

## The Contribution of the Greek Patristic Idea to the Teaching of “Lumen Gentium” on the Nature of the Church\*

### Introduction to the Problem and the Method of the Problem

The dogmatic Constitution on the Church, beginning with the words *Lumen Gentium*, is the central document of the Second Vatican Council. Sixteen Council documents are closely related to the *Lumen Gentium*. They derive from it and are based on it<sup>1</sup>.

Post-Trident theology, like the Tridentine Council, was apologetic. The polemic-juridical attitude is expressed in the definition of the Church derived from Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, which embraces the Church as a visible supernatural society based on faith, sacraments and power. This one-sided, minimalistic concept of the Church was maintained at the First Vatican Council. It was also expressed in the later enunciations of the magisterium of the Church, as in the encyclical of Pius XII *Mystici Corporis Christi*<sup>2</sup>, for example, the new, more complete view of the Church, expressed in the *Lumen Gentium*, is connected with the recognition of the one-sidedness of the apologetic and legal view and harks back to the sources<sup>3</sup>. The dogmatic Constitution on the Church refers

\* STV 35(1997)1.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. V. Grenade, *Konstytucja dogmatyczna “Lumen gentium” soboru watykańskiego*, *CoTh* 36(1966), 49f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. T. Gogolewski, *Nauka o mistycznym Ciele Chrystusa w świetle nowej konstytucji dogmatycznej o Kościele*, *CoTh* 36(1966), 96.100. (The article states that it is Y. Congar who pointed out that the Encyclical of Pius XII did not depart much from the apologetic-institutional concept of the Church adopted at the First Vatican Council and did not cover all aspects of the mystery of the Church).

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the direction of the Council’s work on the Constitution is largely due to Cardinal L. Suenens, who on 4 XII 1962 during the first session of the Council – referring

not only to the statements of the magisterium of the Church, but also to the Holy Scriptures and to the Fathers of the Church, both Eastern and Western<sup>4</sup>.

Numerous Polish theological studies take up the issues included in the *Lumen Gentium*. So far, however, a detailed comparison of the content of the Constitution itself with the documents quoted in the footnotes has not been addressed<sup>5</sup>. This article is devoted to the analysis of the statements of the Greek Fathers, to which the Constitution refers by teaching about the nature of the Church<sup>6</sup>.

The nature of the Church is expressed in the *Lumen Gentium* by numerous images and new expressions, referring to Scripture and the patristic heritage. Of these, the expressions “the mystery of the Church” and “the new people of God” deserve special attention. The Council used them as titles of the first two chapters of the Constitutions.

The text of the first two chapters of the *Lumen Gentium* has thirty-six footnotes. In seven of these footnotes (19% for all footnotes in the first two chapters), the Constitution refers, among other things, to Greek patristic thought, and in five (14% for all footnotes in these chapters) it refers only to Greek patristic thought. In total, in twelve footnotes to Chapters I and II, the Constitution refers to the ten Greek Fathers of the Church and to the anonymous work of the patristic epoch *Didache*.

In the individual, differently edited footnotes to the chapters concerning the nature of the Church, the Constitution most often refers – as in the entire

to the thoughts of John XXIII expressed in his radio address on September 11, IX – proposed a reorganisation of the previous work on the document; he postulated that first we present *Ecclesia ad intra*, or the nature of the Church, and then *Ecclesia ad extra*, or the relations of the Church with the world. At the beginning of 1963, the ecclesiological subcommittee adopted a project of Belgian origin, in which, among others, G. Philips was involved. Cf. A. Kubiś, *Wprowadzenie do “Lumen gentium” – konstytucji dogmatycznej o Kościele*, in: *Idee przewodnie soborowej konstytucji o Kościele*, S. Grzybek (ed.), Kraków 1971, 33f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. T. Gogolewski, art. cit., 94.99ff; A. Kubiś, art. cit., 43.

<sup>5</sup> This gap is being filled by masters theses prepared recently under the guidance of T. Gogolewski at the Academy of Catholic Theology, specialising in apologetic studies: K. Polak, *Dziedzictwo łacińskich Ojców Kościoła w konstytucji “Lumen gentium,”* Warsaw 1991; R. Garbarek, *Soborowy obraz Kościoła w świetle dokumentów magisterium cytowanych w konstytucji “Lumen gentium,”* Warsaw 1992; P. Jeliński, *Wkład greckiej myśli patrystycznej do ujęcia Kościoła w konstytucji “Lumen gentium,”* P. Binkowski, *Wkład przedsoborowej myśli teologicznej do obrazu Kościoła w konstytucji “Lumen gentium,”* Warsaw 1993.

<sup>6</sup> This article is part of the work listed in the above footnote, which has been worked out to form an autonomous whole.

document – to the patristic collection of J. P. Migne<sup>7</sup>. It also uses the *Sources chrétiennes*<sup>8</sup> collection and the collection of F.X. Funk<sup>9</sup> and W.W. Harvey<sup>10</sup>.

An analytical and comparative method was used in this paper. Not only are the statements of the Fathers of the Church quoted<sup>11</sup>, but they were also compared with the text of the Council document<sup>12</sup>. The work became a small anthology. The patristic footnotes to the chapter on the mystery of the Church (part II) and to the chapter on the new people of God (part III) were analysed separately. In the end (part IV) there is a summary in the chronological aspect of the development of the patristic era, starting with *Didache* and ending with John of Damascus.

### The Church as a Mystery

In Chapter I of the *Lumen Gentium* (1-8), only four numbers (2, 4, 6, 7) contain footnotes referring to Greek patristics. The first of these numbers (LG 2) speaks of God the Father's saving plan for mankind<sup>13</sup>. The second (LG 4) presents the work of the Holy Spirit in the realisation of this goal, defined by the Council as the mystery of the Church<sup>14</sup>. In this perspective, the Church is a dynamic,

<sup>7</sup> Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca, *Paris 1857ff.* (quote PG).

<sup>8</sup> Paris 1947 nn. (quote SCh).

<sup>9</sup> *Paires apostolici*, vol. 1, Tybingae 1901 (quote Funk).

<sup>10</sup> *Irenaei (...) libri V adversus haereses*, Cantabrigiae 1857 – this collection could not be reached for independent reasons; it was not necessary in substance, because the Constitution, referring to Irenaeus, also refers to PG and possibly SCh.

<sup>11</sup> The quoted patristic texts were translated from the original by the author of the article. The only exception are fragments from Irenaeus and Origen because the texts have not been preserved in the original language – they have been translated from Latin. For comparison, existing Polish translations are given in the relevant footnotes.

<sup>12</sup> *Fragments of the Constitution are quoted in favour of*: Konstytucja dogmatyczna o Kościele, in: Sobór watykański II. Konstytucje, dekryty, deklaracje. Tekst łacińsko-polski, Poznań 1968 s. 146-257.

<sup>13</sup> Since the work is analytical in its basic assumption, the synthesis of the doctrine of the Church as a mystery and as God's people was not given – it can be found in numerous studies. It was limited only to those constitutional numbers in which the Council refers to Greek patristic thought. This also applies to the next chapter of the work.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. L. Zimny, *Tajemnica Kościoła*, AK 57(1965)340-341, 270ff; H. Bogacki, *Misterium Kościoła pielgrzymującego*, in: *Kościół w świetle soboru*, H. Bogacki, S. Moysa (ed.), Poznań 1968, 54; V. Warnach, *Kościół jako tajemnica*, in: *Nowy obraz Kościoła po soborze watykańskim II*, B. Lambert (ed.), Warsaw 1968, 26ff; K. Wojtyła, *Wstęp ogólny*, in: *Sobór watykański II*, op. cit., 48ff;

complex reality that cannot be closed in a strict conceptual definition<sup>15</sup>. This explains why the Council used biblical images: the flock, cattle, farmland, buildings, blue Jerusalem, mother, bride (LG 6), and the extensive image of the Church as the Body of Christ (LG 7)<sup>16</sup>.

In order to establish the relationship between the Council's teaching of the mystery of the Church and Greek patristic thought, the seven texts of the Fathers of the Church to which the Constitution refers in this chapter should be compared.

LG 2. "And believers in Christ (Father) decided to gather in the Holy Church, which from the beginning of the world shown by types, miraculously (was) prepared in the history of the nation of Israel and in the Old Covenant."

Cyril of Alexandria (footnote 1 to Chapter I of the Constitution): "The description (Abraham's tithing to Melchizedek) contains a typical sense. Namely, Christ was again (here) described under the veil. His origin is not counted among those who, by law, were called to the office of priest, for he was born of the tribe of Judah, whom Moses did not appoint as a priest. He took tithes from the sons of Levi, that is, from the priesthood of the (Old) Law. He took it from Melchizedek and then also from Aaron. For himself (Aaron) also took tithing from the sons of Levi, presenting (thus) the figure of Christ, as we have just said."<sup>17</sup>

The work *Glaphyra in Genesim* is a systematic commentary on the Book of Genesis. It is counted among the exegetical works of Cyril Alexandria. In the quoted text he states that Christ, as High Priest of the New Testament, once took the tithe from Melchizedek, to whom Abraham gave it. Then he also took

A. Zuberbier, *Inspiracje soborowe w eklezjologii*, in: *Myśl posoborowa w Polsce*, J. Myśkow (ed.), Warsaw 1970, 113f; J. Brudź, *Misterium Kościoła*, in: *Idee przewodnie* op. cit., 46ff; A. Słomkowski, *Prawda o Duchu Świętym na II soborze watykańskim*, AK 65(1973)384, 62ff; Y. Congar, *Kościół jako sakrament zbawienia*, Warsaw 1980, 25ff; A. Skowronek, *Powtórka z soboru. W ćwierćwiecze drugiego soboru watykańskiego*, Kraków 1992, 5ff.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. T. Gogolewski, art. cit., 95 n.; J. Puyo, *Życie dla prawdy. Rozmowy z ojcem Congarem*, Warsaw 1982, 120; A. Skowronek, op. cit., 7.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. H. Bogacki, art. cit., 69ff; A. Zuberbier, art. cit., 115; A. Zuberbier, *Teologia dzisiaj*, Katowice 1975, 246f.329; J. Brudź, art. cit., 54ff; A. Luneau, M. Bobiehon, *Kościół ludem Bożym. Od owczarni do ludu Przymierza*, Warsaw 1980, 174f; H. Langkammer, *Nauka św. Pawła o Kościele*, in: *Kościół w świetle Biblii*, Lublin 1984, 85ff; J. Imbach, *Wielkie tematy soboru*, Warsaw 1985, 22; L. Balter, *Holy Universal Church*, "Communio" 9(1989)1, 9ff; M.J. Alves, *People of God. Body of Christ*, *ibid.*, 18ff.

<sup>17</sup> *Glaphyra in Genesim* 2, 10: PG vol. 69 col. 109. Scheme (*Sacrosanctum Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum Secundum. Schema constitutionis de Ecclesia*, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1964) as well as the Constitution refer to the Latin column (col. 110).

it from the priests of the Old Law or sons of Levi, for Aaron, as the High Priest of the Old Covenant, taking tithes from the sons of Levi, typified Christ.

This inspired the *Lumen Gentium*, which already refers this text to the preparation of the Church in the Old Testament.

LG 2. They "(Holy Church) established in the last days, was revealed by the pouring out of the Spirit, and in the end of the ages will reach its glorious end. And then, as we read it from the holy fathers, all the righteous, beginning with Adam, 'from Abel the righteous to the last one chosen,' will be gathered together in the universal Church with the Father."<sup>18</sup>

John of Damascus (footnote 2 to Chapter I of the Constitution): "It teaches us the Symbol of Belief: 'And in one, holy, universal and apostolic church of God.' The universal Church cannot be merely apostolic. For the omnipotent authority of the head, which is Christ, could save the whole world through the apostles. It is therefore a holy, God's, universal church, an assembly of holy fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, evangelists, martyrs, to which have been attached believers according to all peoples. For they have seen that of the entire human race, under heaven, they have the same faith as Christians. For without the Holy Spirit, the common and multilingual crowd cannot say a single sentence of the true faith. For again, I say, therefore, that it is universal everywhere, and so it is called, that the different and wild of the whole world multilingual peoples agree on one, peaceful and saving faith and knowledge of God."<sup>19</sup>

John of Damascus, the last Father of the Church, explains in the quoted text *Adversus iconoclastas* the characteristics of the Church according to the Symbol of Faith. Among other things, the universality of the Church is expressed in the fact that it is a congregation of the holy fathers of the Old Testament, as well as of New Covenant characters, with all the faithful peoples in agreement. This universality is the work of the Holy Spirit, without which there can be no harmony in matters of faith.

John of Damascus' commentary does not refer the Church's congregation to eschatological times, as the text of LG 2 does.

LG 4. "By the power of the Gospel (Spirit) keeps the Church in constant youth, constantly renews her and leads her to perfect union with the Bridegroom."

Irenaeus (footnote 3): the "(Faith) which we have received from the Church (and which we hold) and which is always, thanks to the Spirit of God, as if

<sup>18</sup> The quotation in LG 2 is from Gregory the Great. Cf. K. Polak, op. cit., 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Adversus iconoclastas* 11: PG vol. 96 col. 1357. The diagram shows the Latin col. (1358), which in the Constitution was amended to the Greek col.

a wonderful drink in a noble vessel is young and makes the vessel in which it is found young.”<sup>20 21</sup>

The greatest theologian of the second century – Irenaeus – shows that it is thanks to the Holy Spirit that the deposit of faith received from the Church is young and makes the Church herself young.

The relevant text of LG 4, which speaks of the role of the Holy Spirit and refers to the text of Irenaeus, presents the Spirit of God as the guarantor of the youth of the Church and its renewer. The Council did not limit itself to Irenaeus’ thought, but extended it. While Irenaeus spoke only of the constant youth of faith, transmitted by the Church, the Constitution speaks of the youth of the Church herself. The Holy Spirit is the author of this youth, both according to Irenaeus and the Council document.

LG 4: “Thus the whole Church turns out to be ‘a people united by the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.’”<sup>21</sup>

John of Damascus (footnote 4): “So we believe in one holy, universal and apostolic Church of God, in which we are taught by catechesis. We also know the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and we are baptised in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We also participate in the saving Body and Blood of the Son of God who, for our sake, became a man of our Father’s predilection and died for us.”<sup>22</sup>

The text of John of Damascus was taken from the same commentary on the symbol of faith, to which the Council referred in footnote 2 to Chapter I of *Lumen Gentium*<sup>23</sup>, the Greek Father of the Church states the importance of the Church’s faith in the mystery of the Holy Trinity and its close connection not only with the basic sacrament of Christian initiation, which is baptism, but also (indirectly) with the sacrament of the Eucharist.

The Trinitarian dimension of the Church’s mystery, as described in LG 2–4, is therefore a common heritage of both Latin patristics (apart from Cyprian and Gregory the Great, it is cited in footnotes 1, 2 and 4 of Augustine and 1 of Hilary of Poitiers) and Greek patristics (Cyrillic Alexandria, Irenaeus and John of Damascus).

<sup>20</sup> *Adversus haereses* III, 24, 1: PG vol. 7 col. 966; Sch vol. 34, p. 398. Cf. A. Bober, *Światła ekumeny. Antologia patrystyczna*, Kraków 1965, 48 (in the translation, the subject of the sentence is the truth).

<sup>21</sup> The quotation in LG 4 is from Cyprian. Cf. K. Polak, op. cit., 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Adversus iconoclastas* 12: PG vol. 96 col. 1357. Both the schema and the Constitution refer to the Latin column (1358).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. footnote 19.

LG 6. "The church is also often called God's 'building' (1Cor 3:9). (...) The building is given different names: the house of God (1 Tim 3:15) (...); the dwelling of God in the Spirit (Eph 2:19-22); the tabernacle of God with men (Revelation 21:3); and above all, the 'temple' of the feast, which the holy fathers glorify as represented by the stone shrines and which is not unreasonably compared in the liturgy to the holy city, to the new Jerusalem."

Origen (footnote 5): "So I think that the Church is a temple built of living stones (...)"<sup>24</sup>

The most fertile of the Fathers of the Church, Origen, in the commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew compares the Church to a temple built of living stones.

For example, *Lumen Gentium* includes Origen (next to Tertullian and liturgical prayers) among the witnesses of the early Christian tradition of developing the New Testamentary image of the Church as a building of God.

LG 7. "And so that in him (in Christ) we may continually renew ourselves (cf. Eph 4:23), he gave us his Spirit, who, being one and the same in the Head and in the members, so animates, unites and moves the whole body that the work of the Holy Fathers could be compared to the function which the principle of life, or soul, performs in the human body."

John Chrysostom (footnote 8): "What is unity of spirit? Just as there is one spirit in the body that embraces everything and does one thing (body), consisting of different members, so here too (in the Church). For this purpose, the Spirit was given to unite people of different nationalities and customs. For an old man and a young man, a poor man and a rich man, a child and an adult, a woman and a man and every soul become one thing, and this more than if it were one body. For from this (bodily) union that (spiritual) one is much greater and more complete is the perfection of that union. For the connection of the soul (with the body) is the more perfect, the simpler (and resulting) it is from a single form. But how do we keep it? In the bond of peace."<sup>25</sup>

Didymus the Blind (footnote 8): "For the Father had begun, having likened (to himself in creation), but had created (the Son) the Only-Begotten, and the Spirit of God sanctified (all) and with his sanctification perfected, enlightened, strengthened, enlivened. It all exists in all things (created things) and in each of them. Everyone has a share in His goodness and contains Him. However,

<sup>24</sup> *In Matthaicum commentarius* 16, 21: PG vol. 13 col. 1444. Both the schema and the Constitution refer to the Latin column (1443). Cf. M. Michalski, *Antologia literatury patrystycznej*, vol. 1, Warsaw 1975, 386.

<sup>25</sup> *In epistulam ad Ephesios homilia* 9, 3: PG vol. 62 col. 72.



it is not divided, nor does it pass (from one to the other) and is not subject to change. He always gives himself to everyone in the same way, not in part, keeping his own purity, unblemished by the bodies. In a divine way, everything illuminates and multiplies everywhere holiness, love, peace, wisdom, joy, security and all goodness.”<sup>26</sup>

“He (the Holy Spirit) sanctifies (us) and revives, and makes us partakers of heavenly light. He guards everyone’s perseverance in agreement. His voice was in the prophets and apostles. (He) strengthened the martyrs to resist the tyrannical cruelty. He renews and frees us as the Lord, and as the Spirit of adoption for sons makes us sons of God. He by the light (of baptism) casts away groups of demons and humiliates the enemy (Satan). He opens for us the gates of heaven and introduces us to the vestibule of salvation, making us partakers of the life and singing of angels. He’s a road for us (*exactly*: the path that leads to God Himself and to the Father in heaven.”<sup>27</sup>

The LG 7 continues to discuss the biblical images of the Church, paying special attention to the image of the Church as the Body of Christ. This image is complemented by the comparison of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church with the function of the soul in the body, which is often present in tradition (Augustine, Thomas) and in the teaching of the magisterium (Leo XIII, Pius XII).

This fragment of the Constitution refers to the extensive argumentation of John Chrysostom in his homily to the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians and to the work of Didymus the Blind, dedicated to the Holy Trinity. Both explain in detail what is the unity in the Church, modelled on the unity of soul and body. The council therefore returns to patristic symbolism, breaking the tendency of Post-Trident theology which saw in the Holy Spirit the so-called Uncreated Soul of the Church (*Anima Increata, in contrast to grace, described as anima creata*)<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> *De Trinitate* 2, 1: PG t. 39 kol. 449 n.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* col. 452.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. S. Tromp, *De Spiritu Sancto anima Corporis Mystici, t. 1. Testimonia selecta e Patribus Graecis, Series theologica*, vol. 1, Rome 1948.



## Church as a New People of God

Chapter II of the *Lumen Gentium* (9-17) describes the Church as a new people of God<sup>29</sup>. The four numbers of this chapter (11, 13, 16, 17) refer to the Greek Fathers of the Church. God's people participate in the saving work of Christ through the sacraments of baptism and other sacraments (LG 11). All men are called to this tribe (LG 13). The Constitution discusses, among other things, his attitude toward those who are merely assigned to him and not incarnated with him (LG 16)<sup>30</sup>. Finally, the Council document stresses the missionary character of the Church (LG 17).

The basis for determining the share of the Greek patristic heritage in this chapter of the Constitution are the nine patristic texts.

LG 11. "By the sacrament of confirmation, the (faithful) are even more closely bound to the Church, receive the special power of the Holy Spirit, and thus are even more strongly bound, as true witnesses to Christ, to spread and defend faith by word and deed."

<sup>29</sup> Cf. A. Skowronek, *Soborowa wizja Kościoła*, *CoTh* 37(1967)1, 10ff; H. Bogacki, art. cit., 54ff; J.J. Greehy, *Lud Boży*, in: *Kościół w obliczu reformy*, D. Flanagan (ed.), Warsaw 1969, 16ff; S. Grzybek, *Lud Boży w świetle konstytucji "Lumen gentium"*, in: *Guiding ideas*, op. cit., 81f; A.L. Szafranski, *Pojęcie Kościoła jako ludu Bożego*, *AK* 64(1972)381-382, 113 (the article contains valuable information that this concept was included in the Constitution thanks to Congar); A. Zuberbier, op. cit., 245ff; J. Imbach, op. cit., 22; V. Messori, *Raport o stanie wiary*, Warsaw 1986, 40f; K. Wojtyła, *U podstaw odnowy. Studium o realizacji Vaticanum II*, Kraków 1988, 105ff; M.J. Alves, art. cit., 16ff; R. Winling, *Teologia współczesna 1945-1980*, Kraków 1990, 155. It is worth mentioning that I. Różycki (and after him T. Gogolewski) proposed to speak about the new people of God. This term, better than the formulation of *new God's people*, reflects the conciliar idea that the Church is created by the power of the sacrament of baptism and by the clergy and laity. The concept proposed by I. Różycki and T. Gogolewski has not been accepted. The term used to describe *God's people*, although it does not have a nationalistic meaning, as does the expression of *God's people*, is often associated only with the laity. From a philological point of view, both translations of the Latin *populus Dei* are correct.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. E. Florkowski, *Wprowadzenie do konstytucji dogmatycznej o Kościele*, in: *Sobór Watykański II*, op. cit., 136 (the author, contrary to the original, refers the last sentence of the first paragraph of LG 14 to the Church of Christ, also omits the *Catholic* word for the Polish translation); A. Luneau, M. Bobichon, op. cit., 189; Cz. Bartnik, *Kościół Jezusa Chrystusa*, Wrocław 1982, 171ff; E. Ozorowski, *Kościół. Zarys eklezjologii katolickiej*, Wrocław 1984, 82f; R. Winling, op. cit., 160ff.

Cyril of Jerusalem (footnote 5 to Chapter II of the Constitution): “If you abide in faith (by baptism), you are blessed; if you have given up by unbelief, cast out unbelief from that day on and become strongly convinced.”<sup>31</sup>

There is always a guardian standing by you (*literally* a guardian, a guard), Paraclete. He cares about you as his soldier, about your entrances and your exits, and about those waiting for you. He will also give you various gifts of charisms if you do not sadden Him because of your sins, for it is written: “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph 4:30). So what does it mean, darlings, to keep mercy? Be ready to accept grace and, having received it, do not abandon.”<sup>32</sup>

The third and fourth centuries abounded in Christological and pneumatic problems<sup>33</sup>. Cyril Jerusalem, a participant in the Constantinople Council of 381, which dealt with the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, describes his concern for believers in the relevant passage of his catechesis on the Holy Spirit. The author speaks about the Holy Spirit in the context of the sacrament of baptism, while the Constitution refers to his words for confirmation. The dependence of LG 11 on the thoughts of Cyril of Jerusalem is therefore not strict.

LG 13. “Among all the peoples of the earth, then, there is rooted one People of God, since of all the nations he takes on his own people, citizens of the Kingdom, not earthly, but heavenly in character. For all the faithful scattered throughout the world have communion with each other in the Holy Spirit and thus the inhabitant of Rome knows that the Indians are members of the same organism as he is.”

John Chrysostom (footnote 9 to Chapter II of the Constitution): “Which means: ‘To gather together those who are close by and those who are far away’ (J 11:52; cf. Eph 2:17). He created one body. He who is in Rome recognises that Indians are part of his (body), someone equal in this congregation. The Christ is the head of all of them.”<sup>34</sup>

This passage in the Constitutions on the vocation of all people to the new people of God shows the interrelationship between the citizens of this people. A small passage from the homily of John Chrysostom is quoted exceptionally in the text of LG 13 itself. There is therefore a complete convergence of the text

<sup>31</sup> *Catechesis XVII. De Spiritu Sancto* II, 35: PG vol. 33 col. 1009. Cf. *Cyril of Jerusalem. Catechesis* (Scriptures by Old Christian Writers / Quotations PSP/1. 9, team edition, translated by W. Kania), Warsaw 1973, 280.

<sup>32</sup> *Catechesis XVII*, op. cit. col. 1012. Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, op. cit., 280f.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. J. Kelly, *The beginnings of Christian doctrine*, Warsaw 1988, 90ff.191ff.211ff.

<sup>34</sup> *In Ioannem homilia* 65(64), 1: PG vol. 59 col. 361f.

of the Constitutions with that of Chrysostom. In addition, the Latin text of the Constitutions did not contain the Latin translation of the PG, but was made for the use of the Greek text of the Constitutions. This is a small but meaningful confirmation that the Council's experts reached directly to the Greek text.

LG 13. "It is the mark of universality that adorns the People of God that is the gift of the Lord Himself; through this gift, the Catholic Church effectively and continuously strives to unite all humanity and all its goods with Christ the Head in the unity of his Spirit."

Irenaeus (footnote 10): "He is Jesus Himself, our Lord, who suffered for us and rose again for us, and will come again in the glory of the Father for the resurrection of all the bodies, and for the presentation of salvation, and for the judgement of (His) just judgement to shine before all who are subject to Him. One (is) so, as we have shown, God the Father and one Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has gone through the whole order of salvation and has reunited everything within himself (cf. Eph 1:10). In this 'all' he is also man, God's creation. For this reason, he also reunited man in himself, from the Invisible to the Visible, from the Inconceivable to the Conceived, from the Impatient to the Patient, from the Word to the Human. He has reunited everything within himself. How, then, is the Word of God the first among (beings) above heaven and spiritual and invisible (cf. Col 1:16), so also among the visible and the fleshly (beings) is the first (It), taking precedence for itself (cf. Col 1:18). However, by making himself the Head of the Church (cf. Eph 1:22), he attracts everything to himself at the right time (cf. J 12:32)."<sup>3536</sup>

Irenaeus (footnote 10): "Luke (3:23) shows, therefore, that the genealogy, which goes from the birth of our Lord to Adam, contains seventy-two generations, linking the end to the beginning and emphasizing that he is the one who has united all the nations from (the times of) Adam, and all the languages, and all the human race, including Adam himself, in a new way (cf. Eph 1:10). Hence and Adam himself was called by Paul, the type who was to come (Rom 5:14), because the Word, the Creator of all, formed in advance what was to be accomplished in him, (i.e.) the order of salvation of the human race through the Son of God. God first formed the fleshly man (Adam) to be saved by the spiritual man (Christ). For since there was a saviour in advance (i.e. the Word), it was necessary for him to become also the one who was to be saved (i.e. Adam), so that (Christ) would not be the Saviour in vain."

<sup>35</sup> *Adversus haereses* III, 16, 6; PG vol. 7 col. 925; SCh vol. 34, 292.

<sup>36</sup> *Adversus haereses* III, 22, 3; PG vol. 7 col. 958; SCh vol. 34, 378. Cf. A. Bober, op. cit., 47f.

The texts of Irenaeus point to the role of Jesus Christ as Head of the Church in the unification of all people of all times. The Excerpt from LG 13 presents the universality of God's people as a gift from Christ, making the Catholic Church strive to unite all humanity with Jesus in the unity of the Spirit. The document enriches Irenaeus' thought by emphasizing the role of the Catholic Church in the realization of the sign of universality that Christ bestowed on his Church.

LG 13. "Therefore, in the ecclesiastic community, there are legitimately particular Churches which benefit from their own tradition; however, the primacy of the Holy See, which leads the entire congregation of love, remains intact (...)."

Ignatius of Antioch (footnote 11): "Ignatius, also called Theophorus, (...) (to the Church), which also presides in a place inhabited by Romans, worthy of God, worthy of honour, worthy of recognition as blessed, worthy of praise, worthy of prosperity, worthy of holiness, and leading in love, having the law of Christ (*possible translation*: performing the authority of Christ), bearing the name of the Father."<sup>37</sup>

Ignatius is a witness to the oldest patristic tradition. Therefore, in the historical and theological consideration of the primacy of the Holy See, its statements have a special value.

The Constitution affirms the primacy of the Holy See over particular Churches. The expression that it *leads the congregation of love* was taken from Ignatius. However, he lacks the term *primacy*, which is of later origin.

LG 16. "Nor does it deny the Divine Providence necessary for salvation to those who, without any fault of their own, have not yet come to a clear knowledge of God, and who are trying, not without God's grace, to lead an honest life. For whatever is in them of goodness and truth, the Church treats it as a preparation for the Gospel."

Eusebius of Caesarea (footnote 20): "It seems to me that this lecture will lead properly to a better understanding of the preparation for the Gospel (tes Evangelikes apodeikseos) and then to a better understanding of the more difficult teachings. (It will be so) if what belongs to (the) preparation opens for us (first) the way, as a beginning and easier introduction, more suitable for the Gentiles who have recently joined (to us). Then to those who have gone through these

<sup>37</sup> *Epistula ad Romanos*. Praefatio: Funk, 252. Cf. *The scriptures of the Apostolic Fathers. The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles. Barnabas. Clementine of Rome. Ignatius of Antioch. Polycarp. Hermas*, in: POK, vol. 1, J. Sajdak (ed.), Poznań 1924, 226; Sz. Pieszczoł, *Patrologia. Wprowadzenie w studium Ojców Kościoła*, Poznań 1964, 59; M. Michalski, op. cit., vol. 1, 24; *Pierwsi świadkowie. Wybór najstarszych pism chrześcijańskich*, in: *Ojcowie żywi*, vol. 8, M. Starowieyski (ed.), Kraków 1988, 156; *Ojcowie Apostolscy*, in: PSP, vol. 45, Warsaw 1990, 80.

beginnings and have already attained the ability to accept the more difficult (truths), we will pass on the exact knowledge (truths) of the mysteries of the perfect and all-inclusive economy (salvation) accomplished by Jesus Christ, our Lord (and) God. We will begin this preparation (tes Proparaskeues) with a presentation of what can be accepted both by the Gentiles and by all those who learn more about our customs and institutions."<sup>38 39</sup>

LG 16 refers entirely to those who are not God's people, but are ordered to them. The passage in question concerns those who have not yet come to knowledge of God at all, but who seek to lead an honest life by fulfilling the good and the truth to the best of their ability.

In order to define these efforts, which the Gentiles made *not without God's grace*, as the Constitution expresses it, it used the term *evangelical preparation*, which is the title of the work of Eusebius. The author understood this *preparation* as an initial instruction of the pagans, introducing them to the mysteries of Christianity.

The text of Eusebius, to which the Constitution refers, is therefore only an inspiration to the Constitution. From the initial teaching of the catechumens, the Council extends this term to all (*any*) manifestations of good and truth outside Christianity or even any religion, seeing them as an objective preparation for the acceptance of the Good News by the Gentiles.

LG 17. "But if everyone can baptise those who believe, it is the priest's job to build up the Mystical Body through the Eucharistic sacrifice by fulfilling the words of God recorded in the Prophet: 'From sunrise to sunset my name is great among the nations and they consecrate and make a pure sacrifice to my name in every place' (Mal 1:11)."

Didache (footnote 22): "In (day of) the Lord, while gathering, break the bread and do thanksgiving after previous confession of your sins, so that your sacrifice may be pure. But whoever has a dispute with his companion should not gather with you until they have both come to terms, so that your sacrifice may not be insulted. For this is how you said, In every place and time 'hey will offer me a pure sacrifice, because I am a great king, you say, and my name is great among the nations' (Ml 7:77)."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Praeparatio evangélica* 1, 1: PG vol. 21 col. 28. The diagram shows the Latin col. (27), which in the Constitution was amended to the Greek col.

<sup>39</sup> In the Latin text the *mystical* term does not appear.

<sup>40</sup> Didache 14: Funk, p. 32. Cf. Pisma Ojców Apostolskich, op. cit., 38; Sz. Pieszczoch, op. cit., 45 (only 14:1); M. Michalski, op. cit., vol. 1, 20; Pierwsi świadkowie, op. cit., 50f; Ojcowie Apostolscy, op. cit., 64.

Justin (footnote 22): “Hence, God speaks of the sacrifices you once made, as I have said (above), through Malachi, one of the twelve (prophets): I have no predilection in you,’ says the Lord, ‘and I will not accept your sacrifices at your hands, for from sunrise to sunset (*literally*, sunsets). My name (is) surrounded by glory among the nations, and in every place is offered (is) incense to my name, and sacrifice is pure, because my name (is) great among the nations, says the Lord, and you insult them’ (Ml 1:10-12). He announces the sacrifices made to him everywhere from us Gentiles, the Eucharistic bread and the Eucharistic cup, when he says that we glorify his name and that you insult it.”<sup>41</sup>

Irenaeus (footnote 22): “When he also commanded his disciples to sacrifice the first fruits of his creatures to God, not as if he needed them, but as if they were not themselves useless or ungrateful, he took this bread which he (is) made of created (matter) and which he did by speaking: ‘This is my body’ (Mt 26:26). Similarly (he took) the cup, which is (also) of the created (matter), (destined) for us, and taught the new sacrifice of the New Testament. The Church has received it from the apostles, and God, who gives us food, offers it throughout the world as the first fruits of his gifts in the New Testament, as announced by Malachi, one of the twelve prophets, in such words: I have no predilection *in* you, says the Almighty Lord, and I will not accept any sacrifices at your hands. For from sunrise to sunset my Name is worshipped among the nations and in every place offered incense to my Name and pure sacrifice. For my name is great among the nations, says the Almighty Lord. (1:10-11)”.

LG 17 instructs us about God’s duty to preach the Gospel to all people of God, so that every human being may have the opportunity to make a personal decision in religious matters. On such a broad backdrop, the cited fragment resembles the function of the ministerial priests who, unlike the lay faithful, build the Church in a special way through the Eucharist, fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi.

*Didache*, mentioned in this context, is the oldest Christian source, which the noun *Eucharist (he eucharistia)* (9,1-3) refers to the Lord’s Supper<sup>42 43</sup>. *Didache* 14 uses a verb form to describe mass and, following the book of Malachi, describes it as a sacrifice. Justin is the apologist who testifies to the Eucharistic

<sup>41</sup> *Dialogus cum Tryphone Jitdaeo* 41: PG vol. 6 col. 564. Cf. *Justin. Apologia. Dialog z żydem Tryfonem*, in: POK vol. 4, J. Sajdak, (ed.), Poznań 1926, 167.

<sup>42</sup> *Adversus haereses* IV, 17, 5: PG vol. 7 col. 1023f. Cf. A. Bober, op. cit., 49.

<sup>43</sup> Zob. J. Gliściński, *Eucharystia w nauczaniu Ojców Kościoła*, HD 56(1987)2, 88; F. Louvel, *Słowniczek*, in: *Pierwsi świadkowie*, op. cit., 457.

life of the second century<sup>44</sup>. Irenaeus, on the other hand, emphasises in the Eucharist the novelty in relation to the sacrifices of the Old Covenant<sup>45</sup>. All three Fathers of the Church clearly refer the breaking of Eucharistic bread to the prophecy of Malachi, but they do not speak directly about the role of the priest, as the Constitution does.

### Chronological View of the Problem<sup>46</sup>

The analysis shows that the first chapter of the LG includes the thoughts of the six Greek Fathers, starting from the turn of the second and third centuries (Irenaeus, Origen), through the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century (Didymus the Blind, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria), and ending with the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. the late period of patristics (John of Damascus, quoted twice). Of these, Didymus the Blind and Cyril of Alexandria are mentioned only in this chapter of the LG.

In chapter II of the LG, Greek patristic art is represented by one anonymous work and six Fathers, starting with the oldest surviving *Didache* (late 1<sup>st</sup> century), Ignatius of Antioch (early 2<sup>nd</sup> century), Justin (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century), Irenaeus (second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, quoted again and twice), through Eusebius of Caesarea (early 4<sup>th</sup> century) and ending with Jerusalem Cyril and John Chrysostom (4<sup>th</sup> century).

In pre-conciliar theology, the legal dimension of the Church was over-emphasised. Meanwhile, in Chapter I of the LG, the nature of the Church is described as God's dynamic intention, expressed in the biblical images of the Church, which were not remembered before the Council. In the analysed patristic fragments there is no term for *the mystery of the Church*, which appeared for the first time in *Didache*, but in an unclear, difficult to specify sense. Irenaeus' beliefs (LG 4, footnote 3) that the Church is young through the Holy Spirit was used, even though the author refers the author of this youth only to faith in the Church. Thanks to Origen (LG 6:5), the patristic reading of the biblical images of the Church (and of the Bible in general), previously forgotten, is valued. Based on Didymus the Blind and John Chrysostom (LG 7, footnote 8), the

<sup>44</sup> Cf. J. Gliściński, art. cit., 88f.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 89f.

<sup>46</sup> The chronological notation used in this part of the work is subordinated to the order of the chapters of the *Lumen Gentium* Constitution. Therefore, the contribution of Greek patristic thought to Chapter I and to Chapter II of the CC was discussed separately.



Constitution recognised the action of the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ as analogous to the role of the soul in the body, without calling it the Soul of the Church. In reference to the Cyril of Alexandria (LG 2, footnote 1), the Church has been historically and personally captured, seeing its origins already in the Old Testament. Finally, John of Damascus (LG 2, footnote 2) helped to understand the universality of the Church, although the Constitution refers the words of this Father not to the present but to the eschatological reality. Similarly, the Constitution extended the Trinitarian aspect to the whole Church, which is related to faith (LG 4:4).

In the chapter on the new people of God, the Constitution uses the *Didache* of Justin and Irenaeus (LG 17, footnote 22) to present the role of the priest celebrating the Eucharist in the building up of this people. It is significant that these patristic inspirations are expressed in the terminology of foreign patristics itself: the Church as the mystical Body of Christ, not the Body of Christ.<sup>47</sup> This tendency to use patristic content by the Council using later concepts is also evident in the quotation of Ignatius of Antioch (LG 13, footnote 11). The Council refers to it in the context of the primacy of the Holy See, even though the term *primacy* is alien to this author. Irenaeus (LG 13:10), on the other hand, helped the Constitution to appreciate the desire of the people of God to unite all men and women with Christ the Head in the Holy Spirit in the aspect of the universality of the Church. In this way, the pre-conciliar understanding of unification as merely an admission to the Catholic Church or a return to it of separated brothers and sisters was overcome. An example of the associative dependence of only the text of the Constitutions on the content cited in the notes is the passage from Eusebius of Caesarea (LG 16:20), from which the LG took only the title of his work. Cyril of Jerusalem (LG 11, footnote 5) speaks of the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to the sacrament of baptism, and the Constitution on Confirmation. The Constitution treated the words of John Chrysostom (LG 13:9), which refer to the relationship between the members of the Church's organism, in a different way. He quotes them in the text itself, but only in a footnote, which from a methodological point of view should be considered the most correct way of using patristic sources.

Patristics enriched the Council's vision of the nature of the Church. The dogmatic Constitution on the Church reinterpreted Greek patristic ecclesiology. The *Lumen Gentium* treats patristics as a source to which it returns, although from a methodological point of view the Constitution refers to patristics

<sup>47</sup> It's about *Didache* 11, 11.

in a differentiated way. It should be added, however, that given the teaching of the entire *Lumen Gentium* (on the nature of the Church, on the servile character of the priesthood in its three degrees, on the sanctity of the individual states in the Church, on the role of the Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and the Church), the least patristic inspiration can be felt precisely in relation to the nature of the Church as a mystery and of the people of God<sup>4849</sup>.

### Summary

The nature of the Church was expressed in Dogmatic Constitution on the Church “Lumen gentium” by numerous pictures and new expressions. They refer to the Bible and patristics. It is necessary to place special attention on two expressions. These are: the mystery of the Church and the new people of God. The Second Vatican Council used these expressions to name two of titles of chapters of *Lumen gentium*.

In this article, the speeches of the Greek Fathers of the Church are detailed analysed. The Council document refers to them in glosses only. 8 numbers – 4 in each chapter – contain references to Greek patristics. Totally, in 12 glosses to chapter I and II the Constitution refers to 10 Greek Fathers of the Church and to the anonymous patristic text of *Didache*. In the final part of this work the development of the patristic period was summarized in a chronological aspect. It began with *Didache*, then Irenaeus and John Chrysostom, and finally John of Damascus. In comparison to the whole Constitution with reference to the nature of the Church (as the mystery and new people of God) there is very little patristic inspiration.

In this article, speeches of the Fathers of the Church were not only analysed, but also compared to council texts. Thanks to this, we see it as a short anthology of patristic ideas.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. T. Gogolewski, art. cit., 97f.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. P. Jeliński, op. cit., 2 (on Chapter VIII of the Constitutions), 73 (on the other seven chapters of the LG).