of tradition since the media culture actively erases and re-writes the content of public memory. It is not an easy time to be a Christian minister or priest.

6.4 Karl Rahner

Karl Rahner (1904-1984), one of the most trusted Roman Catholic theologians of the twentieth century, wrote about the future of the Church in his *Mission and Grace* (1963). His forecast for the future is a viewpoint very different from the past that the Vatican has enjoyed and from the optimal future that many of Rome's present-day ecclesiastical leaders would like to bring about. He writes under the general heading 'Christians in the Modern World': "My thesis is this: Insofar as our outlook is really based on today, and looking towards tomorrow, the present situation of Christians can be characterized as that of a diaspora; and this signifies, in terms of the history of salvation, a 'must', from which we may and must draw conclusions about our behaviour as Christians" (Rahner, 1963, 20). The diaspora status and mandate of modern Christianity may not be what we wish for, or even what God wills; but it is nonetheless a reality: "there are no longer any Christian countries...; Christianity (though in very varying proportions) exists everywhere in the world, and everywhere as a diaspora. It is actually, in terms of numbers, a minority everywhere" (Rahner 1963, 25).

Rahner presents a biblical-realistic approach in his survey over the perspectives for the future of the Roman Catholic Church. He notes that like every other social institution, the Church wants to be successful, which means to achieve complete victory in its goals. But this is not what Jesus Christ promised. While Jesus did promise that the

Church would endure until the end of time, he also promised

That his work would also be a sign of contradiction and persecution, of dire and (in secular terms) desperate combat; that love would grow cold; that he, and his disciples, would be persecuted in the name of God; that the struggle would narrow down to an ever more critical point; that the victory of Christianity would not be the fruit of immanent development and widening and a steady, progressive leavening of the world, but would come as the act of God coming in judgment to gather up world history into its wholly unpredictable and unexpected end. (Rahner 1963, 26-27)

According to Rahner, the Roman Catholic Church must accommodate itself to the diaspora situation, and this "must" emanates not only from assessing its empirical condition, but from the same gracious sovereignty that is contained in the journey of Jesus to the cross. The "must" of the Church's participation in the suffering of Christ was obscured during the Middle Ages, the high point of Christendom, when persecution came only "from outside the closed culture" of Western Christendom, which was "the result of temporal, secular combinations of historical forces and a fact of cultural history rather than of theology". But with the advent of the modern world in the Reformation, Renaissance, and Enlightenment, the Church finds herself "surrounded by non-Christians" and "living in a culture, in a State, amidst political movements, economic activity, science and art which are conducted not simply and solely by Christians" - a "diaspora everywhere" (Rahner 1963, 32-33). This situation has really been enforced in the New Europe that is taking shape since the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989). The Church can count on little or no support

From institutional morality, custom, civil law, tradition, public opinion, normal conformism, etc. Thus...each individual must be won afresh, and such recruitment can appeal only to personal decision, to what is independent and individual in a man, not to that in him which makes him a homogeneous part of the masses...Christianity ceases to be a religion of growth and becomes a religion of choice. Obviously Christians will still give institutional form to their lives, over and above the institutional element in the Church herself; they will try to transmit to their children the faith that they themselves have won in a personal decision, they will develop and try to preserve Christian habits of morality, customs, practices, associations, and organizations. But by and large the situation will remain one of choice, not of natural growth; of a personal achievement constantly renewed amid perilous surroundings. (Rahner 1963, 33-34)

Rahner argues that in the future Christians will have to learn to live within the larger culture, and they will realize that contrary to ecclesiastical propaganda, it is not wicked nor composed only of disintegration and decay. The world may be sinful, but it also has been redeemed by the Incarnation of God in Jesus. "If it is to remain alive at all," the diaspora Church will have to be "a church of the laity" who "will have ecclesiastical duties...as they did in the early Church" (Rahner 1963, 36). Rahner even suggests that "sociologically speaking, the Church of the vast mass of people has the advantage that her 'sect' character gives her, and the duty constantly to overcome the dangers inherent in it" (Rahner 1963, 36). It will no longer constitute a matter of privilege and status to be a

member of the clergy. The relationship of church and state will be must less confrontational. In the past, this characteristic feature of Christendom was due to the fact that a rivalry between church and state was built into the situation in which nearly everyone was a member of both simultaneously. This link was especially true in European countries that looked to the Vatican for guidance, and it is clear that the Roman Curia has still not fully wakened from its dream of a homogeneous Christian West. The conservative papacy of John Paul II with its pastoral programme of restoration often was a furious reaction to its living and the realization of the Church's own dream state. Rahner critically observed that

When we say that we have the right to make a cool, dispassionate reckoning with the fact that the Church is a diaspora, we mean, understanding it rightly, the very opposite of resignation and defeatism. If we once have the courage to give up our defence of the old facades which have nothing or very little behind them; if we cease to maintain, in public, the pretence of a universal Christendom; if we stop straining every nerve to get everybody baptized, to get everybody married in church and onto our registers (even when success means only, at bottom, a victory for tradition, custom, and ancestry, not for true faith and interior conviction); if, by letting all of this go, we visibly relieve Christianity of the burdensome impression that it accepts responsibility for everything that goes on under this Christian top dressing, the impression that Christianity is *natura sua* a sort of Everyman's Religious Varnish, a folk-religion (at the same level as folk-costumes) - then the Church can be free for real

missionary adventure and apostolic self-confidence. Then leaders of the Roman Catholic Church should not need to sigh and say, 'We still have 15 percent,' they could say, 'We're up to 17 percent already.' Just where is it written that the Church must have the whole 100 percent? God must have all. It is hoped that He takes pity on all and will have all indeed. But the Church cannot say that God is doing so only if the Church has everybody.

(Rahner 1963, 51)

Rahner urged the Vatican bureaucracy "to get away from the tyranny of statistics. For the next hundred years they are always going to be against the Church. One real conversion in a great city is something more splendid than the spectacle of a whole remote village going to the holy sacraments" (Rahner 1963, 48). Rahner's commentary is pertinent not just to Christians in Europe, but everywhere in the modern world. It is especially relevant to our study of the Vatican's interest in social communications. The flagging and ineffectual transmission of the Christian tradition is a problem for the survival of the Christian narrative. As the Church becomes more marginalized, the Christian fable becomes more open and interrupted. What becomes of public theology and the confession of faith in this diaspora condition? A common Catholic perspective is advanced by Lieven Boeve, a fundamental theologian from Louvain University in Belgium, who has argued that Christians in the public forum should re-introduce the idea of the *arcanum* (meaning 'secret' in Latin, something about which one remains silent) in line with the early Church, out of respect for the deepest motivations of belief. Boeve explains that

In a life of faith, which has its theological explanation in the relationship

between God and humankind, there remain dimensions that cannot be communicated to those who do not share this faith, dimensions that have their roots in the said dimension". "Those who genuinely desire to familiarize themselves with the Christian narrative, will ultimately have to develop a taste for it. Christianity cannot be explained and communicated to the last detail for others and cannot be made completely transparent.

(2003, 180-181)

Boeve notes that where efforts have been made to do the contrary in modern times, Christianity tended to be rather abruptly reduced to morality, ethics and the upholding of values.

Karl Rahner welcomes the advent of secularization and pluralism, but emphasizes less the creation of a new society than the necessity for the Christians' acceptance of their 'diasporic situation' and the establishment of qualitative rather than quantitative witness to salvific truths. As a diaspora, the Church is free to engage itself with the rapidly changing social conditions of the West. Churchmen are tempted to falsely identify pastoral mission with a message, but would be wise to resist this new idol. An important lesson can be found in Michel de Certeau's concept of affirmative weakness. His study of Church history helps us to understand the forgotten mystical-prophetic dimension of the Church's teaching office in the modern world. The changing social status of Christianity from establishment to dis-establishment means that churchmen must adopt an ethic of resistance and social responsibility for the Church's ministry of service.

6.5 Theology in the Global Situation of Media Culture

In his book *Cities of God* (2000) Graham Ward finds that Certeau unravels the

politics of believing, showing us that theological discourse, as all other discourses, is caught up in a cultural politics of meaning. Certeau characterizes the current ethos as a "recited society" in which people believe what they see and what they see is produced for them. "The observer spectator knows that they are merely semblances ...but all the same he assumes that these simulations are real" (Certeau 1984, 187-188). This "objectless credibility" is based upon citing the authority of others. Thus the production of simulacrum involves making people believe that others believe in it, but without providing any believe-able object. In a recited society there is a "multiplication of pseudo-believers" prompted by a culture of deferral and credit (Certeau 1984, 202). Ward finds that in Certeau's account of our contemporary believing there is an aesthetics of absence: we are brought to believe in that which in itself is the representation of an object, not the object of belief itself (Ward 2000, 74). We defer the truth about the object to other experts, whom we have never met nor can substantiate. These hidden experts in whom we put our trust enable us to accept as credible that which we are told is true. The space we as believers inhabit then is a space of "consumable fictions" (Certeau 1997, 25). For Ward, we are caught up in the endless traffic and exchange of communication signs - from billboards, through television, in newspapers, on film - and we construct from this seductive public rhetoric versions of "reality" to which we give allegiance or in which we place our faith. These productions and exchanges organize what we take as our social reality. Ward argues that what is believable changes because the flow of signs is constantly changing in the practices which make up everyday living, just as ideas are constantly being modified, disseminated, re-experienced, re-expressed and transplanted. For Ward, who seems to have overlooked the sacramental dimension of Certeau's

thought, this then means that a continuous writing and re-writing of the stories of what is 'the true' installs an aesthetics of absence (2000, 74).

In Vatican teaching on social communications there is a gap between the symbols of faith and the reality they convey, which is constantly being negotiated and veiled via writing. In his introduction to the *Certeau Reader*, Ward remarks that what is constant is the gap between "what authorities articulate and what is understood by them, between the communication they allow and the legitimacy they presuppose, between what they make possible and what makes them credible" (2000, 7). Ward argues that in tackling the need for a sociological and theological response to cyberspace, the Church needs to examine the cultural politics such a response entails. A certain story is being told, a faith, expounding the theo-logic which relates anthropology to the body of Christ, the Eucharistic body to the civic and social bodies of the world. The way of reflexivity is required, and an account has to be offered why such reflexivity does not render the whole discourse circular (Ward 2000, 74), or why the circularity does not render the thinking invalid, though it necessarily renders it always open to question, to being fractured. In Ward's estimation, these twin requirements of reflexivity and accountability are themselves contemporary cultural concerns that have their analogues not simply in the politics issuing from discourses of market-based economics, but also in the ironic discourses of media and film. In this case, Ward admits Catholic theological discourse is in no worse a predicament than any other cultural activity. In fact, what theological discourse is able to do, Ward argues, is construct a theological argument for why this must be so, why it necessarily must be a discourse always having to re-examine itself afresh, questioning its own rhetoric, and allowing its own blindness to be exposed. In this

way, the Christian ontology that informs this theological project offers itself always for other and further interpretations. In this way, Christian theological discourse is not seeking to colonize the other, but to open the tradition in the Church to future transformation, and make out of it what it really is: transmission - not repetition (Ward 2000, 74).

Along with technology, the context for Christian communication is shaped by social trends of globalization and anti-globalization. Roman Catholic social teaching, especially the documents by the PCSC on media, is deeply influenced by the Western European context. Indeed, the Vatican is located in Europe, European powers founded the Churches of the New World; for these sociological reasons, it is very important to take note of the projected future of contextual theology in Europe. In *The New Catholicity*, Robert Schreiter observes that "since the loss of the working classes to the Church in the nineteenth century, there has been talk about the de-Christianization of Europe" (1997, 90). In the latter half of the twentieth-century talk of a post-Christian society emerged. Beyond acknowledging a steadily diminishing influence of the Church as an institution, it is not always clear what is meant by this. The various projects and schemes that have been proposed since the 1980s to re-Christianize Europe - the New Evangelization of the Roman Catholic Church, the ecumenical Missiology in Western Culture Project, or the British Council of Churches' Gospel and Our Culture Project - all work toward a restoration of Christian faith in Europe.

Schreiter argues that de-Christianization is not entirely co-extensive with secularization. To be sure, the secularization process is usually held responsible for the drift away from Christianity. But if any of the aforementioned projects is successful in

bringing Christianity back to Europe, it will not be to the Europe of Christendom. The migration of peoples has forever changed that. On the continent there is now a large Muslim presence that has resulted both from invitations to come and work and from migrations and refugee flight that took place lately. A New Europe will be an inter-religious Europe (Schreiter 1997, 91). Schreiter points out that a post-Christian Europe does not mean a non-Christian Europe. He refers to the work of Karl-Josef Rivinius, who has found that much of the cultural heritage of Europe is unintelligible without an understanding of Christianity. Even the most secular of Europeans has appropriated a great deal of Christianity in the understandings of justice and other principles that are of the web and woof of Europe today. Even what was once thought antithetical to Christianity such as democracy and human rights are now seen as legitimate developments of the Christian tradition. Schreiter agrees with Rivinius, who argues that any contextual theology that might be developed must lift up this Christian heritage and bring it to the attention of secular Europe. Following such a strategy would be a way to retrieve the foundation of Christianity in Europe and to build upon it anew (Schreiter 1997, 91).

For Schreiter this kind of strategy could potentially provide a partial answer to the 'New Evangelization', but there are some other issues to be mentioned in light of the larger considerations of Vatican media policy. The globalization process destabilizes identities and creates the need to construct new ones. It does this with a speed and a complexity that make any institutional guidance difficult. The individualism fostered by the modernity process and the cult of consumption leads to institutional distrust among those in the Church. If a society provides enough wealth to individuals to allow for a

broad range of consumer choices, the libertarian or anarchist illusion can be fostered that institutions are not even necessary. Emblematic of this belief in a life without meditating institutions is the Internet, which nobody owns and nobody controls, but upon which anyone with a personal computer and modem can surf. For example, on March 18, 1996 *The New Yorker* published a story entitled "Virtual Bishop". It was about Bishop Jacques Guillot, who was exiled by the Vatican to Algeria for his 'heterodox' opinions. Stuck in the middle of the desert - in an ancient diocese that for all practical purposes no longer exists - he went online, becoming the world's first virtual bishop. His virtual diocese could be accessed from anywhere in the world. In response, the Vatican soon went online as well (Powell 1998, 114) and began to organize the horizontal space of the Internet in a vertical fashion.

Schreier argues that societies need mediating institutions such as the Church between the individual or family and the national government. Religion, dethroned by modern times, has tried to take that role in contemporary society and to some measure has succeeded when it has been a voluntary association. This is evident in the free churches, para-church movements such as Campus Crusade for Christ, voluntary communities such as the Thomas Community in Helsinki or the San Egidio community in Rome, and in the new religious movements (Shreiter 1997, 92). Taking a cue from these institutions and associations that serve a mediating role, Shreiter agrees that it would seem to be the task of the Christian Church today to establish credible faith communities, places that engage the power of ritual and create group solidarity. In environments like these, practices can be cultivated and spiritualities developed that could initiate people gradually and ever more deeply into the Christian mysteries. These

communities would have to navigate between the anti-global cultural logics that pull people toward fundamentalism on the one hand, and the primitivist cultural logics that urge people back to an imagined past on the other. These paths begin with religion as a way of life and move from there into something which seems to fit the pattern of religious exploration: if the group is credible and inviting, then the ideas may get a hearing (Schreiter 1997, 92). Fortunately, the Church does not have the ability to coerce its listeners into agreement any longer. Vatican social teaching now puts emphasis upon both speaker and hearer. A new Catholicity requires speakers who are evangelized by hearers, and hearers who become subjects of their own history in the act of preaching and evangelization. Church policies that frustrate agency run the risk of replicating the worst mistakes of globalization and reinforcing its exclusionary and oppressive aspects (Schreiter 1997, 132).

Europe is, of course, a vast and diverse place, as efforts at a European Union have made all too clear. Catholics are no strangers to Europe and they have a certain comfort and familiarity with its past. The Vatican's approach to the media sets a standard that other groups evaluate. In view of de-Christianization, what moral elements would be highlighted in a contextual theology in Europe? Schreiter argues for a theological anthropology that stresses human creation in the image and likeness of God and the worth and dignity of each person (1997, 92-93). In European communities struggling with oppression, the emphasis on how human rights are now included in today's Christian anthropology could be made. When people are struggling with human identity and with human survival, Schreiter finds that anthropological issues are at stake. A new kind of Catholicity would articulate why the asymmetry of the basic Christian story, of the

suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ, brings a special significance to identity in a globalized society. The basic story at the centre of Christianity is not about symmetries, but about mistaken identities, betrayal, reversal, and a resurrection that is not restoration but that takes the crucified Jesus to a new place (Schreier 1997, 93). In the asymmetries eddying out of the globalization process, with its misdistributions of power and profit, with its uprootedness, double visions, multiple belongings, with its tentative hybridities - does not the paschal mystery take on new meaning, illuminating these realities in a new way? Contextual theologies need to be able to read the Christian tradition in this way in order to connect it with the experience of many people today.

Conclusion

Using the pseudonym of Michael Serafian, Malachi Martin, a former Jesuit and professor at the Vatican's Pontifical Biblical Institute, authored in 1964 *The Pilgrim*, his own eyewitness account of events at the Second Vatican Council. From 1958 to 1964 a close associate of cardinal Augustine Bea and of pope John XXIII, he served in Rome as a theological advisor in ecumenical relations with Judaism. The book, famous for many reasons, offers a conservative assessment of the pope's stewardship of the Council, it documents and critiques the reforms adopted, and foreshadows the exit of its author from the priesthood. Martin's book persuasively identifies and frames the Council proceedings according to the model of the 'pilgrim' Church. Though ultra-conservative, it correctly identifies the controlling theme of Vatican II, namely the necessity of ecclesial change and adaptation. In describing the Church as 'new people of God' and as 'new Israel', Vatican II recalled the idea of a wandering and pilgrim people, a people living on earth and moving on their way towards holiness. This aspect of the Catholic Church as a people in pilgrimage is brought to the fore in *Lumen Gentium*, chapter 2, and is evident in chapter 7 with the title, "The Eschatological Nature of the pilgrim Church and Its Union with the Church in Heaven". The pilgrim people of God is the basic metaphor for the Church in the documents of Vatican II.¹ The expression 'pilgrim Church' was adopted by the PCSC as a model in its project of 'ecclesial cybernetics' (see #1.3), in line with those

¹ The expression 'pilgrim Church' can be found in the following Vatican II documents: *Lumen Gentium* on the Church (#6,8,9,21,58,62,68), *Unitas redintegratio* on ecumenism (#2,3,6), *Dei Verbum* on divine revelation (#7), *Dignitatis humanae* on religious freedom (#12), *Apostolican actusositatem* on lay apostolate (#4), *Ad gentes* on missionary activity (#2), *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in today's world (#1,45,57), *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on liturgy (#2,8), and *Christus Dominus* on the pastoral task of bishops (#16).

mental habits the Vatican wants to instill among Catholics to inform their conscience and train their hearts and minds for Christian discipleship. With right William J. Bausch's popular history of Catholic Christianity published in 1995 has the title: *Pilgrim Church*.

It is one of the ironies of twentieth-century Catholic history that Vatican II was outdated before it began (Lakeland 2003, 262). Of course, the last Council was both important and necessary, but it was at the heart of a grand effort to bring the church into an age that was already waning. By the 1960s the communications explosion was already underway and a new era was being born in the midst of a post-traditional society. Vatican II was further proof that Catholic Church can say quaint things that are regarded by its critics as behind the times. From the beginning of his pontificate, Paul VI enthusiastically embraced the Council's mandate to discern what pope John XXIII called the 'signs of the times'. His own writing and policies argued that the Church's mission was to promote peace and justice in very concrete ways. Paul VI understood that the world had changed much after the Second World War. So, he tried to address the global imperatives of the Church. His own written teachings examined large-scale international solutions to development problems, sometimes criticizing those political and economic structures that hampered justice. To construct his global vision, Paul VI started a new era of papal travel, speaking on behalf of the poor before the United Nations, and learning firsthand about the depth of poverty in India, South America, and Africa (Melady 1999, 4-5). This pope showed himself to be a great diplomat and reminded the Church that international communication can be an effective instrument to promote ecumenism. Paul VI's travels around the world underscored his interest to remove barriers that separated the church from other Christians. In the Holy Land and in Istanbul, he embraced the patriarch of the

Eastern Orthodox Church. In Geneva, he addressed the World Council of Churches. In Rome, he welcomed the Anglican archbishop of Canterbury and formed permanent secretariats to work towards unity between people of all religions. In this regard, Paul VI transformed the Church's vocabulary from righteous excommunication to humble apology and forgiveness for past recriminations (Melady 1999, 5).

Paul VI was intent on casting off the symbols that he felt impeded the Church from effectively working in the modern world. He sold his tiara and used the funds for the poor, reduced some of the Church's ceremonial pomp, and abolished papal noble titles, transforming the Vatican's monarchical court into a papal household (Melady 1999, 5). The Vatican had already freed itself from the binding interests of temporal political power; now it had to overcome the vestiges of its autocratic pride in order for the Church to truly practice a leadership that emphasized service to others. Paul VI wanted the papacy to be accessible and so he demystified it, allowing himself to be seen as a human being. The goal was to change the Vatican's reputation from being an old fashioned, authoritarian organization to one that was more democratic. In private audiences, he was known to read prepared denunciations against unorthodox actions and then, sensing that his duty was fulfilled, he would abandon his authoritative posture for a more conciliatory tone (Melady 1999, 5). His diplomatic, conciliatory posture was apparent in how he approached discord in the Church. Believing it futile to hold defecting priests and religious to their commitments, Paul VI allowed the granting of laicization to ninety-seven percent of the growing numbers of priests that asked to be released from their vows (Melady 1999, 5).

By the end of Paul VI's papacy in 1978, it became apparent that papal leadership had changed and even had been transformed by this pope. Margaret Melady, a Roman Catholic media scholar and professional communications consultant, argued that in many ways, this transformation in Vatican leadership followed a path similar to the leadership of other institutions (1999, 6). Rather than governing an institution through the inner workings of the system, dominant personalities such as presidents or prime ministers of democratic governments now conduct the affairs of governance largely through direct address of the people (Melady 1999, 6). Thus, like prime ministers, as well as presidential leadership, papal strategies rely more and more on public discourse and symbol making to articulate meaning. The use of these persuasive techniques to gain acceptance and cooperation among audiences demonstrates the emergence of a modern rhetorical papacy (Melady 1999, 6).

Paul VI's papacy displayed a commitment to employ media to transform the operations of the Vatican. According to Robert A. White, "the exhortation to use the mass media in *Inter Mirifica* appeared just at the time that a strong personality emphasis was entering the stream of Catholic culture in the 1960s" (1989, 595). White examines this trend in his essay entitled "Mass Media and Culture in Contemporary Catholicism: The Significance of Vatican II" (1989, 580-611). Roman Catholicism discovered depth psychology and personality development, which emphasized a type of non-directive therapeutic counselling or small-group discussion. Catholic culture was reacting vigorously to forms of clerical and authoritarian communication that had characterized the Church especially during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The spirit of the Second Vatican Council was interpreted by many as a move away from this kind of

communicative structure in the Church (White 1989, 595). The old-fashioned, popular religious communication that had depended so heavily on moralistic exhortation in parish missions, preached retreats, and catechetical instruction in Catholic schools tended to be questioned by many Catholics. An expressive, non-directive, and participatory form of small-group communication was generally judged to be more appropriate in modern times for the development of the faith (White 1989, 596). In many parts of the world, there was a strong move toward the so-called 'basic' Christian community form of ecclesial organization and toward more participatory decision making in the Church. All this springs from the attention and interest in the use of the mass media in the Catholic Church. White noted in 1989 that "over the past thirty years, there has been increasing interest in the audio-visual media as a new language of religious communication" (596). Consequently, there has been far more reflection and creative experimentation on audio-visual media for the "pilgrim" Church's interest in small-group communications.

In more formal theological language, the Vatican's PCSC offers an eschatological vision of the Church, a vision of the Church moving toward a consummation to be brought about not by the muscular spirituality of its adherents but by the judgement and grace of God and recognizing that only at the consummation of times will the Church have become what it truly is. The Church here and now is always the Church of the 'not yet', the Church that can never be complacently measured by its achievements (a rising curve of global membership or proven 'relevance to the social situation,' for example), but must always be judgmentally measured by the fact that since it is still on pilgrimage and remains far short of its goal, its claims for itself must be more modest than they have usually been in the past, and that efforts to close the gap between what is demanded of it

and what it produces must be unceasing. There is an excellent description of what the label 'pilgrim' means for the Catholic Church in Robert McAfee Brown's book *The Ecumenical Revolution* (1967, 122-125).

Destroyed by cybernetic theory is any notion of a static conception of the Church so full of perfections and graces that all it needs to do is exist. The analysis and comparison of the Vatican II pastoral decree *Inter Mirifica* with the Vatican media documents published subsequently by the PCSC do demonstrate a common forward-looking vision of ecclesial self-understanding. Their focus on the future image of Jesus as the 'Perfect Communicator' preserves the Church from overestimating what its members achieve on earth and from the danger of losing Catholic preaching in social-ethical idealism. It also helps to preserve the Church from despair arising because of disappointments, since believers know that ministry is not in vain in the Lord. The Church need not lose heart because the pilgrimage is so long, the journey in cyberspace so wild and rough, and the companions on the way so apparently devoid of grace. Roman Catholic social communications theory holds the strategy that the antidote for the problems is a shift of focus from the constituent members of the Church to Christ the head of the Church, and to what God wills for the Church (Brown 1967, 122-125).

The corpus of pastoral teaching issued by the PCSC expresses a profound hope in the advances of electronics and information technology. A basic sacramental awareness is posited that finds the divine in secular culture and emerging forms of social organization. At the same time, all Catholics would be wise to affirm that a Church on pilgrimage is nevertheless the place for sustenance of pilgrims on their journey, and that the Holy Spirit will never so forsake the Church that it becomes the unambiguous abode of Satan rather

than the ambiguous abode of Christ. In this imagery, is any note of complacency is replaced by a note of scrutiny and concern lest, the Church remain guilty of betraying its high calling. This is what Brown calls the mandate of "perpetual adaptation" (1967, 125). In the media environment, the whole Church must brace to face the frontier. That is to say, it must become a mobile missionary force ready for a wilderness life. It must be ready to march towards the places in the public spheres where the real issues are shaped and where the most crucial decisions must be made. It is a time for all believers to be thinking of the information databases of banks, hospitals, and military installations rather than any breviaries, hymn-books and bibles found in old cathedrals. Certeau argued that the Church must become afresh a pilgrim people and engage in a new Abrahamic adventure (see #6.2). Focusing on the immense social influence of the mass media, Certeau warned that there may be little room for the successful exercise of the strategies and tactics of everyday life because modern society is increasingly colonised by the information-driven banalisation of reality. As a result, Roman Catholicism, which is in danger of becoming effuse, must truly become "weak", trusting its own contingency as a living pilgrim missionary Church which can subordinate everything in its heritage to the fulfillment of its mission. Drawing from communications theory, the Vatican's reappraisal of patterns of church organization and institutions that belonged to an era that is rapidly passing away may be replaced by "weak" forms of evangelism. Then, the Church may become the pilgrim Church that goes - as Abraham did - into the unknown future not afraid to leave behind the securities of its conventional structure, glad to dwell in the tents of perpetual adaptation and nomadic living, looking to the city whose builder and maker is God. In turning toward the media, the Church is trying to understand the new situation

of humanity in its planetary dimension as well as the new dimensions and dynamics of pluralism. This adaptation to modernity seeks to unmask the powers of manipulation held by image makers, capitalism and technocracy.

In the literature of cybernetics and communications studies, it is widely believed that we have entered a new era of evolutionary history, one in which rapid change is a dominant consequence. It is important for the Church to understand the forces at work and to take advantage of the knowledge to help guide this evolutionary process. The new computerized age of information technology impacts the living patterns of Christians, leaving no one's own life untouched. People now learn, feel, and think differently than before the advent of electronic communications. The writing and thought of Marshall McLuhan have helped to call attention to this new communication/mental structure (see #4.1). As contrasted with the consciousness produced by books and the printed page, by realistic face-to-face communication, and by first-hand experiencing make an increasingly new type of mind obeying a new authority structure. Any emergence of significant meaning now happens within this new historical consciousness. In particular, a new generation of humanity is impatient with those structures in which it is a spectator (Clyde Reid, *The Empty Pulpit: A Study in Preaching as Communication*, New York: Harper and Row, 1967, p. 46-62). As McLuhan put it, "The need for dialogue is a mounting one in the TV generation. They cannot accept any diminution of their adult status. To be treated as anything less than adult affects them with all the indignity of racial segregation" (quoted in Reid, p. 62). This new situation has caused a crisis for old fashioned Vatican styles of 'fiat' communication. Christian communications should not be understood merely as the transmission of information and data.

Along with scholars such as Walter Ong, the Vatican believes that the problem confronting today's mind is to conceive of the challenge of media and modern technology in a positive and imaginative manner. Because of its new diasporic biographical identity, the Church is in transition from its past use of space-oriented, instrumental models of communication and to new models of communications that focus instead upon time and evolution. To overcome the bias of space one must resituate communication in the body, in ritual and conversation, and the endurance of time. Following McLuhan, the Vatican now seeks to revive the oral tradition as an exercise in "stop-time": time-binding media that negates time, which recreates the past in the present through the repetitive and mnemonic power of the word and the body (Munson and Warren 1997, 321). Returning to its Judaic roots the Council Fathers of Vatican II argued that liturgy and ritual should be the Church's primary means of communications. They also began to question mass communication's function as a means of social and political control. The Vatican has tried to recast the goal of Christian communication studies, replacing the search for deterministic laws of behaviour with a simpler mission: to comprehend what others are saying by observation. *Inter Mirifica* argues that the Church should investigate the content of communication and the meaning of symbols, not only the motives that originate them or the purposes they serve. This is a Catholic vision of communications that would enlarge the human conversation through dialogue and participation. It is a vision that links together the similar sounding words 'communication' and 'community' to include the drawing-together of people amidst the powerful ideology of technology.

1. The Ritual Approach to Communication According to James W. Carey

According to journalism historian, sociologist and media scholar James W. Carey in his book *Communication as Culture* (1992), the ritual view of communication is an old viewpoint, in fact it is archaic. In a ritual definition, communication is linked to terms such as “sharing, participation, association, fellowship, and the possession of a common faith”. This definition exploits the ancient identity and common roots of the similar sounding terms “commonness, community, communion, and communication”. A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not toward the act of imparting information but toward the representation of shared beliefs. If the archetypal case of human communication under a transmission view is the extension of messages across geography for the purpose of control (see #2.4), the archetypal case under a ritual view is the sacred ceremony that draws persons together in fellowship and commonality. A ritual viewpoint of human communication sees language as an instrument of dramatic action, and thought that is essentially situational and social, and symbolism as fundamentally fiduciary (Carey 1992, 18).

For Carey, “the indebtedness of the ritual view of communication to religion is apparent in the name chosen to label it. Moreover, it derives from a view of religion that downplays the role of the sermon, the instruction and admonition, in order to highlight the role of prayer, chant, and the ceremony” (Carey 1992, 18). It sees the highest form of human communication not in the transmission of intelligent information, but in the social construction and maintenance of an ordered, meaningful, cultural world that can serve as a control and container for human action. Carey traces this viewpoint in the history of

social theory back to Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* and to the larger argument that "society substitutes for the world revealed to our senses a different world that is a projection of the ideals created by the community" (Durkheim, *Sociology and Philosophy*, 1953, p. 95). This projection of community ideals and their embodiment in material form - dance, plays, architecture, news stories, strings of speech - creates an artificial though nonetheless real symbolic order that operates to provide neither data nor information, but confirmation, not to alter attitudes or change minds but to represent an underlying order of things, not to perform functions but to manifest an ongoing and fragile social progress and material advancement (Carey 1992, 18-19). Carey's view is in stark contrast to St. Bernard of Siena's word: "There is less peril for your soul in not hearing mass than in not hearing the sermon" (see #2.4).

The work of Tocqueville may have been the first to document a link between religious communities and the rise of democratic communications in American history. Carey's sociological analysis is deeply influenced by the American philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952). In Carey's opinion, Dewey was a pioneer in communications theory. Dewey said that modern "society exists not only by transmission, by communication, but it may fairly be said to exist in transmission" (*Democracy and Education*, 1916, p. 5). For Dewey, as he asserted in his book *Experience and Nature* (1939), communication is of all things "the most wonderful" because it is the basis of human fellowship; it produces social bonds, bogus or not, that tie men together and make associated life possible (385). Dewey was aware of the transmission and latently the ritual approach of human communications. Carey notes that the following quotation

reveals the tension and Dewey's final emphasis on a ritual view of communication. Carey notes that the following quotation reveals

There is more than a verbal tie between the words 'common', 'community', and 'communication'. Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common. What they must have in common...are aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge: a common understanding: like-mindedness as sociologists say. Such things cannot be passed physically from one another like bricks; they cannot be shared as persons would share a pie by dividing it into physical pieces...Consensus demands communication. (Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 5-6)

Carey has retrieved this ritual approach from Dewey because he thinks that the transmission approach to study of communication has dominated the United States colleges ever since the 1920s. To revive ritual communications theory, Carey turns to colleagues of Dewey in the Chicago School: George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) and Charles Horton Cooley (1864-1929) through Robert Park and on to Erving Goffman. Carey's interpretation of Dewey also borrows from contemporary scholars such as Clifford Geertz, Victor Turner, Peter Berger, Thomas Kuhn, Kenneth Burke, Hugh Duncan, and Adolph Portman. Furthermore, Carey found it necessary to re-invigorate Dewey's notion of ritual communication theory by turning to cross-disciplinary sources in biology, theology, anthropology, and literature for some intellectual material (1992, 13-35).

One of the consistent sociological themes in Carey's principal work *Communication as Culture* is the contrast between ritual and transmission views of communications. To begin from ritual is to situate the inquiry in a world of doubt, contingency, and chaos. Chaos is always at the edge of all our imaginings and yet is the object of our imaginings. Culture is the ensemble of practices through which order is imposed on chaos. Ritual creates the forms of social relations into which people enter as opposed to the processes occurring within those forms. As John Pauly, an interpreter of Carey's work notes, "we dream the forms of social order as we enact them in the practice of communication" (quoted in Munson and Warren 1997, 314).

According to Carey, ritual is the means through which chaos is controlled and order imposed on the disparate and contingent impulses of human action. The most embodied form of culture is ritual, for as Carolyn Marvin (another Carey interpreter) says ritual constructs cosmos out of chaos. The emphasis on ritual forces one to begin with the oral formation of culture and its secondary displacement in mass-mediated forms. To say that communication begins in ritual is to say it begins in conversation in the sense that it is embodied. Conversation requires the actual presence of bodies. Carey concurs with McLuhan (see #4.1) that to speak is to "outer" the self in an utterance. It is to enter a social relation activating and displaying all the capacities of the body. In ritual and conversation signs have intrinsic agency; they are fiduciary symbols: meanings we acquire not by examining dictionaries but by embodying and acting out the claims symbols have on us. Carey reminds us that the body contains not only speech but also memory, for the primitive form of memory is in act and gesture. The oral and conversational then displays the human body in its full apprehensive range; it utilizes not

only sound but also sight, touch, smell, not only the aural but also the visual and gestural. In this simultaneity of presence, embodied language and memory that McLuhan abbreviated in the synesthesia of the senses produced by conversation and oral communication (Munson and Warren 1997, 314).

For Carey, all ritual begins in the grid-less ambience of conversation. Such ritual, can be displaced (abbreviated, transformed, resituated) in secondary, mediated forms. However, these forms - the printing press, television, the Internet - do not so much create communities as remind us of communities elsewhere embodied in first-order ritual and conversation. Carey privileges oral over technologically mediated communications for normative and descriptive reasons. He completely agrees with John Pauly that communication understood as a metaphor of ritual and conversation encourages, even requires, a primitive form of equality because conversation must leave room for response as a condition of its continuance. Conversation enforces a recognition of others in the fullness of their presence. Carey affirms that in conversation we must deal with the full weight of words for they put not only our minds but also our bodies in play and at risk. To speak conversationally is not only to invite and require a response, but to temper of necessity our criticisms and alienation, our objections and differences, with expressions, implicit and explicit, of solidarity and mutual regard. Carey fully concurs with Dewey, who understood communication as a principle of ethics, not merely a form of action, "for it was the condition of human learning, and, therefore, the condition of survival and prosperity" (Munson and Warren 1997, 315). As a general maxim, whatever inhibits and prevents communication diminishes the vitality of culture, the reach of experience, and the capacity for growth.

Carey's vision of ideal communication emphasizes the social continuity that communications can bring to society. By focusing on continuity of traditions created by communications, Carey overlooks the dynamic, evolutionary thrust of human forms of communication in the world today. Today signs and symbols do not necessarily mean what they did yesterday. Indeed, as McLuhan has pointed out, signification or symbolic meaning depends upon context in a semiotic chain, which is continuously in flux (#4.1). It would be nice to find Carey's viewpoint supplemented by a futurist perspective that helps us to find religious import of change and development. Carey has been very critical of machine mediated communication and also attacks futurist literature in popular culture and academia. He dismisses McLuhan and his line of thinking with the label "technological determinist" (Grosswiler 1998, 134-135). What role does the - invention of printing - play in social change? This is an important question for religion. Does the media affect the human mind and the emotions? By ignoring these questions and viewing them from a neutral perspective technology, Carey minimizes his own analysis. He becomes a traditionalist and a conformist who leaves little or no room for social adaptation within communication or religion.

Carey insightfully points out that all models of human communication were traditionally part of religious thought. Religious thought not only describes the custom of communication; it also presents a model for the appropriate uses of language, the permissible forms of human contact, the motives interaction should manifest, and the ends communication should serve. It teaches what it meant to display. Today models of secular communication are found less in religion than in science, but their implications are the same. Carey views this as a reflexive property: the models do not merely represent

communication, they also socially construct it, serving as a template that guides material or concrete practices of human interaction. The major weakness of Carey's study is his devotion to the past and received traditions at the expense of the human future, and his unwillingness to focus upon change. Supplementing Carey's work with McLuhan would help shift focus from society as closed to an open model that integrates religion within a changing social context. It would also further underscore the influence of religion on contemporary sociological theories of communication and mass media.

While Carey argues for a hermeneutics of content and the meaning of symbols, McLuhan embraced a practical criticism that focused on context and effects. He looked for laws of behaviour that would explain motives and functions of communications. His open model of communication stems from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1887-1955), the avant-garde Catholic scientist who overcame the conflict between faith and modernity which paralyzed traditional Christianity.

2. Generations and the Church's Teaching Office

Modernity and the fervour for new generations is the project of a futurist kind of religious communication. Ecological groups have used McLuhan's work to highlight the role played by generational consciousness in social and political change. A particular generation is an age-group of people within a society who were born at approximately the same time and thus share common concerns within a given society. However, Carey neglects the role of generations, as well as the role held by technology and invention in his research on society. The question remains: how much of communication could be seen as the interaction between generations, a question not of the past, but of the present and future?

Vatican II should be regarded as empirical proof of the sociological law that the unique experiences common to each generation group in the global Church allow for or even cause real social change. In recent years there has been an increasing interest in generational analyses that examine the contribution from emerging age-groups to social change. For example, Andrea Williams and James D. Davidson co-authored "Catholic Conceptions of Faith: A Generational Analysis" for *Sociology of Religion* (57 [1995]: 273-89) and Davidson authored also "The Post-Vatican II Generation of 'Christian Catholics'" (60 [1998]: 12-22). According to Davidson, a generation has four characteristics: (1) its members grow up in a relatively specific social context, (2) they are born during a specific period of time, (3) they share as a group a set of distinctive experiences during their formative years, and (4) an event, often traumatic, leaves an imprint that impacts the rest of their lives (Barnes 2000, 198). All of this research builds upon the pioneering effort of Karl Mannheim, who in *The Problem of Generations* (1952), expertly described how people located in the same generation may see the world in very different ways from their counterparts in earlier generations. This body of research reminds theologians that to understand the Church, it is important to grasp how the behaviour of generations can shape a religious tradition, and *vice versa*.

There is an important relationship between generations and the Church's teaching or prophetic office with regard to the intellectual dimension of Christian religion found among its scholars, writers, artists, and opinion leaders. The Second Vatican Council's theological setting was Eurocentric, dominated by French and German theologians, a few Dutch and Flemish theologians, and the Italian churchmen who have shaped ecclesial bureaucracy. Much of the communications theory during that time period was developed

by social scientists from North America, and so there was a gap between the two. Roman Catholic theology in the middle of the twentieth century was the culmination of a generation shaped by the experience of two world wars. This generation was gradually becoming acquainted with the influence of media on daily life. It was widely held that the end of sociological Catholicism in Europe was at hand. Indeed, Paul VI so emphasized the pilgrim dimension of the Church because he felt that it would be the fate of tomorrow's generation of believers living as a diaspora.

In looking at the history of the PCSC 'generations' as an analytical category. Bryan S. Turner and June Edmunds have examined this matter in their book *Generations, Culture, and Society* (2002). They conclude that when Mannheim, working in Germany between 1920 and 1933, wrote his essay on generations, he could scarcely have imagined the ways in which, at the conclusion of the twentieth century and the first part of the twenty-first century, generations could share a consciousness that transcends national boundaries. Mannheim wrote about specific generations that existed in a national context such as the generation of conservatives that existed in a national context such as the generation of conservative Romantics in Germany in the nineteenth century. Global mass media communication is creating global generations. Mannheim's initial insight provides a basic understanding of how generational consciousness emerges, namely through the shared experience of a traumatic historical event. This generational consciousness is sustained and reinforced through collective memories and rituals. Edmunds and Turner argue that a distinction between active and passive generations is useful because it takes account of the strategic component of generations, illuminating the process by which generations overhaul pre-existing forms of thinking or doing. While a generation might

be formed in response to a traumatic event such as war, it becomes a strategic, acting generation by exploiting available resources to innovate in the cultural, intellectual, or political spheres (Edmunds and Turner 2002, 114-117).

From a cultural and sociological perspective, there is reason to suppose that the 1960s generation provided the initial impulse towards what is called globalization. The booming economies of the post-war period, the reduction in the costs of transport and communication, the creation of worldwide labour markets and the arrival of the Internet have provided the material conditions of cultural globalization. Global mass media communication do create global generations. The 1960s generation was the first truly global one, expressed in the invention in 1968 of McLuhan's concept of the 'global village'. Global television gave people access to popular information in an unprecedented way. By the 1990s, global forms of communication, including the telephone, e-mail, and the Internet, enabled people to act on the information. In McLuhan's familiar terms, television was a 'cold medium' because viewers were passive/reactive. In contrast the new media are 'hot' because they allow users to be proactive and participative (#4.1). There is a strong historical connection between the growth of culture, global communications, innovative consumer lifestyles, and the post-war generation. It could therefore be argued, as Edmunds and Turner do, that the globalization of culture is itself the product of the 1960s generation. At the start of the twenty-first century, there is considerable nostalgia and introspection about the 1960s in an attempt to evaluate the cultural and social impact of the post-war generation that has now reached maturity (Edmunds and Turner 2002, 117-118).

At Vatican II, theologians and churchmen were in search for pastoral answers amidst the limitations of neo-Scholasticism; they wanted freedom for a new understanding of the Gospel. This meant a broadening of the sources used in theology to include such things as the social sciences. They had a sense of engagement with the spirit of the times expressed in the idea that theology must be aware of and respond to contemporary cultural movements. They had an openness to dialogue with those of a more liberal orientation, which exceeded the desire for interaction with those from a more traditional perspective. They were reacting against the past, and, so, they rejected the triumphalism of their older teachers. They dared to approach the topic of media and communication and wrote about that secular topic from an open and non-judgmental perspective. As a younger generation, they were not worried about the snares of liberalism; and from their perspective, the Roman Curia establishment seemed overly concerned with preserving truth, and by fighting the battles of an earlier generation. And so, they looked to their own social location in history for guidance.

Drawing on Mannheim's (1936) distinction between forward and backward-looking groups in his analysis of conservatism, Edmunds and Turner make a distinction between nostalgic and utopian intellectual generations expressing either utopian (forward-looking) or nostalgic (backward-looking) visions. Utopian intellectuals introduce ideas that aim to change the status-quo, whereas nostalgic intellectuals promote ideas that hark back to the past and tend to preserve the status quo. Within each generation, social changes are resisted by some and adopted by others. In *Innovation: The Communication of Change in Ideas, Practices, and Products* (1994), W.R. Spence, a scholar of communication theory, explains that "adoption is the mental process through

which an individual passes from the stage of first hearing about an innovation to the final adoption of it. Diffusion is the spread of a new idea from its source to the ultimate users” (83). While the first is a personal, the second is social. Together they combine to form a process known as innovation which is directed to bringing about change. It sometimes involves a time-lag in its influence on the social structure of groups and organizations. Sometimes, those who are non-conformist or deviant to social norms, may be the most likely to generate new ideas. Of course, people vary in their degree of innovativeness, and this is often influenced by their relationship with their community or social group. This relationship can make acceptance of new ideas easy if the individual is favourably disposed to the norms of a progressive community or organization. Otherwise, an incompatible relationship with a hierarchy or subordinates would make personal innovativeness more difficult (Spence 1994, 71-84).

Progressiveness in organizations such as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned with adopting a viewpoint that is forward-looking in respect to change, problem-solving or decision-making processes in large bureaucratic organizations such as the Vatican. Line management consists of interaction or communication across, as well as up and down the hierarchy. Paul VI created the idea of synods for a more democratic culture within the Church. However, this does not replace the role of the Curia and its study commissions that serve to assist the papacy.

The structures of the pilgrim Church outlined by pope Paul VI held that the open Church model is the best for modern times. According to this model, officials at top levels should encourage communication at all levels of the Church. It should encourage feedback so that the global Church can effectively respond to new needs in light of the

Gospel. Paul VI argued that ecclesial management should be a supportive use of authority, i.e. encourage pastoral experimentation, learning from errors, and tolerance of ambiguity. The Church is not a perfect society, fortress as depicted by Vatican I. Instead, it is a community of sinners journeying with Jesus. Paul VI's vision encouraged the integration of planning and implementation of social policy. As such, decision for action in the pilgrim Church are hypotheses, open to review by all groups in the light of experience.

Paul VI's vision of the pilgrim Church was shared by the generation of Catholic theologians who shaped the proceedings of the Second Vatican Council. Already in 1959 Karl Rahner had written about communication in his book *Free Speech in the Church*. Here, Rahner used the sociological categories of open and closed systems or cultures. He explained that if ecclesiastical authorities lack adequate spiritual qualities for leadership, they will do all in their power to encourage a closed Church system or culture in which authentic dialogue or discernment is impossible. The Church would then become "an absolute monarchy or totalitarian system" and if that happens it would be impossible for the Church to keep its primary task of building the Kingdom of God on earth (Rahner 1959, 89). Apostolically the Church would stagnate were it to remain closed to the world. Officials, instead of listening to the Spirit speaking in the events and aspirations of people, would claim that they alone have the authority and power to decide what the will of God is for the Church, even in matters of little consequence, such as the media. But any demand for blind and unquestioning obedience can never be a virtue, since it denies the basic human right for all people to be heard and involved in whatever pertains to their destiny. It is spiritual arrogance to assert that the Spirit works through ecclesiastical

authorities alone. The inescapable fact is that institutional and charismatic or prophetic structures will not function as the Spirit wishes, unless there are people at all levels of the Church's life striving to foster a spirit of mutuality or interdependence, patience, respect, and charity. Only then, Rahner argued, will the Church be truly an open system or culture as desired and practiced by its founder Jesus (1959, 94-97).

Pope John Paul II, in his personal engagement with media technology, was highly influential as an opinion leader and a role model for Catholics and non-Catholics alike. His motto, 'Be not afraid!' encouraged Catholics to embrace the innovative products of information technology as means to proclaim the Gospel. Personally trained as an actor in his youth, John Paul II was the perfect expression of a guru for a youth culture shaped by MTV and the Internet. His annual visits to Catholics living in countries around the globe for World Youth Day broke the inertia of the ancient Church. His celebrity convinced millions that Catholics could faithfully witness and sustain their beliefs in an era of techno gadgets and changing communications practices (see #4.2).

During the 1980s and 1990s, the dazzling media and communication techniques of John Paul II were used solely for the purposes of securing the administrative or the kingly office of the Vatican. His leadership style has been regarded by many social critics as reversal toward conservatism, and his pontificate tended to practice what James W. Carey critically labels the transmission approach to communication. John Paul II's 'restoration movement' moved the global Church back towards a closed model of ecclesiology because he so feared dissent among clergy and laity. The old fortress mentality of pre-Vatican II Catholicism became resurrected among the Curia during his long pontificate. The closed model assumed that communication is one-way, namely

downward. By spying on and censoring critical thinkers within the Church, such as Hans Küng or Edward Schillebeeckx, John Paul II managed through the Church by fear, thus discouraging ambiguity and experimentation. In the ensuing aftermath of the Church's declining membership during the 1970s, John Paul wanted to foster an atmosphere that is status-quo oriented and formal. He looked to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the Vatican's Prefect for the Congregation of the Faith, to show that decision on faith and morals are final because they were approved by top officials in the Curia. It was assumed that Church leaders could not error and were omnipotent and omniscient about the veracity of the Catholic tradition. This tended to discourage interaction between those churchmen involved in the planning and implementation of pastoral policies. In sum, pope John Paul II wanted to control the feedback processes in order to guarantee authority structures can be maintained in the media age.

3. Reflexivity and Habitus

Reflexivity requires that the Church confront anew cultural amnesia concerning the historical experience of the twentieth century. After Vatican II it is impossible to for the Church to maintain its own religious identity when so many believers remain ignorant of the accomplishments brought about by what John Paul II called in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* that 'grace event of the twentieth century' (1994). This curious phenomenon highlighted in the October 2005 issue of the famous Roman Catholic journal *Concilium* on the topic "*Vatican II: A Forgotten Future*". Alberto Melloni and Christoph Theobald observed that in the aftermath of many great Church councils there has been debating within and between generations. Amidst the debate it has often been forgotten that the Church itself was the main subject matter of the Council documents.

From my perspective, historical investigations of the Second Vatican Council and its proceedings open up the possibility for a critical re-reading of the conciliar documents so that ignored texts such as *Inter Mirifica*, receive new attention.

Inter Mirifica teaches about the Church and the lives of the faithful in the context of the modern communications age. According to the Catholic dogmatic theologian Peter Hünermann (2005: 110-131), the genre for the conciliar documents was shaped by fundamental reflection. Paul VI summarized the agenda of the Council, as prescribed by John XXIII and taken up and realized by the Council itself, in the question: "Church, what say ye about thyself?" The documents of the Council are a fundamental reflection on what the Church in the modern world is, what it is supposed to do, how it presents itself in relation to humanity, to the religions and to the development of modernity. Hünermann notes that fundamental reflection in this historical context means theological reflection which is however not undertaken in order to further clarify matters of the doctrine of God, of Christology, or of Pneumatology. Rather, it is a theological reflection which is meant to illuminate the fundamental orientation of the Church in its historic existence. Pastoral teaching about the mass media represents a sociological initiative to make the Roman Church more aware of its place in recent history.

Hünermann criticizes the paralyzing effect on the Church of the contentious rhetorics that posit a stark contrast between majority and minority viewpoints at the Council for the starting point of their interpretation. It is obvious the many Church historians are not comfortable about the possibility of a plurality of Catholic teachings and the need for accepting the ecclesial ambiguity caused by modernity. So they tend to characterize the texts of the Council largely as statements of political compromise. Here,

Hünemann refers to Pottmeyer, who speaks of an “internal incoherence of the texts of the Council”, and O’Malley, who critically describes the documents of the Council as “committee documents, full of compromises and ambiguities”. Hünemann also refers to Otto Hermann Pesch who with Max Seckler speaks of a “contradictory pluralism” which leaves the solution to a question to a forthcoming synthesis. Numerous Catholic authors, Hünemann observes, find their viewpoints confirmed by pope Paul VI who stated in his final speech at the close of Vatican II that it had not been the intention of the council to resolve all questions that had been raised. Some, such as the topic of social communication, Paul VI argued, had been postponed precisely for the purpose of further study which the Church should seriously undertake with the PCSC. The ambiguities and gaps found in the document *Inter Mirifica* should be indeed acknowledged, but they are positive opportunities, present in the text for the constructive reason of stimulating further development. Vatican II was the very first step in appropriating humanism and modernity to the discursive evolution of Roman Catholic identity and to the sociolinguistics of Church politics. From a CDA perspective, the modernization of Roman Catholicism has contributed to society as a whole. It has helped to liberate the Church from the dangers of sectarianism and religious fundamentalism. At a time when much of Christendom had begun to lose confidence, the Second Vatican Council inspired many to find optimism and hope in the Church’s renewal and reform. Moving away from neo-scholasticism and towards contextual theology Catholics were encouraged to live in critical dialogue with the secular world.

Avery Dulles draws attention to the fact that the Church has always need to modify its understanding of structures and offices “so as to operate more effectively in

the social environment in which it finds itself" (1987, 178). Reflexivity is a helpful concept for religious scholars who wish to understand the identity of the pilgrim Church on earth. The intellectual historian Fons Elders argues in his book *Reflexive Water: Basic Concerns of Mankind* (1974) that the concept of reflexivity has a wider meaning than is usually assumed. As a theory of self-reference and first-person authority, or as an intuitive approach to self-knowledge, reflexivity emphasizes the importance of human perception. As Walter Ong recalls,

By the very same token she is committed to secular learning, for secular learning is not a thing apart from cosmic history, something superadded to it, but rather something within that history which develops in articulation with earlier events in the same history, to protect and fulfill them. When the cosmos has attained a certain degree of maturity, God creates the first human soul and infuses it into the matter prepared for it. As the human race develops, human understanding and learning develop, for learning whether that of letters or science, does not exist full-blown at the beginning of human civilization. It is essentially not only something which puts in its seminal appearance with man himself at a certain time in cosmic history - some five to ten billion years from the beginning of the universe we know - but also something which has a measured growth. The growth of knowledge protracts the growth of the cosmos itself which has given birth to man, for through this growth of knowledge, the cosmos comes to its fuller and fuller maturity, in which it becomes aware of itself and its relationship to God. (Ong 1959, 138-139)

Roman Catholicism's view of salvation history, Ong argues, focuses upon the histories of humanity and of the cosmos because it is sacramental in its view of creation, evolutionary in its view of eschatology.

Thereupon the story of humanity on our planet is in great part the story of the progressive colonization of the planet in its entirety, combined with the story of developing communications and skills. After an initial racial differentiation, or scatter of variants, reminiscent of the progressive differentiation in infrahuman evolution, a pattern of convergence sets in the human world. Over the entire surface of the earth all peoples have establish greater and greater contact with one another, generating an awareness of all humanity as a unit - in a way, for example, in which the global aggregate of bears or butterflies never establishes any sort of global awareness of itself. Today we are on the threshold of a new stage; the earth is beginning to fill up with the population of mankind, while at the same time communications are being perfected in such a way as to make possible human cooperation on a scale simply inconceivable even five thousand years ago, much less a hundred thousand years ago. Within this network of communications are poised our technological skills. And the outer-space age has in some sense begun. Thus, history, if seen in sufficiently large perspectives, gives us some idea of what the future will be like, although the idea is necessarily indeterminate in many details.

(Ong 1959, 13-14)

Reflexivity as consciousness of its own authority is the problem facing the pilgrim Church. In *The Elementary forms of Religious Life*, the pioneering sociologist Émile Durkheim asserts: "A society is not simply the mass of individuals that comprises it, nor the territory it occupies, nor the things it uses, nor the movements it carries out, but above all it is the idea that it has of itself" (1954, 618). The self awareness a group develops is one of the most important factors explaining its behavior. Vatican social communications policy for the pilgrim Church can be seen from the important link between habitus and reflexivity worked out by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002).

According to Bourdieu, the concept of habitus broadly refers to the context in which people live and practice their lives. In his own words, the term 'habitus' is defined to mean those "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organized practices and representations" (Bourdieu 1992, 53). Habitus is not an easy idea to convey. But it is worth thinking about, particularly if we wish to understand religious belief within the context of cybernetic ecclesiology (see #1.3). An important link between habitus and reflexivity in Bourdieu's work that has recently been explored by some important sociologists, such as Scott Lash (1994), and by the Catholic scholar Kieran Flanagan (1996). Bourdieu's sociological theory is a rationale from a critically reflexive or biographical perspective, the Vatican must constantly take stock of those communication routines, institutional habits, or organizational practices that enable the Catholic Church to exist in the modern world. Biography points to the reflexive issue of ecclesial disposition, concerning the thread of argument deemed secular that is to be pulled through cybernetic culture, or the strand that indicates the sacred.

For Flanagan, there are both theological and sociological resonances which emerge from Bourdieu's term 'habitus'. He contends that a theologically inclined reading of Bourdieu's approach to habitus, the field and his definition of culture permit's a resistance to secularization to emerge that is distinctly sociological. Bourdieu uses the term 'habitus' to refer to the growth in sensibility of membership of the field. Here, the field is a site for securing credibility of belief. In his study of French university life, where power and influence are documented in rich details, Bourdieu uses the term 'habitus' to refer to an aggregation that reproduces a collective defence of a professional body emerging as "the product of the sort of social conservation instinct that is the habitus of the members of a dominant group" (Bourdieu 1988, 150). Habitus, Flanagan comments, refers to what is durable through accumulation of tradition, a mentality which members of a group or organization such as the Church, acquire through engagement in the field which comes to signify their cultural capital. It also draws attention to what it is reasonable to know, what is embodied in the social that relates to a quality of being 'at home' in a field (Flanagan 1996, 200).

In his insightful commentary essay introducing Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (1993), Randal Johnson suggests that Bourdieu sees habitus as representing a "theoretical intention", a resource that effects structures within a field that is itself structured. Significantly, Johnson adds that it also refers to a "feel for the game", to a knowing of how to enact in a way that is not necessarily calculated nor follows conscious obedience to rules. Habitus points to what is durable in a person's biography, "the result of a long process of inculcation beginning in early childhood and which becomes a 'second sense' or a second nature" (Johnson 1993, 5).

Bourdieu reports that he found the notion of habitus when reading Erwin Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (1957). Kieran Flanagan observes that for Bourdieu, the term 'habitus' relates to acquired dispositions, to the actor or reflexive institution being the social agent, the practical operator of the construction of structures that take on objective qualities. Habitus is most useful for explaining behavioural patterns in situations where normative rules are not explicit. Cheleen Mahar suggests that habitus offers Bourdieu's work a means of escape from a structuralism that had no subject and from a subject that had no structure. Flanagan refers to an interview by Maher of Bourdieu in which he talks about his surprise, when translating Panofsky back in 1967, of the connection between the structure of the space of the Church, the Gothic Cathedral, and the structure of the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas (Flanagan 1996, 200-201).

Habitus is a set of acquired patterns of thought, behaviour, and taste that constitute the link between social *structure* and social *practice*. From a theological angle, Flanagan argues that habitus also refers to an opening to the sacred, one that has its origins back in medieval times. John Codd has explored Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* in terms of the habit forming force in the Church of Scholasticism, designed to lead to a cultivated disposition towards objects that manifested to the senses the basis of the belief (Flanagan 1996, 136-141). Panofsky sees the relation between Gothic art and Scholasticism in terms not of mere juxtaposition, but of a genuine cause-effect relationship spread through a mental habit that could be reduced to the Scholastic sense of a "principle that regulates the act" (Flanagan 1996, 21-22). Architecture as a habit is the basis of theological clarification understood by Suger by the principle of transparency. The basis of faith was to be made clear to the senses in a manner that also

harmonised with imagination and reason. The sense of hierarchy displayed in the Cathedral, in its carving and in its liturgical order, owed much to the angelic ranking in the Pseudo-Dionysius, who so much influenced Suger and to whom Bourdieu refers in order to illustrate the correspondence between a hierarchy of values and of being, and to point to the notion of perfect correspondence between differing orders (Flanagan 1996, 202). Panofsky encapsulates this correspondence embodied in the notion of habitus when he suggests that “in its imagery, the High Gothic cathedral sought to embody the whole of Christian knowledge, theological, moral, natural, and historical, with everything in its place and that which no longer found its place, suppressed” (Flanagan 1996, 44-45). In Catholic circles the link between the gothic and reflexivity was popularized by novelist Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907) who wrote about Chartres in his book *The Cathedral* (1898).

Bourdieu uses the term ‘habitus’ to refer to “practice in its humblest form” in rituals and in the mundane tasks of everyday life. As “being the social embodied, it [habitus] is ‘at home’ in the field it inhabits, it perceives it immediately as endowed with meaning and interest” (Bourdieu 1992, 120-128). Flanagan tells us that habitus relates to strategies of the game, the self-understanding of the actor in a space of possibilities as to what might be won. It denotes the implicit *modus operandi* of a particular field, the objectified consensus as to what constitutes it and how to play in it. These strategies become second nature as habitus relates to what is generative in the structure of the field. It is what lies below the surface of the social transaction that bears on a sense of place in the field. Secondly, habitus relates to a property of embodiment in terms of the cultural properties that are appropriated to realize an identifiable position in a contestable field, a

point Bourdieu pursues in relation to Gustave Flaubert's public recognition as a writer. Thirdly, habitus signifies a career of grasping and integrating connections as in the imagery of the cathedral and its occupants. This relates to the recognition of what is seen in belief and practice, the tacit understandings of the expenditure of symbolic capital used to survive play on a sacred field. Habitus relates to careers of understanding and the accumulation of tacit knowing unavailable to outsiders. Thus a monk who was a choirboy is steeped in psalms and liturgical practice. It is perhaps the only space or field where he can play himself to the full, for that is the only game he knows by the nature of his vocation. His habitus makes him unavailable to other dispositions, which he treats as undignified unwarranted intrusions. There is a property of imitation in habitus, a reciprocity in disposition and its accomplishment with its own strategies for survival. In monastic life, which is after all a religious field for searching for God, habitus is the form of finding the self before God and being consecrated into the implications of the search. Flanagan's exposition here of Bourdieu's work shows that habitus has religious implications, for it seems to integrate acting with believing and its means of realization. This highlights the need for human will to be harnessed to disposition.

Flanagan has found that crucial to Bourdieu's writing is the link between both symbolic and cultural capital, and the habitual capacity to decipher. It relates, he notes, to forms of knowing how to cope with the indeterminate. This presupposes a consciousness of possibilities, a knowing what to do, that suggests similarities with notions of stocks of knowledge in the context of ethno-methodology. For Bourdieu, this tacit knowing relates to marking distinctions, indices, and qualities of judgement of taste. Self-evident forms of taste have a naturalized property that gives them an implicit protection, rendering them in

someway above categorization and judgement. These forms, Flanagan explains, relate to the inequality of recognition and the forms of misrecognition that tend to naturalize and perpetuate these differences in distinctions that matter. Habitus is in fact a remarkably ambiguous term being about the determinate and indeterminate. In one setting it is about the problem of classification and being classified, of structuring and being structured, that governs inequalities in the use of symbolic capital between classes. It is about the power to define and this links it to the field of cultural production. But it also has a circular quality, Flanagan notes, one of a self-fulfilling prophecy, a property of hope rising above adversity. In sum, the theological debts embodied in the opaque term 'habitus' permit its application in the religious field in a way that links sociology with culture (Flanagan 1996, 203-204).

The sociologist Scott Lash explains in "Reflexivity and Its Doubles: Structure, Aesthetics, Community" that there is an important link between reflexivity and habitus. In *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (1992) Bourdieu speaks of reflexivity in terms of the systematic uncovering of the un-thought categories which themselves are preconditions of our more self-conscious, sociological practices. Reflection is not on social structure, that is, it is not on institutional or other structural roles. Reflexivity is instead on "un-thought categories", which are not readily accessible to us as are social structures. Yet these un-thought categories are also not, Bourdieu assures us, in principle inaccessible to the conscious mind as in the Freudian unconscious. What he is talking about is a hermeneutical relationship, in which the un-thought categories are not causes but are to be hermeneutically interpreted. These un-thought categories are also ontological foundations of practical consciousness. Gordon D. Kaufman would call such categories

“concepts without objects” that are indeed fundamental presuppositions of experience (see G.D. Kaufman, “A Problem for Theology: The Concept of Nature”. *Harvard Theological Review* 65/3 [July 1972]: 337-66). Following the tradition of Durkheim, Bourdieu’s work presents a sociology of our un-thought, through bodily inscribed, categories. It is a sociology of the ontological foundations - in categories of habit - of conscious action (Lash 1994, 153-55).

To explain this un-thought even further, Lash refers to Bourdieu’s talk of habits, most proximally, not in terms of classificatory categories, but in terms of classificatory “schemata”. This is significant because “schemata” are more supple and much less fixed than categories; they are in fact more immediate than the least mediated categories. They are difficult to distinguish in nature from the particular cases and practices they putatively subsume; they are in fact contradictions in terms, of “unmediated (or immediate) mediators” (Lash quoting Bourdieu’s work *Distinction*, 466). But habitus and classificatory schemata can be interpreted yet further and even more immediately as “predispositions”, as “orientations”. These are even more immediate than classificatory schemata. “Predispositions” and “orientations” are the learned, yet un-thought techniques of the body that are foundational for conscious conduct. Lash explains that for Bourdieu habitus exists only as situated in its “world”. Habitus assumes a certain “thrownness” into a web of already existing practices and meanings (Lash 1994, 155-156).

The production or construction of social structures is very much an issue for the Vatican as it deals with the modern diaspora condition amidst the hyper-reality of the Internet and mass media culture. The term ‘habitus’ helps to conceptualize the language of ongoing activities and tactics needed for the Church to survive. The future of

Christianity in the communications age depends upon the coordinating of new 'habits of the mind'! Today the PCSC welcomes laity active in the arts, advertising, and journalism to participate in the Church's teaching ministry. Catholic intellectuals such as Philip Rossi, Paul Soukup, Frances Ford Plude, William Thorn, Angela Ann Zukowski, and Robert White, have each personally helped the PCSC in its effort to search for a way to deal theologically, pastorally, and administratively with today's mass-mediated society and with how the move to the electronic age affected the Church and in particular, the transmission of the Word in the future, preparing Church leaders and laity for today's technological age. Mention should also be made of Philip Lee's edited collection of papers *Communication for All: New World Information and Communication Order* (1985) prepared for the World Association of Christian Communicators. The book includes essays by Catholic intellectuals involved in media and communication such as Robert A. White, Gaston Roberge, Johan Galtung, Michael Traber, Herbert J. Schiller, Colleen Roach, Washington Uranga, Paul V. Ansah, and Margaret Gallagher.

Around the world, there remain many bishops and church members who need to engage the teachings of the PCSC and its ongoing study of mass communication and information technology. In addition to the Vatican, there are other religious groups, such as the World Association for Christian Communications and the Jesuit Centre for Communications, which combine the study of theology with communication and sociology. It is through these study groups that religious intellectuals will map the newly emerging habits of the mind and body in the Roman Catholic Church.

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