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## Can the Anglican Model Inspire the Renewal of the Catholic Church?<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The article deals with the inspirations for the Catholic Church that may come from the Anglican model. The first part presents the main foundations of the Anglican unity in diversity as well as the indispensable foundations of the Catholic ecclesiology and ways of preserving the unity of the Church. Then the article discusses the means of sanctioning the abundance of paths within the Church, all in real unity. It shows certain Anglican experiences which can be valuable and helpful in the search of ways to renew the Catholic Church. Particularly noteworthy are the co-existence of communities featuring different levels of commitment and pastoral activity as well as the formation towards deeper synodality. Such new paths should always be motivated by faith and missionary goals.

**Keywords:** ecclesiology, Catholicism, Anglicanism, renewal of the Church, synodality, unity in diversity

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Facing the contemporary challenges, both external and internal, the Catholic Church is looking for ways of its renewal. Postconciliar popes gave explicit guidelines in this respect. They focused on piety, broadly understood spirituality, various structural elements and current questions and challenges. In this context, Pope Francis encourages to make bold revisions of the road followed so far, listen to the voice of the faithful and the world, look for new ways of expressing faith and develop new modes

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of operation for the Church.<sup>2</sup> New forms must be found then to best support the Church's mission. Additionally, the wide range of styles of pastoral work and pastoral expectations of the faithful remains a challenge. These circumstances give rise to the question of the shape of the Catholic unity, the limits of diversity and the co-existence of different degrees of commitment to Church's life.

When looking for solutions, it may be worthwhile to consider the Anglican phenomenon of the pluralistic unity of all provinces of the Anglican Communion and inside individual Churches. The unity in diversity, in the structural and pastoral dimension, may be called the Anglican model of the Church. Can the model inspire a renewal of the Catholic Church though? If yes, how far can it go without detriment to what is key to the Catholic doctrine and identity?

To answer these questions, this article will show the basic elements of the Anglican model of the Church and the priorities of the Catholic identity. Then, it will ponder upon the possibilities and boundaries for adaptation of Anglican elements in the Catholic Church. Issues for further discussion about the renewal of the Church will also be proposed.

## **1. The Anglican Model of the Church**

Firstly, unity in diversity is what underpins the Anglican experience. This can be seen in various differences between individual Churches. Secondly, reconciled diversity is a value in many pastoral and piety aspects. Thirdly, the keystones of this not-so-easy unity, namely the credo, synodality and instruments of the Anglican Communion, are important. Obviously, the tensions and splits that do appear cannot go unnoticed.

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<sup>2</sup> "There are ecclesial structures which can hamper efforts at evangelization, yet even good structures are only helpful when there is a life constantly driving, sustaining and assessing them" (*EG* 26).

### 1.1. Different Shades of Anglicanism: Unity in Diversity

Diversity, a characteristic feature of the Anglican tradition, has its roots in phenomena that took place long before the Reformation. In medieval England, the Church enjoyed enormous autonomy from the Pope, and the Roman tradition was intertwined with the tradition of Celtic monasticism (monastic organization of the local Church).<sup>3</sup> The time of the Reformation brought about an end to the Bishop of Rome's jurisdiction over England and saw the creation of a national Church. Protestant theological ideas and the new liturgical order were introduced only later. The publications of the *Book of Common Prayer*, *Ordinal* and *Articles of Religion* were major milestones in this process. Various aspects of Protestantism still exerted an impact, but Catholic tendencies remained too. Over time, the pluralistic model of the Church of England has developed as an effect of the national tendency to choose *via media* and combine new ideas with local sensitivity.

This resulted in the different directions the Church of England has developed in High Church is a tradition emphasising the role of the episcopate, the Church's authority, the liturgy and sacraments, together with the faith in Christ's true presence in the Eucharist. Because of its closeness to the Catholic tradition, the term Anglo-Catholic is sometimes used to describe it.

A different attitude can be seen in the Low Church. Low Church communities are clearly closer to the Protestant mentality and rites, and rather identify themselves with Calvinists, Presbyterians or Congregationalists. In the sacraments, they see signs of grace rather than means of grace and their teaching about sin and justification is close to the Lutheran or Calvinist theology. Low Church parishes take up plenty of social and missionary work and projects, e.g., Alpha courses. This group includes also Evangelical and Pentecostal Anglican communities.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The situation in Ireland was similar, as the diocesan structure and the monastic structure existed at the same time. A remainder of this today is the Catholic title of the Primate of Ireland (archbishop of Dublin) and Primate of All Ireland (archbishop of Armagh, a diocese originating from an abbey set up by St Patrick).

<sup>4</sup> See Zieliński 1999, 37–64; 2001, 79–91.

Finally, there is the Broad Church. It features high tolerance for various dogmatic and ethical matters and distances itself from extreme views. This group includes liberal Anglicans, too. Broad Church brings together many different trends, also those concerning the liturgy.

These phenomena are present not only in the Church of England but in other Anglican Churches as well. In many cases it is impossible to draw a clear line between these trends in individual communities (parishes). Nevertheless, the classification shows the essence of the Anglican sensitivity and understanding of the Church. Even though it may be difficult to understand by monolithic denominations, particularly those with a set structure, the internal divisions and tensions in Anglican communities basically do not preclude unity. This is because Anglicanism sees the Church as a *unity in diversity*.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.2. Keystones of Unity

The Anglican unity presents the council's ecclesiology,<sup>6</sup> which translates into the way churches function and exercise authority

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<sup>5</sup> This internal unity of the Church of England is not at all easy. Today the differences are not so polarized, but differences of opinion especially in the moral dimension are igniting new divisions. As Paul Avis notes, in such a situation, compromise is possible, but not synthesis (2007, 21–24). John Henry Newman “could see differences as places of encounter rather than exclusion” (Prince Charles 2019). “The reason Anglicanism is worth bothering with is because it has tried to find a way of being a Church that is neither tightly centralised nor just a loose federation of essentially independent bodies – a Church that is seeking to be a coherent family of communities meeting to hear the Bible read, to break bread and share wine as guests of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate a unity in worldwide mission and ministry” (Williams 2006).

<sup>6</sup> See Avis 2007, 9. The author also notes: “It perpetuates the conciliar ideal as it was developed in the two centuries immediately preceding the Reformation, at a time when the Western Church was disfigured by corruption and fragmented by division within the papacy itself. The conciliar movement aimed to reform the Church, expunge heresy and unite the Church by healing the breach within the papacy.” In Anglicanism we need to see a model of distributed authority. See Dudley 1984. Cf. Kantyka 2004a.

within them: “the character of Anglican polity is not hierarchical but holistic. Bishops have [...] responsibility for doctrine, liturgy and ministry, but they need to seek the consent of the people of God through synodical deliberation” (Avis 2007, 164–65). This synodality creating unity is based on various instruments designed to promote it. They are present at all ecclesial levels. At the basic level, e.g., in parish, the role of the minister and the parish council are key to unity: co-responsibility “in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical” (The Church of England 2022).

At the diocese level, unity is guarded by the bishop and the synod. Synodality is in fact part and parcel of Anglicanism.<sup>7</sup> At the level of individual provinces, unity is kept through the service of chief archbishop (primate) and the Synod of the Church. The Church of England has the General Synod, which is composed of the House of Bishops (composed of diocesan bishops and some suffragan bishops; its prerogatives cover matters concerning bishops and fulfilment of the Church’s mission), the House of Clergy (comprising elected and appointed clergy) and the House of Laity (whose members are elected by diocesan synods and monastic communities). The Synod is a legislative body. It determines forms of worship, approves budgets, considers and expresses the Church’s stance on matters of national or international interest (see The Church of England, n.d.). All its decisions must be passed by each house and finally approved by the Parliament. It must be remembered though that the General Synod’s authority cannot be unlimited – the Holy Scripture is key; no ecclesiastical body has the privilege of infallibility (see The Church of England 2012, a. 21).

Similar solutions, but without the requirements of approval by state authorities, are present in other provinces. In the Church

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<sup>7</sup> To compare with the Presbyterian tradition: “It belongs to synods and councils, ministerially to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his Church; to receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same; which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission [...]” (*WCF*).

of Ireland, the General Synod is composed of three orders: bishops, clergy and laity, but the plenary sessions are held by two houses – the House of Bishops and the House of Representatives (The Church of Ireland 2003, chap. I–II). In the Episcopal Church in the United States, a key role is held by the General Convention, which is made up of the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops (active and retired hierarchs). Between General Conventions, the Church is represented and governed by the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, comprising bishops, presbyters, deacons and lay leaders (The Episcopal Church, n.d.). In the Anglican Church of Uganda, synodality is put into practice by the Provincial Assembly (composed of the House of Laity, the House of Clergy and the House of Bishops) and by the Provincial Assembly Standing Committee (working between plenary sessions). The Church is governed by the archbishop, bishops and the Provincial Secretary (The Church of Uganda 2024). In the Anglican Church in North America, which is not a member of the Anglican Communion, the Provincial Assembly has the highest prerogatives. It is composed of representatives of dioceses and other circles, with a balanced number of lay people, bishops and other clergy. Every day management is carried out by the Provincial Council, and the matters of faith and ecclesial order are handled by the College of Bishops. Another valuable solution is the existence of the Provincial Tribunal, made up of seven members, lay and clergy (The Anglican Church in North America 2019).

The unity of the *Anglican Communion*<sup>8</sup> is also taken care of at the interprovincial level. Each incumbent Archbishop of Canterbury is a primary sign of the unity and a coordinator of the Communion. He is *primus inter pares* the leaders of other Anglican Communion Churches, Primate of All England, Metropolitan for the Southern Province of the Church of England, and diocesan bishop of Canterbury. He also leads various dialogues between the Anglican Communion and other Churches or religions. One of his prerogatives

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<sup>8</sup> The Anglican Communion is not a Church, but it has ecclesial characteristics. Nor does any Anglican Province (Church) claim to be the ultimate expression of Anglicanism. The Communion has global characteristics of conciliarism, but no single discipline or law. It is the experience of communion (*koinonia*) of churches.

is convening of *Primates' Meetings*, meetings of individual Churches' main bishops (who are sometimes called primates, archbishops, metropolitans, lead bishops, etc.) From among the primates, five are appointed to the *Primate's Standing Committee*.

Another important instrument of communion is the *Anglican Consultative Council*, made up of (clergy and lay) representatives of provinces and presided over by the *Archbishop of Canterbury*.<sup>9</sup> It meets once every three years. Its key tasks are to facilitate cooperation between provinces, share information, assist in coordination of work, advise on the organisation and structure of the Communion, and support uniform attitude to matters important to the world or ecumenism. It is also worth mentioning the *Lambeth Conference*, a ten-yearly gathering launched in 1867. The Anglican Communion bishops meet to listen to the experiences of others and address important issues in a climate of prayer (The Anglican Communion 1886).

Above all, unity is formed by liturgy, spirituality and theology, growing from the *Book of Common Prayer*. This influences the development of biblical theology and spirituality, as well as sensitivity to the historical dimension of faith, which makes respect for Tradition, although it does not grant it an authoritative interpretive standard. A living faith is therefore important.

### 1.3. The Anglican Comprehensiveness

It may be surprising to see the unity in diversity in the Anglican reality express itself not only in the attitude to the liturgy or piety but also to theological matters. For the unity to continue, the following four: the Bible as the all-sufficient source of faith, the Apostolic and Nicene Creed, the two sacraments – Baptism

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<sup>9</sup> “The litmus-test of membership of the Anglican Communion is to be in communion with the See of Canterbury. Of course, this cannot be the only condition for membership of the Communion. A common faith and order; a shared tradition of theology, liturgy and spirituality; and participation in the instruments of the Communion are also involved. But it is the ultimate criterion. And it is the Archbishop of Canterbury himself who decides [...] whether he is in communion with a given church or a given archbishop or bishop” (Avis 2007, 62).

and Eucharist – as ministered directly by Christ, and the historic episcopate, whose methods of administration are locally adapted (see *The Anglican Communion* 1886). This expresses an important principle of affirmation and restraint for the Anglican tradition.<sup>10</sup> However, it should be noted that the category *comprehensiveness* faces criticism not only from the Catholic or Orthodox Church but also from some Anglican theologians (see Składanowski 2010, 107).

This does not preclude the existence of different interpretations and views, also on faith and morality. A characteristic feature of the Anglican mentality is comprehensiveness in the interpretation of theological claims. It is, therefore, hard to think about a typically Anglican interpretation of an issue because different interpretations can co-exist.<sup>11</sup> A line should be drawn then between fundamental and non-fundamental truths. The former include truths contained in the Bible.<sup>12</sup> As such, they should be universally accepted. Still, difficulties may arise in this respect too, because the Word of God should be taken as a manifestation of God's will. So, it is not an abstract teaching of the doctrine but needs updating.<sup>13</sup> Whereas the continuing tensions may in fact be constructive if the church life is based on the foundation of spirituality and appropriate attitudes: dispositions

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<sup>10</sup> “[...] the historic formularies are not claimed to be the last word in systematic theology but are simply said to be ‘agreeable to the Word of God’. The central truths of the Christian faith are roundly affirmed, but without going beyond what is revealed. [...] Anglicans are invited to rehearse their faith primarily in liturgical and doxological form” (Avis 2007, 15). Cf. Flynn 1986.

<sup>11</sup> “The vocation of Anglicanism, then [...] is to create the climate of spiritual liberty in which individuals may bear witness to the truth as they see it, submitting themselves to the criticism of their peers without fear of ecclesiastical censorship” (Avis 2007, 35).

<sup>12</sup> However, it is necessary to defend against biblical fundamentalism or conservatism growing out of Tradition on the other hand. “[...] scripture alone, devoid of the collective and developing interpretation of the church, might result in an individualistic and unhistorical fundamentalism; while tradition by itself could easily result in an uncritical conservatism and reason on its own can end in the sheer rationalism of individual judgment” (Stevenson 2003, 7–8). Cf. Kantyka 2014b.

<sup>13</sup> “Anglicans attempt to live with apparent contradictions and paradoxes in the belief that God's spirit will lead us more fully into the larger truth in which ultimately they will be resolved” (Aspinall 2022).



of the heart and spirit, respect, openness to disagreement, humility and preparedness to listen. In this way, a person may be seen as a gift from God, through whom truth and piety can be discovered more fully. The spirit of dialogue and co-existence is not of course always easy to keep.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Priorities of the Catholic Structure

Before we move on to finding inspiration for the Catholic model of renewal and operation of the Church, the fundamental points of ecclesiology, in particular those concerning the structure and unity, must be presented.

### 2.1. Single Doctrine and Authority, Different Spiritualities

The *Code of Canon Law* states: “those baptized are fully in the communion of the Catholic Church on this earth who are joined with Christ in its visible structure by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical governance” (*CCL* can. 205). The first indicator of unity is believing in the same doctrine. Acceptance of the special and ordinary teaching of the Teaching Office of the Church forms a framework for Catholic orthodoxy. Connected with this are orthopraxy (i.e., a liturgy), morality and discipline.<sup>15</sup>

Recognition of the hierarchical authority is indispensable for the defence of the faith and structure. It is by no means limiting to the baptized, but rather safeguards them from error. On the other hand, the hierarchy cannot ignore what is in the People of God, because “the entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief” (*LG* 12). This is how the community-building dimension of faith is put into practice.

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<sup>14</sup> To read about challenges facing contemporary Anglicanism, see Norman 2004. Cf. Kantyka 2010, 88–95; Kantyka 2012; Kopiec 2016; Nadbrzeżny 2010.

<sup>15</sup> “The Church is a visible community of people brought together in proclamation of faith, in liturgical life and in recognition of the authority of the first apostles” (Müller 2015, 611). See Stanford 2012.

A single doctrine is obviously not tantamount to a liturgical, legal or spiritual monolith. First of all, the Catholic Church encompasses different rituals, which have their own liturgical and canonical traditions, such as structures independent from the Roman Catholic hierarchy (patriarchate, larger archbishoprics or metropolitans, eparchies, and parishes). Structures that co-exist in an area may use this situation as an opportunity to exchange spiritual gifts, inspire one another, work together and bear witness. Still, their canonical autonomy is preserved.

Second of all, the Catholic spirituality and piety, which has developed for ages, brought about many alternative routes, initially connected with monasticism or later monastic forms, and then with lay spirituality (fraternities and associations). Nowadays, there are communities and schools of spirituality rooted in the charismatic, evangelization, ecumenical, biblical, charity and other experiences. The broadly understood popular piety and the Latin tradition should also be kept in mind. All this shows in how many different ways and on how many different levels the Holy Spirit acts. The Credo is one, but prayer forms, accents, formation and work styles can be plentiful and different. This may sometimes cause tensions among people with different spiritualities. Nevertheless, the diversity is the Church's wealth and helps it reach people who have different needs and sensitivity. Mutual respect and acceptance of the Catholic nature of all pastoral realities recognised and approved by the Church remain a challenge.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.2. The Bishop of Rome and the Service of the Hierarchical Episcopate

As mentioned above, respect for the rightful hierarchical authority is essential for the Catholic identity. The first and foremost pillar is

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<sup>16</sup> A good example here is acceptance of the Neocatechumenal Way, with its own liturgical order. The link between unity and diversity was also considered in the context of the apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus*. According to Tadeusz Pikus, through the solution proposed by Benedict XVI it embraces diversity while preserving unity, while former Anglicans embraced the sacramentality of unity without giving up diversity (Pikus 2010).

the Bishop of Rome. Pope's mission is clearly defined in the *Code of Canon Law*: Pope is "the pastor of the universal Church on earth. By virtue of his office, he possesses supreme, full, immediate, and universal ordinary power in the Church, which he is always able to exercise freely" (*CCL* can. 331). At the same time, "not only possesses power over the universal Church but also obtains the primacy of ordinary power over all particular churches and groups of them" (*CCL* can. 333 § 1).

The power of the Bishop of Rome encompasses various aspects of Church's life: faith, morality, structure, pastoral care, etc. By the power of the mission of apostle Paul, which continues in the office of the pope, each incumbent Bishop of Rome takes responsibility for the Church, her doctrine, cult, evangelization and pastoral activity, as well as sets the direction for the community to follow. This is how the task of strengthening brothers in faith is fulfilled.

The pope is not alone, but carries his responsibility together with bishops, though not democratically but collegially. Bishops have joint responsibility then.<sup>17</sup> It takes its dignified form in the ecumenical council. It is worth to note that only bishops have the right and duty to take part in an ecumenical council, but the supreme authority of the Church can call other persons to this body, determining their role (*CCL* can. 337, 339 § 2).

### 2.3. Diocese and Parish Structure

Dioceses and parishes play a key role in the structure of the Catholic Church (*CCL* can. 369). Territorial prelatures or territorial abbasies are analogous structures and where a diocese has not yet been established, the role is played by apostolic vicariates, apostolic prefectures and apostolic administration (*CCL* can. 370–71). As a rule, the structure is limited to a definite territory so that it

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<sup>17</sup> It is worth noting that among the achievements of the Catholic-Anglican dialogue is the theological possibility of Anglicans accepting the ministry of the Bishop of Rome as a service to the communion of faith, in conjunction with synodality. The purpose of the primatial office is to be faithful to the apostolic roots, to preserve unity, a unifying point among bishops, a sign of existing ecclesial unity. The definition of the nature of this office needs to be refined. See Rabczyński 2020.

includes all the faithful living in the territory. Things are similar with parishes, which as a rule a parish should be territorial (*CCL* can. 515 § 1, can. 518). It is worth to note though that the Church may establish personal structures where this seems necessary. Therefore, particular churches distinguished by the rite of the faithful or some other similar reason can be erected in the same territory and personal parishes may be established (*CCL* can. 372 § 2, can. 518).

Irrespective of what type a parish is, it should not be seen as a legal and rigid structure only. John Paul II said that the parish is the community of the faithful (*ChL* 26). So, faith is fundamental in the discovery of the parish's significance, not only in the structural and official aspect: "the parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration" (*EG* 28) and has a major flexibility to accommodate various evangelization forms. This missionary direction, an inherent part of the pope's call for pastoral conversion, sheds new light on the reality of parish life, which must be remodelled to meet the challenges of the changing circumstances and life contexts.

#### 2.4. Other Keystones of Unity

Within the structure of the Catholic Church, there are also other instruments which serve unity. One of them is the College of bishops. The unity manifests itself through their faithfulness to the Bishop of Rome, single teaching of faith and service not only to the particular but primarily to the universal Church. A particular part is the Synod of Bishops. The institution assists in discernment and making of conclusions but has no decision-making powers. The Bishop of Rome is also supported by the College of Cardinals. Pope Francis has also appointed the Council of Cardinals to informally advise him on his work. Officially, the Pope is assisted by the Roman Curia, which should also support bishops and various hierarchical structures.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> "The Roman Curia is at the service of the Pope [...]. By virtue of this bond, the work of the Roman Curia is also organically related to the College of Bishops

Outside of the universal Church bodies, there are mechanisms fostering unity at the continental, national and local levels. They can be continental (e.g., Latin American Episcopal Council, Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe), national (conferences of Bishops, plenary synods), provincial (particular synods of metropolitan bishops who have voting rights and other persons acting as advisors), diocesan (diocesan synod, pastoral council, finance council, presbyteral council) or parochial (pastoral council, finance council). This experience is deepened by the new formula of the Synod of Bishops, proposed by Pope Francis, featuring universal consultation phase involving all entities in the Church. This model emphasises the significance of listening and dialogue in the community of faith. However, it needs refinement and should involve proper formation of the faithful.

### 3. Challenges and Chances of the Adaptation

Keeping in mind the indispensable elements of the Catholic Church structure and the Anglican model of unity, one may attempt to determine the areas in which the Roman Church may find inspiration. This would not only be a theoretical deliberation but could lead to formulation of specific structural and pastoral solutions.

#### 3.1. Co-responsibility of the Baptized

Deeper communion, not only at the level of worship and doctrine, but also structure and activity, may be a positive inspiration. The Second Vatican Council clearly describes this dimension of the Catholic identity.<sup>19</sup> The unity can be seen in the universal call to holiness, as

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and individual Bishops, as well as to Episcopal Conferences and their regional and continental groupings, and the hierarchical structures of the Eastern Churches. All these are of great pastoral benefit as expressions of the affective and effective communion existing among the Bishops. The Roman Curia is not set between the Pope and the Bishops, but is at the service of both, according to the modalities proper to the nature of each" (*PE* 8).

<sup>19</sup> The Second Vatican Council describes this dimension of the Catholic identity: "by the will of Christ some are made teachers, pastors and dispensers of mysteries

well as in the worship and apostolate (*LG* 33–35, 39–45). In no way does it undermine the significance of the sacrament of ordination, but rather shows the necessity for the baptized to jointly participate in the life of the Church, so that she can more and more clearly be seen as a *communio*.<sup>20</sup>

Specifically, this takes the form of the supernatural sense of faith (*sensus fidei*), which is an ability to discern truths of faith and morality,<sup>21</sup> participation in the three-fold mission of Christ and living the Church's life (*SF* 3–5; *DVer* 35). This spiritual ability should not be misunderstood as a majority opinion though, as truth can be proclaimed by a minority. It rather helps to recognise what God placed in people's hearts and minds, which can only be done if the faithful are open to listening to one another and searching for truth. This must be accompanied by the climate of faith and acceptance of the Word of God and the grace that comes from sacraments.<sup>22</sup>

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on behalf of others, yet all share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ" (*LG* 32).

<sup>20</sup> The role of the laity in the Church was emphasised by John Henry Newman. "As an Anglican, he guided that church back to its Catholic roots, and as a Catholic he was ready to learn from the Anglican tradition, such as in his promoting the role of the laity" (Prince Charles 2019).

<sup>21</sup> "The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief. [...] It is exercised under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority [...]" (*LG* 12).

<sup>22</sup> In the debate about the participation of the faithful in consultations on matters of faith, it is worth quoting the thought of John Henry Newman: "Doubtless their advice, their opinion, their judgment on the question of definition is not asked; but the matter of fact, viz. their belief, is sought for, as a testimony to that apostolical tradition, on which alone any doctrine whatsoever can be defined" (Newman 1859, 199). In addition "I think I am right in saying that the tradition of the Apostles, committed to the whole Church in its various constituents and functions *per modum unius*, manifests itself variously at various times: sometimes by the mouth of the episcopacy, sometimes by the doctors, sometimes by the people, sometimes by liturgies, rites, ceremonies, and customs, by events, disputes, movements, and all those other phenomena which are comprised under the name of history. It follows that none of these channels of tradition may be treated with disrespect; granting at the same time fully, that the gift of discerning, discriminating, defining, promulgating, and

Another area for unity is co-responsibility of the baptized for the Church and her mission, a direct effect of the baptism and subjectivity of all the faithful. The Second Vatican Council spoke of the significance of the hierarchical and charismatic gifts, saying that the Holy Spirit “distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church” (*LG* 12). It should therefore be only normal for all the people of God to work together. When defining the nature of the synodal process, Pope Francis said: “all the baptized are called to take part in the Church’s life and mission. Without real participation by the People of God, talk about communion risks remaining a devout wish” (Francis 2021b). The participation takes place when people worship together, give testimony of faith and are committed to various spheres of the Church’s life and when all this is rooted in unity with Jesus (see *AA* 4).

Co-responsibility cannot be limited to the sphere of actions only. Laity (and consecrated people alike) may participate in management of various ecclesial bodies (e.g., units of the curia), provided that the spiritual prerogatives arising from the holy orders are preserved.<sup>23</sup> It remains a controversial issue though whether the faithful should strongly participate in the election of diocesan bishops or parish priests. This question may be put to consideration and discussion by theologians, but at the universal rather than local level. Although in some dioceses there are certain privileges concerning election of bishop, e.g., presentation of candidates by the Chapter, the proposal to give this privilege to other groups too would not violate the Catholic ecclesiology. However, the role of the Bishop

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enforcing any portion of that tradition resides solely in the *Ecclesia docens*” (205). Newman also emphasizes that the faithful are particularly important in recognizing the truths of faith that relate to worship, piety (229).

<sup>23</sup> For example, reservations over the proposal made by the German synodal path concern, among other things, the attempt to establish a Synodal Council which would in fact take over the tasks of the Conference of Bishops and would have authority over bishops.

of Rome would have to be secured, and the hierarchical dimension should be respected.

### 3.2. New Vision of the Parish

The new ways of life, especially the living-for-the-weekend culture and the digital progress of the society, change the perception of space, the way of building social relations and people's behaviours. At the same time, faith is becoming an increasingly individual matter, and more and more people arbitrarily choose where to practise their faith (a phenomenon called 'churching'). All this generates new understanding of the traditional ecclesial structures and how they work. That is why the Congregation for the Clergy says that "with the Parish no longer being the primary gathering and social centre [...], it is thus necessary to find new forms of accompaniment and closeness" (*PCP* 14).

This poses a challenge to the pastoral model followed so far. In view of the above, a general acceptance of the parish of choice, with its own liturgical celebration and pastoral profile, might be possible. In such a case, the canonical dimension would remain a challenge, as it is of key significance in some situations, e.g., marriage. Some sort of legal regulation would be necessary then. On the other hand, the idea of creating personal parishes on a wider scale might be worth considering. The *Code of Canon Law* states that "when it is expedient, however, personal parishes are to be established determined by reason of the rite, language, or nationality of the Christian faithful of some territory, or even for some other reason" (*CCL* can. 518). One of the "other reasons" are specific pastoral needs, which also translate into specific visions for building up a community. A proper formation and care for unity in diversity would obviously be necessary. Still, introduction of such a model might ease many a tension that exist in parishes whose members have differing pastoral orientations.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> While appreciating the value of different paths in the Church, it is important to bear in mind the need for them to be firmly rooted theologically. This is the



### 3.3. Church Movements and Parallel Structures

In the contemporary Church, the faithful show different degrees of involvement and have varying spiritual and formation needs, and whole communities have different expectations. On the one hand, there are Catholics who participate in the traditional religious life, attend Sunday liturgy, receive the sacraments and show private piety. On the other, many of the baptized do not have regular religious life and practice only occasionally. Both groups see the existing form of parish life, pastoral care, sacramental service and piety as sufficient.

However, there is a substantial group of churchgoers who want to participate more deeply in Church's life and receive proper formation. They join various prayer, formation or evangelization groups for the faithful of various statuses, which emerged after the Second Vatican Council and put the spirit of the Council into practice.<sup>25</sup> Popes who took the office after Vatican II appreciated the significance of the new forms. John Paul II said that "the movements and new communities [...] announce the power of God's love which [...] renews the face of the earth to build the civilization of love" (John Paul II 1998).

In the first place, these movements and communities help find the ways to holiness and support the evangelization work.<sup>26</sup> Their

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problem that members of ordinariates for former Anglicans have faced. On the good fruits of ordinariates and the real difficulties, see Kantyka 2019, 11–15.

<sup>25</sup> "Since the 1960s, small basic ecclesial communities have been appearing almost everywhere. They are very diversified. [...] Because of a limited number of members, the people can help and get to know one another better, actively participate without the stiff structures, and take different responsibilities..." (Tihon 2001, 458–59).

<sup>26</sup> "At the same time, together with the Synod Fathers, I express my great esteem for the presence and activity of the different apostolic associations and organizations [...]. Such groups, in fact, help Christians to live a more radically evangelical life. They are a cradle for different vocations, and they generate new forms of consecration. Above all, they promote the vocation of the laity, and they help it to find expression in different spheres of life. They favour the holiness of the people. They are able to be both the messenger and the message for people who otherwise would not encounter the Church. Frequently they promote the journey of ecumenism and they open the ways to interreligious dialogue. They are

presence does not undermine the role of the parish. On the contrary, the parish gives the associations and movements the roots they need (*EG* 29).

A special and permanent place in the Church is occupied by entities approved by appropriate universal, national and diocesan Church authorities, such as the Neocatechumenal Way, Charismatic Renewal prayer groups, St. Andrew's Schools of Evangelisation, the Light-Life Movement, etc. There is an understandable tension between the ordinary form of pastoral activity and that connected with renewal movements. The tension is even higher when a community is not just a prayer or charity group but provides comprehensive formation to its members. Their commitment to the Church's life and mission is in many cases put into practice not in their territorial parish but at the diocesan or universal level. This may therefore pose something of a paradox, as these committed persons are not known in their parish of residence and may have trouble, e.g., obtaining various certificates they may need. At the same time, shepherds of communities do not have the powers of parish priests, which in many cases complicates the matters when it comes to sacraments or canonical issues (e.g., right to bless marriage covenants). However, the communities fulfil the people's basic religious needs and truly help them become part of the Church.

It might be worthwhile then to think whether church communities and movements that are approved by canonical authorities (e.g., public and private associations of the faithful) should be granted the status of personal parishes. Some movements do meet the required criteria, especially when the entire liturgical, prayer and formation life of the members takes place within the community. Certain legal regulations would of course be necessary for such situations – for example, the shepherd of the community would have to be appointed the parish priest, the criteria of membership would have to be established, matters of office and location would have to be addressed

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an antidote to the spread of sects and an invaluable aid to the spread of joy and life in the Church" (*EinE* 16); "it is good that pastoral activity also favour the growth of small communities [...], which can help to promote formation, prayer and knowledge of the Bible in accordance with the Church's faith" (*VD* 73).

and rules of cooperation with territorial parishes would have to be formulated. Since such solutions are in place for military ordinariates, ordinariates for former Anglicans or similar structures, they apparently would be possible to introduce for permanent communities. Similar solutions would do good to other forms of pastoral activity too, e.g., national groups, groups following the Latin Tradition, etc.

However, none of the proposed solutions could in any way disturb the diocese structure. The local bishop would have authority over the territorial parishes, personal parishes and analogous entities. In this way the unity of the Church can be ensured, and its Catholicism can manifest itself. Acknowledgement and legitimization of the fact that spiritual growth can take different paths, and that pastoral care is a dynamic reality could lead to greater unity in diversity in the Catholic Church. Secondly, it is necessary to maintain a spirituality of communion, which assumes mutual respect, treating other people as brothers and sisters, seeing other pathways within the Church as valuable too, and refraining from exclusion and too much individualisation.<sup>27</sup> All the structures must exist in harmony.<sup>28</sup> This is where a bishop should act as a shepherd who unites and cares for a communion of all entities comprising the diocese.

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<sup>27</sup> “A spirituality of communion indicates above all the heart’s contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us. A spirituality of communion also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body [...]. A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God [...]. A spirituality of communion means, finally, to know how to *make room* for our brothers and sisters, bearing *each other’s burdens* (Gal 6:2) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy” (NMI 43).

<sup>28</sup> “Along these same lines, another important aspect of communion is the promotion of forms of association [...], which continue to give the Church a vitality that is God’s gift and a true ‘springtime of the Spirit’. Obviously, associations and movements need to work in full harmony within both the universal Church and the particular Churches, and in obedience to the authoritative directives of the Pastors” (NMI 46).

All this should of course serve the overall missionary purpose, which is actually the only justification for the Church.<sup>29</sup> Given the crisis of faith and growing secularism, the following appeal still seems valid: “a new apostolic outreach is needed, which will be lived as the everyday commitment of Christian communities and groups” (*NMI* 40).

The parallelism of structures might foster evangelization of persons who stopped practising their faith and are only formally members of the Church, as well as non-believers and the unbaptized. Different sensitivities and styles of piety, liturgy, evangelization and formation might be appealing to people with different expectations and ways of functioning, thinking and perception. This solution may of course seem controversial, especially in countries where Catholics are a majority of the society, but a search for new solutions is always a right thing to do. Pope Francis encouraged us to do so by saying: “the Church can also come to see that certain customs not directly connected to the heart of the Gospel [...] are no longer properly understood and appreciated. Some of these customs may be beautiful, but they no longer serve as means of communicating the Gospel. We should not be afraid to re-examine them” (*EG* 43).

### 3.4. Forms of the Incardination of the Clergy

The subject of diversity of Catholic movements and communities is also connected with the issue of incardination of the clergy. It is not only a matter of pastoral service to the community (which is always a normal expression of pastoral care), but of canonical assignment of some clergymen to Church associations or movements. Stability of some associations and communities and the fact that they are a permanent element of the evangelization, formation, education and charity landscape may give rise to the question of whether clergymen could be incardinated in these entities. The question was in fact asked during an interdicastery meeting held in Vatican on 27 May 2017 and participated in by Pope Francis. On 15 August 2017 the Congregation for the Clergy *ad experimentum* approved

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<sup>29</sup> “Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church” (*EN* 14).

the Clerical Association of the Emmanuel Community. This was a significant event, because the canonically recognised community received the right of incardination of the clergy. It is therefore a theologically and legally valid question whether the possibility could also apply to other entities subject to the ecclesial law. Undoubtedly, the matter needs deeper consideration, but certain positive effects of this solutions are already evident: it works for the benefit of the Church and supports development of the community's charism. Nevertheless, all the necessary conditions for such incardination need to be unequivocally determined. They include, among other things, ensuring proper formation, financial security and safeguarding of the spirit of communion with the universal Church.

### 3.5. New Means for Building Unity

Unity in diversity, also in the structural dimension, requires specific attitudes on the part of the faithful as well as verifiable mechanisms to ensure the unity. Firstly, respect for the "other," raising awareness of people being part of the same Church, and praying and working together on various pastoral and evangelization projects are necessary. Diverse tensions can always be responded to by showing mutual love (*TAE*). This should result not only from each believer's own sensitivity, but also spirituality and activity. With such love and acceptance, people can live in real unity and respect everyone's specific experience.<sup>30</sup>

Secondly, the Anglican model of the Church requires effective mechanisms of service for ecclesial communion. Currently, the *Code of Canon Law* provides for specific tools to ensure communion of diversity at the diocesan level (presbyteral council, pastoral council, diocesan synod) or parish level (pastoral council, finance

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<sup>30</sup> It is worth quoting the words of St Basil the Great addressed to the erring Eustachius, Bishop of Sebaste and his followers: "For the same Lord who divided the islands from the continent by the sea, bound the island Christians to the continental by love. Nothing, brethren, separates us from each other, but deliberate estrangement. We have one Lord, one faith, the same hope. The hands need each other; the feet steady each other. The eyes possess their clear apprehension from agreement" (Newman 1906, 35).

council); even though these are not democratic bodies, they do serve as platforms of encounter, communication and discernment. It all depends on the people: bishops, presbyters and lay faithful.

Thirdly, it would be valuable if various new forms of building unity were formulated and developed. The forms sanctioned by universal or particular law do matter, but less formal or even informal formulas are particularly reviving. They may be connected with specific forms of spirituality or pastoral activity (e.g., meetings of leaders of evangelization, charismatic, or ecumenical communities) or may be oriented at a specific goal or task. Above all, the key things about such solutions should be cooperation and support rather than administration. A good example here can be the International Service of Communion *Charis*, which was established by Pope Francis to coordinate, inspire and support communities of the broadly understood charismatic renewal sphere (see Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service 2018).

### 3.6. Synodality for Unity in Diversity

The Church cannot be seen as a monolith with rigid spirituality and pastoral forms. However, diversity cannot divide but lead the faithful to greater understanding and enrichment. Speaking to the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships on 30 October 2014, Francis said about unity: “The cause of diversity is also the cause of unity: the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does two things: he creates unity in diversity. [...] Unity in diversity [...] involves the joyful recognition and acceptance of the various gifts which the Holy Spirit gives to each one...” (Francis 2014). Diversity is one of the gifts of the Pentecost and manifests the complementary nature of the gifts. However, diversity should not exist without unity and unity should not exist without diversity.

Synodality also works for unity. It is a real challenge to introduce in various areas of the Church’s life the synodal way of thinking and acting, which in the Catholic version means looking for solutions together.<sup>31</sup> Unlike in the Anglican tradition and practice,

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<sup>31</sup> “What touches all ought to be tested by all” (Congar 1969, 254).

Catholic synodality is about the process to reveal truth and working out various pastoral solutions, but decision-making is reserved to the legitimate ordained ecclesial authority. Synodality is about discernment then. Pope Francis called upon Catholics to discover this path by adding the consultation phase at the universal and then local (within specific conferences of bishops) and continental levels to the existing form of the Synod of Bishops. This is to foster co-responsibility for the Church. Pope Francis characterised the basis for experiencing synodality: “Synodality is not a chapter in an ecclesiology textbook, much less a fad or a slogan [...]. Synodality is an expression of the Church’s nature, her form, style and mission” (Francis 2021a).

As a path travelled together, synod is about listening and hearing other people and listening to the Holy Spirit with others. Prayer is therefore important during synodal meetings. Without it, the synod might lose its theological nature and become an ecclesial parliament. But for recognising God’s will and putting it into life, synod would be limited to the horizontal dimension and would make the Church another human organisation. The Church must preserve its identity and calling. The experiences described in the Acts of the Apostles are still a model to follow. Only in the sphere of faith can we speak about the *sensus fidei* of the faithful. It is no surprising then that the pope disapproved of the German synodal path saying: “when ideology gets involved in church processes, the Holy Spirit goes home, because ideology overcomes the Holy Spirit” (Wimmer 2023). A key to unity within the synodal efforts should be faith and discernment of spirits rather than human reasoning, as it will always divide people.

### 3.7. Boundary Points

Looking at the Anglican model and how it might inspire Catholic renewal, one should keep in mind the theologically uncrossable boundaries. The first of them is differentiating between the service of the ordained and people without holy ordination (not to confuse the priesthood of all believers with hierarchical priesthood). Diminishing the role of the hierarchy (secularization of the clergy)

and the laity taking over the duties of the clergy are not right things to do. Cooperation rather than competition is needed.

The second boundary is the parliamentary mentality and bringing synodality down to a debate and a majority's decision, without discernment in faith, prayer and obedience to the Revelation, i.e., without the vertical dimension and the perspective of holiness (Francis 2019, no. 6–8, 12).<sup>32</sup> To stay secure against that, we need to deepen the proper theology of the laity and develop the ability to bear joint responsibility, with respect for every person's position.

The third boundary is preservation of the prerogatives of the Teaching Office of the Church with respect to the doctrine. Deciding on dogmatic and structural matters is not done through democratic voting but through discernment by people called to be apostles (bishops in unity with pope) and assisted by the Holy Spirit, as during the Council of Jerusalem described in the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>33</sup>

#### 4. Conclusions

Summing up, the following conclusions can be drawn from the analysis made above.

- a. The Anglican model of unity shows that there can co-exist in the same community of the faithful different trends of spirituality and modes of operation. However, uniformity of the fundamentals, i.e., matters resulting from the Bible and confession of faith, must be retained. The middle way requires mutual respect of the faithful, ability to listen to others and following of the faith.
- b. In the Catholic Church, there is a single explanation of faith, guarded by the Teaching Office of the Church, and a universal acknowledgement of the authority of the Bishop of Rome and

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<sup>32</sup> “[...] the Synod is an ecclesial event and its protagonist is the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit is not present, there will be no Synod” (Francis 2021).

<sup>33</sup> “[...] the consensus ecclesiae is not determined by the tallying of votes, but is the outcome of the working of the Spirit, the soul of the one Church of Christ” (PG 58). See DV 10.



College of Bishops. The unity in faith, morality and hierarchical structure is not tantamount to uniformity of spirituality and pastoral forms.

- c. The changing reality requires bold changes on the part of the Catholic Church. Missionary orientation should underpin all her actions. It is therefore necessary that, taking into account the reality, new forms for the structure are found without diminishing the significance of the hierarchical dimension. Structures representing different pastoral forms can in fact co-exist.
- d. It is important that unity in diversity is preserved. To ensure this, the existing forms of building unity should be revived, and new instruments should be looked for to help people listen to one another, exchange spiritual gifts and work together under the authority of the Bishop of Rome and diocesan bishops.
- e. The Anglican experience can be inspirational for the Catholic Church. However, a clear line should be drawn between doctrinal matters and structural and pastoral aspects. It is unacceptable for the Catholic Church to claim the existence of different interpretations of the truths of faith given in the teaching of the Church's magisterium.

### **Czy model anglikański może zainspirować odnowę Kościoła katolickiego?**

**Abstrakt:** Artykuł dotyczy inspiracji dla Kościoła katolickiego, jakie mogą płynąć z modelu anglikańskiego. Pierwsza część przedstawia główne fundamenty anglikańskiej jedności w różnorodności, jak również niezbędne podstawy katolickiej eklezjologii i sposoby zachowania jedności Kościoła. Następnie artykuł omawia sposoby usankcjonowania obfitości ścieżek w Kościele, z zachowaniem prawdziwej jedności. Ukazuje pewne doświadczenia anglikańskie, które mogą być cenne i pomocne w poszukiwaniu dróg odnowy Kościoła katolickiego. Na szczególną uwagę zasługuje współistnienie wspólnot o różnym poziomie zaangażowania i aktywności duszpasterskiej, a także formacja w kierunku pogłębionej synodalności. Takie nowe drogi powinny być zawsze motywowane wiarą i celami misyjnymi.

**Słowa kluczowe:** eklezjologia, katolicyzm, anglikanizm, odnowa Kościoła, synodalność, jedność w różnorodności

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