

RETRIEVING THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CORE OF JOSEPH RATZINGER'S COMMUNIO ECCLESIOLOGY¹

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INTRODUCTION: THE CHRISTOLOGICAL PRINCIPIUM

In his benchmark tome on Joseph Ratzinger's ecclesiology, Maximilian Heim states that 'the real problem of the present day, according to Ratzinger, is not an ecclesiological but a christological crisis'.² Ratzinger himself stipulates: 'Christology must remain the centre of the teaching about the Church'.³ Now, I want to ask a question that is, *prima facie*, not directly related to the previous two quotations concerning Christology: is Ratzinger's ecclesiology a *communio* ecclesiology?⁴ I think it is but, for reasons different than the ones many theologians would submit. Many, I think, would posit a sacramental ground – the Eucharist – as the reason for which Ratzinger's ecclesiology falls under the theological *genus* of 'communio ecclesiology'.⁵ This reason is not incorrect since the Eucharist makes or builds the Church.⁶ However, what is often overlooked or treated tangentially in such answers and in many accounts of *communio* ecclesiology is the 'high' onto-Christological⁷ dimension 'from above',⁸ which by necessity precedes and engenders the tangible eucharistic body of Christ *hic et nunc* and the visible *communio ecclesiae*. What is often missing or diminished is, in a word, the person of Christ – the incarnate Son or the Logos made flesh – as the *principium quod* of *communio*.

If the Church is an intimate communion with Christ, which grows from the sacramental giving and gift of his body in the Eucharist through which we become one body or communion with and in him, then, logically speaking, Christ's identity – his person – would have to be distinguished by communion. In other words, one cannot give or

enact what one does not already have or what one is not; or, to recall the medieval-scholastic axiom: *agere sequitur esse* – actions flow from being. To recast the axiom, Christ's action of eucharistic self-giving and his engendering of the Church as communion flow from and are undergirded by his *being* communion. Christ is communion *in se*. As such, there is a divine and theological communion already behind and operative in Christ's eucharistic self-giving that subsequently incarnates visible ecclesial communion. Ratzinger spells out this theological *a priori* as follows:

Trinitarian faith and faith in the incarnation guide the idea of communion ... *Communio* must first be understood theologically. Only then can one draw implications for a sacramental notion of *communio*, and only after that for an ecclesiological notion.⁹

Hence, the burden of my paper will be to distil from Ratzinger's writings the precise nature of this theological *principium*, namely the pre-existing Christological communion as found in the incarnation.¹⁰ In doing so, I will show that – to go back to the original question – Ratzinger's ecclesiology is indeed a *communio* ecclesiology, but it is so by virtue of its Christological *principium* or core and not (at least not originally) by any sacramental-ecclesial notion. In brief, I aim to retrieve and clarify the Christological core of Ratzinger's *communio* ecclesiology.¹¹

THE INCARNATION: THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNIO

In the concluding section of the first part of his essay 'Communion: Eucharist – Fellowship – Mission', Ratzinger maintains that, in contrast to the repudiation of the possibility of communion between God and man in the Old Testament and the opposite striving for mystical union between the divine and the human in ancient Greek philosophy,¹² something entirely different confronts us with the Christian *kerygma*:

In the incarnation of the eternal Word there comes about that communion between God and the being of man, his creature, which had hitherto seemed impossible to reconcile with the transcendence of the one God ... Yet in Jesus occurs the new event, the one God entering into concrete communion with men by incarnating himself in human nature. Divine and human

intermingle – 'without mixing and undivided' – in the Person of Jesus Christ ... The incarnation is in fact the new synthesis that has been brought about by God himself.¹³

According to Ratzinger, this new idea of communion as grounded in the incarnation 'is not the byproduct of a new synthesis of thought; rather, it is the fruit of a new reality that was not previously there'.¹⁴ Christianity proposes a breakthrough in the form of a historical event, a person: Jesus Christ. He is the incarnate God-man, the person within whom, as Ratzinger says in the above passage, the '(d)ivine and human intermingle'. By virtue of this metaphysical breakthrough, God enters into 'concrete communion with men' for the first time in history. Thus, the infinite gulf that had hitherto separated the divine from the human, eternity from time, and the universal from the particular has been not only breached by the Christ-event, but in fact Christ's unique personhood has conjoined these once diametrically opposite and dialectically opposing dimensions. Herein lies the unprecedented newness of the Christian concept of communion and thus, says Ratzinger, 'the essence of Christianity'.¹⁵

EUCCHARIST, CHRISTOLOGY, ECCLESIOLOGY: THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CORE

Since Ratzinger maintains in the end of part one of his essay ('Communion: Eucharist – Fellowship – Mission') that the unique identity of Christian communion is rooted in the incarnation, in the beginning of part two of the same essay he concludes that 'we are now in a position to say that its source (communion's source) lies in Christology: the incarnate Son is the "communion" between God and men.'¹⁶ To recapitulate Ratzinger's line of logic thus far: the uniqueness of Christian communion lies in the incarnation and therefore in Christology since Christology is the study of the incarnation, of the incarnate Christ who is – *in se* – the communion between God and man.

The title of part two of Ratzinger's essay not only underscores this centrality of Christology, but in addition it highlights Christology's relation to the Eucharist and ecclesiology; the title reads: 'Eucharist, Christology, Ecclesiology: The Christological Core.'¹⁷ In this tripartite division of the title's first half, it is not accidental that Ratzinger

posits Christology in between the Eucharist and ecclesiology and that he then follows up with 'The Christological Core' as the title's second half. He does so in order to stress that Christology – the study of the incarnate Christ – is the foundational core mediating the passage from the Eucharist to the Church and vice versa. In fact, shortly after commencing his essay's second part with this triptych of a title, Ratzinger expands his thought on the middle panel, 'The Christological Core':

Now we must take a second step and define even more clearly the christological foundation (for example, 'The Christological Core') of Christian existence. Thus we shall draw closer to both the core of eucharistic spirituality and the core of a spirituality of the Church ... If we are to grasp the spiritual content of the Eucharist, therefore, we must understand the spiritual tension which marks the God-man (Christ): only in the context of a spiritual Christology will the spirituality of the sacrament (the Eucharist) reveal itself to us.¹⁸

Yes, as we often hear, and not incorrectly, the Eucharist makes the Church and the Church in turn makes the Eucharist.¹⁹ Here, however, Ratzinger stresses the point that the foundation or core of both the Eucharist and the Church is Christ, a point that, despite or because it is so obvious, is often overlooked in the regnant Church-fixed theological discourse of the post-conciliar epoch. To put the hierarchy of truths in order here, we can say this: the Eucharist makes the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist, but Christ makes both the Eucharist and the Church while neither of them makes him. In sum, without penetrating the mystery of 'the spiritual tension which marks the God-man', without probing and excavating the core of the incarnate One, we will never fully understand and properly partake in the mystery and spirituality of the Eucharist and the Church.

THE INCARNATION:

THE COMMUNION OF DIVINITY AND HUMANITY IN CHRIST

To bring into full relief 'the spiritual tension of the divine man',²⁰ or what he calls 'a spiritual Christology',²¹ Ratzinger examines the 'high' onto-Christology 'from above'²² of the Third Council of Constantinople (681).²³ More specifically, he focuses on how Constantinople III understood the spiritual tension between and the

mode of operation of the human and divine wills within the incarnate Christ vis-à-vis communion:

The Council's response ran as follows: The ontological *union* of two wills that remain independent within the unity of the person means, on the level of daily life, *communion* (κοινωνία) of the two wills. With this interpretation of the union as communion, the Council was devising an ontology of freedom. The two 'wills' are united in that way in which one will and another can unite: in a common assent to a shared value. To put it another way: Both of these wills are united in the assent of the human will of Christ to the divine will of the Logos. Thus on the practical level – 'existentially' – the two wills become one single will, and yet ontologically they remain two independent entities ... (I)t is a unity in the mode of communion – the unity that love creates and (that) love is. In this fashion, the Logos takes the being of the man Jesus into his own being and talks about it with his own 'I': 'I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me' (Jn 6:38).²⁴

As Ratzinger clarifies here, Constantinople III recognised that Christ's two wills 'remain independent (ontologically) within the unity of the person', but on the existential level of daily life their union is described as a '*communion* (κοινωνία) of the two wills'. The human will of Christ becomes one with the divine will of the Logos because Christ's will freely assents to and recognises the inherent value of what – or whom – the Logos assents to. There is a 'common assent to a shared value' created and motivated by love. Love is the active principle of the 'unity (of Christ's two wills) in the mode of *communion* – the unity that love creates and (that) love is'. In another essay in which he discusses Constantinople III, Ratzinger again accents the primacy of love:

The metaphysical twoness of a human and a divine will is not abrogated, but in the realm of the *person*, in the realm of freedom, the fusion of both takes place, with the result that they become *one* will, not naturally, but personally. This free unity – a form of unity created by love – is higher and more interior than a merely natural unity ... The Council illustrates this unity by citing ... the Gospel of John: 'I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me' (Jn 6:38).²⁵

In the preceding two passages I quoted, Ratzinger, following the lead of Constantinople III, cites Jn 6:38 to clarify the paradoxical metaphysical or ontological twoness and the existential oneness of Christ's human and divine wills. In this paradigmatic and enigmatic Johannine text, the 'I' of the divine Logos speaks for Jesus' will as his own will, as the personal will of the divine Logos so that, existentially, there is in effect one will. How so? Since each respective will loves and thus assents to the same and inherently higher value, for example, the Father's will, the fusion of both wills takes place into a single and pure Yes to the Father, to 'the will of him who sent me' (Jn 6:38). In other words, the existential fusion of these two wills happens by, as Ratzinger calls it, 'a common assent to a shared value'. Communion in the incarnate Christ is, at bottom, a communion of divinity and humanity, of a human will and a divine will united by one free act of love *for* something and someone higher: the will of the Father.

THE INCARNATION AS COMMUNIO:

FOUNDATION OF THE EUCHARIST AND THE CHURCH

Now that we have taken the necessary step of probing and retrieving the Christological core, namely the mystery of the incarnation as the communion of Christ's human and divine wills, or what Ratzinger calls 'the spiritual tension of the divine man',²⁶ we are ready to make the transition from a 'high' onto-Christology 'from above' into the realm of the Eucharist and the Church. Before we do so, however, it would be worthwhile to examine briefly Ratzinger's reflection on the profound ramifications that ensue from the communion of the human and divine wills in Christ.

It is in the obedience of the Son, in the uniting of both these wills in one assent to the will of the Father, that the communion between human and divine being is consummated. The 'marvellous exchange', the 'alchemy of being': this is here becoming a reality as a liberating and reconciling communication that develops into a communion between Creator and creature. It is in the pain of this exchange, and only here, that the fundamental change in man that can alone redeem him, and that changes the conditioning factors of the world, is achieved; here it is that community is born; here Church comes into being.²⁷

As we have seen before and now see again, Christ's human will is conjoined to his divine will in such a way that there is a mutual indwelling or communion of wills 'in one assent to the will of the Father'. Moreover, in Ratzinger's estimation this 'communion between human and divine being' in the incarnate Christ has profound anthropological and soteriological consequences. There is a 'marvellous exchange' or 'alchemy of being', more specifically 'a liberating and reconciling communication that develops into a communion between Creator and creature'. In other words, the communion of humanity and divinity within the incarnate Christ makes possible a further communion of universal and salvific significance in which the being of man and the being of God can join together, creature and Creator can become one, earth and heaven can unite. But how exactly can this further communion, this 'fundamental change in man that can alone redeem him' transpire?

As Ratzinger says in the above passage, it is in 'the pain of this exchange', namely when man renounces the temptation to do his own will and seeks instead to conjoin it in communion with something higher and greater than himself, that 'the fundamental change in man that can alone redeem him ... is achieved'. More specifically, when man chooses to take the way of the *imitatio Christi*, when like Christ he conforms and conjoins his human will to God's, precisely then is he brought up to his full stature and transformed. In fact, when our freedom is a genuine participation in the Son's own freedom, namely when it is lived as filial obedience to the Father, only then is the path of true freedom found, only then does our genuine liberation come fully into its own. In other words, for Ratzinger, it is only through the personal appropriation and sometimes painful reenactment of 'the obedience of the Son' that we really establish true communion between God and ourselves and thus find true communion with one other. Moreover, when 'the pain of this exchange' happens, Ratzinger says, 'here it is that community is born; here Church comes into being'. At this point, Ratzinger segues into the sacramental and ecclesiological ramifications of the communion that the incarnate Christ creates:

We had already noted that the incarnation of the Son creates communion between God and man and thus opens up the possibility of a new communion of men with another. This communion between God and man that is realised in the person

of Jesus Christ for its own part becomes communicable to others in the Paschal mystery, that is, in the death and resurrection of the Lord. The Eucharist effects our participation in the Paschal mystery and thus constitutes the Church, the body of Christ ... The inmost mystery of communion between God and man is accessible in the sacrament of the Body of the Risen One.²⁸

As we can now see more clearly from this passage, Ratzinger originally took us into the core of Christ's person, into the spiritual tension of the divine man where the communion between God and man transpires, so that once having penetrated these innermost depths of communion in Christ himself we could emerge to see the full stature of the Eucharist reveal itself and thus the mystery of the Church open up. The 'communion between God and man' in the incarnate Christ 'opens up the possibility of a new communion of men with another'. More specifically, 'this communion between God and man that is realised in the person of Jesus Christ', becomes communicable to us in our participation in the Paschal mystery as effected by the Eucharist, a participation that in turn constitutes the Church, which is our communion with one another in Christ.²⁹

By now we can see that Ratzinger has taken us on a theological journey traversing the entire spectrum of theology. More specifically, he has led us through the hierarchy of truths vis-à-vis communion:³⁰ Trinitarian communion (between the Father and the Son), Christological communion (between Christ's human will and divine will), eucharistic communion, and ecclesial communion, each of which hinges on the previous.³¹ The cardinal point we are left with is this: the Church and her sacramental life grow from within, from Christ, and never vice-versa. Thus, the *sine qua non* of any ecclesiology worth its money, particularly a *communio* ecclesiology, begins with the inmost mystery of the incarnate Christ, with a 'spiritual Christology' and only then does it work its way outward; to do otherwise is illusory. Without penetrating into the mystery of Christ's person as the incarnate Son, as the God-man, we will never understand or properly partake in either the mystery of the Eucharist or the Church. This is no exaggeration or *faux-gravitas*. I would like to conclude this section with a quotation that encapsulates the Christological core of Ratzinger's *communio* ecclesiology:

[T]he incarnated Son is the 'communion' between God and men. Being a Christian is in reality nothing other than partaking in the mystery of the incarnation, or, to use St Paul's expression: the Church, insofar as she is the Church, is the 'body of Christ' (that is, in fact, [the Church is] men's partaking of the communion between man and God, which is what the incarnation of the Word is).³²

CONCLUSION: ECCLESIOLOGIA, ECHOLALIA, AND RATZINGER'S COMMUNIO ECCLESIOLOGY FIFTY YEARS AFTER VATICAN II

Before concluding, a summary of my findings is in order. For Ratzinger, the uniqueness of the Christian concept of *communio* lies in the incarnation of Christ since he is the communion between God and man. Given this, Christology, which is the study of the incarnate Christ, becomes indispensable for opening up the core of communion that lies at the heart of the divine man. The communion of divinity and humanity in the incarnate Christ is, at bottom, the existential communion of his human will and divine will, which are united by a common assent to and one free act of love for the will of the Father. Finally, the communion between God and man in the incarnate Christ becomes communicable to us in our participation in the Paschal mystery as effected by the Eucharist, a participation that in turn constitutes the Church, which is our communion with one another in Christ. In these four sections, I have retrieved the Christological core of Joseph Ratzinger's *communio* ecclesiology.

Having said that, I want to ask this: What practical or pastoral difference can this retrieval make, if any? What relevance does it have for today, for the way the Catholic faith is understood, discussed and lived in Ireland or elsewhere, fifty years after the opening of the Vatican II? Without exaggerating the importance of what I have said, in reality what Ratzinger has said and I only systematised theologically, I would like to answer this question concerning my topic's concrete and contemporary relevance.

The term *ecclesiolalia* means 'Church chatter, prattle or babble', more specifically 'chatter about the Church'.³³ *Ecclesiolalia* identifies the incessant and insipid chatter of the mass media, opinion makers, and putative intelligentsia when discussing the Church. Since the eve of Vatican II, these extra ecclesial sectors of society have been

fixated on Church matters but they have paid little or no heed to the Church's supernatural essence and *raison d'être*, namely the Church as the divine communion founded by Christ for the salvation of souls. In addition to *ecclesiolalia*, I would add that *echolalia*, in short, 'echoed speech',³⁴ has seeped into and infected the Church herself. *Echolalia* provokes some from within the Church to speak of her as many do from without: as an institutional structure made by human hands and thus malleable according to one's subjective whims and fancy. So, for example, one hears some disgruntled individuals and certain organised groups within the Church – be it the Appeal to Disobedience of the Pfarrer-Initiative in Austria³⁵ or the Association of Catholic Priests in Ireland³⁶ – who echo verbatim and *ad nauseam* the hackneyed media chatter they hear about the need for institutional Church reform.³⁷

Having said that, the secondary goal of my paper has been to provide a practical alternative to the *ecclesiolalia* and *echolalia* that contaminate contemporary discourse about the Church both *ad extra* and *ad intra*. The immediate and concrete means is an ecclesiology that brings the Church back to her original moorings, namely a supernatural *communio* grounded in Christ. Joseph Ratzinger provides us with such a Christologically grounded ecclesiology, one that all local Churches as well as Ireland are in dire need of retrieving fifty years after Vatican II. To be sure, it was precisely Vatican II that espoused such a Christological ecclesiology. In fact, the mundane claims and inane rhetoric of *ecclesiolalia*, and of *echolalia* that repeats the former's lines like a mantra, are entirely out of step with both the letter and the spirit of Vatican II. Conciliar Christocentrism precludes a purely juridical or extrinsicist ecclesiology that reifies the Church into a merely man-made institution or worldly entity, into a self-contained reality. In fact, in the very first line of *Lumen Gentium* the Council subsumed ecclesiology under Christology and *ipso facto* under theology and not anthropology, under God and not under man. For Ratzinger, this determinative Christological prefix furnishes not only the correct hermeneutic for *Lumen Gentium* but for the entire Council.

Therefore, I will conclude with Ratzinger's analysis of the opening of Vatican II's ecclesiological constitution, an analysis that serves as a synopsis of my own essay and that also, hopefully, can provide a

potent antidote to the cancerous *ecclesiologia* and *echologia* that still corrupt contemporary Church discourse and ecclesiology fifty years after Vatican II. Ratzinger writes:

The very first sentence of the Constitution on the Church makes it clear that the Council does not regard the Church as a self-contained reality; rather, it sees her from the perspective of Christ: 'Since Christ is the light of the nations, this Council, which is gathered together in the Holy Spirit, would like to light all men with his splendour, which shines forth from the face of the Church' (LG, 1, 1). We can recognise in the background the image from patristic theology that sees in the Church the moon, which has no light of its own but gives out again the reflected light of Christ the sun. Ecclesiology appears as dependent upon Christology, as belonging to it.³⁸

Church is the presence of Christ ... (H)er first word is Christ, and not herself; she is healthy in the measure in which all her attention is directed toward him. Vatican II magnificently placed this insight at the very head of its deliberations by beginning the foundational document on the Church with the words: '*Lumen Gentium cum sit Christus*' – Because Christ is the light of the world, there is also the mirror of his glory, the Church, which reflects his radiance. *If you want to understand Vatican II correctly, you must begin again and again with this first sentence ...*³⁹

Lumen Gentium cum sit Christus ...

NOTES

- 1 I would like to extend my warmest gratitude to Bishop Dr Felix Genn, bishop of the diocese of Münster, Germany, for financially supporting my trip to the Theology Symposium. *Ad multos annos!*
- 2 Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger: Life in the Church and Living Theology: Fundamentals of Ecclesiology with Reference to Lumen Gentium*, Michael J. Miller, trans., Joseph Ratzinger fwd., San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007, 262. Rev. Prof. Dr Maximilian Heim is the Cistercian Abbot of Heiligenkreuz Monastery in Austria and one of the inaugural winners in 2010 of the prestigious Ratzinger Prize.
- 3 Joseph Ratzinger, 'The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council', *Church, Ecumenism and Politics: New Endeavors in Ecclesiology*, Michael J. Miller et al., trans., San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008, 27/Joseph Ratzinger, 'Die Ekklesiologie des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils', *Kirche, Ökumene und Politik: Neue Versuche zur Ekklesiologie*, Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1987, 26: 'die Christologie [muss] die Mitte der Lehre von der Kirche bleiben.' As I did in this footnote, I refer to Ratzinger's works in the following footnotes by first giving the English translation, followed by a slash, and then the corresponding original in German.
- 4 Though not entirely satisfactory from a linguistic perspective, as is common practice in theology today I use the English 'communion' and the Latin *communio* interchangeably. From the abundant literature on *communio* ecclesiology, one can begin with the following work by the editor in chief of the English-language edition of the journal *Communio*, David L. Schindler, *Heart of the World, Center of the Church. Communio Ecclesiology, Liberalism, and Liberation*, Grand Rapids, MI/Edinburgh: Eerdmans/T&T Clark, 1996; also see the works cited in Joseph Ratzinger, 'The Ecclesiology of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*', *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*, Stephan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür, eds, Henry Taylor, trans., San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005, 129, 131/Joseph Ratzinger, 'Die Ekklesiologie der Konstitution *Lumen Gentium*', *Weggemeinschaft des Glaubens: Kirche als Communio*, Stephan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür, eds, Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich Verlag, 2002, 112, 113. For Ratzinger's own understanding of *communio*, one can start with Joseph Ratzinger, 'Communio: A Program', *Communio. International Catholic Review*, Peter Casarella, trans., 19.3, Fall 1992: 436–39/Joseph Ratzinger, 'Communio – ein Programm', *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 21, 1992: 454–63. For secondary literature on *communio* in Ratzinger's works, see, for example, James Massa, *The Communion Theme in the Writings of Joseph Ratzinger: Unity in the Church and in the World Through Sacramental Encounter*, PhD, Diss., New York: Fordham University, 1996, and Wojciech Wójtowicz, *La Chiesa come 'Communio' nell'Ecclesiologia di Joseph Ratzinger*, Roma/Koszalin: Feniks, 2010. In addition to all these works, see the document *Communio Notio* issued on 28 May 1992 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the accompanying theological essays as found in

Congregazione per La Dottrina della Fede, *Lettera 'Communiois Notio'. Su Alcuni Aspetti della Chiesa Intesa come Comunione*, Documenti e Studi 15, Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994.

- 5 The fact that 'communio ecclesiology' and 'eucharistic ecclesiology' are often used interchangeably suggests that the Eucharist is the *conditio sine qua non* of *communio* ecclesiology and the Church. See Ratzinger, 'The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council', 17/Ratzinger, 'Die Ekklesiologie des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils', 17. On eucharistic ecclesiology, see Paul McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995.
- 6 On this point, see Avery Dulles, S.J., 'Reflections on *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*', *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English, 30th July 2003, 3, and also, Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizoulas in Dialogue*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993. The phrase, 'the Eucharist makes the Church', can be found in its nascent form in Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 22, 17, PL, 41, 779. The phrase itself was coined by Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: L'Eucharistie et l'Eglise au Moyen Âge. Étude Historique*, Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1944, 103. Furthermore, the phrase has been used in recent magisterial documents; see, for example, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, with modifications from the *editio typica*, New York: Image-Doubleday, 1997, n. 1396, and also, Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia. Encyclical Letter on the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church*, Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003, nn. 21–6. Finally, the second part of the phrase 'the Eucharist makes the Church' should be kept in mind: 'the Church makes the Eucharist.'
- 7 I abbreviate 'ontological' as 'onto'. By a 'high' onto-Christology 'from above' I mean a Christology whose immediate object of inquiry is the person of Christ in his dual being: Christ *in se*.
- 8 Ratzinger points out that – because of the Trinity and the incarnation – an ecclesiology based on *communio* must be one 'from above'; see Ratzinger, 'Communio: A Program', 445–445/Ratzinger, 'Communio – ein Programm', 460–1. For an examination of the distinction between a 'high' onto-Christology 'from above' and a functional Christology 'from below', see Jean Galot SJ, 'Christology IV: Various Approaches', René Latourelle – Rino Fisichella, ed., *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, Robert Barr et al., trans., New York: Crossroad, 1994, 126–31. For an example lacking a 'high' onto-Christological dimension 'from above' in relation to *communio* ecclesiology, see Dennis M. Doyle, *Communio Ecclesiology. Vision and Versions*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000. Despite the fact that it is thin on this 'high' onto-Christological dimension 'from above', Doyle's book stands second to none on *communio* ecclesiology from a historical perspective. For a study that sees this 'high' onto-Christological dimension 'from above' as integral to *communio* ecclesiology, and thus remains faithful to the spirit and letter of Vatican II, see David L. Schindler, *Heart of the World, Center of the Church*, pp. 7–31. Finally, although Ratzinger often works out of a

'high' Christology from above, like Aquinas his theological ken is wide enough, and thus truly catholic that he also possesses a well-developed 'functional' Christology 'from below'. See, for example, both volumes of his *Jesus of Nazareth*, especially his own comments on the distinction between Christology 'from above' and 'from below' as applied to his *Jesus of Nazareth*, which can be found in Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: Part Two: Holy Week. From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection*, Vatican Secretariat of State, trans., London: Catholic Truth Society/Ignatius Press, 2011, xv–xvi/Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus von Nazareth. Zweiter Teil: Vom Einzug in Jerusalem bis zur Auferstehung*, Freiburg: Herder, 2011, 12–13.

- 9 Ratzinger, 'Communio: A Program', 444, 446/Ratzinger, 'Communio – ein Programm', 460–1: 'Der trinitarische Glaube und der Glaube an die Menschwerdung führen den Gedanken der Gottesgemeinschaft ... Communio ist zunächst ein theologischer, dann aber auch weitgehend ein sakramentaler und erst so auch ein ekklesiologischer Begriff.'
- 10 In this essay, I focus on Ratzinger's concept of *communio* from a Christological perspective and choose not to develop the Trinitarian dimension, though in the end I will touch on the relation between the Father and the Son. For more on the Trinitarian and pneumatological dimensions of *communio*, see, for example, Joseph Ratzinger, 'The Holy Spirit as Communion. On the Relationship Between Pneumatology and Spirituality in the Writings of Augustine', *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 38–59/Joseph Ratzinger, 'Der Heilige Geist als Communio. Pneumatologie und Spiritualität bei Augustinus', *Weggemeinschaft des Glaubens*, 34–52. For a *communio* theology in a Trinitarian key, see Thomas J. Norris, *The Trinity: Life of God, Hope for Humanity: Towards a Theology of Communion*, David C. Tracy, fwd., Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2009.
- 11 To this end, I will be relying on two essays by Ratzinger, the first of which makes a concerted effort to develop the Christological foundation of *communio* ecclesiology. The first essay is Joseph Ratzinger, 'Communio: Eucharist – Fellowship – Mission', *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 60–89/Joseph Ratzinger, 'Communio: Eucharistie – Gemeinschaft – Sendung', *Weggemeinschaft des Glaubens*, 53–78. The second essay is Joseph Ratzinger, 'Taking Bearings in Christology', *Behold the Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology*, Graham Harrison, trans., San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986, 13–46/Joseph Ratzinger, 'Christologische Orientierungspunkte', *Schauen auf den Durchbohrten: Versuche zu einer spirituellen Christologie*, Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1984, 13–40.
- 12 Ratzinger, 'Communio: Eucharist – Fellowship – Mission', 73–77/Ratzinger, 'Communio: Eucharistie – Gemeinschaft – Sendung', 64–7.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 76/*Ibid.*, 67: 'In der Fleischwerdung des ewigen Wortes vollzieht sich jene Kommunion zwischen Gott und dem Sein des Menschen, seiner Kreatur, die vorher mit der Transzendenz des einzigen Gottes unvereinbar schien ... In Jesus aber vollzieht sich das neue Ereignis, daß [sic] der einzige Gott real in Kommunion mit den Menschen tritt, indem er sich in der menschlichen

Natur inkarniert. Göttliche und menschliche Natur durchdringen sich – "unvermischt und ungetrennt" – in der Person Jesu Christi.'

- 14 Ibid., 75–6/Ibid., 66: 'ist nun nicht Resultat einer neuen Synthese des Denkens, sondern Frucht einer neuen, vorher nicht gegebenen Realität.'
- 15 Ibid., 77/Ibid., 67: 'das Wesen des Christentums.'
- 16 For reasons of readability, here and only in the remaining citations of this second section of my essay, I use the Graham Harrison translation of Ratzinger's essay, 'Communion: Eucharist – Fellowship – Mission', found in Ratzinger, *Behold: the Pierced One*, 88, italics are mine / Ratzinger, *Schauen auf den Durchbohrten*, 74: 'Wir können jetzt feststellen, daß, (sic) ihr Quellgrund in der Christologie zu suchen ist: Der fleischgewordene Sohn ist die 'Kommunion' zwischen Gott und den Menschen.' For the citations of Ratzinger's essay, 'Communion: Eucharist – Fellowship – Mission' in the remaining sections of my essay, I revert to the Henry Taylor translation I originally began with.
- 17 Ibid., trans. Harrison, 88/Ibid., 74.
- 18 Ibid., 90/Ibid., 76–7: 'In einem zweiten Schritt müssen wir nun den christologischen Grund der christlichen Existenz noch deutlicher bestimmen, um auf diese Weise sowohl den Kern eucharistischer Spiritualität wie denjenigen einer Spiritualität der Kirche zu ertasten ... Um den geistlichen Gehalt der Eucharistie zu erfassen, müssen wir also die geistliche Spannung des Gottmenschen verstehen: Nur in einer spirituellen Christologie öffnet sich auch die Spiritualität des Sakraments.'
- 19 See note 6 above.
- 20 Ratzinger, 'Communion: Eucharist – Fellowship – Mission', Taylor, trans., 79/Ratzinger, 'Communio: Eucharistie – Gemeinschaft – Sendung', 70: 'die geistliche Spannung des Gottmenschen.'
- 21 Ibid., 79/Ibid., 70: 'einer spirituellen Christologie.'
- 22 I sometimes use the term 'high' onto-Christology 'from above' interchangeably with what Ratzinger calls 'a spiritual Christology'. The former term conveys the same thing as the latter, namely that the person of Christ in his dual being, i.e. the divine Word or Logos made flesh, the incarnate Son, the God-man, the divine man, etc., is the immediate object of inquiry. See notes 7 and 8 above.
- 23 For the pertinent pronouncements of Third Council of Constantinople, 681, see Josef Neuner SJ, Jacques Dupuis SJ, ed., *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Pronouncements of the Catholic Church*, 7th ed., New York: St Pauls (sic)/Alba House, 2001, no. 635–7. The corresponding numbers in the *Denzinger-Schönmetzer*, *DS*, anthology are n. 556–8.
- 24 Ratzinger, 'Communion: Eucharist – Fellowship – Mission', 81/Ratzinger, 'Communio: Eucharistie – Gemeinschaft – Sendung', 70: 'Die Antwort

des Konzils lautet: Die ontologische *Union* zweier selbständig bleibender Willensbegabungen in der Einheit der Person bedeutet auf der Ebene der Existenz *Kommunion*, (κοινωνία) der zwei Willen. Mit dieser Auslegung der Union als Kommunion entwirft das Konzil eine Ontologie der Freiheit. Die beiden "Willen" sind in der Weise geeint, in der Wille und Wille sich einen können: In einem gemeinsamen Ja zu einem gemeinsamen Wert. Anders ausgedrückt: Beiderlei Wille ist geeint im Ja des menschlichen Willens Christi zum göttlichen Willen des Logos. So werden konkret – "existenziell" – die beiden Willen ein einziger Wille und bleiben doch ontologisch zwei selbständige Realitäten ... Es, ist Einheit in der Weise der Kommunion – Einheit, die die Liebe schafft und ist. Auf diese Weise nimmt der Logos das Sein des Menschen Jesus in sein Eigenes auf und spricht mit seinem eigenen Ich davon: "Ich bin vom Himmel herabgekommen, nicht um meinen Willen zu tun, sondern den Willen dessen, der mich gesandt hat", Joh 6:38.'

- 25 Ratzinger, 'Taking Bearings in Christology', 39/Ratzinger, 'Christologische Orientierungspunkte', 34–5: 'Die metaphysische Zweieit eines menschlichen und eines göttlichen Willens wird nicht aufgehoben, aber im *personalen* Raum, im Raum der Freiheit, vollzieht sich beider Verschmelzung, so daß, *sic*, sie nicht natural, aber personal *ein* Wille werden. Diese freie Einheit – die von der Liebe geschaffene Weise der Einheit – ist höhere und innerlichere Einheit als eine bloß, *sic*, naturale Einheit ... Das Konzil erläutert diese Einheit mit ... dem, Johannesevangelium ... 'Ich bin vom Himmel herabgestiegen, nicht um meinen Willen zu tun, sondern den des Vaters, der mich gesandt hat', Joh 6:38.'
- 26 Ratzinger, 'Communion: Eucharist – Fellowship – Mission', 79/Ratzinger, 'Communio: Eucharistie – Gemeinschaft – Sendung', 70: 'die geistliche Spannung des Gottmenschen.'
- 27 Ibid., 81–2/Ibid., 72: 'Im Gehorsam des Sohnes, in der Einswerdung von beiderlei Wille zu einem einzigen Ja zum Willen des Vaters vollzieht sich die Kommunion zwischen menschlichem und göttlichem Sein. Der 'wunderbare Tausch', die 'Alchemie des Seins' – hier verwirklicht sie sich als befreiende und versöhnende Kommunikation, die zu Kommunion zwischen Schöpfer und Geschöpf wird. In dem Schmerz dieses Tausches, und nur hier, vollzieht sich die grundlegende und allein erlösende Veränderung des Menschen, die die Bedingungen der Welt verändert; hier wird Gemeinschaft geboren, hier entsteht Kirche.'
- 28 Ibid., 82–3/Ibid., 72–3: 'Wir hatten bisher festgestellt: Die Fleischwerdung des Sohnes schafft die Kommunion zwischen Gott und Mensch und eröffnet so auch die Möglichkeit einer neuen Kommunion der Menschen untereinander. Diese Kommunion zwischen Gott und Mensch, die in der Person Jesu Christi verwirklicht ist, wird nun ihrerseits kommunikal im Ostergeheimnis, d.h. in Tod und Auferstehung des Herrn. Die Eucharistie ist unsere Beteiligung am Ostergeheimnis und so konstituiert sie die Kirche, den Leib Christi ... Das innerste Geheimnis der Kommunion zwischen Gott

und Mensch ist zugänglich im Sakrament des Leibes des Auferstandenen ... Die Kirche, die vom Sakrament des Leibes Christi her gebaut wird, muß [sic] auch ihrerseits ein Leib sein, und zwar ein einziger Leib in Entsprechung zur Einzigkeit Jesu Christi.

- 29 Although the communion between God and man as realised in the incarnate Christ becomes communicable to us in our participation in the Paschal Mystery as effected by the Eucharist, our participation in this communion does not oppose or minimise our participation in the communion spoken of earlier in this section, namely our communion with Christ when we imitate him by conjoining our will in communion with God's. In fact, the Eucharist is the food that gives man the strength to imitate the incarnate Christ and do God's will.
- 30 Though not necessarily in the order I give here.
- 31 As I mentioned in the beginning of my essay, I began with and focused on the Christological core of communion and only later touched on the Trinitarian dimension, which in reality precedes the Christological. However, I believe – and Ratzinger's line of thought bears this point out – that one can take Christ as the methodological starting point without erring theologically since speaking of Christ involves by necessity an, at least, implicit acknowledgement that the Trinity is prior.
- 32 Ratzinger, 'Communion: Eucharist – Fellowship – Mission', 77/Ratzinger, 'Communio: Eucharistie – Gemeinschaft – Sendung', 68: 'Der fleischgewordene Sohn ist die "Kommunion" zwischen Gott und den Menschen. Christsein ist in Wahrheit nichts anderes als Beteiligung am Geheimnis der Inkarnation, oder mit einer Formel des hl. Paulus: die Kirche, sofern und soweit sie Kirche ist, ist "Leib Christi", d.h. eben Beteiligung von Menschen an der Kommunion zwischen Mensch und Gott, die die Fleischwerdung des Wortes ist.'
- 33 To my knowledge *ecclesioliá* was coined by the Emeritus Archbishop of Bologna, Giacomo Cardinale Biffi, *Memorie e digressioni di un italiano cardinale*, Siena: Cantagalli, 2007, 183. The word *ecclesioliá* has two roots, both Greek. In *koine* or New Testament Greek, *ἐκκλησία*, *ekklesia*, designates 'church'. In Ancient Greek, the substantive *λαλιά*, *laliá*, which comes from the verb *λαλέω*, *laléo*, 'to talk', generally means 'speech, talk, or conversation'. More specifically, *λαλιά*, *laliá*, can mean 'prattle, babble, or childish chatter'.
- 34 The word *echolaliá* derives from the Ancient Greek *ἠχώ*, which means 'echo' or 'to repeat', and from *λαλιά*, *laliá*, which, as I noted above, means 'childish or meaningless talk, babble, prattle, chatter, etc.'. Although *echolaliá* is a normal stage in child development as well as a speech and psychiatric disorder referring to the behaviour of uncontrollably repeating another person's spoken words, I am not using it in either of these ways. Rather, I am using it in a pejorative sense to signify adults who uncritically accept and repeat the ideas and beliefs of others.

35 See <http://www.pfarrer-initiative.at/> (accessed 1st May 2012).

36 See <http://www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie/> (accessed 1st May 2012).

- 37 Yet, interestingly enough, such individuals and groups say little or nothing of the more radical need for interior, personal reform that Christ in the Gospel demands from all of us. It is precisely this call from Christ for interior, personal reform that the truly great reformers of the Church answered in a radical way and in doing so initiated a tremendous renewal of the Church. I am referring to St Francis of Assisi, St Dominic, St Ignatius of Loyola, St Teresa of Avila, et al. This historical fact buttresses Ratzinger's fundamental, theological argument and the main point of my essay: the *communio ecclesiae*, and any renewal of it, grows from within, from Christ, and not vice-versa.
- 38 Ratzinger, 'The Ecclesiology of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*', 140/Ratzinger, 'Die Ekklesiologie der Konstitution *Lumen Gentium*', 120–1: 'Gleich der erste Satz der Kirchenkonstitution macht klar, daß [sic] das Konzil die Kirche nicht als eine geschlossene Realität in sich selber betrachtet, sondern sie von Christus her sieht: 'Da Christus das Licht der Völker ist, möchte diese im Heiligen Geist versammelte Synode alle Menschen mit seinem Lichtglanz erleuchten, der auf dem Antlitz der Kirche widerstrahlt ...' (LG, 1,1). 'Im Hintergrund erkennen wir das Bild der Vätertheologie, die in der Kirche den Mond sieht, der kein eigenes Licht aus sich selber hat, aber das Licht der Sonne Christus weitergibt. Ekklesiologie erscheint abhängig von der Christologie, ihr zugehörig.'
- 39 Ratzinger, 'The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council', 15, italics are mine/Ratzinger, 'Die Ekklesiologie des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils', 14: 'Kirche ist Gegenwart Christi ... Deshalb ist ihr erstes Wort Christus, nicht sie selbst; sie ist in dem Maß [sic] gesund, in dem alle Aufmerksamkeit auf ihn hin gerichtet ist. Das Zweite Vatikanum hat diese Einsicht großartig [sic] dadurch an die Spitze seiner Erwägungen gestellt, daß [sic] es den grundlegenden Text über die Kirche mit den Worten beginnt: *Lumen Gentium* cum sit Christus – weil Christus das Licht der Welt ist, darum gibt es den Spiegel seiner Herrlichkeit, die Kirche, die sein Leuchten weitergibt. Wenn man das Zweite Vatikanum recht verstehen will, muß [sic] man immer und immer wieder bei diesem ersten Satz beginnen ...' For more on Ratzinger's understanding of Vatican II as a Christocentric council, see the telling analysis by Aidan Nichols, *The Thought of Pope Benedict XVI. An Introduction to the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger*, new ed., London: Burns & Oates, 2007, 61–2. For the place of Christ within Ratzinger's theological oeuvre, see Emery de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI. The Christocentric Shift*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.