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**Looking to the future: the development of a new partnership
between priests and people in the Catholic Church in Scotland.**

Mary Josephine Cullen MA MTh

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

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College of Arts

University of Glasgow

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Abstract

The Second Vatican Council set out a new vision of the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people in the Roman Catholic Church within its understanding of the church as the people of God. This is an important issue for the church's self-understanding and mission; it also has practical implications for the Catholic Church in Scotland as it faces a sharp decline in vocations to the ordained priesthood, raising questions about the relative roles of priests and lay people. Dioceses are developing plans for closing and merging parishes based on projected numbers of priests, in an effort to maintain traditional patterns of church life. This study explored a different approach, based on the development of a partnership between ordained and lay people which reflects the theology of Vatican II.

To investigate this possibility, the study drew on research carried out in two Scottish dioceses between 1998 and 2000. It found evidence that a new partnership between priests and people was developing in some parish communities, but it also found that diocesan commitments to collaborative working between ordained and lay were not reflected in the church's practice and structures. These tensions between commitment and practice, which undermined efforts to create a new partnership, were analysed with the help of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, a strategy for ecumenical engagement which addresses tensions in the church's performance of its vocation by a critical appraisal of its own tradition and openness to the insights of others. By bringing together the experience of those who took part in the archived research with the theology of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, the elements of a new ecclesial partnership between ordained and lay were identified. They open up the possibility of a different kind of future for the Catholic Church in Scotland.

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Introduction

When we understand Vatican II in the light of all that its documents say and imply, the understanding of the lay role in the Church is completely revolutionised... The laity and clergy together... come to be understood as a missionary body in history, called into dialogue with the world that is not the Church; at the same time, this world, in virtue of its being loved by God, exists in relation to the Church, the People of God.¹

(i) Context

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) set out a new vision of the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people in the Roman Catholic Church within its understanding of the church as the people of God. However, as we shall see, the Council did not provide a systematic ecclesiology, and there is debate within the church about the way in which the Council's vision and the theological elements it set out should be developed and given practical expression. This thesis draws on archived research undertaken in Scotland between 1998 and 2000 to explore the nature of the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people in the Scottish Catholic Church, and to consider how a new partnership might be developed between them which builds on the teaching of Vatican II and meets the needs of a changing church in a changing world.

This is a critical question for the church's self-understanding and mission. It is also a practical question as the church faces continued decline in membership and vocations to the ordained priesthood, raising questions about the relative roles and responsibilities of clergy and laity. The estimated Catholic population

¹ Lakeland, P. 'The Laity' in Bulman R.G. and Parrella F.J. (eds) *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006; Oxford Scholarship Online September 2006 Chapter 11 pp. 1-15 p. 12 DOI: 10.1093/0195178068.003.0011.

in Scotland peaked in 1964 and declined by 14 percent in the succeeding 24 years; in the same period the number of diocesan priests fell by over a third.² Bishops in the Scottish research were committed to collaborative working between ordained and lay, but there were many tensions between their commitment and the way it was reflected in the church's structure and habits.

(ii) Significance of this study

This thesis represents the first detailed study of the Scottish data which was recorded as part of a UK wide research project in 1998-2000. It is based on over 80 conversations with lay people, priests and bishops in two Scottish dioceses, and allows us to hear what Catholics in Scotland were saying about their experience of church and the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay at a time when traditional patterns of parish life were becoming increasingly unsustainable. Their voices represent a significant theological resource: they provide a 'thick description' of what was happening within the church community at a particular point in time, and reflect the experience of people who are seldom heard as well as those in authority. Their insights come from engagement and participation, and, in the words of Nicholas Healy, they focus theological attention on the church's 'confused and sometimes sinful daily life'.³ The data gathered in Scotland provides a rich account of the way in which the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay was constituted, the factors which sustain it, the tensions which surround it, and the promise it holds for the church. In this way it can contribute to our understanding of a key issue for the church and its future in Scotland.⁴

² Timms N. (ed.) *Diocesan Dispositions and Parish Voices in the Roman Catholic Church*. London: SPCK 2001 pp.29, 32. The estimated number of Roman Catholic adults in Scotland in 1998 was 0.537 million, which represented 13 percent of the adult population.

³ Healy, N. M. *Church, World and the Christian Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000. pp. 154-155

⁴ For a discussion of qualitative social research as a source for theological reflection see Hahnenberg, E. P. 'Learning from Experience: Attention to Anomalies in a Theology of Ministry' in Gaillardetz, R. R. and Hahnenberg, E. P. (eds.) *A church with Open Doors: Catholic Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium*. Collegeville Minnesota: Liturgical Press 2015, 159-180.

(iii) *Outline of the thesis*

The possibility of a new partnership between ordained and lay is opened up by bringing together the experience of those who took part in the archived research with the theological insights of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, a strategy for ecumenical engagement which builds on the teaching of Vatican II and emphasises the way in which churches can deepen their own understanding and practice by openness to the gifts of other traditions. Its understanding of truth as something to be performed as well as proclaimed provides a lens through which to view tensions between the church's commitment to collaborative working and its practice, and a strategy for addressing them.

The thesis begins by identifying tensions between ordained and lay which emerge from the archived conversations in Scotland. Chapters two, three and four explore the roots of these tensions, in order to gain a better understanding of their causes and complicating factors. Chapter five provides an account of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, and brings voices from the archived research into conversation with its theological and philosophical roots. From this conversation the elements of a new ecclesial partnership between ordained and lay are drawn out.

(iv) *Findings*

The thesis finds that a new partnership between ordained and lay people in the Scottish Catholic Church, which reflects the vision of Vatican II, can be developed by bringing together the theological insights of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, the experience of the Catholic community reflected in the archived research of 1998-2000, and the wisdom of priests and people who were building a new partnership in their parish communities.

This finding takes on a new significance in the light of continued institutional decline since the research was undertaken, and continued efforts by church leadership to shore up the institution and maintain traditional patterns of church life.

The thesis also identifies further research which could be taken to test and develop the new partnership between priests and people which is emerging within the church in Scotland. This includes research into the extent to which the partnership has already developed; into the way in which other traditions are responding to institutional decline; into the provision and focus of adult faith education within the churches in Scotland; and into the way in which the structures and practices of other traditions embed the contribution of lay people to the development of the church's life and priorities.

The thesis ends with a summary of its findings and an assessment of prospects for change in the pontificate of Pope Francis.

Chapter one: Priests and people in the Catholic Church in Scotland 1998-2000.

'The lack of priests forces change in how priests work and how laity respond... There is a need for laity to change and assume practical responsibilities'.
Senior priest in Scotland, 1998-2000.

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will draw on research carried out between 1998 and 2000 to explore the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people in the Scottish Catholic Church. The chapter begins by describing the aims, objectives and methodology of the historical research, followed by the aims, objectives and methodology of this study and the way it gathers and makes use of data from the historical research. It then identifies the people who took part in the research in Scotland and the issues they raise in relation to the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay. The issues cluster around four themes: the Scottish Church's response to the Second Vatican Council; the changing role of priests in the light of the Council and declining vocations to the ordained priesthood; the struggle to develop a new role for lay people; and changing patterns of belonging and believing within the Catholic community. After each theme the issues which arise, their implications, and the tensions they uncover are summarised.

1.2 Aims, objectives and methodology of the historical research

The historical research was carried out by an interdisciplinary group of academics and practitioners who came together in 1996 to examine contemporary dimensions of governance and authority in the Roman Catholic Church in Great Britain. To address the wide ranging and complex issues involved, the group, which was based at the Queen's Educational Foundation for

Theological Education in Birmingham, undertook a range of studies as part of the Queen's Authority and Governance Project.¹

One of the studies was carried out between 1998 and 2000. It examined the experience of Catholics at parish and diocesan level across Great Britain in relation to the church's human and material resources, the place of leadership in the church and its organisational structures. A series of conversations was held with parishioners, priests and senior diocesan officials, including Ordinaries (bishops), in six dioceses in Scotland, England and Wales. A total of 100 senior diocesan personnel, including bishops, and 350 parish respondents, including 12 parish clergy, took part. Written and audiotaped records of their conversations are archived at the University of Roehampton, London, as part of the Queen's Foundation Authority and Governance (A&G) Archive.²

On a range of indicators, including the size of the Catholic population, Mass attendance, baptisms, marriages, numbers of priests and churches, the four English and two Scottish dioceses accounted for between one-fifth and one-quarter of British Catholics.³ In each of the dioceses, two parishes were selected for study at local level. Parish priests were asked to identify a range of people to take part in the research, from active parishioners to occasional churchgoers, and they in turn were asked to identify others, in a bid to ensure a cross section of participants. The study acknowledges that no claim can be made about the representative nature of the sample. Although the age of most respondents is not recorded, it is clear from the audio taped conversations that they include parents of young children, middle aged and elderly people. The under-25s are under-represented and there is no data from those who do not attend Mass or who are excluded from the sacraments.⁴ However, the study suggests that the results of so many carefully conducted conversations with

¹ The work of the Queen's Working Party on Authority and Governance in the Roman Catholic Church is described in detail in *Diocesan Dispositions and Parish Voices* op. cit. pp. 7-10 from which the description that follows is taken.

² The archive is entitled 'The Roman Catholic Church in Great Britain 1998-2002: The Queen's Foundation Authority and Governance Archive'.

³ *Diocesan Dispositions and Parish Voices* op. cit. p. 64.

⁴ *Diocesan Disposition and Parish Voices* op. cit. p. 182.

informed respondents cannot be viewed as simply another poll or reactive opinion.⁵

Conversation was the method chosen for gathering data for the study carried out in parishes and dioceses between 1998 and 2000. Researchers did not use a pre formulated questionnaire, but held conversations around topics judged to be relevant to issues of authority and governance. The conversational approach taken by the study embraces the view that:

It is not the case that we possess rigorously formulated ‘belief systems’, which stamp out our thoughts and reactions in a fully determinable way... our attitudes represent guidelines, or commitments to advocacy, but there will always be some uncertainty about the full potentialities of these guidelines. By the same token we cannot be absolutely precise about the details of the advocacy which might actually be presented in the new rhetorical situations, which forever are posing dilemmas.⁶

A&G working party chairman Noel Timms points out that conversation also refers to what goes on ‘both in public and within ourselves’.⁷ It is understood as

the meeting place of various modes of imagining; and in this conversation there is, therefore, no voice without an idiom of its own: the voices are not divergences from some ideal, non-idiomatic way of speaking, they diverge only from one another. Consequently, to specify the idiom of one is to discern how it is distinguished from, and how it is related to, the others.⁸

Conversation also depends on ‘attention to listening and the practice of engagement with respect’.⁹ Respectful listening and engagement encouraged people to speak about their experience and understanding of faith and the church, and is reflected in the rich quality of many of the archived conversations

⁵ *Diocesan Dispositions and Parish Voices* op. cit. p. 10.

⁶ Billig, M. *Arguing and Thinking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996 p. 284.

⁷ Oakeshott, M. *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*. London: Methuen 1962 p. 202 quoted in *Diocesan Dispositions and Parish Voices* op. cit. p. 9.

⁸ *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* op. cit. p. 206.

⁹ *Diocesan Dispositions and Parish Voices* op. cit. p. 9.

and the illuminating, often moving insights which emerge. Their voices weave together a rich tapestry from different perspectives as they come to terms with the disappearing church of their childhood and strive to articulate their understanding of faith and identity in a fast changing world.

Conversations explored models of church in operation and any specific vision or sense of mission. In parishes they were conducted around the issue of the church's authority, how people would describe their parish community, the impact of any changes in the local church or community, and relationships with the wider church. In conversations with bishops and diocesan officials, both ordained and lay, views were sought about the bishops' vision and the extent to which dioceses were focussed more on serving a shrinking, ageing group of churchgoers than the wider unchurched majority. At both parish and diocesan level, researchers explored leadership and the processes of decision making, and the extent of lay participation, formation and involvement.¹⁰

A central objective concerned perceptions of the extent and use of resources. At diocesan level the study explored how the bishop and key personnel endeavoured to make best use of the human and material resources available to them. Parishioners were asked to identify parish resources, how they thought decisions about resources were made, and what they thought of the process. Finally, researchers explored relationships at the level of diocesan curia, priest-parishioner, and parish-diocese.¹¹

1.3 Aims, objectives and methodology of this study

The Scottish data in the archived research was gathered in two of the country's eight Roman Catholic dioceses, which are referred to in this study as dioceses A and B to preserve the anonymity of participants. In each of the dioceses, two

¹⁰ *Diocesan Dispositions and Parish Voices* op. cit. p. 9.

¹¹ *Diocesan Dispositions and Parish Voices* op. cit. p. 10.

parishes were selected for study; they cover urban and rural settings, and are predominantly working class.

A total of 44 conversations, most of them lasting an hour or more, were recorded with parishioners in Scotland, including three conversations with married couples.¹² Twenty-three women and 24 men took part. At diocesan level, 24 conversations were held with bishops and senior diocesan personnel, lay and ordained in diocese A; and 17 in diocese B.¹³ A total of 23 priests, 13 lay women, one religious sister and four lay men took part, as well as their bishops.

The data from Scotland consists of written and audio material. I gathered findings for this study by transcribing all the audiotaped conversations with parishioners in Scotland, and studying them alongside transcripts of conversations with Scottish bishops, senior priests and lay officials. The written material includes reports on parishes, records of diocesan plans and finances, and papers commissioned by the research team, including research into the attitude of priests in the UK to issues of authority and governance. I did not use any of the supporting material, but chose instead to base my study on the primary evidence of conversations recorded in Scottish parishes and dioceses.

Once I had gathered the data, I looked for themes which emerged from it. There was concern about the impact of institutional decline on the church, especially the steady fall in the number of candidates for the ordained priesthood and the implications this had for the relative roles of clergy and laity; concern about the changes which were set in train by the Second Vatican Council and how they were being implemented in Scotland; and concern about changing patterns of belief and practice. At the heart of many conversations about these issues was the complex ecclesial relationship between ordained and

¹² The audio tapes, which I have transcribed, are archived in two boxes dated 1998-2002, one consisting of 42 audio tapes, and a second box with five audio tapes. The sound quality of six of the tapes is very poor and a further four are difficult to hear in parts.

¹³ The conversations from diocese A are archived in file no 6. Of the Queen's Foundation A&G Archive dated 1998-2002, and the conversations from diocese B are in file no. 10.

lay. How will it be affected by change and what role should priests and people play in shaping a new church? Tensions emerged between diocesan commitments to collaboration between ordained and lay as the basis for a new way of working, and the reality many people experienced. This provided a focus for my research question: how to develop a partnership between ordained and lay which builds on the theology of Vatican II and responds to the needs of a changing church in a changing world. In providing data to address this question, the Scottish research contributes to our understanding of a key issue facing the church today.

1.3.1 Voices and themes

Four groups of voices emerge from the Scottish conversations which build up a picture of the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay. The first voices are those of parishioners in their local communities, who speak principally about their parish experience. The second group of voices are those of lay diocesan personnel, who speak sometimes from their experience as parishioners and sometimes from the perspective of the diocese, which gives them an overview of parish life and church governance. The third group of voices are those of senior priests, who hold positions within the dioceses but are also parish priests; they often speak of their parish experience. The fourth voices are those of the Ordinaries of the dioceses.

The issues which arise from their conversations in relation to the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay can be grouped under four thematic headings: the church's response to the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council; the changing role of clergy; the struggle to develop a new role for lay people; and changing patterns of believing and belonging within the Catholic community.

Throughout the conversations, the relationship between priests and people, and that of both groups to their bishops, is marked by affection, loyalty and common concern for the church. However, there is also evidence of anger and frustration. Tensions come to the surface as people respond in different ways to the challenges facing the church, and contradictions emerge between what the church says and what it does. The significance of these tensions will be explored in subsequent chapters. In this chapter, I will let the voices speak about each theme in turn, and at the end of each section I will summarise the issues that arise and their implications for the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay.

1.4 Theme one: responding to the Second Vatican Council.

1.4.1 Diocesan commitments to collaborative working

Both bishops stated their commitment to the vision of Vatican II and the development of a new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay. They spoke of ‘collaborative ministry’ and ‘partnership’. The bishop of diocese A said the mission of the church in his diocese was to help the Catholic community live the faith and hand it on to others. At the heart of this vision was a model of church based on collaborative ministry between ordained and lay. He said:

The approach is to emphasise the different ministries within the church. When I meet with laity... I always stress the sentence from *Christifideles Laici* (Pope John Paul II’s 1988 Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and Mission of Lay People): ‘You have an exalted vocation and there are many and varied forms of ministry open to you’.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Christifideles Laici* sec. 54 refers to ‘the exalted vocation and the many forms of mission entrusted to the lay faithful’. John Paul II, *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christifideles Laici of His Holiness John Paul II on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World*: 30th December 1998, accessed November 10, 2014. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html

To help lay people prepare for their new role, his diocese promoted a course in adult education which was designed to equip lay people for ministry. A total of 48 people had completed the programme over the previous four years, and the course was continuing. In addition, priests, religious and lay people had been given study opportunities to enable them to learn about new forms of ministry, and a diocesan pastoral team had been established to engage with parishes. However, there was no overarching plan to bring these initiatives together. One lay diocesan official said: ‘There is no sign that we are getting ready for lay ministry... there’s no long term plan’.

In diocese B, the Ordinary expressed the mission of the church in his diocese in terms of the transformation of society: he spoke of an option for the poor and of ‘transforming Scotland into a more loving society’. He introduced a diocesan renewal plan as a way of concretising the vision of Vatican II and creating a more communitarian church. At its heart, he said, was the belief that ‘the will of God is determined not solely by the bishop but by all together including the bishop’. This involved, he said, ‘co-responsibility’ and ‘partnership’ between ordained and lay, supported by faith formation that would enable the partnership to develop. He and several diocesan priests referred to two ‘models’ of church: they spoke of the partnership model as *communio* which they contrasted with a model of church they described variously as ‘hierarchical’, ‘pre-Vatican II’ or ‘authoritarian’.¹⁵ *Communio* was used in conversation among senior priests as a way of referring to the complex reality of the new model of church they were attempting to introduce across the diocese in response to the vision of Vatican II.

¹⁵ *Communio* is one of many ways in which Vatican II speaks of the church. In the first section of *Lumen Gentium*, the Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the church is described as mystery and ‘a sign and instrument... of communion with God and of unity among all’. Vatican Council II, “*Lumen Gentium*,” p. 350.

1.4.2 Conflicting understandings of church

The new vision was not shared by all the clergy. Several senior priests spoke of two models of church existing side by side. A senior priest in diocese B said: ‘Is the new model of the church up and running in the diocese? Yes and no! Yes, it’s official policy to work for *communio*. No, because there’s resistance to it’.

A senior priest in diocese A described the church as ‘caught between two models’. He said: ‘Older priests are pre Vatican II but they have to be kept on board; newer priests are freeing lay people to become more involved. [We are] moving towards a lay based church’. Another senior priest in diocese A agreed: ‘We are moving away from an authoritarian church; not that it’s no longer such - it very much is!’ A senior priest in diocese B thought that ‘the dominant model is [still] dependence on the priest’s leadership’. Another described the church in the diocese as ‘still very traditional’.

Several reasons were given for the co-existence of different models of church. One was the strength of the old model and its patterns of top down decision making and leadership, which even those committed to renewal found difficult to leave behind. A senior priest in diocese B said: ‘Despite the stated commitment to *communio*, everything is still very hierarchical. The leadership *is* the bishop’. Another added that the bishop still takes decisions and then tells people about it. ‘He is a strong leader who loves the idea of *communio*, but has to struggle with it in practice’.

A second reason was conflict over visions of the church. A senior priest in diocese A said: ‘There is no agreed vision and there is conflict between different visions... there is a variety of people in both’. Another senior priest in the same diocese spoke of a new vision ‘in small pockets’ and said there were ‘different models of church in different circumstances’.

A third reason for the existence of different models was resistance among some clergy to diocesan renewal plans, which several priests referred to as ‘an imposition’, an unwelcome addition to workloads already stretched by additional responsibilities created by decline in the number of priests.

A senior priest in diocese B summed up the situation in his diocese: he thought that plans for renewal were going well in about 10 percent of parishes, going reasonably well in over 30 percent, and not going at all in over 50 percent. This reflected three kinds of parish priest, he said: those who understood the renewal plans and were conscientious about them; those who were too busy supplying essential services to take on additional work; and a third group, who are ‘just not comfortable with this model [of church]’. He said many in this group ‘feel that the people [i.e. lay people] have nothing to tell them’.

His analysis was echoed by other priests. One senior priest said that in practice ‘[W]e are actually trying to manage two models [of church], and are managing people in two models’. He said that ‘resources are ongoing into the two models’ but thought the diocese was ‘more in model one than model two’. He said lay volunteers were coming forward to contribute to diocesan renewal, but one of his colleagues thought they were frustrated by the slow pace of change. ‘Laity are angry; they want *communio* with the diocese and with their peers... We are in a great transition and moving more slowly than we would like’.

Both Ordinaries spoke of tension in their dioceses over models of church. The bishop of diocese B said : ‘We are working simultaneously out of two models of church’. The bishop of diocese A referred to the ‘inherent conservatism’ of priests, although he believed that they were ‘more used now to handing responsibility to the laity because they realised they cannot cope with everything’.

1.4.3 Parish realities

Two thirds of senior priests, several lay diocesan personnel and a number of parishioners in both dioceses spoke of tensions between the collaborative model of church which was officially promoted in their dioceses and the reality of parish life.

Many parishioners spoke of the growing number of lay people who contributed to the life of the parish in response to changes introduced by Vatican II, from readers and musicians to members of parish groups and co-ordinating teams. One man thought the increased contribution of lay people ‘cut down the distance between clergy and laity’. Like others, he saw the growing number of lay ministers of the Eucharist as a response to the shortage of priests. He said: ‘We are narrowing the gap between lay and ordained and going back to our roots in the early church’.

However, a senior priest in diocese B thought that increased lay involvement had not fundamentally altered the culture of the church or its underlying structures of clerical decision making.

Everything is still very traditional; priests are difficult to change, mostly middle aged to older; younger clergy have their own idea of ministry. Lay involvement is really just a modified version of the present structures. Full decision making power in administration and in finance rests with the bishop. There is still the problem of the docility of lay people who look to the priest to tell them what to do.

His views were echoed by an official in diocese A who observed that clergy still took the decisions, while another added that ‘people still think that everything happens because of the parish priest’. A senior priest in diocese B said that all

the decisions at parish level ‘are still taken by the priest... laity do not have a say’.

Evidence from parishes suggests that the clerical culture of the church remained strong, despite increased lay involvement. When asked who runs the parish, most parish respondents thought that priests ran the parish with the help of groups of parishioners; but when asked who took decisions, the majority either said they did not know, or that key decisions were taken by priests. One man described volunteers and members of the parish committee as ‘working for’ the priest. Asked whether decisions were taken by the parish committee or the parish priest, he said: ‘I don’t know. But I hope if Fr x put suggestions forward they are taken seriously and they help *what he wants to do*’. (My italics).

Some priests were commended for ‘being open’, ‘good at delegating’, or approachable (‘you can speak to him about anything’); but even when the priest went to some lengths to consult people about changes in parish life, many saw decision making as his role. ‘Ultimately, clergy have the final say’.

Several parishioners distinguished between decisions about liturgy and sacraments, which they believed should be the responsibility of priests, and decisions about practical aspects of running the parish, which they thought should be the responsibility of lay people. One woman spoke of the ‘dual authority’ of priests and people. Many described the priest in terms of leadership of the parish. One man spoke of the priest as ‘leader/motivator/instigator’.

Two parishioners linked the question of the priest’s role in the parish directly to the ecclesiology of Vatican II. One man said: ‘The leadership of the community comes from the animator, who should be the parish priest.... We have moved from a model of church as a pyramid to one as a circle in which all are the

people of God, with everyone dependent on everyone else'.¹⁶ Another man in the same parish said: 'People in the parish are into Vatican II' and explained what this meant: 'It's all about people being the church and moving away from hierarchical systems'.

1.4.4 Issues of accountability

Half the senior priests and lay diocesan officials spoke of their bishops' lack of accountability and the absence of transparency in the way decisions were taken. A lay official in diocese A said:

At parish level, [decisions are taken] mostly by the parish priest. At deanery level, I don't know [who takes decisions]. At diocesan level the bishop takes the decisions... Clergy feel they have no input into the process... there is no structure or pattern as to how decisions are reached.

A senior priest in diocese B said that 'the model of church is still hierarchical... no one knows the criteria for appointments... There is a culture of obedience. We have been trained to that'. One senior priest referred to the Ordinary as 'he who must be obeyed'. Another said that the bishop's style of leadership is 'contrary to many things he has tried to put into place - a great deal depends on [the bishop's] style'. A lay official in diocese B observed that while there were systems in place for interviewing staff, in at least one instance an appointment was made by the Ordinary without any interview taking place. A senior priest said: 'It's all very hierarchical; the leadership equals the bishop... he makes the decisions'. Several senior priests said they felt they had no voice in decision making at diocesan level, despite having representation on diocesan structures. One said: 'Leadership is very narrow'.

¹⁶ See Jan Grootaers' observation that the restructuring of chapters in *Lumen Gentium*, Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, which places the chapter on the people of God before the chapter on the hierarchy 'put an end to the pyramidal vision of the church'. Grootaers, J. 'The Drama Continues Between the Acts: The Debate on the Church' in Alberigo, G. *History of Vatican II Vol II* Maryknoll NY: Orbis 1997 p. 411. English version edited by J. A. Komonchak.

A lay worker in diocese A summed up the culture of the diocese as she saw it.

Competing interests... clerical culture... fragmentation... lack of communication... secretive power symbols... no access to decision making ... good people are ground into the dust... don't ask questions, don't challenge.

A lay official in diocese B said: 'when he [the bishop] retires, the new guy will do something else'.

Lay officials in diocese A gave several examples of preparing and presenting reports for the bishop, but said they had no input into subsequent decisions. One described her experience of working on a proposal for a considerable time, then giving a presentation for which she was not thanked. She said a 'watered down version' of her proposal was taken forward, and described the whole experience as 'very demotivating'. Another gave an example of a personnel decision taken by bishops which she thought was wrong. When she raised the issue with them, the bishops' response, she said, was 'silence'. She was told: 'You've made your point'. A third commented that she was concerned about the way an important issue was being dealt with by the bishops but said there was 'no way of finding out what had happened and no way of addressing it'. She had been 'disillusioned' with the way they had dealt with the matter.¹⁷

1.4.5 Issues of communication

Almost half of all diocesan officials, lay and ordained, expressed concern about the quality of communication between dioceses and parishes. When asked if they were aware of diocesan plans, only three parishioners said yes and two thought they had some idea. The majority said they had no idea at all. A lay official in diocese B spoke with enthusiasm about the 'new model of church' which had emerged at diocesan level but said it was not getting through to parishes because of poor communication and materials that were not 'user

¹⁷ Both of these examples relate to individuals and because of the commitment to anonymity, it is not possible to give any details of the issues involved.

friendly'. She said the challenge was still to get it 'down to the grassroots'. A senior priest in diocese B stressed the need for listening and honesty about the extent to which renewal was taking root in parishes. A senior priest in diocese A described communication between the diocesan office and priests as 'very bad'. Another spoke of the need for a diocesan pastoral council in which the 'voice of the laity' would be heard and suggested that there should be mechanisms for 'cross fertilisation and sharing' of ideas. He said that at parish level 'consultation depends on the parish priest, whether he wants to set up structures that allow him to hear what needs to be looked at'.

A lay official in diocese A spoke of the lack of follow up to a previous diocesan consultation and another suggested that communication had to work both ways: people had to be able to communicate with the bishop and the bishop had to make clear to people what he thought the main issues facing the diocese were. 'We need to say to the bishop that we are not being consulted... The diocese is not getting across to the people in the parishes what it sees the issues are'.

Four officials in diocese A identified the need for a forum where people could be heard, share what is happening, and contribute to the 'emergence of diocesan priorities'. A lay official said that the bishop and his senior advisors needed to get together with lay representatives and embark on a 'serious listening exercise' to develop a shared vision and make a commitment to resourcing it with people, training and finance.

1.4.6 The power of Rome

Both bishops and several diocesan officials spoke of the power of Rome to influence diocesan initiatives. A senior priest in diocese B described his bishop as 'very much a pope's man'. A priest in diocese A referred to 'the legendary loyalty of the Scottish bishops to the Vatican'. He said the bishops were 'scared of the Vatican' and when it came to developing pastoral strategies they were

'looking over their shoulders at the Vatican' to ensure that their proposals would not provoke Roman disapproval. A lay official in diocese A said the bishop 'hesitates to do something in case Rome comes down on his head'. Another lay official referred to him as having 'a good record of standing up to Rome'.

One of the bishops spoke of tension with Rome over the training of seminarians. When asked if lay people could be trained alongside priests in seminaries to enable them to work together in the future, he said: 'Rome would not be happy... [It would be seen as] tinkering with seminaries'. A senior priest said it would put the diocese 'in conflict' with Rome.

One of the bishops spoke of 'excessive Roman interference'. He also said that 'sometimes the right wing [within the diocese] is being encouraged by Rome... How to redress that? It can be undermining'. He gave an example of a Scottish bishop who received a reprimand from Rome following a proposal he had made with the support of his fellow bishops. He said the reprimand had been hurtful and added: 'I mean, none of us is way out'.

1.4.7 Summary of findings and their implications

The archival material provides evidence of a number of underlying tensions within the Scottish dioceses over their response to Vatican II which reflect varied understandings of the Council, the nature and mission of the church, and the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people.

- Both bishops speak of their commitment to a new vision of church inspired by the ecclesiology of Vatican II, which emphasised co-responsibility and collaborative working between ordained and lay. However, one bishop had no overall plan to introduce a new model of church in the diocese and the other, while committed to a diocesan renewal plan, struggled to free

himself from traditional patterns of top down decision making. The gap between commitment and practice undermined attempts to introduce new ways of working (1.4.1).

- Bishops and priests speak of tension within their dioceses over different models of church, with one priest suggesting that 50 percent of clergy in his diocese were unhappy with the way the new model was being introduced. Tension between priests, and continued resourcing of both models of church, undermined diocesan commitments to change (1.4.2).
- Lay people speak of sharing parish responsibilities with priests but testify to the continuing power of priests to make decisions. This suggests that lay participation had not fundamentally altered traditional structures of clerical decision making. While one priest identified this as a problem of lay ‘docility’ or ‘passivity’, another suggested it was caused by the exclusion of lay people from decision making (1.4.3).
- Priests and people speak of their bishops’ lack of accountability. It undermines their stated commitment to collaborative working and reveals tension between the traditional clerical culture of the church and the professional culture of lay employees (1.4.4).
- Diocesan officials speak of poor communication between dioceses and parishes which highlights the challenge of managing organisational change and underlines the need for the development of shared priorities. Tension between ‘top down’ decision making and a desire for ‘bottom up’ consultation represents a barrier to collaborative working. It also raises questions about how deeply the vision of Vatican II had taken root in the church in Scotland (1.4.5).
- Bishops speak of interference from Rome in the life of the Scottish church and the way it constrains their attempts to develop local solutions to problems. This in turn limits the potential contribution of lay people (1.4.6).

A picture emerges of a church struggling to translate a new theological vision of collaboration between ordained and lay into practice within an institution which retains a deep rooted culture of clerical decision making, lacks accountability, and is shaped by the exercise of power from the top. The result is an organisation within which two very different cultures exist in tension. Bishops, priests and lay people testify in different ways to the negative impact this has on their sense of self-worth and their capacity to bring about change.

1.5 Theme two: the changing role of priests

1.5.1 *Responding to decline in the number of clergy*

Both Ordinaries spoke of the impact which the fall in vocations to the priesthood had in their dioceses. The bishop of diocese A gave the example of a priest who had been ordained four years earlier and had responsibility for three parishes and two schools; when the bishop was a young man, he said, there were two priests in each of these parishes. His response to the new situation was to emphasise the variety of ministries open to lay people although, as we have seen, he had no coherent plans to develop lay ministry (1.4.1). The bishop of diocese B said he would consider lay ministries only ‘if we needed them’. He insisted that ‘If it were a vibrant diocese, priests will want to come and work in it’.

Among senior priests in both dioceses, there was a wide spectrum of responses to the shortage of clergy. One response was described by a senior priest in diocese B as ‘denial’. He said:

What physically is about to happen has already happened psychologically: holiday insurance, for example, is now an issue because of the age and health of clergy... As to the future, for some priests the attitude is that God will provide... We are in deep denial about this... we don't map out

arguments, you just follow down the line... everything comes too late... comes across as crushing... priests are so busy maintaining the system, for example one priest had 90 funerals last year.

He said that for many priests, the model of church was ‘priestly decision making with lay involvement’ and the focus of their concern was ‘maintenance and care’ of the church they had inherited. For them, dependence on clergy ran deep. A senior priest in diocese B reinforced the point:

Training of priests is an essential part of our self-understanding: the fact that there is a small number is a sadness, but the target is to increase the number of seminarians, not reduce the number of places.

At the other end of the spectrum some priests believed that clergy should be taken out of jobs which lay people could do, and resources invested in the training of lay people. A senior priest in diocese A believed that if priests are left to do ‘priestly work’ and lay people took more responsibility, there would be enough priests ‘even in 20 years’ time’.

Lay personnel in both dioceses thought the church was not facing up to the issue of declining clergy numbers because of the scale of the problem and the cost of looking after sick and retired priests. A lay official in diocese B said that diocesan authorities ‘don’t want to look at [the implication of the age profile of priests] - they’re slightly scared’; an official in diocese A said ‘I don’t see the church addressing the fall in vocations... There is a very big percentage of the clergy who are over 60’.

Both dioceses had begun to group parishes together and rationalise the number of church buildings in an effort to maintain the traditional parish system. A senior priest in diocese B said: ‘We need to revise the administration of parishes; in the future, priests will be looking after a number of parishes. We are

probably over-churched; there are too many buildings'. However, there was no overall plan for closing and merging parishes in either diocese. A priest in diocese B described the issue as a 'hot potato' because 'parishes in poorer areas are costing us money'. He said many priests would prefer the diocese to take a systematic approach to closing or merging parishes, but the bishop told them he would 'take each one as it comes'. Another priest in diocese B said that the bishop 'did not want to be seen as the one who closes parishes', while another said they needed a rationalisation process, but the bishop 'won't entertain it'. A priest in diocese A said: 'There is no five-year plan or the like...there is a degree of crisis management. We don't think in terms of closing down parishes but of linkage'. A senior priest in diocese B spoke of learning from mistakes: he described how closing down a parish without consultation had led to 'dreadfully bad feeling; people did not like us for it'. The diocese then successfully merged two parishes, 'with planning and notice'.

The majority of parish respondents said they would accept married or women priests in response to the diminishing number of clergy, with more in favour of married priests than the ordination of women. Only one parishioner said he would not accept married or women priests, and another two were not sure. Several parishioners linked support for married priests to concern about the perceived loneliness of celibate priests. One parishioner said:

I wouldn't object to married or women priests on principle. I am a married man and if it came to the point I would prefer married priests to women priests... See the size of Fr x's house. If no-one is in, he must be lonely'.

A woman in the same parish said: 'The obvious solution [to the shortage of priests] is married priests. I can't see why not. Anglicans have come in with their families... it's a lonely life being a priest'. Another man who supported married priests observed: 'It works in the Church of Scotland and the Methodists'. One woman thought that allowing priests to marry would 'bring its own problems'. She said: 'People think there would be no other problem. I've

been married for 40 years and that's not my experience. Do people suppose that marriages never fail?' But she also said she didn't know why celibacy was such a difficult issue for the church. 'It's a man-made law. There are ex-Anglican priests with children - it's confusing for the faithful. There is an anomaly between them and Catholic priests who have left'. One man observed that 'plenty of religious people are married' and added: 'Women are equally as capable of preaching the word of God as men'. However, when a priest wanted the question of the ordination of women and married men put on the agenda of the diocesan council of priests for discussion, the bishop's response was to 'send around copies of the Pope's letter' [Pope John Paul II's letter to bishops *On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone*, 1994]. The issue did not appear on the agenda and was not discussed.

1.5.2 The impact of change

Half the senior diocesan priests spoke about low morale among clergy. A priest in diocese A said: 'Morale is low... priests go along with things rather than think about it. They are there to carry out decisions like putting parishes together but without reference to the people involved'. He thought the diocese had lost a lot of priests because they did not feel valued. Another said there was 'a lot of cynicism, people are tired, undervalued and unsupported'. Another priest in diocese A said: 'Fellows are weary... so much paper coming across their desks... I'm not sure that we're overworked... unless you have a good self-evaluation system you do the immediate things rather than the important things'.

Diocesan renewal was seen by several priests as an added burden. A senior priest in diocese B said: 'We are on the tail of another problem of morale... the pastoral plan is seen as something to add on'. Another commented: 'A lot of folk have been hurt: the [diocesan] vision has been more important than the individual who just gets banged on the head... A lot of priests are unhappy'. He added: 'the morale of clergy, sad to say, is not good... a lot of cynicism,

tiredness, energy goes into supplying essential services; deep down they are tired'.

Another senior priest in diocese B spoke of the experience of young priests who had come forward for ordination after Pope John Paul II's visit to Scotland in 1982. He said:

We came in at 24 years of age and wanted to change the world; they came in at 31 years of age and know that the world cannot be changed... Fifty per cent of those ordained in the last few years have left... not mostly to get married but because of disillusionment, not necessarily with the diocese but with the Church... asking themselves if they wanted to spend all their life like this... the morale of the clergy is quite low.

Several lay diocesan personnel expressed concern about clergy morale. A lay official in diocese A said: 'The morale of clergy is kept up by supportive parishioners... they are at a low ebb because of overwork and lack of support'. Another said: 'Priests were on a pedestal... that's all changing now... how can they be helped? They are moved around like parcels, sometimes I feel sorry for them'. A third lay official described the situation in this way:

There is a lot of disquiet... a degree of clericalism among young priests... morale is low... There is a general sense that the church is not really where it ought to be ... There is marginalisation in society... and a sense of loss around the securities they grew up with... But they have persevered... There are issues about the social life of clergy... they need companionship... There should be a ministry to priests programme.

1.5.3 Anxiety about the future

A senior priest in diocese B acknowledged that an ageing clergy would mean change and added: 'the question is, what do we want the priests to be doing?'

Just under half the senior priests and lay diocesan personnel said that priests do not have the skills or support structure needed to fulfil their role in a changing church. One senior priest in diocese A said: ‘there is a certain anxiety among the clergy about their role and whether they are adequate to some of the tasks’. Another thought that encouraging and empowering lay people required a style of management that involved ‘persuasion, encouragement, motivation’. Another observed: ‘Not all priests can empower the laity’. Another senior priest in diocese A said: ‘the skills learned at college do not prepare seminarians for life as a priest... managerial skills training... computers... community work skills... counselling skills’. A senior priest in diocese B said that there had been ‘no strong current of thought’ about the question of the education of seminarians ‘if in the future they were going to work closely in teamwork with lay people’. A lay diocesan worker in diocese A said, however, that ‘priests are assumed to have the knowledge and skills for everything that is thrown at them’.

A senior priest in diocese A said that there was no support structure for clergy, and another suggested that ‘some form of self-assessment needs to be put in place’. One senior priest questioned whether clergy were overworked, citing that some of them found time to study at university. He suggested that job prioritising would be useful. A lay diocesan worker thought that new priests were ‘not given ongoing support with regard to drawing boundaries and managing workload and with how to voice that they are unhappy with the way things were going’. Another thought that among priests there was ‘fear of handing over responsibility... of sharing it [with lay people]’. A senior priest in diocese A said: ‘Priests: intellectually they see the need for a new church... emotionally they have difficulty in freeing themselves to do it’. Another suggested several reasons why change was hard for priests. He said:

Why won’t priests let go? What can be done? It requires more work to involve people... reluctant... out of step... inability to change... extra work, frustration... heck of a job keeping all motivated and trained... seminarians’ conservatism... late vocations... expect to be respected.

A senior official in diocese A said: ‘If my son wanted to be a priest I’d encourage him to join a [religious] order’.

1.5.4 Summary of findings and their implications

The archival material provides evidence of anxiety among priests about their changing role and the absence of any clear strategy for addressing the issue of declining numbers. Differences of opinion among bishops, senior clergy and lay people about how to deal with the situation highlight tensions over the relative roles of priests and lay people.

- There was little evidence of planning at diocesan level for a future with fewer priests and the predominant concern of bishops was to maintain the current parish system. This reveals a deep seated dependence on clergy for the church’s self-understanding and suggests that clerical perspectives continue to frame discussion about the future of the church (1.5.1).
- Among senior priests there was a wide range of responses to the shortage of clergy, ranging from denial, to giving lay people more responsibility. The diocesan response was seen as crisis management. This reflects a lack of clarity about the relative roles of lay and ordained people and different perspectives on how to respond to change (1.5.1).
- Half the priests speak of low morale and a third of anxiety about their future; many lay people also express concern about the welfare of clergy. This raises questions about the level of care and support available to priests and about the sustainability of a model of church that depends so much on a diminishing number of clergy (1.5.2).
- Just under half the senior priests and lay diocesan officials speak about priests’ skills and question whether they are sufficient to meet the demands of their changing role, particularly that of empowering lay

people to play a greater role in the church. Little thought has been given to the possibility of training seminarians to work more closely with lay people. This has implications for the development of collaborative ministry and the training of priests, and suggests that the theological and pastoral development of lay people is inextricably linked with that of clergy (1.5.3).

- Most parish respondents said they would accept married or women priests as a response to falling numbers of clergy; several pointed to the fact that other traditions ordain women and married men. Priests also wanted to speak about this option but were denied the opportunity by their bishop on the grounds of papal teaching. The result was that there was no serious theological exploration of an important ecclesial issue and no formal opportunity for priests and lay people to share their perspectives (1.5.3).

A picture emerges of a church in crisis, deeply embedded in a traditional clerical culture and failing to provide adequate support for a declining number of priests. The traditional parish model, which was so dependent on clergy, is increasingly unsustainable, but there is little evidence of planning for future collaboration between ordained and lay people, despite diocesan commitments to change. The overarching concern is to maintain traditional patterns of church life.

1.6 Theme three: the struggle to develop a new role for lay people

1.6.1 Overcoming dependence on clergy

Almost all parish respondents said they believed that the situation created by the decline in the number of priests was unsustainable and that a greater role for lay people was inevitable. There was a sense of urgency in some of their

comments. One man thought it was ‘imperative’ that the church focus on the future regarding the shortage of priests, and said that in future the priest would share leadership of the parish with the parish pastoral council. Another parishioner said: ‘The nettle has to be grasped. We’re not getting vocations’. Another said: ‘Change is now with us and will get worse. What will happen when we have to share our parish priest with two or three parishes on a Sunday?’

Many parishioners thought that priests could no longer do all that was required of them. ‘It’s a difficult job to balance faith and spirituality and balance the books’ said one parishioner. ‘Priests are multifunctional now’ said another. Yet another commented on the fact that his parish priest had responsibility for three churches, which he described as ‘very hard work’. Another said that if everything was left to the priest ‘he couldn’t do it all’.

A small number of parishioners spoke of the diminishing number of priests in terms of loss. For many of them, lay people could not fill the gap left by priests. In one parish, where a religious sister had taken responsibility for leading funeral services, a parishioner said: ‘Father is not there. Many people take the opportunity for confession [at that time]. So there is no confession. [Confession] always gave people the opportunity to come back to the church’. In a parish where lay people were taking Eucharistic services on weekday mornings as there was no priest available to say Mass, a woman said: ‘It’s not the same. They [lay people] don’t have the same training or knowledge. The people who do it are good but they’re not priests’. Several others spoke of people crossing the aisle in church to avoid taking communion from a lay Eucharistic minister. A priest in diocese A said there was ‘a body of lay people around who are well educated and well-motivated’ but the problem was to ‘get people to relate to lay people, to the idea of lay people doing some of the work [that priests currently do]’.

However, many parishioners expressed the view that lay people brought different gifts to the life of the local church. One said: ‘There is an increasingly

educated group of Catholics. So priests should not be doing non-priestly work such as looking after property, but giving their energies to spiritual leadership'. Many parishioners thought that greater lay involvement as a result of fewer priests was a positive development. In one parish the absence of the priest for part of the week, because he was responsible for three parishes, was perceived as liberating. A parishioner said:

If the community work together they can have communion every day. Attendance is not affected and the celebration is maintained. People take more responsibility and work together. There are lots of Eucharistic ministers and readers. Not having a parish priest allows strength to come forward.

He added: 'It is important to involve the parish - the pastoral council is looking at ways of empowering others'. Here the key role of the priest was that of facilitator, encouraging lay involvement.

In another parish, a woman said that a change of priest had helped parishioners realise that they could take more responsibility for parish life. She said that their new priest 'leads us, doesn't dominate, and we all come to decisions together on the parish co-ordinating team. We could manage to do a lot on our own'. Another parishioner thought there were 'great strengths' in the community but they 'need someone to help draw them out'. She saw this as a role for the priest: leadership, she said, is about 'drawing out potential'. A man spoke of his parish as an 'untapped resource' where 'talents were not brought in'.

Some parishioners said that the experience of becoming more involved in the church helped them develop their gifts and skills. One woman spoke of her experience of volunteering as 'part of a faith journey'. Another said: 'Everyone has their own gifts and talents'. One young woman said bluntly that 'The Catholic Church is not the clergy alone. Our voice should be heard'. A

parishioner commented on the contribution made by ‘people who wouldn’t have said boo to a goose years ago’. He said that they had matured through putting their talents to use in the parish.

Over half the parish respondents thought that one of the consequences of the greater participation of lay people was a greater sense of community in the parish. One woman said: ‘There is more community spirit now... more lay participation... The greatest resource of the parish is the community’. Several people made a link between community involvement and the spiritual life of the parish. One parishioner observed that the ‘sense of community was increased by involving more people in the liturgy’. Another commented that one of the biggest changes in the parish was the number of lay Eucharistic ministers and she linked this with an increase in spirituality. Another said that the spiritual life of the parish had ‘brought out so much good in so many people’ who were now actively involved in the parish and the local community.

One woman remembered the church of her childhood as ‘cold, bare and uninviting’. Asked what it meant to her now, she said:

Community. It’s a strong feeling. People are pleasant. I was away [from the church] for a few years and came back and it was daunting at first. But I have no qualms now... There is more community involvement. I was once asked to do the offertory procession. ...I would like to be involved.

Asked what she thought the main purpose of the parish was, she said: ‘To involve everyone. Faith in one another and church’.

Another woman gave a practical example of setting up a soup kitchen in the parish hall for older people, to provide them with a cheap lunch and social contact. ‘Before, we would have had to speak to the priest about it. But since

the hall committee started it has taken responsibility'. She saw the church hall as a 'safe space' for lonely people and a centre for building community.

1.6.2 Barriers to lay participation

Some parishioners wondered if their contribution was really valued by the church: one suggested that the greater involvement of lay people was 'probably in the main due to the fall in vocations'. One woman wondered whether this was such a bad thing. She said: 'People expect the priest to be nearer to God - they need to get through that barrier. [There are] a thousand things lay people could do that priests couldn't'.

A number of lay people spoke of barriers to their participation. Several expressed concern about the power of priests to take decisions without consultation or explanation, and gave the example of priests who reversed decisions which were taken in parishes before they arrived. In one parish where a long serving priest, who had encouraged lay participation, had retired, a parishioner observed anxiously: 'A lot will depend on who comes in and whether he is for change. If the parish priest is not for change it could make a big difference'. This was echoed by a senior priest who said of parish councils, 'if the priest moves on, that can be the end of it'. A lay official in diocese A said that some parishes do not have a parish council because 'a priest sets it up, a priest disbands it'. Another added:

In one parish everything was jumping, it was going so well... lay people were doing RCIA [leading the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults with people who were preparing to become members of the Catholic Church] ... a new priest came in and threw everything out. It all still depends on the style of the priest, not on an agreed process.

One lay diocesan official asked why the bishop did not challenge priests who disbanded existing parish councils when they arrived in a new parish, and why decisions about resources were not explained. She said angrily:

Why doesn't the bishop ask the priest why he did this? Why do we fund some projects and not others? Even the young Catholics are asking about accountability - why are we not being asked [for our views]?"

A parishioner spoke of resentment in his parish towards a priest because he 'walked in and threw things out'. A woman who had worked in diocese A for almost 30 years said:

the church is the hierarchy... reluctant to devolve power to the laity... The laity should be valued for their special talents and allowed to use them for the church... Laity are not valued... it's tokenism... laity are invited to speak but not listened to... we should be trying to use the laity more.

A senior priest in diocese A said: 'Clergy still want to run everything and dominate everything... [they are] protecting their position... priests don't want to be accountable to anyone... not even to themselves'. Another senior priest described priests as 'all little gods in their own kingdom'. A senior priest in diocese B said: 'In the parish the priest is still doing everything himself... so he does not have the time and energy to get other people to do it... there is total lack of accountability in us priests... people have lost heart'.

A number of lay diocesan and parish respondents commented on the role of women in the church: one woman said they were 'the backbone' of the parish. Several observed that most of the people in the pews were women and another pointed out that in her diocese, church agencies were represented predominantly by women. Several parish respondents suggested that the greater role for lay people which was developing in the church meant that women were becoming more visible. One man said that without women, 'many things would not happen in this parish'. A lay official in diocese B thought that 'women are

still second class citizens,’ and a lay official in diocese A said: ‘Women feel that they don’t have much power’. Yet, she added, ‘we’re all travelling together’. Another lay diocesan worker said that women don’t speak out because of loyalty and love of the church, and ‘wouldn’t want to do anything to hurt priests’.

Two lay diocesan workers employed by the church expressed the view that their professionalism was not valued and said that they were invited to speak but were not always listened to: clergy had the final say. They gave examples of decisions taken in discussion with them which were subsequently overturned without explanation, and funding that was switched to other priorities. When this happened, one lay official in diocese B said he was ‘left wondering what happened... I wonder what were the secret conversations... we were just left with the thought that they were not happy with the direction we were moving in’.

A lay official in diocese A said that even when diocesan strategies were agreed, resources were not made available, leaving lay workers in the position that they ‘raise expectations and then cannot meet them’. She said ‘there has not been a real partnership’. She added that in one instance, a recommendation she made to the diocese was rejected in such a way that she felt she was ‘not treated like a professional’. She also said that a priest was appointed to a key role for which, in her view, he was ‘not professionally equipped’. She added that when she started work at the diocese she had ‘no job description; it was all very vague’. In both dioceses, lay workers raised questions of ongoing professional training. But a senior diocesan employee in diocese B said: ‘It is rare that training courses can be offered because there is no funding for this... We cannot discuss needs with staff because we cannot fulfil these needs’.

1.6.3 What role should lay people play?

There were different views among ordained and lay people about the role lay people should play in the church. A senior priest in diocese A thought there was a lack of clarity about *why* lay people should be more involved. He said: ‘Is the involvement of lay people due to the age profile of the clergy or to theological reasons? It’s both and in a confused way... It’s old fashioned with a liberal veneer’.

Several senior priests stressed the importance of lay people playing a greater role in the mission of the church as part of their baptismal commitment, in accordance with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.¹⁸ But how this was to be translated into action was not clear. A senior priest in diocese A said: ‘The bishop wants to bring in the laity but does not see the implications of what he is setting up. We have an aspirational church not marked by strategic thinking’.

Others spoke of lay people taking responsibility for practical issues within the church, like finance and building maintenance, in order to free up priests. A senior priest in diocese A asked why diocesan trustees are all clerics. A lay official commented that laity with professional expertise were not being called on in relation to the fabric of church buildings. A senior priest in diocese B said he would like to see ‘the whole financial administration of the diocese in lay hands’. A parishioner described how the planning committee in his parish looked for people who could contribute particular skills: they were ‘chosen for their expertise in the field from the wider parish for a specific task, and were not necessarily committed for a long period’. Another pointed out that ‘there are people out there running multinational companies and trade unionists who are used to dealing with people’; he thought the church could make use of this

¹⁸ See, for example, *Lumen Gentium* Chapter II on ‘The People of God’. ‘The baptised, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated to be a spiritual house and a holy priesthood... They should everywhere on earth bear witness to Christ...’ (sec. 10). Chapter IV on the Laity: ‘... the whole laity must co-operate in spreading and building up the kingdom of Christ. Let the laity, therefore, diligently apply themselves to a more profound knowledge of revealed truth...’(sec. 35). *Vatican Council II*, “*Lumen Gentium*,” pp. 360-361 and pp. 392-393.

range of skills. Referring to the Acts of the Apostles, he said: ‘when the apostles found that their time was limited and taken away from preaching, they appointed men to positions of governance in the local church’.

Others spoke of the involvement of lay people in pastoral ministry. A senior priest in diocese A proposed that ‘the ministry of the catechist should be re-established, trained and resourced... they [lay catechists] will work as volunteers accompanying people at baptism and confirmation. We have got to work at the parish base’. A senior priest in diocese B envisaged people from parishes being trained within the dioceses to take more responsibility for parish life. Asked if this could all be done by volunteers, he responded that it was hard to say, but there might be a need for some form of permanent diaconate in the future. A senior priest in diocese A suggested that courses promoted by the diocese to prepare lay people for ministry should be located in parish experience.

The question of theological training for lay people divided senior priests. A senior priest in diocese B said:

Although a number [of lay people] are qualified, none are qualified theologically; there is also the question of justice - we would not be able to pay them a salary. The diocese exists on a cheap clergy. There is also the matter of training: it is not a highly skilled lay community and we don't wish to professionalise the laity.

This was echoed by another senior priest who, speaking of the diocesan renewal programme, said: ‘It is not in the spirit of the programme to professionalise it. All the baptised have a stake in the evangelisation process’.

The issue of whether lay people should be paid also divided opinion among the clergy. Both bishops and around half the senior priests said lay people would continue to contribute to the church on a voluntary basis: they did not envisage

employing lay pastoral workers. The bishops said their reservations were financial rather than theological; one Ordinary said: ‘It is not our tradition to employ lay people; we depend on voluntary work, we don’t have the money’. A priest in diocese B said: ‘Those involved are and will be overwhelmingly volunteers; that is our tradition... not the U.S. employee model’. A lay official in diocese A said that lay people who had completed training courses approved by the diocese, mostly at their own expense, did so ‘with a view to working for the church: they didn’t expect to get a [paid] position’. A senior priest in diocese B said that ‘those who complete [the course] are not seen by the diocese as future full-time pastoral workers’. He said that people who work for the diocese do so ‘for God not money’.

But a senior priest in diocese A questioned whether the scale of the task and the range of skills involved in training, co-ordinating and assessing volunteers had been taken into account. He said: ‘How do you get groups in parishes working? There’s a step before the formation of a parish council. Things are being done with lay people but on an ad hoc basis’. His view was shared by a senior priest in diocese B, who questioned whether the work of empowering and involving lay people could be done by volunteers.

One of his colleagues thought there would in future be paid lay pastoral workers, perhaps on a part time basis; he said: ‘It’s got to come’. A priest in diocese A thought things were changing.

People are coming into ownership of the church... not just receiving things unquestioningly. In the future they might have to be full time and paid. A lot would not envisage that... their objection is emotional, cultural, not reasonable. ...If we are interested in passing on the faith... then we have to resource this... and that means salaries. That’s the ultimate scenario... parishes would have the responsibility if lay pastoral workers’ salaries became an issue.

1.6.4 Adult education and training

The lack of clarity over the role lay people should play in church was reflected in lack of planning for adult education and training. Both Ordinaries, as we have seen, expressed their commitment to adult education but there was no consensus about what that might mean, and no overall training plan in either diocese. While one diocese had built up a group of lay people who had completed a training course designed to equip them for ministry, there were no plans to make use of their skills. The Ordinary in the other diocese said he was ‘searching for a course’ to equip lay people for becoming lay ministers ‘if we need them’.

A priest in diocese A observed that the church’s traditional educational focus was schools: ‘Beyond school, the only formation has been Mass’. Another senior priest in diocese A, who thought there was a need for education at different levels within the church, said: ‘The church has let its lay faithful down... Many people have never moved on from what they’ve been taught at school’.

Most of the parish respondents who played an active role in their parish said they received sufficient training and support, usually from their parish priest, to carry out their role. Among them were readers, musicians and Eucharistic ministers. When they were asked if they knew where to find opportunities to grow in faith, the majority said they would.

Several people said they would need more support to play a greater role in their parish as the availability of priests continued to decline. One woman said that lay people would have to be ‘asked and guided, trained and taught’. Another said there was a need for lay education and formation to ‘develop people’s ability and skills’. One woman was worried that she was ‘not qualified’ to be a member of the parish pastoral council. She said: ‘I need more help and training. I have ideas but am not good at expressing them... I think it’s very important

that people can have conversations about faith. Ninety-nine percent of people have questions, and are a bit worried about things'.

Senior priests and lay diocesan personnel expressed concern about lack of planning and resources for adult education. A lay official in diocese A, who was involved in adult education, said: 'The commitment to lay people is not reflected in resourcing... how little planning there seems to be'. A lay official in diocese A spoke of the failure to make use of the skills of lay people who had completed training courses which prepared them for ministry. She said:

I think people see the writing on the wall... but there is no sign we are getting ready [for lay ministry]. You can't do this overnight... if you just wait for volunteers you won't get the best people... Priests are looking out for people in their own parishes who have the gifts... but I can feel some sense of frustration for some people who have come through [training courses]... there's no long term plan.

A priest in diocese B described adult theology courses at the national seminary as 'learning for learning's sake' because there was 'no outlet' for those who took the courses.

1.6.5 Will enough lay people come forward?

There was disagreement and some anxiety over whether enough lay people would come forward to meet the needs of the church as the number of priests declined. One senior priest who thought the church needed 'pastorally and theologically qualified laity' wondered if enough lay people would be interested. He said: 'We talk about adult education and formation but I don't hear the adults shouting for this'. However a senior priest in diocese A said: 'You have to assure people that they can do things and empower them to do it. It is a process, and the first characteristic is patience... taking people along with you'.

The majority of parish respondents thought that at least some people would be willing to become involved in their parish if they were asked. One woman said: ‘People would like to be involved more but they need training’. Another added: ‘You cannot simply say to people “Be empowered” and they are empowered’. Another said she thought that there was a desire among parishioners for greater participation in the parish: ‘If it got to the stage where the [local] church said we need ten people it wouldn’t be a problem. There are a lot of good people’.

Other parish respondents thought lay people did not want to become more involved. ‘Most people are happy for others to do it’. ‘People are shy. They let others do it. Nobody out there is crying for a job’. ‘There is apathy in every walk of life. People are happy not to be involved. They come on Sunday and go away’.

One parishioner pointed out that there are occasions when people rely on the church, such as funerals or weddings. He thought that people should be asked what they can do for the parish - not just expect the parish to help them. He said:

There should be more responsibility asked of us directly. An open letter to individuals. Outline how things are done and ask, say, for a day a month, two hours a week - more people might respond then.

1.6.6 Resourcing lay formation

A lay official in diocese B provided a comparison between the diocesan budget for training seminarians and the amount spent on the education of lay people. Most of the cost of training seminarians was met by an annual parish collection, and the diocese contributed a further four percent of its annual budget. Seminaries also benefited financially from endowments. The amount spent on

adult formation in the diocese was 1 percent of the annual budget. In other words, four times more was spent on a small number of seminarians than on the laity as a whole. As there is no collection for lay formation, a more realistic calculation, the diocesan official suggested, might be a factor of eleven. Without the endowments of the seminaries, she added, the disparity would be much greater.

1.6.7 Summary of findings and their implications.

The archival material provides evidence of a number of underlying tensions within the two Scottish dioceses about the actual and potential roles of clergy and laity.

- Lay people speak of parishes where priests and lay people together are changing the culture of dependence on clergy. These pockets of change, which in all four parishes were linked to priests' leadership style, represent a shift in the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people and highlight how much is lost to the church when lay people are prevented from contributing their skills (1.6.1).
- The majority of parishioners speak about the unsustainability of the traditional parish model because of the declining number of priests, and believe that a greater role for lay people is inevitable. Some speak of greater participation creating a stronger sense of community. This suggests that there is an appetite for change among lay people, while the focus of many senior clergy was maintenance of the current system (1.6.1, 1.5.1).
- A number of lay respondents speak about the continued power of clergy to take decisions without consultation or explanation, and lay diocesan officials speak about the lack of value placed on their professionalism. This suggests that clergy continue to dominate the culture of the church

and retain control over its structure despite diocesan commitments to collaboration between ordained and lay (1.6.2).

- There is no consensus among bishops and senior priests about what role lay people should play in the church and some priests refer to the theological education of lay people as ‘professionalising’ them. This, together with the apparent lack of value placed on the professional skills of diocesan employees by senior clergy, suggests disquiet among some senior priests about a greater role for trained lay people (1.6.3).
- Bishops and priests speak about the need for adult education but neither diocese had developed a plan to deliver it; they continued to resource the education of a dwindling group of seminarians to a far greater degree than the education of lay people. This reinforces clerical culture and undermines commitments to collaborative ministry (1.6.4, 1.6.6).
- Priests and lay people speak with concern about the number of lay people prepared to come forward and play a greater role in the church. Although the majority of parishioners thought that some people would become involved if they were asked, they also acknowledged that many are happy to attend church without taking any responsibility for management of the parish (1.6.5).

A picture emerges of a church struggling to define a new role for lay people, with tension between priests, and between priests and lay people, over their relative roles. Lay people believe that the traditional model of church is unsustainable and that it is inevitable that they will play a greater role; but evidence suggests that some lay people who have undergone training are frustrated at the lack of opportunity to do so. Among bishops and priests there is no clarity about the role of lay people, and little planning or resourcing for their training and development.

1.7 Theme four: changing patterns of belonging and believing

1.7.1 *Changing patterns of believing*

Asked whether people in their parish recognised the authority of the church in their daily lives, only four parish respondents gave an unqualified yes. The overwhelming majority said people did not agree with all aspects of church teaching. One woman said: ‘I don’t buy everything the Vatican puts out. I am selective. If it’s fundamental to faith, I accept it. If not, I make my own decision, such as over birth control’. Another observed: ‘For many, religion is a total way of life. For others, it’s just for Sundays. Daily life is difficult, there are difficult decisions, and the church is not always the driving force’. A man in another parish said: ‘People are more inclined to refer to moral authority [than to church teaching]. They refer to right and wrong rather than the church’s line. There are question marks over church teaching historically’.

Changed attitudes were linked to changes in society and the way in which the church’s place in the community had changed. A man in one parish said that the ‘climate in the country itself has changed dramatically’. A woman in another parish said that ‘When we were growing up the church was the centre for the village’. She spoke of fasting from midnight, sodalities, Children of Mary and the boys’ guild. A woman in the same parish remembered processions, with ‘men at the front and women at the back’.

Many people cited Pope Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical letter on the regulation of birth, *Humanae Vitae*, as the moment when things changed in the church. One woman said:

When people disagreed over *Humanae Vitae* it changed their whole view of the church. I was young, and from a very moralistic family when I realised the church was not what I thought it was. A rod broken in two; part of security was gone’.

Another woman said:

It [*Humanae Vitae*] was a big change in how people regarded information from the Vatican. People made their own decision. Unfortunately it affected a much wider area and led to a wider failure to listen. It was a catalyst. A watershed.

Others struggled to put the church's teaching into practice and thought it was time for change in regulations about divorced and remarried Catholics. One woman spoke of how much it meant to her when a priest approached her to ask why she didn't go to church. She had been away for several years after being married in a registry office to a man who had been married before. She subsequently divorced and was bringing her daughter up as a Catholic, but felt unable to take communion while she was still married. She said: 'Fr x was very sympathetic. He agreed that the church should change with the times... I think that people should be accepted the way they are and should be able to take communion'.

One of the most moving conversations took place with a parishioner who reflected on how little the church seemed to understand the situation in which he found himself when his marriage ended in separation. When he was asked what was the best thing about his village, he answered:

The church. It has been my life. My marriage ended and I was left with eight children. Four go to Mass regularly and four occasionally. The church kept me going because it kept me close to God.

But I struggled day to day because of the church. I was only 42 when we split up. I have been celibate since and it's a struggle... I could have done with a relationship again. If the church got over its divorce laws it would be packed again. Marriage is the nucleus of society but it's hard when one parent is not at fault.... I spent 15 years bringing up my family. There was no adult conversation. No help. The church didn't help. The

parish priest only spoke to me about it once. I don't hold that against him. But I went to church, said morning and night prayers with the children.

My daughter is divorced. She can't go to communion. I'm trying to get it sorted for her. She would like to go back'.

1.7.2 Changing patterns of belonging

In all four parishes which took part in the Scottish research, parishioners spoke about recent changes to the celebration of first communion. In two parishes, a decision to celebrate first communion with small groups of children over several Sundays, instead of the traditional practice of celebrating with all the children on one day a year, had divided opinion. Some parishioners thought the event had lost something of its significance. One woman said: 'it takes the specialness away'. She remembered her own first communion with its traditional procession as a 'special day'.

Others approved of the change because they said it was less disruptive of regular Sunday worship. One woman said the traditional first communion day had taken on a different character in recent years with the presence of many families who were not regular churchgoers. She described the scene in her parish:

There were too many people, not enough respect and reverence, and we were diverted from what Mass was about.... Having first communion over three weeks was a lovely thing to do because last year it was a rabble and most parishioners couldn't get a seat. That was not acceptable and parishioners were upset. There were people there who don't normally come to Mass.

Another parishioner said that spreading the celebration over several weeks 'made space for people coming to Mass'. She distinguished between regular

churchgoers and those who celebrated first communion ‘with meals and big parties but had no reason to come back [to church]’.

One woman expressed anxiety about the way faith was being handed on and asked: ‘[w]ould there be faith without teachers?’ She said children were ‘coming into primary one not being able to say a prayer or bless themselves’ and observed that there was ‘apathy among many families [about religious practice] until first communion came up’. Her parish responded to this situation by inviting parents to become more involved in preparation for the sacrament. One parishioner thought this had brought more people to church. She said the first communion Mass was ‘crowded, there was lots of noise and disruption, but it was alive’. But one man said bluntly that ‘People *use* the church - for marriage, baptism etc. They use the church and don’t give anything back’.

In another parish, the priest kept the tradition of all the children celebrating first communion together on one day a year, but changed the time from Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon. A parishioner said this was a good thing because ‘when it was held on Saturday morning there was one big drinking session for parents afterwards. There’s not the same opportunity at five o’clock on a Sunday’.

1.7.3 Changing relationships with other churches

Several parish respondents said that the development of ecumenical relationships was one of the major changes in recent years. A large majority of parishioners reported that regular inter-church contact had become part of the life of the local church. One man said: ‘There is greater willingness to be involved than in the past... The division is now between those who believe and those who don’t. The parish priest is involved in ecumenical services and there is strong support for them locally. It is a friendly relationship’.

Most people could offer examples of ecumenical co-operation, ranging from joint church services to social events. They spoke of a Palm Sunday ecumenical service which attracted 300 people; of carrying a cross together on Good Friday; of a prayer service for peace in Northern Ireland; of Christian unity events; and of a joint Christian Aid group. Priests in all four parishes met with local ministers on a regular basis. One woman said that ecumenical relationships were very friendly, built up over years of joint participation in the World Day of Prayer. Another spoke of attending a playgroup in a Church of Scotland hall; another of going to senior citizens' clubs in each other's church premises. She said: 'That didn't happen years ago'. Another said that ecumenical events allowed the churches to 'mingle'.

However, a few parishioners commented that the numbers involved were usually small. One man said that progress was slow, and it was 'still all too parochial'. A woman thought that only 'small steps' were being taken. Another said: 'Is there a good ecumenical spirit? Yes and no. There are still certain pockets of people not prepared to co-operate'.

1.7.4 Mission to the local community

Parish respondents were divided over the issue of whether their parish had a mission to the local community and many struggled to articulate what it might mean.

Fewer than half of those who answered a question about mission to the local community thought their parish did have a mission, but several of them could not think of any practical examples. Some respondents said the church had no engagement with the local community. Others thought mission was a matter of individual response to need, motivated by faith, while others saw it as reaching

out to people who no longer attended church in order to re-engage them. One man said: ‘mission is faith building’. One woman found mission difficult because she said historically, Catholics had been encouraged to keep to themselves and live quietly. She said: ‘In Scotland there was tremendous discrimination against Catholics and we had the idea of living quietly... Because it was this way in the past, it is hard to go out and talk about faith’. A small number of people understood the question in terms of support for missionary work overseas.

A man who saw mission in terms of the local community described it in these terms:

The mission is threefold. It is first of all to ourselves, to strengthen us to move out. This applies to all those who attend church. We need to look at the way we deal with people who are deprived, old, ill or unemployed [within the church community]. At the same time we need to look at people who are not involved in church, such as people with addiction problems or people suffering from HIV/Aids overseas. [He stressed this was not a hierarchy of needs].

Several examples of the church’s mission to the local community were given by members of another parish, which had been involved in a parish renewal programme for several years. It aimed to give concrete expression to the teaching of Vatican II. Parishioners described their parish as ‘outward looking’ and identified the work of organisations like the St Vincent de Paul Society, which gives practical help to people in need, and the local credit union, which was set up by the parish in the local community, as examples of parish mission. They also spoke of the church hall as a community resource, used by groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, and of the church facilitating meetings with local and national politicians about issues of concern to the community. Several mentioned that these initiatives involved other local churches as part of the parish’s ecumenical commitment. One described their community in these terms:

The Christian community depends on each other, they love, help and support one another, collectively worship and praise. By their actions and interdependence this would be obvious...

Several people spoke about the need to reach out to young people, but a lay diocesan worker thought that the church's approach to youth work was 'narrow' and only offered young people events centred on the church. She said:

World Youth Day [a global gathering of young people with the Pope] is fine but what about the day to day at the grassroots? The church's response to young people doesn't have to be just a youth Mass or a Lenten day.

She was working with young people who did not come to church and had regular meetings with a group of adolescent girls outwith church premises, whose behaviour she described as 'outrageous'. She tried to help them find ways of using and developing their skills.

One parish respondent thought that the church was more concerned with maintenance of the institution than mission. He said: 'What seems to be taking place is a holding exercise - maintaining what we have rather than a missionary attitude'. This echoed the views of the senior priest who spoke about the priority of saying Mass and 'maintaining the system'; and the reluctance of bishops to close parishes (1.5.1).

1.7.5 Summary of findings and their implications

The research material provides evidence that patterns of believing and belonging within the Catholic community have changed: a large number of lay people no longer accept all the church teaches, and there are different

understanding of what it means to belong to the church. Ecumenical engagement has become part of the church's life. There is a stronger focus on maintaining the institution and its traditions than on mission to the local community.

- The overwhelming majority of parish respondents say they no longer assent to church teaching on issues like birth control and many express concern over the impact of church teaching on divorced and separated Catholics (1.7.1).
- Several parish respondents say that priests are concerned about the pastoral implications of church teaching on moral issues but find it difficult to discuss this with lay people. A similar situation arises in relation to the ordination of women and married men, which priests are not allowed to discuss (1.5.1). This impacts on the relationship between priests and people and inhibits the priest's role as an agent of change within the parish community, as Vatican II envisaged (1.7.1).¹⁹
- Many people who no longer attend church on a regular basis come for celebrations like first communion. We can hear in voices from parishes the tension between the church's view of first communion as the first step in an individual's lifelong pattern of weekly participation in the Eucharist, and the view of families who see it as a once in a lifetime celebration of an event that does not necessarily lead to regular church attendance. Their approach highlights tensions over what it means to belong to the church: some of those who attend on a regular basis and contribute to the maintenance of the parish resent those whom they perceive as 'using' the church without 'giving anything back'. Their presence in church was perceived by some as disruptive and marked by a lack of reverence and respect (1.7.2).
- The majority of parish respondents describe ecumenical relationships as cordial and valued, and say that regular inter-church services and events

¹⁹ See, for example, The Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests sec. 9 in *Vatican Council II "Presbyterorum Ordinis"*, pp. 880 -881 where priests and lay people together are to discern the 'signs of the times'.

have become part of the life of the local church. In one parish they had developed a shared approach to mission in the local community. But several people thought the numbers involved were small and the ecumenical journey was only beginning (1.7.3).

- The archived evidence suggests that the Catholic Church in Scotland is more inward looking than outward looking: a minority of people were able to describe the church's mission to the local community with confidence. This was linked to the perception, expressed by one parishioner in an echo of comments by priests, that the focus of the church was maintenance of the institution rather than mission (1.7.4).

A picture emerges of a church responding to signs of decline with a focus on maintaining traditional patterns of church life which reinforce the role of the priest and the clerical culture of the church. Tensions emerge between parish 'insiders' and perceived 'outsiders' who are seen to 'use' the church without contributing to its maintenance or long term future. Ecumenical relationships are warm and cordial at the level of individuals and parishes, but there was a sense that the journey was only beginning.

1.8 Conclusion of chapter one

This chapter set out to explore the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people by listening to the voices of priests and people recorded in Scotland between 1998 and 2000. The issues they raise fall under four headings: the church's response to the ecclesiology of Vatican II; the changing role of priests; the struggle to develop a new role for lay people; and changing patterns of belonging and believing within the Catholic community. The issues, their implications and the tensions they raise can be summarised as follows:

The Scottish church struggled to translate the new theological vision of Vatican II, which envisaged a collaborative relationship between ordained and lay, into practice. The church retained a deep rooted culture of clerical decision making, lacked accountability, and was shaped by power from the top down. Bishops, priests and lay people testified in different ways to the negative impact this culture had on their sense of self-worth (1.4).

In relation to the changing role of priests, a picture emerges of a church in crisis, deeply embedded in a traditional clerical culture and failing to provide adequate support for a declining number of priests. The traditional parish model, which was so dependent on clergy, was seen as increasingly unsustainable, but there is little evidence of planning to train priests or lay people for a different role, or for working in partnership together. The church's response to decline was framed in terms of the number of priests available and it continued to invest much more in training seminarians than lay people (1.5).

The church also struggled to define a new role for lay people, and there were tensions between priests, and between lay people and clergy, over their relative roles. Lay people believed it was inevitable that they will play a greater role in the church, and there was evidence of pockets of good practice of collaboration between ordained and lay people in parishes. But there was also frustration among lay people who had undergone training for ministry because of the lack of opportunity to use their skills. Among bishops and priests there was no clarity about the role of lay people, and little planning for their training and development (1.6).

Shifting patterns of belonging and believing reveal that many Catholics no longer assent to church teaching; together with the continued fall in church attendance and vocations to the ordained priesthood, they suggest that the church is in the process of decline. Evidence suggests that the church's response was to focus on maintenance of the institution and its traditional patterns of parish life (1.7).

From these issues, three overarching questions emerge which impact on the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people. The first concerns the difficulties the church faced in implementing the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council with its vision of a new partnership between ordained and lay. Why was the implementation of the Council problematic in Scotland?

The second question concerns the enduring power of a deeply clerical culture which affected the church's ability to develop a new role for priests and lay people and foster a different ecclesial relationship between them. How did this culture arise and why did it endure, despite diocesan commitments to collaborative working?

The third question concerns the church's response to signs of decline. Why did it frame its response in terms of maintenance of the institution and its traditional patterns of church life?

In the next three chapters I will address each of these questions in turn to explore the causes and complicating factors of tensions in the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay.

Chapter two: The implementation of the Second Vatican Council in Scotland.

'Is the new model of church up and running in the diocese? Yes and no!'
Senior priest in Scotland, 1998-2000.

2.1 Introduction

The archived research undertaken in Scotland between 1998 and 2000 provides evidence that the Scottish Catholic Church struggled to implement the new theological vision of the Second Vatican Council. In this chapter I will examine why the implementation of Vatican II was so problematic. What changed at the Council and why was its implementation difficult?

To explore the question I will consider three aspects of Vatican II which had a major impact on its implementation, particularly in relation to the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay: the Council's new theological vision; how the vision was translated into the Council's teaching on the church and the laity; and how the Council's teaching was interpreted.

The first section examines the nature and scope of the Council's new theological vision. Vatican II was a watershed for the Catholic Church: it marked the end of one distinctive form of Catholicism and pointed the Church towards another, more open and inclusive engagement with the world, with other faiths and with other Christian traditions. Its sixteen documents, shaped by four years of debate by over two thousand bishops from across the world, bear the imprint of the theology they were leaving behind and contain elements of a new theology which in many cases remained to be developed. In this process, and in the way in which the bishops of Vatican II articulated their new vision, the seeds of problems for the Council's implementation were sown.

The second section examines the consequences this had for the Council's teaching on the church and on lay people. It analyses the first two chapters of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, which set out the elements of the Council's ecclesiology; and the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, together with the fourth chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, which deals with lay people. The drafting and redaction of these texts highlights the way in which the mind of the Council developed and the consequences this had for implementation of its teaching, while the documents themselves illustrate some of the difficulties of translating the new ecclesiology into practice.

The third section considers conflicting interpretations of the Council and the impact this had on its implementation by examining the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops called by Pope John Paul II in 1985 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Council. I have chosen to focus on the synod because of its theological character and because it was here that conflicts of interpretation became clear: the balance of power within the church began to shift in favour of those who thought the Council had gone too far, as I will discuss below. The atmosphere in which the Synod was held, the polarisation of opinion about the meaning of the Council, the theological differences reflected in the Synod's final report, and the comments of contemporary observers all reveal sharp differences in the way Vatican II was interpreted in the years before the archived research was undertaken in Scotland. The role of Pope John Paul II was also significant and would have had particular resonance in Scotland; just three years earlier he had made a historic visit to Scotland where he had celebrated the contribution of Scotland's Catholics to Scottish society and invited other Christians to walk hand in hand with them as fellow pilgrims.¹

¹ John Paul II, 'Holy Mass in Bellahouston Park: Homily of John Paul II. Glasgow Tuesday 1 June 1982' sec. 9 and sec. 15, accessed October 2, 2014. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19820601_glasgow.html

At the end of each section I will summarise the problems of implementation which have been identified, and in the conclusion of the chapter I will draw out the implications for the Catholic Church in Scotland.

2.2 Section one: the theological vision of Vatican II

2.2.1 *The historical context*

The calling of Vatican II was a profound response to the rapidly changing world of the twentieth century. The second part of the Council's final document, *Gaudium et Spes*, for example, highlights some of the economic, social and political issues that it considered urgent, which included the growing gulf between rich and poor individuals and nations, the arms race, and the need for international economic co-operation to build peace and promote justice.² At the time of the Council, these were seen largely from the perspective of the developed world.

To help situate Vatican II within its historical context and highlight the scale and significance of the changes it set in train, I will draw on the analysis developed by Joe Holland in his study of the way in which successive popes, from the eighteenth century onwards, responded to the growth of modern industrial capitalism.³ Holland argues that the Council represented a strategic shift in papal strategy in relation to the church's relationship with the modern world. Like other such strategic shifts, it reflected papal judgement on 'how best to pursue both evangelisation and social transformation in a new historical context' and was nothing less than an attempt to reshape the consciousness, policies and

² Vatican Council II, "Gaudium et Spes" pp. 968-1001.

³ Holland, J. *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: The Popes Confront the Industrial Age 1740-1958*. Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press 2003 pp. 21-22. Holland defines modern industrial capitalism as a form of society which emerged from the Industrial Revolution, based on the assumption that 'strategic guidance for political-economic organisation of nature, human labour and technology should be left to the free-market process of capital accumulation'.

structure of the church in service of its contextualised mission.⁴ In organisational terms, it was an ambitious and far-reaching strategy which came from the top, was based on a wide-ranging analysis of global change, and carried with it extensive implications for all aspects of the Church's life.

Holland identifies three such major shifts in papal strategy in the period from the eighteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century which correlate with major shifts in the development of industrial capitalism. The church's response to the first, localised phase of industrial capitalism, which lasted from around 1760 to 1880, was to withdraw into cultural isolation from the new world it helped create. The church condemned its underlying liberal philosophy and its secular, rationalist and progressive individualism which gave rise to the French Revolution. It swept away the *ancien régime*, signalling the end of the church's political and cultural power in Europe which culminated in the loss of the Papal States in 1870.⁵ The church's retreat into a religious counter-culture was to have profound implications for its ecclesiology, which I will consider in more detail in the next chapter.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the second phase of industrial capitalism, with its heavy machinery, large scale national economies and growing multitudes of urban poor, prompted a further shift in the church's response: Pope Leo XIII opened up a new strategy of engagement with modern liberalism in order to counter what he saw as the more serious threat of secular socialism.⁶ In this more adaptive reforming strategy, Leo and his successors made important contributions to social reform and began to deploy associations of lay people, under hierarchical control, in an effort to promote Christian values in society. This, too, was to have profound implications for the church's ecclesiology and the role of lay people. Leo's concerns remained focussed on predominantly European economic and political developments, and their

⁴ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 12.

⁵ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 14

⁶ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 15

perceived threat to Christian order. His 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* opens with an analysis of what he calls the ‘impact of revolutionary change’.

The elements of the conflict now raging are unmistakable, in the vast expansion of industrial pursuits and the marvellous discoveries of science; in the changed relations between masters and workmen; in the enormous fortunes of some few individuals, and the utter poverty of the masses; the increased self reliance and closer mutual combination of the working classes; as also, finally, in the prevailing moral degeneracy.⁷

The third, global stage of industrial capitalism began in the middle of the twentieth century with the electronic revolution, the creation of transnational corporations and rapid systems of transport and communication. In response, Pope John XXIII moved beyond Leo’s vision of a modernised Eurocentric Christian civilisation and pointed the church instead towards ‘global ecumenism, interfaith co-operation, cross-ideological dialogue and a prophetic path of justice and peace, all in service of a new humanistic civilisation on a planetary scale’.⁸ Part of this strategy was an attempt to integrate clergy, religious and laity in the common framework of the one people of God.⁹ Pope John’s new vision can be seen in his opening speech to Vatican II, where he spoke of the ‘needs and opportunities of the modern age’ the ‘unity of the human race’ and the ‘new order of things’.¹⁰ The elements of his shift in focus are all present in the speech, as will be discussed below.

Holland’s correlation of major shifts in papal strategy with shifts in the development of industrial capitalism highlights the historic nature of Vatican II, the magnitude of its concern, and the enormous challenge it represented to the church. Implementation of change on this scale in any organisation would be a major undertaking.

⁷ Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* [Encyclical Letter on Capital and Labour] sec. 1, accessed March 15, 2016. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l

⁸ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 3.

⁹ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 296.

¹⁰ John XXIII, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* [Pope John XXIII’s Opening Speech to the Council] translated by Joseph Komonchak, accessed December 8, 2015.

<https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/john-xxiii-opening-speech.pdf>

Holland's analysis also underlines the role of papal encyclicals in officially codifying Catholic social teaching. They shape the church's official response to political and economic issues, and successive popes can adapt or reject strategies worked out by their predecessors. We can see, for example, the way in which Pope John XXIII, in his 1963 encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, builds on the teaching of his predecessor Pius XII to establish human rights as the basic moral principle governing political life,¹¹ and to set out new teaching on women's rights.¹² This is very different from the church's rejection of rights talk in the nineteenth century, most famously articulated by Pope Pius IX in his *Syllabus of Errors* in 1864.¹³ The way in which John XXIII's successors interpreted Council documents was to become a crucial issue for the implementation of Vatican II.

2.2.2 *The papal vision*

John XXIII's vision for the church was outlined serenely in his opening address to the Council on 11th October 1962. He said he wished to present the church's teaching to 'all the people of our age', and trusted that, in the course of the Council, the church would grow in heavenly riches and draw on new energies so that it could 'look to the future without fear'.¹⁴ He disagreed with the 'prophets of doom' who saw only 'ruin and calamity in the present conditions of human society' (n. 8). They act as if they have nothing to learn from history, he said, which is the 'teacher of life'. He argued that 'divine Providence is leading us to a new order of human relationships' (n. 9) and the church's task was to study and present its doctrine 'through the forms of enquiry and literary formulation of modern thought... measuring everything by the forms and proportions of a teaching authority primarily pastoral in character' (n. 14).

¹¹ John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* [Encyclical of Pope John XXIII on Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity and Liberty], sec. 27, accessed April 15, 2016.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html

¹² *Pacem in Terris* op. cit. sec. 41.

¹³ Pius IX *The Syllabus of Errors Condemned by Pius IX*, accessed December 1, 2015.

<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9syll.htm>

¹⁴ *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* op. cit. n. 6. In this section I refer to the paragraphs as numbered by Komonchak in his translation.

Errors are to be dealt with using the ‘medicine of mercy’ rather than the ‘weapons of severity’; the church thinks she ‘meets today’s needs by explaining the validity of her doctrine more fully than by condemning’ (n. 16). The pope put unity at the heart of his vision - the unity of ‘Catholics among themselves’, the unity of separated Christians, and the unity of respect for the Catholic Church shown by those who profess ‘non-Christian forms of religion’ (n.19). John’s global outreach, his openness to learn from the world, his historical awareness, his commitment to updating the language and formulations of the faith and his pledge on unity are all marks of the major shift which Holland identifies as the papal response to the new global phase of industrial capitalism.

The leitmotif of the Council was to be *aggiornamento*, updating the Church in order to put it more in touch with the contemporary world. Pope John pointed out that the Council’s purpose was not to repeat at length what had been handed on from the past: for this there would have been no need to call a council. What was needed instead was that the Church’s teaching be ‘investigated and presented in the way demanded by our times’.¹⁵ In the four years of debate which followed and the sixteen documents the Council produced, we can see the breadth and depth of the change which was attempted: in the scope of the Council’s agenda, the extent of its aims, the style it adopted, and the scale of the challenge it represented to preconciliar theology. Much of the Council’s agenda, which pervades the documents, remains, nevertheless, implicit, and this, together with all the other factors, was to play a critical part in creating problems of implementation.

2.2.3 *The Council’s agenda*

John O’Malley observes that the vagueness of the purposes for which the Council was convoked encouraged an examination of all aspects of the church’s life and

¹⁵ *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* op. cit. n.14.

gave the Council an open-ended agenda.¹⁶ He points out that the approach of progressive theologians at the Council was more historically aware than at any previous Council; the revival of historical studies in the nineteenth century and the consequent application of historical methods to subjects like the history of doctrine meant that theologians were ‘much more aware of the profound changes that had taken place in the history of the church’. They were also aware that many of the changes could be explained in human terms as expressions of culture, and were not necessarily irreversible. The open, invitational style the Council adopted, which was very different from the directional style of its preparatory documents, with their preconciliar focus on doctrinal stability, reflected the Council’s open-ended agenda.

O’Malley also points out that the number of people who took part in Vatican II was enormous: 2,540 churchmen with the right to vote attended the opening session compared with 700 or so at the First Vatican Council (1869-70).¹⁷ The countries of Asia and Africa were better represented than ever before. The decision to admit non Catholic members to Council sessions was unprecedented and allowed its deliberations to be reviewed by scholars and members of churches who did not share the basic assumptions on which Catholic theology and discipline were based. The media took a keen interest in the Council, ensuring that its actions were discussed and debated on a day to day basis, and Council members were forced to explain and justify their positions. Vatican II took greater note of the world around it than any previous Council and one of its principal tasks was to enter into dialogue with the world.

Previous councils had generally insisted on the stability of religious practice and doctrinal formulas and on the necessity of eradicating anything that would threaten that stability. *Aggiornamento* took the opposite position; in the breadth of its application and the depth of its implications, it was a revolution in the mentality with which previous councils had addressed their problems.¹⁸

¹⁶ O’Malley, J.W. *Tradition and Transition: Historical Perspectives on Vatican II* Delaware: Michael Glazier 1989 pp. 13-14 for this and the following points in this paragraph.

¹⁷ *Tradition and Transition* op. cit. pp. 13-14 for this and the following points in this paragraph.

¹⁸ *Tradition and Transition* op. cit. p. 15.

The scale and openness of the Council's agenda had implications for its implementation. With so many aspects of the church's life open to scrutiny, the potential for change and the challenge of translating it into practice was considerable. The vagueness of the Council's aims was reflected in vagueness about how it might be implemented.

2.2.4 The Council's aims

Reviewing the Council's sixteen documents within their historical context, O'Malley draws out the remarkable scope of their aims in the following terms:

to end the stance of cultural isolation that the Church was seen as having maintained; to initiate a new freedom of expression and action within the Church; ...to distribute more broadly the exercise of pastoral authority, especially by strengthening the role of the episcopacy and local churches; ...to modify the predominantly clerical, institutional and hierarchical model [of church] that had prevailed; to affirm the dignity of the laity; ...to establish a better relationship with other religious bodies; ...to change the teaching of the church on "religious liberty" and give new support to the principle of "freedom of conscience;" to base theology and biblical studies more firmly on historical principles; ...to affirm that the Church was and should be affected by the cultures in which it exists; finally, to promote a more positive appreciation of "the world" and the relationship of the Church to it, with a concomitant assumption of clearer responsibility for the fate of the world...¹⁹

The wide range of the documents' concerns and the inclusive audience they addressed represent a new ecclesiastical paradigm, which, O'Malley points out, the Council never unambiguously articulated in so many words.²⁰ At its heart

¹⁹ *Tradition and Transition* op. cit. p. 25.

²⁰ *Tradition and Transition* op. cit. p. 107.

was the attempt to shape a church responsive to the needs of the time, which marked a departure from the fundamental paradigm of church order that prevailed before the Council. As O’Malley suggests, the new paradigm bore within itself the basis for its programme.²¹

Such an approach meant that many of the Council’s changes were implicit rather than explicit, leaving the documents open to different interpretations - including the option of continuing with business as usual within the church.

2.2.5 The Council’s style

The style of the Council reflected the new paradigm of shaping a church which was responsive to the needs of its time in terms of its language, its pastoral character, and its commitment to dialogue.²² O’Malley points out that Vatican II abandoned for the most part the technical and juridical language of previous councils, choosing instead a more discursive, rhetorical style that was designed to persuade rather than define and to invite rather than prescribe.

Part of the Council’s message, revealed in its style, was its reluctance to close issues prematurely. Its language was also more biblical and patristic, reflecting the theological renewal that had taken place in the decades before Vatican II, and the work of theologians associated with the *ressourcement* movement who turned to Scripture, the Fathers of the Church and liturgical renewal as sources for their ‘new’ theology. What united them was a belief that the neo-scholastic revival of 1850-1950 was inadequate to address the fullness of Christian tradition or the demands of modern life.²³

²¹ *Tradition and Transition* op. cit. p.110.

²² *Tradition and Transition* op. cit. pp. 176 ff.

²³ Ruddy, C. ‘*Ressourcement* and the Enduring Legacy of Post-Tridentine Theology’ in Flynn, G. and Murray, P.D. (eds.) *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012 185-201 p.125.

The Council's style also reflected its pastoral character, which was concerned with the effectiveness of the church in the contemporary world: its rhetorical style sought to connect with its audience by engaging people's feelings and meeting their needs. O'Malley argues that a fundamental ecclesiological statement pervades all the documents of the Council in the language they adopted: that the church is an instrument of ministry. Effective ministry by definition adapts itself to the language of the flock.²⁴

He suggests that the very bulk of the conciliar documents denotes that the Council was seeking more than an acceptance of particular decisions: it required a change in mentality on the part of believers and a change in ways of looking at the Christian tradition. 'If the Council wished to say "business as usual," it could have done so in a paragraph, and it need not have directed its documents so pointedly to such a wide audience'.²⁵

The Council's style was reflected in its frequent use of the word *dialogue*. The emphasis on collegiality, for example, is a concrete expression of dialogical style, which might also be described as a new articulation of how the church's vocation should be performed. Style and content interpenetrate: as O'Malley points out, the documents of the Council teach how the church is, or ought to be, and dialogue implies a shift in ecclesiology more basic than any specific passage or image in *Lumen Gentium*, the Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.²⁶ Once again, the change, like that of the turn to respond to the needs of the time, was implicit rather than explicit.

The rhetorical style also contributed to what O'Malley calls the verbosity of Council documents. He argues that this indicated a growing awareness among participants of the complexity of the issues with which they were grappling, the wide range of positions possible, and the necessity of not bringing them to premature closure. 'Nothing, the Council seemed to say, should be more

²⁴ *Tradition and Transition* op. cit. p. 178.

²⁵ *Tradition and Transition* op. cit. p. 179.

²⁶ *Tradition and Transition* op. cit. p. 179, pp. 27-28.

characteristic of Catholicism than its catholicity - that is, its ability to embrace different cultures, different spiritualities and even different theologies without losing its basic identify'.²⁷

Richard Gaillardetz observes that there was a transitional element to the Council's work. Breaking out of the strictures of one theological framework and moving the church in directions that were only dimly perceived meant that the Council was not able to anticipate all the implications of its new initiatives.²⁸

All these aspects of the Council's style and its transitional nature created problems of interpretation and implementation. In some passages the Council's new insight is simply placed alongside the old with no indication of how the two are to be reconciled. For example, how are we to interpret *Lumen Gentium* 37 when it argues that lay people, by their 'knowledge, competence or pre-eminence' are obliged to make their views known on issues relating to the church', yet adds in the same paragraph that, 'like all Christians, the laity should promptly accept in Christian obedience what is decided by their pastors'.²⁹ Joseph Komonchak points out that in the course of the Vatican II's four year duration, the mind of the Council itself developed, and on many important issues it decided not to try and settle legitimately disputed theological questions but 'simply to set forth the elements that must be kept together, perhaps even in tension'.³⁰ In so doing the Council was following the conciliar practice of working towards the greatest consensus possible. For these reasons, Komonchak states, we should not expect to find a definitive and systematic treatise on the church in conciliar documents.³¹ Ambivalence was sometimes the price of consensus, and it had far reaching implications for the implementation of the Council's vision.

²⁷ *Tradition and Transition* op. cit. p. 28.

²⁸ Gaillardetz, R.E. 'Shifting Meanings in the Lay-Clergy Distinction' *Irish Theological Quarterly* 64:1999, 115-139 p. 119.

²⁹ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" pp. 394-395.

³⁰ Komonchak, J.A. 'The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology' in Phan, P.C. (ed.) *The Gift of the Church* Collegeville: The Liturgical Press 2000 69-92 p. 75.

³¹ 'The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology' op. cit. p.76.

2.2.6 The dynamic of change

Change on this scale represents an enormous challenge: reshaping the consciousness, policies and structures of the church is a process which unfolds slowly, unevenly, and often in a polarised fashion.³² Elements of change were already underway before new strategies were developed, and contradictions were to present challenges to change. *Ressourcement* theologians were to make a huge contribution to the Council's ecclesiology, for example, but not before many of them had been silenced for a time before the Council began.³³ The *nouvelle théologie* was denounced by Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Humani Generis* of 1950, in what Komonchak calls 'a last effort by Pius XII to hold everything together'.³⁴ The pope referred to 'these advocates of novelty who despise the teaching authority of the church' and declared that when popes pass judgement on disputed issues, these issues 'cannot be any longer considered a question open to theologians'.³⁵ Yet, in the new climate of openness created by the calling of the Council, several leading *ressourcement* theologians became *periti* or expert consultants who worked with the bishops on the development of conciliar texts. This dynamic had an impact on the Council: Giuseppe Alberigo notes that there had not been enough prior study of issues which became central to the Council to enable all the bishops to take on board their implications for the church.

Vatican II laboured under an unresolved tension between, on the one hand, themes and tendencies that had been elaborated in silence amid suspicion between 1930 and 1960, and, on the other, the much more

³² *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 295.

³³ See, for example, Flynn, G. 'Introduction' in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal* op. cit. 1-19 pp. 1-11.

³⁴ Komonchak, J.A. 'Humani Generis and Nouvelle Théologie' in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal* op. cit. 138-156 p. 138.

³⁵ Pius XII, *Humani Generis* [Encyclical of Pope Pius XII conceding some false opinions threatening to undermine the foundations of Catholic doctrine August 12, 1950], sec.18 and sec.20, accessed February 2, 2015. <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius12/P12HUMAN.HTM>

profound and complex demands produced by the very holding of the Council'.³⁶

Komonchak also points out that once the ‘hegemonic power of neo-scholasticism’ was broken at the Council, differences were bound to appear among the leaders of *ressourcement* theology, whose inspiration was drawn from different sources.³⁷ This was to have consequences for the interpretation of the Council in the years that followed.

Pope Paul VI, who was elected following the death of John XXIII in June 1963, also played a part in the dynamic of change and the direction the Council would take on certain issues. He had participated in the preparation and first session of the Council, and in his opening speech as Pope at the second session he signalled his intention to continue its agenda with a reaffirmation of its pastoral nature and its commitment to *aggiornamento*.³⁸ Yet in some ways he took a more interventionist role in the Council than his predecessor: the textual changes he sent to the commission working on the chapter on the dignity of marriage and the family in *Gaudium et Spes*, for example, which addressed the question of birth control, caused consternation among many bishops.³⁹ Paul had set up a special commission to examine the issue of birth control which was still to report its findings, and many thought he should not therefore impose his solution on the Council.

³⁶ Alberigo, G. ‘The Christian Situation after Vatican II’ in Alberigo, G. Jossua J-P. and Komonchak J.A. *The Reception of Vatican II* Washington: The Catholic University of America Press 1987 1-24 p. 11.

³⁷ Komonchak J.A. ‘The Redaction and Reception of *Gaudium et Spes*’ p 22 , accessed March 9, 2016. <http://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2013/jak-views-of-gaudium-et-spes.pdf>

³⁸ O’Malley, J.W. *What happened at Vatican II*. Harvard: Belknap Press p. 172.

³⁹ Hünermann, P. ‘The Final Weeks of the Council ‘ in Alberigo, G. (ed.) *History of Vatican II Vol V* English version edited by J. A. Komonchak. Maryknoll NY: Orbis 2006 363-483 pp. 408-419.

2.2.7 Summary of section one

The new era which Vatican II ushered in for the Catholic Church was set in train by a strategic shift in papal strategy characterised by *aggiornamento*, an updating of the church in order to put it more in touch with the globalised world of the twentieth century.⁴⁰ The scale of change which this opened up is reflected in the Council's open-ended agenda, its wide-ranging aims, its style of engagement with the issues and people of the day, the new rhetorical language of its sixteen documents and its stress on dialogue. In the course of its four year duration, the mind of the Council developed as the bishops voted to leave behind the established framework of preconciliar theology and chose instead to take the church in new directions which were not always clear. This, together with the desire to reach consensus on final texts, resulted in ambiguities in which the seeds of problems for the Council's implementation were sown.

These can be summarised as follows:

- The sheer scale of the changes which the Council embraced would have required a major programme of implementation to translate them into practice.
- The transitional nature of the Council carried within it multiple problems for implementation. These were manifest in various ways: in the way the mind of the Council developed; in its willingness to break free from the limitations of an older theological framework without a clear understanding of the new directions in which it was moving; in its open-ended agenda and willingness to examine all aspects of church life; and in its readiness not to settle legitimately disputed theological questions but to set out elements that were to be kept together, sometimes in tension, within the same documents. For all these reasons, the Council was not always able to anticipate the implications of its initiatives.

⁴⁰ O'Malley points out that the meaning or the practical repercussions of *aggiornamento* were never spelled out by the Council. He points out that the Council consistently described *aggiornamento* in terms of adjustment or accommodation, but the underlying question of what from the past can be changed remained unanswered. For a discussion of the issues involved see 'Reform, Historical Consciousness and Vatican II's Aggiornamento' in *Theological Studies* Dec. 1971 32:4 pp. 573-601.

- The resulting ambiguity in many of the documents made it difficult to discern what should be implemented and how it was to be done. Ambiguity was reinforced by the Council's open, invitational style, which was very different from the directional style of preconciliar theology, reflected in the Council's preparatory texts.
- Many of the changes envisaged by the Council were implicit rather than explicit, leaving them open to a range of interpretations and operational options. Major shifts in ecclesiology, for example, were implicit in the Council's stress on dialogue, and in its desire to shape a church which was responsive to the needs of its time.
- The interpretation of the Council was crucial to its implementation and was affected by many of the factors already highlighted. In addition, the fact that many of the bishops had not studied the new approaches to many of the issues addressed by the Council affected their ability to take on board their implications. Differences of opinion among *ressourcement* theologians who helped shape the Council led to different interpretations; and the perspective of popes who succeeded John XXIII, including that of Paul VI, was central to the direction the Council would take.

2.3 Section two: the development of a new ecclesiology

In this section I will examine the development of the Council's ecclesiology and its teaching on lay people to see what changes took place and what implications this had for the implementation of the Council's vision. I will analyse the first two chapters of *Lumen Gentium*, and the teaching on the laity which emerges from the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People and the fourth chapter of *Lumen Gentium*. From this analysis I will draw out factors which affected their implementation, the seeds of which were sown in the Council's agenda and its style.

2.3.1 *The first schema on the Church*

The theological commission responsible for preparing a text on the church for debate at the Council initially assumed that its role was primarily to articulate a defence of the faith against modern errors.⁴¹ Its first schema drew largely on the teaching of recent popes and the church's preconciliar manuals of theology.

Gerald O'Collins identifies five characteristics of this 'manualist' theology.⁴² It was *regressive* in its method; it began with the current teaching of popes and returned to the past in order to show how this teaching was first expressed in Scripture, developed by the Fathers and Doctors of the church, and deployed in official teaching. It was *conceptualist* in that it suggested concepts were transmitted unchanged from one generation to another; ignoring political, social and cultural developments, its theologians claimed 'unprejudiced' access to an objective order and dealt with eternal truths and general laws from which they deduced particular applications. It was *legalistic* and juridical, concerned with the validity of sacraments and the supreme validity of the bishops and the pope, rather than the sacramentality of the whole church. It was *non-liturgical* in that it did not regard liturgy and liturgical sources as a locus of theology. It had a *non-experiential* character: manualists believed that divine self-communication could somehow be encountered 'outside' human experience.

The theological commission's preparatory schema on the church, *De Ecclesia*, was framed in terms of this theology. It had eleven chapters, the first two of which established the institutional character of the church and the visible criteria for membership. The next two were on the episcopate and reinforced the prerogatives of the pope. A chapter on the laity reflected the role assigned to Catholic Action, the network of hierarchically controlled lay organisations dedicated to the promotion of Christian values, which was described by Pius XI as 'the participation and collaboration of the laity with the Apostolic

⁴¹ 'The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology' op. cit. p. 72.

⁴² O'Collins, J. 'Ressourcement and Vatican II' in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal* op.cit. 372-391 p. 375 ff.

Hierarchy'.⁴³ A chapter on religious orders was largely devoted to their juridical place in the church. Two chapters addressed what was described as the crisis of authority in the church and a chapter on missionary activity concentrated on the church's right to evangelise. A final chapter on ecumenism concentrated on individuals and their 'return' to Mother Church, and set out restrictive rules for common worship.⁴⁴

The theological commission largely ignored contemporary questions in its concern with defending the deposit of faith, except where perceived errors needed to be condemned. As Komonchak observes:

The deposit of faith was assumed to have such an objectivity and consistency, particularly as articulated in traditional concepts and as defended by the recent magisterium, that the circumstances in which it had been stated in the past were of little account, and the defence of it was a matter of confidently and deductively pursuing paths already indicated, especially by scholastic theology. Contemporary hermeneutics was so absent from its preoccupations that it could expect the Council to settle 'doctrinal' issues on their own terms, leaving contemporary concerns and questions to the 'pastoral' efforts of bishops and priests.⁴⁵

The first chapter of *De Ecclesia* drew extensively on Pope Pius XII's 1943 encyclical *Mystici Corporis*. It emphasised the visible and societal character of the church and concluded with the identification of the Catholic Church with the mystical body of Christ, which was the theological commission's key image of the church. Efforts within the commission to promote other images, such as the People of God, were largely unsuccessful.⁴⁶

⁴³ Pius XI, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno*, [Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Catholic Action in Italy], sec.5, accessed October 2, 2014. http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_29061931_non-abbiomo-bisogno.html

⁴⁴ 'The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology' op. cit. p. 72; see also Komonchak J.A. 'The Struggle for the Council during the Preparation of Vatican II' in Alberigo, G. (ed.) *History of Vatican II Vol I* English version edited by J. A. Komonchak. Maryknoll NY: Orbis 1996 167-356 p 287; analysis of key themes pp. 287-300.

⁴⁵ 'The Struggle for the Council during the Preparation of Vatican II' op. cit. pp. 284-285.

⁴⁶ 'The Struggle for the Council during the Preparation of Vatican II' op. cit. pp. 288- 289.

The issue of church membership became a matter of public discussion when one of the leading figures of the Council, Cardinal Bea, said that in virtue of their baptism, non-Catholics were members of the mystical body. The question was hotly debated at the theological commission, but it continued to insist that the word ‘church’ had to be kept exclusively for the Roman Catholic Church.⁴⁷

Giuseppe Ruggieri observes that the image of church as the body of Christ was given an ‘absolute value’ among all New Testament images because it stresses unity in faith, communion in the sacraments and apostolicity of government, and expresses both the social and mystical dimensions of church.⁴⁸ Membership was defined in terms of those who were joined by the bonds of external profession of faith, reception of the sacraments and submission to the authority of the pope, and since only Roman Catholics fulfilled these criteria, the Church of Christ was identified with the Roman Catholic Church. This, and the insistence that membership did not really extend to non-Catholics, despite acknowledgement that other Christians share in many ways in the life of the church, prompted Ruggieri to comment that ‘this was the iron cage created by recourse to the category of “member” in defining what it means to belong to the Church’.⁴⁹

However, fuller notions of church had been developing in the decades before the Council, alongside the dominant institutional emphasis. Komonchak points out that biblical renewal had been reactivated by Pius XII’s encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943). The notion of the pilgrim people of God and the idea of the church as sacrament had developed in the two decades before the Council, and the relationship between Eucharist and church was a major theme in liturgical theology. Ecumenically inspired investigations had drawn attention to the relationship between Word and sacrament and between Scripture and tradition; to problems of authority; and to the eschatological dimensions of the

⁴⁷ ‘The Struggle for the Council during the Preparation of Vatican II’ op. cit. pp. 292-3.

⁴⁸ Ruggieri, G. ‘Beyond an Ecclesiology of Polemics: the Debate on the Church’ in Alberigo, G. (ed.) *History of Vatican II Vol II* English version edited by J. A. Komonchak. Maryknoll NY: Orbis 1997 281 -357 p. 286.

⁴⁹ ‘Beyond an Ecclesiology of Polemics: the Debate on the Church’ op. cit. p. 287.

church. The place and role of lay people had become the subject of study.⁵⁰ As Komonchak says:

It was the small place of these notions in the official draft on the Church prepared for Vatican II that led to the general disappointment with the text. The redactional history that resulted in *Lumen Gentium* and the other major ecclesiological texts of the council is largely the story of the effort to integrate the recent developments into a statement of the Church's awareness of itself.⁵¹

We can see in this process the scale of the task the bishops faced in translating the vision which John XXIII had set out for the Council into a new understanding of church: in place of old certainties they were being asked to embrace new ideas, with all the consequences this might have for the church in whose service most of them had spent a lifetime.

2.3.2 Escaping the iron cage: the development of a new schema

When the schema on the church came to the Council for debate at the end of the first session, it became clear that the text would have to be rewritten. The bishops had already rejected the theological commission's schema on Sources of Revelation and approved a draft text on the liturgy which called for significant reforms. As Komonchak says, these two votes revealed that the Council had decided to opt for a new agenda: the bishops

shared the pope's vision and wanted to produce texts that would authorise a serious review of the Church's pastoral activity and state the faith in a language and with an emphasis quite different from those which had characterised the magisterial teaching of the previous century.⁵²

⁵⁰ 'The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology' op. cit. p. 75.

⁵¹ 'The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology' op. cit. p. 75.

⁵² 'The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology' op. cit. p. 73.

Cardinal Suenens had asked his theological adviser Gérard Philips to start work on a revised text even before the Council debate on the first schema began. Philip's text expanded the original schema's perspective on the church to address its eschatological as well as its earthly dimension, and gave more room to the images of the people of God and the bride of Christ. It also referred to the 'family of the Church' rather than its 'members' in a way that was less abstract and began from a concrete reflection on the faith and life of the churches.⁵³ The first chapter of the new schema was on the mystery of the church; the second was on the hierarchical church, a third was on the laity, and a fourth on states of perfection - a concept relating to levels of spirituality in which religious, who were seen by many as 'above the struggle', were placed at the highest level.⁵⁴ Cardinal Suenens, in a significant intervention, recommended that chapter IV be placed in the context of the call to holiness of *all* Christians.⁵⁵ He then proposed a radical change in the entire schema by rearranging its chapters. The chapter on the mystery of the church was to be followed by one on the people of God in general; then a chapter on the hierarchical constitution of the church; then the laity in particular; then the call to holiness in the church. Jan Grootaers observes that

the restructuring meant a fundamental reorientation of ecclesiology that would put an end to the pyramidal vision of the church. It showed that bishops, laity and religious were all part of the people of God, the description which took precedence over the chapter on the episcopate. The first two chapters laid the foundation for membership of the Church in a spiritual dimension in which all members are equal by reason of their baptism, prior to any differentiation by the functions described in the next two chapters.⁵⁶

The schema, which was to provide the basis for *Lumen Gentium*, was accepted by the bishops for debate. In so doing, they 'buried the preparatory schema and

⁵³ 'Beyond an Ecclesiology of Polemics: the Debate on the Church' op. cit. pp. 300-303.

⁵⁴ Grootaers, J. 'The Drama Continues Between the Acts: The Debate on the Church' in *History of Vatican II Vol II* op. cit. p. 408.

⁵⁵ 'The Drama Continues Between the Acts: The Debate on the Church' op. cit. p. 404.

⁵⁶ 'The Drama Continues Between the Acts: The Debate on the Church' op. cit. p. 411.

signalled that they wanted to move forward'.⁵⁷ The implications, as Jan Grootaers observed, were radical: they had chosen to opt for a fundamental reorientation of ecclesiology. But there was no indication of how the 'pyramidal vision' was to be dismantled and what structure might take its place.

2.3.3 A wider vision: the first two chapters of *Lumen Gentium*

The final text of *Lumen Gentium* was approved in November 1964. It opens with a chapter entitled 'The mystery of the church'. The church is described first in terms of a sacrament, a sign and instrument of communion in the divine life and unity among all people. This grounds the purpose of the document, which is to 'set forth as clearly as possible' the church's 'nature and universal mission', 'for the benefit of the faithful and of the whole world'.⁵⁸ To reflect the many dimensions of the mystery of the church, the first two chapters evoke a wide range of images.

In the Old Testament the revelation of the kingdom is often made under the form of symbols. In similar fashion the inner nature of the Church is now made known to us in various images. Taken either from the life of the shepherd or cultivation of the land, from the art of building or from family life and marriage, these images have their preparation in the books of the prophets.⁵⁹

So the church is a sheepfold, a cultivated field, a vineyard, a living building, a Holy City, a mother and a spotless spouse, the mystical body of Christ and the people of God.⁶⁰ The number and variety of images reflects the Council's choice of a more biblical, patristic and liturgical language, and a more open,

⁵⁷ Melloni, A. 'The Beginning of the Second Period: The Great Debate on the Church' in Alberigo, G. (ed.) *History of Vatican II Vol III* English version edited by J. A. Komonchak. Maryknoll NY: Orbis 2000 pp. 46-47.

⁵⁸ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" sec. 1 in *Vatican Council II* op. cit. p. 350.

⁵⁹ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" p.353.

⁶⁰ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" pp. 353-359.

invitational style. The Pauline image of the body of Christ is placed within a multifaceted set of scriptural images which evoke the complex reality of a church that is described as at once a community of faith, hope and charity and a visible structure; is endowed with heavenly gifts and existing on earth; and is at once holy and always in need of purification.

The society structured with hierarchical organs and the mystical body of Christ, the visible society and the spiritual community, the earthly Church and the Church endowed with heavenly riches, are not to be thought of as two realities. On the contrary, they form one complex reality which comes together to form a human and a divine element'.⁶¹

Komonchak points out that images, precisely because of their concreteness, cannot be integrated as such; the Council did not seek to provide a synthesis of its ecclesiology, but used images to illuminate particular elements of it. An integral ecclesiology would include them all.⁶² In an explanatory note, the doctrinal commission said that chapter two of *Lumen Gentium*, entitled 'The People of God', continued the exposition of the mystery of the church begun in chapter one. The first chapter had discussed the mystery of the divine plan from creation to its fulfilment at the end of time, and the second chapter took up the same mystery as it is lived out in history, in the time between the ascension and the *parousia*. A single chapter would have been too long, but a single mystery was being unfolded, which has both a divine and a human element.⁶³

The issuing of the clarification suggests that different interpretations of the Council's ecclesiology were already emerging.

⁶¹ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" p. 357.

⁶² 'The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology' op. cit. p.77.

⁶³ Komonchak. J.A. 'Towards and Ecclesiology of Communion' in Alberigo, G. (ed.) History of Vatican II Vol IV English version edited by J. A. Komonchak Maryknoll NY: Orbis 2003 1-93 pp. 43-44.

The issue of membership was expanded within this richer understanding of church. In chapter one of *Lumen Gentium* it is made clear that ‘elements of sanctification and of truth’ exist outside the visible confines of the Roman Catholic Church,⁶⁴ and as Komonchak points out, a more flexible language had to be found than that of membership. The Council chose to speak of degrees of communion and incorporation.⁶⁵ Chapter two describes those who are fully incorporated into the church as

those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept all the means of salvation given to the Church together with her entire organisation, and who - by the bonds constituted by the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion - are joined in the visible structure of the Church of Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops.⁶⁶

It then speaks of non-Catholic Christians, who enjoy imperfect communion based on sacred scripture, faith in God and Christ, baptism, other sacraments, the episcopate, the Eucharist, devotion to the Blessed Virgin, communion in prayer and spiritual blessings, the gifts of the Spirit and martyrdom.⁶⁷

The Council had moved beyond the simple identification of the Church of Christ with the Roman Catholic Church. Here, too, the language changed: from saying that the Church of Christ ‘is’ the Catholic Church to saying that the Church of Christ ‘subsists in’ the Catholic Church: ‘This Church, constituted and organised as a society in the present world, subsists in the Catholic Church’.⁶⁸

These first paragraphs of *Lumen Gentium* illustrate the richness and complexity of the new vision of church which the bishops had embraced, and the transitional nature of the Council. They set out the elements of a new

⁶⁴ Vatican Council II, “*Lumen Gentium*,” p. 357

⁶⁵ ‘The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology’ op. cit. p. 78.

⁶⁶ Vatican Council II, “*Lumen Gentium*” p. 366.

⁶⁷ Vatican Council II, “*Lumen Gentium*” pp. 366-367.

⁶⁸ Vatican Council II, “*Lumen Gentium*” p. 357.

ecclesiology in a new style, using a new language, and left the task of developing an integral ecclesiology to theologians. They also opened up important new pathways for the development of ecumenism with their language of communion and incorporation, and their new emphasis on the church of Christ ‘subsisting in’ the Catholic Church.

2.3.4 The pilgrim people of God

The second chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, entitled ‘The People of God’, signals that the building up of the church and the fulfilment of its mission is the work of the whole community of believers, which Komonchak identifies as one of the main contributions of Vatican II to ecclesiology.⁶⁹ The people of God are all those who belong to the church, and what they have in common is discussed as part of the Council’s reflection on the mystery of the church, before later chapters address what characterises them as hierarchy, religious and laity.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the first of the Council’s documents to be published in December 1963, had already established that the whole community of faith is the subject of worship; lay people were not merely passive recipients of liturgical actions performed by clergy.

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people’ (1 Pet. 2:9, 4-5) have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism.⁷⁰

Lumen Gentium makes clear that the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood, ‘each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood

⁶⁹ ‘The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology’ p. 83.

⁷⁰ Vatican Council II “*Sacrosanctum Concilium*” pp. 8-9.

of Christ'.⁷¹ It also states that the faithful share in Christ's prophetic office, and indicates the practical implications for the church.

The whole body of the faithful ... cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of the faith (*sensus fidei*) of the whole people, when, 'from the bishops to the last of the faithful' they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals.⁷²

Alberigo observes that the centralisation of doctrinal authority which had taken place in the church and the multiplication of its interventions had stripped the 'peripheral' and 'lower ranks' of responsibility and the consensus of the faithful had atrophied. 'The surmounting of an essentialist ecclesiology... not only made it possible to recognise the importance of the universal priesthood of the laity, but it also required a new thinking about the *sensus fidelium*'.⁷³

The image of the people of God also highlights the eschatological orientation of the church, which in turn emphasises its provisional nature, always open to the spirit and in need of renewal, advancing 'through trials and tribulations... ceaselessly renewing herself through the action of the spirit... until she may attain to that light which knows no setting'.⁷⁴

Alberigo comments that the idea of 'pilgrim' which the Council used to describe the church underlines its historical character and represents a point of departure which called for further development: another example of the transitional nature of the Council. He points out that hints of its importance appear in *Lumen Gentium* where God is described as gradually instructing the people of

⁷¹ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" p. 361.

⁷² Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" p 363. A translator's footnote on this page explains that 'Sensus fidei refers to the instinctive sensitivity and discrimination which the members of the Church possess in matters of faith'.

⁷³ 'Major Results, Shadows of Uncertainty' op. cit. 617-640 p. 627.

⁷⁴ Vatican II "Lumen Gentium" p. 360.

Israel and revealing himself through their history, and the Church is described as entering into the history of humanity.⁷⁵

Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XIV, who was one of the *periti* at the Council, summed up the significance of chapter two of *Lumen Gentium* in these terms:

[i]t was here that the historical character of the Church became clear, the unity of the history of God with his people, the internal unity of the people of God beyond the boundaries of sacramental states of life, the eschatological dynamic, that is, the provisional and fragmentary character of the Church always in need of renewal, and finally the ecumenical dynamic, namely, the various ways of being joined or related to the Church which are possible and real, even beyond the confines of the Catholic Church.⁷⁶

Komonchak asserts that the essential theological description of the church is concentrated in the first two chapters of *Lumen Gentium*⁷⁷. Its great achievement, he says, was to ‘free the spiritual and theological dimensions of the church from the Procrustean constraints of the first draft’.⁷⁸ Once this was done, the bishops dealt with essential elements of the rich and deep reality of the church.

Once again we can see the Council as work in progress: it set the church free of the constrictions of the past, and created an agenda for future development whose practical implementation remained to be worked out. The understanding of the building up of the church as the work of the whole community of believers, for example, has far reaching implications for the relative roles of lay and ordained people, as does the renewed interest in the *sensus fidelium*. As

⁷⁵ ‘Major Results, Shadows of Uncertainty’ op. cit. p. 625

⁷⁶ Ratzinger, J. ‘Notes and Comments: The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council’ in *Communio* Vol XI no. 3 1986 239-251 p. 249.

⁷⁷ ‘The Ecclesiology of Vatican II’ op. cit. p. 2.

⁷⁸ ‘The Ecclesiology of Vatican II’ op. cit. p. 3.

Alberigo points out, the concept of the pilgrim church, one of the key images of Vatican II, was a point of departure: it required further elucidation for its fuller meaning to be made explicit.

*2.3.5 Towards a new theology of the laity: chapter four of *Lumen Gentium**

As Komonchak notes, the new understanding of church as the people of God and the realisation that the fulfilment of the church's mission in the world is the work of the whole body of believers meant that the laity, 'much neglected in preconciliar textbooks', would have to be 'rehabilitated'.⁷⁹

Rehabilitation proved to be a difficult process. *Lumen Gentium* devoted its fourth chapter to the laity, in which it defines lay people in contrast to clergy and religious as 'all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the church'. It then goes on to say that the special attribute of the laity is their secular character: they live in the world and in the 'ordinary circumstances of social and family life'.

There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit to the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties.⁸⁰

In comparison, 'those in Holy Orders... are expressly ordained to the sacred ministry', even when they are engaged in secular activities.⁸¹ However, the same document stresses the co-responsibility and equality of all the people of God which derive from baptism.

There is ... one chosen People of God: 'one Lord, one faith, one Baptism' (Eph 4:5), there is a common dignity of members deriving from their rebirth in Christ, a common grace as children [of God], a common

⁷⁹ 'The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology' op. cit. p. 83.

⁸⁰ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" p. 389.

⁸¹ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" p. 388.

vocation to perfection, one salvation, one hope and undivided charity. In Christ and in the Church there is, then, no inequality arising from race or nationality, social condition or sex, for ‘there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor freeman; there is neither male nor female, For you are all ‘one’ in Christ Jesus (Gal, 3:28 Greek; cf Col 3:11).⁸²

The contrastive view - which defined laity in contrast to clergy - emphasises the unique responsibility of lay people for the conversion of the world. Edward Schillebeeckx observed that this approach starts from largely ‘hierarchological’ premises.

Here it was often forgotten that this positive content [of a theology of the laity] is already provided by the Christian content of the word *Christifidelis* [Christ’s faithful people]. The characteristic feature of the laity began to be explained as their relation to the world, while the characteristic of the clergy was their relationship to the Church. Here both sides failed to do justice to the ecclesial dimension of any *Christifidelis* and his or her relationship to the world. The clergy become the apolitical men of the Church; the laity are the less ecclesiastically committed, politically involved ‘men of the world’. In this view, the ontological status of the ‘new humanity’ reborn with the baptism of the Spirit was not recognised in his or her own individual worth, but only from the standpoint or status of the clergy.⁸³

Gaillardetz argues that this ‘hierarchological perspective’ can only be drawn by focusing on certain texts at the expense of the whole corpus of Council documents.⁸⁴ The common call to discipleship which comes with baptism, described by Kenan Osborne as the ‘common matrix’,⁸⁵ is evident in the decision to place the chapter on the people of God before that on the hierarchy, and in the Council’s appeal to the priesthood of all believers.

⁸² Vatican Council II, “*Lumen Gentium*” p. 389.

⁸³ Schillebeeckx, E. *The Church with a Human Face*. London: SCM Press Ltd 1985 p. 157.

⁸⁴ Gaillardetz, R. R. ‘Shifting Meanings in the Lay-Clergy Distinction’ op. cit. p. 121.

⁸⁵ Osborne K. B. *Ministry: Lay Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church*. New York: Paulist Press 1993 p. 530.

While at one level... the Council documents can be read as simply presupposing the traditional lay-clergy distinctions, at a more profound level the Council set in motion a significant reconsideration of this distinction by adopting this common matrix as the starting point for its theological reflection.⁸⁶

Gaillardetz proposes that the positive theological content of the laity is best identified by considering the primary identity of the *Christifidelis* realised in baptism. This primary identity is presupposed in *Gaudium et Spes*, published a year after *Lumen Gentium*, whose fifth chapter addresses the universal call to holiness.

It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love, and by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society.... The forms and tasks of life are many but holiness is one - that sanctity which is cultivated by all who act under God's Spirit and, obeying the Father's voice and adoring God the Father in spirit and in truth, follow Christ, poor, humble and cross-bearing, that they may deserve to be partakers of his glory. Each one, however, according to his own gifts and duties must steadfastly advance along the way of a living faith, which arouses hope and works through love.⁸⁷

This consistent assertion of the fundamental equality of the *Christifidelis*, Gaillardetz states, helps explain why, even in texts which speak of the distinctive characteristic of the laity, these characteristics are never presented as exclusive to them. *Gaudium et Spes* asserts that 'It is to the laity, though not exclusively to them, that secular duties and activity properly belong'.⁸⁸ In addition, Gaillardetz points out that over the course of the Council there was a shift in its way of relating the church to the world. Chapter VII of *Lumen*

⁸⁶ Gaillardetz, R.R. 'Shifting Meanings in the Lay-Clergy Distinction' op. cit. p. 122.

⁸⁷ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" pp. 397-398.

⁸⁸ Vatican Council II, "Gaudium et Spes" p. 944.

Gentium, for example, on the Pilgrim Church, relates the temporal not so much to a sacred order as to the eschatological order.

The promised and hoped for restoration, therefore, has already begun in Christ. It is carried forward in the sending of the Holy Spirit and through him continues in the Church, in which, through our faith, we learn the meaning of our earthly life, while we bring to term, with hope of future good, the task allotted to us in the world... Until there be realised a new heaven and a new earth in which justice dwells, the pilgrim church... carries the mark of this world which will pass and she herself takes her place among the creatures which groan and travail yet and await the revelation of the sons of God (cf Rom 8:19-22).⁸⁹

The whole church, then, and not just the laity, is situated within the temporal order.

Gaillardetz concludes that in spite of ambiguity in the Council texts, the bishops were trying to avoid a strictly categorical or contrastive definition of the lay person, and were moving instead in the direction of ‘simply defining *laicus* as the normal situation of the practicing Christian who seeks in their daily lives to bring all of history to its fulfilment in Christ. The lay person is the typical Christian, the *Christifidelis*'.⁹⁰ Once again we can see how ambiguity in the texts raises issues of interpretation and implementation.

2.3.6 *The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*

Just as *Lumen Gentium* had emerged from the constraints of the first schema on the church which had been shaped by preconciliar theology, so, too, the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People struggled to move beyond the limits of a schema

⁸⁹ Vatican Council II, “*Lumen Gentium*” p. 408.

⁹⁰ ‘Shifting Meanings in the Lay-Clergy Distinction’ op. cit. p. 126.

which was shaped by old patterns of relationship between ordained and lay, summed up by Pius IX's characterisation of lay people as a 'docile flock' whose duty was to 'follow their pastors'.⁹¹ By the time the decree went to the bishops for debate in October 1964, it was in its third draft and had been in development since 1960. It was finally approved in November 1965 as the Council was coming to a close.

The commission set up to produce a draft text was charged with examining the scope and purposes of the apostolate of the laity, Catholic Action and other lay associations, their subordination to the hierarchy, and how they might be adapted to meet contemporary needs.⁹² Disagreements quickly emerged over the definition of the lay apostolate, particularly over the basis of lay activity in the world and the significance of the public 'mandate' officially accrediting certain forms of lay apostolate. Paramount among these was Catholic Action, which had developed as a network of lay organisations, under the control of the hierarchy, dedicated to infusing Christian values in public life. Some members of the commission wanted to expand the definition of Catholic Action to include other forms of lay activity, while others wanted to retain its more restricted meaning. Others thought that the focus on lay associations, with its overtones of church control, was itself restrictive and clerical. Behind the debates were fundamental questions about the relationship between the temporal and the spiritual order, the scope of the church's redemptive mission, the relative roles of laity and hierarchy in accomplishing it, and the freedom and autonomy of the laity.⁹³

The conciliar debate which took place on the third version of the schema from 7th-13th October 1964 provides an insight into the bishops' responses to these

⁹¹ Pius X, *Vehementer Nos* [Encyclical of Pope Pius X on the French Law of Separation] sec.18, accessed August 5, 2014. http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_px_enc_11021906_vehementer-nos.html

⁹² 'The Struggle for the Council during the Preparation of Vatican II' op. cit. p. 196.

⁹³ 'The Struggle for the Council during the Preparation of Vatican II' op. cit. pp. 197-198.

fundamental questions.⁹⁴ The Bishop of Bhopal urged that laity be treated as adults, and criticised the schema's concept of Catholic Action, which, he said, is only one of many forms of the apostolate. He thought clericalism was the main hindrance to church reform and asked why the church had to be represented in many fora by priests. The bishop of Salt Sainte Marie also thought the schema was over clerical and did not meet the expectations of lay people around the world. Clerics were talking to themselves in the schema, he said, not the laity, and there was no dialogue, nor any serious basis for it. An apostolate of the laity outside of lay associations is hardly considered, yet the call to the apostolate is much more wide-ranging.

The bishop of Bruges wanted it made clear that in the exercise of their apostolate, the laity must be respectful of the religious freedom of others. The truth, he said, is not to be presented ex cathedra but in dialogue. The bishop of Cape Town thought the schema ought to acknowledge the maturity of the faithful and their sense of responsibility, and he thought something should be said about the preparation of priests since they are to lead the laity and be with them in their apostolate.

The auxiliary bishop of San Antonio noted that this was the first time in the history of councils that so positive a teaching was proposed about the laity and the people of God; he wanted the schema to explain even more clearly that the apostolate of the laity belongs to the very essence of the church. He also called for greater clarity on the necessity of dialogue among bishops, pastors and laity, and proposed that a postconciliar commission be established to investigate and set up an adequate structure for dialogue, which would be a sign of the times.

The bishop of Zagreb proposed that every parish should have a weekly meeting of all the adults to promote dialogue among members of a single ecclesial family; he saw the chief task of priests in the future to be the pastoral care of

⁹⁴ Sauer, H. 'The Council Discovers the Laity' in *History of Vatican II Vol IV* op. cit. 234-267. The debate is described in pp. 257-264 from which the following examples of contributions to the debate are taken.

adults and their training for the apostolate. The bishop of Nueve de Julio said the schema should speak of a participation of the laity in the church not only in the areas of holiness and teaching but also in that of governance.

The bishop of Talca thought that the lay apostolate ought to involve organisations only in a minimal degree, because institutions change more slowly than people do. The contemporary world is moving so rapidly that ecclesiastical institutions for the apostolate could easily lock Christians into a closed, anachronistic ghetto.

The last of the Council Fathers to speak was the Melkite Patriarch of Antioch for Egypt. As an example of collaboration between laity and clergy in the Orthodox Church and the Catholic communities of the Eastern Church, he pointed to the existence of lay committees who took over the task of teaching, handling legal business and taking care of the church in every parish in Egypt.

These contributions to the debate provide a glimpse of the new vision many bishops had of the church and the role of lay people. The call for lay people to be treated as mature and responsible adults, the stress on their autonomy and the breadth of their calling, and the repeated calls for structures which would allow them to contribute their skills and insights to the life of the church demonstrate how far the bishops had moved from preconciliar teaching.

The bishops' comments reflected in part their own local experience and the organisational structures with which they had ties: for the Italians it was Catholic Action, which was more highly developed in Italy than anywhere else, for the French it was their involvement in the world around them. The call of the North American and other non-European bishops for the acceptance of a greater variety of organisations reflected their local experience.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ 'The Council Discovers the Laity' op. cit. p. 264.

More fundamentally, the comments reflect very different understandings of what it meant to be a lay person - whether it should be understood primarily in terms of an apostolate to be regulated by the church, or as a vocation to be lived in the freedom of the Spirit. Both understandings appear in the final text. Its stated aim and the framework it adopts suggest that many bishops were still thinking in terms of hierarchical control and regulation. It set out to 'explain the nature of the lay apostolate' and 'to state fundamental principles and give pastoral direction for its more effective exercise' which will 'serve as norms in the revision of Canon Law'.⁹⁶ There are chapters on the vocation of lay people to the apostolate; on the objectives of the apostolate; on the various fields of the apostolate; the different forms of the apostolate, including a section on Catholic Action; the order to be observed, which addresses the relationship between the lay apostolate and the hierarchy, clergy and religious; and training for the apostolate.

However, in the third section of the first chapter, a new understanding emerges which articulates a very different vision and opens up the basis for a new relationship between lay people and clergy.⁹⁷ In an analysis of this section, William H. Johnston traces the dismantling of the Catholic Action framework and its replacement by a very different foundation for the place and work of lay people.⁹⁸

The section speaks of the place and role of the laity within the family of the whole people of God. We read that laity are 'apostles' and that this 'derives from their union with Christ their head' - not, as in Catholic Action, from the hierarchy. This role is then called a 'right', something within the laity's prerogative to exercise, not merely with the permission of others. It is also called a 'duty', something they are bound to exercise despite what others may

⁹⁶ Vatican Council II, "Apostolicam Actuositatem" p 767.

⁹⁷ Vatican Council II, "Apostolicam Actuositatem" 768-769.

⁹⁸ Johnston, W.H. 'Lay Ecclesial Ministry in Theological and Relational Context' in Muldoon, T. (ed) *Catholic Identity and the Laity* Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books 2008, 220-238 pp. 229-231.

judge or think. It goes on to say that ‘it is by the Lord himself that they are assigned to the apostolate’ - again, not by the mediation of the apostolic ministry, but directly by Christ. This Christological basis for the apostolate of the laity is rooted in sacramental grounding: the laity ‘are inserted... in the Mystical Body of Christ by baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in confirmation’. Johnston points out that *Lumen Gentium* 33 says the same thing in nearly the same words.

The last paragraph of the section develops a pneumatological grounding for the ministry of lay people. It begins and ends with reference to the role of the ordained; what happens in between, suggests Johnston, reconfigures, even revolutionises, that role. The paragraph opens by recalling *Lumen Gentium* 12, and affirming that ‘the Holy Spirit sanctifies the people of God’ not only ‘through the ministry [of the ordained] and the sacraments’ but also directly, giving ‘the faithful special gifts besides (cf 1 Cor 12:7)’ for their apostolate. The Spirit does this in freedom, ‘allotting them to each just as the Spirit chooses (1 Cor 12:11)’. The reception of these charisms gives the faithful ‘the right and duty to use’ them. They can be exercised anywhere: ‘in the church and in the world’. Not only that, the recipients of the charisms have freedom in using them: they can exercise them ‘in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who “blows where it will” (Jn 3:8)’. Johnston observes that this powerful scriptural image for the Spirit’s ‘utterly free, divinely sovereign, humanly unconfinable scope of action’ is a long way from Catholic Action with its hierarchical control.⁹⁹

Charisms are discerned in communion with the whole community, ‘with the pastors especially’. Pastors have a pivotal role because of their leadership function in the community, but Johnston argues that all traces of unilateral and authoritarian exercises of power should be exorcised and replaced by an appreciation for Christ’s deputation of the faithful to their apostolates.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ ‘Lay Ecclesial Ministry’ op. cit. p. 231.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Lay Ecclesial Ministry’ op. cit. p 231.

The tension between this section of the text and its overall framework provides further evidence of the transitional nature of the Council. The potential for ecclesiological change which it implies is considerable. Alberigo observes that the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People was the first document of a council that dealt specifically with the laity, and it moved beyond the traditional idea of lay participation in the hierarchical apostolate of the church. But it lacked a theological definition of a lay person, and this, together with the continued focus on the organisation of Catholic Action, held back efforts to situate problems relating to the ordinary faithful in the perspective of the people of God.¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, *Gaudium et Spes*, the final document of Vatican II, promulgated a month later, looks forward to a new ecclesial relationship between priests and people.

It is to the laity, though not exclusively to them, that secular duties and activity properly belong... It is their task to cultivate a properly informed conscience and to impress the divine law on the affairs of the earthly city. For guidance and spiritual strength let them turn to the clergy; but let them realise that their pastors will not be so expert as to have a ready answer to every problem (even every grave problem) that arises; this is not the role of the clergy: it is rather up to the laymen to shoulder their responsibilities under the guidance of Christian wisdom and with eager attention to the teaching authority of the Church.¹⁰²

The teaching of Vatican II on the laity, despite its ambiguities, is far removed from the preconciliar tendency to see the laity as passive recipients of the clergy's pastoral initiatives. Gaillardetz points out that the Council taught that the laity have a right and a responsibility to be involved in the church's apostolate (*Lumen Gentium* 30, 33); that they are equal sharers in the threefold office of Christ as priest, prophet and king (*Lumen Gentium* 34-36); they are

¹⁰¹ 'Major Results, Shadows of Uncertainty' op. cit. p. 628-9.

¹⁰² Vatican Council II, "Gaudium et Spes" p. 944.

called to full participation in the liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14); they are encouraged to pursue advanced study in theology and scripture (*Gaudium et Spes* 62), and they take the initiative on the transformation of the temporal order (*Lumen Gentium* 31; *Gaudium et Spes* 43). Pastors must also acknowledge their expertise, competence and authority (*Lumen Gentium* 37).¹⁰³

As Paul Lakeland states,

when we understand Vatican II in the light of all that its documents say and imply, the understanding of the lay role in the Church is completely revolutionised. From passive recipients of the benefits accorded by a clergy called to the exercise of sacred powers and divinely bestowed jurisdiction, the laity become active ministers of the Gospel... The laity and clergy together ... come to be understood as a missionary body in history, called into dialogue with the world that is not the Church; at the same time, this world, in virtue of its being loved by God, exists in relation to the Church, the People of God.¹⁰⁴

2.3.7 *Structures for implementation*

Lumen Gentium refers to the obligation of lay people to share their opinions on issues which affect the good of the church, which, it says, should be done ‘through the institutions established by the Church for that purpose’.¹⁰⁵ Many of the structures, however, referred to in *Lumen Gentium* and the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People were not made mandatory and in many cases the hierarchy retained control over who served on them. In *Christus Dominus*, the Council’s Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, for example, we read that lay people can serve on diocesan curia, where they will be

¹⁰³ ‘Shifting Meanings in the Lay-Clergy Distinction’ op. cit. p.119

¹⁰⁴ Lakeland, P. ‘The Laity’ in Bulman R.G. and Parrella F.J. (eds) *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations* Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online September 2006 Chapter II pp. 1-15 p. 12 DOI: 10.1093/0195178068.003.0011

¹⁰⁵ Vatican Council II, “*Lumen Gentium*” pp. 394-395

'collaborating in the pastoral work of the bishop'.¹⁰⁶ 'Specially chosen' laity can also serve alongside clergy and religious on diocesan pastoral councils, which are presided over by bishops and aim to 'investigate and consider matters relating to pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions concerning them'.¹⁰⁷ These councils are optional and are simply encouraged in Canon Law: they are not mandatory.¹⁰⁸ At the level of governance of the whole church, Vatican II sought to restore the collegial character of the episcopate, but the Decree on Bishops expresses only an 'earnest hope' that synods and councils will flourish.¹⁰⁹

In the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People there is a similar vagueness of intention; we read, for example, that 'in dioceses, as far as possible, councils should be set up to assist the Church's apostolic work... such councils should be found, too, if possible, at parochial, inter-diocesan level, and also on the national and international plane'.¹¹⁰

It was not until 1983 that the revised Code of Canon Law gave legal expression to the conciliar vision of lay participation in the life and ministry of the Church, with provision for a range of roles for lay people which included catechists (c. 776), parish co-ordinators (c. 517 § 2), and membership of parish finance committees (c. 537).¹¹¹ Parish councils, however, where people might be expected to share their opinions as *Lumen Gentium* encouraged, can be mandated by a bishop after consultation with a council of priests, but they are not required.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Vatican Council II, "Christus Dominus" p. 579.

¹⁰⁷ Vatican Council II, "Christus Dominus" p. 580.

¹⁰⁸ Canon 511 states that 'In each diocese, in so far as pastoral circumstances suggest, a pastoral council is to be established'. *The Code of Canon Law in English translation*, London: Collins 1983 p.92 English translation by the Canon Law Society.

¹⁰⁹ Vatican Council II, "Christus Dominus" pp. 586-588

¹¹⁰ Vatican Council II, "Apostolicam Actuositatem" p. 792.

¹¹¹ *The Code of Canon Law in English translation* op. cit. p.142, p.93, p. 97.

¹¹² Canon 536 states: 'If, after consulting the council of priests, the diocesan Bishop considers it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish... The pastoral council has only a consultative vote...' *The Code of Canon Law in English translation* op. cit. p. 97.

Many of the Council's references to implementation in relation to the new role of lay people, therefore, are expressed in vague terms; even where there are calls for practical change, they can easily go unheeded as many changes are not mandatory.

2.3.8 *Summary of section two*

This section traced the process by which the new theological vision of Vatican II was given expression in the Council's ecclesiology and its teaching on lay people, and identified factors which affected the implementation of the documents it produced.

It found that the Council chose to reject the draft schema on the church and go beyond the schema on the apostolate of lay people, embracing in the process a new theological vision. The redaction of the texts highlights how challenging this process was. In the first two chapters of *Lumen Gentium*, the elements of a new ecclesiology and a new understanding of the church as the whole people of God are set out for further development. In the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, the struggle to move beyond the framework of preconciliar teaching on the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people is clearly visible, opening the door to different interpretations. We find a new vision of the role of lay people in the third section of the first chapter, and in many of the voices in the debate on the final text, which also call for structures for embedding new insights into the life of the church. The new vision emerges more strongly from reading what is said and implied across all the Council's documents, but it was not matched by a clear commitment to create structures for its implementation.

Factors which affected the implementation of the Council's vision in relation to its ecclesiology and its teaching on lay people can be summarised as follows:

- The scale of change envisaged by the Council's ecclesiology and its teaching on the laity made implementation difficult. The reorientation of ecclesiology represented by the re-ordering of chapters in *Lumen Gentium*, for example, implied major structural change. The lack of clarity involved in moving away from the certainties of preconciliar theology in directions that were yet to be elucidated added to the difficulties.
- The transitional nature of Council documents had an impact on their implementation. The bishops did not resolve many of the theological issues which emerged during the redaction of texts, but chose instead to include different perspectives in the same documents which required to be developed further. New directions were opened up by the language of communion in relation to other Christians, for example; by the renewed appreciation of the *sensus fidelium* in relation to lay people; and by the concept of the church as the pilgrim people of God. A new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people was implicit in the common baptismal call to discipleship and in the new interpretation of the role and calling of lay people which emerges from the first chapter of the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People. The debate on the final text of the Decree raised issues which remain to be resolved.
- Both documents contained ambiguities which left them open to interpretation. Different understandings of the role of lay people, for example, as members of hierarchically controlled associations, or as gifted members of the church, could lead to different programmes of implementation.
- The documents' changes were often implicit rather than explicit: the invitational style of the first two chapters of *Lumen Gentium*, for example, contrasts with the directional style of the first schema on the church. A new message was being conveyed which could be translated into practice in a variety of ways.

- The documents were open to different interpretations from the start, as the note of clarification on the first two chapters of *Lumen Gentium* suggests. The Council debate on the final text of the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People demonstrates differences in interpretation and regional experience among bishops which in turn resulted in different proposals for implementation.
- Many of the Council's references to implementation, where they exist, are expressed in vague terms; even where there are calls for practical change, they can easily go unheeded as many changes are not mandatory.

For all these reasons, the implementation of Vatican II was, and, I will argue, continues to be, a complex and disputed process in the wider Church and in Scotland.

2.4 Section three: conflicts of interpretation.

In this section I will focus on the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops of 1985 in order to highlight the conflicting interpretations of the Council's ecclesiology which emerged in the years before the archived research was undertaken in Scotland.¹¹³ The Synod was called by Pope John Paul II to celebrate the Council on the twentieth anniversary of its close and to consider how it had been implemented. To this end a consultation paper was sent out to episcopal conferences around the world in preparation for the gathering of bishops in Rome, and the Synod produced two reports: an initial short 'Message to the People of God' and a final report. I will consider the different interpretations of the Council's ecclesiology which emerge from the Synod and its documents

¹¹³ The Synod of Bishops was established by Pope Paul VI in 1965 in response to calls for the continuation of collegiality after Vatican II. Its purpose is 'to foster the unity and co-operation of bishops around the world with the Holy See... by means of a common study concerning the conditions of the Church and a joint solution on matters concerning Her mission'. Ordinary Synods, with delegates from episcopal conferences, meet on a regular basis; special Synods are devoted to the affairs of a particular church; and membership of extraordinary Synods is restricted to presidents of episcopal conferences. Hebblethwaite, P. *Synod Extraordinary* London: Darton, Longman and Todd. Prefatory note p vii.

through the eyes of contemporary observers, who highlight the tensions they created.

2.4.1 The Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops 1985

The central theme of the extraordinary Synod of 1985 was the ‘celebration, promotion and verification’ of Vatican II.¹¹⁴ Giuseppe Alberigo notes that the Synod’s organisation was marked by many anomalies: the time for consultation was short; there was no preparatory or working document; episcopal conferences were forbidden to make the outcome of their consultations public or to share them with one another. Even a report by the International Theological Commission on ‘Select Themes of Ecclesiology on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council’, dated 1984, was not released until just before the Synod opened.¹¹⁵

At the same time, pressure on public opinion was created by the publication of a long interview given by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) and later Pope Benedict XVI, in which he spoke of the need for ‘restoration’ in the church, which he defined as the ‘search for a new balance after all the exaggeration of an indiscriminate opening to the world, after the overly positive interpretation of an agnostic and atheistic world’.¹¹⁶ Alberigo argues that Ratzinger’s intervention ‘had the effect of disseminating a markedly negative and alarmist view of the state of the Church, in which criticism of the present state... went so far as to attack the validity of the second Vatican Council itself’.¹¹⁷ Peter Hebblethwaite suggests that the interview with Cardinal Ratzinger appeared to set the agenda for the Synod. He

¹¹⁴ *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod 2*, accessed January 27, 2016.

http://www.saint-mike.org/library/synod_bishops/final_report_1985.html

¹¹⁵ Alberigo, G. ‘New Balances in the Church since the Synod’ in *Synod 1985 - An evaluation*. Concilium Edinburgh: T&T Clarke December 1986 138-146 pp.138-9.

¹¹⁶ Ratzinger J. with Messori V. *The Ratzinger Report*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1985. Translated by Salvator Attanasio and Graham Harrison p.37.

¹¹⁷ ‘New Balances in the Church since the Synod’ op. cit. p. 139.

adds that the silencing of Brazilian liberation theologian Fr Leonardo Boff by the CDF in February 1985 added to a sense of gloom.¹¹⁸

The questionnaire sent out in advance to bishops around the world as the basis for consultation included four questions about the general implementation of Vatican II, two of which asked about errors, abuses or difficulties which may have arisen in the interpretation or application of Vatican II.¹¹⁹ Hebblethwaite claims that these questions were put in for Ratzinger, who was ‘professionally concerned’ with detecting and eradicating error.¹²⁰ A further set of questions focussed on specific aspects of the Council’s teaching: on the church, divine revelation, liturgy, and the church in the contemporary world. Alberigo notes that many people thought the questions were inspired by a ‘static vision of Vatican II and the life of the Church’ and were therefore prejudicially orientated towards a negative view of the situation.¹²¹

Despite this, Avery Dulles, among others, notes that almost universally, reports from the bishops’ conferences reflected deep gratitude for the work of the Council.¹²² Many of the responses, despite the Vatican Secretary of State’s ruling about confidentiality, found their way into the public domain. The response of the Bishops of England and Wales, for example, was printed in *The Tablet*. Their report concluded by saying that the decrees and spirit of Vatican II had been generally welcomed by the people of England and Wales. Above all, they said, they have

welcomed the renewal of ecclesiology and the emphasis of the dogmatic constitution Lumen Gentium on the Church as the pilgrim People of God. The renewal of relationships within the Church and the development of

¹¹⁸ *Synod Extraordinary* op. cit. p.7.

¹¹⁹ See the questionnaire issued by the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland entitled ‘Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Second Vatican Council: Rome November 25-December 8, 1985’. Published by JSB Glasgow (undated).

¹²⁰ *Synod Extraordinary* op. cit. p.30.

¹²¹ ‘New Balances in the Church since the Synod’ op. cit. p. 138.

¹²² Dulles, A. *The reshaping of Catholicism* San Francisco: Harper & Row 1988 p. 185.

relationships between the Churches which have occurred since the council are counted among its chief benefits.¹²³

Cardinal Godfried Daneels presented a summary of the bishops' responses in his initial report at the start of the Synod and began with the Council's positive achievements. In relation to *Lumen Gentium*, he noted that there was 'a more profound understanding of the Church, greater co-responsibility (deacons, lectors, acolytes, catechists). A dynamic ecclesial attitude has replaced a defensive one in the prophetic mission and the missionary spirit'.¹²⁴ But he also noted:

Many of the respondents report that the Council's teaching on the Church has sometimes been incompletely and superficially received. For example, the notion of the Church as People of God with which the Council describes the Church has been separated from its salvation-history context and from its coherence with other images and notions of the Church, such as the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Spirit. Some ideological and false ideas have been brought in under the notion "people". In addition, the mystery of the Church and its sacramental condition are often neglected. The Church as institution is sometimes separated from the Church as mystery, and an opposition is claimed between the Church as communion and the Church as institution, between the popular Church and the hierarchical Church. ¹²⁵

Cardinal Daneels proposed that what was needed was not a repudiation of the Council but a deeper knowledge and understanding of its teaching and he offered four themes for reflection at the Synod: to examine more deeply the mystery of the church in her vocation to sanctity; to return to the sources: the Word of God, the living tradition and the authentic interpretation of the magisterium; to rediscover the richness of the Church as communion; and to

¹²³ 'Bishops for renewal' in *The Tablet* 3 August 1985 p. 22.

¹²⁴ *Synod Extraordinary* op. cit. pp. 111-112.

¹²⁵ Komonchak , J.A. 'The Synod of 1985 and the Notion of the Church' *Chicago Studies* 26/3 (November 1987) 330-345 p. 331.

focus on dialogue with the world.¹²⁶ This set the framework for the Synod's discussion and its final report.

2.4.2 The final report of the Synod

The first paragraph of the final report recalls the words of Pope John Paul II when he announced the calling of the Synod on 25th January 1985. He spoke of the sufferings and joys, struggles and hopes, not of the people of our time, as *Gaudium et Spes* had done,¹²⁷ but of the sufferings and joys of the Church. Hebblethwaite sees this as a sign the church had become more introverted.¹²⁸

The report then speaks of 'lights and shadows in the reception of the Council' and of 'deficiencies and difficulties', which it attributes in part to an incomplete understanding and application of the Council and in part to developments in modern culture. It points out that not everything that took place after the Council was caused by the Council. It identifies among wealthy nations the growth in an ideology 'characterised by pride in technical advances and a certain immanentism that leads to the idolatry of material goods (so-called consumerism)'.¹²⁹ This, it says, results in blindness to spiritual realities and values. Where the church is oppressed or raises her voice against injustice it observes, it seems to be accepted more positively; but even in such places 'not all the faithful fully and totally identify with the Church and her primary mission'.¹³⁰ Hebblethwaite sees this as a veiled attack on liberation theology.¹³¹

Among the internal causes of difficulties, the report highlights a 'partial and selective reading of the Council as well as a superficial interpretation of

¹²⁶ *Synod Extraordinary* op. cit. pp. 116-117.

¹²⁷ Vatican Council II, "Gaudium et Spes" p.903.

¹²⁸ *Synod Extraordinary* op. cit. p.136.

¹²⁹ *The Final Report* op. cit.4.

¹³⁰ *The Final Report* op. cit. 3.

¹³¹ *Synod Extraordinary* op. cit. p.137.

doctrine'. This partial reading of the Council has led to 'a unilateral presentation of the Church as a purely institutional structure devoid of her Mystery... From time to time there has also been a lack of the discernment of spirits, with the failure to correctly distinguish between a legitimate openness of the Council to the world and the acceptance of a secularized world's mentality and order of values'.¹³² All of this indicates the need for a 'deeper reception of the Council' to be achieved through a deeper and more extensive knowledge of the Council, its interior assimilation, its loving reaffirmation and its implementation. The theological interpretation of the conciliar doctrine 'must show attention to all the documents'.¹³³

It was in the theological interpretation of the Council and its application that conflicts were rooted. The report focuses on two major ecclesiastical themes: the church as mystery and as communion. In its consideration of the mystery of the Church, the Synod reads in the signs of the times a bleaker picture than that which the church faced twenty years earlier in relation to secularism. The legitimate autonomy of temporal realities which the Council affirmed, it says, does not apply to the current immanentism which, in the Synod's view, neglects and denies the dimension of mystery; at the same time, the final report speaks of a 'new hunger and thirst for the transcendent and the divine'.¹³⁴ Its response is to stress the primary mission of the church to proclaim the gospel: 'The Church makes herself more credible if she speaks less of herself and ever more preaches Christ Crucified and witnesses with her own life'.¹³⁵

The report recalls that the Council described the Church in many ways, including as 'the people of God, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the family of God'. This is the only reference in the document to the image of church as the people of God, which was such a major theme of *Lumen Gentium* and featured in the Synod's initial report and in the

¹³² *The Final Report* op. cit. 4.

¹³³ *The Final Report* op. cit. 5.

¹³⁴ *The Final Report* op. cit. A1.

¹³⁵ *The Final Report* op. cit. A 2.

questionnaire sent out in advance of the Synod.¹³⁶ The reason for its virtual disappearance is hinted at in the next sentence: ‘We cannot replace a false unilateral vision of the Church as purely hierarchical with a new sociological conception which is also unilateral’.¹³⁷ Komonchak says that within the theological community the concept of the people of God had sometimes been put to ideological use: either by giving it a particular political meaning by identifying ‘people’ in social or economic terms, especially the poor; or by counterposing a ‘people’s church’ or a ‘church from below’ with the ‘hierarchical church’ or ‘church from above’.¹³⁸ This was the ‘sociological’ reading to which the final report alluded.

The second major ecclesiological theme in the final report is the church as communion. Although the report argues that theological interpretation of the conciliar documents ‘must show attention to all the [Council] documents ... and their close inter-relationship, in such a way that the integral meaning of the Council’s affirmations - often very complex - might be understood and expressed’, it goes on to state that ‘[t]he ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of the Council’s documents’. It is defined as

communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit... The communion of the Eucharistic Body of Christ signifies and effects, that is, builds up, the intimate communion of all the faithful in the Body of Christ which is the Church... For this reason, the ecclesiology of communion cannot be reduced to purely organisational questions or to questions about power. The ecclesiology of communion is the foundation of order in the Church...’¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Questionnaire issued by the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland op. cit.

¹³⁷ *The Final Report* op. cit. A3.

¹³⁸ ‘The Synod of 1985 and the Notion of the Church’ op. cit. p. 335.

¹³⁹ *The Final Report* op. cit. C 1.

The final report says that ‘because the church is communion there must be participation and co-responsibility at all levels’.¹⁴⁰ It says nothing concrete in terms of putting the principle into practice.

2.4.3 Conflicting interpretations

The final report’s focus on mystery and its resolve to avoid any ‘sociological’ interpretation of the church reflect the concerns of Cardinal Ratzinger, who was a member of the German speaking group at the Synod. In his 1985 interview, he spoke of a crisis in the understanding of church.

Even with some theologians, the Church appears to be a human construction, an instrument created by us and one which we ourselves can freely reorganise according to the requirements of the moment... Without a view of the church that is also supernatural and not only sociological, christology itself loses its reference to the divine in favour of a purely human structure, and ultimately it amounts to a purely human project....¹⁴¹

In an article on the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council published a year later, he said:

We are the people of God only from the crucified and risen body of Christ. We become Church only in the living ordainment to it, and it is only in this context that the word has meaning. The Council made this connection clear... by placing together with the ‘people of God’ another... basic term for the Church: the Church as Sacrament. One remains true to the Council only if one always reads and thinks these two central terms of its ecclesiology together.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ *The Final Report* op. cit. 6.

¹⁴¹ *The Ratzinger Report* op. cit. pp. 45-46.

¹⁴² ‘Notes and Comments: The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council’ op. cit. p. 251.

He stresses: ‘One cannot make Church but only receive it... from the sacramental community of Christ’s body passing through history...’.¹⁴³

Komonchak points out that the German language group at the Synod makes the same point when it refers to a tendency to ‘want to make the Church ourselves rather than to receive it from God’. They say that from the correct statement, ‘We are the Church’, it is often mistakenly concluded, ‘We make the Church’.¹⁴⁴ But as Komonchak observes, there is also a sense in which we build up the church, like other social bodies. So we require both a hierarchical and sociological approach, without which there is a danger of an equally incorrect and one-sided ecclesiology of mystery.

Peter Hebblethwaite sees in the concept of communion a deeper understanding of church which was ‘struggling to come to birth in the text of *Lumen Gentium*’.¹⁴⁵ The image of the people of God, he argues, had two great advantages: it said that all the baptised were members of the people of God and shared in a radical equality of grace. It also said that this people was on a journey in history, and had to have a real relationship to each successive age. But an image, he adds, however powerful, remains only an image: it points towards a reality but it is not identical with it. And it can be misunderstood in a ‘populist’ or ‘democratic’ sense. *Koinonia*, on the other hand, is not an image; it says what the Church is.¹⁴⁶

He quotes Cardinal Hume:

This word *koinonia* (communion) helps us to penetrate more deeply the mystery which is the church. This concept means a gathering together of

¹⁴³ ‘Notes and Comments: The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council’ op. cit. p. 244.

¹⁴⁴ Komonchak, J.A. ‘The Theological Debate’ *Concilium* Edinburgh:T&T Clarke December 1986 53-63 p. 56.

¹⁴⁵ *Synod Extraordinary* op. cit. p. 121.

¹⁴⁶ *Synod Extraordinary* op. cit. p.121.

those who give themselves in faith to Jesus Christ and who receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit when they are reborn by baptism.... In this mutual and virtual exchange between God and man, the faithful recognise their unity of life in Christ and their need for each other. In this description of the Church, unity and diversity exist at every level under the impulse of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁷

In their report to the Synod, the Bishops of England and Wales say that ‘within this concept of Church, each level of the Church needs the capacity to exercise sufficient responsibility for its life and ordering so as to develop its integrity and a community within the wider community’.¹⁴⁸

Avery Dulles, while acknowledging that there were many perspectives at the Synod, identified two broad schools of thought. One, associated most closely with Cardinal Ratzinger, had a ‘markedly supernaturalistic point of view, tending to depict the church as an island of grace in a world given over to sin’ and for them the church had to take a sharper stance against the world and seek to arouse the sense of God’s holy mystery.¹⁴⁹ The second group, represented by men like Cardinal Hume, had a more humanitarian and communitarian outlook. For them, the church had ‘not yet succeeded in giving the laity an adequate sense of participation in and co-responsibility for the mission of the church’ and the urgent need was for further development of collegial and synodal structures.¹⁵⁰ The two points of view implied vastly different programmes for the future. The first group, putting the accent on worship and holiness

wanted a church more separate from the world, more manifestly united in itself, more taken up with the cultivation of a spiritual union with God. The more communitarian group... wanted the church to become more internally diversified and more involved in the promotion of peace,

¹⁴⁷ *Synod Extraordinary* op. cit. p. 120.

¹⁴⁸ *The Tablet* 3rd August 1985 p 23.

¹⁴⁹ *The reshaping of Catholicism* op. cit. p.191.

¹⁵⁰ *The reshaping of Catholicism* op. cit. p. 192.

justice and reconciliation. The first group used the term *mystery* as a kind of code word; the second group, *communion*.¹⁵¹

Alberigo sees the real strength of the Synod not in its debates, or in its final report, which he describes as ‘timorous, uncertain and even contradictory’, but in the preliminary submissions from episcopal conferences around the world. They demonstrate, he argues, an appreciation of the Council as an event that signified something much richer and fuller than the sum total of its documents. He gives three reasons for his evaluation. The first is the emergence of a universal understanding in which the problems of Christian witness are set. The growing importance of the perspectives of countries outside Europe and North America, he argues, signals the end of the reduction of Catholicism to its European-North American axis. Secondly, the process of reception of Vatican II underlines the sense in which the condition of the church is not seen as one of stability but of continuing change. Thirdly, he sees the emergence of a capacity to appreciate the dynamism of history and to understand its connections with the life of the church and of human society; this underlines the conciliar focus of reading and proclaiming the signs of the times. To the extent in which his analysis is correct, he says, the possibilities opened up by the Synod look much more significant and positive than the impression given by its final documents.¹⁵²

2.4.4 The role of the pope

Divisions within the church over the interpretation of Vatican II focus attention on the leadership role of the pope. Pope John Paul II made the implementation of Vatican II a priority when he was elected in October 1978. In his first radio message as pope he said that ‘as the Council is not limited to the documents alone, neither is it completed by the ways of applying it which were devised in

¹⁵¹ *The reshaping of Catholicism* op. cit. p. 192.

¹⁵² ‘New Balances in the Church since the Synod’ op. cit. pp. 142-143.

these post-conciliar years'.¹⁵³ He regarded the implementation of the Council as a 'primary duty' and said he would strive to ensure that an 'appropriate mentality' would flourish: namely that 'outlooks must be at one with the Council so that in practice those things may be done that were ordered by it and those things that lie hidden in it ... may become explicit in the light of experiments made since then and the demand of changing circumstances'. He said that greater attention would have to be given to the Council's ecclesiology.

But how did he understand the Council and the 'experiments' that had been made since its close? In August 1985, on a visit to Africa, he said:

Let us never forget the words spoken by Pope John XXIII on the opening day of the collegial assembly: 'The greatest concern of the Ecumenical Council is this: that the sacred deposit of faith should be more effectively guarded and taught'.¹⁵⁴

As Hebblethwaite points out, this does not convey the whole of what Pope John wanted the Council to do: he also said that 'the substance of the ancient doctrine of faith is one thing, the way it is presented is another' and he called for the Church's teaching to be 'investigated and presented in the way demanded by our times'.¹⁵⁵

Pope John Paul acknowledged that theology had to deal with new problems and that a rightful and necessary freedom of research is essential to address them, but insisted that the constant point of reference for theological reflection was to be the Pope and the bishops of the church.

¹⁵³ John Paul II, First Radio Message "Urbi et Orbi" [Address of His Holiness John Paul II Sistine Chapel Tuesday 17th October 1978] accessed February 22, 2016.

<http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1978/documents>

¹⁵⁴ John Paul II, Address of Pope John Paul II on the Occasion of the Opening of the Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa, Nairobi (Kenya), Sunday 18th August 1985 n.7 accessed March 9, 2016. <https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1985.index.html>

¹⁵⁵ *Synod Extraordinary* op. cit. p.77 see also *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* op. cit. n.14.

In order to be truly Christian, this theological reflection must be guided by the revealed word of God and the teaching of the Church as it had developed from the beginning through the exercise of the prophetic office of Christ, which had been *transmitted in a particular way to the Roman Pontiff and to the bishops who are in communion with him.*¹⁵⁶ (Italics in the text).

He added that the Church's magisterium is 'the authentic guardian and interpreter of the full doctrine of Christ'.¹⁵⁷

The pope was stamping his authority and that of the church's magisterium on any theological interpretation of church teaching. The message to the Synod from Africa, Hebblethwaite concluded, was that theologians had misinterpreted the Council.¹⁵⁸ Pope John Paul's reading of the Council and what had happened in the intervening years, and his forceful personality, so different from that of John XXIII, ensured that his views had a major impact on the way the Council was interpreted and implemented. And as already noted, the views of the pope would have had particular resonance in Scotland, following his historic visit in 1982 (2.1).

2.4.5 *Summary of section three*

This section highlighted conflicting interpretations of Vatican II that were already dividing the Catholic Church by the time the extraordinary Synod was called in 1985. It found that the well-publicised views of Cardinal Ratzinger, Head of the CDF and future pope, who believed that the Council's opening to the world had gone too far and that the Council's ecclesiology had been wrongly

¹⁵⁶ Address of Pope John Paul on the Occasion of the Opening of the Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa op. cit. sec.5.

¹⁵⁷ Address of Pope John Paul on the Occasion of the Opening of the Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa op. cit. sec. 5.

¹⁵⁸ *Synod Extraordinary* op. cit. p. 80.

interpreted, helped polarise opinion and had a significant impact on the Synod and its final report. The views of bishops from around the world, on the other hand, which were supposed to remain confidential, reflected gratitude for the work of the Council. The final report focussed on two major theological themes around which differences of interpretation coalesced. One stressed the mystery of the church and sought greater separation of the church from the world and spiritual renewal; the other stressed the church as communion, sought the development of collegial and synodal structures, and a greater involvement in justice and peace.

Writing in 1986, Komonchak observed that the issues at stake in the Synod, both theoretical and practical, were very large and would take decades, if not centuries, to resolve, if indeed they could be resolved without tension. The theoretical issues, he said, were still those which had been stated by the Council, and the Synod resolved neither its theoretical nor practical problems.¹⁵⁹

Conflicts of interpretation which emerged in relation to the Synod can be summarised as follows:

- Divisions within the church over the interpretation of Vatican II had already taken root by 1985 and Cardinal Ratzinger's warning of the need for 'restoration' following what he believed to be the church's overly positive view of the world was being widely promoted. It had the effect of polarising opinion, such as that between a 'sociological' and a 'hierarchical' understanding of church.
- The theological focus on mystery and communion in the Synod's final report highlight two very different interpretations of the Council which imply vastly different programmes for the future: one stressed the importance of worship and holiness; the other wanted the church to become more internally diversified and involved in issues of justice and peace.

¹⁵⁹ 'The Theological Debate' op. cit. p. 62.

- The positive tone of submissions from bishops' conferences around the world contrasts with the view from Rome as articulated by Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger. It suggests tension between the centre and the local churches in the interpretation and implementation of the Council. This is underlined by Alberigo's analysis.
- Pope John Paul II stressed the role of the magisterium as the authentic guardian of doctrinal orthodoxy. His views and personality had a critical impact on the interpretation and implementation of the Council.

2.5 Conclusion of chapter two

This chapter asked why the implementation of Vatican II in Scotland was so problematic. It looked at three aspects of the Council which had a major impact on the way it was implemented: its new theological vision; the way the vision was translated into the Council's ecclesiology and its teaching on the role of lay people; and the interpretation of the Council's teaching in the years before the archived research was carried out in Scotland. Evidence from the research illustrates how each of these aspects affected the implementation of the Council in Scotland.

The scale of change envisaged by the Council's new theological vision implied a reshaping of the consciousness, policies and structures of the church but it was not matched by a clear commitment to practical action which would translate the vision into practice (2.2.6). This lack of direction is reflected in the fragmented approach to implementation in Scotland where, for example, one diocese chose to implement a pastoral plan while the other relied on a range of different but separate initiatives to bring about change (1.4.1). There were pockets of change where new relationships between priests and people had begun to flourish (1.6.1). Although one parishioner could say that Vatican II

was ‘all about people being the church and moving away from hierarchical structures’ (1.4.3), priests and people testified to continued lack of accountability within their dioceses and struggled to have their voices heard (1.4.5).

The transitional nature of the Council’s teaching and the ambiguity of its documents is reflected in the wide range of attitudes among clergy in Scotland. In one diocese a senior priest said there was no agreed vision of the church and there was conflict between different visions. He estimated that plans for renewal were going well in only ten per cent of parishes and not going at all in over fifty per cent (1.4.2). The new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay, which is implicit in the common call to baptism in *Lumen Gentium* and in the new role of lay people which emerges from passages in the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, was reflected in some parishes where lay people were overcoming dependence on clergy (1.6.1). But a senior priest observed that many priests thought that the laity had nothing to tell them (1.4.2).

The ambiguity of Council documents also made it difficult to discern what should be implemented and how. This was most clearly reflected in the question posed by one senior priest in Scotland who said there was a lack of clarity about *why* lay people should be more involved in the church and the resulting confusion about *how* this was to be carried out. He spoke of an ‘aspirational church not marked by strategic thinking’ (1.6.3).

The need for structures for implementing the Council, which many bishops stressed in the debate on the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, is echoed in the archived research by priests and lay diocesan officials who comment on their absence (1.4.4). The consequences of making structures optional rather than mandatory is reflected in the frustration of lay people at the power of priests to disband parish councils (1.6.2).

The new language of communion which emerged from the extraordinary Synod of 1985, and the power of Rome to rule on the interpretation of the Council, is also reflected in the archived research. The bishop and priests of one Scottish diocese use the language of *communio* to explain the new model of church they were trying to develop, in contrast to the preconciliar model which they described as hierarchical and authoritarian (1.4.1). Both bishops and several diocesan officials spoke of the power of Rome to influence diocesan decisions. One bishop spoke of ‘excessive Roman interference’ and encouragement of the ‘right wing’ which he found undermining (1.4.6).

The archived evidence makes clear that the implementation of Vatican II in Scotland was affected by factors inherent in the scale and nature of the Council’s vision, its teaching on the church and the role of lay people, and its interpretation. As a result, implementation in Scotland was weak and fragmented, and contributed to tensions in the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay.

Chapter three: The roots of a deeply clerical culture.

'Everything is still very traditional... Lay involvement is really just a modified version of the present structures... there is still the problem of the docility of lay people who look to the priest to tell them what to do'.

Senior priest in Scotland, 1998-2000.

3.1 Introduction

The archived research undertaken in the Catholic Church in Scotland between 1998 and 2000 provides evidence of a deeply clerical culture which was at odds with official diocesan commitments to collaborative working between lay and ordained. In this chapter I will explore the historical roots of this culture in order to understand how it arose and why it endured.

Using Holland's analysis, we have seen how major shifts in the development of industrial capitalism correlated with strategic shifts in papal strategy from the late eighteenth century to the calling of the Second Vatican Council, as successive popes attempted to 'reshape the consciousness, policies and structure of the church in service of its contextualised mission' (2.2.1).¹

Holland's analysis provides a valuable key for understanding the forces that shaped the church and affords an insight into the way change comes about. The use of papal encyclicals as source texts within the changing historical context provides an overview of the developing interpretation of church and society by successive popes, which, Holland says, consolidate the achievements of past generations, and provide a platform for new achievements of future generations.² Each strategic shift embodies the leadership's judgement on 'how

¹ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching op. cit.* p.12.

² *Modern Catholic Social Teaching op. cit.* p 3.

best to pursue both evangelisation and social transformation in a new historical context'.³ Holland's analysis is class based and urban, reflecting the significance of the social division of labour in the industrialised countries of Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the challenges the church faced in trying to win and retain the allegiance of the working classes. The role of lay people, their ecclesial relationship with clergy, and the significance of the papacy itself became key elements in strategies which were designed to reshape the church in response to the changing world. At their heart was a deeply clerical culture.

The first section of the chapter traces the development of this culture from the church's retreat into a religious counterculture at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the creation of separate church structures which mirrored those of the state, to the mobilisation of lay Catholics and the promotion of Catholic Action, which, as we have seen, shaped the church's thinking about the role of lay people right up to the debates of Vatican II (2.3.6). I will consider how papal strategies gave rise to an unequal ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay, casting a long shadow over later efforts to bring about change.

The second section considers the particular factors which shaped the Scottish Catholic Church within this context, in which clergy played a central role. They were responsible for bringing together disparate groups within the church, meeting the needs of waves of desperately poor Irish immigrants, and building a remarkable infrastructure of parishes and schools through which they sought to exercise control over the Catholic community.

At the end of each section I will summarise the roots of clerical culture which have been uncovered and consider their impact on the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay.

³ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p 12.

3.2 Section one: the ecclesiology of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

3.2.1 *The creation of a religious counterculture*

Holland describes the profound impact of modern industrial capitalism on the Roman Catholic Church in these terms:

After the French Revolution, when this first stage of modern industrial capitalism truly exploded upon the Catholic continental European world, the Catholic papacy reeled in strategic shock. The classical aristocratic paradigm, which for a millennium and a half had provided the societal foundation for the identity, mission and ministry of European Catholic leadership, was suddenly doomed. In reaction, for most of the nineteenth century, the popes clung to a premodern strategy of vehemently condemning the emerging bourgeois liberal movement... as a destroyer of aristocratic Christian civilisation.⁴

As Gianfranco Poggi observes, the ‘bitter truth forced upon the Church in the nineteenth century was that a new world had been built up outside it’.⁵

The church’s negative judgement of this new world provided what Joseph Komonchak describes as the ‘basic ideological justification for the construction of modern Roman Catholicism in the face of an apostate world’.⁶ Komonchak identifies four characteristics of this form of Catholicism. It ‘stressed the dogmas that stood in greatest contrast to the perceived errors of modernity’,

⁴ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 14.

⁵ Poggi, G. *Catholic Action in Italy: The Sociology of a Sponsored Organization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press 1967 p. 7.

⁶ Komonchak, J.A. 2000 ‘The significance of Vatican II for ecclesiology’ in Phan, P (ed) *The Gift of the Church*. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press: pp. 69-92. P. 71.

such as original sin, the atonement, and the right of Christ to rule over society and culture; it ‘encouraged devotions that would provide a popular reinforcement of this faith’, such as the Immaculate Conception, the Sacred Heart and the Kingship of Christ; it promoted a multiplicity of distinctively Catholic associations and movements to ‘solidify a sense of identity among Catholics, immunise them from contamination by the world, and mobilise and energise them to restore the world to Christ’; and it promoted uniformity in the Church and an ‘increasing centralisation of authority in Rome by means of an exaltation of the role and person of the pope’. Its high point was the definition of papal primacy and infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870.⁷

3.2.2 The church as perfect society

The key image of this form of Catholicism was that of the perfect society, which had been articulated by apologists like Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) in response to Protestant reformers.

This one true church is the assembly of men joined by the profession of the same Christian faith and by the communion of the same sacraments, under the regime of legitimate pastors and especially of the Roman Pontiff, the one Vicar of Christ in the world.⁸

This perfect society, with its stress on the visible elements of structure and order and its threefold constitutive elements of baptism, profession of faith and union of its members under the pope, identified the one true church with Roman Catholicism. It was complete in itself and was the means by which individuals would be safely borne to eternal salvation; the superiority of this end grounded the superiority of the church’s spiritual authority over any temporal authority.⁹

⁷ ‘The significance of Vatican II for ecclesiology’ op. cit. p. 71.

⁸ Bellarmine, R. *De controversiis christiana fidei adversus nostri temporis haereticos*, Book 3 chapter 2, ca 1590. Translated by Peter McGrail in McGrail, P. *The Rite of Christian Initiation* Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate 2013 p. 10.

⁹ Komonchak, J. A. ‘Concepts of Communion. Past and Present’. Essay posted on 16th June 2014 in <https://jakomonchak.wordpress.com>. Accessed August 2, 2016.

It contained all that was necessary for its governance, the regulation of the life of its members and the fulfilment of its mission.¹⁰ It was not subject to any external power.

Strategically, Holland observes, it was a model that served multiple purposes. It insisted on the principle of institutional visibility in the face of Protestant attacks on the visible nature of the church at the time of the Reformation. It defended the church's legal status in the face of rationalist attacks on the public role of church in society and provided legal justification for concordats with civil governments, such as that negotiated with Napoleon in 1801. And as the church's temporal power ebbed away in the nineteenth century, it reinforced the principle of hierarchical authority and the power of the pope.¹¹ Derek Holmes observes that:

The Pope [Pius IX] and the Ultramontanes... came to believe that there was an absolute dichotomy between Catholicism and the contemporary world, and they actually encouraged a Catholic withdrawal from modern society as well as modern thought. In 1850 the Roman clergy were ordered to wear the cassock instead of breeches and frock coat in order to distinguish the clergy from the 'men of the age, infected with revolutionary principles'. Donoso Cortes, one of the leading Spanish Ultramontanists, identified Catholicism with absolute good and modern civilization with absolute evil, while the pope himself, as Wilfred Ward remarked, took up the position that Christendom had apostatized. The appropriate action of Catholics was intense loyalty to the central power, unity among themselves, and separation from the outside world.¹²

Holland points out that as this anti-worldly ultramontanism became the all-embracing papal strategy under Pius IX, the western Catholic Church became ever more Roman, extending its control to all aspects of the church. The papal bureaucracy promoted a standardised Roman liturgy, Roman devotions like Forty

¹⁰ McGrail, P. *The Rite of Christian Initiation*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate 2013 p. 12.

¹¹ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 275.

¹² Holmes, J. D. *The Triumph of the Holy See*. London: Burns & Oates 1978 p. 135.

Hours, expansion of Roman colleges for foreign seminarians, and Roman clerical titles like *monsignor* (an honorary aristocratic title meaning ‘my lord’). During his pontificate, Pius IX appointed more *monsignori* than all the popes of the previous two centuries and personally appointed almost all the Catholic bishops in the world, allowing him to tailor the international episcopacy according to ultramontanist criteria.¹³

Pius IX’s *Syllabus of Errors* of 1864, a list of 80 condemned propositions appended to the encyclical *Quanta Cura*, drew together papal teachings which underpinned the promotion of the church as perfect society and listed the corresponding errors to be found in the world. In the *Syllabus* we find the claim to the absolute and divinely derived autonomy of the church, the notion of church as perfect society, and condemnation of the view that the state had the power to define the rights of the church (19). There was also condemnation of the separation of church and state (55) and of any suggestion that the pope should ‘come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization’ (80).¹⁴

Within this perfect society there was an inbuilt imbalance between the church’s hierarchy and its lay members. This was most clearly expressed in 1906 by Pope Pius X in his encyclical *Vehementer Nos*. In it, the pope identifies the church as a ‘society of men containing within its own fold chiefs who have full and perfect powers for ruling, teaching and judging’.¹⁵ The duty of the laity was, quite simply, to be led by their pastors. The church is

essentially an unequal society, that is, a society comprising two categories of persons, the Pastors and the flock, those who occupy a rank in the different degrees of the hierarchy and the multitude of the faithful. So distinct are these categories that with the pastoral body only rests the necessary right and authority for promoting the end of the

¹³ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p 53-54.

¹⁴ Pius IX, *The Syllabus of Errors condemned by Pius IX*. Accessed December 1, 2015.

www.papalencyclicals.net/Piuso9/p9syll.htm

¹⁵ Pius X, *Vehementer Nos* [Encyclical of Pope Pius X on the French Law of Separation] 1906 sec. 8, accessed December 1, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_11021906_vehementer-nos.html

society and directing all its members towards that end; the one duty of the multitude is to allow themselves to be led, and like a docile flock, to follow their pastors'.¹⁶

It is in this understanding of church, with its emphasis on structure, common faith and worship, that Paul Lakeland finds the roots of lay passivity. Without the fellowship which builds community, he argues, it is a 'one sided' presentation of the church. For this reason above all, he suggests that the laity are unaware of the church as something that needs to be made, and made by them.¹⁷

However, as he also points out, the church needed the laity in its struggle with the modern world.

The world became both the enemy to be feared and avoided and at the same time, the 'unchurched' to be conquered for Christ. The laity, too, emerged as a bifurcated community. On the one hand there were those who needed protection from the depravities of the secular world. On the other, it was clearly to the laity that the responsibility to reclaim the world for Christ largely fell.¹⁸

How could the power of the hierarchy be maintained while lay people were given apostolic responsibilities? The answer lay in the second strategic shift in the church's response to industrial capitalism, which involved the mobilisation of lay people under the control of the clergy.

¹⁶ *Vehementor Nos* op. cit. sec. 18.

¹⁷ Lakeland, P. *The Liberation of the Laity*. New York and London: Continuum 2004 p. 58.

¹⁸ 'The Laity' op. cit. p. 5.

3.2.3 *The mobilisation of lay Catholics*

The foundation of this new strategy was laid by Pope Leo XIII (1878-1902). His approach was twofold. Externally, he was prepared to co-operate with moderate liberals as a defence against what he perceived to be the more serious threat of socialism, and as a potential base for social reform and evangelisation. Internally, Holland points out, he aimed to prevent the church's life from being contaminated by liberal culture by 'maintaining an intellectually segregated clerical and religious culture and by keeping strict hierarchical control over lay members, even as they were mobilised to defend the church and reform society'.¹⁹

The segregated religious culture was reinforced by the creation of parallel Catholic structures which mirrored those of the state. These consisted of

a network of Catholic institutions and movements created or expanded to compete with liberal or socialist initiatives in the same areas. These included Catholic education at every level...; Catholic health and charitable services; utilisation of modern printing for Catholic newspapers and book publishing; the utilisation of modern transport for Catholic pilgrimages; and Catholic associations of workers..., of employers, of specialised professionals, of women, of families and of youth. Activist lay associations would later be officially given the name of Catholic Action. These parallel structures also included explicitly Christian-Democratic political parties.²⁰

No longer able to claim direct spiritual or political authority in society, Leo set out to exert moral authority indirectly through the controlled mobilisation of lay Catholics. For this, he legitimised the developing movement of Christian Democracy and its related movement of Catholic Action, which was to become a grassroots lay force committed to the defence of the church against its

¹⁹ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 114.

²⁰ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 114.

perceived enemies, and to the creation of a new democratic Christian civilisation.²¹ Its key elements were the organisation and co-ordination of multiple kinds of lay apostolates, with the guidance of clergy and bishops, in the work of infusing Christian values and spirit into all corners of public as well as private life.²² It was to be nothing less than the religious equivalent of a vast army for Christ, ‘working to transform the social order in the image of Christ’s reign’.²³

Holland suggests that two basic contradictions within Leo’s strategy helped maintain the centralising power of Rome and hindered the development of the role of the laity within the church. The first contradiction lay in the attempt to convert liberal society to a new form of Christian civilisation, while refusing to allow liberal values to influence the internal life of the church. As the world opened to historical consciousness, he points out that ‘church authorities clung to a non-historical understanding of church as a static, essentially unchanging reality; and as society began to ground itself on the concept of democracy, the modern papacy centralised clerical authority within the Vatican bureaucracy and intensified its control over the whole church’.²⁴

The second contradiction lay in the cultivation of an aristocratic style and structure for clerical elites within the church, which worked against the goal of lay mobilisation. On the one hand clerical elites ‘reached out to lay people for assistance in defending the church’s interests in society and also for reforming society’, while on the other hand they considered themselves to be ‘institutionally separate and spiritually above the laity to whom they appealed. In turn, they denied the laity any significant participation in the processes of developing institutional policy.²⁵

²¹ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 123.

²² Hinze, C. F. ‘Commentary on *Quadragesimo Anno*’ in Himes, K. R. *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press 2005, 151-174 p. 153.

²³ Hinze, C. F. ‘Commentary on *Quadragesimo Anno*’ op. cit. p. 153.

²⁴ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 311.

²⁵ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. pp. 311-12.

3.2.4 *The promotion of Catholic Action*

Leo's strategy of lay mobilisation under the control of the hierarchy reached its zenith in the pontificate of Pius XI (1922-1939). He defined Catholic Action as 'the participation and collaboration of the laity with the Apostolic Hierarchy' and saw it as the main vehicle for the restoration of Christian civilisation.²⁶ Giuseppe Alberigo observes that it provided lay people with an opportunity to become active within the world, but even here they were still expected to be dependent on clergy.

Catholic Action as a form of collaboration in the hierarchical apostolate was the reassertion of the total dependence of any lay movement on the clerical caste; lay people were accepted as indispensable collaborators from the moment when the shortage of vocations meant that the clergy could no longer be self-sufficient, and from the moment when society seemed to refuse to give ever greater devotion to and place ever greater trust in the clerical habit.... Catholic Action is not guiding action in the theoretical sphere, but an executive branch in the practical sphere. So action became widely seen as the way, virtually the only way open to lay people, of expressing their religious fervour.²⁷

Pius XI attempted to export the Italian model of Catholic Action to the universal church, beginning with his 1931 encyclical on Catholic Action in Italy, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno*, and continuing through letters to bishops around the world.²⁸ He focussed the attention and emotions of Catholics on Rome with an unprecedented number of mammoth gatherings.

The pope's reason for organising this stream of major events was to mobilise Catholics around the world, emphasising the authority of the

²⁶ Pius XII, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* [Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Catholic Action in Italy] 1931 sec.5, accessed December 1, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_29061931_non-abbiamo-bisogno.html

²⁷ Alberigo, G. 'The People of God in the Experience of Faith', in *La Iglesia Popular: Between Fear and Hope* ed. Boff L. and Elizondo V., *Concilium* 176 December 1984 pp. 24-34.

²⁸ Pollard J. 'Pius XII's promotion of the Italian Model of Catholic Action in the World-Wide Church' *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 63 2012 pp. 758-784.

Roman pontiff in the face of challenges from the Church's enemies and to demonstrate the demographic power of Roman Catholicism... But given the specialist nature of some of these gatherings - Catholic journalists, doctors, young workers - it is also clear that it was seen as a way of tightening the bonds between these groups and the pope, and also their relationship with Catholic Action.²⁹

Given the very different local and national situations of the church, the Vatican's efforts to impose a standardised model for lay activism was unsuccessful. Holland notes that Catholic Action met vigorous competition from a growing international network of lay-led and relatively autonomous Christian-Democratic political parties.³⁰ The Catholic Action model also took on a different focus in different countries. The bishops of England and Wales, for example, issued a pastoral letter in 1934 in which they announced their decision to establish a National Board of Catholic Action which would co-ordinate the work of existing Catholic societies under the guidance of the bishops, in order to make them more effective in the face of 'the peculiar perils to historic Christianity of the time in which we live'. Their duties included 'watching Press and broadcast utterances for misrepresentations with regard to Catholic faith and practice', safeguarding the interests of Catholic schools, defending the principles of Catholic morality and securing representation for Catholics on public bodies.³¹

Four months later, the Dominican journal *Blackfriars* devoted an entire edition to the topic of Catholic Action, since in its view there was 'little or no literature' on the subject in England, despite the Pope's 'tireless efforts' to establish this branch of the lay apostolate.³² One article stressed the importance of the church's need to connect with the urban working class.³³ This

²⁹ Pius XII's promotion of the Italian model of Catholic Action' op. cit. p. 769.

³⁰ *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 130.

³¹ 'Catholic Action: the Whitsuntide Joint Pastoral from the Archbishops and Bishops of England and Wales to the Clergy and Faithful of said countries' *The Tablet*, 26th May 1934 p. 14.

³² *Blackfriars* Vol XV no 174 September 1934.

³³ van Gestel, C. 'Catholic Action and the Workers' translated by M. A. Bousefield in *Blackfriars* Vol XV no 174 September 1934 pp. 600-605.

'vast field', it says, is open to laity alone, as clergy are seen as associates of capitalism and protectors of vested interests, and can make only individual conversions, while lay people can 'work like the leaven in the lump'. They were to do so under the direction of a body of priests 'specially trained in social science' who will 'gather and train and inspire lay apostles from among the workers themselves' by way of retreats, devotional weekends and study circles.³⁴

In Ireland, the Catholic Truth Society (CTS), which disseminated millions of pamphlets every year, was in the forefront of promoting Catholic Action. A series of booklets in the 1930s highlighted the need for an organised army of lay people from Catholic associations to withstand the threats of militant atheism, communism, and the world economic crisis. By the 1940s there were thousands of members of Catholic Action in parishes across the country, acting as moral guardians and feeding information to priests and bishops on local and national developments. They had become the 'eyes and ears of the Catholic Church': the writer Sean O'Faolain referred to them as 'Miraculous Meddlers'.³⁵ Alberigo notes that in devoting special attention to Catholic Action, the popes of the first half of the twentieth century made it 'the only escape valve for ecclesial energies, so much so that it was in danger of exhausting itself in soulless activism'.³⁶

John Pollard suggests that there are several reasons why Catholic Action failed to take root in Scotland. He refers to rivalry between the Archdioceses of Glasgow and that of St Andrews and Edinburgh, citing the Scottish bishops' decision to abandon their plans to produce a joint pastoral letter on the threat of communism when the Archbishop of Glasgow decided to issue his own.³⁷

³⁴ 'Catholic Action and the Workers' op. cit. p. 605.

³⁵ Curtis, M. "Miraculous Meddlers": the Catholic Action Movement' in *History IRELAND* September/October 2010 34-37 p. 36.

³⁶ Alberigo, G., 'The Christian situation after Vatican II' in Alberigo, G., Jossua, J. and Komonchak, J. A. (eds) *The Reception of Vatican II* (translated by O'Connell, M. J.) Washington: The Catholic University of America Press pp 1-24 p. 17.

³⁷ 'Pius XI's promotion of the Italian Model of Catholic Action in the World-Wide Church' op. cit. p.775. See also the minutes of the October meeting of the Scottish bishops in 1936 which record their decision to issue a joint pastoral letter on the threat of communism. The minutes of the

Pollard also suggests that an organised and visible national movement risked provoking an anti-Catholic backlash. There was anti-Catholic agitation at the time of the 1935 Eucharistic congress in Edinburgh, for example. Archbishop McDonald of St Andrews and Edinburgh, in letters to the press, described a ‘campaign of incitement to violence and almost unbelievable obscenity’ which involved damage to Catholic property, insults to priests and nuns, and hostility to young Catholic men and women.³⁸ English speaking bishops at Vatican II, discussing the lay apostolate, said the term *Catholic Action* was not used because of pejorative connections: it was seen as a pressure group.³⁹

Like the Irish bishops, the Scottish bishops encouraged the CTS to promote anti-communist literature, and they discussed the dangers of communism and threats to Catholic morality on several occasions.⁴⁰ The bishops were also urged to keep the development of Catholic organisations under control. Letters from the Apostolate Delegate in London encouraged them to ensure that movements which called themselves Catholic reflected the mind of the church.⁴¹

Gianfranco Poggi provides an illuminating insight into the ecclesial relationship between lay and ordained people on which Catholic Action was based. In his study of Italian Catholic Action, based on research carried out in 1957-58, when it was the largest lay organisation in Italy and one of the largest in the world,⁴² he identifies two imperatives which derived from the requirement of hierarchical control: that lay leaders should not confront the members of the hierarchy on an equal footing, and that they should not gain any self-sustaining

following meeting in May 1937 record that the joint letter had not been issued because the Archbishop of Glasgow ‘resiled from the agreement saying that he proposed to issue a pastoral on the subject on his own account’. Scottish Catholic Archives (Edinburgh) ED 29/91.

³⁸ Letters written by Archbishop McDonald to *The Times* and *The Spectator*, SCA (Edinburgh) DE 162/56. The file also includes contemporary descriptions of events on the streets of Edinburgh (files 52-56).

³⁹ Grootaers, J. ‘The drama continues between the acts’ in Alberigo, G. *History of Vatican II Vol II* Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books pp 359-514, p.444. English edition edited by J.A. Komonchak.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Scottish Catholic Archives (Edinburgh) ED 29/91 for discussions on communism between 1932 and 1945. The file also records discussion about the ‘evil’ of contraception (1926) and the scandal caused by priests going to the cinema - they were eventually forbidden to do so in 1938.

⁴¹ See, for example, Letters of 18th September 1947 and 16th August 1950 in *Correspondence with the Apostolic Delegate* Scottish Catholic Archives (Edinburgh) DE 8/14 and DE/15.

⁴² *Catholic Action in Italy* op. cit. p. xiii.

control over the operation of the organisation. To ensure that these imperatives were secure, a supreme governing body made up exclusively of members of the hierarchy was placed above the organisational structure, with appointments to key leadership positions made by bishops; all lay leaders worked under the control of (ordained) ecclesiastical assistants appointed by the hierarchy.⁴³ The extent to which lay leaders were expected to obey the clergy without question can be seen in the following passage from an article written by the general president of Italian Catholic Action and published in his fortnightly newsletter to all members.

What is asked of us is an integral and total devotion to the Church's hierarchy.... A truly obedient person asks not to know where he is being sent, does not concern himself with how far he is supposed to go; he simply picks himself up and goes. His intelligence is to be employed not in arguing about his destination, but in detecting the better, speedier road to it, supposing that a road has not been shown to him already....⁴⁴

However unevenly it was taken up, the highly centralised model of Catholic Action and its underlying view of the lay apostolate as the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy lived on within the church right up to the debates of Vatican II (2.3.6). At the same time, the stress on the visible institutional understanding of church as perfect society, from which it derived, was beginning to give way to a greater focus on the internal, invisible life of the church, and with it came a new focus on the role of lay people.

3.2.5 The church as the Mystical Body of Christ

Canadian Bishop Alex Carter recalls being present at the last public audience given by Pope Pius XI before his death in 1939, when he spoke to students at the Canadian College in Rome to mark the 50th anniversary of their college. He recalls the pope saying that

⁴³ *Catholic Action in Italy* op. cit. pp. 67-68.

⁴⁴ Quoted in *Catholic Action in Italy* op. cit. p. 82.

the church, the Mystical Body of Christ, has become a monstrosity. The head is very large but the body is shrunken. You, the priests, must rebuild the body of the church and the only way you can rebuild it is to mobilise the lay people. You must call upon the lay people to become, along with you, the witnesses of Christ. You must call them especially to bring Christ back to the workplace, to the marketplace.⁴⁵

The pope's successor, Pius XII, was to breathe new life into the highly centralised, institutional model of the church as perfect society with his encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* of 1943. The Pauline image of the body of Christ was present in the encyclicals of Leo XII and Leo XIII, but it began to appear in Catholic theology with growing frequency during the 1920s and the 1930s.⁴⁶ It took shape as an affirmation of the church's mystery, its participation in grace and continuation of Christ's saving presence, but how this related to the church on earth was variously understood.⁴⁷

In *Mystici Corporis Christi* Pius XII said there was no more noble or sublime description of the church than 'the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ'.⁴⁸ He attempted to harmonise the paradigm of the church as perfect society with the theme of the mystical body, emphasising the inner life of the church as well as its externals. He reaffirmed the visible institutional model of the perfect society, but spoke also of the church's mystical and organic unity; he continued to stress the principle of hierarchy, but said that 'Christ has need of all His members'.⁴⁹ He also placed greater emphasis on the role of the Spirit in the life of the church as its 'invisible principle', quoting Leo XIII who said that 'as Christ is the Head of the Church, so is the Holy Spirit her soul'.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Carter, A. *A Canadian Bishop's Memoirs*. Ontario: Tomiko Publications 1994 pp. 50-51.

⁴⁶ Hahnenberg, E. P. 'The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels' *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70 (2005) pp 3-30 p. 9.

⁴⁷ 'The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels' op. cit. p. 10.

⁴⁸ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi* [Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on the Mystical Body of Christ] 1943 sec.13 accessed December 1, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi.html See also 'The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels' op. cit. p. 11.

⁴⁹ *Mystici Corporis Christi*. op. cit. sec. 44.

⁵⁰ *Mystici Corporis Christi* op. cit. sec. 57.

Hahnenberg observes that

for Pius XII the invisible and the visible dimensions of the Church are one and the same; the spiritual community of Christ's body is the institutional, hierarchically-ordered society. The result is that... the pliable image of the mystical body serves to justify prevailing patterns of authority and power... The strong association between the Church's invisible head (Christ) and its visible head (the pope) affirmed papal centralisation... Thus the model of mystical body itself, while offering a deeper theological ground to ecclesiology, had little influence on the existing understanding of the church's concrete, historical existence.⁵¹

Despite its limitations, Holland argues that, in stressing that Christ has need of all his members, Pius XII granted a significant theological and spiritual place to the laity in this mystical communion. The encyclical 'opened up a strategic door to a different understanding of the church, one that was mystically organic and partially lay in character... It provided a richer understanding of the importance of the laity in both the Church's pastoral life and in its external mission...' .⁵² However, it did not fundamentally alter the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people.

At the same time, the growing importance of the laity to the church was reflected in papal initiatives to strengthen religious education and lay spirituality. Pius X encouraged popular religious education and urged frequent reception of communion.⁵³ Pius XI promoted the lay-oriented spiritual teaching of St Francis de Sales,⁵⁴ and the spirituality of marriage.⁵⁵ Pius XII's 1947

⁵¹ 'The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels' op. cit. pp.11-12.

⁵² *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* op. cit. p. 275.

⁵³ Pius X, *Sacra Tridentina* [Decree of Pope Pius X On Frequent and Daily Reception of Holy Communion] 1905, accessed December 1, 2015.

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDWFREQ.HTM>

⁵⁴ Pius XI, *Rerum Omnium Perturbationem* [Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on St Francis de Sales] 1923, accessed December 1, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_26011923_rerum-omnium-perturbationem.html

encyclical on liturgical reform, *Mediator Dei*, called on lay people to participate actively in the Eucharist.⁵⁶ This turn to the laity continued when, in an address to new cardinals in February 1949, Pius XII highlighted the need for lay people to develop their awareness of not just belonging to the church, but being the church.

Lay believers are in the front line of church life; for them the church is the animating principle of human society. Therefore, they in particular ought to have an ever clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the church, but of being the church'.⁵⁷

In 1957, at the Second World Congress of the Lay Apostolate, Pius XII set out his understanding of what this meant. All members of the church are to be active: 'It would be a misunderstanding of the Church's real nature and her social character to distinguish in her a purely active element, Church authorities, and a purely passive element, the laity'. It was the role of lay people to consecrate the world to Christ and bring others back to the church.⁵⁸ Organised groups like Catholic Action were to be an elite group within the laity.

Not all Christians are called to engage in the lay apostolate in its strict sense. We have already said that the bishop should be able to choose co-workers from those whom he finds willing and able, for willingness alone is not sufficient. Lay apostles will, therefore, always form an elite, not because they stand apart from others but, quite the contrary, because they are capable of attracting and influencing others.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* {Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Christian Marriage} 1930, accessed December 1, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121930_casti-connubii.html

⁵⁶ Pius XII, *Mediator Dei* [Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on the Sacred Liturgy] 1947 sec.24, accessed December 1, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20111947_mediator-dei.html

⁵⁷ *Apostolicae Sedis Series II* Vol XIII p. 149.

⁵⁸ Pius XII, *Guiding Principles of the Lay Apostolate* [Address of His Holiness Pope Pius XII to the Second World Congress of the Lay Apostolate] 1957, accessed December 1, 2015. www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius12/P12LAYAP.htm

⁵⁹ *Guiding Principles of the Lay Apostolate* op. cit.

3.2.6 *Questions on the eve of the Council*

In an essay published just before the Second Vatican Council, Dominican Augustin Leonard identified four forms of lay apostolate. The first was that of witness, which he describes as ‘co-terminus’ with the vocation of the lay person. ‘No Christian is excused from this apostolate which is the Christian life itself lived consciously and seriously with all its consequences in every field’.⁶⁰

The second group of ‘apostolic lay activities’ he finds hard to define. These are people, often gathered in secular institutes, who consecrate a great deal of their time to the service of the church, especially in teaching.⁶¹

The third group is Catholic Action, which he says has become a topic of some controversy because ‘it does not correspond to the divided and pluralistic structure of society which is prevalent today’.⁶² He hopes the Council can clarify its precise role.

He sees the classic definition of Catholic Action as the participation of the laity in the apostolic ministry of the hierarchy giving way to a broader notion of lay apostolate, which is his fourth category. It reflects a new emphasis on the church’s commitment to work with all people of good will for the good of the whole community, which was articulated in the teaching of Pope John XXIII.

In this regard the Encyclicals *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris* are striking a new note.... Less emphasis is put on Catholic organisations as such than on the ‘duty to take an active part in public life and contribute toward the attainment of the common good of the entire human family as well as to that of their own political community’ (*Pacem in Terris*). The great error of the Catholics is ‘an inconsistency in their minds between

⁶⁰ Leonard, A.P. ‘Theological Foundation of the Lay Apostolate’ in Lee, A. D. (ed.) *Vatican II: The Theological Dimension*. USA: The Thomist Press 1963 pp. 284-306 p. 300.

⁶¹ ‘Theological Foundation of the Lay Apostolate’ op. cit. p. 300.

⁶² ‘Theological Foundation of the Lay Apostolate’ op. cit. p. 304.

religious belief and their action in the temporal sphere' (*Pacem in Terris*).⁶³

Leonard concludes that, inspired by the Gospel, 'the layman works then in the profane dimension of civilisation and human history', engaged in temporal tasks. But he is 'not primarily concerned to bring them into Catholic organisations. He is the anonymous mediator who by his presence, his work and his witness establishes an indirect communication between the sacred world and the profane world'.⁶⁴

Writing on the eve of the Council, fellow Dominican Edward Schillebeeckx thought that lay people had responsibility to the church and the world, and their apostolic secular involvement was in the service of both. But this, he argues, will take some time to work out.

[B]y reason of the still brief history of Christian self-awareness of the layman in the Church, the laity do not yet know exactly where the limits of their active function in the Church lie...they do not know this because the theologians themselves do not properly know it and because this whole new experience has not yet been fully thought out on the theological level... We must give the laity time and room so that they may feel their way...⁶⁵

The process of thinking through the role of lay people was not to be an easy one as we saw in chapter two (2.3.5; 2.3.6). Bishop Carter, who was a member of the pre-conciliar Commission on the Laity, recalls the first draft of the schema on the laity drawn up for discussion at Vatican II. He said it was, for the most part, a 'timid and flat reiteration of the old principles of Catholic Action'.⁶⁶

⁶³ 'Theological Foundation of the Lay Apostolate' op. cit. p. 305.

⁶⁴ 'Theological Foundation of the Lay Apostolate' op. cit. p. 306.

⁶⁵ Schillebeeckx, E. 'The Layman in the Church' in Lee A. D. (ed.) *Vatican II: The Theological Dimension*. USA: The Thomist Press 1963 pp. 262-283 p. 282.

⁶⁶ A Canadian Bishop's Memoirs op. cit. p. 165.

3.2.7 *Summary of section one*

This section traced the roots of the Catholic Church's clerical culture to the papal strategies of the nineteenth century within which a deeply unequal relationship between ordained and lay was embedded. The roots of this culture and its impact on the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay can be summarised as follows:

- As its temporal power ebbed away, the church defined itself as a perfect society which was set apart, complete in itself, and increasingly Roman in character. Within this highly structured organisation, with its clearly defined membership, distinctive dogmas, popular devotions and Catholic associations, the duty of lay people was simply to obey their pastors. They had no role in shaping the church, and it is here that Lakeland finds the roots of lay passivity (3.2.2).
- Even when lay people were mobilised to carry out the task of transforming the social order following Leo XIII's more adaptive strategy towards the world, they did so under clerical control. Contradictions within the strategy hindered the development of the role of lay people within the church. As Leo sought to influence a changing society, the papacy intensified its control of the church and the incursion of any external influences which could have given lay people a voice; and as hierarchies reached out to lay people for support in defending the church's interests, they denied the laity any significant participation in the development of church policy (3.2.3).
- The scale of Pius XI's promotion of Catholic Action and the impact of its internal structures of clerical control reveal how deeply entrenched the culture of lay obedience to clergy had become (3.2.4).
- With the revival of the image of the church as the Mystical Body of Christ, the church's inner life and the wider significance of the role of lay people

came into focus, but it was not until Vatican II that these elements became part of a much wider debate about ecclesiology. By the eve of the Council, it had become clear that much work had to be done to develop a theological understanding of lay people, their place in the church, and their ecclesial relationship with clergy (3.2.5, 3.2.6).

3.3 Section two: the development of the Scottish Catholic Church

In this section I will trace the way in which the modern Scottish Catholic Church took shape within this highly centralised and clerically controlled institution, and consider how the Scottish church's response to the particular challenges it faced deepened lay dependence on clergy. There were three very different groups within the church, with different needs and expectations: the tiny Scottish Catholic Church which had survived the Reformation in small pockets of the north east, the south west, and remote parts of the western Highlands and Islands; successive waves of Irish immigrants, especially those who came after the famine of the 1840s; and a group of wealthy and influential lay people, many of them converts to Catholicism, who looked to Rome and to the British state for their identity. S. Karly Kehoe suggests that for most of the nineteenth century the Catholic community in Scotland was in a state of flux and largely unsure of its own identity, 'plagued by three competing agendas until the end of the 1870s'.⁶⁷ She argues that recusant elements were averse to change; the Irish, who made up the bulk of the Catholic population by 1850, were 'problematised as religious and political subversives'; and the ultramontanes wanted a complete transformation of Catholicism in Scotland, 'committed to Britain and to a Roman-dominated church'.⁶⁸ Out of these three very different groups, a new church was forged.

⁶⁷ Kehoe, S. K. *Creating a Scottish Church*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010. p. 49.

⁶⁸ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. pp. 49-50.

3.3.1 A quiet and conservative church

Catholicism in Scotland had grown slowly from an estimated population of 14,000 in the early 1680s to around 30,000 by the turn of the nineteenth century: a tiny fraction of the country's 1.6 million people.⁶⁹ Scott Spurlock argues that its survival during penal times rested not on an ecclesiastical structure funded by Rome, but on the 'belligerent resistance of lay Catholics to conformity'.⁷⁰ Catholicism was seen primarily 'as an aberration or persistent, lingering heresy rather than an external risk to political security' and as a result, the penalties facing Scottish Catholics were not as rigorously employed as those against their English co-religionists.⁷¹

Priests came from Ireland and further afield in Europe to serve in the Scottish Mission, as the church was known until the restoration of the Scottish Catholic hierarchy in 1878. Titular bishops, known as Vicars Apostolic, oversaw the mission, which was originally divided into a Gaelic speaking Highland district and a Lowland district which stretched north east across the country to Banffshire. Its centre lay in the close knit farming communities of the north east, where Catholics had learned to live quietly alongside their Protestant neighbours. Anthony Ross points out that more than half the 159 students admitted between 1799 and 1828 to the seminary at Aquhorties on Donside came from Banffshire and Aberdeenshire, where Catholics had been building churches openly since 1788.⁷²

Although the church was numerically small and weak, there was recurrent fear of a return to 'popery': reports compiled by Church of Scotland ministers between 1714 and 1747, for example, spoke of priests in the Highlands

⁶⁹ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. p. 28.

⁷⁰ Spurlock, R. S. 'The laity and the structure of the Catholic Church in early modern Scotland' in Armstrong, R. and Ó hAnnraighán, T (eds) *Insular Christianity: Alternative models of the Church in Britain and Ireland, c 1570-c 1700*. Manchester: Manchester University Press 2012 pp. 231-251 p. 232.

⁷¹ 'The laity and the structure of the Catholic Church in early modern Scotland' op. cit. p. 233.

⁷² Ross, A. 'Development of the Scottish Catholic community 1878-1978' in McRoberts, D. (ed) *Modern Scottish Catholicism 1878-1978* Glasgow: Burns 1979 pp 30-55 p. 30.

'swarming like Locusts, running from house to house, gaining multitudes to their anti-Christian Idolatry, Baptizeing and marrying'.⁷³ With the granting of Catholic relief in Scotland in 1793, church leaders were anxious to reassure those in authority that Catholics posed no threat to the political and religious establishment. In a pastoral letter of 12th July 1793, Vicar Apostolic George Hay appealed to Catholics to maintain the church's quiet and conservative disposition.

You know the unfavourable circumstances in which we have hitherto been: You know the mistaken notions that many, through ignorance, may still retain for us.... You ought therefore to consider it as a duty we owe both to our religion and to ourselves, to be extremely cautious not to give the least cause of offence to anyone, but by a modest, quiet, and peaceable behaviour to convince the world that we are not undeserving of the favour bestowed upon us.⁷⁴

When rebellion erupted in Ireland in 1798, the British Vicars Apostolic branded Irish radicals as 'emissaries of impiety and rebellion' and accused them of attempting to corrupt a population who had held 'firm and steady' in an atmosphere of catastrophic European crisis.⁷⁵ When Daniel O'Connell became involved in a Relief Bill in 1813, which would have seen the authority of church leadership significantly reduced by making ecclesiastical appointments subject to state approval, English and Scottish bishops together expressed their opposition. Their reaction was part of the growing debate over the division of church and state and fears of increased secularisation, but it was also, says Kehoe, a clear indication of their opposition to lay dictates.⁷⁶

⁷³ Wilby, N. M. 'The "Encrease of Popery" in the Highlands 1714-1747' *The Innes Review* vol. 17 no. 2 (Autumn 1966) pp 91-115 p.93. The article is a transcription of a group of eighteenth century manuscripts with a short introduction.

⁷⁴ Scottish Catholic Archives (University of Aberdeen) CA SM15/2/7. Pastoral Letter, 12 July 1793.

⁷⁵ Scottish Catholic Archives (University of Aberdeen) CA SM15/2/13 Pastoral Letter, 1798. SM 15/2/14. Pastoral Letter, 7 May 1798.

⁷⁶ Kehoe, S. K. *Creating a Scottish Church*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010 p. 37.

When Catholic Emancipation was finally granted in 1829, there was public opposition, especially in Glasgow, where levels of Irish immigration were highest and the impact of industrialisation greatest. The towering statue of John Knox in Glasgow's Necropolis is testimony to the depth of hostility to the legislation as it went through parliament. On 22nd September 1825 an estimated 10,000 people gathered for the laying of the statue's foundation stone. Dr John Burns, minister for Barony Parish, urged people to be vigilant against a return to 'the dominion of ignorance, superstition and tyranny'; while James Ewing, a wealthy evangelical merchant, attributed Scotland's commercial prosperity, enlightened clergy and industrious artisans to Knox's courageous attack on 'errors and impostures of popery'.⁷⁷ As Kehoe points out, 'most Scots believed that Presbyterianism had ushered in a new era of imperial growth and economic prosperity, whereas Ireland and the Irish, predominantly Catholic, were poor, backward and ignorant'.⁷⁸

3.3.2 Responding to Irish immigration

Evidence suggests that early waves of Irish immigrants were assimilated into Scottish society. Tom Devine points out that many of the descendants of 18th century Irish in Galloway and Ayrshire lost their Catholic faith as a result of intermarriage with local people and because of the absence of priests and Catholic churches; their changed allegiance was reflected in the change of their surnames - the Irish *McDade*, for example, became the Scottish *Davidson*; *O'Neil* became *McNeil*; *Dwyer* became *Dyer*.⁷⁹

Everything was to change with the influx of immigrants in the nineteenth century, especially those who came after famine in Ireland in the 1840s. In the 1830s an estimated 65,000 Catholics were settled in the Glasgow area; in 1847,

⁷⁷ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. pp. 37-38.

⁷⁸ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. p. 33.

⁷⁹ Devine, T. M. *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*. London: Penguin 1999 p. 489.

50,000 arrived in the wake of the famine.⁸⁰ It was a desperately poor, fluctuating population: some found work and lodgings in the city; some were to move on, many to America; others were to be found in the poorhouse if economic downturn left them destitute. Glasgow's Medical Officer of Health, Dr J B Russell, described poor people, many of them Irish immigrants, who crammed into the city's tenements as the 'nomads of our population' and compared them to an ant's nest as they 'changed their location in hundreds every month'.⁸¹ As towns and cities struggled to cope with rapid industrialisation and growing populations, famine victims received little sympathy. Describing the Irish as 'landing among strangers without food, money, or prospects of employment', a correspondent in the *Glasgow Herald* in 1846 warned that 'it would be well that our poor Irish friends should understand that the city of Glasgow is at present overrun with poor, and that by flocking hither in droves they are only exposing themselves to certain misery'.⁸²

Latent anti-Popery sentiments were hardened by the restoration of the English Catholic hierarchy in 1850, which sparked numerous petitions in parliament to combat the menace of 'papal aggression'.⁸³ Just as poor Irish immigrants had to adjust to an alien culture in the teeming slums of industrialised Scotland, so the tiny Scottish Catholic Church had to find ways of responding to the cultural and financial pressures which their arrival created.

The conservatism of the traditional Banffshire-born church leadership, with its settled agrarian background, was shaken by the new arrivals.⁸⁴ After 1815 Catholicism's centre shifted from the rural north-east to the new industrial centre of Glasgow. In 1827 the old ecclesiastical boundaries of the Highland and Lowland Districts were reorganised into the Eastern, Western and Northern Districts to improve administration and reflect regional and cultural changes.

⁸⁰ Aspinwall, B. 'Children of the Dead End: The Formation of the Modern Archdiocese of Glasgow 1815-1914' *The Innes Review* vol. XLIII no. 2 1992 pp. 119-144 p. 120.

⁸¹ Butt, J. 'Housing' in Cage R. A. (ed.) *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750-1914*. London: Croom Helm 1987 pp. 22-55 p. 50.

⁸² *The Glasgow Herald* Monday 21st December 1846. (Mitchell Library, Glasgow).

⁸³ *The Scottish Nation* op. cit. p. 494.

⁸⁴ Aspinwall, B. 'Scots and Irish clergy ministering to immigrants, 1830-1878'. *The Innes Review* vol. 47 no 1 Spring 1996 pp. 45-87 p. 47.

Changing demographics and reactions to immigrants, both within and outwith the Catholic Church, presented its leadership with enormous challenges. They had to find a way, with limited resources, of establishing a structure which would enable them to meet the spiritual and practical needs of this burgeoning, shifting, poverty stricken Catholic population. They had to minimise anti-Catholic and anti-Irish sentiments in the wider population, and deal with tensions, as we shall see, between Scottish and Irish priests. They also had to guard against expressions of support for Irish nationalism from church members, which would have been perceived as a threat to the British state and disturbed the quiet and conservative disposition Bishop Hay had sought to promote.

Ultramontanism provided the key: as Bernard Aspinwall observes, through zealous reassertion of Roman authority and an appeal to Catholic sentiment, it transcended and contained nationalism and class.⁸⁵ Loyalty was directed to the church and to Rome, with its distinctive Catholic culture, popular devotions and Catholic associations, which aimed to solidify a sense of identity among Catholics and keep them safe from a hostile world (3.2.1). Leading the transformation were parish priests.

They introduced popular religious devotions which provided solace in a harsh world. They promoted Catholic revivalism, which appealed to the emotions and enabled the church, with its limited number of priests, to win the masses with what Aspinwall calls a ‘portable religion of medals, scapulars, rosaries and other accompaniments of the traditional parish mission’.⁸⁶ They established the discipline that shaped the Catholic community through regular Mass attendance, confession and opposition to mixed marriages.⁸⁷ Steady income increased collections, built Catholic infrastructure, and kept many of the faithful from

⁸⁵ ‘Children of the Dead End: The Formation of the Modern Archdiocese of Glasgow 1815-1914’ op. cit. p. 123.

⁸⁶ ‘Children of the Dead End: The Formation of the Modern Archdiocese of Glasgow 1815-1914’ op cit. p.123.

⁸⁷ Aspinwall, B. ‘Catholic Realities and Pastoral Strategies: another look at the historiography of Scottish Catholicism, 1878-1920’ *The Innes Review* vol. 59 no. 1 (Spring 2008) pp. 77-112 p. 93.

proselytising and the poorhouse.⁸⁸ Irish identity was subsumed within local ultramontane pride as people contributed funds to build and decorate churches. Clothiers, publicans, cabinet makers, provisions merchants and pawnbrokers - the Catholic shopkeeper class - were among those who provided loans to the church and helped give it its conservative character.⁸⁹

Pious and practical associations provided support to the immigrants, cemented church authority and solidified a sense of identity among Catholics. Parish savings banks and building societies promoted community formation and ensured that family income was not spent on drink. Temperance organisations further reinforced clerical leadership and helped the slow integration of the poor into society. The values of discipline, thrift and sobriety, which church based associations promoted, 'encouraged charity rather than social justice, the status quo rather than radical reconstruction of the social order, and the result was solidarity'.⁹⁰ The drive towards respectability and success through self-help transformed the Catholic Church in its industrial heartlands.⁹¹

A remarkable church building programme reinforced the central role of the parish and the priest in the life of the church. In 1840 there were five Catholic churches in the west of Scotland; by 1884 another 54 were built, with 18 extensions to existing churches.⁹² Schools were an integral part of the development of the Catholic community from the beginning. In 1833, for example, when there were two permanent priests saying four weekly masses in St Andrew's Cathedral in Glasgow, and at a smaller chapel in Calton, in the east end of the city, there were six schools and eleven Sunday schools. In the same

⁸⁸ 'The Formation of a British Identity within Scottish Catholicism, 1830-1914' op. cit. p. 273.

⁸⁹ 'Children of the Dead End: The Formation of the Modern Archdiocese of Glasgow 1815-1914' op. cit. pp. 128-131.

⁹⁰ 'Children of the Dead End: The Formation of the Modern Archdiocese of Glasgow 1815-1914' op. cit. p.123.

⁹¹ Aspinwall, B. 'The formation of the Catholic community in the west of Scotland: some preliminary outlines' *The Innes Review* vol. 33 1982 pp. 44-57 p. 46.

⁹² 'The Formation of the Catholic Community in the West of Scotland: Some Preliminary Outlines'. op. cit. p.44.

year Edinburgh had five resident priests and two churches, and four schools in the districts where Irish migrants congregated.⁹³

The story of Banffshire born Fr Peter Forbes, who returned from a three year recruitment and fundraising campaign in Ireland to found St Mary's Calton in Glasgow in 1842, provides a snapshot of a local church community in the middle of the nineteenth century and highlights the pivotal role of clergy in shaping the emerging church and establishing their authority over it. Aspinwall describes how he combined revivalist techniques with self-help philosophy, introducing May devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary, June devotions to the Sacred Heart, and a weekly temperance pledge. He was closely associated with the temperance priest Fr Mathew, who preached at the opening of St Mary's and held a hugely successful ecumenical temperance campaign in Glasgow in 1842. Fr Forbes started a parish savings scheme and building society; brought Sisters of Mercy and Franciscan nuns to help in the parish schools, and in concentrating on the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist followed the revivalist technique of consolidating the leading role of the parish priest. Colourful ceremonies and celebrity preachers reinforced community identity.⁹⁴

3.3.3 The drive towards order and stability

Some thought that the Irish might depart as quickly as they had come, leaving behind debts for churches and mission stations. In 1867, the convert Presbyterian priest, Rev Alexander Munro wrote:

There are whole congregations which must, and some of them soon, disappear leaving no track behind except perhaps a few impoverished creatures who will probably land in the poor house and leave their

⁹³ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. pp. 59- 60.

⁹⁴ 'Children of the Dead End: The Formation of the Modern Archdiocese of Glasgow 1815-1914' op. cit. p.136.

children to be raised as Protestants... the Irish population, priests and people, must necessarily disappear.⁹⁵

He believed the Irish were the greatest barrier to Catholic progress in Scotland.⁹⁶ Kehoe argues that

impressions of the Irish as racially, culturally and religiously inferior fed clerical anxiety and convinced many of the need to transform the migrants into respectable, loyal and obedient Scottish citizens and British subjects because they were undermining the Catholic position in Scotland.⁹⁷

There were tensions between Irish and Scottish clergy. Aspinwall notes that in Rome, the needs of the Scottish mission and the dangers of Irish nationalism were magnified by rival clergy; Irish clergy were presented as loyal to nationalism first and faith second.⁹⁸ They were excluded from positions of authority in Scotland, despite their numbers. Aspinwall points out that there were more Irish than Scottish priest among secular clergy in Scotland between 1830 and 1878 - 103 were Irish, while 98 were native Scots - yet apart from a brief period when James Lynch served as Coadjutor Vicar-Apostolic between 1866 and 1869, no Irish born bishop was appointed until Keith O'Brien became Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh in 1985.⁹⁹ Aspinwall states:

Fear of Protestant reaction, misgivings about image, education and even commitment to Scotland rather than to Irish exiles, fostered resistance to Irish ecclesiastical advancement. They remained infantrymen or at best NCOs in the church militant'.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Aspinwall, B. 'Scots and Irish Clergy ministering to immigrants, 1830-1878' op. cit. p. 48.

⁹⁶ 'Scots and Irish Clergy ministering to immigrants, 1830-1878' op. cit. p. 49.

⁹⁷ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. p. 23.

⁹⁸ 'Scots and Irish Clergy ministering to immigrants, 1830-1878' op. cit. p. 50.

⁹⁹ 'Children of the Dead End: The Formation of the Modern Archdiocese of Glasgow 1815 ' op. cit. p. 127.

¹⁰⁰ Aspinwall, B. 'The Formation of a British Identity within Scottish Catholicism, 1830-1914'. In Pope, R. G. *Religion and National Identity: Wales and Scotland c1700-2000*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press 2001 pp. 268-306 p. 272.

The discipline inculcated by parish missions and the promotion of organisations loyal to the church helped contain Ribbonism and Fenianism, Irish nationalist movements linked to violence. Aspinwall cites a Jesuit Mission to Saltcoats in 1860, for example, which heard 478 confessions, reclaimed 460 souls and made 19 converts. Significantly, it also reclaimed 100-150 Ribbonmen and effectively destroyed their local organisation, the Great Ribbon Lodge.¹⁰¹

The drive towards order and stability was underpinned by the third group within Scottish Catholicism: wealthy middle and upper class Oxbridge Catholics, many of them converts to Roman Catholicism, who brought ‘prestige, patronage and substantial benefactions to hard pressed clergy’.¹⁰² Among them was Robert Monteith (1828-1884), who was received into the Catholic Church by John Henry Newman in 1846, and played a leading role in the establishment of the St Margaret Association to raise funds for poor parishes and pay for seminary education and schools in Scotland. Monteith and his wealthy Catholic friends north and south of the border were conservatives with a social conscience who resisted Irish nationalism, home rule, or any threat to the hierarchical order.¹⁰³ They were detached from the cultural friction that coloured relations between Irish and Scottish Catholics and were intent on promoting a cohesive community that was firmly committed to Britain and to a Roman-dominated church.¹⁰⁴ Monteith was instrumental in the appointment of the Englishman Charles Eyre to Glasgow in 1868, where he improved the efficiency and discipline of the Western District; ten years later he became Archbishop of Glasgow following the restoration of the Scottish Catholic hierarchy.¹⁰⁵

As Aspinwall observes, Catholicism underwent a revolution: faith was systematised through a proliferation of parochial organisations, schools, confraternities, devotional and welfare bodies.¹⁰⁶ This was a church which

¹⁰¹ ‘The Formation of a British Identity within Scottish Catholicism, 1830-1914’ op. cit. p. 286.

¹⁰² ‘The Formation of a British Identity within Scottish Catholicism, 1830-1914’ op. cit. p. 274.

¹⁰³ ‘The Formation of a British Identity within Scottish Catholicism, 1830-1914’ op. cit. pp. 269-70.

¹⁰⁴ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. p. 50.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Scots and Irish Clergy ministering to immigrants, 1830-1878’ op. cit. p. 67.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Catholic Realities and Pastoral Strategies’ op. cit. p. 94.

closed ranks against mixed marriages, looked after its own poor, provided for its own schools, and created a state within a state with its focus on parish devotions, social events and saving schemes. Its societies and associations provided alternatives to those deemed to be subversive.¹⁰⁷ Kehoe suggests that this was more than the creation of a Catholic ghetto: the church's involvement in issues like education and the temperance movement, she argues, demonstrated its willingness to take responsibility for its members and contribute to Scottish civic society.¹⁰⁸

Aspinwall also notes that the walls of the ghetto were porous. He cites as an example the number of 'mixed' marriages which took place between Catholics and non Catholics. Even after Pius X's *Ne Temere* decree, which came into effect 1908 and required marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics to be solemnised by a priest, the number of mixed marriages remained high. Aspinwall points out, for example, that in St John's Stevenston, between 1915 and 1930, mixed marriages averaged thirty-six percent, and in six of the fifteen years exceeded forty percent.¹⁰⁹ The community was open to outside influences: an 'increasingly educated, organised and enfranchised laity consumed popular culture in the press, entertainment and novels'.¹¹⁰

One lay critic thought the church's drive towards order and stability meant that it failed to challenge the causes of poverty. The writer Patrick MacGill condemned what he saw as the church's collusion with the state and its failure to challenge oppression, while preaching personal morality to the oppressed. MacGill came from Donegal to work in the Scottish potato fields in 1905 and drifted around Scotland working as a labourer on building sites; his thinly disguised autobiographical novel, *Children of the Dead End*, first published in 1914, provides a searing insight into the hardships faced by Irish immigrants and poor Scottish labourers. In it he criticises the church for what he saw as its

¹⁰⁷ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. p. 150.

¹⁰⁸ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. p.151.

¹⁰⁹ Aspinwall, B. 'Baptisms, Marriages and Lithuanians; or, 'Ghetto? What Ghetto?' Some reflections on modern Catholic historical assumptions'. *The Innes Review* vol. 51 no.1 (Spring 2000) 55-67 p. 64.

¹¹⁰ 'Baptisms, Marriages and Lithuanians; or, 'Ghetto? What Ghetto?' op. cit. p. 65.

legalism, its irrelevant devotions and its deference to the state, while its people suffered.

The Church allows a criminal commercial system to continue, and wastes its time trying to save the souls of the victims of that system. Christianity preaches contentment to the wage-slaves, and hob-nobs with the slave drivers.¹¹¹

With the exception of an Irish priest in the Glasgow slums, MacGill had little time for clergy of any denomination: ‘Clergymen dine nowadays with the gamblers who rob the working classes’.¹¹² He told the tale of a Scottish minister who set his dog on a dying labourer and his mate;¹¹³ and of a ‘stray clergyman, ornamented with a stainless white collar’, who had ‘the impudence’ to tell the navvies labouring in appalling conditions to build the great dam at Kinlochleven near Lochaber what they should do.¹¹⁴ The minister was given short shrift and told that ‘no one took any heed of an apprentice who dressed better than his Divine Master’.¹¹⁵

3.3.4 *The role of education*

Education was a key factor in securing Catholicism in Scotland and moulding the working classes into obedient and respectable citizens; here, too, clergy played a leading role. Pius IX’s encyclical *Quanta Cura* of 1864, to which the Syllabus of Errors was attached, stressed the importance of a religious-run Catholic education system that would counter the secular influence of liberalism.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ MacGill, P. *Children of the Dead End*. Edinburgh: Birlinn 1999. Introduction by Osborne, B. D. p. 268.

¹¹² *Children of the Dead End* op. cit. p. 268.

¹¹³ *Children of the Dead End* op. cit. p. 258.

¹¹⁴ *Children of the Dead End* op. cit. pp. 222-223.

¹¹⁵ *Children of the Dead End* op. cit. p. 223.

¹¹⁶ Pius XI, *Quanta Cura* [Encyclical of Pius IX Condemning Current Errors] 1864 sec. 4 refers to ‘most deceitful men chiefly aim at this result, that the salutary teaching and influence of the Catholic Church may be entirely banished from the instruction and education of youth...’

Accessed December 1, 2015. <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9quanta.htm>

The recruitment of religious communities by church authorities transformed Catholic education. James Gillis, who was to become one of the Eastern District's most influential bishops, invited the Ursulines of Jesus, a French congregation of religious sisters to Edinburgh in 1834. There they set up Scotland's first post Reformation convent.¹¹⁷ In 1858 the Sisters of Mercy arrived and began to develop parish schools. In 1847, as upwards of 1,000 impoverished Irish were landing in Glasgow each week, the first two nuns arrived in the city from France, members of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. They initially divided their time between teaching and nursing victims of typhus, cholera and consumption.¹¹⁸ By 1871, male and female religious teaching communities could be found as far north as Elgin and as far south as Galashiels, with a concentration across the central belt.¹¹⁹

In her study of the contribution of women religious to the development of the Scottish Catholic Church, Kehoe points out that the institutions and care networks they established connected the church with Scotland's emerging civil society. Their commitment and authority helped secure the church's influence over the laity, and their identity as 'pious women with religious authority complemented the broader middle-class preoccupation with the resurrection of civil society through social and moral improvement'.¹²⁰ The clergy sought to ensure Scottish leadership of religious communities by taking an active role in elections to the key positions of superior and novice mistress. Kehoe's analysis of the ethnicity of superiors in the Sisters of Mercy in Glasgow between 1849 and 1870 finds just one Irish-born superior.¹²¹

Clergy control over education was also exercised through the Catholic Poor Schools Committee, founded in 1847 to manage applications for government

¹¹⁷ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. p. 76.

¹¹⁸ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. pp. 81-82.

¹¹⁹ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. p. 119.

¹²⁰ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. p. 12.

¹²¹ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. pp. 98-99.

grant money. Lay involvement was permitted only at the discretion of the bishops.¹²²

St Mary's in Glasgow, under the direction of the Franciscan Sisters, became one of the first Catholic schools to submit to government inspection and receive a grant for school books.¹²³ In 1877, Schools Inspector D. Middleton reported that Catholic schools in Glasgow were 'doing an immense amount of good among a comparatively poor class of children who were, for the most part, of Irish extraction'. He observed that

No school managers can be more anxious than our Catholic Clergy are, that the children get as good a secular education as possible... They consider that a sound secular education will help to make the child not only a better citizen, but a better catholic.¹²⁴

In a letter to the bishops of Scotland in 1898 on the anniversary of the restoration of the hierarchy, Pope Leo XIII stressed the importance of education and urged that 'we must not allow our youth to be inferior to others in literary attainments or learning'.¹²⁵

The arrival of the Sisters of Notre Dame in Glasgow in 1894 at the invitation of Archbishop Charles Eyre to set up a teacher training college was a key moment in the development of the Catholic education system: it met the need for teachers in Catholic schools and addressed the Scottish education authorities' concern for the training of qualified staff. The Sisters' decision to locate the

¹²² *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. p. 126.

¹²³ *Creating a Scottish Church* op. cit. p. 117.

¹²⁴ Extract from "General Report, for the Year 1877, by Her Majesty's Inspector D. Middleton, Esq., M. A., LL.D., on the Schools in the Lower Ward of Lanarkshire and Five adjoining Parishes" Glasgow Archdiocesan Archives ED2/10/2.

¹²⁵ *Caritatis Studium* [Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the Church in Scotland] 1898 sec 12, accessed January 4, 2016. http://w2.vatican.va/.../hf_l-xiii_enc_25071898_caritatis-studium.html

college near Glasgow University reflected their mission to engage with, rather than withdraw from, modern secular society.¹²⁶

Francis J. O'Hagan and Robert A. Davis have charted the process by which the Scottish Catholic Church arrived at a rapprochement with the secular powers of late nineteenth century Scotland for the protection and maintenance of a separate and distinctive Catholic educational system, which culminated in the Education Act of 1918.¹²⁷ The arrangements for Catholic teacher training, O'Hagan and Davis argue, epitomise the evolving understanding between the Catholic Church and the Scottish state in the pre-1918 period. The 1918 Education Act ensured that teaching staff in Catholic schools were full employees of the local education authority, while also fully 'approved' by the church regarding their religious belief and character.

Approval lay at the heart of the 'transfer with safeguards' principle that the Catholic Church in Scotland consistently believe would guarantee... the continuing vitality and distinctiveness of its schools within a modern state system operating in accordance with a fundamentally secular construction of educational purpose. ¹²⁸

The 1918 Act signalled the admission of the Catholic community into mainstream Scottish education. It was a key factor in the assimilation of Catholics in Scotland, and enabled them to grasp the educational opportunities of the twentieth century; it facilitated the eventual growth of a large Catholic professional class.¹²⁹ By the middle of the century the Catholic Church was looking to the future with confidence, as it launched a major post war church building programme in the 1950s and 1960s.¹³⁰ And, in 1982, as we have seen, Pope John Paul II made a historic visit to Scotland where he celebrated the

¹²⁶ O'Hagan, F. J. and Davis, R. A. 'Forging the compact of church and state in the development of Catholic education in late nineteenth-century Scotland' in *The Innes Review* vol. 58 no. 1 (Spring 2007) 72-94 p. 84.

¹²⁷ 'Forging the compact of church and state' op. cit. pp. 72-94.

¹²⁸ 'Forging the compact of church and state' op. cit. p. 92.

¹²⁹ *The Scottish Nation* op. cit. pp. 496-497.

¹³⁰ See Roger, J (ed.) *Gillespie, Kidd and Coia: Architecture 1856-1987* Glasgow: RIAS 2007 for an account of a major church building programme in this period.

contribution of Catholics to Scottish society. A senior priest in the archived research of 1998-2000 said: ‘Today Catholics are Scots rather than immigrants’.

3.3.5 Summary of section two

This section considered the development of the Scottish Catholic Church within the framework of modern Roman Catholicism, which was shaped by the church’s withdrawal from the world and the creation of a Catholic counterculture underpinned by the concept of church as perfect society. The unequal relationship between ordained and lay which was intrinsic to this understanding was reinforced in Scotland by the leading role played by the clergy in meeting the complex challenges the church faced. These included integrating disparate groups, seeking accommodation with an initially hostile society, meeting the spiritual and practical needs of waves of desperately poor Irish immigrants and directing their loyalty to Rome. The construction of a Scottish Catholic Church in the nineteenth century was a remarkable achievement, and formed generations of Catholics in their faith, but it was achieved at the cost of a deeply unequal relationship between ordained and lay that was to endure for many years. The roots of this culture can be summarised as follows:

- The determination of the Scottish hierarchy to establish its authority over the church and protect the church’s independence within society involved rejection of any lay challenge to its leadership (3.3.1).
- The adoption of ultramontanism as a way of transcending nationalism and class cemented the pivotal role of clergy in the church. Their power and influence over the laity was reinforced through popular devotions and parish associations, the administration of church discipline, and loyalty to the church and to Rome. An extensive church building programme established the central role of the parish and the position of the priest in the life of the local Catholic community (3.3.2).

- The clergy led the drive towards order and stability by channelling Irish political identity into loyalty to the church, promoting Scottish leadership within the church, and mobilising the support of wealthy converts loyal to the state and to Rome. They sought to mould the working classes into obedient and respectable citizens, and to connect the church with Scotland's emerging civil society (3.3.3).
- The clergy also played a key role in establishing a Catholic education system by setting up schools alongside the first missions and developing them through the recruitment of religious teaching communities. Their commitment and authority helped secure the church's influence over the laity (3.3.4).
- While Catholic Action did not find a place in Scotland, its echoes can be discerned in the extent to which the clergy had oversight of lay people's lives, and in the expectation by Rome that the hierarchy would maintain control of Catholic organisations (3.2.4).

3.4 Conclusion of chapter three

This chapter asked where the deeply clerical culture which emerges from the archived research of 1998-2000 came from and why it endured.

It found the roots of this culture in papal strategies of the nineteenth century which were developed in response to successive phases of modern industrial capitalism. The strategies were underpinned by the concept of church as perfect society, within which there was an inbuilt inequality between ordained and lay. Pope Leo XIII attempted to regain influence over society through the mobilisation of lay people under the control of the clergy, and Catholic Action shaped official perceptions of the relationship between ordained and lay people within the church right up to the debates of the Second Vatican Council.

The deeply clerical culture endured because it reflected the judgement of successive popes right up to Vatican II. The implementation of John XXIII's new vision was problematic, as we saw in chapter two. We can hear in voices from the archived research how deeply the pattern of clerical control affected the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay and how difficult it was for priests and people to develop shared responsibility for the church in 1998-2000. Priests spoke of clergy 'still wanting to run everything and dominate everything' (1.6.2); of clergy who believed that 'lay people had nothing to tell them' (1.4.2); and of the power of Rome to shape the policies of the church in Scotland (1.4.6). Lay people expressed anger about priests who took decisions without consultation or explanation (1.6.2). This sense of entitlement by clergy has deep historical roots.

In Scotland, the papal strategies of the nineteenth century which created and reinforced the clerical culture of the church provided the context within which the Scottish church leadership responded to the complex challenges it faced in the wake of Irish immigration. These included bringing together disparate groups within the Catholic community, meeting the practical and spiritual needs of poverty stricken immigrants and ensuring that the church was not perceived as a threat to the British state. Ultramontanism transcended nationalism and class and cemented the power of the clergy in the Scottish church, and they played a part in shaping almost every aspect of the church's life. The creation of a Scottish Catholic Church with its parish infrastructure was a remarkable achievement, but it was realised at the cost of reinforcing the deeply unequal relationship between ordained and lay. The model of the Scottish church which was established in the nineteenth century lives on in conversations in the archived research: in the preoccupation among some priests with 'maintenance and care' of the church they had inherited; in the belief that 'training of priests is an essential part of our self-understanding'; and in the reluctance of bishops to close parishes (1.5.1).

The world had changed radically since the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay within the Catholic

Church in 1998-2000 remained largely untouched. As Schillebeeckx pointed out on the eve of Vatican II, there had been little theological reflection on the role of the laity (2.2.5). Despite the new possibilities opened up by the Council, its weak and fragmented implementation in Scotland ensured that the church's deeply clerical culture retained its hold. In the next chapter I will consider how the tensions this created were further exacerbated by the way in which the church responded to change.

Chapter four: responding to institutional decline

'What seems to be taking place is a holding exercise - maintaining what we have rather than a missionary attitude'.

Catholic parishioner in Scotland, 1998-2000.

4.1 Introduction

The archived research undertaken in Scotland between 1998 and 2000 highlights continued decline in church attendance and vocations to the ordained priesthood, and changing patterns of belonging and believing within the Catholic community.¹ Peter Hünermann argues that these factors signal the dissolution of the church as an institution.² The archived evidence suggests that the response of the leadership of the Scottish Catholic Church was primarily to focus on maintenance of the institution and its traditional patterns of parish life. In this chapter I will ask why the church responded in this way, and consider the consequences this has for the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people. I will also consider a different response which emerges from the archived research among some parish communities in Scotland.

The chapter consists of two sections. The first section draws on research by Peter McGrail, who examined issues of belonging and believing in a study of the way in which three parishes in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool celebrated First Communion. The research was carried out between 1998 and 2000.³ His work is valuable not only because he, too, is analysing data from

¹ The phrase 'believing without belonging' comes from Grace Davie, who argues that decline in religious practice does not necessarily imply a corresponding abandonment of religious belief. Davie, G. *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing without Belonging*. Oxford: Blackwell 1992.

² Hünermann, P. 'Evangelization of Europe?' in Schreiter, R. J.(ed.) *Mission in the Third Millennium*. Maryknoll NY: Orbis 2001 57-80. By institution Hünermann means the church as 'a public form of interaction and communication that makes possible a certain orientation in life and society, enabling people to relate to one another'

³ McGrail P. *First Communion: Ritual, Church and Popular Religious Identity*. Aldershot: Ashgate 2007.

parish settings, but also because he considers his findings within the framework of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, as I will do in the next chapter. He asks why the Catholic Church drew on its own traditions and resources in order to address the challenges of institutional decline, instead of sharing with and learning from other Christian churches facing the same challenge.⁴

In McGrail's analysis of the relationship between changes in the Catholic Church and society, he considers four issues in turn: the impact of ecumenical engagement on the church; the extent of sociological change; changes within the Catholic community; and the process of renegotiating identity which many Catholics have undergone. The church's response, he concludes, is to focus on maintenance of its traditional patterns of church life, which reinforce the role of clergy and put a premium on their ministry. Drawing on data from Scottish parishes in the archived research, I will follow the same steps and suggest that a similar pattern can be seen in Scotland.

The second section considers an alternative vision which can also be discerned in the archived research. The parish respondent quoted at the beginning of this chapter compared the church's focus on maintenance of its traditions with a 'missionary attitude', and I will explore what this might mean. The section begins by considering the teaching of Vatican II on mission and finds ambiguity between the Council's understanding of mission as constitutive of the church and mission as an activity carried out by those with a 'missionary' vocation. It finds that the ambiguity is dissolving as the church in the West declines and the missionary qualities of dialogue and respect for different cultures, which were advocated at the Council, become increasingly relevant for the mission of the whole church. It then considers evidence of such an approach to mission in Scotland, and asks what this might mean for the church's response to institutional decline and the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay.

⁴ McGrail P. 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction? Sociological Factors Inhibiting Receptive Learning in the Church in England and Wales' in Murray, P. D (ed.) *Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008 pp 319-332.

4.2 Section one: changes in church and society

4.2.1 *The impact of ecumenical engagement*

Since the ecumenical flourishing which followed the Second Vatican Council, interchurch activity has become part of the life of the Scottish Catholic Church. It is a member of the Joint Commission on Doctrine of the Church of Scotland-Roman Catholic Church, for example, which was set up in 1977,⁵ and of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), founded in 1990, which brings together nine Christian denominations who share a desire for closer unity, greater understanding and joint action.⁶ Leading figures from the Catholic Church often stand alongside representatives of other traditions in the public square to give common witness on issues of justice and peace.⁷

At parish level the picture that emerges from the archived research is one of cordial relationships between local churches which have settled into a regular pattern of interdenominational services, meetings between clergy, and shared resources (1.7.3). Some respondents observed that the numbers involved in ecumenism are small, and thought that progress was slow (1.7.3). Respondents in one parish in the archived research described an approach to mission in the local community which involved co-operation with other churches on a regular basis (1.7.4); this parish drew its inspiration from Vatican II (1.4.2).

⁵ For an example of the Joint Commission's work see their Liturgy for the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows for use in the course of ecumenical gatherings (2010) at http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/3116/baptism_liturgy.pdf Accessed August 26, 2016.

⁶ See <http://acts-Scotland.org.uk> for their current programme of work.

⁷ See, for example, ecumenical witness against nuclear weapons at Faslane naval base on the Clyde in 2016, at <http://glasgowchurches.org.uk/easter-witness-for-peace-at-faslane>; or the lobby of church leaders on poverty ahead of the G20 in May 2012 at <http://glasgowchurches.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/church-leaders-in-Christian-Aid-appeal.jpg> Accessed August 11, 2016.

Priests and people clearly appreciate the changes that have taken place in relationships between the churches, the sense of common ground and the friendships that have developed; but there is little evidence of ecumenical encounter transforming the church at a structural level. Yet, as McGrail suggests, Catholics could, with integrity, learn a great deal from other Christians who are also faced with renewing their sense of mission while renegotiating their path within a rapidly changing society.⁸ He suggests that the principal reason why the Catholic Church tends to seek solutions to challenges by drawing on its own traditions is primarily sociological.

4.2.2 The extent of sociological change

McGrail points out that the landscape Christians are required to negotiate is changing rapidly, and the breadth of opinion on contentious issues renders a response all the more complex.⁹ He cites the churches' response to legislation on same-sex civil partnerships as an example of the challenges they face in seeking to be faithful to the call of the Gospel in a fast changing world.¹⁰ We have seen how almost every parish respondent in the archived research commented on the level of change which had taken place in society's attitudes and norms in their lifetime, and how it had impacted on their own beliefs. The majority said people no longer agreed with all that the church teaches (1.7.1).

Linda Woodhead has tracked the way in which the place of religion in British society has undergone change. She says that for most people, religion has 'ceased to be a matter of belonging to a clerically-led community, affirming unchanging dogma, participating in prescribed rituals, and holding conservative social attitudes'.¹¹ She notes that the explosion of further and higher education since the 1980s, the deregulation of the media and the advent of the internet

⁸ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. p. 320.

⁹ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. p. 322.

¹⁰ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. p. 322.

¹¹ Woodhead, L. 'What British people really believe' in *Modern Believing*, Volume 55, issue 1 2014.

Liverpool University Press pp. 53-54.

have ‘changed forever’ the situation where scholarly and clerical elites had a monopoly on culture and religion in Great Britain.

Now we all know more, and we expect to have a greater say. We’re not happy being preached at - we want to be able to respond. We want our leaders to be more accountable, and we want our views to count.¹²

Active engagement in church life has significantly declined. Woodhead points out that church attendance in Britain halved between 1950 and 1980, and halved again between 1980 and 2005 when it fell to 6.3 per cent of the population.¹³ In Scotland, the number of Catholic marriages, which had increased by more than a fifth between 1944 and 1974, declined by more than two thirds in the following 24 years. The number of infant baptisms increased by almost 30 per cent between the mid-1940s and the mid-1960s; after 1964 they declined steadily until in 1998 there were less than half the pre sixties level.¹⁴ A report published in May 2016 on religion in England and Wales shows that the religious makeup of England and Wales has changed dramatically in recent decades with 48.5 percent of the adult population identifying as ‘no religion’. Of those who currently identify as Catholics, 27.5 percent say they attend church services at least once a week and 39.2 percent say they attend never, or practically never.¹⁵

We can see a significant repositioning of the role and status of religion and religious institutions in Britain. Yet even in the midst of these broad processes of change, the fundamental instinct of the leadership of the Catholic community, McGrail suggests, is to look inwards to identify responses to change and the challenges it brings.¹⁶ Evidence from the archived research in Scotland

¹² ‘What British people really believe’ op. cit. p.4.

¹³ Woodhead, L. ‘Religion in Britain has changed, our categories haven’t’ at www.faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/1335118113_Woodhead-FINAL-copy.PDF Accessed August 29, 2016

¹⁴ *Diocesan Dispositions and Parish Voices* op. cit. pp. 30-31.

¹⁵ <http://www.brin.ac.uk/catholic-community-estimates/> The report was compiled by Stephen Bullivant. Accessed August 29, 2016.

¹⁶ ‘The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?’ op. cit. p. 322.

suggests that the priority of the church's leadership is to preserve the institution (1.7.4).

4.2.3 Changes within the Catholic community

One of the reasons for the focus on maintaining the institution lies in the church's history. Chapter three explored the parallel structures built by the church in the nineteenth century to protect the Catholic community from the world and provide for its needs. McGrail observes that this created a 'remarkable synergy' between the social function of the Catholic community and its religious self-identity.

Within this setting, the primary focus for mission, at least at home, was internal: energy was directed towards forming successive generations within the self-reverential meaningful universe of Roman Catholicism.¹⁷

However, we have also seen that the walls which were built around the Catholic community were porous; people remained open to outside influences (3.3.2). The process of renegotiating identity by engaging with ideas from outside the Catholic community accelerated as the pace of change in society quickened. A survey of Catholic adults in Scotland for the Westminster Faith Debates, carried out in 2014, illustrates the extent of change within the Catholic community.

- When asked about their source of guidance on living their lives and making decisions, 32 percent of Scottish Catholics said they would rely on their own reason and judgement, 23 percent on their own intuition and feelings, 16 percent on their family, and only 11 percent on the tradition and teachings of their religion.
- Asked about the time limit for abortions, 27 percent said they would keep the legal time limit at 24 weeks, 34 percent said they would reduce it and 25 percent would ban abortions altogether.

¹⁷ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. p. 323.

- On same-sex marriage, 42 percent thought it was right, 39 percent thought it was wrong, and 19 percent didn't know.
- On assisted suicide, 27 percent thought the law should be kept as it is, 67 percent thought the law should be changed to allow assisted suicide for people with incurable diseases, and 7 percent didn't know.¹⁸

The process of renegotiation, McGrail suggests, has both contributed to and been intensified by the church's dismantling of many of the features which set the Catholic church apart, such as Friday abstinence and the mandatory celebration of Holy Days of Obligation. Respondents in the archived research recalled fasting from midnight before receiving Communion, sodalities for women and men, and processions which marked significant days in the church's year (1.7.1). The dissolution of this distinctive Catholic subculture has served to highlight the extent to which Catholics, like most groups in society, are exposed to external social change and its consequences. Despite this, McGrail argues, there is a tendency for the church to continue to construct its identity without reference to the repositioning of its members. He observes that the 'dissonance between formal discourses and identity-expectations and the reality of the lives of Roman Catholics is becoming ever louder'.¹⁹

As we have seen, several parishioners in the archived research indicated that priests were concerned about the pastoral implications of the gap that has opened up between church teaching and practice on moral issues, but find it difficult to discuss with lay people. This impacts on the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay and inhibits the priest's role as an agent of change within the parish community, as Vatican II had envisaged (1.7.5).

¹⁸ www.fairnessandequality.org.uk/research. 3rd YouGov survey (on Catholics) fieldwork 11-15 June 2014. See http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/k0rbt8onjb/YG-Archive-050613-FaithMatters-UniversityofLancaster.pdf. Accessed August 11, 2016.

¹⁹ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. p. 324.

4.2.4 Renegotiating identity

Markers of renegotiated Catholic identity can be seen in the steady decline in Mass attendance, the reduction in the number of clergy and the growing number of parishes facing closure. As individuals continue to renegotiate their personal identity in response to the explosion of change in society, McGrail's research into the celebration of first communion suggests that many people continue to incorporate the category 'Catholic' into the construct of their identity, without necessarily implying any commitment to church teaching. Being Roman Catholic is their cultural heritage, and access to the church's rituals their 'birthright'; the celebration of rituals like first communion provide a sense of intergenerational rather than religious continuity.²⁰ As the Scottish research demonstrated, while some people saw in the ritual of first communion the first steps in a lifelong pattern of weekly participation in the Eucharist, others understood it as a once in a lifetime celebration of an event that does not necessarily involve church attendance (1.7.2).

McGrail points out that these different discourses express different aspirations for the future.²¹ The aspirations of the first group, which includes parish clergy and parishioners who attend church on a regular basis, are bound up with the parish's hopes and fears for its future existence. For them, the ritual of first communion must

establish a pattern of weekly reception of communion that will ensure that the Sunday congregation is constantly rejuvenated, and be the clearest possible sign of the adherence of successive generations of Catholics to the formal teaching of the Church.²²

²⁰ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. p. 324.

²¹ McGrail's analysis of the groups involved, which I will follow in relation to the Scottish research, are explored in *First Communion: Ritual, Church and Popular Religious Identity* op. cit. pp. 170-175.

²² *First Communion: Ritual, Church and Popular Religious Identity* op. cit. p.171.

For the second group, made up of the families of first communicants who are not regular churchgoers, the ritual does not relate primarily, if at all, to the future of the liturgical assembly. Instead its focus is on the family, its identity and its status within the local community.

This second group makes little or no personal investment in the future of the church as a liturgical community; many in the first group, who contribute on a weekly basis to parish finances, perceive that the ritual is being celebrated with and for people who are contributing to the decline of the parish institution they hold so dear. Hence the resentment expressed by the parishioner who said people ‘use’ the church and give nothing back (1.7.2). By placing the non-practising majority at the centre of the ritual stage, McGrail argues, the event makes it evident to practising Catholics that they are the minority within their parishes.²³

As the social distinctiveness of the Catholic community dissolves, people bring different sets of meanings to their encounters with the church. This has consequences for the traditional parish structure.

Catholics now have access to a wider range of ‘scripts’ than previous generations from which they can construct meaningful discourses for themselves and their families. The Church’s discourses concerning regular Mass attendance, family formation and doctrinal submission, which were so central to the construct of the parish... no longer receive the assent of the general Catholic population... the very structure of the parish itself has become jeopardised.²⁴

²³ *First Communion: Ritual, Church and Popular Religious Identity* op. cit. p. 175.

²⁴ *First Communion: Ritual, Church and Popular Religious Identity* op. cit. p. 175.

4.2.5 *The church's response to change*

McGrail points out that social changes of themselves do not constitute a barrier to learning from other traditions - by breaking down the distinctiveness of the Catholic community, they expose common ground that could become the seedbed for ecumenical exchange.²⁵ The issue is the church's response to change.

We have already seen two facets of this response, neither of which, McGrail notes, is hospitable to learning from the experience of other Christians. The first is lack of tolerance for those Catholics who have renegotiated their identity in response to social change. This was expressed by the parishioner who saw them as 'using' the church and not giving anything back; and in comments about their perceived apathy towards the church and their lack of respect and reverence (1.6.2). The second is the attempt to create a buttress against change by preserving the traditions of the institution; this was reflected in the focus by many priests on 'maintenance and care' of the church they had inherited (1.5.1) and resistance to greater lay involvement (1.6.2).

The buttressing tendency can be seen in the preservation of doctrine as well as traditional practice. We have seen how one of the bishops in the archived research denied priests an opportunity to discuss the ordination of women and reinforced his position by reminding them of John Paul II's 1994 letter to bishops *On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone* (1.5.1). We have also seen how, in an address to African theologians in 1985, the pope stressed that the church's magisterium is the authentic guardian and interpreter of doctrine (2.4.4).

McGrail argues that the tendency to shore up traditional teaching and practice as a buttress against change is further strengthened by the need to respond to changes within the church which threaten the future of the institution as it is

²⁵ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. p. 325.

presently constituted.²⁶ He points out that the continued fall in church membership, which in Scotland dropped by 14 percent between 1964 and 1998, and the reduction in the number of diocesan priests, which fell by a third in Scotland in the same period,²⁷ is leading to the progressive dismantling of the parish system. As a parishioner in the archived research said, ‘Change is now with us and will get worse. What will happen when we have to share our parish priest with two or three parishes on Sunday?’ (1.6.1).

The church’s official response to the falling number of priests, as we have seen, was to try and maintain business as usual by giving them responsibility for a number of parishes. Both dioceses in the archived research had begun to group parishes together to match the number of priests available and rationalise the number of church buildings which were to be kept open. The role of the priest was seen as central to maintaining traditional pattern of church life.

Dependence on clergy ran deep (1.5.1).

McGrail points out that expressions of dependence on clergy contain a paradox: despite commitments to collaborative working between ordained and lay, the person of the priest is becoming more dominant as the reduction in the number of clergy raises their profile within the community and enhances the premium invested in their ministry.²⁸ This, McGrail argues, risks reinforcing the preference of many Catholics to avoid taking responsibility for parish management and faith development, a concern which was reflected in the archived research when people expressed anxiety about the number of people likely to come forward to meet the church’s needs (1.6.5). This in turn mapped on to historical patterns of lay passivity that many found difficult to shake off (1.6.4).

The archived research supports McGrail’s observation that the focus of reconfiguration of the church’s structures in the face of institutional decline is

²⁶ ‘The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?’ op. cit. p. 325.

²⁷ *Diocesan Dispositions and Parish Voices* op. cit. p. 29 and p.32.

²⁸ ‘The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?’ op. cit. p. 326.

predominantly inward looking maintenance rather than outward facing mission (1.7.5). The overwhelming concern of the church's leadership is the redeployment of clergy and the management of dwindling personnel and financial resources, which one priest described as akin to crisis management (1.5.1). McGrail sees two possible consequences: the emergence of a new clerical culture and a tendency to retreat into viewing the Catholic community as constituted only by the liturgical assembly, as the issue of providing Sunday Mass becomes paramount.²⁹ He suggests that there is a danger of the Roman Catholic community slipping into an unarticulated but effectively congregationalist position as its focus becomes the gathering of like-minded individuals around a priest, instead of making present at local level the church in its universality.³⁰

4.2.6 Summary of section one

This section explored why the church's response to institutional decline was to focus on maintenance of the institution and its traditional patterns of parish life, and asked what implications this had for the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay. The section's findings can be summarised as follows:

- Ecumenical engagement in Scotland has not opened up a shared discussion among churches about their response to institutional decline (4.2.1).
- The landscape Christians are required to negotiate is changing rapidly and the role of the church within society has shifted considerably. Yet the weight of the Catholic community's traditional social configuration retains a powerful emotive pull that risks drawing it back into seeking solutions framed in terms of its own discourses (4.2.2).
- In response to change within the Catholic community, the church continues to construct its identity without reference to the repositioning

²⁹ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. p. 326.

³⁰ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. p. 327.

of its members, which creates tension in the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay (4.2.3).

- Patterns of celebrating first communion suggest that increasing numbers of people incorporate the word ‘Catholic’ as part of their cultural and intergenerational rather than religious identity.³¹ One of the consequences is to place the traditional parish structure in jeopardy (4.2.4).
- The church’s response to change is to shore up the traditional practices of the institution and stress its traditional doctrine. Internally, the church seeks to maintain traditional patterns of parish life by redeploying clergy and reducing the number of parishes. This risks placing a renewed premium on the role of the priest, and reinforcing the tendency among some lay Catholics to avoid taking responsibility for their faith development and the future of the church (4.2.5).

4.3 Section two: an alternative focus

In this section I will consider a different response to institutional decline which emerges from the archived research, based on the church’s developing understanding of mission. I will examine its significance for the Scottish Catholic Church and the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay.

The section begins by considering the teaching of Vatican II on mission and notes ambiguity between the Council’s understanding of mission as constitutive of the church and mission as an activity carried out by those with a ‘missionary’ vocation. It finds that ambiguity is dissolving as the church in the West declines and the missionary qualities of dialogue and respect for different cultures, which were advocated at the Council, become increasingly relevant for the whole

³¹ McGrail’s research found that this group made up the majority of participants in the ritual of first communion. *First Communion: Ritual, Church and Popular Religious Identity* op. cit. p. 170.

church. The section then considers evidence that such a missionary approach is developing in local communities in Scotland, and asks what this might mean for the church's response to institutional decline, and for the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay.

4.3.1 Mission at Vatican II

As we considered in chapter two, Vatican II taught that the building up of the church and the fulfilment of its mission is the work of the whole community of believers. This understanding was developed in the second chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, which emphasised that the people of God share in the common priesthood of Christ (2.3.4). Here we find the foundation for the development of a new theology of the laity based on the primary identity of the *Christifidelis*, which is presupposed in *Gaudium et Spes*.

It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love, and by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society.³²

We have also seen the way in which the Council, over the course of its deliberations, shifted its understanding of the relationship between the church and the world. Chapter VII of *Lumen Gentium* on the Pilgrim Church, for example, linked the temporal to the eschatological rather than the spiritual order. In this perspective, the whole church, laity and clergy alike, are situated within the temporal order in which they learn the meaning of their earthly life (2.3.5).

As Stephen Bevans points out, one of the fullest expressions of the conviction that the church finds its identity and purpose by being immersed in the service

³² Vatican Council II, “*Lumen Gentium*” p. 397.

of and dialogue with the world can be found in *Gaudium et Spes*.³³ Its opening words, which identify the joys, hopes, griefs and anxieties of every human being with those of Christians are well known, but the missionary lines which follow, Bevans argues, are often overlooked: '[Christians], united in Christ and guided by the holy Spirit, press onwards towards the kingdom of the Father and are bearers of a message of salvation intended for all'.³⁴ Bevans describes the whole constitution as a 'mission document par excellence'. He points out, for example, that the first part of chapter four deals with the role of the church in the world as one of mutuality.

Not only is the church in mission to and among individuals (no.41), within society (no.42) and in terms of human development (no.43), but the document also goes on to say that the church is helped in its mission by the world's various cultures and by women and men 'versed in different institutions and specialities' (no. 44)... Preaching the gospel in tune with particular cultures and contemporary movements 'ought to remain the law of all evangelisation' (no.44).³⁵

The texts of Vatican II, Bevans argues, make clear that the way in which the church carries out its mission is in dialogue with different cultures, recognising the prior presence of God's spirit in the world and among its peoples.³⁶

However, as we have seen in relation to other aspects of the Council's teaching, there was ambiguity in the Council's understanding of mission. Did mission mean the basic task of the church wherever it finds itself, or did it refer to the work of churches sending missionaries out to different places and cultures? Bevans points out that on the one hand, *Ad Gentes*, the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, states that the pilgrim Church is missionary by its very nature, and *Lumen Gentium* that the church is a sacrament, a sign and an instrument of unity in the world; while on the other hand, the Council

³³ Bevans, S. B. 'Revisiting mission at Vatican II: theology and practice for today's missionary church'. *Theological Studies* 74.2 (June 2013) pp. 261-283 pp.264-265.

³⁴ Vatican Council II "Gaudium et Spes" p. 903.

³⁵ 'Revisiting mission at Vatican II' op. cit. p.266.

³⁶ 'Revisiting mission at Vatican II' op. cit. p.267-268.

distinguishes between missionary work as such and pastoral activity exercised among the faithful (*Ad Gentes* sec. 6).³⁷ Mission can be read as constitutive of the church or it can be read as one of many activities carried out by women and men with a specific ‘missionary’ vocation.³⁸

4.3.2 Mission in a changing world

As Bevans and others have observed, the ambiguity found in Council documents in relation to mission may no longer obtain: today every church exists in a missionary situation.³⁹ As the church in the West finds itself in numerical decline, living out its mission in a rapidly changing world, new ways to preach the gospel need to be found. Bevans suggests that revisiting Vatican II’s documents on mission is a fruitful way to approach the task: what was seen as relevant to a specific ‘missionary’ vocation can now be seen as relevant to the missionary nature of the whole church.

There is no longer a dichotomy between every church’s missionary nature and its task of preaching the gospel in a way that requires dialogue, knowledge of and empathy for the concrete contexts in which women and men live, and skills of intercultural communication. The church is indeed ‘missionary by its very nature’, requiring missionary practice for its very existence.⁴⁰

The skills that characterised the work of missionaries provide a resource for today’s church in a pluralist society. The promotion of a ‘new evangelisation,’ for example, by Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II drew on these skills in response to the secular cultures of the West. In his 1990 encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II observed that

³⁷ Vatican Council II, “*Ad Gentes*” p. 820.

³⁸ ‘Revisiting mission at Vatican II’ op. cit. p. 274.

³⁹ ‘Revisiting mission at Vatican II’ op. cit. p. 274; see also Dorr, D. *Mission in Today’s World*. Dublin: The Columba Press 2000. In chapter 11, Dorr speaks of new models, new images and new attitudes to mission which recognise that Western civilisation is no longer identified with the Christian message pp. 186-201.

⁴⁰ ‘Revisiting mission at Vatican II’ op. cit. p. 274.

entire groups of the baptised have lost a living sense of the faith, or even consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. In this case, what is needed is a ‘new evangelisation’ or a ‘re-evangelisation’.⁴¹

Here, too, there are ambiguities. The pope acknowledged the need for the Gospel to be incarnated in people’s culture, but although he says that inculturation enriches the church as well as the receiving culture, he defines inculturation as a top down, rather than a mutual process. He quotes the Final Document of the Extraordinary Synod of 1985 which states that ‘inculturation means the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures’.⁴²

As Bevans points out, for John Paul II,

no matter how creative the translation of the gospel [into other cultures] may be, it must always be a *translation* of the gospel (and of subsequent doctrinal formulations of the church).... Foremost in the pope’s mind, it seems, is the preservation of the unity of the faith, and for him this can be accomplished only by emphasising the primary universality of ecclesial communion and doctrinal expression.⁴³

Bevans argues that revisiting Vatican II on mission suggests that the church should engage in what he calls ‘prophetic dialogue’: a stance which anchors all mission in deep listening and respectful attitudes towards the world. From this perspective the church shows reverence for the heritage of people’s religions, readiness to learn from their experiential wisdom, and sensitivity to those who

⁴¹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* [Encyclical of Pope John Paul II On the permanent validity of the Church’s missionary mandate] sec. 33, accessed September 3, 2016..

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html

⁴² *Redemptoris Missio* op. cit. sec.52, quoting the Final Document of the Extraordinary Synod of 1985, II, D, 4.

⁴³ Bevans, S.B. *Models of Contextual Theology* Maryknoll NY:Orbis Books 2008 p. 51.

do not or cannot believe.⁴⁴ Bevans suggests that such an approach should be rooted in what Pope John XXIII in his opening speech to the Council referred to as the ‘medicine of mercy’ (2.2.2).

A second aspect of missionary practice can be found in the Council’s call for the formation of Christian communities which are examples of the power of the gospel to transform lives. In *Ad Gentes*, we read:

Missionaries... should raise up communities of the faithful, so that walking worthy of the calling to which they have been called... they might carry out the priestly, prophetic and royal offices entrusted to them by God. In this way the Christian community will become a sign of God’s presence in the world.⁴⁵

Three further characteristics of communities shaped by the gospel follow in this section of *Ad Gentes*: they should be marked by mutual support and sharing, by ecumenical activity, and within them the laity are of ‘prime importance and worthy of special care’.

4.3.3 Mission in the Scottish church.

The archived research carried out in Scotland between 1998 and 2000 reflects the ambiguity of the Council’s teaching on mission, but it also reflects the way the church’s understanding of mission has developed since Vatican II (1.7.4). A small number of parish respondents understood mission in terms of women and men with a special ‘missionary’ vocation who work overseas. Support for the ‘foreign missions’ was a source of pride; one man listed the members of missionary communities from his village who had left to go ‘far afield’.

⁴⁴ ‘Revisiting mission at Vatican II’ op. cit. pp. 277-278.

⁴⁵ Vatican Council II, “*Ad Gentes*” p. 828.

For others, however, mission was understood as constitutive of the church in its relationship with the world. Avery Dulles describes this model of church as ‘servant ecclesiology,’ and compares it with the model of church as an institution which risks becoming ‘increasingly concerned with its own internal affairs’.⁴⁶ Parishioners in the archived research spoke of ways in which their parish responded to need in the local community. They saw the parish as a community resource and the church hall as a ‘safe space’ for lonely people (1.6.1). Some of their community activity was undertaken alongside other local churches as part of their ecumenical witness. Their understanding recalls the description of Christian community in *Ad Gentes* 15, which was characterised by mutual support, sharing and ecumenical activity (4.3.2): one parish respondent observed that ‘the Christian community depends on each other, they love, help and support one another, collectively worship and praise. By their actions and interdependence this would be obvious’ (1.7.4).

In another parish, one man spoke of mission as ‘moving out’ from the church in order to engage with people in need. He described mission as threefold - to the church community, in the first place, to strengthen its members to ‘move out’; to those in need within the church community; and to those in need within wider society (1.7.4). The youth worker who met young people in a café on a regular basis to try and help them develop their skills had also moved out from the church: she believed its approach to youth work was ‘too narrow’ and expected young people to come to church. For her, moving beyond the boundaries of the church to engage with difficult young people was the place where she lived out her Christian vocation (1.7.4).

The archived research makes clear that those parish respondents who understood mission as constitutive of the church came from parishes where strong partnerships between priests and people were developing, and lay people were taking more responsibility for the life and mission of the church. The role of the priest in these parish communities was described variously as facilitating,

⁴⁶ Dulles, A. *Models of the Church* (Second Edition) Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1987 p. 98.

leading, and empowering, while lay people spoke of liberation, growing in maturity, and experiencing a greater sense of community (1.6.1).

These communities reflect the Council's understanding that the building up of the church and the fulfilment of its mission is the work of the whole community of believers, and that they should work alongside others in the service of the world. Their outward facing mission stands in contrast to the inward looking focus on maintenance of the institution which was explored in the first section of the chapter. Instead of a renewed dependence on clergy, the second group demonstrate a growing confidence among lay people and a deeper partnership between ordained and lay.

They also represent a different approach to the church's institutional decline: by engaging with the wider community they are making the church present in a different way, which looks forward to the transformation of the world rather than backwards to the preservation of the past.

McGrail suggests that a renewed sense of mission can grow from ecumenical engagement. He offers an example from a parish in Liverpool, where he was parish priest.⁴⁷ The parish shared a church building with an Anglican congregation in a large housing estate, where the population faced multiple social problems. The primary learning from the experience, for the Catholics especially, he states, was twofold.

Firstly, a joint church council was established, through which members from both communities looked after the day-to-day use and management of the shared property. This gave Roman Catholic members the opportunity to learn from an Anglican Parochial Church Council, whose lay members were accustomed to sharing responsibility and decision making with their pastor. It had an impact on the Catholics' engagement with the joint council, and on the

⁴⁷ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. pp. 329-330

working of their own parish council. It fostered a much more responsible and involved approach, McGrail suggests, particularly to collaborative ministry, and was a ‘healthy antidote to the prevailing Catholic dependence on the clergy’.⁴⁸

The second area of learning flowed from the first: as the two communities participated together in decision making, they began to develop a shared sense of mission to the locale. For the Catholics, the learning was to ‘look beyond the traditional walls of the fortress and to recognise the importance of outreach, not least social, to the community at large’.⁴⁹

4.3.4 Summary of section two

This section considered the way in which the church’s teaching on mission developed at Vatican II and in the years which followed. Ambiguities between the Council’s understanding of mission as an activity carried out by those with a ‘missionary’ vocation, and mission as constitutive of the church, dissolved as the church in the west found itself in numerical decline. The emphasis on dialogue, understanding and empathy for the contexts in which people live, and the skills of intercultural communication, which the council stressed in relation to missionary activity, came to be understood as relevant to the missionary nature of the whole church.

The archived research provides evidence that this understanding has developed in some communities in Scotland where lay people are taking more responsibility for the church and where the life of the parish is characterised by partnership between priests and people. Their outward facing focus on mission stands in sharp contrast to the inward facing focus on maintenance of the institution, which was discussed in section one.

⁴⁸ ‘The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?’ op. cit. p.330

⁴⁹ ‘The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?’ op. cit. p.330

The findings of section two can be summarised as follows:

- Vatican II taught that the building up of the church and the fulfilment of its mission is the work of the whole community of believers, who find their identity and purpose by being immersed in the service of and dialogue with the world. There was ambiguity between this understanding of mission as constitutive of the church, and mission as an activity carried out by those with a specific ‘missionary’ vocation (4.3.1).
- This ambiguity has dissolved in the face of the church’s decline in the West, as all churches exist in a new missionary situation. Revisiting Vatican II’s documents on mission provides resources for today’s missionary church to preach the gospel in a way that is anchored in deep listening and respectful attitudes towards the world (4.3.2).
- The archived research reflects the ambiguity of the Council’s teaching on mission, but it also provides evidence of parish communities with a strong sense of mission as constitutive of the church. They are characterised by strong lay involvement and partnership between ordained and lay people, and provide an alternative response to the church’s buttressing tendency in the face of institutional decline (4.3.3).

4.4 Conclusion of chapter four

This chapter explored why the church’s response to institutional decline in Scotland was primarily to focus on maintenance of the institution and its traditional patterns of parish life. It concluded that the answer is primarily sociological, involving the complex relationship between changes in society and changes in the church. In response to change, the efforts of the church’s leadership are directed at the maintenance of traditional patterns of church life, the redeployment of clergy and the management of dwindling personnel and financial resources. The role of the priest has become a key issue, creating the

possibility of a new clerical culture, with implications for the church's commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay.

The chapter also explored an alternative vision which has emerged, based on the teaching of Vatican II on mission as constitutive of the whole church. Evidence from the archived research suggests that this vision has taken root in Scotland in communities characterised by strong lay involvement and partnership working between priests and people. In the next chapter I will consider how this relationship might be developed in the Catholic Church in Scotland, and the church's structures renewed, by drawing on the insights of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning in conversation with voices from communities like these.

Chapter five: Reimagining the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people in the Catholic Church in Scotland

'Why are we [lay people] not being asked for our views?'

Lay diocesan employee in Scotland, 1998-2000.

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will bring voices from the archived research into conversation with Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, a strategy for ecumenical engagement which emphasises the way in which churches can deepen their own Christian understanding and practice by learning from one another. The aim of the conversation is to explore how the structures and habits of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland might be reconfigured to reflect its stated commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay people.

I am bringing Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning into the conversation because, as I will demonstrate, it provides a lens through which to understand tensions in the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay, and a framework within which to address them. The archived research identified many points of tension (chapter one). Analysis revealed that their causes and complicating factors included a weak and fragmented implementation of Vatican II (chapter two), a pervasive clerical culture with deep historical roots (chapter three), and a response to institutional decline which privileged institutional maintenance over mission (chapter four). In this chapter I will explore how Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, in conversation with voices from the archived research, can help address these tensions and their underlying causes, and offer a process for reimaging and reconfiguring the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay within the Catholic Church in Scotland.

Section one provides an account of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, beginning with the ecumenical context in which it was developed. It can be understood as a response to two great ecclesial events of the 20th century - the Second Vatican Council and the ecumenical movement - and the way in which they developed. In relation to Vatican II, it offers a rich account of the Council's ecclesiology; in relation to ecumenism, it draws on the Council's teaching to develop a new response to the loss of momentum in the ecumenical movement which followed the optimism of the 1960s.

This loss of momentum, described below, helps explain how Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning developed, and provides the background for the definition which follows. As the definition unfolds with an account of the key characteristics and theological and philosophical roots of Receptive Ecumenism, voices from the archived research enter the conversation by placing their insights and concerns about the church's commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay within this framework. One of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning's core concerns is the way in which the church's teaching is reflected in its structures and communal ways of living. Tensions between teaching and practice, such as those between the church's commitment to collaborative working and the way it is lived, are understood as wounds in the body of the church which require healing.

With this understanding in mind, the focus of the conversation in section two turns to sources of healing, by considering the characteristics of a community shaped by Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning. Voices from the archived research, which describe green shoots of a new church struggling to emerge in Scotland, enter into this conversation to identify where healing might be found, opening up the possibility of a new partnership between ordained and lay.

The third and final section of the chapter considers how, in the light of this conversation, the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay might be re-

imagined within the Scottish Catholic Church. Voices from the archived research suggest how the church's web of belief and practice might be developed and renewed in order to overcome the problems that have been identified in the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay. Insights from other traditions also offer potential for healing. The section ends by considering how these insights, taken together, might be operationalised in the Scottish Catholic Church today.

5.2 Section one: Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning

5.2.1 *The ecumenical context*

Until the Second Vatican Council, the official position of the Roman Catholic Church on ecumenism was uncompromising: church unity was understood in terms of one way return to Rome. Catholics were forbidden by the 1917 Code of Canon Law to participate in meetings with other Christians (c.1325), or share in their rituals (c.1258).¹ In his 1928 encyclical, *Mortalium Animos*, Pope Pius XI declared that 'the union of Christians can only be promoted by promoting the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it, for in the past they have unhappily left it'.²

However, a new understanding developed within Roman Catholicism in the decades before Vatican II, influenced by the ecumenical movement (2.3.1). It was reflected in the new direction taken by Pope John XXIII in his opening speech to the Council.

¹ Peters, E. N. *The 1917 or Pio Benedictine Code of Canon Law*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2001 p. 447, p. 426.

² Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos* [Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI on Religious Unity 1928] sec.10, accessed March 24, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19280106_mortalium-animos.html www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals

The Catholic Church considers it to be her duty to work actively to fulfil this mystery of that unity for which Christ Jesus ardently prayed the heavenly Father on the eve of his sacrifice.³

The Council's Decree on Ecumenism, promulgated in November 1964, acknowledged the growing movement for unity among Christians and declared that it was one of the Council's principal concerns.⁴ The years that followed were a time of great ecumenical growth and flourishing. The Catholic Church became a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC). In Scotland, hopes for a new chapter in ecumenical relations were highlighted in a full page article in *The Scotsman* in September 1965 by Church of Scotland minister Dr Ian M. Fraser, as the Council was entering its final session. He wrote:

What matters now is that Churches work in partnership towards that unity which is compatible with whatever truth they are able to affirm together, and undertake common acts of service and love. Here lies the great evangelical opportunity of our time.⁵

Yet twenty-five years later, Konrad Raiser, a former deputy general secretary of the WCC, described the overwhelming impression of the ecumenical movement as one of 'stagnation if not resignation'.⁶ There was talk of an 'ecumenical winter'. Raiser argued that the reasons for the stalled momentum lay in unresolved tensions implicit in the goals of the ecumenical movement and the methods adopted for achieving them.

He reflected the uncertainty which had come to characterise the ecumenical movement. In relation to its goals, for example, he points to the revised WCC

³ John XXIII, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* [Pope John XIII Opening speech to the Council] sec. 19, accessed April 20, 2016. Translated by Joseph A. Komonchak
<https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/john-xxiii-opening-speech.pdf>

⁴ Vatican Council II, "Unitatis Redintegratio" p. 452.

⁵ Ian Fraser, 'Gin Ye Daur' *The Scotsman*, September 25, 1965 p. 4.

⁶ Raiser, K. *Ecumenism in Transition: a Paradigm Shift in the Ecumenical Movement?* Geneva: WCC Publications 1991 p. 1.

constitution which refers to unity, common witness and mission, service and renewal.⁷ This, he argues, conceals unresolved tensions: is the main goal of the ecumenical movement the Faith and Order focus on church unity, the Life and Work promotion of justice and peace, or the spiritual, missionary and ecumenical renewal of the churches? The meaning of unity is itself ambiguous. Is its goal to make visible the unity of the church given in Christ, or to restore broken unity? In the years following Vatican II there was a growing sense of the importance of unity not just of the church, but of the whole of humanity in justice and peace. Ecumenism came to be understood in the light of its Greek root *oikoumene*, concerning the whole inhabited earth. Raiser points out that this shift in understanding was supported by the teaching of Vatican II, and he highlights parallels between the Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, and the WCC Uppsala report a few years later.⁸

... the church, in Christ, is in the nature of sacrament - a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and unity among all men....⁹

The church is bold in speaking of itself as the sign of the coming unity of mankind.¹⁰

But the focus on justice and peace and the whole of humanity gave rise to more questions: is work for justice and peace an expression of Christian responsibility in the social and political realm, or is it central to the church's confession of faith? How far should the ecumenical movement go in solidarity and support for social and political initiatives? The WCC's Programme to Combat Racism, initiated in 1969, was criticised as a falling away of the WCC from the central goals of the ecumenical movement.¹¹

⁷ The WCC Nairobi Assembly (1975) speaks of calling the churches to 'the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in the common life of Christ, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe'.

<https://www.oikomene.org/en/about-us/faq> Accessed March 24, 2015.

⁸ *Ecumenism in Transition* op. cit. p. 8.

⁹ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" p.350.

¹⁰ Goodall N. (ed.) *The Uppsala Report: official report of the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches*. Geneva: WCC 1968 p. 17.

¹¹ *Ecumenism in Transition* op. cit. p. 9.

Raiser points out that an early goal of the ecumenical movement was renewal in the life of the churches. In the debate on worship and liturgy he sees the same tension between continuity and change: does renewal have as its goal a new form of church, which can do justice to God's commission in a changed world, or does renewal mean recovering continuity with the origins of the church and its witness?¹²

Raiser asks if the goal of church unity is still valid and suggests that the biblical concept of fellowship with its vertical dimension of participation in divine reality through Jesus Christ in the Spirit, and its horizontal dimension as a sharing with one another in a life of solidarity, is better suited to give direction to the ecumenical movement. The goal becomes not static but dynamic unity that will only be complete at the *eschaton*.¹³ This approach offers the structurally distinct and fraternally associated character of the WCC as a model of unity in diversity that seeks to take into account both the internal tensions and external challenges that the ecumenical movement has encountered.¹⁴

The development of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, by a team led by Paul Murray, responded to the ecumenical challenge articulated by Raiser and others.¹⁵ Like Raiser, Murray believes that, on most fronts, the aspiration for programmed structural unity in the short to medium term is unrealistic.¹⁶ Among factors contributing to the change of climate since the 1960s and 70s, he cites the disappointment occasioned by the failure of high profile initiatives and the sense that ecumenical engagement is made easier when it focusses on practical

¹² *Ecumenism in Transition* op. cit. p. 12.

¹³ *Ecumenism in Transition* op. cit. p. 76.

¹⁴ *Ecumenism in Transition* op. cit. pp. 54-78. See also Murray P. D. 'Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning - Establishing the Agenda' in Murray P.D. (ed) *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning*, Oxford: OUP 2010 pp. 5-25 p. 10.

¹⁵ Staff from the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University and St Cuthbert's Seminary, Ushaw College, in collaboration with others from Australian, European and North American institutions worked on a research project in Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning in the years leading up to an international colloquium held in Durham in 2006. Two years later, a volume of essays was published: Murray P. D.(ed.) *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning*, Oxford: OUP 2010 (First published 2008). The background to the initiative is described by Murray in the preface and the first chapter which is entitled 'Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning - Establishing the Agenda' pp. 5-25.

¹⁶ Murray, P.D. 'Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning - Establishing the Agenda' in *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning* op. cit. pp. 5-25, p. 9.

issues of service and mission rather than ‘unravelling arcane matters of faith and order’ which are regarded as blocking the way to structural unity.¹⁷ He suggests that impatience with the slowness of ecumenical progress and the perceived irrelevance of continuing structural divisions relative to the urgent need to proclaim the gospel can be seen in the phenomenon of post-denominational Christianity where people move from one church to another and may not feel tied to any ecclesial tradition.¹⁸

Pulling in the opposite direction of reinforcing differences rather than relativising them, he also identifies factors such as the intensification of secularisation and the associated reduction in the numbers of clergy and active lay people in many traditions. This energy drain, he observes, can serve to promote a more inward looking, preservationist mentality within congregations in contrast to the outward facing mission focus of ecumenical endeavour. As we have seen this was a factor in shaping the response of the Catholic Church in Scotland to institutional decline (chapter 4). A further factor in reinforcing difference, Murray suggests, is the characteristic postmodern emphasis on particularity over commonality which leads to an appreciation, and even a defensiveness, of distinctive traditions.¹⁹

The loss of ecumenical momentum is reflected in the archived research from Scotland. The sense of excitement and discovery which Ian Fraser described in 1965 had settled into a pattern of cordial relationships and interchurch services at the local level (1.7.4).

This is the context in which Receptive Ecumenism asks how we should respond to the call to organic structural unity which has become central to the teaching of the Catholic Church, as restated by Pope John XXIII’s successors.²⁰ Does it

¹⁷ ‘Establishing the Agenda’ op. cit. p. 10.

¹⁸ ‘Establishing the Agenda’ op. cit. p. 10.

¹⁹ ‘Establishing the Agenda’ op. cit. p. 11.

²⁰ See, for example. Pope John Paul II’s encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint* sec. 20 where he describes ecumenism as an organic part of the church’s life and work:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-

simply recede into the future as Konrad Raiser suggests? Is reconciled diversity without structural unity the best we can hope for? And how should we live now in the light of the expectation of organic structural unity at the *eschaton*?

5.2.2 *The concept of catholicity*

The concept of catholicity is central to an understanding of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning.²¹ Murray describes catholicity as referring not to the ‘narrow uniformity of a sect’ but to

the differentiated unity of a communion that stretches to encompass all of creation in all of its diverse particularity... It refers not to the diversity of assertive autonomy and absolute individuality but to a diversity in which all are brought to coherent configuration in their immensely diverse particularity within the providential plan of God.²²

Catholicity as understood here offers a vision of ‘*all* being gathered in intensely differentiated but configured communion’ that reflects something of the infinite richness of God; it is a project to be lived and lived into rather than a bald given to be preserved.²³ This perception of catholicity was central to the understanding of Vatican II, with its ability to embrace different cultures, different spiritualities and even different theologies without losing its basic identity (2.2.5). As a result, a range of theological positions appeared side by

[ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/pont-messages/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20050420_missa-pro-ecclesia.html) (accessed March 24, 2015); the first message of Pope Benedict XVI at the end of the Eucharistic Concelebration with the Members of the College of Cardinals: http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/pont-messages/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20050420_missa-pro-ecclesia.html (accessed March 24 2015); the Address of Pope Francis to His Grace Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury and his entourage, 16th June 2014:

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/june/documents/papa-francesco_20140616_arivescovo-canterbury.html (accessed March 24, 2015).

²¹ The term catholicity refers to one of the marks of the church, which Vatican II acknowledged can be found outside the Roman Catholic Church (*Lumen Gentium* sec. 8; *Unitatis Redintegratio* sec. 3). The term is sometimes capitalised, as it is by Murray.

²² Murray P. D. ‘On Valuing Truth in Practice: Rome’s Postmodern Challenge’ *International Journal of Systematic Theology* Vol. 8 no. 2 April 2006, 163-183 p. 179.

²³ ‘On Valuing Truth in Practice’ op. cit. p. 180.

side within many of the Council's documents, keeping discussions open within the church and within the wider ecumenical network.

This understanding of catholicity, Murray suggests, requires certain communicative virtues both of individuals and of institutions if it is to be more fully realised.²⁴ At the level of the individual it could mean always seeking what is true in another's position and asking what can be learned from it; at the level of the institution or assembled church it could mean holding the field of deliberation open for discernment, and ensuring all relevant voices are heard and taken seriously. It might also mean not moving to closure or definition until the time is right and allowing even firm guidance, such as that of a papal encyclical, to be returned for further deliberation. It would also involve transparency and accountability in relation to decision making.²⁵

The archived research provides evidence that the practice of these virtues was being sought in the Catholic Church in Scotland. Voices speak of a desire on the part of priests and people to hold deliberations open on the issue of ordaining women and married men (1.5.1); they also provide evidence of the way in which discussion was closed down (1.5.1). Lay people wanted to discuss the issue of divorced and remarried Catholics (1.7.1) and claimed that priests wanted this too (1.7.1). Many lay people had made their own judgement on the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1.7.1). There were many calls for transparency and accountability in the church about the way decisions were made (see, for example, 1.4.5).

5.2.3 *An ethic of constant receptivity*

Murray points out that the inculcation of the virtues of receptivity, transparency and accountability is essential to nurturing and deepening a catholicity capable of showing forth the value of truth in its practice - in other words, of being a

²⁴ 'On Valuing Truth in Practice' op. cit. p. 180.

²⁵ 'On Valuing Truth in Practice' op. cit. p. 180.

community which is constantly open to learning. Nicholas Lash speaks of the church as a school of wisdom: ‘a place in which we endlessly learn to know God better’.²⁶ Such an ethic means that receptive learning and growth are intrinsic to people who are catholic. In relation to the institutional transformation of Roman Catholicism, the implications can be drawn out in an ecumenical context.

Here, alongside the fine-detailed work of the patient clarification, increased understanding, and creative negotiation of past knots of disagreement that has borne such fruit in the various bilateral processes of recent decades, there is a further need for an ethic of constant receptivity to what Catholicism can learn with integrity - concerning how its own Catholicity might be enriched - by receiving imaginatively yet appropriately from aspects of Catholicity in other traditions that may be being performed there considerably more clearly than within Catholicism itself.²⁷

This is the premise from which Receptive Ecumenism, with its paired concept, Catholic Learning, develops its strategy for approaching the ecumenical goal of organic structural unity. It is a ‘form of Christian ecumenical engagement that begins with an emphasis on how different churches can learn from one another and so improve their own Christian understanding and practice’.²⁸ The primary call is to take responsibility for one’s own and one’s own community’s learning without first demanding that the other does likewise.²⁹ Its primary aim is not the promotion of increased understanding between traditions, but continuing ecclesial conversion *within* traditions by receptive learning *from* and *across* traditions, so that each tradition becomes more fully what it already is - more Catholic, more Lutheran, more Anglican. The conviction is that pursuing this primary aim will in time move each tradition to a new place and so open up fresh possibilities for overcoming differences.

²⁶ Lash, N. ‘The Church - a School of Wisdom?’ in Murray P. D.(ed.) *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning* op. cit. 63-77 p. 66.

²⁷ ‘On Valuing Truth in Practice’ op. cit. p. 181.

²⁸ Ford, D. F. ‘Introduction - Interreligious Reading after Vatican II: Scriptural Reasoning, Comparative Theology and Receptive Ecumenism’. *Modern Theology* 29:4 October 2103, 1-9. p. 2.

²⁹ ‘Establishing the Agenda’ op. cit. p. 17.

The envisaged process of receptive ecumenical learning is... about becoming more deeply, more fully Catholic (more fully Methodist, more fully Anglican, etc.) precisely through a process of imaginatively explored and critically discerned receptive learning from other's particular gifts. It is about the intensification, complexification, and further realisation of Catholic identity, not its diminishment and loss.³⁰

Receptive Ecumenism sees the ecumenical scene as one of 'open possibilities, across which the only path is one of long slow learning into greater maturity'.³¹ It is a mode of self-critical learning which is envisaged as a constant process of deepening and growth. It complements the Faith and Order search for conceptual and grammatical clarification of issues which divide the churches, arguing that without a commitment to transformational receptivity, such clarification alone will not bring about practical growth and change.³² It takes the view that Life and Work ecumenism on its own is not enough.

All ecumenical engagement presupposes a willingness to listen with respect to the teachings and insights of other traditions. What Receptive Ecumenism does is to take what is learned/received from others and put it at the heart of the process, allowing it to transform the receiving community. It is an ecumenism which asks first what we can learn from one another, not what we have to teach.

It makes the case for the Roman Catholic Church to develop an ethic of constant receptivity to aspects of Catholicism in other traditions which will both deepen its own catholicity, making it more fully what it is, and move it closer to church

³⁰ 'Establishing the Agenda' op. cit. p. 17.

³¹ Murray P. D. 'Families of Receptive Ecumenical Learning: Scriptural Reasoning, Comparative Theology, and Receptive Ecumenism' *Modern Theology* 29:4 October 2013:76-92 p. 87.

³² Murray, P. D. 'Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning - Establishing the Agenda' in *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning*, op. cit. 5-25 p. 14.

unity through an ‘ecumenism of mutual growth towards full communion’.³³ As such it represents a rich - and challenging - development of the teaching of Vatican II on ecumenism and on the Catholic Church’s need for constant reform and renewal, as I will consider below.

Evidence from the archived research suggests that the need to develop an ethic of receptivity to the insights of others is an aspect of church teaching which needs to be developed in the Catholic Church in Scotland. Chapter two demonstrated that the implementation of the Second Vatican Council in Scotland was weak and fragmented. Chapter four found that ecumenical engagement had had little impact on learning across traditions. However, there was evidence of a culture of learning among lay people, which had yet to find a place within the church (1.6.4) and the experience of other traditions was cited in support of the ordination of women and married men (1.5.1). There was also a culture of outward facing mission in some parishes, which had been developed in co-operation with churches of other denominations (1.7.3).

5.2.4 *Receptive Ecumenism: a practical and inclusive task*

Receptive Ecumenism is a reparative process. It attends to wounds and tensions in traditions. It is typically focussed, in the first instance, on practical issues such as structural and organisational differences between churches and how they might be addressed through learning from one another.³⁴

The practical and structural aspects have theological and evangelical significance, just as doctrinal issues do. Murray points out that the lived reality of ecclesial existence either shows forth or contradicts the message to which the

³³ Murray, P. D. ‘Expanding Catholicity through Ecumenicity in the work of Yves Congar: Ressourcement, Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Reform’. *International Journal of Systematic Theology* Vol. 13 no. 3 July 2011, 273-302 p. 280.

³⁴ See, for example, a description of a project in receptive ecclesial learning in the North East of England which involves nine of the major regional denominational groupings in Murray, P. D. ‘Searching the Living Truth of the Church in Practice: on the Transformative Task of Systematic Ecclesiology’ *Modern Theology* 30:2 April 2014, 251-281 pp. 278-281.

church is called to witness.³⁵ Truth is something to be performed, not merely proclaimed. Tensions between church teaching and practice - between the church's understanding of truth and the way it is enacted - are seen as wounds in the body of the church which require healing. Traditions are 'limited as well as life-giving, wounded as well as grace-bearing' and we need to show our wounds and ask others to minister to us in our need from their specific gifts.³⁶ A core focus of Receptive Ecumenism is therefore 'the lived practice of traditions, their organisational, structural and procedural realities and the wounds and tensions that call out for repair through potential learning from others' gifts'. The textual and explicitly theological are seen as a means of 'analysing wounds, diagnosing causes, and assessing possible healing and cure'.³⁷ This is theology as ministry, as healing service within and for the ecclesial Body of Christ, in order to aid its service of and witness to the kingdom.³⁸

While Receptive Ecumenism accords a proper place to the need for rigorous theological scrutiny, it also believes that asking the basic receptive ecumenical question about what in a given situation can be learned from another is not the exclusive preserve of the theologian. Everyone, at every level of church life, is capable of asking the question, and the learning process is one in which all can share.³⁹ This is a critical issue for the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay in the Catholic Church, as it opens up the possibility of rich and life-enhancing conversations which could help shape the life of the church.

Here we can see a rich correlation between the focus of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, and issues raised by voices in the archived research: concerning the tensions that affect the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay (1.4.7); the damage these tensions inflict on the church (1.5.3; 1.6.2); the contradiction between what the church says and what it does (1.4.1); and the implications this has for the church's mission (1.6.2).

³⁵ Murray, P. D. *Establishing the Agenda* op. cit. p. 18.

³⁶ Murray, P. D. 'Families of Receptive Ecumenical Learning' op. cit. p. 86.

³⁷ 'Families of Receptive Ecumenical Learning' op. cit. p. 91.

³⁸ Murray, P. D. 'On Valuing Truth in Practice' op. cit. p. 165.

³⁹ Murray, P. D. 'Families of Receptive Ecumenical Learning' op. cit. p. 90.

5.3 Vatican II and the theological roots of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning

Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning is rooted in the theology of the Second Vatican Council: in its focus on eschatology, its teaching on ecumenism, and its stress on the church's need for continual renewal. As such it represents a rich development of the Council's ecclesiology, the elements of which were set out in its documents but remained to be developed (2.3).

5.3.1 *The eschatological dimension*

The Second Vatican Council brought eschatology from the margins of the Catholic Church's official teaching to its centre. It was conceived as 'that which defines the very nature of the church'.⁴⁰ In the seventh chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, eschatology is located in the context of the church as the pilgrim people of God, taking its place 'among the creatures which groan and travail yet and await the revelation of the sons of God'.⁴¹

The Church, to which we are all called in Christ Jesus, and in which by the grace of God we attain holiness, will receive its perfection only in the glory of heaven, when the time for the renewal of all things will have come (Acts 3:21). At that time, together with the human race, the universe itself, which is so closely related to humanity and which attains its destiny through humanity, will be perfectly re-established in Christ...

The promised and hoped for restoration... has already begun in Christ. It is carried forward in the sending of the Holy Spirit and through him continues in the Church in which, through our faith, we learn the meaning

⁴⁰ Phan, P.C. 'Roman Catholic Eschatology' in Walls J. L. (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 215-232 p. 217.

⁴¹ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" p. 408.

of our earthly life, while, as we hope for the benefits which are to come, we bring to its conclusion the task allotted to us in the world by the Father, and so work out our salvation (see Phil 2:12).⁴²

The kingdom is both now and not yet. Already inaugurated in Christ, it is the horizon within which Christians live and hope. *Gaudium et Spes* stressed that living within this horizon increases, not lessens, the church's commitment to the transformation of the world:

Far from diminishing our concern to develop this earth, the expectancy of a new earth should spur us on, for it is here that the body of a new human family grows, foreshadowing in some way the age which is to come. That is why, although we must be careful to distinguish earthly progress clearly from the increase of the kingdom of God, such progress is of vital concern to the kingdom of God, insofar as it can contribute to the better ordering of human society.⁴³

This great cosmic sweep of eschatology, the 'deep story of all things' which have their origin, existence and end in the communion of the Trinity, is the lens through which Receptive Ecumenism views the challenge of growth within and between Christian churches.⁴⁴ Here the church is understood as 'the communion of saints in God into which, in Christian understanding, all are called, both personally and collectively, to grow, ever more deeply, for all eternity'.⁴⁵ The emphasis is on conversion, on constant growth and flourishing, on becoming more fully what we already are, at both a personal and ecclesial level. As John Henry Newman said, 'In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often'.⁴⁶

⁴² Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" p. 408.

⁴³ Vatican Council II, "Gaudium et Spes" p. 938.

⁴⁴ 'Establishing the Agenda' op. cit. p. 6.

⁴⁵ 'Establishing the Agenda' op. cit. p. 6.

⁴⁶ Newman J. H. *An essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845 edition) edited by Cameron, J. M. Middlesex: Penguin 1974 p. 100.

Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning suggests that Christian existence should be viewed as living from and towards the promised eschatological fulfilment of bringing all things into ‘fully actualised, differentiated communion in God’.⁴⁷ Rather than relegate the promise to an irrelevant future, it suggests that we should live in the light of it, anticipating and being drawn into it as fully as possible amid our present conditions. The Christian task is not so much to assert and construct the kingdom as to ‘lean into its coming,’ to be shaped and formed by it so that we become channels for its anticipatory realisation’.⁴⁸

In this perspective, a core concern of Receptive Ecumenism is to ‘explore how ecumenical encounter, ecumenical engagement and ecumenical responsibility can be privileged contexts for promoting the process of personal and ecclesial growth into more intensely configured communion in Christ and the Spirit’.⁴⁹ And where once ecclesial transformation within denominations might have been seen as a necessary prerequisite for effective ecumenical progress, Thomas Reese suggests that it is now more appropriate to view the capacity for receptive ecumenical learning *across* traditions as a key for unlocking the potential for transformation within them.⁵⁰

Evidence of ecumenical engagement shaped by awareness of living in the light of the kingdom can be heard in voices from the archived research which describe a shared approach to mission in the local community (1.7.4).

5.3.2 Vatican II’s teaching on ecumenism

Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning is situated within the stream of the Second Vatican Council’s teaching on ecumenism. As we have seen, pre-

⁴⁷ ‘Establishing the Agenda’ op. cit. p. 11.

⁴⁸ ‘Establishing the Agenda’ op. cit. p. 11.

⁴⁹ ‘Establishing the Agenda’ op. cit. p. 7.

⁵⁰ Reece T. J. ‘Organisational Factors Inhibiting Catholic Learning’ in Murray P. D. (ed.) *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning* op. cit. 346-356 p. 354.

conciliar teaching on the relationship between Catholics and members of other denominations was seen in terms of one way return to Rome (5.2.1). The tone and content of the Council's Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, and its Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, are very different. The opening words of *Lumen Gentium* speak of the church as a sign and instrument of communion with God and with all people. Given the rapidly changing nature of the modern world, the task of seeking church unity takes on a new urgency.

The condition of the modern world lends greater urgency to this duty of the Church; for, while men of the present day are drawn ever more closely together by social, technical and cultural bonds, it still remains for them to achieve full unity in Christ.⁵¹

The Decree on Ecumenism acknowledged Catholicism's complicity in the historic breaks of the past: 'often enough, men of both sides were to blame'.⁵² Pope John Paul II reinforced this understanding when he addressed an international symposium on the Bohemian preacher and reformer Jan Hus, who was put to death in 1415. The pope expressed 'deep regret' for his cruel death and the conflict and division which followed. He added:

The wounds of past centuries must be healed through a new attitude and completely renewed relationships.... Scholarly endeavours to reach a more profound and complete grasp of historical truth are crucial [to the cause of the rediscovered unity of all Christians]. The truth can... prove uncomfortable when it asks us to abandon long-held prejudices and stereotypes... Yet the truth which sets us free from error is also the truth which sets us free for love...⁵³

⁵¹ Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium" p.350.

⁵² Vatican Council II, "Unitatis Redintegratio" p. 455.

⁵³ John Paul II, Address of the Holy Father to an International Symposium on John Hus, December 1999. Accessed March 17, 2016. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1999/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_17121999_jan-hus.html

The Decree on Ecumenism also echoed the assertion of *Lumen Gentium* that many aspects of the life of the church can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: ‘the written Word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit’.⁵⁴ Pope John Paul II developed the point in his 1995 encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*: ‘To the extent that these elements are found in other Christian communities, the one Church of Christ is effectively present in them’.⁵⁵

These ecclesial elements are significant for Catholicism itself: the Decree on Ecumenism states that divisions prevent the Catholic Church from ‘realising in practice the fullness of catholicity proper to her’.⁵⁶ It also acknowledges that some of the ecclesial elements may have come to fuller perfection in other traditions than they have within Catholicism: ‘anything wrought by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of our separated fellow Christians can be a help to our own edification... it can always bring a deeper realisation to the mystery of Christ and the church’.⁵⁷ John Paul II repeated the point when he referred to other Christian communities in his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* as places where ‘certain features of the Christian mystery have at times been more effectively emphasised’.⁵⁸ In September, 2013, in an interview with Antonio Spadaro SJ, Pope Francis developed the point in relation to the topic of collegiality.

Maybe it is time to change the method of the Synod of Bishops, because it seems to me that the current method is not dynamic. ...This will have an ecumenical value, especially with our Orthodox brethren. From them we can learn more about the meaning of episcopal collegiality and the tradition of synodality. ...In ecumenical relations it is important not only

⁵⁴ Vatican Council II ‘*Unitatis Redintegratio*’ p. 455.

⁵⁵ *Ut Unum Sint* sec. 11. Accessed March 24, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html

⁵⁶ ‘Families of Receptive Ecumenical Learning’ op. cit. p. 84; Vatican Council II ‘*Unitatis Redintegratio*’ sec. 4 in *Vatican Council II* op. cit. p. 458.

⁵⁷ Vatican Council II, “*Unitatis Redintegratio*” p. 458.

⁵⁸ *Ut Unum Sint* sec. 14 and sec. 48. Accessed March 24, 2015.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html

to know each other better but to recognise what the Spirit has sown in the other as a gift for us.⁵⁹

Openness to the gifts of others is a key element of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning. Evidence from the archived research suggests that it is not well developed in the Catholic Church in Scotland (1.7.4).

5.3.3 *The need for continual reformation*

Vatican II emphasised Catholicism's need to learn, to be renewed, purified and even reformed. *Unitatis Redintegratio* speaks of ecumenism as 'a renewal' and a 'continual reformation' and *Lumen Gentium* of the church being in a state of always being in need of purification.⁶⁰ Communion with the bishop of Rome is still seen as an essential aspect of the unity of the church, but this is no longer ecumenism as one way return, but of 'growth on both sides and mutual journeying to a new relationship'.⁶¹ Catholics' especial duty is 'to make a careful and honest appraisal of whatever needs to be renewed in the catholic household itself'.⁶²

As Murray points out, all this provides a helpful perspective within which to interpret the famous passage in section 8 of *Lumen Gentium* where the 'church of Christ' is described as 'subsisting' in the Catholic Church.⁶³ The first seven sections of *Lumen Gentium*, which trace the place of the church within the context of creation and salvation history, do not speak of the Catholic Church but of the 'church of Christ'. Section 8 provides the first mention of the Catholic Church, and in an apparent contrast to the pre-conciliar statement of

⁵⁹ Pope Francis in an interview with Fr Antonio Spadaro on 21 September 2013. Accessed March 24, 2015.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130921_intervista-spadaro.html

⁶⁰ Vatican Council II "Unitatis Redintegratio" p. 458 and "Lumen Gentium" p. 356.

⁶¹ 'Families of Receptive Theological Learning' op. cit. p. 84.

⁶² Vatican Council II, "Unitatis Redintegratio" p. 457.

⁶³ 'Families of Receptive Theological Learning' op. cit. p. 84

strict and exclusive identity between the church of Christ and the Catholic Church, it states that ‘This church [i.e., the church of Christ] set up and organised in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church...’.⁶⁴ The earlier texts demonstrate that ‘subsists in’ cannot simply mean strict and exclusive identity, given the repeated acknowledgement of there being real elements of the church to be found outside the Catholic Church.⁶⁵

Equally, Murray notes, it is not appropriate to claim that this new understanding amounts to a complete relinquishing of there being something distinctive about the Catholic Church. *Lumen Gentium* and *Unitatis Redintegratio* are quite clear that while there may be elements of the church in other traditions, they believe that something essential is also missing: ‘they are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those to whom he has given new birth into one body’.⁶⁶ ‘This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose’.⁶⁷

Catholicism can here be understood as ‘refreshing its self-understanding in a way that both recognises the dignity of other traditions and the real potential for appropriate Catholic learning from them’ while continuing to maintain what it believes to be its own distinctive gifts.⁶⁸ The key point, according to Murray, is that

Vatican II maintains an appropriate orientation to receptive ecumenical learning on Catholicism’s behalf and clear recognition that Catholicism is itself engaged on a continuing story of reform, growth and renewal. ...
 [T]hese principles have been of fundamental importance in the shaping of Receptive Ecumenism.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Vatican Council II, “*Lumen Gentium*” p. 357.

⁶⁵ ‘Families of Receptive Theological Learning’ op. cit. p. 85.

⁶⁶ Vatican Council II, “*Unitatis Redintegratio*” p. 456.

⁶⁷ Vatican Council II, “*Unitatis Redintegratio*” p 457.

⁶⁸ ‘Families of Receptive Theological Learning’ op. cit. p. 85.

⁶⁹ ‘Families of Receptive Theological Learning’ op. cit. p. 85.

When we turn to the archived research, we find an echo of the Council's stress on Catholicism's need for continual reform and renewal. It can be heard in the voices of those who were open to the vision of Vatican II, such as those who called for structures which would facilitate collaborative working between ordained and lay (1.4.4); lay people who came forward for training (1.4.1); and priests who had made a commitment to diocesan renewal (1.4.2).

5.4 Nicholas Rescher and the philosophical roots of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning.

The philosophical roots of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, which can be found in the work of Nicholas Rescher, underpin its theological commitment to the need for constant growth and renewal and its ethic of receptive learning within and across traditions.

5.4.1 *Truth and tradition*

Nicholas Adams characterises Receptive Ecumenism as a strategy for dealing with long-term disagreement (within the Christian churches) which seeks to maintain a concern with truth while taking questions of tradition seriously.⁷⁰ A key factor in the development of such an approach, he argues, is the capacity to embed philosophical developments in institutions in such a way that they shape everyday practice. Just as Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning seeks to repair wounds and tensions in the practice of traditions, so it seeks also to address underlying philosophical issues. One of these is foundationalism, the theory that knowledge of the world rests on a foundation of indubitable beliefs from which further propositions can be inferred to produce a superstructure of known truths.⁷¹ Foundationalist habits, Adams observes, are widespread and

⁷⁰ Adams, N. 'Long-Term Disagreement: Philosophical Models in Scriptural Reasoning and Receptive Ecumenism' *Modern Theology* 29:4 October 2013, 154-171 p. 154.

⁷¹ Jones, O. R. 'Foundationalism' in Honderich, T (ed) *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford: OUP 2005 p 310.

audible when people say they will only be satisfied with absolute certainty - which creates problems when people of different traditions encounter one another.⁷² Murray seeks to go beyond foundationalism and asks what style of rationality should characterise the task of Christian theology given the pluralist, post foundationalist, postmodern context in which the task is set.⁷³

In seeking after truth in this context, Murray draws American philosopher Nicholas Rescher into conversation with aspects of Christian tradition. He finds that Rescher's insights resonate with emphases already intrinsic to the Christian tradition, which in turn give shape to Receptive Ecumenism and underpin its fundamental commitment to the process of receptive learning.

5.4.2 Keeping the conversation open: Rescher's account of human rationality

Rescher's work is focussed on the construction of a system of pragmatic idealism which is concerned with knowledge of reality. Philosopher John Kekes defines Rescher's approach as

- a) idealistic, because it regards the constructive contribution of the enquiring mind as essential to knowledge, and because it regards systematic coherence as the criterion of truth;
- b) fallibilistic, because it denies that knowledge can provide more than an imperfect approximation of reality; and
- c) pragmatic, because it maintains that the validity of knowledge-claims depends on their utility in furthering human purposes.⁷⁴

Rescher's emphasis on truth as the articulation of reality refers to a state which always eludes final attainment, but which, he argues, should nevertheless be retained as an ideal to be aspired after. This acts as a constant reminder of the

⁷² 'Long-Term Disagreement' op. cit. p. 155.

⁷³ Murray, P. D. *Reason, Truth and Theology in Pragmatist Perspective*. Leuven: Peeters 2004 p. 1. See also Murray P. D. 'On Valuing Truth in Practice op. cit. pp. 164-165.

⁷⁴ Kekes, J., 'Nicholas Rescher' in Honderich T (ed) *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Second edition) Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005 p. 814.

'partial, fragile, value-laden nature of all human rationality' and of the consequent need for its continual exposure to potential revision. In this manner Rescher seeks to keep the conversation open.⁷⁵ This stress on keeping the conversation open is a key factor in Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Leaning and resonates with Vatican II's emphasis on the church's need for constant renewal and openness to the insights of other traditions.

This emphasis on holding truth open to potential revision also highlights a tension within the Roman Catholic tradition. There is, Murray notes, a strong bond in the Roman Catholic psyche between Catholicism and truth deriving from an understanding of the church as divinely instituted, a continuation of the incarnate presence of God in the world in the person of Jesus, 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' (John 14:16).⁷⁶ The relationship is explored at length in Pope John Paul II's 1998 encyclical letter, *Fides et Ratio*. In it, the search for truth is understood as innate to human life, but it is thought of as requiring Catholic understanding for its guidance and fulfilment.⁷⁷ 'It is [the church's] duty to serve humanity in different ways, but one way in particular imposes a responsibility of a quite special kind: the *diakonia of the truth*'.⁷⁸

The most notable expression of this, Murray points out, is the First Vatican Council's formal declaration of papal infallibility in the nineteenth century. In line with prior conviction that the church as the authoritative witness to God's truth in Christ will be preserved from fundamental error, it declared that when the Pope is speaking *ex cathedra* as the head of the church on earth,

he is to be regarded by Catholics as making infallibly binding pronouncements not subject to subsequent consent of the church for their authentication. The logic at work here is that such a statement

⁷⁵ Murray, P. D. 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology: Putting Nicholas Rescher to Theological Work' *Modern Theology* 20:3 July 2004 339-362 pp. 339-340. See also *Reason, Truth and Theology in a Pragmatist Perspective* op. cit. chapter 4.

⁷⁶ Murray P. D. 'On Valuing Truth in Practice' op. cit. p. 166.

⁷⁷ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* [On the Relationship between Faith and Reason] Accessed March 24, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html

⁷⁸ *Fides et Ratio* sec. 2. Accessed March 24, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html

represents not a stage in the discerning of the church's mind but its terminus.⁷⁹

Such final pronouncements require no subsequent ratification; but it is nonsensical, Murray argues, to extract from this the claim that the *prior* consent of the broader church is irrelevant to the process of arriving at an irreformable judgement on an issue. He points to Pope Pius IX's seeking prior consent before the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, albeit in a limited way, as a necessary prerequisite for bringing a process of deliberation and discernment to a close.⁸⁰

Whatever qualifications may be expressed on the formal performance of papal infallibility, Murray notes that its definition in the context of a dominant theology of papal absolutism and Roman centralism unqualified by an appropriate theology of the episcopacy, the local church and the laity, had a deep and lasting impact.

[It] promoted within modern Catholicism a pervasive ethos of unidirectional hierachal authoritarianism that was, in turn, reflected at each level of Catholic life and structure and from which contemporary Catholicism has still yet fully to emerge.... There has been a widespread tendency to view all papal teaching alike as equally binding and so closed to criticism rather than as significant punctuation marks within broader processes of deliberation... Catholicism currently lacks both the habitual ethos and the necessary structures to address this point.⁸¹

There is much evidence from the archived research to support Murray's argument here. We have seen, for example, that the impact of closing down conversations on the ordination of women and married men meant that there was no serious exploration of an important theological and practical issue and no

⁷⁹ 'On Valuing Truth in Practice' op. cit. p. 168.

⁸⁰ 'On Valuing Truth in Practice' op. cit. p. 170.

⁸¹ 'On Valuing Truth in Practice' op. cit. p175.

formal opportunity for priests and lay people to share their perspectives (1.5.1). We have seen the need for a developed theology of the laity (2.3.5; 2.3.6); and heard calls for better structures for communication and discussion between ordained and lay within Scottish dioceses (1.4.4; 2.3.7).

5.4.3 A constant process of expansion and revision

At the heart of Rescher's approach to truth and rationality is the belief that pure objectivity and unassailable certainty are impossible to attain. We are always already engaged in value-laden practices of knowing the world, which are called into question by other, differently laden, practices.⁸² In evolutionary terms, Rescher argues that the need for understanding defines us as a species; our need for knowledge is as pressing as our need for food and shelter. But we cannot refrain from acting until we have some kind of ideal, best possible knowledge - we have to settle for the best available knowledge in any given situation. Human intelligence requires to be used in situations short of cognitive perfection.⁸³

Rescher places the cultural evolution of the processes and methods of human rationality, its conceptual apparatus and the methods to which it gives rise, alongside the physiological evolution of the capacity for intelligence. Just as survival has reinforced certain physiological developments, so, too, satisfaction with the aims of human rationality has reinforced certain processes and methods of reasoning over others - such as natural sciences over numerology.⁸⁴ Languages are similarly understood to have evolved, implying that they, too, are at least partially adequate for the tasks to which they are put. While none of this guarantees the veracity of human rationality, it suggests that we take our rational apparatus and conceptual constructs seriously and treat them as

⁸² *Reason, Truth and Theology*. op. cit. p. 98.

⁸³ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. p. 101; also Rescher, N. *A System of Pragmatic Realism Vol I*. London: Princeton University Press 1993 p 9.

⁸⁴ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. pp 101-102; also Rescher, N. *The Coherence Theory of Truth*. London: Oxford University Press 1973 pp. 260-261.

providing us with rationally warranted assertions as to how things are. The presumption is that ‘human reason is in process of being fitted to the articulation of reality despite its fragility and fallibility’.⁸⁵

Rescher also emphasises that our ways of understanding are mind-dependent. While there is a material component to the way we understand reality, and our concepts are fitted, partially, to that reality, they cannot be viewed as direct representations of unconceptualised reality. Our experience is not just mediated but defined by particular conceptual resources. Aspects of reality can be conceptualised in different ways, each potentially articulating something of what is there. Rescher says that it is never legitimate to presume that any one set of concepts could ever exhaustively articulate all that can be thought about any aspect of reality.⁸⁶ And, Murray says, he argues for ‘an ethic of self-critical conversation and mutual challenge capable of supporting a constantly renewed attempt to draw-in previous unperceived dimensions of reality with a view to integrating them into new systems of understanding’.⁸⁷

Murray observes that for Rescher’s interwoven system of rationality and his coherence theory of truth, the starting point is always in the middle, with items of data already interpreted and contested: we ‘inherit a mass of conceptual and theoretical presuppositions and data that is already situated within and interpreted by them’.⁸⁸ The aim is to identify the most warranted truth claimants. Some will be confirmed and others demoted, others will be upgraded and become embedded in one’s working system of knowledge. And if this is a process without a clear beginning, it is also one without a clear end. Intrinsic to Rescher’s coherentism and his broader concern for cognitive systematisation is the belief that our scrutiny of truth needs to be both dynamically expansive in scope and recursively fallibilist in orientation.

⁸⁵ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. p.103.

⁸⁶ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. p. 105; and *A System of Pragmatic Realism Vol I* op.cit. pp. 115-117.

⁸⁷ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. p. 107.

⁸⁸ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. p. 114.

Whatever coherent system of understanding we might arrive at remains permanently in need of expansion and revision... For Rescher it is precisely the retention of the elusive aspiration for ideal truth that counteracts any complacency concerning current states of knowledge. Rather than closing the conversation down... it is striving after truth as the *fullest articulation of reality possible* that ensures it is kept open'.⁸⁹

Murray suggests that such a fallibilist approach can be described, following Mary Hesse, as a 'learning machine'.⁹⁰ The procedural concern is to integrate the new by reconfiguring some aspect of what is received in such a way that it allows the claim to be made that a new configuration coheres better with the fundamental concern of tradition.⁹¹ We saw in chapter two the way in which Vatican II developed its teaching on the church and on the laity by integrating new insights into traditional teaching. It was work in progress: in setting the church free from the constrictions of a preconciliar theological framework, the Council created an agenda for future development whose practical implementation remained to be worked out (2.3.4). Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning can be understood within this context.

5.4.4 The importance of the evaluative and the practical

For Rescher, evaluative and practical concerns are prior to the cognitive. We desire understanding because we have to act. And just as the cognitive dimension of rationality needs to be subjected to scrutiny and possible revision, so too do the evaluative and practical dimensions. Truth does not simply relate to cognitive depiction; 'it designates a course of action which is both rooted in a warranted assessment of how things are and judged to be beneficial'.⁹² Truth talk is expanded to include evaluation and the practical. Rescher's maxim is

⁸⁹ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. pp. 113-115.

⁹⁰ Hesse, M. *Revolutions and Reconstructions in the Philosophy of Science*. Sussex: The Harvester Press 1980 pp. 125-139.

⁹¹ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. pp. 116-117.

⁹² *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. p. 119.

'Proceed everywhere on the basis of the best available reasons to do what is appropriate in the situation at hand'.⁹³

Many of the tensions which emerge from the archived research in Scotland arise from different responses to the decline in the number of priests. While the hierarchy insisted on maintaining business as usual, the majority of parish respondents believed that a practical response would be to ordain women and married men (1.5.1) and develop a greater role for lay people in the church (1.6.1).

5.4.5 The positive value of pluralism

The fact that there is a legitimate plurality of perspectives on any given aspect of reality does not, for Rescher, mean all are equally good. The rational thing to do is to view one's own standards as superior until there is reason to do otherwise. So he argues for a qualified relativism which hinges on the idea that while others may be fully justified in their beliefs relative to their judgements, so too might we be in relation to ours ('conceptual egocentrism').⁹⁴ It is only possible to make a case for one's own community's perspective if one can show that one has taken account of all other relevant perspectives in the process. He rejects consensus as a regulative ideal in order to allow for the stance of 'conceptual egocentrism' and to maintain the possibility of a genuine pluralism requiring 'open access, mutual engagement, disputation, negotiation and imagination in the formulation of common decisions in which all can acquiesce'.⁹⁵ Murray draws a comparison here with David Tracy's principles for good conversation in pluralistic contexts which seek to combine commitment to traditional discourse with the need for mutual challenge and correction.

⁹³ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. p 120; also Rescher, N. *A System of Pragmatic Idealism Vol II* Oxford: Princeton University Press pp. 19 and 20.

⁹⁴ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. p. 123; also Rescher, N. *A System of Pragmatic Idealism Vol III* Sussex: Princeton University Press pp. 123-124.

⁹⁵ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. p. 127; also *A System of Pragmatic Idealism Vol III* op. cit. p.156.

Speak carefully to convey as accurately as possible what you mean; Be prepared to defend your position, offering warrants and backing for it; Consider all relevant evidence; Listen carefully and respectfully to your conversation partners and take their views seriously... Be prepared to correct and if necessary, to confront your partner and change yourself.⁹⁶

An example of the importance of this kind of conversation can be seen in the archived research in calls for better communication within dioceses, and for opportunities for everyone to contribute to the development of diocesan plans and priorities (1.4.4). In arguing for the ordination of women and married men, many parishioners drew on the experience of other Christian traditions to support their views (1.5.1).

5.4.6 Christianity and Rescher's thought

How might Rescher's thought be appropriated to support the kind of contextually rooted yet dynamically expansive account of theological reason required by an authentic understanding of Christian truth and tradition? Murray draws Rescher's insights into conversation with emphases already acknowledged as being intrinsic to the Christian tradition. The purpose of the conversation is to grant such emphases clearer voice within the tradition in order to extend their shaping power over the practice of contemporary Christian theology, and to test the assumption that it is possible to see in human rationality an analogous reflection of the Trinitarian being of God.⁹⁷

Murray notes that certain presuppositions embedded within the Christian tradition are already hospitable to Rescher's thought. He explores the resonance between the Trinitarian dynamics of Christian faith and theology, and Rescher's dynamically expansive, recursively fallibilist view of human rationality

⁹⁶ Tracy, D. *Plurality and Ambiguity*. London: SCM 1987 p. 19.

⁹⁷ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op cit. p. 130.

as cognitive, evaluative and practical. Murray reflects on the theological rationality implicit within the threefold dynamic of Christian discipleship:

faithful attendance to the reality of things as held in being by God the sustaining source of all that is; *hopeful* discerning of creative possibilities in the light of the ever fresh yet constant patterning of God's self-revealing truth and *loving* enactment of certain of these possibilities inspired by the generative and transforming power of God.⁹⁸

Bringing all three of these moments together, he quotes Rowan Williams:

'God reveals himself' means that the meaning of the word 'God' establishes itself among us as the loving and nurturing advent of newness in human life... This advent has its centre... in the record of Jesus; it occurs among us now as the re-presentation of Jesus through the Spirit; and it rests upon and gives content to the fundamental regulative notion of initiative, creative or generative power, potentiality, that is not circumscribed by the conditions of the empirical world - the *arché* of the Father, the ultimate source.⁹⁹

Murray concludes that there is resonance between the Trinitarian dynamics of Christian faith and Rescher's account of human rationality.

[A]s with the dynamic interrelatedness of divine life and as with the dynamics of human rationality as articulated by Rescher, there is an expansively recursive quality to Christian living such that an integrating pattern is continually reinforced in ever fresh modes of expression.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. pp. 135-136.

⁹⁹ Williams, R. 'Trinity and Revelation' in *Modern Theology* 2:3 1986:197-212 p. 208.

¹⁰⁰ 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology' op. cit. p. 342.

5.4.7 Fallibilism and Christian faith

The best analogy for the character of Christian faith as a lived rather than a purely intellectual construct is to be found, Murray argues, in human relationships: faith *per se* is not arrived at as the logical endpoint of a reasoning process. Such a process can demonstrate the coherence and credibility of Christian faith, but certitude is best thought of as ‘the conviction of being grasped by a reality that evokes one’s trust while itself in turn eluding one’s own grasp and the giving of cast-iron guarantees’.¹⁰¹ He suggests that faith is appropriately viewed as a venture lived in the face of abiding risk as the person of faith is continually exposed to fresh challenges, which they hope will ultimately deepen their relationship with God. And far from Christian faith amounting to a blind dogmatism, the very nature of the object of faith - that is, the abundantly rich mystery of God which eludes adequate understanding - imposes constraints on what level of certainty is possible.¹⁰²

5.4.8 Pragmatic idealism and Christian theology

Murray suggests that Rescher’s interweaving of the cognitive, evaluative and practical dimensions of rationality shapes an approach to theological rationality that sees Christian truth first and foremost as conforming to life in God’s practice in Christ and the Spirit, aided by intellectual understanding, rather than the conformity of intellect alone. It would also promote a dynamic view of Christian tradition as not just a conserving, retrospective force but also a creative, prospective impulse that continues to unfold anew within the space defined by the rules of Christian life and discourse:

[T]he risen reality of Christ continues to relate to the diverse particularities of created life in ways genuinely fitted to the contingencies

¹⁰¹ ‘Fallibilism, Faith and Theology’ op. cit. p. 343.

¹⁰² ‘Fallibilism, Faith and Theology’ op. cit. p. 344.

of new situations yet faithful to the particular patterning remembered as having characterised the ministry of Jesus.¹⁰³

In line with this expansive Christological/pneumatological conviction and with the thrust of Rescher's approach to rationality, Murray argues that the rooting of Christian theology in the particular narratives and commitments of Christian faith cannot be allowed to justify the closing of theology in on itself, immune from challenges and criticism; on the contrary, the cosmic scope of belief in the risen Christ's presence to all of created reality should impel Christian theologians to adopt as expansive a vision as Rescher's.¹⁰⁴ All things are regarded as being called to fulfilment and unity - not uniformity - in Christ and the Spirit in such a way that places an eschatological proviso over the still-in-process character of Christian truth.¹⁰⁵ So, Murray argues, while Christians may understand themselves as already existing within the truth of God, and even as enacting that truth, however sporadically and partially, they should remain permanently mindful that even the most accomplished performance of Christian truth falls short.¹⁰⁶ 'It is intrinsic to its own commitments that Christian faith, theology and ecclesial self-identity should be constantly exposed to the scrutiny of new questions'.¹⁰⁷

Christians disagree on how most appropriately to read and respond to particular situations on the basis of shared criteria of Christian identity and they cannot consistently agree on what the appropriate criteria are. Murray suggests that working this out is more like developing a skill than following a set of well-defined procedures. 'Ultimately, perhaps, the value of an interpretation... depends on whether it is heard as having the ring of authenticity, or, to use more explicitly theological language, upon whether it is received by the ecclesial community'.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology' op. cit. p. 349.

¹⁰⁴ 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology' op. cit. p. 349.

¹⁰⁵ 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology' op. cit. p. 350.

¹⁰⁶ 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology' op. cit. p. 350.

¹⁰⁷ 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology' op. cit. p. 350.

¹⁰⁸ 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology' op. cit. p. 351.

So, he argues, a fallibilist self-regard and openness to the need for continual conversion can be seen as essential to the practice of good Christian theology as well as good Christian living. This may be a traditional theological tenet, Murray observes, but it is often submerged in practice under a tone which is more at home with rigid certainties than open questions. Equally, the critical is not the only valid mode of theological analysis: it is in dialogical tension with a more reactive mode in which challenges are subjected to scrutiny. With regard to both modes, he argues that

an appropriation of Rescher's recursively expansive, determinedly fallibilist and avowedly postfoundationalist account of human rationality can help all the more so to give real shaping power to the character and balance of an authentically Christian theological ethic... it can act as a resource to enable the practice of Christian theology to be more fully itself.¹⁰⁹

5.4.9 Summary of section one

This section opened a conversation between voices from the archived research and Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning. It demonstrated how Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning provides a lens through which to view tensions in the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay and how its rich theological analysis of Vatican II, underpinned by the philosophy of Nicholas Rescher, provides a framework within which they can be addressed.

The conversation can be summarised as follows:

- Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning's emphasis on truth as something to be performed rather than merely described provides the lens through which it understands tensions between church teaching and

¹⁰⁹ 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology' op. cit. p. 352.

practice as wounds in the body of the church which call out for healing. Voices in the archived research speak of tensions that affect the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay (1.4.7); of the damage these tensions inflict on the church (1.5.3; 1.6.2); the contradiction between what the church says and what it does (1.4.1); and the implications this has for the church's mission (1.6.2).

- The key characteristics of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning are shaped by the insights of Vatican II and underpinned by Nicholas Rescher's understanding of the nature of truth. The concept of catholicity, for example, which was intrinsic to Vatican II's style of dealing with complex theological issues (2.2.5), is supported by Rescher's commitment to holding the truth open to potential revision. This attitude can be heard in the voices of those in the archived research who want to discuss issues like the ordination of women and married men and the church's attitude to divorced and remarried Catholics (5.2.2).
- Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning's stress on the need to develop an ethic of constant receptivity to the gifts of other traditions is a development of Vatican II's teaching on ecumenism (5.3.1) and is supported by Rescher's emphasis on the positive value of pluralism (5.4.5). Voices from the archived research suggest that this ethic is not well developed in the Catholic Church in Scotland: there was little evidence of learning across traditions and the loss of momentum in the ecumenical movement was reflected at local level (5.2.1). However, there was some evidence of a common approach to mission developed with local ecumenical partners (5.3.1); and there were voices from the archived research which drew on the experience of other traditions to support their views on the ordination of women and married men (5.2.3).
- The need to remain open to the insights of others within one's own tradition was reflected in the process of drafting and redaction of texts at Vatican II (2.1) and is underpinned by Rescher's emphasis that truth needs to be open to a constant process of expansion and revision (5.4.3). This understanding is echoed by voices in the archived research which call for

structures that would enable a range of voices to be heard within the church in the development of its approach to aspects of church teaching (5.4.2) and its pastoral planning (5.4.5).

- The practical and inclusive focus of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning is underpinned by the philosophical emphasis on the importance of the evaluative and the practical in developing an understanding of truth (5.4.4). This is reflected by voices in the archived research which see the ordination of women and married men, and the development of a greater role for lay people, as practical responses to the shortage of priests (5.4.4).
- Rescher's philosophical insights help shape the practice of theology: his fallibilism underlines the limits to claims of certainty, and his pragmatic idealism promotes an understanding of Christian tradition as a creative, dynamic force. It suggests that Christians should remain permanently mindful that the truth in which they live is always open to development from new questions and insights (5.4.8).

5.5 Section two: a community shaped by Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning

With this understanding in mind, the conversation turns to sources of healing for tensions in the Scottish Catholic Church's performance of its commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay people. Here, voices from the archived research, which speak of a new church struggling to emerge in Scotland, enter into conversation with characteristics of a community shaped by Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning.

Such a community, Murray suggests, would be one which can 'live within the dynamic unfolding of God's truth and be sacrament of this for the world'.¹¹⁰ Its

¹¹⁰ 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology' op. cit. p. 352.

habits, structures and communal ways of living would serve its calling to discern and witness to the living truth of God. This would be in keeping with the understanding of truth outlined in conversation with Rescher as ‘something to be performed rather than merely described... and with the associated expansive, self-critical view of rationality transposed theologically into the need for a *paideia* of continual, God-willed, grace-filled conversion’.¹¹¹

In relation to Roman Catholic tradition and practice, Murray suggests that there are three characteristics of such a community: it would represent a radicalising of Vatican II’s image of the people of God; its structures would facilitate processes of church members discerning the truth together; and it would demonstrate an appreciation of legitimate plurality and diversity.¹¹² I will explore each of these characteristics in conversation with voices from the archived research in order to identify ways in which the church’s performance of its commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay might be more effectively enacted as part of a community committed to showing forth in its practice the truth it proclaims.

5.5.1 Radicalising Vatican II’s image of the people of God

The first characteristic of a community shaped by the theology of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning can be understood as a radicalising of Vatican II’s image of the church as the pilgrim people of God in the sense that it rejects stability and security for the authentically dynamic - even contested - character of Christian truth and the need for the church’s continual conversion. Murray argues that ‘[l]iving within the tradition is not a state of arrival but of continuing navigation... It entails responsibility to the tradition’s present and future as surely as to its past’.¹¹³ He points out that Christians today can no longer assume that they will find support for their faith in the prevailing cultural milieu; faith must find its support within the stories, practices and beliefs of the

¹¹¹ *Reason, Truth and Theology* op. cit. p. 197.

¹¹² ‘Fallibilism, Faith and Theology’ op. cit. pp. 352-353.

¹¹³ ‘Fallibilism, Faith and Theology’ op. cit. p. 352.

tradition, and within the personal prayer life and commitment of believers. But there is a need for a dialectical tension between the distinctiveness and transformative potential of the Christian gospel on the one hand and engagement with the diverse and particular situations in which the church exists.¹¹⁴ This is the context within which the mission of the church is lived out, and the life of the church develops.

We have seen in the archived research how tensions between the security of the past on the one hand, and the call to continual conversion on the other, impacted on the Catholic Church in Scotland in relation to the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay. Both Scottish bishops who took part in the archived research were committed to the Second Vatican Council's new vision of collaborative working between ordained and lay people, but struggled to put it into practice (1.4). Analysis in chapter two indicated that this was in part because of the transitional nature of much of the Council's teaching and the contested interpretation of Vatican II in the years that followed. A senior priest in the archived research testified to the lack of clarity in Scotland about *why* lay people should be more involved in the church (1.6.3).

Bishops at the Council were divided on their understanding of the relative roles of laity and hierarchy in relation to the church's mission, and on the freedom and autonomy of lay people. Those who spoke in the debate on the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity about the need for a new role for lay people, and new structures to support it, drew on the Council's developing theology of the laity and the experience of their own situations (2.3.6). As chapter three demonstrated, the Scottish bishops' experience was shaped by a clerical culture with deep historical roots which, at the time of the archived research, still exerted a considerable influence on their understanding of the place of lay people within the church and the way this was reflected in its structures and habits. Faced with the challenges of institutional decline and changing patterns of belief, their response was to focus on maintenance of the institution they had

¹¹⁴ 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology' op. cit. p. 352

inherited. The availability of priests was a central factor in this response (chapter four).

Other voices in the archived research, however, articulated a different understanding of the Council's vision of a new ecclesial relationship between priests and people. Many parishioners, often with the support of their parish priests, found in the Council's vision a development of their own faith experience and a way of responding to the situation in which they lived, particularly in relation to the decline in the number of priests. If we look at the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay through this lens, we see the shape of a new church emerging in Scotland, with a greater role for lay people and a new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay.

- One parishioner spoke of Vatican II replacing the pyramid model of the church with the image of the people of God; another spoke of people being the church and moving away from hierarchical systems (1.4.3).
- The majority of lay people believed that the situation created by the decline in clergy numbers was unsustainable and that a greater role for lay people was inevitable. Many believed this was a positive development and thought lay people would bring different gifts to the life of the church (1.6.1). The number of lay people contributing to the life of the church in new ways since the Council had increased (1.4.3) and the majority of parish respondents thought that lay people would be willing to take more responsibility within their parish community as the number of priests declined (1.6.5).
- There was a growing appreciation of the talents of lay people: one man pointed out that the church could call on the skills of a range of people, from trade unionists to people who run multinational companies (1.6.3). Another said that people could be called on to help with specific issues where they had a relevant competence without having to make a commitment over a long period (1.6.3).

- The relationship between priests and people was changing. Parishioners spoke of a new relationship between them, and saw the role of the priest as facilitator, leader, and one who draws out the potential of the community (1.6.1). Parishioners shared positive experiences of becoming more involved in their church community, describing their experience as liberating, empowering and developing their potential (1.6.1).
- Priests and lay people wanted resources invested in training lay people (1.5.1, 1.6.4) and stressed the importance of lay people playing a greater role in the church's administration, mission and pastoral care (1.6.3). Evidence from the archived research also suggests that the theological and pastoral development of lay people is inextricably linked with that of clergy (1.5.4).
- Over half the parish respondents reported that increased participation of lay people led to a greater sense of community (1.6.1). One woman contrasted the austere church of her childhood with a more community focussed church, which she valued (1.6.1).

All these factors suggest that, within the Catholic Church in Scotland, a new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay was emerging which has the potential to address tensions in the way the church lives out its commitment to collaborative working between them. The new relationship moves beyond the security of the traditional ecclesial relationship in favour of a more dynamic response to the situation in which the church finds itself, especially in relation to decline in the number of priests. It draws on Vatican II's teaching on the laity, which, as Paul Lakeland observes, regards lay people and clergy together as active ministers of the Gospel, responding to the situation in which they live (2.3.6). It acknowledges the need for training to develop collaborative working and shifts the focus of the church from maintenance of the institution to the development of community.

In this way it addresses the underlying causes of the church's struggle to put its commitment to collaborative working into practice which emerge from the archived research: the weak and fragmented implementation of Vatican II in Scotland, the deep rooted clerical culture of the church, and the focus on maintenance rather than mission. It does so by drawing together the resources of theological analysis, ecclesial experience and human wisdom, an approach to the renewal of Catholicism described by Nicholas Healy as practical-prophetic ecclesiology.¹¹⁵ I will return to this concept in the final section of this chapter.

5.5.2 Discerning truth together

The second characteristic of a community shaped by the dynamic of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning is its challenge to Christian institutions to organise themselves in ways which facilitate processes of discerning the truth together. That is, everyone with appropriate experience and expertise should have assured, as opposed to concessionary, access to relevant conversations in such a fashion as to 'blur any unnecessarily strict demarcation between the teaching church... and the learning church'.¹¹⁶

Evidence from the archived research suggests that there was a strong demarcation between the teaching and learning church in Scotland: even as lay people became more active in the church, its structures of clerical authority and decision making remained largely unchanged (1.4.3). The roots of this clerical culture were explored in chapter three, which found that the Church's retreat into a religious counter culture in the nineteenth century increased the centralisation of power in Rome and deeply influenced the development of the Church in Scotland. Right up to the eve of the Council, the model of hierarchical control of lay associations shaped many bishops' understanding of the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay (3.2.4).

¹¹⁵ *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology*. op. cit. In particular see chapter 7, 'Practical-prophetic ecclesiology' pp. 154-185.

¹¹⁶ 'Fallibilism, Faith and Theology' op. cit. p. 353.

The archived research provides evidence of people being excluded from relevant conversations about the life of the church. Lay diocesan workers spoke of their exclusion from discussions about diocesan policy based on work they had carried out (1.6.2). Parishioners spoke about decisions taken by priests to close parish councils without consultation (1.6.2). Priests said they felt excluded from diocesan decisions (1.4.5).

However, voices can also be heard which identify the need for structures which would facilitate the process of lay and ordained people discerning the way forward for the church together.

- A senior priest spoke of the need for mechanisms which would facilitate ‘cross fertilisation and sharing’ of ideas, and proposed a diocesan pastoral council in which the voice of the laity would be heard (1.4.4). Four officials in one diocese identified the need for a forum where people could contribute to the development of diocesan priorities (1.4.4).
- Almost half of all diocesan officials, ordained and lay, expressed concern about the quality of communication between dioceses and parishes: they saw it as a barrier to the development of a new vision of church (1.4.4).
- There was concern among priests and lay people about lack of accountability at all levels of the church (1.4.5, 1.4.6).
- A senior priest stressed the need for listening and honesty about the extent to which renewal was taking root in parishes (1.4.4). A lay diocesan official suggested that bishops, priests and lay people together needed to embark on a listening exercise to develop a shared vision and make a commitment to resourcing it with people, training and finance (1.4.4).

The evidence suggests that there is a desire within the Catholic Church in Scotland to create structures which would allow lay and ordained members to shape the church's priorities together. This also addresses aspects of the weak implementation of Vatican II in Scotland, and the clerical culture which shaped the church. Once again, we see how theological resources, ecclesial experience and human wisdom can offer healing for tensions in the church's commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay.

5.5.3 Appreciating legitimate plurality and diversity

The third characteristic of a church community shaped by the dynamic understanding of theological rationality underpinning Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning is a renewed appreciation of the local and particular dimension of ecclesial life which requires sensitivity to the legitimate internal plurality and diversity that characterises the church catholic. Evidence from the archived research suggests that awareness of this internal plurality and diversity was limited within the Catholic Church in Scotland. There was little sense of learning across traditions (1.7.4).

The roots of limited ecumenical engagement were seen as a reflection of the wider ecumenical context (5.2.1) and explored in chapter four. It found that the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland responded to institutional decline by drawing on its own tradition, rather than sharing with other traditions which faced the same challenge. The Church's priority was inward looking maintenance rather than mission.

Yet once again, voices from the archived research suggest that a different church was emerging, with a focus on shared mission.

- Several people described their parish as outward looking, its hall a resource for the community, and its responsibilities extending to the

facilitation of political engagement in the neighbourhood, often with the co-operation of its local ecumenical partners (1.7.3).

- One man described the church's mission as threefold: to those who attend church, strengthening them to move out; to those within the church community who are in need; and to those in need within the wider community (1.7.3).
- A diocesan worker thought that the church needed to reach out to young people where they were, and not expect them always to come to church for youth events (1.7.3).
- Over half the parish respondents thought that one consequence of greater participation by lay people in the parish was a greater sense of community. A woman gave the example of setting up a soup kitchen in the parish hall, a decision she took with the support of the hall committee (1.6.1).

Here we see that the focus of the parish is not preservation of the institution, but mission to the wider community, and this addresses the third cause of tension in the church's commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay. The emerging church reflects a commitment to the teaching of Vatican II on ecumenism, and draws on the ecclesial experience and wisdom of parishioners to open up new directions for the wider church in Scotland.

5.5.4 Summary of section two

This section explored whether sources of healing might be found for the way the church lives out its commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay people by bringing voices from the archived research into conversation with aspects of a community shaped by Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning. The conversation identified three sources of healing, all of which address, in

different ways, tensions in the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay, and their underlying causes.

- The first source of healing is the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay which is developing in the emerging church in Scotland. Theologically, it reflects Vatican II's understanding of the church as the people of God and its realisation that the fulfilment of its mission in the world is the work of the whole body of believers. It moves beyond the security of traditional patterns of ecclesial relationship in favour of a more dynamic response to the situation in which the church finds itself, especially in relation to decline in the number of priests. It is characterised by a much greater role for lay people, who bring new gifts to the church and the possibility of new ways of working. It is shaped by an understanding of the role of the priest as one who facilitates and empowers the community. It is marked by a call for training lay people to take up roles in church administration, pastoral care and ministry; and it suggests that the way in which priests are trained should be reviewed. It shifts the focus of the church from maintenance of the institution to the church's mission to the wider community (5.5.1).
- The second source of healing is the desire within the emerging church to create structures which would enable priests and lay people to discern the way forward for the church together. Calls for such structures stress the requirement for all voices to be heard; they emphasise the need for better communications and systems of accountability; appeal for honesty about the impact of renewal programmes; and suggest that a listening exercise be carried out within the church (5.5.2).
- The third source of healing is the emerging church's focus on shared mission. It is characterised by an understanding of the church's mission to those in need within and outwith the parish community; by the development of an ecumenical approach to shared mission in the local neighbourhood; and by the use of church buildings as a community resource (5.5.3).

Before considering how these sources of healing might be operationalised within the Catholic Church in Scotland today, I will begin the final section of this chapter by placing them within the context of the struggle for the future of the church in Europe in order to highlight their significance.

5.6 Section three: reimagining the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people in the Catholic Church in Scotland.

5.6.1 The European context and the struggle for the future of the church

Hünermann's analysis of institutional decline in the Catholic Church (4.1) was made in the context of the church in Europe.¹¹⁷ He considered statistics on ordinations to the priesthood, Sunday Mass attendance, baptisms and weddings in the Roman Catholic Church across Europe, and found that numbers across much of the continent had fallen dramatically since the 1950s. This is consistent with findings from Scotland (chapter four). Hünermann concludes that the European Catholic Church as an institution is in process of dissolution. The structures of this institution, he argues, still operate from a concept of society which most Europeans consider obsolete, and are therefore in need of revision. Alongside the old structures, however, a new vision of church has grown which suggests a potentially different future.

He finds signs of this new vision in factors such as the emergence of a new type of Catholic, who 'knows how to make judgements on the implication of the gospel for society'; in the number of lay volunteers contributing to parish life; in the retreat movement and interest in spiritual direction; in the contribution of lay theologians to the church and in the growing number of adult baptisms.¹¹⁸ He argues that 'all the charisms of life in the church' are needed to develop this new vision of church: those of 'married and single people, priests and religious,

¹¹⁷ 'Evangelization of Europe?' op. cit. pp. 57-80.

¹¹⁸ 'Evangelization of Europe?' op. cit. pp. 73-74; p. 76.

theologians and social workers, men and women'.¹¹⁹ However, he says that the struggle for a new form of church has yet to be decided: signs of new life do not balance out the 'enormous losses and collapses the church has experienced'.¹²⁰ In this situation, he notes, the European bishops are divided between the traditionalist option, with its emphasis on restoring the institution; and openness to these new signs of life, which Hünermann locates within the horizon of the pilgrim people of God.¹²¹

While Hünermann focusses on the need for a new inculturation of Christianity in Europe and a reform of church structures which would allow the gospel to take root more easily in secular societies, Robert Schreiter widens the focus further by arguing for the development of a new ecumenical catholicity in response to globalisation. To carry out mission faithfully and critically, he says that the church must pay heed to this new context of globalisation and the way it is shaping the world. The church must develop ways of examining the effects of globalisation, what drives it, and how it might be engaged; it must work to put in place structures which allow for sustained and effective engagement with it; and it must be prepared to think in new ways, as it had to do in the years after the Second Vatican Council.¹²² Schreiter proposes that the Christian understanding of reconciliation could provide resources for a new theology and spirituality of mission in a world marked by globalisation: it would involve the creation of communities of reconciliation, the moral reconstruction of broken societies and the development of a spirituality of reconciliation.¹²³ Schreiter's vision recalls that of Pope John XXIII in its global outreach, its ecumenical vision and its commitment to engage with the changing world.

¹¹⁹ 'Evangelization of Europe?' op. cit. p. 77.

¹²⁰ 'Evangelization of Europe?' op. cit. p.64.

¹²¹ 'Evangelization of Europe?' op. cit. pp. 74-75.

¹²² Schreiter, R.J. 'Globalisation and Reconciliation' in Schreiter R. J. (ed.) *Mission in the Third Millennium* op. cit. 121-143. p. 135.

¹²³ 'Globalisation and Reconciliation' op. cit. pp. 141-142.

5.6.2 *The Catholic Church in Scotland 2015*

We saw in chapter four the way in which the struggle for the future of the church in Europe which Hünermann describes was reflected in the archived research Scotland in 1998-2000. On the one hand, there were parish communities which were living out Vatican II's understanding that the building up of the church and the fulfilment of its mission is the work of the whole community of believers, while on the other hand the church's leadership sought to preserve the institution and the central role of the priest (4.3.3). Evidence suggests that the response of the church's leadership in face of continued institutional decline is unchanged.

Between 2000 and 2015, the total number of secular priests in Scotland, including those who were retired, fell from 700 to 506. In 2016, the Catholic Directory for Scotland recorded that in 2015 there were 17 priests on loan from countries outwith Scotland, which represents around 5 percent of the total number of secular priests who are not retired.¹²⁴ This is a new category in the annual statistics, which suggests that dioceses overseas have become an important source of clergy for the Scottish church.

In January, 2014, the Archdiocese of Glasgow circulated data to parishes on mass attendance and the number of priests working in the diocese. It stated that in 1977 there were 285 diocesan priests serving in the diocese, and by 2014 this had dropped by 70 percent to 85. It noted that the average age of priests had increased, and estimated that by 2034, there would be around 45 diocesan priests. An exercise was launched to ask parishes how priests might be redeployed.¹²⁵ In January 2015, the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh wrote to deans of the archdiocese to say they could count on having around 30

¹²⁴ *The Catholic Directory for Scotland 2016* Glasgow: Burns Publications Ltd 2016 p. 565.

¹²⁵ www.rcag.org.uk accessed January 2014; see also a leaflet entitled 'This Affects You' (undated) which was circulated by the Archdiocese.

priests until the year 2035. He asked the deans to propose how the number of parishes could be reduced to match the projected number of priests.¹²⁶

One of the effects of institutional decline noted by Hünermann is to put younger priests at risk: increasingly stationed on their own, and overburdened with responsibilities, their personal and spiritual maturation becomes more difficult and they are often isolated.¹²⁷ Evidence from senior priests in the archived research in Scotland supports his observation (1.5.2). Yet the response of church authorities to institutional decline is still framed in terms of the availability of priests, even as their numbers continue to decline.

These examples indicate that the ‘restorationist’ response to institutional decline is still the church’s official position in Scotland: its stress on maintaining the church’s traditional structures is framed in terms of the number of priests available. Yet the projected number of priests, and the impact of continued decline, indicates that this approach is unsustainable. Voices from the archived research, which echo the new church taking shape across Europe, offer an alternative future with a much greater role for lay people in collaboration with priests. The choice, as Hünermann suggests, is between two very different forms of church. How might the church in Scotland discern the way ahead?

5.7 The testing of new insights

The way in which priests and people in the archived research were developing a new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay can be understood as an exercise in practical-prophetic ecclesiology: it draws together the resources of theological analysis, ecclesial experience and human wisdom to bring about renewal of the church’s understanding and practice (5.5.1).

¹²⁶ Letter from Archbishop Leo Cushley to the Deans of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh and copied to parish clergy, dated 10th January 2015.

¹²⁷ ‘Evangelisation of Europe?’ op. cit. p.60.

Healy describes practical-prophetic ecclesiology as a ‘church-wide social practice of communal self-critical analysis’ which is, therefore, the work of the whole church rather than that of ‘a few authoritative churchpeople’.¹²⁸ He suggests that groups who are marginalised within the church may have clearer insights into its sinfulness and how it might be reformed. The archived research suggests that the deeply clerical culture of the church made it extremely difficult for lay voices to be heard (1.6.2). Practical-prophetic ecclesiology argues that lay people have a contribution to make in shaping the church’s present and its future. This echoes Murray’s point that asking the receptive ecumenical question about what in a given situation can be learned from another is not the exclusive preserve of the theologian (5.2.4), and that everyone with appropriate experience should have access to relevant conversations within the church so that the truth might be discerned together (5.5.2). Healy likens practical-prophetic ecclesiology to a communal version of the traditional practice of confession in the Roman Catholic Church, which represented a continuing effort to ‘reorientate oneself anew to Jesus Christ’.¹²⁹

Murray describes the process as ‘rooted in the reality of the church, carried out in the middle of things, and poised between given circumstances and accumulated understanding on the one hand, and necessary accountability, refinement and anticipated actualisation on the other’.¹³⁰ This implies a degree of provisionality. The new relationship between ordained and lay which was articulated by voices in the archived research requires to be tested and refined within the wider community of the church as part of the process of re-imagining and reshaping its web of practice and belief. What possibilities does this open up for the Catholic Church in Scotland?

¹²⁸ *Church, World and the Christian Life* op. cit. pp. 177-178.

¹²⁹ *Church, World and the Christian Life* op. cit. p. 185.

¹³⁰ *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning* op. cit. p. xii.

5.7.1 A new ecclesial partnership

The first possibility opened up by the insights of priests and people in the archived research is the development of a new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people within the Catholic Church in Scotland. Prompted in part by the decline in the number of priests, and inspired by Vatican II's vision of the pilgrim people of God, priests and people in Scotland have begun to develop a new partnership as active ministers of the Gospel. They seek a wider and deeper reception of Vatican II; they recognise that the clerical culture which shaped the church in Scotland belongs to another era; and they are developing alternative ways of approaching the challenges the church faces. They are striving to live out Vatican II's understanding that the laity and clergy together constitute a missionary body in history (2.3.6).

This new ecclesial partnership needs to be nurtured and supported as the church faces a future with many fewer priests. The first step in discerning how it might be taken forward could be to establish how widely it has already developed: this could begin with an exercise in listening, as several voices in the archived research suggest, to the experience of local communities (see, for example, 1.4.4); and by mapping the extent to which the new partnership has taken root in Scotland's 449 parishes.¹³¹ This in turn could be followed by dialogue about the possibilities of further development and support. A key part of this process would be to ask what the Catholic Church can receive with integrity from other traditions about the way in which they are responding to the impact of institutional decline.

5.7.2 A clear theological basis

The second possibility suggested by the archived research is a renewed commitment to the vision of Vatican II and the drafting of a clear statement on

¹³¹ The figure of 449 is from *The Catholic Directory for Scotland* 2016 op. cit. p. 565.

the theological basis which underpins the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay. Schillebeeckx observed on the eve of Vatican II that lay people did not know where the limits of their function in the church lay because the issue had not been thought out on a theological level (3.2.4). We have seen how the implementation of the Council was weak and fragmented in Scotland (chapter two) and heard a senior priest in the archived research observe 35 years later that there was still a lack of clarity at diocesan level about why lay people should be more involved in the church (1.6.3).

As Komonchak pointed out, Vatican II's new understanding of the church as the people of God meant that the laity would have to be 'rehabilitated': a long and difficult process which was set in train by the Council's turn to the development of a theology of the laity (2.3.5). Chapter two traced the beginnings of this theology, which was based on the common baptismal call to discipleship and the fundamental equality of the *Christifidelis*. Despite ambiguity in Council texts, and the transitional nature of much of its teaching, Paul Lakeland argues that, when we understand Vatican II in the light of all that its documents say and imply, the understanding of the lay role in the church is completely revolutionised (2.3.6).

If the new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay to which the church is officially committed is to be developed in Scotland, its theological basis needs to be clearly set out, perhaps in a pastoral letter from the bishops. This is not an abstract theological question: it concerns a critical issue for the future of the church and reflects the experience of priests and people in parishes where change is already taking place, as well as the hopes of all those in the archived research who called for change. Their commitment to a greater role for lay people, their appreciation of the gifts they bring, and their understanding of the role of priests as leaders, motivators and facilitators within communities provide the theological building blocks for a new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay, and represent a living example of the way it looks in practice.

5.7.3 *A programme for training*

The third possibility opened up by voices from the archived research is the development of a coherent approach to adult education and training in the Catholic Church in Scotland. The archived research suggests that lack of clarity about the theological basis of a new role for lay people is reflected in a lack of clarity about their training. Both Ordinaries expressed a commitment to adult education but there was no overall plan in either diocese to carry it through (1.6.4). There were different opinions among senior priests about the role lay people should play, what kind of training they should be offered, and the level of planning and resources required (1.6.3, 1.6.4). There was also evidence that lay people who had undertaken training had yet to find a role in the church (1.6.4). As a lay official noted sadly, ‘How little planning there seems to be’ (1.6.4).

Several senior clergy believed that priests were not well prepared for their new role of encouraging and empowering lay people and little thought had been given to the possibility of training seminarians to work more closely with lay people (1.5.3). This has implications for the development of collaborative ministry and the training of priests, as it suggests that the theological and pastoral development of lay people is inextricably linked with that of clergy (1.5.4). The amount spent on training a small number of priests was a great deal more than the resources devoted to adult education (1.6.6).

If the church’s commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay is to be put into practice, all these questions need to be addressed. As part of this process, a mapping exercise would be useful in order to establish the extent of existing training programmes for lay people across Scotland’s eight dioceses, what their purpose is, how effective they are, and the resources that are dedicated to providing them. It would also be appropriate to ask what could be learned from other traditions in relation to adult education, particularly where they have experienced a reduction in the number of ordained ministers.

5.7.4 Structures for collaborative working

The fourth possibility which has been opened up is the creation of structures to facilitate a greater involvement of lay people in shaping the priorities of the church. This would be an important contribution to developing the skills of discerning and negotiating possibilities for change within the church which, as Richard Lennan points out, the Roman Catholic Church, with its descending models of authority, currently lacks. More specifically, Lennan points out that there is no lived memory of the way in which the dynamics of the *sensus fidei* might operate within the church, as Vatican II advocated.¹³² It is clear from the archived research that many Catholics in Scotland, lay and ordained, did not find it easy to play their part within a culture shaped by descending models of authority; priests and lay diocesan officials felt excluded from decision making (1.6.2) and parishioners said they would need support to take up a greater role in the church (1.6.4).

The archived research provides evidence of a desire on the part of priests and lay people for structures which would facilitate their involvement in discerning the way forward for the church together. Voices spoke of the need for fora where views could be shared; for better communication between dioceses and parishes; for more accountability within the church; and for bishops, priests and lay people to listen to one another (1.4.7). Developing such structures would be a key step in embedding the church's commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay in its habits and ways of living.

As has already been noted, many of the directives of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, which gave legal shape to much of the teaching of Vatican II, were not mandatory and were, therefore, not put into practice (2.3.7). Even where

¹³² Lennan, R. 'Roman Catholic Ecclesiology' in Mannion, G. and Mudge, L. S. (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*. Abingdon: Routledge 2010 pp. 234-250. p. 243.

structures like parish councils were set up, they could be disbanded by parish priests (1.6.2).

However, the archived research provides evidence of growing lay confidence, which came from the experience of taking more responsibility in church and recognising the skills which lay people bring (1.6.1). Lakeland points to parallels between signs of health in the church and secular democracies.

A healthy church will possess lively mediating structures, a strong public forum of ideas, and a clear conduit between those in positions of leadership and the members of the community. This conduit needs to be a two-way street. The community needs to have confidence in leadership's willingness to listen to its voice and incorporate that voice into decision making... leadership needs to be aware of its accountability to the people it serves.¹³³

Here the Catholic Church in Scotland could usefully ask what can be received with integrity from other traditions about the involvement of lay people in governance. The Church of Scotland's General Assembly and the Scottish Episcopal Church's synodal system, in which ordained and lay people take decisions together, might offer insights on the way in which lay and ordained members of the Catholic Church can work together.

5.7.5 A focus on shared mission

The fifth possibility opened up by the archived research is the growth of a deeper understanding of the mission of the church. The archived research identified tensions between the Catholic Church's focus on maintenance of the institution and its commitment to mission (1.5.1, 1.7.3). However, it also found evidence of communities which were committed to working alongside others in

¹³³ *The Liberation of the Laity* op. cit. p. 215.

the service of the local community, which in one parish included working with ecumenical partners (1.7.4, 4.3.3). These parish communities were making the church present in ways that looked forward to the transformation of the world (4.3.3).

McGrail offered an example of the way in which ecumenical learning helped people develop their understanding of mission in a parish in Liverpool (4.3.3). This suggests that working together on practical social issues develops the church's understanding of mission. It also raises questions about the impact of ecumenical learning at the institutional level. Receptive ecumenical learning implies institutional transformation; it moves traditions to new places which open up fresh possibilities for overcoming differences (5.2.3). As McGrail points out, such transformation would have a profoundly social dimension: it would 'inform and animate a commitment to social engagement and solidarity with many others beyond the confines of the Christian community'.¹³⁴ He observes that churches have a great deal to learn from one another as they seek to renew their sense of mission while renegotiating their way within a rapidly changing world.¹³⁵ This suggests that the issue of shared mission should be on the agenda of ecumenical discussions at all levels of the church.

5.7.6 Summary of section three

This section considered how sources of healing for the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay, which were identified by voices from the archived research in conversation with aspects of a community shaped by Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, might be operationalised within the Catholic Church in Scotland today. It began by highlighting why this is a critical question for the church by placing it within the context of the struggle for a new form of church taking place across Europe and the global context within which mission is carried out; by stressing the theological importance of voices from the archived

¹³⁴ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. pp. 319-310.

¹³⁵ 'The Fortress Church Under Reconstruction?' op. cit. p. 310.

research; and by suggesting that their insights should be tested and refined as part of the church's planning for the future.

Re-imagining the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people within the Catholic Church in Scotland opened up five possibilities for reconfiguring its web of belief and practice. They can be summarised as follows:

- The first possibility is to nurture the new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay which the archived research identified within the Catholic Church in Scotland. This could begin by establishing the extent of its development and asking what might be learned from other traditions about the way they are responding to institutional decline (5.6.4).
- The second possibility is to establish the theological basis for the new ecclesial relationship. This could be communicated to the church in the form of a pastoral letter from the bishops (5.6.5).
- The third possibility is to develop a coherent programme of adult education and training for lay people, together with resources to support it. This would have implications for the training of priests. A mapping exercise to clarify current provision of adult education would identify best practice and provide a useful baseline for further development. Development could be enhanced by asking what can be learned from the way other traditions approach the issue of adult education, particularly where they have experienced a reduction in the number of ordained ministers (5.6.6).
- The fourth possibility is to set up structures which would facilitate greater involvement of lay people in shaping the life and priorities of the church. These could build on the 1983 code of canon law and draw on the practice of other traditions, especially the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church (5.6.7).

- The fifth possibility is a deeper understanding of the church's mission. This could be developed through closer ecumenical co-operation at the local level and discussions about a common approach at the institutional level (5.6.8).

5.8 Conclusion of chapter five

This chapter explored how the structures and habits of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland might be reconfigured to reflect its stated commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay people by drawing voices from the archived research into conversation with Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning.

The first section established how Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning's emphasis on truth as something to be performed rather than merely described provides a lens through which tensions between the church's commitment to collaborative working between ordained and lay, and the way the commitment is put into practice, can be understood (5.2.4). It also provides a framework within which tensions can be addressed. Its understanding of catholicity stresses the need to keep discussions open (5.2.2); its ethic of constant receptivity to the gifts of other traditions recognises that they may be performing aspects of catholicity more fully than the Catholic Church(5.2.3); and its practical and inclusive focus recognises the theological and evangelical significance of practical and structural aspects of church life (5.2.4). Analysis of the theological roots of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning placed them within the context of the Second Vatican Council's understanding of eschatology, its teaching on ecumenism, and its stress on the church's need for continued reformation and renewal (5.3). These elements were underpinned by the philosophy of Nicholas Rescher (5.4), which supported the understanding that Christians should remain permanently mindful that the truth in which they live is always open to new questions and new insights (5.4.8). In relation to

ecumenism, a key question to ask of other traditions is whether they might have gifts which are lacking in one's own.

The second section focussed on sources of healing for the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay. By drawing voices from the archived research into conversation with characteristics of a community shaped by Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, it identified three sources of healing. They are to be found in the new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay which has developed in the Catholic Church in Scotland (5.5.1); in the desire for structures that would enable priests and people to discern the way forward for the church together (5.5.2); and in the focus on shared mission which has developed in some parishes (5.5.3).

The final section considered how the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay might be re-imagined by operationalising these sources of healing within the church. It argued that this is a critical question by placing it within the context of the struggle for a new form of church which is taking place across Europe (5.6.1). The new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay which emerges from the archived research represents an alternative to the focus on redeployment of clergy which is central to the response of church authorities to institutional decline (5.6.2). The possibilities opened up by the development of this new ecclesial relationship require to be tested and refined within the wider Catholic Church in Scotland (5.6.3).

Re-imagining the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay opened up five possibilities for reconfiguring the web of belief and practice within the Catholic Church in Scotland. The first involves nurturing the new, more collaborative ecclesial relationship which emerges from the archived research and establishing the extent to which it has already taken root (5.6.3). This would require clarification of the theological basis for the relationship (5.6.4); the development of a coherent programme of adult education (5.6.5); the creation of structures to facilitate collaborative working between ordained and lay

(5.6.6); and the development of a deeper understanding of the church's mission at local and institutional level (5.6.7). In all these factors, a key issue will be to seek out gifts from other traditions which can help address what is lacking in Roman Catholicism.

6 Conclusion: summary of thesis and prospects for change

In this final section I will summarise the thesis and its findings and consider prospects for change under the pontificate of Pope Francis.

6.1 Summary of thesis

The thesis asked how a partnership might be developed between ordained and lay people in the Scottish Catholic Church which builds on the theology of Vatican II and responds to the needs of a changing church in a changing world. Chapter one began by establishing the contours of the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people from conversations between bishops, priests and lay people who took part in research in two Scottish dioceses between 1998 and 2000. The conversations revealed that the bishops of both dioceses were committed to collaborative working between ordained and lay people in response to the teaching of Vatican II, but there were many points of tension between commitment and practice. Tensions clustered around the implementation of Vatican II in Scotland, the changing role of priests, the struggle to develop a new role for lay people within a deeply clerical culture, and the church's response to changing patterns of belonging and believing within the Catholic community.

Chapters two, three and four probed the roots of these tensions. Chapter two asked why the implementation of Vatican II in Scotland was problematic and found that it was affected by factors inherent in the scale and nature of the Council's vision, its teaching, and its interpretation. As a result, the Council's implementation in Scotland was weak and fragmented. Chapter three explored where the deeply clerical culture of the Scottish church came from and why it endured and found that its roots lay in papal strategies of the nineteenth century which were underpinned by the concept of church as perfect society, within which there was an inbuilt inequality between ordained and lay. This

ecclesiology, with its ultramontane focus, helped shape the Scottish Catholic Church in the wake of Irish immigration. Its culture endured because it reflected the judgement of successive popes about how best to pursue the church's contextualised mission, until John XXIII opened up a new strategy and set a new direction for the church with the calling of the Second Vatican Council. Chapter four investigated why the church responded to institutional decline by focussing on maintenance of traditional patterns of church life. It found that the reason was primarily sociological, and the church's leadership sought to create a buttress against change by preserving traditional teaching and practice, which placed clergy at the centre of its efforts to maintain the parish system. The role of the priest became a central factor in maintenance of the institution. The chapter also found that a focus on mission rather than maintenance, which had emerged in some parish communities, was characterised by a growing partnership between ordained and lay.

With this deeper understanding of tensions between the church's commitment to collaborative working and its practice in mind, chapter five turned to the question of how the tensions might be healed and the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay re-imagined. The chapter began with a detailed account of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, a strategy for ecumenical engagement which builds on the theology of Vatican II and emphasises the way in which churches can improve their own Christian understanding and practice by learning from one another. Its perception of truth as something to be performed, not merely proclaimed, focusses attention on the way churches live out their vocation, and tensions between church teaching and practice are understood as wounds in the body of the church which require healing. By drawing on the theological insights of Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning, the experience of priests and people in Scotland, and the wisdom of those who were developing a new partnership between priests and people, sources for healing were identified and new possibilities opened up for the partnership between ordained and lay people in the Scottish Catholic. The chapter concluded by considering how these possibilities might be tested and operationalised in the church today.

6.2 Prospects for change

We have seen the way in which the strategies of successive popes, based on their interpretation of church and society, shaped the Catholic Church, consolidating the achievements of past generations and providing a platform for the achievements of future generations. We have also seen that the way in which Pope John XXIII's successors interpreted the teaching of Vatican II, and the tone they set, was crucial to the Council's implementation. In this final section I will consider prospects for a new partnership between ordained and lay in the pontificate of Pope Francis, who succeeded Benedict XVI in 2013.

Gaillardetz identifies four aspects of Vatican II which Francis places in the foreground of his pontificate and argues that they represent a fresh interpretation of the Council and a new synthesis of its teaching. They relate to the church's orientation to mission, the importance of the *sensus fidelium*, the issue of ecclesial subsidiarity, and the relationship between doctrine and pastoral ministry.¹ I will examine the implications of each of these issues for the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay. First, however, I will consider how Francis has placed the relationship within the context of baptism.

6.2.1 *The primary identity of God's faithful people*

In a letter to Cardinal Marc Oullet, the pope reflects on the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people and reinforces the Council's teaching on the primary identity of God's faithful people realised in baptism. He writes:

¹ Gaillardetz, R. *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II, Pope Francis and the Renewal of Catholicism*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press 2015. See especially chapter six, 'Pope Francis and the Reception of Vatican II' pp. 115-158

Looking at the People of God is remembering that we all enter the Church as lay people. The first sacrament, which seals our identity forever... is Baptism. Through Baptism and by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, (the faithful) “are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood” (Lumen Gentium, n. 10). Our first and fundamental consecration is rooted in our Baptism... It does us good to remember that the Church is not an elite of priests, of consecrated men, of bishops, but that everyone forms the faithful Holy People of God. To forget this carries many risks and distortions...²

One of these distortions, Francis argues, is clericalism, which is

the fruit of a mistaken way of living out the ecclesiology proposed by Vatican II... Clericalism... gradually extinguishes the prophetic flame to which the entire Church is called to bear witness in the heart of her peoples. Clericalism forgets that the visibility and sacramentality of the Church belong to all the People of God (cf. Lumen Gentium, nn. 9-14), not only to the few chosen and enlightened.³

There is a clear affirmation here that the building up of the church and the fulfilment of its mission is the work of the whole community of believers.

6.2.2 The missiological vision of Vatican II

Francis understands the church as fundamentally orientated towards mission as a sign and instrument of God’s mercy. Gaillardetz points out that although he uses the language of the ‘new evangelisation’ which was promoted by John Paul II and Benedict XIV, Francis strikes a different note from his predecessors by

² Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to Cardinal Marc Oullet, President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, 19 March, 2016
https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160319_pont-comm-america-latina.html. Accessed September 12, 2016

³ Letter to Cardinal Marc Oullet, op. cit.

speaking in terms of ‘missionary discipleship’ and by urging Christians to enter into a deeper and more profound solidarity with the world.⁴ He stresses that mission is the work of all the baptised.

The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples... An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others... An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be.⁵

This missionary church is shaped by its encounters with people in their daily lives. It is a church which learns from the poor because they have ‘much to teach us... Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them’.⁶ It offers everyone a share in its life in a way that has pastoral consequences: ‘everyone can be part of the community, nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason...’.⁷ Its structures and practices should be shaped by its outward facing missionary thrust rather than its inward facing impulse to self-preservation.

I dream of a “missionary option,” that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures, can suitably be channelled for the evangelisation of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-orientated, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a

⁴ *An Unfinished Council* op. cit. p. 116

⁵ Francis, “*Evangelii Gaudium* [Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Francis On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World]” sec. 24 in *Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel*. London: Catholic Truth Society 2013 p.17

⁶ *Evangelii Gaudium* op. cit. sec.198 p. 101

⁷ *Evangelii Gaudium* op. cit. sec. 47 p. 29

constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself.⁸

There is much here which supports the development of a partnership between priests and people in service of the church's mission, and it touches on many of the tensions between them which emerge from the archived research. It stresses that mission is the work of all the baptised; that the church must pay heed to the insights of all the faithful; that access to the sacraments should be as open as possible; and that the church's structures need to reflect its mission rather than its self-preservation. Its stress on the relationship between the church and the world, and the way in which the whole church needs to be involved in shaping the church to meet the demands of its mission, call to mind the new partnership between ordained and lay which was sketched out in *Gaudium et Spes* sec. 43 (2.3.6).

6.2.3 A listening church

The second feature of Francis's emerging ecclesiological vision which supports the development of a strong ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay is his commitment to listening to the whole church. As Gaillardetz observes, in *Evangelii Gaudium* 'we come to the end of a *de facto* fifty-year papal moratorium on the council's teaching on the sense of the faithful'.⁹ Francis exhorts church leaders to listen to the whole people of God:

The presence of the Spirit gives Christians a certain connaturality with divine realities, and wisdom which enables them to grasp those realities intuitively, even where they lack the wherewithal to give them precise expression'.¹⁰

⁸ *Evangelii Gaudium* op. cit. sec. 27 pp. 19-20

⁹ *An Unfinished Council* op. cit. p. 122

¹⁰ *Evangelii Gaudium* op. cit. sec. 119 pp. 62-63

Francis has taken practical steps to develop the church's capacity to listen: he has asked the International Theological Commission to develop criteria for discerning authentic expressions of the *sensus fidelium*.¹¹ He has also challenged bishops to broaden their practice of consultation so that everyone in the church can be heard. In *Evangelii Gaudium* we read:

In his mission of fostering a dynamic, open and missionary community, [the bishop] will have to encourage and develop the means of participation proposed in the Code of Canon Law and other forms of pastoral dialogue, out of a desire to listen to everyone and not simply to those who would tell him what he would like to hear....¹²

Francis' commitment to this dynamic, open and missionary community, underpinned by theological analysis and practical action, suggests a much closer partnership between ordained and lay. His focus on the theological and practical implications of the *sensus fidelium*, and his instruction to bishops to develop the provisions of canon law in relation to consultation, have far reaching implications for the ecclesial relationship between priests and people.

6.2.4 Ecclesial subsidiarity

The third feature of Francis's foregrounding of a key teaching of Vatican II which could impact on the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay is his concern with the development of the Council's teaching on collegiality. In *Evangelii Gaudium* he refers to ecclesial 'decentralisation' as a counterpoint to 'excessive centralisation'.

The Second Vatican Council stated that... episcopal conferences are in a position "to contribute in many and fruitful ways to the concrete

¹¹ 'it is your task... to develop criteria for discerning authentic expression of the *sensus fidelium*'. "Address of Pope Francis to Members of the International Theological Commission, 6 December, 2013" Accessed September 23, 2016

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/december/documents/papa-francesco_20131206_commissione-teologica.html

¹² *Evangelii Gaudium* op. cit. sec. 31 p. 22

realization of the collegial spirit”. Yet this desire has not been fully realized... Excessive centralization, rather than proving helpful, complicates the Church’s life and her missionary outreach.¹³

Gaillardetz observes that if Pope Francis is serious about papal decentralisation, his turn to ecclesial subsidiarity may be his most profound effort at *ressourcement*, as it represents a return to ancient ecclesial practice in which the principal instrument of authoritative church teaching was the regional gathering of bishops in synods.¹⁴ In this scenario, there would be a renewed focus on the local church and the development of local responses to the challenges it faces. This could, for example, allow the Scottish bishops to consider the ordination of women and married men, and joint training for priests and lay people as responses to the needs of the church, which they were constrained from considering in the archived research because of the power of Rome (1.5.3, 1.4.6).

6.2.5 The pastoral orientation of doctrine

The fourth feature of Francis’ vision of the church which could strengthen the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay is his pastoral understanding of doctrine. In an address to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the pope said: ‘In reality, doctrine has the sole purpose of serving the life of the People of God and it seeks to assure our faith of a sure foundation’.¹⁵ In *Evangelii Gaudium* he draws out the implications of this understanding.

Pastoral ministry in a missionary style is not obsessed with the disjointed transmission of a multitude of doctrines to be insistently imposed. When we adopt a pastoral goal and a missionary style which would actually reach everyone without exception or exclusion, the message has to

¹³ *Evangelii Gaudium* op. cit. sec. 32 p. 22

¹⁴ *An Unfinished Council* op. cit. p 128

¹⁵ Francis. “Address to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, January 31, 2014”. Accessed September 23, 2016. <https://zenit.org/articles/pope-francis-address-to-congregation-for-the-doctrine-of-the-faith/>

concentrate on the essential... The message is simplified, while losing none of its depth and truth, and this becomes all the more forceful and convincing.¹⁶

This commitment to the pastoral orientation of doctrine emerges in Francis' openness to reconsider issues such as the church's discipline regarding the possibility of communion for those who are divorced and remarried. Gaillardetz suggests that in this, and in other issues, the pope 'deftly maintains the tension between the normative claims of church doctrine and the pastoral reality of people's lives'.¹⁷ Such an approach makes possible a closer ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people, which was, as the archived research demonstrated, constrained by the limits imposed on discussions about the reality of people's lives by the normative claims of doctrine.

6.3 Conclusion

In his fresh reception of Vatican II, which echoes the pastoral focus of John XXIII, Pope Francis has opened up the prospect of a new ecclesial partnership between ordained and lay within the Catholic Church. At the heart of his vision is the primary Christian identity conferred by baptism and the conciliar understanding that the building up of the church and its mission in the world is the work of the whole people of God. He has taken practical steps to translate this vision into practice, so that the church's teaching might be embedded in its habits and structures. His stress on mission, rather than institutional preservation, his emphasis on learning from the faithful, his commitment to ecclesial subsidiarity and his focus on the pastoral orientation of doctrine all enhance the prospects for a new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay, and support the efforts of those who are building a new partnership between them in Scotland.

¹⁶ *Evangelii Gaudium* op. cit. sec. 35 p. 23

¹⁷ *An Unfinished Council* op. cit. p.131

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