

# THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES THE CHURCH ONE BY MAKING HER CATHOLIC, APOSTOLIC, AND HOLY ACCORDING TO YVES CONGAR'S LATEST VISION

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**Abstract:** Yves Congar's scholars agree that there is "no "Copernican turn" in his ecclesiological itinerary.<sup>1</sup> While this is true, nonetheless, there is also significant evolution in his ecclesiology. One of the reasons of this progress is due to Congar's continuously evolving understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Therefore, this article shows Congar's later pneumatological ecclesiology with regard to the four notes of the Church which are contained in each other. Thus, Congar moved from a mainly Christological position to a more pneumatological one, in three directions. First, if catholicity was comprehended as the capacity of the Church to assimilate in its unity all the values of the world (in the first Christological model), now the Holy Spirit is the principle that stimulates diversity and guarantees the Church's unity (in the second model). For Congar, the Spirit stimulates and resolves the fruitful tension between the universal and particular (churches). Ecclesial unity and pluralism are both necessary—pluralism in unity and unity without uniformity.

Second, for Congar, apostolicity means the continuity between the Alpha and the Omega of the Church, and the Holy Spirit is the principle of this substantial identity throughout history. Therefore, the Holy Spirit keeps the Church one by making her apostolic. In turn, apostolicity means that the unity of the Church is original and eschatological.

Third, the Holy Spirit purifies and sanctifies the Church by giving her new life. Doing so, the Spirit makes the Church the bride of Christ, his mystical body. It can be concluded that, sanctifying the Church, the Holy Spirit makes her one because he makes her "one flesh" with her bridegroom, Christ.

**Key words:** Yves, Congar, ecclesiology, pneumatology, Holy Spirit, marks of the Church, unity, catholicity, apostolicity, holiness, communion, Bride of Christ, temple of God, indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

## Introduction

Looking at the whole sweep of Congar's works, the relation between ecclesiology and pneumatology in them can be described for the sake of

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph FAMERÉE, *L'ecclésiologie d' Yves Congar avant Vatican II: Histoire et Église*, University Press, Leuven 1992, 439.

synthesis, with all its limitations, in the following way. From an ecclesiological point of view, Congar used basically two models of the Church: society-body of Christ (or structure and life) and communion, bride, temple. The early model was mainly Christological, while the role of the Holy Spirit was to animate the body of Christ (the institution) founded by Christ. The later model was pneumatological and trinitarian, the role of the Spirit being described as the co-instituting principle of the Church while the content of his mission was Christological. The turning point is generally considered to be the year 1959, when Pope John XXIII announced the convocation of an ecumenical council. However, the transition was not abrupt and it was marked by various factors. From a pneumatological point of view, that transition coincides with Congar's explicit affirmation of the autonomy of the Spirit in regard to the Church<sup>2</sup> in "The Holy Spirit and the Apostolic College" in 1953<sup>3</sup>.

Consideration of the Church as the work of the glorified Christ and of his Spirit with regard to the unity of the Church, for example, offers Congar the possibility of further developments. The Church is not only one, but also holy, catholic, and apostolic because she is the fruit of the Lord and of the Spirit. This implies that "the marks of the Church are not only inseparable from each other, they are also contained within each other"<sup>4</sup>. This article will attempt to show how the Holy Spirit makes the Church one by making her catholic, apostolic, and holy—following the order that Congar pursues later in his career, more precisely in *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, his most mature pneumatological work<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Lucian PĂULEȚ, *The Holy Spirit as the Principle of Ecclesial Unity, Catholicity, Apostolicity and Holiness in the Thought of Yves Congar*, Sapientia, Iași 2019, 273.

<sup>3</sup> Yves CONGAR, "The Holy Spirit and the Apostolic College, Promoters of the Work of Christ," in *The Mystery of the Church*, 2Helicon Press, Baltimore 1965<sup>2</sup>, 105-145. The chapter was originally published as "Le Saint-Esprit et le corps apostolique, réalisateurs de l'oeuvre du Christ" in the second edition of *Esquisses du Mystère de l'Église*, Cerf, Paris 1953<sup>2</sup>, and it replaced two articles which were dedicated to J. A. Möhler in the first edition.

<sup>4</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith, 3 vols., Crossroad Publishing, New York 1997, 47, originally published as *Je crois en l'Esprit Saint*, 3 vols., Cerf, Paris 1979-1980. From now on quoted as *I Believe*.

<sup>5</sup> In his ecclesiological work *L'Église: Une, Sainte, Catholique et Apostolique*, in *Mysterium Salutis: Dogmatique de l'Histoire du Salut*, no. 15, Cerf, Paris 1970 — from now on quoted as *L'Église: Une*, the order of the notes of the Church follows the order in the creeds. In his pneumatological work *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, the order of notes of the Church is as following: unity, catholicity, apostolicity, and holiness. Congar chooses this order to show better the relations between them. When unity extends to many people it becomes catholicity; when unity extends from the beginnings of the Church to the end is apostolic. Finally, the unity of the Church in the body of Christ is holiness.

## 1. The Holy Spirit Makes the Church One by Making Her Catholic

As Congar understands it, the catholicity of the Church is grounded in Christ's mystery made present by the work of the Holy Spirit. This mystery contains two complementary elements. The Word assumed a particular human nature, that of Jesus Christ; at the same time he united himself with the whole human race. Because of the former, Christ's mission was circumscribed to a particular space, time and culture; because of the latter, the value of his mission extends to all times, spaces and cultures. Congar, therefore, considers it "possible to speak in Christ's case of a concrete universal element"<sup>6</sup>.

In a manner similar to Christ, "the Church was born universal by being born manifold and particular."<sup>7</sup> It will be shown that this is possible only due to the work of the Holy Spirit. The same Gospel and faith are implanted in various and diverse cultural soils and human spaces. Congar applies this dialectic between unity in faith and diversity of forms to the relation between the local, or particular churches, and the universal Church. In each local church, the universal Church is truly present and operative. Each local church is the Church because the whole is present in each part; each local church brings its own gifts and talents to the universal communion<sup>8</sup>.

Theologically, for Congar catholicity is that capacity of the Church to harmonize multiplicity with unity. This multiplicity is based on "the undefined variety of human nature, the undefined potentialities of the first Adam"<sup>9</sup>. The catholicity of the Church is the universality of everything that is human as being able to form a whole by participating in the transcendental unity of Christ. For Congar, catholicity is not merely a geographical extension of the Church but an essential ecclesial quality based on the universality of truth, redemption, and divine gifts.

In Congar's early work, *Chrétiens désunis*, Catholicity is the capacity of the Church to apply her principles of unity to human diversity in order "to assimilate, fulfill and raise to God in oneness with him all men and every man and every human value."<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that for Congar

<sup>6</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 24.

<sup>7</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 26.

<sup>8</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 26: "This rediscovery and reassessment of local or particular Churches is the work and fruit of the Second Vatican Council and, as Karl Rahner called it, its most novel contribution."

<sup>9</sup> Yves CONGAR, "Catholicité," in the encyclopedia *Catholicisme, hier, aujourd'hui, demain*, II, Letouzey, Paris 1949, col. 722-725. The note was republished in *Sainte Église*, 155-161, at 158: "la variété indéfinie de la nature humaine, les potentialités indéfinies du Premier Adam".

<sup>10</sup> Yves CONGAR, *Chrétiens désunis: Principes d'un "oecuménisme" catholique*, Cerf, Paris 1937, 59-113. *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*. Translated by M. A. Bousfield, The Centenary Press, London 1939, 94-95.

catholicity is not merely quantitative (universal in a geographical and temporal sense, as it has often been presented in apologetics), but rather it is especially qualitative.<sup>11</sup> This qualitative catholicity consists in the universality of truth, redemption, and the divine gifts, which are based on the oneness of the Church as an extension of the unity of God. “Thus understood the Catholicity of the Church is essentially Trinitarian and Christological”<sup>12</sup>. Catholicity is an expression of the relation which exists between the unity of God and the multiplicity of the human race. The Church has this capacity to incorporate all human beings in Christ, so that they participate in his life and receive what has already been given to him. Like the oneness of the Church, catholicity is a reality that is already given in Christ yet is to be accomplished by us<sup>13</sup>.

The principle of catholicity requires the Church to accommodate the diversity of human forms. Congar holds that since the Church is *ex hominibus* she “must follow up the human material that is dispersed, in order to reassume it into the unity” of God.<sup>14</sup> In doing so, the Church respects the diversity of nations, languages, temperaments, customs, and religious experiences<sup>15</sup>. To absorb the nations according to the lowest common denominator would mean an impoverishment of the incarnation<sup>16</sup>. A great diversity of religious experience and theological traditions is not only legitimate but also necessary in the Church<sup>17</sup>. This diversity, however, is subordinated to a higher unity, which in the end is supreme for it is ordered to the interests of the whole<sup>18</sup>.

Nonetheless, for the purpose of this article it is important to show that while in the early works catholicity was understood by Congar as an extension of the unity of the Church, in the later works the emphasis lies in the other direction, namely, from diversity to unity.

The Holy Spirit is the principle that stimulates diversity and guarantees the Church’s unity. He bestows on each particular church its own gifts which are for the sake of the whole Church. The Holy Spirit imparts charisms to each person “for the common good” to build up the community

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<sup>11</sup> Yves CONGAR, *Divided Christendom*, 93.

<sup>12</sup> Yves CONGAR, *Divided Christendom*, 95.

<sup>13</sup> Yves CONGAR, *Divided Christendom*, 96-97.

<sup>14</sup> Yves CONGAR, *Divided Christendom*, 102.

<sup>15</sup> Yves CONGAR, *Divided Christendom*, 108.

<sup>16</sup> Yves CONGAR, *Divided Christendom*, 109.

<sup>17</sup> Yves CONGAR, *Divided Christendom*, 110. The English version of *Chrétien désunis* translated “nécessaire” (*Chrétien désunis*, 140) with “desirable” (*Divided Christendom*, 110). Congar’s thought is that the diversity in the Church is necessary, not only desirable.

<sup>18</sup> Yves CONGAR, *Divided Christendom*, 111-112.

of the Church<sup>19</sup>. For Congar, the Spirit stimulates and resolves the fruitful tension between the particular and universal. The bonds of faith and charity, as supernatural, transcend human cultural diversity. In this way, the diversity of local churches adds to the rich unity of the universal Church in so far as inculturated forms are of the same faith and are offered and accepted by charity. Ecclesial unity and pluralism are both necessary—pluralism in unity and unity without uniformity<sup>20</sup>. The Holy Spirit makes the Church one in a profound and complex manner by making her catholic.

## **2. The Holy Spirit Makes the Church One by Making Her Apostolic**

In Congar's thought, apostolicity is related to the apostles, to eschatology, and to the sending of the Church. This logical and systematic order follows Congar's thought faithfully. His presentation, however, is less orderly partially due to the examples which he introduces.

Congar considers apostolicity as the continuity of the Church throughout history from the beginning to the eschaton. The Church maintains a historical link with her founder, Christ, due to the witness given by the apostles. Congar points out that the New Testament uses the word "martyr" for the eyewitnesses of Christ's death and resurrection (Lk 24:48; Acts 1:21-22). "Martyr" is not mainly one who dies for a cause, as modern people tend to think, but is one who is an eyewitness to something that has happened and who can testify authentically about it<sup>21</sup>. The apostles are the ones who bear witness to Christ's death and resurrection.

After his departure, Christ entrusts the mission of carrying out his work to his qualified witnesses, the apostles (Jn 13:20) and the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26). Congar notes that these two missions bear witness together to the work of Christ that took place in the past but is also to be continued in the future (Jn 15: 26-27; Lk 24: 48-49; Acts 1: 8; 5:32)<sup>22</sup>. Furthermore, in Acts and the Pauline epistles, the Church is built up by the mission of apostles supported by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given to Saul and Barnabas before they are sent on their mission (Acts 13: 3-4). He makes their preaching fruitful (Acts 6: 7; 4: 33; 9: 31) and inspires them where to direct their ministry (Acts 16:6-7). Briefly, for Congar "the

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<sup>19</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 26.

<sup>20</sup> Congar also holds that the Church is catholic in history, that is, the Church is one from the beginning (the apostles) to the end of history. Therefore, this theme fits better in the next section, "The Holy Spirit makes the Church one by making her apostolic" throughout history.

<sup>21</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 41-42.

<sup>22</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 42.

Church was born and increased because of the preaching and the help given by the Spirit"<sup>23</sup>. The apostles are the qualified witnesses of Christ and their apostolate is made fruitful by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit operates both in the witnesses and in the recipients who accept that witness.

The Church's apostolicity is not only her historical link with Christ. It is also a sign of the authenticity of its teaching. "The Spirit is also given to the Church as its transcendent principle of faithfulness," according to Congar<sup>24</sup>. For the Fathers from the second and third centuries, the "tradition" or communication of the Spirit ensured the unity in faith of the churches scattered throughout the world. This transmission of the Holy Spirit, which guarantees the Church's faithfulness, is connected to the bishops. Through their apostolic succession and their reception of the Holy Spirit, bishops are given a "sure charism of truth"<sup>25</sup>. Congar expresses the Christian belief that the Church, through the ministry of the bishops being helped by the Holy Spirit, is unfailingly faithful to the faith received from the apostles<sup>26</sup>. Congar does not reduce "apostolic succession" to the historical succession of the bishops, but he places the latter within the communion of the whole Church<sup>27</sup>. The whole Church is apostolic because she participates in the faith and the ministry of the apostles due to the Holy Spirit. In this universal apostolicity of the Church, however, the bishops have a unique role of keeping authentically and developing organically the apostolic faith.

The reason why Congar situates the "hierarchical" function of the bishops within the communion of the Church is to avoid a narrow interpretation of "apostolic succession," where the focus was mainly on the imposition of hands, the validity of the consecratory rite and an uninterrupted historical continuity in an apostolic seat<sup>28</sup>. Placing the hierarchical function within the community of the Church and emphasizing the importance of the apostolicity of faith, Congar offers the opportunity for dialogue with Protestant and Orthodox Christians. The presence of the Spirit is not automatic or limited to the laying of hands and a historic continuity from one bishop to his successor. The Spirit's work is larger: he assists any activity of the bishops when they exercise their function of teaching, of pastoral

<sup>23</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 43.

<sup>24</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 43.

<sup>25</sup> IRENAEUS, *Adversus Haereses*, IV, 26, 2. *Sources Chrétiennes* (Paris: Cerf, 1952), no. 34.

<sup>26</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 44.

<sup>27</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 45.

<sup>28</sup> See for instance, Yves CONGAR, "My Path-Findings in the Theology of Laity and Ministries" *The Jurist* 32 (1972) 169-88, at, 180, originally published as "Mon cheminement dans la théologie du laïc et des ministères," in *Ministères et communion ecclésiale*, Cerf, Paris 1971, and *L'Église: une*, 205.

government, and of sanctification. According to Congar, both the act of the ordained minister and the intervention of the Spirit are necessary and complement one another. “Apostolic succession” is necessary but it always calls for an epiclesis<sup>29</sup>.

In the conclusion of this section, Congar’s words are relevant: “The apostolicity of the Church is a communion with the apostles, and with and through them a communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ (1 Jn 1:3,7). The Holy Spirit is the principle of that communion (2 Cor 13:13)”<sup>30</sup>. Making the Church apostolic, the Holy Spirit communicates the unity of faith and communion, and, thus, makes the Church one.

The Church’s apostolicity is, for Congar, a continuity and a substantial unity between the beginning and the end of the history of salvation<sup>31</sup>. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega of creation and salvation<sup>32</sup> and it follows, therefore, that God’s intention and gifts are identical throughout history and through all the developments which have taken place and will still take place. The ministry of the Twelve was given to them at the beginning of the new people of God (Mk 3:14)—a moment which Congar calls “the Alpha” of the apostolic ministry. They will judge whether what is reached at the Omega (namely at the full eschatological realization of the Church) is in conformity with what was given at the Alpha when they were established as witnesses (Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30)<sup>33</sup>; in other words, whether what they passed on to the Church was kept and developed without alteration by the successive generations of Christians.

The apostles’ witness refers to the death and resurrection of Christ, which took place in the past but is always oriented forwards. Their testimony is not merely a repetition but also an affirmation of the present effectiveness of the realities to which they were eyewitnesses<sup>34</sup>. Congar uses von Balthasar’s expression, “the Unknown One beyond the Word,” to explain that the Spirit acts towards the eschatological future<sup>35</sup>. This idea has to be

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<sup>29</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 46.

<sup>30</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 45.

<sup>31</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 39.

<sup>32</sup> For Congar, especially in his early writings, the Alpha moment of Christ is the incarnation, and not the beginning of creation (like in Rev 22:13, for instance). Congar considers the incarnation the moment when Christ founded the structure of the Church (hence, the beginning or the “Alpha”). In “The Holy Spirit and the Apostolic College,” the Alpha moment is the resurrection, after which the Spirit and the apostles work together. Congar maintained this terminology throughout his career, referring to the event of Christ’s coming in history.

<sup>33</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 40.

<sup>34</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 41-42.

<sup>35</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 33; Hans Urs VON BALTHASAR, “Der Unbekannte jenseits des Wortes,” in *Interpretation der Welt. Festschrift für Romano Guardini*, ed. Helmut Kuhn,

understood in light the statement that the Spirit has his own freedom and acts in a new way in history but always in accordance with the work of Christ.

The Holy Spirit makes the Easter event of Christ present with the eschatological destiny of creation in mind. [...] There must be a link between what has already been given and the unexpected, between what has been acquired once and for all time and what is always new. This link is forged by the Holy Spirit<sup>36</sup>.

Since, for Congar, apostolicity means the continuity between the Alpha and the Omega and since the Holy Spirit is the principle of this substantial identity throughout history, it can be concluded that the Holy Spirit keeps the Church one by making her apostolic. In turn, apostolicity means that the unity of the Church is original and eschatological.

The Church is also apostolic because she is sent forth. There is a profound connection between apostolicity and the apostolate or evangelization. The apostles are “sent” to be witnesses of Christ from Jerusalem to the earth’s remotest end (Acts 1:8), to evangelize and also to sanctify. “The apostolate fills the ‘in-between [time]’ between the two comings of Christ in order to make everything grow toward fullness while preserving the form of Alpha”<sup>37</sup>. The Church grows by founding new local churches which will be churches only by receiving the faith and doctrine of the apostolic Church. Furthermore, Congar says that the apostolicity of these churches is realized through the hierarchy that has apostolic succession<sup>38</sup>. The Church is apostolic by her nature because she is sent on mission.

The mission of the Church is grounded on the two missions of the Word and of the Spirit. Both Christ and the Spirit are sent into the world. Their missions are those movements by which the eternal and divine processions are freely extended in the history of the world. The Holy Spirit, as the person who proceeds from the love of the Father and of the Son, dwells in Christ and in the Church. Congar continues: “The Spirit is therefore the ultimate principle, that is, the supreme and fulfilling principle of the identity of the supernatural and saving work of God”<sup>39</sup>. The Holy Spirit makes the Church apostolic so that it is enabled to participate in the mission of Christ. If to be missionary means participation in the mission of Christ

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Echter, Würzburg 1966, 638-645, reprinted in *Spiritus Creator. Skizzen zur Theologie*, III, Johannes, Einsiedeln 1967; English trans: *Explorations in Theology: Spirit Creator*, III, trans. Brian McNeil, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1993.

<sup>36</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 34.

<sup>37</sup> Yves CONGAR, *L’Église: une*, 223: “L’apostolate remplit l’entre-deux des deux venus du Christ pour, en gardant la forme de l’Alpha, faire tout croître vers la plénitude.”

<sup>38</sup> Yves CONGAR, *L’Église: une*, 224.

<sup>39</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 41.



with the goal of leading all people to the unity of God, it can be understood how the Holy Spirit making the Church missionary or apostolic makes her one. Furthermore, since the missions of the Son and the Spirit correspond to their processions, the Church's mission corresponds to her participation in the communion of the Trinity.

In conclusion, the Holy Spirit makes the Church apostolic because he assures the historical link with the apostles, because he directs the Church to the Omega which is in conformity with the Alpha, and because he makes her apostolic mission fruitful. In all these respects, the Holy Spirit makes the Church one through time by keeping her apostolic.

### **3. In Sanctifying the Church, the Holy Spirit Makes Her One**

Congar does not refer here to the sanctification of individual souls but to the sanctification of the Church as a whole. As usual, he goes to the sources of the faith and begins with the Bible. He notes that the expression "holy Church" cannot be found explicitly in the New Testament<sup>40</sup>. There are, however, two ideas associated with that of "holiness," namely, the Church as a temple and as a bride.

#### *Church as a Temple*

The *Epistle to the Ephesians* (2:18-22) and the *First Letter of Peter* (2:5) describe the Church as God's household and holy temple. It is holy because the one who dwells there is holy. A temple is also holy because here true spiritual worship is brought to God "in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23-24). Congar considers this spiritual worship as the act in which the Church is most perfectly itself<sup>41</sup>. This spiritual worship comes from faith and expresses the theological realities of faith, charity and hope. Congar agrees with Aquinas saying that external worship is an expression of the inward cult, which consists in faith, hope, and charity<sup>42</sup>. But true worship is the work of the Spirit (Phil 3:3; Jude 20); therefore, the Church as true temple is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The idea of the temple is related to the concept of habitation or dwelling. Congar points out that there are several texts which speak about the dwelling of the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:15-17; 1 Cor 3:16-17, 6:19; 1 Jn 4: 12-13). Congar asks how the Spirit can dwell in the Church as such. He answers that through the created grace of love the assembly of believers has as the

<sup>40</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 52.

<sup>41</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 54.

<sup>42</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 54; THOMAS AQUINAS, *ST Ia IIae*, q. 99, a.3 and 4, IIa IIae, q.93, a.2; q. 101, a. 2, ad 3.

object of its knowledge and love the Tri-unity of God. This love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Given the fact that only through love the Spirit can fully dwell or be present, and also the fact that an individual person can fail in charity, it follows that only the Church, as a whole, as the body of Christ, can be always sure to have a faith fashioned by charity<sup>43</sup>. Due to the presence of the Spirit in the Church, holiness is already given to us. The Church's sanctification is an on-going process, in which her members collaborate with God's grace. What makes the Church holy first of all is the presence of the Holy One in the Church. In conclusion, the Holy Spirit pours into the assembly of believers faith, hope, and charity, and thus makes it holy, and a true temple of God. Making the Church holy, the Spirit dwells in her and unites her with God through charity, thus making the Church to be one.

### *The Church as the Bride*

Congar begins his presentation of this theme with the Pauline epistles that describe the Church as Christ's pure bride, with no spot or wrinkle, but holy and faultless (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5: 25-27, 29-31). Then Congar continues by showing that the Church Fathers present the theme of wedding between Christ and the Church as an election of grace and by means of an anticipatory love. This love includes also the aspect of purification. Congar states that Christ assumed human nature and purified it by making it his bride: "The Word, the Son, decided to marry human nature through his incarnation"<sup>44</sup>. Purification is accomplished through Christ's baptism—which is the foundation of Christian baptism—and through his death on the cross. Both these events communicate the Spirit to the Church, the new Eve, Congar says<sup>45</sup>. Christ also nourishes the Church with his own glorified body in the Eucharist. Congar points out that through baptism, Eucharist and the Spirit, the Church as his bride becomes his body and forms mystically with him "one flesh"<sup>46</sup>.

According to Congar, this mystical wedding between Christ and the Church will be perfected only eschatologically. The Church has the Spirit as *arrha*, as first-fruits, and therefore the qualities of fullness and purity are really possessed but not yet in an eschatological way<sup>47</sup>. In this way, Congar explains how the Church as such is holy yet this holiness has not

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<sup>43</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 54.

<sup>44</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 55.

<sup>45</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 55.

<sup>46</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 56.

<sup>47</sup> "Arrha" is a key term used by Congar when discussing something eschatologically. The scriptural references are: Rm 8:23, 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14. See *I Believe*, II, 17 and 107.

yet reached eschatological fullness<sup>48</sup>. Until the Church reaches the final fullness of holiness, the Holy Spirit “inspires necessary reforms and prevents them from becoming merely external arrangements, so that they are able to lead to a new life according to the spirit of Jesus”<sup>49</sup>.

The Holy Spirit purifies and sanctifies the Church by giving her new life. Doing so, the Spirit makes the Church the bride of Christ, his mystical body. It can be concluded that, sanctifying the Church, the Holy Spirit makes her one because he makes her “one flesh” with her bridegroom, Christ.

In conclusion, this article has shown the development of Congar’s thought regarding unity and the role of the Spirit in building it up. Development means both continuity and progress. There is continuity in between the early and the late period in Congar’s ecclesiology: ecclesial unity comes from the unity of the Trinity given to the Church (in time Congar stressed the perichoresis of divine persons). There is also progress in Congar’s ecclesiology: from an understanding of the Church as a society, then body of Christ and people of God to an un understanding of the Church as communion.

The more important advancement is the difference between the roles of Christ and the Spirit in building up the ecclesial unity. If in the early stage, Congar described Christ as the founder of the Church and the Spirit as her animator (or her soul), in his late pneumatology, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ because he comes from Christ and also because the content of his mission is Christological. He builds up the Church as the body of Christ and enriches her with his gifts, charisms (a dimension that Congar began developing in 1953). Therefore, the Spirit is the “co-instituting” principle of the Church together with Christ. He brings about the unity of the Church by making her the body of Christ and introducing her into the tri-unity of the Blessed Trinity. Therefore, the unity brought about by the Spirit is a communion with the Trinity, with Christ, and with the communion of saints, which includes diversity (also developed beginning with 1953).

Finally, the doctrine of divine processions and missions was mentioned in *Chrétien désunis*.<sup>50</sup> Congar kept working on it and so in his *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, he says that the Holy Spirit in this work keeps his hypostatic character: love as proceeding, which is different from the Father’s and the

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<sup>48</sup> Congar uses the expression “the Holy Church of sinners” (*I Believe*, II, 57). It is worthy to note that all the marks of the Church are possessed eschatologically. For instance, the Church is one and undivided yet Christendom is presently still divided.

<sup>49</sup> Yves CONGAR, *I Believe*, II, 57.

<sup>50</sup> Yves CONGAR, *Chrétien désunis*, 55-56. See also Lucian PÅULET, *The Holy Spirit as the Principle of Ecclesial Unity, Catholicity, Apostolicity and Holiness in the Thought of Yves Congar*, 89-91.

Son's. The Spirit, the term or the end of the immanent unity between the Father and the Son, becomes the principle of the communion between the Trinity and the Church. Even though this mission in the world does not take place by necessity, there is in God an inclination to unite humankind to himself, which belongs by appropriation to the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit in making the Church one is, thus, revelatory of his person or, in other words, corresponds with his procession from the Father and the Son as the bond of unity between them.

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