

THE MEDIATION OF THE CHURCH IN SOME PONTIFICAL DOCUMENTS

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IN His recent encyclical letter, *Humani generis*, of Aug. 12, 1950, the Holy Father reproves those who "reduce to a meaningless formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church in order to achieve eternal salvation."¹ In the light of the Pope's insistence in the same encyclical letter on the ordinary, day-by-day teaching office of the Roman Pontiffs, it will be useful to select from the infra-infallible but authentic teaching of the Popes some of the abundant material touching the question of the mediatorial function of the Church in the order of salvation. The Popes, to be sure, do not speak and write after the manner of theologians but as pastors of souls, and it is doubtless not always easy to transpose to a theological level what is contained in a pastoral document and expressed in a pastoral method of approach. Yet the authentic teaching of the Popes is both a guide to, and a source of, theological thinking. The documents cited are of varying solemnity and doctrinal importance; an encyclical letter is clearly of greater magisterial value than, let us say, an occasional epistle to some prelate. It is not possible here to situate each citation in its documentary context; but the force and point of a quotation, removed from its documentary perspective, is perhaps as often lessened as augmented. Those who wish may read them in their context, if they desire a more careful appraisal of evidence.

I

In paging through documents of the Popes one finds again and again the affirmation, in varying forms of expression and degrees of emphasis, that oneness and solidarity with Christ is oneness and solidarity with the Church, the Body of Christ, and vice versa; in other words, that *extra ecclesiam* means *extra Christum*. Thus Clement XIII speaks of the members of a pseudo-synod of the Jansenist Church of Utrecht as those who, "gathered outside the Church, have falsely opined that

¹ AAS, XLII (1950), 571.

Christ was with them when they were so gathered.”² “He who does not gather with the Church and Jesus Christ, scatters and does not gather, and most truly do those strive against God, who do not strive with Him and with the Church”;³ heretics are “adversaries of Christ and of the Church”;⁴ those who are outside the Church are “strangers and foreigners to Christ”;⁵ “. . . one is not with Christ and of Christ if one is not in the Catholic Church and with the Catholic Church; *ubi ecclesia, ibi Christus*”;⁶ “if it has pleased God the Father that all His fulness should dwell in Christ, he certainly cannot enjoy that same fulness, who is separated from the Church ‘which is His Body.’”⁷ We are further told that it is impossible to love Christ without loving the Church: “Jesus Christ is not loved by him who disregards the Spouse or the Vicar of Christ”;⁸ Pius XII affirms that for the faithful “the Church is the Christ who continues to live here below and that love for Christ is equivalent to love for the Church and vice versa”;⁹ “since the Head cannot be separated from the Mystical Body, the love of Christ is necessarily conjoined with zeal for His Church.”¹⁰

Another way of expressing the same general truth is to say that one separated from the unity of the Church is dis severed “from the unity of Christ”;¹¹ Our Lady is asked not to suffer the dissident Orientals to wander far “from the unity of the Church and therefore from her Son”;¹² Benedict XIII is eager that Ruthenian dissidents “be led back

² Clement XIII, Constitution, *Non sine*, April 30, 1765 (*Bullarii Romani continuatio*, curantibus A. Barberi et A. Spretia [Rome, 1838], III, 68).

³ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Sapientiae christianae*, Jan. 10, 1890 (*AAS*, XXII [1889–90], 392–93).

⁴ Innocent III, Bull, *Cum inestimabile*, May 10, 1210 (*Bullarum, privilegiorum, ac diplomatum Romanorum pontificum amplissima collectio*, cura C. Cocquelines [Rome, 1740], III, Pars prima, 142).

⁵ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Rerum ecclesiae*, Feb. 28, 1926 (*AAS*, XVIII [1926], 65).

⁶ Pius XI, Address, Dec. 24, 1930 (*AAS*, XXII [1930], 534).

⁷ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Orientales omnes*, Dec. 23, 1945 (*AAS*, XXXVIII [1946], 58).

⁸ Pius X, Letter, April 28, 1913 (*AAS*, V [1913], 209).

⁹ Pius XII, Allocution, Feb. 17, 1942 (*AAS*, XXXIV [1942], 142).

¹⁰ Benedict XV, Encyclical Letter, *Spiritus Paraclitus*, Sept. 15, 1920 (*AAS*, XII [1920], 418).

¹¹ Cardinal Secretary of the Holy Office, Letter, Nov. 8, 1865 (*AAS*, XXVII [1894–95], 72).

¹² Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Lux veritatis*, Dec. 25, 1931 (*AAS*, XXIII [1931], 515).

to the Catholic Church outside of which there is no salvation, and restored to Christ the Lord who acquired them in His very blood";¹³ Pius XI addresses unbelievers and dissidents as those "who are yet far from the faith and unity of Christ."¹⁴ This indivisible unity of Christ with His Church is expressed in very unyielding terms. Pius XII uses a phrase reminiscent of St. Joan of Arc: "For the faithful, religion, Christ, and the Church are all one."¹⁵ The devil, says Leo XIII, has ever sought to introduce divisions among the followers of Christ, thus hoping "to overthrow Christ Himself and the work of His redemption: for in no sense, whether in Himself or in His Mystical Body, 'is Christ divided.'"¹⁶ It is for this same reason that Leo says of those who accept the divinity of Christ but remain outside His Church: "Whoever accepts Christ, must needs accept the whole Christ,"¹⁷ i.e., the mystical Christ, Head and Body, indissolubly conjoined; and he further warns those who accept only the fatherhood of God that "they can by no means be reckoned among the sons of God, unless they take Jesus Christ as their brother and the Church as their mother."¹⁸ It is the same Pope who notes that many have sought the certain way of salvation in the Catholic Church, "since they clearly understood they could by no means be conjoined with Christ the Head if they did not adhere to His Body which is the Church."¹⁹ Pius XI in his encyclical letter *Mortalium animos* has an equally firm statement: "Whoever is not united with it [i.e., the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church], is not a member of it nor is he in communion with Christ its Head."²⁰ In the light of the foregoing one can see why the Popes at times interchange the expressions "members of the Roman Pontiffs" and "members of Christ," which is, it would seem, another way of saying what Boniface VIII said in the bull *Unam sanctam*. Thus

¹³ Benedict XIII, Apostolic Constitution, *Aeterni pastoris*, Aug. 12, 1724 (*Bullarium Romanum*, ed. H. Mainardi [Rome, 1736], XI, Pars altera, 335).

¹⁴ Pius XI, Radio Address, Feb. 12, 1931 (*AAS*, XXIII [1931], 68).

¹⁵ Pius XII, Allocution, Feb. 17, 1942 (*AAS*, XXIV [1942], 142).

¹⁶ Leo XIII, Letter, Dec. 15, 1895 (*ASS*, XXVIII [1895-96], 386).

¹⁷ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896 (*ASS*, XXVIII [1895-96], 738).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 738.

¹⁹ Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter, *Praeclara gratulationis*, June 20, 1894 (*ASS*, XXVI [1893-94], 710).

²⁰ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Mortalium animos*, Jan. 6, 1928 (*AAS*, XX [1928], 15).

Gregory XV, in the bull of foundation of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, teaches that the vision shown to Peter in Acts 10:10 ff. prefigures the office, given to Peter and his successors, of gathering men from the four quarters of the earth, in order that "by converting them into his [i.e., Peter's] members who was the visible head of the Church, he should make them also members of Christ, the invisible Head of the Church, and that thus they should become sharers in the sonship of Christ."²¹ Leo XIII establishes a parallelism between Christ and the Church in the order of salvation: ". . . the way for man is Christ, the way likewise the Church; He in Himself and by His very nature, she by reason of the office entrusted to her and the power communicated to her. Whoever, therefore, wishes to strive for salvation apart from the Church, is deceived as to the right way and strives in vain."²²

A similar striking comparison, found in a letter of Pius XI to Cardinal Schuster on the defense of Catholic Action, may serve as ending for this general section on the solidarity and indissolubility of Christ and His Church in the salvific order:

And when this life [i.e., supernatural] and this salvation are in question, one can and one ought to say of the Church what Saint Peter says of Jesus Christ Himself: "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12); because to the Church, and to no other, Jesus Christ has given both the mandate and the means to save: the doctrines of the faith, divine and ecclesiastical law, the word of God, the sacraments, prayer, the virtues theological and infused.²³

It is to be noted here that in these last two quotations the indispensable place of the Church in the economy of salvation is founded on two factors: first, that she has received from Christ the mandate or office to save; and secondly, that Christ has endowed her with the power or the means to realize that mandate. And it is to the Church and her alone that Christ has given this mandate and the power to fulfill it.

We may say then that there is a solidarity in the salvific order between Christ and His Church, between Head and Body. One cannot,

²¹ Gregory XV, Apostolic Constitution, *Inscrutabili divinae*, June 22, 1622 (*Codicis juris canonici fontes*, ed. Card. Gasparri [Rome, 1926], I, 382).

²² Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Tametsi futura*, Nov. 1, 1900 (*A.S.S.*, XXXIII [1900-1], 279).

²³ Pius XI, Letter, April 26, 1931 (*A.A.S.*, XXXIII [1931], 146-47).

so to speak, "unchurch" Christ the Savior, and adhere to Him apart from that visible and social communion so consciously precious to the early centuries of Christianity. Nor yet can one fashion a church other than the Church of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church; that were, as Leo XIII remarks, to fashion "another Christ," "another head"²⁴ for another body. Man cannot sunder what God has indissolubly united, the Spouse and His Bride. It is, of course, true that there are many who, in the best of faith, seek to follow and confess Christ the Savior apart from any church, or else confess the headship of Christ in a body which is not of Christ's making but man's. But that is a problem which for the present we shall not touch.

II

If we turn our attention now to pontifical teaching on the relation between the saving passion of Christ and the Church "which He acquired for Himself through His own blood" (Acts 20:28), it will enable us to see more deeply why there is a solidarity between Christ and His Church in the economy of salvation. Clement XIII speaks of "the passion of Christ, in which, as in the most efficacious sacrament of divine mercy, the ground of all hope of eternal salvation is contained";²⁵ and Pius XII teaches: "In order therefore that the redemption and salvation of men, insofar as it touches them singly, for all future generations, be effectively accomplished and accepted by God, it is wholly necessary that they should individually come into vital contact with the sacrifice of the Cross and thus be made sharers in the merits which flow from it."²⁶ All men, if they are to be saved, must be brought into fruitful and vivifying contact, by faith and the sacraments of faith, with the passion of Jesus. The question then arises: What function has the Church of Christ in applying or distributing the fruits of His sacred passion to all who have living faith in Him as Redeemer? Is that mediation of the Church in some sense universal and therefore absolutely indispensable, or is it only normal, ordinary, as one would say, so that

²⁴ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896. (A.S.S., XXVIII [1895-96], 714).

²⁵ Clement XIII, Apostolic Constitution, *Commissi nobis*, Sept. 6, 1774 (Berberi and Spretia, IV, 768).

²⁶ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mediator Dei*, Nov. 20, 1947 (A.A.S., XXXIX [1947], 551).

there remain according to the providence of God extranormal and extraordinary ways of mediating the fruits of Christ's passion which bypass altogether the intervention of His Body the Church? To put the question in another way: Is there any partial dissociation between soteriology and ecclesiology? Can there be, let us say, a pure God-and-myself salvific order?

What is the teaching of pontifical documents on the relation between the passion of Christ and the Church of Christ? In line with the patristic commonplace of the birth of the Church on the Cross, we read: "Is not that most saving work, mercifully wrought by the very Son of God, the origin and foundation of the Catholic religion, and the basic ground and cause of the Church of Christ?"²⁷ Not only does the Church owe her very being to the passion of Christ, but she is become by His passion the Bride of Christ, whom God the Father "has willed to be dowered with the precious blood of His only-begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ."²⁸ It is to the blood of Christ that His Spouse owes her spiritual fecundity—"the Church fruitful by the blood of the divine Redeemer."²⁹ Honorius III elaborates the image: "[Jesus Christ], forming her from His side, redeemed and washed her in His blood, and loving her as a sister and as a spouse, joined her to Himself in an unconquerable love, her who was to be fruitful with always new children until the number of the elect should be filled out."³⁰ The Church is "she who continues the mission of the Savior, the daughter and heir of His redemption."³¹ If the Church is dowered with the blood of Christ the Redeemer and heir of His redemption, then one sees why she is said to continue His saving mission. This heritage of Christ's Spouse is that "most noble patrimony of truth and charity entrusted to her care by Jesus Christ."³² Indeed, the Church is heir not only of the saving power of Christ but also of His mercy and compassion for the sheep that are

²⁷ Pius XI, Letter, June 20, 1935 (*AAS*, XXVII [1935], 484).

²⁸ Innocent VIII, Bull, *Sacrosanctam matrem*, Jan. 6, 1485 (Cocquelines, III, Pars tertia, 193).

²⁹ Pius XI, Homily, May 20, 1934 (*AAS*, XXVI [1934], 287).

³⁰ Honorius III, Bull, *Qui stavit*, March 18, 1226 (Cocquelines, III, Pars prima, 244).

³¹ Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter, *Pervenuti all'anno*, March 19, 1902 (*ASS*, XXXIV [1901-2], 523).

³² Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Sapientiae christianae*, Jan. 10, 1890 (*ASS*, XXII [1889-90], 389).

without a shepherd. "The merciful Son of God . . . left the Church He founded the heir not only of His power but also of His mercy so that the benefits wrought by Him might be propagated to all ages in ever the same spirit of charity."³³ The Church is "as it were, the perpetual guardian and administrator of Christ's passion among the peoples of the world."³⁴ She is "forever the preserver of sound doctrine and of the Blood of God the Redeemer."³⁵ Pius XI writes: "There is a brotherhood infinitely more sacred and more precious than the brotherhood of man and one's country; it is that which unites in the brotherhood of Christ the Redeemer, as children of the Catholic Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ Himself, and the full treasury of all the benefits of the redemption."³⁶ It is our Mother the Roman Catholic Church which guards and transmits across the ages "the whole store of truth and of grace which is contained in the redemptive mission of Christ."³⁷ It is the Church which has in herself "the glorious Redeemer always living and operating."³⁸

In the light of the intimate relation between the Church and the redemption of Christ it is clear that "the Church was not born for any other purpose than to make all men sharers in the saving redemption by spreading the Kingdom of Christ throughout the whole world."³⁹ It is clear, too, why Benedict XV calls on all men and all peoples "to unite themselves in mind and heart to the Catholic Church and through the Church to Christ the Redeemer of mankind."⁴⁰ It is clear, finally, why "the immense benefits which Jesus Christ the Redeemer acquired for the world are communicated to men only through 'the servants of Christ and the stewards of the mysteries of God.'"⁴¹ Our Mother

³³ Leo XIII, Apostolic Constitution, *Misericors Dei*, May 29, 1883 (*ASS*, XV [1882-83], 513).

³⁴ Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter, *Apostolicae curae*, Sept. 13, 1896 (*ASS*, XXIX [1896-97], 202).

³⁵ Pius XI, Allocution, May 23, 1923 (*AAS*, XV [1923], 252).

³⁶ Pius XI, Address, Sept. 14, 1936 (*AAS*, XXVIII [1936], 375).

³⁷ Pius XII, Allocution, June 2, 1944 (*AAS*, XXXVI [1944], 170).

³⁸ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Summi pontificatus*, Oct. 20, 1939 (*AAS*, XXXI [1939], 415).

³⁹ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Rerum ecclesiae*, Feb. 18, 1926 (*AAS*, XVIII [1926], 65).

⁴⁰ Benedict XV, Encyclical Letter, *Pacem Dei*, May 23, 1920 (*AAS*, XII [1920], 217).

⁴¹ Pius XI, Apostolic Letter, *Officiorum omnium*, Aug. 1, 1922 (*AAS*, XIV [1922], 449).

the Church is called "the masterpiece of the hand and heart of God the Creator and Redeemer, . . . the irreplaceable executrix of His work for the salvation of the world."⁴² "Supernatural life and all that pertains to it . . . was by Jesus Christ the Redeemer and Lord of mankind entrusted to His Church and to her alone."⁴³ It is against this background that we see the aptness of the comparisons drawn between the real physical body of Our Lord and the Mystical Body of Christ in realizing the work of the redemption. Thus Leo XIII: "Just therefore as He took to Himself but one mortal body which He offered up for suffering and death that He might pay the price for the liberation of men, so too He has one Mystical Body in which, and by the efforts of which, men are made possessors of sanctity and eternal salvation."⁴⁴ Our present Holy Father in his encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ has a similar comparison: "Just as the Word of God willed to use our nature that He might redeem man by His sufferings and passion, so too in much the same way through the course of the centuries He uses His Church to perpetuate the work so begun."⁴⁵ The Church is, like the redemption of Christ, derived from the salvific will of God. In the proemium of the third session of the Vatican Council we read: "Just as God wishes that all men be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth; just as Christ came to save that which had perished and to gather together the scattered children of God: so too the Church, constituted by God the mother and teacher of the peoples of the world, knows that she is a debtor to all men."⁴⁶ Finally, Pius XII, in a vigorous phrase, the significance of which we shall attempt to see later on, calls the Church "the plenitude and complement of the Redeemer."⁴⁷

Another way in which is brought out the relation obtaining between the redemptive passion of Christ and the Church is found in the papal teaching on the finis or purpose of the Church. In the proemium to the

⁴² Pius XI, Address, May 12, 1936 (*AAS*, XXIX [1937], 141).

⁴³ Pius XI, Letter, April 26, 1931 (*AAS*, XXIII [1931], 148).

⁴⁴ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896 (*ASS*, XXVIII [1895-96], 713).

⁴⁵ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici corporis*, June 29, 1943 (*AAS*, XXXV [1943], 199).

⁴⁶ *ASS*, V (1870), 461-62.

⁴⁷ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici corporis*, June 29, 1943 (*AAS*, XXXV [1943], 230).

dogmatic constitution on the Church of Christ in the Vatican Council we read that Christ decreed to build His Church "to perpetuate the saving work of the redemption."⁴⁸ The Church is, then, the continuation not only of the Incarnation but also of the redemption, or, if one wishes, of the redemptive Incarnation. Apart from the quotations already seen we find in pontifical documents many parallels to this assertion of the Vatican Council. Pope Pius XII speaks "of the *finis* itself of the Church: to cooperate in the saving of souls, and to continue across time and space the redemptive work of Jesus Christ."⁴⁹ The Church continues the redemptive mission of Christ by applying the fruits of that redemption to all generations of mankind. In a letter to Protestants issued on the occasion of the Vatican Council, and inviting them to return to the true Church, Pius IX says:

And indeed no one can deny or doubt that Jesus Christ Himself, in order to apply the fruits of His redemption to all generations of men, built here on earth on Peter His one and only Church, i.e., the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church, and bestowed on it every power necessary to keep the deposit of faith intact and inviolable; to receive all men through baptism into His Mystical Body; and to preserve and perfect in them that new life of grace without which no one can ever merit and attain eternal life.⁵⁰

Leo XIII says that Christ constituted the Church "*vicaria muneris sui*";⁵¹ and the reason for this vicarious function of the Church is:

The only-begotten Son of God founded a society on earth called the Church, to which He entrusted the continuation through all ages of that exalted divine mission which He had received from the Father. . . . Therefore, just as Christ came on earth that men "might have life and have it more abundantly" (Jo. 10:10), in the same way the Church has as its end the eternal salvation of souls, and for that reason it stretches out by its very nature to embrace the whole human race.⁵²

It is from this moral identity of the redemptive mission of the

⁴⁸ *DB*, 1821.

⁴⁹ Pius XII, Allocution, Sept. 4, 1940 (*AAS*, XXXII [1940], 363).

⁵⁰ *Acta et decreta sacrorum conciliorum recentiorum*, Collectio Lacensis, VII, 9.

⁵¹ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Arcanum divinum*, Feb. 10, 1880 (*ASS*, XXVII [1894-95], 385-86).

⁵² Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Immortale Dei*, Nov. 1, 1885 (*ASS*, XVIII [1885-86], 164-65).

Church with that of Christ that Leo XIII argues to the unicity of the Church:

What did Christ our Lord will to achieve in founding the Church? It was this: to hand over to her for perpetuation that same office and that same mission which He had received from the Father. This is what He had resolved to do, and this is what He actually did. . . . Now it is the office of Christ to save that which had perished, i.e., not some peoples or cities but the whole human race. . . . And so the Church must propagate for all ages and unto all men the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ and all the benefits that derive therefrom. Wherefore, by the will of its founder, it must be one and one only.⁵³

Pius XI speaks of "the absolute universality and totality of the mandate of the Church," i.e., "the imperative divine mandate with which its divine founder invested it, to bring to souls, to all souls, all the treasures of truth and good, doctrinal and practical, which He Himself had brought to the world."⁵⁴ The Church is, therefore, the divinely appointed meeting place of all men with their Savior. "Wherefore Jesus Christ called all men, present and future, to follow Him, their leader and Savior, not merely as individuals, but also as joined together socially in fact and in resolve, so that from a multitude there might come into being a people socially organized."⁵⁵ This mandate or mission of the Church is frequently described as a sharing in, and a perpetuation of, the prophetic, regal, and sacerdotal offices of Christ: just as Christ, prophet, king, and priest, came to save mankind, so too the Church in her prophetic, regal, and sacerdotal offices continues that work. Thus Pius XII: "The Church has, therefore, in common with the Incarnate Word the aim, the obligation, and function of teaching all men the truth, of governing and directing men aright, of offering to God the pleasing and acceptable sacrifice."⁵⁶ It may be remarked here that it is the whole Church, in both its mystical and juridic aspects, which is destined by the will of its founder to continue His mission. As Pius XII says: ". . . the whole Church, both in its body and in its

⁵³ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896 (ASS, XXVIII [1895-96], 712).

⁵⁴ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Non abbiamo*, June 29, 1931 (AAS, XXIII [1931], 301-2).

⁵⁵ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896 (ASS, XXVIII [1895-96], 724).

⁵⁶ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mediator Dei*, Nov. 20, 1947 (AAS, XXXIX [1947], 527-28).

soul, insofar as the sharing of its goods and the benefit that derives therefrom is involved, is constituted exclusively for the salvation of souls, according to the saying of the Apostle, 'All things are yours.'⁵⁷ Indeed, as we shall see later, in some sense every member of the body of Christ and not merely the hierarchical Church must share in this function of the saving of souls.

III

If the Church is necessary for salvation because she is the continuation of the salvific work of Christ and because she shares in the saving power of Christ, then the Church must exercise some sort of salvific mediation toward those who are saved. In other words, the Church must be in some sense a principle of salvation. We do indeed find this idea present in papal documents. Thus in the encyclical letter, *Spiritus Paraclitus*, of Benedict XV Saint Jerome is depicted as asking heretics to return "to their sorrowing mother, the one and only cause of salvation."⁵⁸ Pius XI in his encyclical on St. Francis of Assisi says that men "are lifting their gaze to the one cause of salvation, the Catholic Church."⁵⁹ It is the same Pius who speaks of "the spiritual and supernatural efficiency"⁶⁰ of the Church; and in another place he brings out the power of the Church in direct relation with her mission or finis:

Christ our Lord instituted His Church as a perfect society, by its very nature external and perceptible to the senses, in order that it might bring to pass, under the leadership of its one head, the work of restoring humankind, through a living teaching office, and through the administration of the sacraments, the sources of heavenly grace. . . . This Church, so marvelously constituted . . . could not cease to exist or be destroyed, for it had the mission to lead all men, without distinction of time or place, to eternal salvation. . . . In the never-ending fulfilment of this function, will the Church lack any power or efficacy, when Christ Himself is always with her, according to His solemn promise: "Behold I am with you all days?"⁶¹

The Church, as a perfect society, has at its disposal all the means

⁵⁷ Pius XII, Allocation, Oct. 2, 1944 (*AAS*, XXXVI [1944], 288).

⁵⁸ Benedict XV, Encyclical Letter, *Spiritus Paraclitus*, Sept. 15, 1920 (*AAS*, XII [1920], 403).

⁵⁹ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Rite expiatis*, April 30, 1926 (*AAS*, XVIII [1926], 155).

⁶⁰ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Non abbiamo*, June 29, 1931 (*AAS*, XXIII [1931], 304).

⁶¹ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Mortalium animos*, Jan. 6, 1928 (*AAS*, XX [1928], 8-9).

necessary to achieve its end: “. . .the Church is a supernatural society, embracing the whole human race, and in itself a perfect society, since it possesses everything necessary to attain its end, the eternal salvation of men.”⁶² The ministerial or instrumental nature of the saving activity of the Church is implied in such assertions as that the Church is “the administrator of the salvation of mankind,”⁶³ or “the administrator of the truth and grace of the gospel.”⁶⁴ “When then the salvation of our race had been wrought by the mystery of the Cross, and when after the triumph of Christ the Church had been founded here on earth and duly constituted the administrator of that same work of salvation, then from that time a new order of God’s providence toward the people began to have force.”⁶⁵ The fact that Christ our Lord uses the Church as an instrument of mediating salvation to men is often expressed in the phrase “per ecclesiam” or some equivalent. Pius XI, speaking of the necessity and duty of forming a numerous clergy for the service of the Church, remarks: “For this is a matter which involves the dignity, the efficacy, even the life itself of the Church, and which in the highest degree touches the salvation of the human race: for the immense benefits wrought by Jesus Christ are communicated to men only through ‘the servants of Christ and the stewards of the mysteries of God.’ ”⁶⁶

The triple power of the Church, prophetic, regal, and sacerdotal, is often presented in such wise that its instrumental character is revealed.

Christ, who in His Church brought to fulfilment here on earth the Kingdom of God announced by Him and destined for all men of all time, did not entrust to the community of the faithful the mission of Teacher, Priest, and Pastor which He had received from the Father for the salvation of mankind, but He transmitted it and communicated it to a college of apostles or legates, chosen by Himself, in order that by their preaching, their sacerdotal ministry, and their social power, they should bring into the Church the multitude of the faithful, sanctifying them, enlightening them, and leading them to the full stature of the followers of Christ.⁶⁷

⁶² Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Divini illius*, Dec. 31, 1929 (AAS, XXII [1930], 53).

⁶³ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Octobri mense*, Sept. 22, 1891 (AAS, XXIV [1891-92], 195).

⁶⁴ Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter, *Praeclara gratulationis*, June 20, 1894 (AAS, XXVI [1893-94], 714).

⁶⁵ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Octobri mense*, Sept. 22, 1891 (AAS, XXIV [1891-92], 195).

⁶⁶ Pius XI, Apostolic Letter, *Officiorum omnium*, Aug. 1, 1922 (AAS, XIV [1922], 449).

⁶⁷ Pius XII, Allocution, Oct. 2, 1945 (AAS, XXXVII [1945], 259).

In treating of the priestly office Pius XII says that Christ "is the unique and supreme mediator between God and men; but in His goodness and mercy He wishes that these also [i.e., priests] participate in His priesthood and be ministers of His divine mediation."⁶⁸ Another way of depicting the causality which the Church exercises in the work of the redemption is to underscore the similitude between the instrumentality of the physical human body of Christ and the ministerial function of His Mystical Body. Let us choose a selection from the encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ:

Just as at the first moment of the Incarnation the Son of the eternal Father adorned with the fulness of the Holy Spirit the human nature which was substantially united to Him, that it might be a fitting instrument of the divinity in the sanguinary task of the redemption, so at the hour of His precious death He wished that His Church should be enriched with the abundant gifts of the Paraclete in order that, in dispensing the divine fruits of the redemption, it might be a powerful and never-failing instrument of the Incarnate Word.⁶⁹

Perhaps some of the most vigorous statements affirming a positive influence of the Church in the work of the salvation of mankind are to be found in certain early bulls of canonization. Thus in the bull of canonization of Saint Edmund of Canterbury we read of Holy Mother the Church that "none can enter into heavenly glory save through her, as the bearer of the keys of the kingdom of heaven."⁷⁰ A similar, though fuller, statement is contained in the bull of canonization of Saint Louis of France: "None enter into the glory of the heavenly fatherland save through the powerful ministry of her as the keybearer of heaven, after the most high gates thereof have been unlocked."⁷¹ The decree of canonization of Saint Elzear of Sabran contains an almost verbally identical affirmation, adding the qualification that it is due to divine disposition that the Church must intervene in some positive way in opening heaven to souls: "The Most High permits none to enter into the glory of the heavenly fatherland save through the powerful ministry of her as the bearer of the keys of heaven, the gates thereof having been un-

⁶⁸ Pius XII, Radio Address, Oct. 13, 1940 (*AAS*, XXXII [1940], 419).

⁶⁹ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici corporis*, July 20, 1943 (*AAS*, XXXV [1943], 206-7).

⁷⁰ Innocent IV, Bull, *Novum Matris*, Jan. 11, 1247 (Cocquelines, III, Pars prima, 307).

⁷¹ Boniface VIII, Bull, *Gloria, laus*, Aug. 11, 1297 (Cocquelines, III, Pars altera, 88).

locked."⁷² It might perhaps be objected that these latter statements mean only that no one is declared officially to have entered heaven without the definitive judgment of the Church, or that no one achieves high sanctity without the Church's maternal fostering. Yet even in the context it does seem that these affirmations can reasonably bear a wider meaning.

We may ask ourselves at this point why God chose instruments so weak and imperfect as mere men to mediate the fruits of Christ's redemption to mankind. The first answer must be that such is the will of Christ.

By the efficacious will of Christ priests must be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, since they continue His redemptive and sanctifying mission. "I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (Jo. 10:10), says the divine Master. In order to transmit to all men of all centuries that supernatural life of which He is the author and cause, Jesus Christ founded the Church and instituted the hierarchical apostolate, conferring on simple men—bishops and priests—the most exalted power of giving to souls the life of grace, for He wished to save men by means of men.⁷³

Christ's will to use men as instruments in order to save other men proceeds from His supreme liberality and goodness, and He thereby endows His Church with a dignity that is divine. "Nor should anyone object that Jesus Christ, the protector and conservator of the Church, by no means needs the help of men. It is not through any want of power but by reason of the greatness of His goodness that He wishes us to collaborate in obtaining the fruits of salvation which He has wrought."⁷⁴ Or, as Pius XII expresses it, Christ's will arises "not from any lack or weakness on His part, but rather because He Himself so ordered things to the greater honor of His unblemished Spouse."⁷⁵ Pope Leo XIII brings out that occasionalism is as untenable in the supernatural as in the natural order.

Although God can by his own power realize all that created natures can do, nevertheless in His benign providence He preferred to use men themselves in order

⁷² Gregory XI, Bull, *Rationi congruit*, Jan. 5, 1371 (*ibid.*, p. 333).

⁷³ Pius XI, Apostolic Letter, Jan. 18, 1939 (*AAS*, XXXIV [1942], 254).

⁷⁴ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Sapientiae christianae*, Jan. 10, 1890 (*ASS*, XXII [1889-90], 391).

⁷⁵ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici corporis*, July 20, 1943 (*AAS*, XXXV [1943], 213).

to help other men; and just as in the natural order He has been wont to confer on men due perfection only through the work and instrumentality of men themselves, so too in the supernatural order, when it is a question of sanctity and salvation.⁷⁶

In this connection we must recall, if we wish to penetrate deeper into the place of men in the economy of salvation, that Christ Himself is, as Leo XIII says, "the Head and exemplar"⁷⁷ of His Church. Pius XII in his encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ develops the idea of this exemplarity of Christ the Head in relation to His Body the Church: "Just as Christ wishes that each of His members singly resemble Himself, so too the whole Body";⁷⁸ and "Our Savior shares His most personal prerogatives with His Church in such a way that she mirrors forth in her whole life, both interior and exterior, a most perfect image of Christ."⁷⁹ Christ the Savior has then willed to be the exemplar or archetype of His Church so that she is not only a redeemed but also a redeeming community.

IV

We can turn now to consider the status of those who are not real members of the Catholic Church and who never will be, so that they will die actually outside her visible communion. To one who is not familiar with the whole teaching of the Church it might appear from the foregoing that all such are morally blamable for their failure to come into the Church and have therefore no chance of salvation. This is not the teaching of the Church. Not to mention the two well-known loci of Pius IX,⁸⁰ we call attention to the same Pontiff's encyclical letter, *Singulari quidem*, of March 17, 1856, in which he teaches that the Catholic Church is "the temple of God, outside of which everyone, no matter who he be—apart from the excuse of invincible ignorance—is a stranger to all hope of life and of salvation."⁸¹ Leo XIII in his letter, *Longinqua oceani*, to the bishops of the United States says that many non-Catholics of America differ from us "by reason of birth rather than

⁷⁶ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896 (ASS, XXVIII [1895-96], 708-9).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 710.

⁷⁸ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici corporis*, July 20, 1943 (AAS, XXXV [1943], 214).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁸⁰ DB, 1647 and 1677.

⁸¹ Pius IX, Encyclical Letter, *Singulari quidem*, March 17, 1856 (*Acta Pii noni* [Rome, 1870], II, Pars prior, 516-17).

by deliberate choice”;⁸² and in the encyclical letter, *Satis cognitum*, he adds that the innate beauty of the Church can have a great influence on those outside her fold, especially “those who are in error through no fault of their own.”⁸³ Pius X exclaims: “How many are there who have hated Christ, who turn from the Church and the Gospel, through ignorance rather than through evil will”;⁸⁴ and in a letter to the bishops of Canada he says that the non-Catholics of that country are, “in great part, of good conscience.”⁸⁵ Pius XI states that “the grace of God permits us not to despair of the salvation of any man as long as he lives on earth”;⁸⁶ and he also speaks of those dissidents “who are involved in mere ignorance of the truth.”⁸⁷ Finally Pius XII in a radio address of Sept. 5, 1948, to German Catholics, says that “God knows how many of them [i.e., the non-Catholics of Germany] stand afar without personal guilt.”⁸⁸ Yet the Popes are careful to bring out the state of spiritual indigency of non-Catholics relative to that plenitude of life which is found only within the confines of the Catholic Church. Pius XII speaks of “the spiritual poverty of those who, outside the true Church of Christ, had to live without the support of the sacraments, deprived of the divine strengthening of the most holy Eucharist”;⁸⁹ and in his encyclical on the Mystical Body he follows the doctrine of Pius IX, when he invites non-Catholics to “withdraw from that state in which they cannot be secure of their eternal salvation; for even though unsuspectingly they are related to the Mystical Body of the Savior in desire and resolution, they still remain deprived of so many precious gifts and helps from heaven which one can enjoy only in the Catholic Church.”⁹⁰ However, despite the relative inferiority of the state in which they are, non-Catholics can be saved, even though they are not actual members of the true Church of Christ.

⁸² Leo XIII, Letter, *Longinqua oceani*, Jan. 6, 1895 (*ASS*, XXVII [1894-95], 398).

⁸³ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896 (*ASS*, XXVIII [1895-96], 708).

⁸⁴ Pius X, Encyclical Letter, *E supremi*, Oct. 4, 1903 (*ASS*, XXXVI [1903-4], 136).

⁸⁵ Pius X, Letter, July 10, 1911 (*ASS*, III [1911], 564).

⁸⁶ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Ad salutem*, April 20, 1930 (*AAS*, XXII [1930], 225).

⁸⁷ Pius XI, Letter, March 15, 1923 (*AAS*, XV [1923], 148).

⁸⁸ Pius XII, Radio Address, Sept. 5, 1948 (*AAS*, XL [1948], 419).

⁸⁹ Pius XII, Allocution, April 14, 1947 (*AAS*, XXXIX [1947], 345).

⁹⁰ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici corporis*, July 20, 1943 (*AAS*, XXXV [1943], 243).

One knows the doctrine which distinguishes between real (or actual) membership in the Church and a desire of such real membership, a desire which is informed by perfect charity and which involves, at least implicitly, an intentional adherence to the Church, or, as Pius XII expresses it in the passage just cited, an "ordination" to the Church. Discussions of the necessity of the Church generally and rightly focus on the subject of membership in the Church, i.e., who are and who are not real members of the Church; and in the case of those who are inculpably outside the Church the question is asked: What level of membership, infra-actual and in some sense intentional, or, to use the Pope's phrase, what ordination toward the Church, suffices for salvation? The answer commonly given by theologians and borne out by the encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ is that all such men must be, by desire and intention, in the Church. It may be well to note that membership in desire, or intentional adherence to the Church, though it does not constitute real membership in the Church, is in itself something real. Assuming this common teaching, one may go a step further and raise the question whether the "in-ness" of a man with relation to the Church—either actual or merely the minimal necessary, i.e., intentional—is due in all cases to some positive intervention of the Church. There comes to mind a statement of the first *schema de ecclesia* of the Acts of the Vatican Council, that the Church is a necessary means for obtaining salvation "because in the providentially instituted economy of salvation the Holy Spirit is not imparted, and truth and life are not shared in, except in the Church and through the Church whose Head is Christ."⁹¹ If it could reasonably be shown that the Church is not only the term (*finaliter*) but also the source (*fontaliter*) of the grace of salvation, whenever in the present economy that grace comes into being outside the visible, social limits of the Church; in other words, if it could be shown that in the cases just envisaged the present economy of salvation is not only Christian but also Catholic and ecclesial (and that, too, under the twofold aspect just noted of *finis* and *origin*), then the necessity of the Church is perhaps put in a stronger light.

There are, indeed, modern theologians who hold that the necessity of the Church for salvation means that all who are saved, are saved not only in the Church, but also, in some mysterious way, through the

⁹¹ *Acta et decreta sacrorum conciliorum recentiorum*, Collectio Lacensis, VII, 569.

agency or activity of the Church. One might, on the contrary, be disposed to say that in the above-mentioned cases the relation of finality toward the Church that is at least implicit in the desire of membership, is sufficient, and that, as a consequence, the messianic offices of Christ, insofar as they are continued in the Church, are but the ordinary means of salvation. One might appeal to Leo XIII's dictum that "when it is a question of the eternal salvation of the nations, the counsels of the divine mind are far removed from the understanding of men."⁹² And the same Pontiff calls the sacraments of the Church "the ordinary and chief instruments of sharing in grace,"⁹³ and he adds that the Church "alone supplies those things that are the instruments of salvation according to the ordinary counsel of providence."⁹⁴ Benedict XV refers to the work of preachers as "that which, according to the ordinary course of divine providence, is indispensably connected with the salvation of mankind."⁹⁵

When, however, one reflects on the main lines of pontifical teaching outlined in the first part of this paper—that there is an indissoluble union between Christ and His Church so that, to paraphrase the words of Leo XIII, mankind is given the critical option between the whole Christ and nothing; that the Church is the heir of the plenary treasury of the merits of Christ's saving passion, a treasury to be disbursed chiefly through the sacrifice of the Mass and the sacraments;⁹⁶ that the Church has the absolutely universal and total mandate to save all men, and the means to realize that mandate; that the Church, is, therefore, and knows herself to be, a debtor to all men—, then one is strongly drawn to consider the view that the Church is in some positive way the mediator of salvation even for those who will never actually enter her visible communion, i.e., that the *votum* of membership, informed as it must be by perfect charity, not only has the Church as the term of its intentional ordination, but also in some way derives from the Church as from its source.

⁹² Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter, *Praeclara gratulationis*, June 20, 1894 (*ASS*, XXVI [1893-94], 716).

⁹³ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896 (*ASS*, XXVIII [1895-96], 709).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 723. ⁹⁵ Benedict XV, Address, Feb. 16, 1920 (*AAS*, XII [1920], 63).

⁹⁶ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mediator Dei*, Nov. 20, 1947 (*AAS*, XXXIX [1947], 551).

It may indeed seem that the millions of men who live and die without visible and, so to speak, three-dimensional adhesion to the Church of Christ, are and always remain untouched by the mediation of the Church in her prophetic, regal, and sacerdotal offices. Yet do they totally escape the influence of the sacerdotal office of the Church, that sacerdotal office and power which Christ entrusted to His Church, so that, as "a sharer in His unique and eternal priesthood," she should "perpetuate to the end of time the work of redemption of mankind"?⁹⁷ Our Mother the Church can by her prayer and sacrifice expiate and intercede for those of her sons whose ears are closed to her prophetic voice and whose paths are not guided by her regal bidding. The prayer and sacrifice of Christ her Spouse and Head, in which are caught up her own prayers and sacrifices, are fruitful according to the disposition of divine providence in an area that lies far outside the visible limits of her social being and efficacy.

We find in the writings of the Popes material that indicates the way in which one may seek light in this matter. First of all, the sacrifice of the Mass, which is the mystical renewal "in medio ecclesiae" of the sacrifice of the Cross, is, like the sacrifice of the Cross, offered "pro nostra et totius mundi salute." The Mass is offered, then, not only for the members of the household of the faith, but also for all the scattered sons of Adam without exception, because all men are called to be members of the Mystical Body of Christ, and because Christ's sacrificial love extends to all men in the person of His beloved, the Church. Pius XI, in his encyclical on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, after recalling that the faithful must fill up those things that are lacking of the sufferings of Christ for His Body which is the Church, and that not merely the ministers of the altar but also all the faithful must join their own praises and satisfactions to those of their Head in the most holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, adds: "The whole Christian people, rightly called by the prince of the apostles 'a chosen people, a royal priesthood,' must make offerings for sins, not only their own but those of the whole human race."⁹⁸ If, then, the Mass is offered for the salvation of all men, it must in some sense draw them to the Church, which is the salvation of God.

⁹⁷ Pius XII, Apostolic Exhortation, *Menti nostrae*, Sept. 23, 1950 (AAS, XLII [1950], 659).

⁹⁸ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Miserentissimus redemptor*, May 8, 1928 (AAS, XX [1928], 171). Cf. also *Menti nostrae* (AAS, XLII [1950], 666 and 669).

The Popes, especially in their letters on the occasion of Eucharistic Congresses, bring out the efficacy of the Eucharist in attracting men to the unity of the Mystical Body of Christ. "Is not [this sacrament and sacrifice], as it were, the center of the Church or the Kingdom of Christ, powerfully drawing all the faithful to itself, and graciously attracting the unbeliever also, so that there be one fold under one shepherd?"⁹⁹ "Indeed since He is hidden in the Eucharist for the very purpose of abiding with us and of pouring forth on us in perpetuity the riches of His merciful love, why should it not come to pass, by reason of the gracious benefit of His presence, that. . . well-minded dissidents be drawn to the true religion of Christ?"¹⁰⁰ Nor need one wonder that the Eucharist is the power of God to draw men, all men, toward the Mystical Body of Christ, for, as Leo XIII says, "the expiatory and impetratory virtue" of Christ's death on the Cross abide "integrally"¹⁰¹ in the Eucharist; and Pius XII observes that the Mass is "as it were, the instrument of choice whereby the merits stemming from the Cross of the divine Redeemer are distributed to the faithful."¹⁰² There seems to be no reason why one cannot extend the force of this statement of Pius XII not merely to the faithful but to all who are called to be faithful.

But the Church herself and the members of the Church must unite themselves to the sacrifice of Christ in the very same spirit in which Christ "sanctified Himself" as a sacrificial victim for all those who were to believe in Him; "wherefore the immolation of the ministers [of the altar] and of the other faithful must be conjoined with the most august sacrifice of the Eucharist, so that they show themselves 'living, holy victims, pleasing to God.'"¹⁰³ It is in this way that "the expiatory passion of Christ is renewed and in a certain sense prolonged and filled out in His Mystical Body which is the Church";¹⁰⁴ and that, too, not only in the Church but also for Christ's Body which is the Church.

⁹⁹ Pius XI, Letter, Jan. 1, 1937 (*AAS*, XXIX [1937], 54).

¹⁰⁰ Pius XI, Letter, July 2, 1924 (*AAS*, XVI [1924], 328).

¹⁰¹ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Mirae caritatis*, May 28, 1902 (*ASS*, XXXIV [1901-2], 652-53).

¹⁰² Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mediator Dei*, Nov. 20, 1947 (*AAS*, XXXIX [1947], 551).

¹⁰³ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Miserentissimus redemptor*, May 8, 1928 (*AAS*, XX [1928], 171). Cf. also *Mediator Dei* (*AAS*, XXXIX [1947]), 559.

¹⁰⁴ Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Miserentissimus redemptor*, May 8, 1928 (*AAS*, XX [1928], 174).

It is of course true that the Church's prayers and afflictions have no virtue save through the power of the Cross of Christ and through the merciful disposition of divine providence which has so ordered the interplay of the spiritual energies of the redeemed world of men. Leo XIII in one of his Marian encyclicals says of Christ's prayer in the Garden of Olives: ". . . He prayed for us and for His Church, whose future prayers and tears He at that very moment received and rendered a fecund source of grace."¹⁰⁶ The prayers and sacrifices of the Church, i.e., the passion of Christ renewed in the Church, even though temporarily long removed from the objective redemption of Christ, have been, so to speak, inserted in the economy of His saving passion and made fruitful of grace. And in the document just cited Pope Leo recurs to the classical explanation of how the prayer and sacrifices of the Church can be integrated in the economy of the redemptive work of Christ:

Since the Church was born for this [i.e., the salvation of souls], she ought to be able by her prayer to do much to bring happily to pass the designs of a merciful providence toward mankind; and thus men praying with the Church and through the Church, finally obtain through their intercession those things which "Almighty God had ordained from all eternity to grant" (*Sum. theol.*, II-II, q. 83, a. 2, from St. Gregory the Great).¹⁰⁶

The prayer and sacrifices of the Church, rendered fruitful by the objective redemption of Christ, can, then, intervene in the temporal order according to the eternal providence of God as a principle of those things which God had decreed from eternity.

The present Holy Father has more than once recalled different aspects of this general doctrine. In a recent radio address he reminds the sick and the suffering that Jesus from His Cross invites them "to cooperate with Him in the work of the redemption. As His heavenly Father had sent Him, so He sends you; and the mission which He entrusts to you, We, His Vicar here below, confirm and bless."¹⁰⁷ So, too, in his apostolic constitution, *Sponsa Christi*, Pius XII has reaffirmed the apostolic finality of the contemplative life, reminding all cloistered nuns that ". . . their vocation is fully and completely apostolic, to be

¹⁰⁶ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Octobri mense*, Sept. 22, 1891 (*A.S.S.*, XXIV [1891-92], 195).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

¹⁰⁷ Pius XII, Radio Address, Nov. 21, 1949 (*A.A.S.*, XLI [1949], 612-13).

hedged in by no limits of place or time or businesses, but always and everywhere stretching out to whatever concerns in any way either the honor of their Spouse or the salvation of souls."¹⁰⁸ In the encyclical on the Mystical Body these ideas come into strong focus. The Pope emphasizes that the mission of the Holy Spirit to the Church assimilates the Church, both in its entirety and in its single members, to Christ the Redeemer: "Christ wishes the whole Body of the Church, as well as its single members, assimilated to Himself."¹⁰⁹ One can, then, readily see in what sense the Pope draws out the implications of this assimilation of the Church and of the members of the Church to Christ, their Head and exemplar. "We must all collaborate with Christ in this work of salvation, 'from one and through one saved and saving.'"¹¹⁰ And the Church in its totality is constituted "the fulness and complement of the Redeemer; and Christ is in all respects, so to speak, brought to completion in His Church."¹¹¹ Christ, the mystical Head, and the Church "constitute the one new man in whom heaven and earth are joined together in perpetuating the saving work of the Cross: we mean Christ, Head and Body, the whole Christ."¹¹²

But how can the whole Body of Christ and its single members work to perpetuate the redemption by disbursing the fruits of that redemption to those innumerable sons of Adam who, lying far from the Church, are thus removed from the ambit of her visible power, whether the reason for that estrangement be purely geographical or rather deliberate choice made in all good will? It would seem that we can appeal for enlightenment to the following passage of *Mystici corporis*:

Moreover, our Savior, in so far as He Himself exercises in an unseen way His regal providence over His Church, wishes to be helped by the members of His Mystical Body in carrying out the work of the Redemption. . . . Dying on the Cross He left to His Church the immense treasury of the redemption; toward this she contributed nothing. But when these graces are to be distributed, not only does He share this work of sanctification with His Spouse, but He wishes that it be due

¹⁰⁸ Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution, *Sponsa Christi*, Jan. 10, 1951 (AAS, XLIII [1951], 14).

¹⁰⁹ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici corporis*, July 20, 1943 (AAS, XXXV [1943], 214).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 231.

in a way to her activity. A truly awe-inspiring mystery this, and one unceasingly to be pondered: that the salvation of many depends on the prayers and voluntary penances which the members of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ offer for this intention.¹¹³

The love of Christ for His Church must be the exemplar of our love for the Church; and "the love of the divine Spouse is so ample that it excludes none but embraces the whole human race in His beloved."¹¹⁴ Our love for the Spouse of Christ, patterned on the love of Christ Himself, must show itself in prayer and penance. "Unfortunately many are still walking far from the Catholic truth, not willing to yield to the impulses of divine grace; and the reason is, that not only they but the faithful also fail to intensify their prayers to God for this intention."¹¹⁵ And although the Redeemer has by His saving passion merited for His Church an infinite treasury of graces, ". . . still, in accordance with the counsels of the providence of God, these graces are bestowed on us in part only; and their greater or less amplitude depends also, and not a little, on our good works which draw down on the souls of men that shower of heavenly gifts freely granted by God."¹¹⁶

The foregoing pontifical documents, in so far as they consider the positive mediation of the Church in the order of salvation, do not, it is true, consider the question of the salvation of those who die without being visibly incorporated into the Church of Christ; yet it does seem a legitimate extension of the logic of their assertions to suppose that the sacrifice of the Mass, in which are caught up the prayer and sacrifices of the Church, can be and is, at least in many such cases, a source in God's providence of the grace of salvation. Would one be justified in going further and claiming for the Church some sort of universal mediation of the grace of salvation toward this segment of mankind, so that all such who are saved, are saved not only in the Church but also through the activity of the Church, and more particularly through the intercessory power of the Church? Could one say that, just as the lines of grace in the present economy all point Churchward as to their con-natural term (even though in individual cases this grace never achieves visibly its true climate and full fruition within the social Body of Christ), so too the lines of grace all flow forth from the Church as from

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 213. Cf. also *Mediator Dei* (AAS, XXXIX [1947], 551).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 239-40.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

an ever-living source? Could one perhaps suggest that, in the cases we have been envisaging, the Eucharist exercises from the midst of the Church a traction, drawing all such men to the unity of the Mystical Body, a traction to which corresponds on their part a desire or *votum* of the *res* of the Eucharist? Carlo Passaglia says that, correlative to that ordination of God's saving providence by which all men are called to the Church, there is in the Church a force of affinity and assimilation which draws all men to itself. Then he adds: "For to her who is one person with the Head can be rightly applied the words which Christ spoke of Himself: 'And I, when I shall be lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men to myself.'"¹¹⁷ There are, as has been said before, modern theologians who postulate for the Church some sort of universal mediation of the grace of salvation, with the result that the saving activity of the Church can and does reach even those who will never visibly be her members. It would doubtless be necessary to consider with greater precision the nature and ambit of this activity of the Church; and the undeniable, though not decisive, difficulties against this view are still to be reckoned with. At any rate the foregoing conspectus of pontifical teaching affords a solid frame of reference in which to consider the question.

¹¹⁷ Carolus Passaglia, S.J., *De ecclesia Christi* (Ratisbon, 1856), II, Book III, 397.