

The Society for Ecumenical Studies

Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Ecumenical Learning

Report of a Day Conference at St Mary's Catholic Church, Chelsea on Saturday, 3rd November 2007 by Mark Woodruff

Introduction

The conference of over a hundred ecumenical practitioners, academics and church leaders in January 2006, a combined effort of the College of St Cuthbert, Ushaw (the seminary for the northern dioceses of the Catholic Church in England and Wales) and the new Centre for Catholic Studies at the University of Durham, celebrated the refreshing approach to ecumenism promoted by Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, known as receptive ecumenism.

The concept of spiritual ecumenism is well known from *Unitatis Redintegratio* at Vatican II, absorbing the aspirations and vision of Paul Couturier who re-imagined the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in the mid 1930s. The idea of 'spiritual emulation', or the exchange of gifts and inspiration from other traditions for the purpose of mutual spiritual enrichment and ecclesial rapprochement is even earlier, recalling the work of Lambert Beauduin and the Monks of Unity reaching out from the West to the Christian East after the rise of state communism in Russia, as well as his famous idea of Anglicanism 'united, not absorbed'. Nineteenth century Anglicans liberally borrowed and grew from Catholic and Lutheran continental worship and spirituality, too, as well as renewing an earlier interest in Orthodox worship, iconography and

patrology. Receptive ecumenism is an idea which takes all this much further, and in a way that is suited to the present state of ecumenical dialogue and rapprochement, which many had felt were stalled on the path to re-integration and a scarcely feasible organic, visible unity in life, faith, praxis and structure. But no one came away from that conference with a chill from the so-called ecumenical winter.

Reports of the Durham conference can be found on the websites of the Society for Ecumenical Studies and of the Association of Inter-Church Families. A book published by Oxford University Press in October 2008, *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Ecumenical Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism*, features the contribution of the principal contributors. In the meantime, further events have taken place in Dublin and the United States to extend the discussion and the Society felt that it would be useful to facilitate a short event to introduce its principles and themes to a new audience in the south of England, engage more thinkers, and encourage support for its constructive spirit.

Of course, the Durham conference was a Catholic initiative and focussed a good deal on the scope for Catholic learning ecumenically. It was not an exercise, therefore, in the promotion of Catholic ecumenical principles as the preferred or most practical model for unity – how can others fit in better with Catholics – but instead asked what the Catholic Church can learn and receive, with integrity of course, from other Christian traditions. It won a generous response from a range of imaginative Anglican, Orthodox, Methodist and indeed other Catholic thinkers, as well as Christians working in secular settings and disciplines other than theology.

In framing the follow-up day conference event in November 2007, we felt it would be useful to enable each of the traditions to pose the same sort of question, as well as offer their own answers. So His Eminence Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia, the Rt Revd Christopher Hill, Bishop of Guildford, the Revd Dr John McDade SJ, Principal of Heythrop College, the Revd Professor Paul Fiddes of Regents Park College, Oxford, David Carter of the

British Methodist-roman Catholic Committee, and Dr Paul Murray of the University of Durham spoke to the following question from the Orthodox, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Baptist and Methodist traditions:

What can and does my Church learn and receive, with integrity, from other Christian traditions? Spiritual ecumenism, or the spirituality of communion? Liturgy and Evangelisation? Faith and Order?

Over 80 people attended and, as at Durham, all the addresses and discussions, grew out of and returned to a common experience of prayer. First there was the regular Saturday morning mass, where we were able to join in the worship of the Catholic parish community at St Mary's Church, Cadogan Street, in Chelsea. Midday Prayer was the Orthodox Office of the Sixth Hour, read by Archimandrite Ephrem Lash and led by Metropolitan Kallistos. The day was concluded by Evening Prayer according to the form of the Chemin Neuf Community, a Catholic but also ecumenical religious community with a large worldwide lay following, whose charism is to live in the world, especially in marriage and family, united in the 'invisible monastery' which is the Church at prayer in heaven, beyond the world's separations. The service, featuring a number of hymns by Charles Wesley to express this sense of unity in worship, was led by the parish priest, Canon Stuart Wilson.

For technical reasons on the day it was not possible in the end to make a transcript of all the addresses, but extensive notes were taken by Dr Martin Conway, president of the Society. It has not been possible to obtain all the texts in full as most were addresses and not papers. So they are reported in summary form based on notes and other supporting material. If the construction of the narratives conveys any inaccuracy or misrepresentation, the fault is entirely mine and I would be only too happy to make correction.

David Carter, British Methodist-Roman Catholic Committee

Receptive ecumenism is the process by which churches take responsibility for their growth in catholicity spiritually, under the leading of the Holy Spirit as he guides us deeper into the purpose of God. It is the way we can all give and receive the gifts God has given each church.

And because the 'receptive' journey to unity has this spiritual quality, it is not something we can pursue by negotiation or trade. There is no common denominator; no playing fast and loose with our own tradition or traditions, or expecting others to do the same with theirs. We grow into unity by growing in each other's trust; and we grow in trust by learning from each other. And in learning from each other, we receive from each other, until ultimately it is each other that we receive into our unity as they receive us into theirs.

Asking, therefore, not how other Christians and their churches need to change to accommodate us, but how we can learn and receive from each others' gifts, riches, systems, traditions, insights, believing and spirituality, while remaining true to our own tradition's integrity, gives a fresh dimension and dynamism to our existing openness to 'spiritual ecumenism'.

The idea of receptive ecumenism has been developed especially in the University of Durham's Department of Theology and its new Centre for Catholic Studies, as well as through the work in the Catholic diocese of Hexham & Newcastle locally, which is endeavouring to learn from regional partners how to realise unity in operation or praxis (and any structures needed for this) in a collaborative research programme supported through the Centre.

At the inaugural Durham conference on receptive ecumenism in January 2006, Dr Paul Murray set out an important rationale:

- the movement into organic unity seems stalled (especially in Anglican Roman Catholic relations)

- But relations between churches are often so good that we simply cannot go back to isolation
- Therefore a process of mutual learning can be very fruitful now and going forward, even if we cannot at present see through to the end.

There was a naivety after Vatican II about how difficult achieving unity would actually be. All our churches were, and remain, still too attached to our own traditions and bad at receiving gifts that others can share. This has meant that we have not had the will to embrace the consequences of moving towards the unity we desire and say we are pledged to. Receptive ecumenism therefore at last provides us with the means.

And taking stock of what has been happening naturally, in a way almost unnoticed before, and identifying clear potential developments, show hopeful signs. The latest report from the International Methodist-Catholic Commission, *The grace given to us*, gives good examples of what each can learn from the other. Indeed the Commission's Roman Catholic co-president, the Australian Bishop Michael Putney, spoke at the Durham conference of realising his debt to the Wesleys. And from my own work as Ecumenical Officer in Bristol I can tell that the degree of good will between the churches is generally high, especially as we all face difficult challenges that are beyond us as individual churches. Nevertheless, each of us finds our systems tougher than we know how to open up so as to enable shared work. At the moment, we have hardly begun to know how to live as one Church handling one mission.

And it is particularly important to help smaller churches, both as denominations and as local congregations, to open up and overcome the fear of being swallowed up. One recalls the phrase of Lambert Beauduin concerning the reunion of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, proposing that it could be 'united, not absorbed'. Thus we can confidently walk forward into a process of *mutual* reception of and in Christ.

On this understanding, we can - and must - appreciate what we have already learned and what we are now learning. By the same token, we must also discern the lessons we have failed to learn in the past and are still disinclined to receive in the present. Again, receptive ecumenism's stress on learning and receiving in a way that is *genuinely* true to our own integrity, teaches us what is not conducive to unity and ecumenical learning usefully teaches us the hard lessons, too - what would be wrong for us. For this is a process of growing in wisdom together too, as our ecumenism draws us into one. One good example is a Local Ecumenical Project in Bristol, which brings together a congregation of relatively Catholic Anglicans and a decidedly Evangelical joint Methodist and URC church. Each appreciates the other's contrasting feel of worship. The distinctiveness of each community, far from being a mark of incompatibility, is a cause of closer understanding and rapprochement. Another example is of a lively Catholic church which has become thrilled to learn what the Catholic-Methodist dialogue has brought out about the other denomination and, moreover, what it has evoked from within their own tradition that reveals already close aspects of identity with Methodists.

My own spirituality looks to John Wesley for pointers on the journey of receptive ecumenism. He brought together material and experiences from many different quarters of the total Church. He emphasised how church leaders have a responsibility to show how much we can all learn from other Christians, and not just to insist on our own ways. So each tradition should dig deep to uncover the roots for such ecumenical learning. When John Wesley laid the foundation stone for his church in the City Road in London, he was not embarking on something novel and separate – he saw what he was trying to achieve as looking directly to the Bible, the Church Fathers, the English heritage of the Reformation, and Continental pietists. It was thus deeply rooted, embedded, in the one Church across place and history. And his famous appeal to 'Catholic Spirit', an early plea for ecumenical learning and living beyond the limitations recognised at the time, has been identified as a 'transconfessional Evangelicalism' which has as much to offer back to the whole Church now, especially in the systematic corpus of Wesleyan hymnody,

as it originally drew from the renewal and enriching of the experience of Church, the Tradition, which inspired it.

In our own era, Vatican II was right to insist that the riches stored up by the Holy Spirit and waiting to be shared in other churches are to be embraced wholeheartedly. And this is true not just for Catholics but for other Christians too. For our common ecumenical learning to be a genuinely receptive ecumenism in this way, it has to be an essentially spiritual ecumenism of the whole of our life in the Church. On the road into, it is a Spirit-led life, a Spirit-led humility, and Spirit-led prayer which must enliven and encourage us.

HE Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, Greek Orthodox Diocese of Thyateira

As I was preparing for today, I asked myself what could be meant by the idea of 'receptive ecumenism'. Was it receptiveness to each other, or receptiveness to our different customs and traditions, or receptiveness to our various ways of thinking and believing, or receptiveness of our very different ways of being the Church? It may include some or all of these in a way that for the moment only God can see, but how can our ecumenism now be receptive and what does that require of us?

Essentially it must mean nothing other than our receptiveness to God. My mind was immediately drawn to an icon in one of the catacombs of Rome, a very early painting showing a woman raising her hands to heaven (is it Mary, or a figure representing all the Church, or a saint whose name is now unknown?). She is clearly open to, longing for, the Holy Spirit. So it is seen that a horizontal receptiveness presupposes a vertical ecumenism. Therefore prayer for our union with God in Christ is the essential basis for ecumenism among each other on earth. It makes me wonder whether our Januarys, if they are genuinely to include Weeks of Prayer for Christian Unity, ought to offer a week of silence rather than a week of meetings.

Then I thought of what receptiveness means in our Liturgy. When the deacon approaches the priest to begin the Divine Liturgy, he quotes Psalm 119.126:

“It is time for the Lord to act.”

It is not ‘time to act for the Lord’. The Liturgy is not our act, but God’s. It is Christ who gives himself in it, and we who receive him. So too, unity will be God’s action, received by us. Yet so much of ecumenism concerns our activity, our belief that it is our work, our discussions, our thinking, that drive the course of Christian unity. The number of reports and documents we produce shows how much we trust to our own action rather than God’s. We do not really need more reports – whose lives, after all, are changed by them? As Karl Barth said, the union of churches is not a manufactured article – it is to be discovered and received in Christ who is already one. So the unity of the Church, when it comes and is revealed to us, will be a miracle of God. Our human task is to remove the obstacles, so that God can act.

So in receptive ecumenism, the learning and receiving we need to achieve change is from God. There are three things we need above all for this.

First, silence, which I mentioned before. As Kierkegaard and others have observed, as persons we are what we do with our silence. Desiring to be as we are in one Church, can we learn the value of shared silence? For it is in the silence before God that we encounter our own receptiveness. And into our receptiveness to God comes awareness of the other. As God tells us in Psalm 46, ‘Be silent, and know that I am God.’ Silence then is the opening for God’s presence and our awareness that in the silence it is God who is present. Our silent attentiveness to him leads to attentiveness to the other. Thus it becomes both active and purposeful (cf Simone Weil).

Our reluctance to resort to silence and the futility of our constant concern to be busy reminds me of a scene in the Goon Show, when Harry Secombe answers the telephone:

Harry Hello
Voice Hello
Harry Who is this?
Voice It's you.
Harry I know it's me. Who are you?
Voice This is me.
Harry No, I am talking to *you*.
Voice No, this is *me*.
Harry I am talking to myself? I thought I recognised the voice.

We have to beware lest our prayer is all speaking and no listening.

The second thing we need is repentance. Repentance, *metanoia*, means a change of mind. Unless we approach ecumenism prepared for real change, we will only be superficial, and unity will get no further than the surface.

Metanoia in the worship of the Orthodox Church is also the name for the bow we make as we ask for the Lord's mercy, especially at the Liturgy. So change does not require me to deny my own tradition; quite the opposite. But it does call upon me to acknowledge my inadequacy in many ways and the need for me to ask for as many graces and new gifts.

The third thing we need concerns the idea of relationship. Our understanding of human, personal and social relationship can tend to be exclusively world-bound and horizontal. This in turn can determine our understanding of ecumenical relationships and the entire movement towards unity among Christians and their churches. But we need to recall that in the world all our human relationships derive from within God the Holy Trinity. Our human personhood comes from the Persons of the Trinity, and the relations between human persons derive from the relation between the Persons of the Trinity who is one God. So the unity of Christians and all our ecumenical relationships are not the result of the joining of separate individuals and organisations, but they come from the unity of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Ecumenism can thus be seen as a manifestation in the world of the life and glory together of the Holy Trinity.

So what can the Orthodox learn and receive from others – what can others learn and receive from Orthodoxy?

I wondered about making two lists – but it does not work. In each case I realised that it is in talking with others that we actually learn our own traditions even better. Therefore I suggest a list of matters for common exploration.

First, our understanding of what it is that makes the Church. There has been a renewal of ecclesiology in both East and West, focusing less on the study of theory, valuable as that is, and more on uncovering the reality that it is the Eucharist that makes the church as it celebrates the divine Mysteries. Among the Orthodox, this was much emphasised, for example, by Nicholas Afanasieff, and later importantly qualified by John Zizioulas, Metropolitan John of Pergamon. In the Catholic Church, Henri de Lubac explored the same themes in a profound way. Father Paul McPartlan, in his excellent book, *The Eucharist makes the Church*, does a great service to the common exploration of the Eucharistic dimension of ecclesiology by bringing these two theological movements and these leading thinkers from East and West into dialogue and mutual influence.

Secondly, as we look to the Catholic Church we have to ask, “How do we understand the ministry of the Bishop of Rome?” At the recent meeting of the International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church at Ravenna, our agreed statement on *The Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church: Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority in the Church* may offer the sound basis we have been looking and hoping for for our next discussion. This will be on *The role of the Bishop of Rome in the communion of the Church in the first millennium*. We will be considering, therefore, “What sort of communion did we have in the early centuries before the split in the eleventh century?” So our painstaking work to understand the understanding of communion we both share, that is true to the perspectives we had when both shared in it together in full – and the pope’s clear role in it for both East

and West at that time - will require thousands of words before we get to Papal primacy as it is today and the possibility for how the Orthodox Church can be in communion with it. This is a good example of how we can be receptive to God and become more attentive to each other in the integrity of our respective reception of the Tradition that is common, but which has become separated out within itself. So we overcome our separation by thinking and speaking together, by learning from each other, and so preparing the way to receive our unity again from God.

Not that the problem lies solely in Orthodox problems with contemporary Papal primacy and the expectation, according to the Canons of the undivided Church, of a conciliar approach to government, in which the Bishop of Rome's role is prime. For, since the schism between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, the Orthodox have lacked the means to decide disputes between the '*pares*' among which the pope is '*primus*' and thus to be the effective resort for authority and keeper of unity. Today's Orthodox are too good at autocephaly – there exists no way of reaching agreement in disputes between two sides. The relevant Canons suppose a universal Church at one with itself; and without communion with a Bishop of Rome, there can be no provision for a substitute or alternative. A current example is the status of the Orthodox Church in Estonia. Its autocephaly (and therefore its status among other Orthodox Churches) is recognised by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. But the Russian Orthodox Church does not currently recognise an autocephalous Estonian Church in what it regards as its own canonical territory. Currently, in the absence of agreement, there is no way of arbitrating on the solution. So here is at least one example of where a universal primacy could assist in settling disputes among the patriarchates, and why the Orthodox Church benefits from exploring concerns together with the Catholic Church.

A third matter for common exploration is our thinking on the human person, a common Christian doctrine of anthropology. We do not really have one. Yet this is likely to be a huge concern in the 21st century. And what is happening in the Anglican Communion – the ordination of women, whether or not to accept of homosexual bishops – bears this out well. We Orthodox have not

thought about either at all very carefully and we have much to learn. It is the crucial ecumenical issue of today, but there is not much help in the Fathers and the Creed emphasises the dogma of the living humanity of Christ, not so much what our humanity is.

The fourth matter for urgent common explorations is the environment, the other great issue for the new century. The Ecumenical Patriarch stands out as the major Christian leader in this field, both in his writing and preaching, and in setting aside 1 September, the first day of the Orthodox calendar each year, as the day of prayer for the protection of the natural environment. It is all too easy for humanity to find itself in terminal decline, as the planet becomes increasingly unable to sustain us. So we see that cruelty to animal life and biodiversity and how you treat the environment are as much sin as what you do to other people. Here, in trying to overcome the problems and convincing the people of the world of the need to protect the Creation and the world we have been given to live and thrive in, we Orthodox need the help of other Christians and scientists, politicians and leaders in other faiths too, if we are to survive.

So our journey of receptive ecumenism, of receptiveness to God, of awareness of the other, and of our hopes for full communion in Christ, involves a common exploration in ecumenical learning, not just to find once more the unity of the Church, but also the very life and salvation of the people of the whole world.

The Revd Professor Paul Fiddes, Professorial Research Fellow, Regents Park College, Oxford

What might Baptists receive from others and what might others learn from us?

In 1918, the General Secretary of the Baptist Union, the Revd John Shakespeare, looked to the formation of a union of all Free Churches prior to unity with the Church of England. Anticipating objections from Christians

whose churches which had settled on Congregational or Presbyterian, or at least non-Episcopalian forms of governance, he challenged those who saw in the Anglican tradition only a form of prelacy out of keeping with the spirit of the Church in the New Testament. He asked whether it was possible for Baptists to believe that episcopacy was set up, then continued for hundreds of years, without the Holy Spirit being involved. No, he observed; it was impossible to hold this. So, if the Free Churches were concerned to be faithful and be at one among themselves, they would have to consider their unity in the context of the wider body of Christians, and this would mean coming to terms with episcopacy. But equally, Shakespeare asked something similar about the democratic emphasis in local churches, a question for episcopally ordered churches – how might it be that the involvement of lay people in the governance of the church is flourishing unless by the power of the Spirit?

Nowadays, we think less of our distinctive ways as rival. We share an understanding of Tradition that is for us all. We look beyond the stereotypes to discern how we each exemplify the Tradition out of which we have all been formed and which we take forward and show forth in our different ways. Apostolicity, the aspect of the nature and purpose of the Church which lies behind episcopacy and the faithfulness discerned in all forms of ministry in the Church to the commission of the apostles, is a case in point.

And yet the idea of Tradition, and sharing formulae and structures in common with other churches, can make Baptists nowadays anxious. It came as a surprise to many, when in 2005 a Baptist Church celebrated its centenary, that in 1905 all the congregation had been able to recite the Apostles' Creed as a familiar feature in Baptist worship. An assumption has grown up that liturgical set texts are alien to Baptist worship, which should be *ex tempore*, free in form. But this is not necessarily true of our tradition. At the centenary service, the Apostles' Creed was, after all, included; and it introduced people to something that they were able to re-receive into a sense of Tradition that they could see as their own. But they needed an overhead projector and video screen to do it!

Therefore there is nothing for Baptists to fear in embracing Tradition. They should be confident in learning how to make use of it. Indeed, if we think about it, this is exactly what Paul says we do in the Eucharist: “the tradition that we have received” in breaking bread and blessing the cup. So we should use the Tradition more often, as part of sharing the total story of faith and our life in the Church with our fellow disciples. We need to look to the wider Church beyond the immediate, the local; and we need to receive near at hand what comes to the Church from afar.

With regard to episcopacy, John Shakespeare’s comments had been picking up on the idea of the episcopal ministry as ‘locally interpreted’ or adapted, which had been put forward in Anglicanism from the third Lambeth Conference in 1888. Could there be a form of episcopacy that was not an import from traditional episcopally ordered churches but an authentic expression arising from within, and true, to our own tradition? In a Baptist congregation, which is seen as the autonomous local instance of the universal Church, the pastor’s role includes that of overseer-bishop, elder and teacher as outlined in the New Testament. There are also deacons, so there is a sense of correspondence with the three-fold ministry operating in other churches. But the scale of what ‘local’ signifies in comparing, say, an Anglican diocese with a Baptist congregation in a single neighbourhood makes a claim for parity of episcopacy difficult to recognise.

But now in Britain, without undermining the integrity of local churches’ autonomy, we have Regional Ministers operating at a wider level, each having spiritual oversight over his own church members as well as a concern for other ministers and the members in their churches. These new Regional Ministers have learned not a little from bishops in other traditions. But, for the role to be of fruitful service among Baptists, it cannot be an executive power. It has to be seen as a role of spiritual power and blessing, operating only if those to be locally cared for are willing to expect and receive it. In due course, it would be good if Baptists could accept the Regional Ministers as having a special, distinctive role as guardians of the continuity of their church.

Now, baptism. We Baptists think a lot of our approach, its rightness and positive advantages. But what is there that we can we learn? First, it seems to me, is that we can see and accept from others' traditions, how God can work in a young child. We do have a service of dedication, based on Jesus' blessing of children, but use it too little. We set a great deal of store by baptism coming when the individual is capable of a personal profession of belief, but we need to learn about a role for 'the faith of the Church' in helping the children grow up into faith within a nurturing and believing community. Believer's baptism is not an isolated incident in the Christian's life of faith and discipleship, decisive as it is. Nor is it the whole story to our understanding of Christian initiation, as it comes at a point in a process.

Other traditions have a very developed idea of how initiation goes in phases, and recognise it in liturgical and sacramental ways. It is possible to see how, taken as a whole, each tradition's process of Christian initiation can be seen as equivalent, comprising the acceptance and nurture of children within the context of the believing community, mature profession of faith, baptism with water in the name of the Trinity, admission to the fellowship of the Church, especially in sharing Communion, and commissioning for service and discipleship. No one ceremony is either total or final in any of our traditions; it is not useful to try and see how the different individual events or turning points correspond with those in another tradition. But setting the integrity of one tradition alongside that of another – compare the difference between the Orthodox and Catholic processes of initiation, as well as that between the Baptist Churches and the Church of England – we can see how they take their different steps but on the same course. To grow further into identity with what other Christians do, we Baptists need to recognise the genuine role for God's grace in the child before believer's baptism and how therefore God can give a place to infants in the total initiation process.

In our worship, too, we set store by sincerity of heart, worship in spirit and in truth. Therefore there is a tradition of reaction to any given text, not least one promoted by Parliament. But we have greatly learnt of the oral value of texts, if used freely and intelligently. After all, we regularly use familiar and well

loved hymns and songs. Perhaps with other texts and prayers, too, we can learn to receive from the huge riches of liturgical prayer and their power to allow for worship in the Spirit that is no less free and sincere than our own. I have already mentioned a recent re-discovery for some Baptists of the Apostle's Creed, as well as the way we approach what we do at the Eucharist.

We Baptists say we are attached to the Bible, but readings from it are surprisingly scarce in our services. So we can learn a great deal from the liturgical traditions about the place of Scripture, its systematic reading and its proclamation in substantial passages, in Christian worship. We can appreciate that the Spirit can work in other ways for worship to be true than by novelty and enthusiasm.

Nothing I have spoken of in these four areas – the acknowledgement of Tradition, an episcopal role in our ministry, or provision for the nurture of Christian faith among our children within the total process of Christian initiation, or the way we worship - requires us to deny our own Baptist tradition and witness. But they do at least ask Baptists to recognise the reality of the experience, and authenticity, of the Christianity at work among Christians in other churches and their traditions.

Therefore, to return to the questions John Shakespeare was asking his fellow Baptists at the end of the First World War, can all these things be happening in other churches for so long and so deeply without the Holy Spirit being involved? It is clear that they could not. And over the decades we have learned so much from them as Baptists, and can learn even more.

Dr Paul Murray, Director, Centre for Catholic Studies, and Senior Lecturer, University of Durham

The great momentum for Christian unity arose and flourished in very different circumstances from those that surround us today. The desire for peace and unity in a world so shattered by two World Wars, the persecution of the

Orthodox Church in Soviet Eastern Europe, the end of the colonial era and the founding of the United Nations, the World Council of Churches and the new horizons opened up by Vatican II raised hopes that at last the old divisions that grew out of Europe could be overcome, and the rift between East and West healed. But the rise of a multicultural, plural society of many faiths, mass migration, the global economic village and the idea of partnership of 'one world' at home and abroad, saw Christians concentrating their efforts for unity less on doctrinal and structural reconciliation, and more on the pressing concerns for mission and service.

So the first question that is faced by the idea of receptive ecumenism, as a fresh attempt at the ecumenical task asks, "Is ecumenism actually trying to handle the issues of a former age that has now passed?" No, I do not think it is. In fact, ecumenism, living and working towards Christian unity, is all the more important the more complex and plural our contexts become. Living differently but in mutual respect and appreciation is one of the most important things Christians need to do if our faith is to be at all available to people in the 21st century. The disunity of the Church may on the surface appear to offer people a great range of choice in the spiritual market, and some welcome that. But we cannot get around the fact that Christ did not pray that we should all be the same, but that we should be one. So difference, at the expense of the unity we are supposed to live and offer to the world, looks like a scandal, and we have nothing to say to the world on reconciliation and forgiveness, or peace and cohesion, or mutual respect and acceptance, if we cannot be those things in the Church. So Christian unity, and the work of ecumenism in all our churches, remain urgent and they are possibly more urgent now than ever.

Behind January 2006's conference in Durham was an underlying assumption: that the 'default instinct' in ecumenism is to ask, "How might they become more like us, so as to ease the difficulties between us?" This is the tendency in all our traditions, but it is going to get nowhere. If all the churches are expecting only the others to change, change will happen nowhere. Indeed the Catholic Church abandoned its version of this thinking, the idea of an 'ecumenism of return' by other Christians to the profession of Roman

Catholicism, not least as it became clear in the growing popularity of prayer for unity in so many traditions, that no one could agree to pray with the same objective. Instead a more considered attitude to prayer enabled people on all sides to agree (even if they meant it differently) to pray for the unity that Christ prayer for, “according to his will, according to his means.” This praying – the mutual exchange of gifts in spiritual ecumenism - has gradually but irreversibly altered the way in which we view the unity of Christians and the ‘re-integration of the one Church’ – but it has been difficult, despite all the openness and generosity on all sides, to overcome that basic assumption that others will need to become like us if unity is going to be possible.

So receptive ecumenism turns the question the other way round: “What can and do we receive and learn, with integrity, from other Christian traditions?” You might think there is a hint of John Francis Kennedy in this question – “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” You would be right. If enough of us can really seek answers for this new question, then, just as in 1960s America, there will be a senses of possibilities of new things becoming thinkable, within each church and so, hopefully, between two churches, among more and even all churches. It is a dream that each of us should have and live by, about what my church can become, an ecclesial *poiesis*.

What are we thinking about? Spirituality and spiritual renewal, or liturgy and sacramental life? Or is it about pastoral and social care, or mission and service to the world? Or does it concern educating humanity and our witness to the Gospel? Or is it about how we put our faith into practice through the nature and structure of our churches, or in the ethics of our life as disciples? I think receptive ecumenism – ecumenical learning – takes into account both the Faith and Order and the Life and Work traditions, which cover all these things. But, because these too share the same ‘default instinct’ as the ecumenical movement in general – “How can others change to be more like us?” – we hope to add a new and different dimension for the path to Christian unity to move into.

Therefore the new question – “What can we learn and receive from others?” - has two accompanying convictions:

1. The journey is into the communion of *all* things in God's Kingdom. It is a process of growth, with ever unfolding realisations of what God's purposes are, what they are calling us into, calling us to become, and in which we can all share; again, ecclesial *poiesis* (cf Saint Augustine on the Eucharist: “It is you who are placed on the altar – receive what you are.”)
2. The ecumenical movement is dynamic and responsive to the times and contexts it is in. Yes, we need to move from earlier enthusiasm to a more realistic awareness, in that we shall not achieve unity quickly. Therefore, the frustration many of us feel at the lack of movement on the ground; the prioritisation in recent years of active mission and service issues over doctrinal and Faith and Order issues; the rise of so much post-denominational Christianity in Pentecostal and other independent churches; also the frightening of some older traditions in a post-modern atmosphere – all these deserve facing up to.

So full unity remains a central calling for all Christians. It is the eschatological reality that our lives are aiming at. It is wrong to condemn it to an unknown future, because we may not know how to respond to the challenges of the day, or find that we cannot realise the ideal, whether that is the essential oneness of the Church known to the experience of the past or the visible unity of the future, in the here and now . But rather than abandon the ideal as impractical, because we believe it to be at the core of our journey onward through the world and history, we can try to live at least parts of it, to keep the objective of unity before us, and to trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit. Yes, it will be a long haul. Like economic justice, we cannot expect perfection; but that must not stop us.

In part the new approach of receptive ecumenism has been called for - and conceived and promoted by Cardinal Walter Kasper as President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity - precisely because after an earlier phase of ecumenical optimism the aspiration for programmed reunification in the short-medium term has been widely abandoned as unrealistic. But this should lead neither to pessimistic resignation to the present 'ecumenical winter' as a permanent and inevitable state of things – the other side to the earlier somewhat of ungrounded optimism – nor to an over-ready accommodation to the claim that 'reconciled diversity without structural unity' is a sufficient equivalent to the unity and catholicity of the Church. On the contrary, a continued commitment to work for structural reunification represents a core aspect of the Catholic instinct, no matter how long-term this aspiration might have to be, nor what combination of patience, imagination and rigour – that is, faith, hope and love – this might require.

How, then, can this commitment to structural reunification most fruitfully be lived - not simply at the individual level but, more significantly, at the communal, structural, institutional or ecclesial levels? And, specifically, whilst recognising the commitment both to partnership in mission (such as IARCCUM, the International Anglican and Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission) and to the increasingly emphasised 'spiritual ecumenism' (sharing faith and so learning to appreciate each other the better), receptive ecumenism aims to extend spiritual ecumenism into an explicit exploration as to how Christian traditions might most effectively and genuinely learn, or receive, from each other with integrity. In other words, to go beyond closer collaboration and greater understanding through the exchange of spiritual gifts, to translating ecumenism into the practicalities of own respective life and structure as the Church. If we can assume that all are asking this question seriously and acting upon it, then all would be moving, albeit somewhat unpredictably, in ways that would deepen our authentic respective identities and draw us into more intimate relationship with each other.

The 2006 Durham colloquium was experienced by all as a quite remarkable, even graced, happening. Senior theologians, ecumenists and church leaders

spoke of the event and the fresh thinking it introduced as 'historic', 'opening a new chapter in ecumenism', and as 'providing the much needed model for future initiatives'.

But it was also apparent that there was a further pressing need: a much more practically-orientated research project to explore the relevance of receptive ecumenism to life 'on the ground' in the local church, not just in the hopeful theory that suggests it. In other words, "Can we see if and how our commitment to ecumenical learning works in practice?" Such a project would test and extend the thinking behind receptive ecumenism in very practical ways that could act as a model of good practice throughout the United Kingdom and beyond. Here was the clear recognition that the Church is not simply an idea but a life-world and that ecumenism is, therefore, a profoundly practical as well as theoretical activity.

Receptive Ecumenism and the Local Church, a Regional Comparative Research Project, is a fully collaborative exercise in dialogue and exchange in action, which is due to get under way in north east England in a few weeks' time, bringing together the Catholic diocese of Hexham & Newcastle, the Anglican dioceses of Durham and Newcastle, the corresponding Methodist district and the regional Synod of the United Reformed Church. It will be co-ordinated and researched through the University of Durham's Centre for Catholic Studies.

Over the next three years, we will focus on matters of order, formation and organisational culture with a view to asking what mutual learning might take place in these regards that would help better equip the churches of the north-east of England for mission, both independently and together. We will investigate things in terms of three pathways:

- governance and finance,
- learning and formation, and
- leadership and ministry

Starting out from an understanding of each denominational tradition's commitment and priorities for mission, we will identify the particular cultures and practices of each denomination in terms of each of the three pathways. Then we will explore the ways in which each tradition may have useful things to learn from the other participant traditions, especially regarding potential ways ahead in the face of perceived difficulties, and how these could help each denomination to realise its mission more fruitfully, both independently and together. We will also identify what factors militate against the realisation of these possibilities and how they may best be navigated.

Academically, the project will lead to significant fresh knowledge in the fields of ecclesiology, ecumenism, practical theology, the sociology and anthropology of religion, and in organisational studies and the study of human resources and finance more generally. Ecclesially, it is envisaged that the project will produce:

- a range of well thought-through, tested and practical proposals for real receptive learning within the participant traditions, to enable them with integrity to live their respective callings and mission more fruitfully
- a thoroughly researched framework for assessing how various traditions can best work together
- an unparalleled and much needed model of good practice – a lived performance of the Gospel – showing a creative way of living the contemporary ecumenical challenge to the wider church, both nationally and internationally.

In January 2008, midway through, findings so far will feature at an international conference. This will follow the publication of the book from the original conference, *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning*. At the end of the project in September 2010 the researchers will record the experiences, recommendations for practice and final conclusions in a second scholarly volume. In due course there would also be resources at a more

popular-level, such as a practical handbook, study guides etc., and public presentations to disseminate the practice of receptive ecumenism more widely, in this country as well as in other parts of the world and the Church. It may also be that we could offer advice and consultancy in support.

The Rt Revd Christopher Hill, Bishop of Guildford

Paul Murray has spoken of ecclesial *poiesis*, dreaming what one's Church might become. It requires not only detailed research, but also a sharp analysis of each denomination's sense of faithfulness to its own traditions, culture and priorities for mission, leading on to an analysis of how different traditions could work together and discover a 'synergy' as well as how we get in each other's way and how that can be overcome. Always the perspective will be of how to translate what we feel and believe we are into action, what we do and our living and work in the world. Clearly none of us can do this alone and must increasingly find the ways to do it together and make our unity happen. Receptive ecumenism, ecumenical learning for this task, will involve a genuine *poiesis* for us all. We will all change and develop, we will all become new in the Church. It puts me in mind of the vision of St John in the Revelation: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth ... the holy city, new Jerusalem ... the former things have passed away ... I make all things new."

So what is this *poiesis* in terms of what we need today? Where have we come from and where should we be moving to? I too will begin with a sharp analysis and then move on to action and what we need to learn and receive and do next.

I hope we have come a long way from John Dryden's famous characterisation of a bossy, power-dominated Church of England, overbearing towards Roman Catholics in the seventeenth century, *The Hind and the Panther*, written to celebrate the author's conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1687. But it also unwittingly portrayed Roman Catholics as feckless and weak, not the confident ecumenical partners we know today, so we have all changed. The

old unfavourable comparison and the temptation to polemic are not useful for either side nowadays (despite Aidan Nichols' attempt to revisit it in his 1993 *The Panther and the Hind – a theological history of Anglicanism*). But there was more than a grain of truth in it then, and we Anglicans should remember how we once seemed to our fellow Christians, and how we can seem even today.

In his poem *The Hippopotamus*, T.S. Eliot compares the Church of England of his time with a faltering, compromised, world-bound creature, that does not match up to the image of 'the True Church'. Again, this is another salutary reminder to recall us from what we are to our true selves and to become the Church we actually dream of. It reminds me of the caution, again from the Revelation, in the word spoken to the Church in Laodicea, "You are neither cold nor hot, so I will spew you out of my mouth." So we Anglicans have to guard against a temptation to self-sufficiency, of being content with ourselves and needing nothing from others, even rejecting them. By the end of the poem the hippopotamus, however, realises its possibilities, to 'take wing, ascending from the damp savannas' to the life of the world to come, while the idealised, unrealistic – and therefore unredeemable and illusory – 'True Church', stays the same, without direction, 'wrapt in ...mist'. So it seems possible for the Church to learn and receive, and thus become what it dreams to be, without relying either on unreal optimism or a romantic illusion of the past or the future.

So let us analyse this 'becoming the Church we dream of being' from an Anglican point of view. How do Anglicans see the idea of reception in an ecclesial context?

- We use it for describing the reception of the early Creeds and the writings of the Greek and Latin Fathers
- we have learned, especially in the light of the helpful influence of John Zizioulas, Metropolitan John of Pergamon, how contemporary

ecumenical findings can be received not just as texts but as lived reality

- our church lawyers talk about a process of reception of their canonical rules and regulations
- we have also valued Yves Congar's discussion both of the reception of older teachings and the non-reception of things judged wrong (for example, the Council of Florence, and its ill founded and ultimately unsuccessful attempts at reforming Catholic Church governance and the reunion of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches).

Our idea of reception is also shaped by our view of what authority is, where it lies and how it serves and operates in the Church. For Anglicans, authority does not just reside only with the magisterium, whether of the pope or the bishops, or the ordained teaching authority of the clergy, so that the lay people of God receive or do not accept it, whether actively or passively. Nor is it solely in the Bible, or chiefly in the body of Tradition which may embrace all of these. From the 1948 Lambeth Conference, which continued to look to the famous Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral (the agreed, authoritative basis for Anglican unity in one communion, and the grounds for establishing unity with other Christians), Anglicans have regarded 'authority' as single because it comes from the one divine source, but distributed, 'dispersed', between Scripture, tradition, the historic episcopate and threefold order of ministry, the Church's liturgical and sacramental worship, the witness of the Saints, the active consensus of the faithful (the last point made compellingly by Paul Fiddes this morning). What is received from other Christian churches in the search for unity has had to take account of all these authorities as integral to the Anglican view of life in Christ's Church.

But is this the whole story for Anglicans now? Our idea of what constitutes authentic grounds for reception took a sharp turn over the decision to ordain women. Some provinces accepted this, others did not. Within some provinces that did accept it, there were significant minorities that did not. The Eames working party, established to find a way through this for the Anglican

Communion as a whole and retain the highest possible level of communion, spoke of a limited period of reception. Its report observed that reception is a long and spiritual process, which requires a lot of listening on both sides and a genuine respect for the other. Some saw this as a way of persuading those who did not accept the decision to get used to the idea over time. Others genuinely saw it as an open phase to test whether the innovation passed the test of Gamaliel – is it of God, or is it not of God?

This extended use of reception is a new way of using the word for Anglicans. In practice, you either accept or reject one or all women priests. Within a single communion, there cannot be an open question as to whether people are bishops or priests or not, whether the sacraments they celebrate or the clergy bishops ordain, are authentic. Yet that is a position that Anglicans who have not, or not yet, received the ordination of women find themselves in, and their non-reception is a situation we are living with in this period.

Furthermore, not only do many Anglicans believe this particular development can be received and said truly to be of God, clearly a number of our ecumenical partners do not. So the period of reception in the Anglican Communion is something that addresses the reception of a new development not just among ourselves, but also affects the rest of the Christian Church too. But early on in the Church's life, especially in the Christological and Trinitarian controversies in which classic, orthodox Christianity was forged, it took several centuries for such questions of new developments in terminology and thinking to become generally received. This almost always focussed on acceptance or rejection by the bishops, and a good deal of variety was either allowed for, or persisted regardless. Yet whatever the reception by the bishops over time, the reception of the new way of expressing the true doctrine about Christ took hold because of its acceptance by the people, its full resonance with their faith-instinct as the Body of Christ, the *consensus fidelium*. It is evident that the ordination of women to the priesthood is being received in the Church of England, with authority, not only from the bishops and clergy, but also from within the faith of the people. It is also something we have received from the experience and belief of our ecumenical partners in

other churches, especially in the Churches of the Reformation and the Free Churches, but also the Old Catholic Churches. We recognise that it poses, especially with the ordination of women as bishops, a grave obstacle to unity with the Catholic and Orthodox Churches as soon as we had all hoped, but we have been coming to see this as a true development within the Tradition as we have received it, and also something new received with authority. Early precedent shows how long it took for the Church's authority to receive the whole doctrine of Christ and express it in its worship and the belief of the people. Perhaps the ordination of women will take much time in the same way to be received, but we are confident that in the end this deflects none of us from the pressing course towards visible unity in the end.

There are, after all, encouraging signs, both from history and recent experience. We have already had a good deal of receptive ecumenism in one way or another:

- In the wake of the Reformation, reflected in proposals at the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholic Church considered dropping Latin in favour of the local language as a means to reform and renewal in the Church. It took several centuries, but the vernacular in the Liturgy and a renewal in the Catholic Church that affected us all came as a result of Vatican II
- Anglicans and other Christians have borrowed and learned a great deal over the last 100 years from what was originally a Roman Catholic Liturgical Movement
- There is now a common lectionary, again a post-Vatican II initiative
- The renowned and much-loved English hymn tradition – that all English-speaking Christians are using hymns in worship at all, at least in some way, is thanks to 'the people called Methodists', by no means least through the body of hymns by Charles Wesley
- Baptism by immersion has become for almost all Anglicans the norm for an adult Baptism, something we have received from the witness of the Baptists

- Anglicans have also borrowed much from the RCIA process in the Catholic Church, the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults
- There is also now a widespread use of icons, and the sharing of respective saints and martyrs in common – for instance, the new statues on Wells Cathedral include great Christians from the history of several churches

So, what of the future? We will need by all means to put the ordination of women into the context of a wider discussion on receptive ecumenism, ecumenical learning and, indeed mutual reception. We also need to find how churches can reach a way of working on questions requiring universal international agreements – the ARCIC debate on primacy and universal conciliarity is an attempt to achieve just this. And divisions now internal to the Anglican Communion point to the need for much more careful handling of procedures, both in terms of our internal ecumenism and our ecumenism with other churches in the context of our being one Church in Christ. So our exploration of decision making, authority, and the reception of what is new to our sense in the Church of who we are and its integrity, needs us all to ask of ourselves how in relation to the Roman Catholic Church, we ‘other churches’ can be enriched and served by decisions that the Roman Catholic Church makes? This also works the other way and we need to consider how the Roman Catholic Church takes the other churches into account as it develops its thinking and makes decisions which have huge implications for the rest of us.

But our ecumenical learning and mutually receptive ecumenism cannot take place in Christian isolation from the world. The unity of Christians was prayed for so that the world might believe that the Father sent the Son. So our faith and our life together as the Church both have to be credible and learn from the world, so that we can express ourselves authentically and convincingly. What do we receive, with integrity, from our respective cultures? Should all churches reflect the expectations and aspirations of most people throughout the world in all kinds of society and use some form of democratic procedure?

And what do we as the Body of Christ and the People of God need to learn from what he is doing in, and with and through, other faith communities?

The Revd Dr John McDade SJ, Principal, Heythrop College

Fr John Coventry SJ once said in a lecture that we did not really need bishops – we could get by with committees of three instead. He also asked whether God, having led us into bishops in one context, may now be leading us out of their old forms in the present day. You may think this is extraordinary coming from a convinced Catholic. But it shows that a great deal of thinking things through from other angles in different parts of the Church has been going on, as well as other ways of being the Church taken seriously. It does not mean, of course, that the Catholic Church is abandoning its own integrity, giving itself and its beliefs up to accommodate those of others. This would not be telling the truth, and it would not work.

But it is legitimate to ask what in the old forms is essential and what in the way they operate today is no longer conducive to what the Catholic Faith and the Catholic Church need to be today. It is also good to ask what in other traditions can actually be embraced and seen with imagination and profound reflection to be in accordance with the core of Catholic belief and life. A great deal of reception has been going on already and it is remarkable to see how far it has affected us. You only have to consider how the teaching of Pope John Paul II could be seen to be at the same time prophetic, papal and Barthian! And there are those who remark that contemporary problems for Catholicism, at least in Western Europe and North America, have been marked by our having a Barthian pope presiding over a liberal church.

So, in the context of receptive ecumenism, what is Catholicity, and how can Catholicism being true to itself be receptive?

First, we need to understand that the terms Catholicity, Catholicism, and Catholic Christianity are to be distinguished from each other, but cannot be understood in isolation from each other:

- Catholicism is the project and endeavour at the heart of Christianity to form a unified community that signals and mediates Jesus Christ's significance for human beings in their relationship with God and with one another.
- Catholicity is the quality of universality and unity common to all Christian churches and expressed differently according to their tradition and character.
- Catholic Christianity is the focus of the project of Catholicism and its central expression in the Roman Catholic Church.

So for Catholics, *Roman Catholicism* is integrally bound up with their sense of their catholicity and their very Christianity. As Blaise Pascal writes in the *Pensées* (no.872), "The pope, the Bishop of Rome, is at its head: who else is known by all? Who else is recognised by all, with the power to insinuate the whole body because he holds the main shoot which insinuates itself everywhere? How easy it would have been for this to degenerate into tyranny. That is why Christ gave the commandment, 'But it shall not be so among you'." (Luke 22.26)

The central importance of the Bishop of Rome to Roman Catholics is because the term 'Catholic' signals the triple quality of universality, unity and completeness. These three connotations can be interpreted thus:

- The universality of the Church means that it is open to all and understands itself to be of significance to all human beings in their relationship with God
- The unity of the Church means that it brings its members together in an identifiable unity of belief and practice as an expression of their communion with God

- Completeness means a wholeness of integrity of Christian faith and teaching that excludes partiality, factionalism and selectivity.

So unity is inseparable from comprehensiveness, which is an essential quality for Christian faith. Any and every church will possess catholicity in different ways. And Catholicism, as it were the sacrament of the significance of Jesus Christ, whose focus is in the Catholic Church, is a reality that is to some extent present in all Christian Churches. But Catholicity and Catholicism by definition cannot easily be seen to be Catholicity and Catholicism without the necessary completeness that is integral to them. The comprehensiveness of Catholic Christianity means that its integrity is a single whole of faith and teaching, open to include all humanity. This is quite different from the ability to embrace and accommodate a wide range of views and belief, even conflicting and incompatible positions. This is not unity, and has not gone through the process of mutual learning and receptive ecumenism we are considering today.

We have already noted how, for instance, John Paul II was able to bring together a wide range of thinking from other sources in his teaching, discerning how it could be integral to the Catholic faith of which he was the guardian and expressing it in renewed ways, suited to the contemporary world. And this leads me to reflect on what the Catholic Church needs most by way of receptive ecumenism or ecumenical learning, if it is to be significant for humanity in the coming age. It is actually identified by Pope John Paul in his Letter on Ecumenism, *Ut Unum Sint*, in which he asked the assistance and advice of other Christians on how the Petrine ministry could be exercised beyond the bounds of the Catholic Church itself to be of service for building up faith and unity in the whole Church.

The Roman Catholic Church is realising that it is an inadequate definition of catholicity to identify it wholly and only by the Pope. Catholicism is always something in the process of being realised. Catholic Christianity does have a very strong structure, which is a great asset, especially in a world of many faiths and competing views; but the structure may also prevent the Catholic

Church from responding to the many and varied inspirations of the Holy Spirit. Yes, there is one revelation, to which Catholicism and most other Christians attest in their proclamation and their living structures, their faith and order. But there is also the stream of that prophetic witness which, as J H Newman remarked (while still an Anglican), is no less original and apostolic than that of the episcopate or the Primacy of Peter, has been there since the very beginning of the Church, and is something found in the bishops too, but by no means only.

The papacy, essential not just to the Catholic Church, but also for the whole of Christianity to be comprehensive and truly Catholic and one, must not allow itself to flourish and rule outside of careful listening to different contexts and cultures. It must be aware of the prophetic witness and the need to learn from it. The Petrine office cannot work separately from, let alone against, the Pauline experience of mission and renewal. This is a comment we hear again and again from our dialogue with the Orthodox Church, reminding us that Peter is not the only apostle, that Rome's ancient primacy is respected because it is the city where Paul is buried too, not just Peter, and the bishop of Rome succeeds in the apostolicity of them both. And furthermore all the bishops are successors of all the apostles; all the bishops share with the pope in some way the continuation of the ministry of Peter and Paul together. Our Protestant and Reformed colleagues, too, remind us Catholics of the need to embrace the witness and preaching of Paul as much as we live in communion with the authority and guidance of Peter.

And Paul needs complementing by a James, faithful to the Jewish law (cf. Acts 15). Also an apostle, he presided at the first council of the Church, deciding among Peter and Paul. James, leader of the church in Jerusalem, points to the foundation of our Christian religion upon the foundation stone of the Temple, seen in the Jewish religion as the beginning of our creation, the containment of the flood, the site of Adam's, Cain and Abel's, Noah's, Melchizedek's, and Abraham's sacrifice. It signifies Catholicism as the Temple of the Last Days, the culmination of Biblical Judaism, the definitive community established by Christ, in which priestly access to the divine presence is

extended to the whole world by its Eucharistic union with the sacrifice of Christ.

Have your traditions come up with something comparable about balances and tensions in what it is truly to be and become the Church? In Christianity in Britain, we are very aware, for example, of Catholic and Evangelical dimensions to both our history and our faith. And looking back to the Reformation and the debates and violent disagreements which divided us all then, we see that they actually belonged then, and still belong, within Catholic Christianity. So we must be careful to avoid stressing one aspect of the Church to the expense or exclusion of the others. Nor should we confuse what the Church at any point happens to be with what God is calling the whole Church to be and do. The realities of Scripture and Tradition rightly call any particular expression of the Church into question. Our ecumenical learning can teach us how to hold Peter and Paul and James together, and so see more clearly the completeness of our Christian faith in a united catholicity and Catholicism as “the project and endeavour at the heart of Christianity to form a unified community that signals and mediates Jesus Christ’s significance for human beings in their relationship with God and with one another.” Receptive ecumenism should thus prompt an important renewal.

I return again to the role of the pope in realising this through ecumenical learning. In *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church*, Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote,

Peter too must be continually learning: he must not think that he can carry out his office in isolation (which could easily tempt him to overvalue it). He too must take his bearings by the all-encompassing totality of the Church, which expresses itself concretely in the dynamic interplay of her major mission and in the laws inherent in her structure... Revelation is entrusted to the whole Church; and all, under the leadership of Peter, are to preserve it, interpret it and produce a living exposition of it. And since the office of Peter is borne by fallible human beings, it needs everyone’s watchful but loving co-operation so

that the exercise of this office may be characterised by the degree of 'infallibility' that belongs to it. More precisely, this means that a pope can exercise this office fruitfully for all, only if he is recognised and loved in a truly ecclesial way, even in the midst of *paraklesis* or dispute.

If we are to receive each other ecumenically, Catholics have to receive the way other Christians can receive the office of pope. By the same token, other Christians have to receive the office of pope in the way that it is integral to the Catholic Church as it is. This will require a great deal of learning and it is a good example of how we will need to move from asking 'How can other Christians change so they can be more like us?' to 'What can and do the churches learn and receive, with integrity, from other Christian traditions?'

So how can the pope be true to the whole Church? What sort of partnerships does a pope need? Can this office be recognised as evangelically valuable?