Augstine's Analogy between the Spirit in the Church and the Soul in the Body and Its Implications for Communion Ecclesiology

Gabriel Mendy

Follow this and additional works at: https://dsc.duq.edu/etd

Recommended Citation
AUGUSTINE’S ANALOGY BETWEEN THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH AND
THE SOUL IN THE BODY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNION
ECCLESIOLOGY

A Dissertation Submitted to
McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
Gabriel Mendy

December 2009
Copyright by

Gabriel Mendy

2009
AUGUSTINE’S ANALOGY BETWEEN THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH AND
THE SOUL IN THE BODY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNION
ECCLESIOLOGY

By
Gabriel Mendy

Approved October 21, 2009

Dr. Radu Bordeianu
Assistant Professor of Theology
Dissertation Director

Dr. George Worgul
Chair of Theology Department
Committee Member

Dr. Amiée Light
Assistant Professor of Theology
Committee Member

Dr. Christopher Duncan
Dean of McAnulty College and School of
Liberal Arts

Dr. George Worgul
Chair of Theology Department
ABSTRACT

AUGUSTINE’S ANALOGY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH AND THE SOUL IN THE BODY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNION ECCLESIOLOGY

By

Gabriel Mendy

December 2009

Dissertation supervised by Dr. Radu Bordeianu

In the Spirit’s own age, it is ironically ascribed a secondary role in the Church. Conversely, I have opted to study Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy and its implications in order to identify the Spirit as the Church’s principle of communion. Analogies are generally open to interpretations and their relevance also varies according to the context. This study is, therefore, designed to offer a faithful interpretation of Augustine’s analogy based on his understanding of the Spirit in his trinitarian theology. And is, at the same time, an attempt to specify the analogy’s relevance for the Church’s unity in diversity, the universal and local Churches’ communion, and the African church’s particularity.

On account of the divine persons’ consubstantiality and relationship, Augustine was able to defend their unity, equality, and distinction while affirming their inseparable operations. The Spirit is not, therefore, subordinate to the Father and the Son as their common gift, bond of love, and communion. In the immanent Trinity, the Spirit is the
principle of love and communion signifying its function in the Church where the whole Triad dwells through the Spirit. As the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church, the Spirit is common to all and not simply reserved for a select few. On that note, I will argue that all members should discover their gifts and participate in the life and mission of the Church. The Church will in turn be a vibrant unity in diversity because the Spirit will animate and coordinate the gifts and languages of the members.

Following the Magisterium’s shift in perspective, the Church was considered a divine institution with the Spirit as its soul. Vatican II would, rather, define the Spirit’s relation to the Church according to its unique presence in both the Head and the members. For Congar, the analogy is functional, not ontological. Besides, the Spirit is the co-institutive principle of the Church’s hierarchical and charismatic structures. In light of the Church’s origins and constitution, I will argue that Spirit and not the hierarchical structure is the source of communion between the universal and local Churches. Their communion in the Spirit also implies a commitment to unity in diversity, mutual interiority, Church’s infallibility, renewal, ecumenism, and inculturation. In this communion, the African church is required to emphasize its particularity more than its autonomy and to use its gifts and resources for the good of the whole Church.
DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my family and Mother church in The Gambia, ‘the salt of the earth and the light of the world’ and all the sons and daughters of God who are united and are alive in the Spirit.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a sign of appreciation to those who nurtured and shaped my vocation and ideas about the nature, life, and mission of the Church, I would like to acknowledge their invaluable contribution towards this project on the Spirit as the source of communion in the Church. First and foremost, I am most grateful to my parents Lawrence (R.I.P) and Marian, the deceased members of my family, my brothers and sisters in Lamin, my extended family, Fr. Reginald Gillooly and parishioners of my home parish living and deceased, my teachers and schoolmates in St. Peter’s Primary and St. Peter’s High Schools. They are the ones from whom I first experienced the unity and love the Spirit creates in the Church and they continue to be an inspiration to me in my ordeals. In a special way, I am also indebted to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit for my spiritual and academic formation and my participation in the Church’s mission to the ends of the earth in the power of the Spirit. As a member of the Congregation I want to express my appreciation to all the Irish Spiritans who worked in The Gambia especially Bishop Maloney (R.I.P), Bishop Cleary, Bishop Ellison, Fr. White (R.I.P), Fr. Carroll (R.I.P), Fr. Comer (R.I.P), Fr. Fagan, Fr. Conaty, Fr. Cleary, Fr. Grimes, Fr. Smith, Fr. Hogan, Fr. Sharpe, Fr. Casey, and Fr. Murphy. My fellow Gambian Spiritans are equally dear to me for their solidarity and support. Due credit also deserves to be given to my former superiors, namely, Fr. Kwofie, Fr. Dan Yeboah, and Fr. Luseni and the USA province especially Fr. Jeff, Fr. Fogarty, and Fr. Tandoh for sponsoring and facilitation my Ph.D. program in Duquesne University from 2004-2009. During this period, I was privileged to
experience the fraternal support of my confreres in both Laval House and Trinity Hall and I deeply value their tolerance and guidance.

Considering the support and encouragement the wider Catholic community accorded me, I sincerely want to register my gratitude to The Gambian Clergy, St. Joseph of Cluny Sisters, Presentation of Mary Sisters, St. Joseph of Annecy Sisters, the Missionaries of Charity, Marists Sisters, the Missionaries of Saint Paul, and the Christian Brothers. I earnestly treasure the interest and concern heartily expressed by all the faithful as well especially Mr. and Mrs. Tom Mendy, Mr. and Mrs. Dominic Mendy, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Jallow, Mr. and Mrs. George Gomez, Mrs. Sylva and family, Aunty Adele and family, Mrs. Sonko and family, Aunty Ada and family, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Senghore, Fred Evans and family, Mr. and Mrs. Mboge, the Kujabi family, the Carvallo family, the Sarr family, Mr. and Mrs. Gabou Gomez, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Gomez, Eli Correa and family, Mrs. Thomasi and family, Mrs. Goswell and family, David Gomez and family, Gabou Mendy and family, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Mendy, Mr. and Mrs. Edu Sambou, Mr. and Mrs. Pierre Mendy, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Mendy, and Mr. and Mrs. Cassel. Throughout my doctoral studies, I was profoundly inspired and motivated by their commitment and participation in the life of the church in The Gambia. The prayers and the good intentions of the priests, religious, and parishioners of St. Martin’s, Holy Trinity, and St. Mary’s in Sierra Leone equally spurred me to explore the significance of our unity in the Spirit.

In many ways, my studies in Duquesne University was enriched and enhanced by the Spirit’s gift of charity that I was privileged to experience from Mr. and Mrs. James Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Leese, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Mendy, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Penco and family, Mr. and Mrs. Simeon Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Davies, Michael Ogu,
Mr. and Mrs. Gabou Sarr, Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Mendy, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Gomez, Francis Jallow and family, Cathy Jarjue and family, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Mendy, Mr. and Mrs. Tejan Ceesay, Vero Secka and family, Eli Owens, Cecilia Njie, Eli Bouvier, Sam Gibba, Benedette Gomez, Ogis and Ellen, Harriet and Edmund, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Turkpor. The holiday periods of my stay in Duquesne were, likewise, fruitful and meaningful because of the bond of love the Spirit created between me and the priests, staff, and parishioners of Our Lady Star of the Sea in Staten Island and St. Matthew’s Parish in Hastings on Hudson of New York Archdiocese. For this reason, I am highly grateful to all especially Msg. Jeff Conway, Fr. Joe McLafferty, Fr. Guillermo Catalan, Fr. Matthew Fenan, and Fr. Smyth. The faculty, staff, and students of the Theology Department in Duquesne University also earn my highest esteem and appreciation for their professionalism and cordial assistance in my intellectual pursuit. I am deeply humbled and grateful to all especially Dr. Worgul, the Chair of the Department, Dr. Bordeianu, the Dissertation Moderator, Dr. Amiée Light, member of my dissertation committee, Dr. Baird, the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Thompson-Uberagua, Dr. Slusser, Dr. Hannigan, Dr. Anne Clifford, Dr. Donovan, Dr. Karen Hoover (R.I.P), Dr. Kelly, Fr. Sean Kealy, Fr. Luke Mbefo, and Fr. Elochukwu Uzukwu. Finally, I thoroughly cherish the insights and contributions of Jill Dishart and my confrere Fr. John Geary who both read and corrected the full text of my dissertation. Because of your assistance and impact on this study, namely, Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy and its Implications for Communion Ecclesiology, be assured of my pledge to our unity in the Spirit who is love.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Limits of this Study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Contributions of Study</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE IMMANENT TRINITY</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Augustine’s Trinitarian Presuppositions</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 The Divine Persons and their Common Substance</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 The Equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 The Unity of the Divine Persons</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work inseparably <em>ad extra</em></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Spirit’s Distinctive Nature</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 The SpiritProceeds from the Father and the Son</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 The Common gift of the Father and the Son</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.3 The bond of love between the Father and the Son</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.4 The Communion between the Father and the Son</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Augustine’s Notable Perspective about the Spirit</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 The Spirit’s timeless and simultaneous procession as gift</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3.2 The Spirit through which the Triad dwells in the Church .........................85
1.3.3 The Spirit also gives himself as God ..........................................................89

Chapter Two: THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT .............................................93
A. The Gift of the Father and the Son to the Church .............................................95
2.1.1 The Holy Spirit is not conjoined to its bodily forms .................................98
2.1.2 Christ’s anointing by the Spirit prefigures the Church ...............................102
2.1.3 The Spirit is the supreme gift to the members of the Church .....................108
2.1.4 Source of the Church’s charismatic gifts .....................................................113
B. Augustine against the Donatists .....................................................................115
2.2.1 The Donatists’ stance on rebirth in the Spirit .............................................122
2.2.2 The Spirit and the Sacraments of the Church .............................................126
2.2.3 Why the Donatists do not have the Spirit ...................................................133
2.2.4 Schism: A sin against the Holy Spirit – an act against love .....................137
C. Augustine’s Spirit – Soul Analogy .................................................................143
2.3.1 The animating principle of the Church’s unity .............................................147
2.3.2 The Spirit gives life to the members of the Church ....................................154
2.3.3 The Church speaks all languages because of the Spirit .............................160
2.3.4 Unity is the finality of the gifts of the Spirit ...............................................164

Chapter Three: DIVERGENT AND COMPLEMENTARY INTERPRETATIONS OF
THE SPIRIT – SOUL ANALOGY ........................................................................169
A. Shifts in the Magisterium’s Understanding of the Analogy ...........................171
3.1.1 Leo XIII’S Encyclical: Divinum Illus Munus (1897) .................................172
3.1.2 Pius XII’S Encyclical: Mystici Corporis Christi (1943) ..............................176
3.1.3. Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium* (1964) ............................................................181

3.1.4 John Paul II Encyclical: *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986) .................186

B. Congar’s Perspective on the function of the Spirit in the Church ..........191

3.2.1 A functional and not an ontological analogy .......................................193

3.2.2 The Spirit animates and dwells in the Church .....................................197

3.2.3 The Spirit co-institutes One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church ..........202

3.2.4 The Church invokes the Spirit – the Event of the Spirit .................211

C. The Question of the Autonomy of the Spirit ...........................................214

3.3.1 Developments in Congar’s perspective ...............................................216

3.3.2 The Freedom of the Spirit is not a sufficient formula for ecclesiology ....217

3.3.3 The Word and the Spirit work together to build up the Church ..........221

3.3.4 Preserving the charismatic element in the Church ...........................227

Chapter Four: THE SPIRIT AS THE SOURCE OF COMMUNION BETWEEN THE
UNIVERSAL CHURCH AND THE LOCAL CHURCHES .............................234

A. The Nature of the universal and the local church ....................................236

4.1.1 The nature of the universal Church .....................................................237

4.1.2 The nature of the local church ............................................................244

4.1.3 The mission of the universal and the local church ...............................248

4.1.4. The debate over the ontological priority of the universal Church ..........253

B. Implications of the Spirit as the Source of Communion ..........................258

4.2.1 The concept of communion – a mystery .............................................259

4.2.2 A communion of unity and diversity of gifts ....................................261
4.2.3 A communion of mutual interiority between the universal and local churches ..............................................................266

4.2.4 Communion between the universal and local church – A sign of the Spirit.................................................................................................................................270

4.2.5 The Spirit Guarantees the infallibility of the Church.........................................................273

4.2.6 Renewal of the Church in the Spirit..............................................................................................279

4.2.7 Ecumenical dialogue and inculturation........................................................................................284

C. What Communion in the Spirit means for the African church ....................................................................................285

4.3.1 Participatory Structures of the African church – Family ..........................................................293

4.3.2 Emphasis is on particularity and not on autonomy of African church ..................................304

4.3.3 The Gifts and Resources must be used for the whole Church .............................................308

4.3.4 The African church – an instrument for reconciliation........................................................314

CONCLUSION........................................................................................................................................................................314

Summary ................................................................................................................................................................................315

Appraisal .................................................................................................................................................................................329

Recommendations.................................................................................................................................................................334

BIBLIOGRAPHY........................................................................................................................................................................337
INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Among the many challenges facing the Church today, the most central and urgent of all is the consolidation of the bonds of communion between the diverse members and between the universal Church and the local churches. This task is foremost, in my view, because it bears positive and far-reaching consequences on all aspects of the Church’s life and mission. At this moment in time when there is an evasive spirit towards authority, vocations are in decline, parishes are closed, and the Church is searching for a renewal of service and religious fervor, only the bonds of communion that transcend and cut across differences and fears can restore harmony in the Church. The source of the Church’s bonds of communion and the nature of this communion is what I intend to articulate in this dissertation. Specifying the unifying and animating principle of the Church’s communion is vital at this stage because it is mainly the visible hierarchical structure of the Church that is noted as the source of communion for the members.

Consequently, the overarching theme of this research on Augustine’s theology of the Spirit and ecclesiology is the unique function of the Spirit in the Church as the source of life, unity, gifts, and mission of the Church. What I ultimately intend to accomplish in this endeavor is to account for the various functions the Spirit fulfills among the members of Christ’s Body, the Church. In that way, the Spirit will not simply be perceived as an external additional force dwelling in the Church. Rather, the Spirit will be acknowledged as an indispensable principle of the Church’s constitution, communion, and mission. The Church’s dependence on the Spirit as its source of unity and life was adequately justified by Augustine in his Pentecost sermon when he analogically compared the function of the
Spirit in the Church to the soul in the body. Based on his Spirit – Soul analogy, I will examine in this study the Church’s communion in the Spirit and its implications for the life, identity, and mission of the Church. The subject-matter of this research, therefore, covers the following key issues of interest: the unifying and animating functions of the Spirit in the Church, the universal and local churches’ communion in the Spirit, the particularity of the African church, and the charismatic structure of the Church.

Throughout this study on the Spirit in the Church, the unifying and animating functions of the Spirit will be emphasized because the Spirit is, in my view, the one who fosters, sustains, and preserves the Church’s life and its unity in diversity. The Spirit will, consequently, be identified as the source of the Church’s unity in diversity that coordinates and harmonizes the diverse gifts and charisms of the members. The Church’s unity in that sense is not wholly and solely a direct result of its hierarchical structure and discipline because the different members of the Church are fundamentally united in the Spirit they share in common. As the source of the Church’s unity in diversity, the Spirit is the one who enriches each member with different charismatic gifts for the good of the whole Church. For this reason, no member of the Church is clearly endowed with all the charismatic gifts of the Spirit. I would, therefore, argue that the Church is inherently a unity in diversity in its constitution and all members of the Church should fully participate in the Church according to their gifts and charisms. In addition to its unifying function, the Spirit is also identified in this study as the animating principle that gives life to the members of the Church. Those who are united in the Church by the Spirit are equally alive in the Spirit because the Spirit is the one who empowers them with its life-
giving breath. They have to be in communion with the Church as well if the Spirit and the sacraments they receive are bound to have an effect on them.

The communion that exists between the universal Church and local churches is also associated with the Spirit in this investigation because the Spirit is uniquely the bond of love and the source of unity. Since the Spirit is the communion between the Father and the Son, I would argue that the communion between the universal Church and local churches is equally modeled on the communion of the divine persons of the Trinity. The form of this communion between the universal Church and local churches should be a communion of mutual interiority in which both are inseparably united and at the same time distinct in their relationship. An exchange of gifts and resources and a spirit of solidarity should ultimately prevail in this communion the Spirit creates in order to strengthen the universal Church and local churches’ communion. If the Spirit is recognized as the source of communion the tensions, fears, and doubts that have weakened communion in the Church will, in my view, be amicably resolved. The fact that the Spirit is the source of the universal Church and local churches’ life and gifts means that there is no reason for either the former or the latter to undermine their communion in the Spirit. In situations where the communion between the universal and local churches is firmly established and rooted in charity, it is a sign, from my point of view, that the Spirit is present and active in the life and mission of the whole Church.

On the basis of the Spirit’s function as the source of communion and the uniqueness of its charismatic gifts, I will argue that the African church in communion with the universal Church should discover and treasure its particularity. For the Spirit is the one who confers on each local church the ecclesial, liturgical, and cultural heritage it
acquires as a community of faith. At the same time, the Spirit is also the one who preserves the diversity of the local churches in communion for the good of the universal Church. The Spirit’s charismatic gifts to the African church are, accordingly, different from the gifts of other local churches. These gifts that characterize the African church include: Africa’s diverse cultural and social heritage, the African sense of community life, the centrality of life and family in African culture, the liturgical celebrations of Africans and the symbols and spirituality of the African world-view. Each of these represents the identity and particularity of this local church in communion with the universal Church. Yet, these gifts and resources of the local church in Africa are meant for the good of the whole Church. These qualities and gifts can gainfully be shared as a contribution and means to consolidate the communion of the universal Church and African church. By sharing its gifts, the latter is in a position to assert its identity that will have an impact on the life and ministry of the whole Church. The emphasis, from my perspective, should ultimately be on the African church’s particularity, not on its autonomy because the latter is not obtainable where the Spirit is the source of communion. If the Spirit’s gifts to the local churches are meant to be used for the good of the whole and the model of the universal and local churches’ communion is one of mutual interiority, autonomy cannot be a viable option for the African church. For this reason, I will propose that the African church should appreciate its particularity and use its unique gifts to strengthen its communion with the universal Church. The task of the leaders and theologians of the African church is to discover and define the particularity of this local church.
Due consideration is similarly given to the charismatic structure of the Church on account of the Spirit’s role in the constitution of the Church. Both the hierarchical and charismatic structures are, accordingly, presented in this study as constitutive features of the Church that must equally be valued. An attempt to suppress or render the Church’s charismatic structure ineffective is, in my estimation, a direct opposition to the Spirit that endows the members of the Church with charisms for the good of the whole. Like the hierarchical members of the Church, the charismatic members of the Church should also participate in the life and ministry of the Church according to their vocations. The lay faithful should, therefore, be encouraged to discover their unique charisms and offer themselves at the service of the whole Church. This would not only enrich the life of the Church, it would also enable these members to be receptive and obedient to the Spirit that is present and active in the Church. If the hierarchical structure of the Church were more prominent, the Church would, in my view, be perceived more as an institution and not a communion in the Spirit. For this reason, the charismatic structure of the Church is emphasized in my reflection on the nature of the Church to highlight the distinctiveness of the Church from other institutions and organizations.

In order to fully understand in proper perspective Augustine’s theology of the Spirit and the Spirit’s role in the constitution and life of the Church, it is necessary to also examine his trinitarian theology. For the latter is the corpus of work in which he established the Spirit’s consubstantiality and its inseparability from the Father and the Son, as well as the Spirit’s distinctive function in the Trinity. One cannot adequately assess the nature and function of the Spirit in the Church without considering Augustine’s trinitarian theology since the Spirit is a divine person of the Trinity sent by the Father and
the Son to the Church. I will, therefore, reflect on his understanding of the function of the Spirit in the Church in light of his trinitarian presuppositions concerning the Spirit because the latter informs the former. There is, accordingly, a connection between Augustine’s trinitarian theology and ecclesiology as a result of the Spirit that functions as the source of communion between the divine community and the whole Church. From his trinitarian theology, one can equally deduce not only the distinctiveness of the Spirit’s function in the Church, but also the trinitarian origins of the Church from the communion of the divine persons. Consequently, the method of approach in this study on the Spirit as the source of the Church’s unity and life will be deductive in nature since the function of the Spirit in the Church reflects what the Spirit does in the immanent Trinity. In my analysis of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy, I will, therefore, endeavor to interpret his point of view in line with the broader vision of his theology of the Spirit. This would ensure that the divinity and freedom of the Spirit in the Church is properly represented and safe-guarded from any possible misinterpretation.

For the sake of human clarity and insight into the nature and activity of the divine persons, analogies were used by Augustine to illustrate how three entities can be united and yet distinct in their relation. He even utilized the analogy of lover, beloved, and the love to signify the function of the Spirit as the bond of love between the Father and the Son. The analogical sense in which Augustine made these comparisons is particularly emphasized in this research as a caveat against a literal interpretation of these analogies. There is no substantial identification as such between the divine persons and any particular aspect or component of the analogies. Regarding the Spirit’s manifestations and its functions, Augustine would argue that the Spirit is not conjoined to its bodily
forms because the Spirit remains the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Therefore, it is my thesis that Augustine did not intend the Spirit – Soul analogy to be interpreted in a literal sense or be understood as an ontological analogy because the Spirit is not substantially the soul of the Church. An attempt will, accordingly, be made in this study to correct interpretations of the analogy that exceed the limits of what the analogy represents.

In all, this dissertation is divided into four chapters. Each major chapter is further subdivided into three sections outlining the themes of the subject-matter of the chapters. A general conclusion, summary, and appraisal to the whole work are provided at the end. In what follows, a brief summary of these major chapters will now be provided. This will expose the trend of thought that is developed in this work. At the same time pave the way for a detailed understanding of my study on Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy and its implications for communion ecclesiology.

The general topic of the first chapter is the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity. Since the Spirit is a divine person of the Trinity, Augustine’s trinitarian presuppositions on the nature, unity, and equality of the divine persons form the starting point of this discussion. Based on their consubstantiality, Augustine would argue that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are divine, united, and equal in nature. The divine persons are, therefore, one in nature and the Spirit is neither less divine nor subordinate in nature to the Father and the Son. In addition to their unity and equality, the divine persons are also distinct in their relations. However, the unity that exists among the divine persons is essentially a unity of equals as well as a unity of diversity that will be presented in this study as the model of the Church’s unity in diversity. As a result of the divine persons’ unity in nature, Augustine would also maintain that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work
inseparably ad extra. This indicates that Augustine is trinitarian in his perspective in affirming that the divine persons work together with the cooperation of all. However, in view of their distinctiveness, the Spirit’s particular nature and function in the immanent Trinity will be examined in this chapter. For the Spirit is identified in Augustine’s trinitarian theology as the common gift, the bond of love, the communion between the Father and the Son, and the one through whom the whole triad dwells in the Church. These characteristics of the Spirit are fundamental to his trinitarian theology and ecclesiology because they provide an insight into who the Spirit is and what the Spirit does in the Trinity and the Church. As such, the Spirit is the communion between the Father and the Son, and the divine community and the Church. In this communion, the Spirit is the unifying and animating principle of their unity in diversity.

The second chapter specifically concerns the mission and function of the Spirit in the Church where the Spirit unites the members of the Church in a communion of love. The Spirit’s indispensable role in the life and unity of the Church and the obligation of the members of the Church to preserve their communion in the Spirit will be discussed in this chapter. First of all, the Spirit is presented as the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church that is meant to empower the members of the Church so that they can be united in love. This Church was prefigured, according to Augustine, at the baptism of Christ when he was anointed by the Spirit to fulfill his mission. Therefore, the members of the Church should also receive the Spirit in order to be effective. As the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church, Augustine would argue that the Spirit is the supreme gift of God that is common to all the members of the Church. The latter are ultimately gifted and equal on account of the Spirit because the Spirit is not reserved to a select few based on their
holiness as the Donatists claimed. Furthermore, the Spirit is identified as the source of the Church’s charismatic gifts, as well as the efficient cause of the sacraments of the Church. For Augustine, the Church is like the human body with different members that have diverse gifts, vocations, and languages. Yet, the Church is a living and united Body of Christ with all the members actively functioning in harmony because the Spirit is the unifying and animating principle of the Church. The latter is, therefore, a unity in diversity in which all are alive in the Spirit. In that sense, the Spirit is the one who enables all members of the Church to be united in love and to speak the languages of all the nations while preserving their communion in the Church.

In the third chapter, the divergent and complementary interpretations of the Spirit – Soul analogy by the Magisterium and by Congar will be examined. The ways in which this analogy was interpreted in selected documents will be discussed in order to outline the shifts in the Magisterium’s understanding. In *Divinum Illud Munus*, Leo XIII would identify the Spirit as the soul of the Church. This is, in my view, a shift from Augustine’s analogical sense because the Spirit is not in itself a soul. His position clearly limits the Spirit to the Church and makes the Church essentially a divine institution. In similar fashion, Pius XII also adopted a literal interpretation of the analogy in *Mystici Corporis Christi*. He affirmed that the Spirit is present and active in the inferior members through the ministry of the higher members. This statement is clearly a departure from Augustine because for the latter the Spirit animates and vivifies all members of the Church. On its part, Vatican II was more faithful to Augustine in analogically comparing the function of the Spirit in the Church to that of the soul in the body. This Council attempted to even express what was not so explicitly represented in Augustine’s analogy, namely, the
Spirit’s relationship to Christ. For John Paul II, the Spirit’s function as the Lord and Giver of life also includes sanctifying and teaching the members of the Church because it is through the Spirit that they are adopted as children of God. Although Congar would evoke the analogy between the Spirit and the soul, he cautioned that it is a functional and not an ontological analogy because the latter amounts to ecclesiological monophysitism. Moreover, he considered the Spirit as the co-instituting principle that works together with the Word in forming the Church. The assumption that the Spirit functions in an already constituted Church and the charismatic and hierarchical elements of the Church are opposed to each other will be addressed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter deals with the Spirit as the source of communion between the universal Church and local churches and its implications in the life and mission of the Church. As a result of the Spirit’s function in the Church, the nature of both the universal Church and local churches will be examined to highlight the origin and constitution of the whole Church. The significance of Augustine’s and Congar’s insight on this subject would, therefore, be emphasized since the Spirit is the one who constitutes and preserves the Church’s communion in unity. Based on Augustine’s trinitarian theology, I would argue that the universal Church derives its origin from the divine community of the Trinity. I would also maintain that the Church’s unity is not solely the result of the Church’s hierarchical structures, but the Spirit that is the source of the Church’s visible and invisible communion. The local churches are, accordingly, manifestations of the universal Church and they bear the elements of the latter. Each of these churches is, however, particular in identity based on the liturgical and spiritual gifts the Spirit confers on them. As a result of the Spirit’s function as the source of communion between the
universal Church and local churches, their communion should become a unity in diversity of gifts. There should also be a spirit of solidarity and charity between them based on their mutual interiority. The members of the Church should equally be more receptive to its teaching on account of the Spirit that guarantees the Church’s infallibility. On its part, the Church is required to renew itself in the Spirit and be involved in ecumenism and inculturation to promote the unifying mission of the Spirit. For the local church in Africa, I would argue that because of the Spirit, participatory structures should be created so that the members can use their charismatic gifts. The African church’s particularity should in turn be stressed and it should use its resources to strengthen communion with the universal Church.

THE LIMITS OF THIS STUDY

Since the focus of this study is on the Spirit as the source of communion based on Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy, the subject-matter imposes some limitations on this project. What this dissertation specifically examines is, therefore, the unifying and animating functions of the Spirit as the source of communion between the universal Church and local churches and between the hierarchical and charismatic members of the Church. Consequently, the Spirit’s mission in the natural world is not a major issue in my analysis of its functions as the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church. Moreover, the analogy of the Spirit in the Church and the soul in the body is far more related to the function of the Spirit in the Church than its presence in the world. Yet, attention is only given to specific activities the Spirit fulfills in the Church in its distinctive role as the source of communion. The focus is mainly on the Spirit’s unique function in the Church, but the reason is not that the trinitarian nature of the divine persons’ work is absolutely
rejected and insignificant in this study. Rather, the function of the Spirit is emphasized to account for the Spirit’s indispensable role in the origin, life, and mission of the Church.

Though Augustine is immensely useful in understanding the Spirit’s effect on the members of the Church as their source of life and unity, it must be noted that his perspective was partly informed by his polemical concerns against the Donatists. For this reason, this study does not seek to establish a direct link between the Church in Augustine’s time and the current state of the Church’s communion. Since my ultimate goal is to highlight the significance of his Spirit – Soul analogy for the life and mission of the Church today, it is not within the limits of this work to conduct an in-depth analysis of Augustine’s theological writings and context. While Congar’s perspective on the function of the Spirit in the Church is presented as a complement to Augustine’s analogy, only a selected portion of his ecclesiology and pneumatology is discussed in this dissertation. As a result, Congar’s contribution is confined to his insights on the Spirit’s indispensable role in the Church’s constitution, ministry, and infallibility.

The objective of my study on the function of the Spirit as the source of communion is also modest and limited in degree. This work is not intended to resolve the differences between the East and West on the Spirit’s relation to the Father and the Son. The extent to which this topic is discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation is purely rudimentary. Furthermore, this dissertation is not designed to specifically address the relation between the Orthodox, Protestant, and the Catholic Churches. As such, the perspective I offer on the function of the Spirit as the source of unity is not ecumenical in nature. For this reason, the Spirit’s effect in the Ecumenical Movement between the Churches is not contained in this study.
THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY

Prominent voices within the hierarchy have remarkably expressed concerns over the image and organization of the Church since the end of Vatican II that sought to define the nature and mission of the Church. These pastors and theologians have at least noted some of the Church’s failures in implementing the Council’s teaching. In response to these concerns, they have offered proposals on how the Church’s self-image and organization can become more authentic and faithful to Scripture and Tradition. In this section, I will review some of these proposals that have been discussed in recent years by those who believe it is necessary for the Church to transform itself in order to be effective in its mission. Such an exercise will bring to light the various points of view that have emerged on this subject. At the same time offer the opportunity to consider the oversights of these proposals that I intend to address in this dissertation as my own further contribution to the Church’s understanding of its communion, identify, life, and mission.

In its teaching, the Church is keen to present itself as the Mystical Body of Christ, the Temple of the Spirit, or the People of God that is distinct from other forms of human associations. While this is undeniable, Cardinal Avery Dulles have argued that

the prevailing image of the Catholic Church is highly institutional. The Church is understood in terms of dogmas, laws, and hierarchical agencies which impose heavy demands of conformity … The top officers are regarded as servants of the institution, bound by a rigid party line, and therefore inattentive to the impulses of the Holy Spirit and unresponsive to the legitimate religious concerns of the faithful.¹

The Church is certainly institutional in nature. However, this aspect of the Church is bound to have a negative impact on the members if it is over emphasized. In their bid to conform to the laws and patterns of the Church, the members are inclined to become

passive towards new initiatives and challenges that require their response. For this reason, I believe that in addition to its institutional structure, the sacramental, charismatic, and prophetic dimensions of the Church also deserve to be properly recognized.

Towards this end, Dulles has proposed the community of disciples’ model in place of the institutional model of the Church. For him, the former is most appropriate and relevant to the present context of the members because

the idea of discipleship, as we know it from the New Testament, makes ample room for both freedom and failure. Unlike the bare notion of community, discipleship brings out the demands of membership. The Church is not a club of like-minded individuals, but a venture in which all depend on the community and are obliged to make contributions to the community and its work.²

One must commend Dulles for presenting an alternative model to the institutional image of the Church. Positively, the Church will be more engaged with its evangelizing and prophetic mission if its members are organized and formed into a community of disciples witnessing to their vocation and faith in Jesus. However, the problem of conformity and the failures of the members to be attentive to the Spirit, especially the office holders, do not seem to be fully addressed in Dulles’ discussion of this alternative model. In an effort to deal with these concerns, I will argue in this dissertation based on Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy that the Spirit is the animating and unifying principle of the Church’s life and mission. Identifying the functions of the Spirit in the Church in this way will clearly indicate that the Church is a communion in the Spirit. At the same time, it will reveal the unity in diversity that exists among the members and between the universal Church and the local churches.

Within the Church, there is an element of suspicion and fear because of the tension and gap that exists between the hierarchical and charismatic members of the

² Dulles, *A Church to Believe In*, 15.
Church. This unfortunate situation is further complicated and sustained by an abuse of office and authority in the Church that ought to be at the service of all the members. As a solution to the problem, Dulles has argued that

ideally the hierarchical and the charismatic, since they proceed from the same Lord and are intended for the same goal (the edification of the Church in love), should be responsive to each other … It is often said that the last word lies with the office holders, since it is their function to discern between true and false charisms – a point made more than once in the Constitution of the Church … In a pilgrim Church time is needed to sift the good grain from the chaff, the wheat from the cockle (Mt. 13:14-30). If a true consensus is to be achieved, it must be the work of the Spirit, who dwells not in the hierarchy alone but in all the faithful, as we are taught by Vatican II. In this sense charism has the last word.3

In affirming the necessity of both the hierarchical and charismatic constitutions of the Church, Dulles has recognized that one cannot be suppressed at the expense of the other. However, the idea that the charismatic has the last word is inaccurate and problematic in a Church where collaborative ministry is not effectively implemented. For this reason, I will maintain in this dissertation that the hierarchical and the charismatic structures of the Church equally count in all aspects of its life and mission. This position is informed by Augustine’s and Congar’s affirmations that the Word and the Spirit work together in building up the Church. Both of them should, therefore, bear the last word in the Church.

Another cause for concern that has generated an ongoing debate in the Church is the question of the relationship between the universal Church and the local churches. The interest on this issue is widespread following the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s assertion that the universal Church “is not the result of the communion of the Churches, but, in its essential mystery, it is a reality ontologically and temporally prior to

---

3 Dulles, *A Church to Believe In*, 37-38.
every individual particular Church.” As one of the outspoken critics of this statement, Cardinal Walter Kasper regards the universal Church’s claim to ontological and temporal priority as part of its scheme to exercise centralization over all the local churches. Consequently, it is more difficult, in his view, for the local churches and the bishops in particular to act responsibly on the specific needs of their faithful. For Kasper, such a trend has its own negative effects on the Church as a whole because whatever happened, by now such ‘unifying’ activities and processes have gone too far. The right balance between the universal and the particular churches has been destroyed. This is not only my own perception; it is the experience and complaint of many bishops from all over the world.

There is clearly an imbalance between the universal Church and the local churches in the way they relate to each other and discuss issues of interest. In some cases the universal Church has authorized the appointments of pastors, introduced new liturgical rubrics and translations, and imposed foreign spirituality without proper consideration of the situation of the local churches. On the other hand, the local churches, as Kasper also indicated have abdicated their responsibility and turned to the universal Church for decision.

In light of these sensitive and complicated dispensations, various proposals are presented to redress the imbalance between the universal Church and the local churches. The proposal Kasper advanced on a general level is for “each bishop to be granted enough vital space to make responsible decisions in the matter of implementing universal laws.” On my part, I would caution against granting individual bishops such a freedom without deference to a higher office based on how some bishops have imposed their own aspirations over the local church. Elochukwu Uzukwu would share Kasper’s position in

6 Ibid., 10.
reference to the local church in Africa. In fact, he supports the idea and existence of an autonomous African church. According to him,

the redefinition of the relationship implies the adoption of a necessary distance by the church in Africa towards the Latin Patriarchate, without prejudice to the primacy of the chair of Peter. This distance is necessary to maintain the tension between autonomy and communion in the one Church.7

In my view, what should rather be strengthened in order to address the imbalance between the universal Church and the African church is the bond of communion and spirit of solidarity between them. For this reason, I will argue in this dissertation that the emphasis should be on African church’s particularity and not its autonomy from the universal Church. Once the African church can embrace its particularity and effectively use its unique gifts and resources from the Spirit to enrich the universal Church, the trend of isolation and imposition will be reversed in due course to that of collaboration.

There are several contributions that this study on Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy and its implications for communion ecclesiology will clearly provide for a more authentic understanding of the nature, life, and mission of the Church. The first major contribution to ecclesiology is acknowledging the Spirit as the source of the Church’s visible and invisible communion. In this study, the Spirit will be identified as the source of communion between the divine persons of the Trinity and the Church, the universal and the local churches, and among the diverse members of Christ’s Body, the Church. Since Vatican II, the idea that the Church is a communion of the members of Christ’s Body is quite prominent in the magisterial documents of the Church. In fact, a conscious step is taken by the Magisterium in its writings to present the nature of the Church as a communion of life and love with the divine community of the Trinity. For instance, the

Second Extraordinary Synod of Bishops was emphatic about the Church’s communion as a fundamental concept of the Council’s document. In addition, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith also noted that “the concept of communion lies at the heart of the Church’s self understanding insofar as it is the Mystery of the personal union of each human being with the divine Trinity.” However, the Magisterium is not specific in identifying the Spirit as the source of communion in these recent documents in spite of its teaching on communion ecclesiology. In light of this oversight, the Spirit will be identified in this dissertation as the Church’s principle of unity. The ultimate aim is to recreate an awareness about the Spirit as the fundamental source of communion so that the members of the Church will realize what inherently unites them in unity with the Trinity.

The second contribution that will emerge from my analysis of the function of the Spirit in the Church as the source of communion is the exposition of the Church’s unity in diversity. Both the unity and diversity of the universal Church and local churches, as well as the cultures and gifts of the members will be underscored in this study to illustrate that unity in the Church is not meant to represent uniformity. In Dulles’ opinion, many of the Church Fathers, including Augustine, developed the image of the Body of Christ with particular stress on the mystical and invisible communion that binds together all those who are enlivened by the grace of Christ. Augustine speaks of a Church that includes not only the earthly but the heavenly.

An important aspect of Augustine’s form of communion that, in my view, is underestimated in the above statement is his affirmation of the Church’s unity in diversity. The nature of the Church’s communion in the Spirit will, therefore, be depicted in this study as a unity in diversity that is modeled on the unity of the divine persons. For this reason, each member of the Church is required to retain and preserve his or her

---

8 Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church, 3.
uniqueness within the unity that the Spirit creates in the Church. Consequently, there should be mutual respect and tolerance for all the different gifts, cultures, and languages that prevail among the members of the Church. Such forms of disposition cannot spontaneously be created, in my view, by the hierarchical or visible structure of the Church unless the Spirit inspires the members to treasure and celebrate their unity and diversity of gifts.

The Spirit will not only be shown in this dissertation to be the unifying and animating principle of the Church’s unity in diversity, it will also be revealed as one that is common to all the members regardless of their vocation or status. In that case the members of the Church are fundamentally equal and gifted by the Spirit they share in common. An insight of this nature as presented in this study will encourage the full participation of all the members in the life and mission of the Church in order to realize their potential and communion in the Spirit. This dissertation will, therefore, provide the grounds for the members of the Church to promote unity in diversity and be engaged in the life and mission of the Church according to the charisms. The real challenge for all members will be to discover their gifts and effectively use these gifts to enhance the Spirit’s unifying mission in the whole Church.

In addition to the above contributions, this study will offer an objective and informed assessment of the charismatic structure of the Church as an indispensable element of the life of the Church. The study will establish that the Church is charismatic in nature since its constitution because of the Spirit’s defining feature in the life and ministry of the Church. The charismatic structure is, in that sense, a permanent aspect of the Church as a result of the Spirit’s ongoing participation in the Church’s formation and
renewal. For this reason, the whole Church will be considered charismatic in form and dimension, instead of a few members of the Church who are gifted with spectacular charisms such as prophecy, the gift of tongues, and discernment of spirits. These charisms are expressions or signs of the charismatic structure of the Church, but they are a limited understanding of the Church’s charismatic constitution. In this study, the charismatic structure will be brought to the fore of the Church’s self-understanding in order to provide a broader meaning to the concept of charism.

Considering the situation of the Church today, it is important, in my view, to preserve the charismatic structure of the Church. This is because “an overemphasis on the institutional element in the Church has sometimes been to the detriment of effective service.”\textsuperscript{10} As a way of encouraging other forms of ministry and service in the Church the charismatic gifts of the faithful and non-ordained members of the Church will be valued and endorsed. The possibility of adopting the extremes of a Spirit-based church that is opposed to the hierarchical nature of the Church will, however, be avoided in my analysis of the charismatic structure and the Spirit’s function as the Church’s source of communion. Such extremes will be eliminated because the Spirit that is represented in this study as the Spirit of the Father and the Son, is one that inseparably works with them in fulfilling its unique functions in the Church. Consequently, there is no opposition between the hierarchical authority of the Church that represents the Word and the Church’s charismatic element that signifies the Spirit. A study of this nature will clearly enable the members of the Church to see the hierarchical and charismatic structures of the Church in a more positive light.

\textsuperscript{10} Dulles, \textit{Models of the Church}, 155.
Finally, my thesis that the Spirit is the source of communion and that there is
unity in diversity of gifts will spur the local churches, especially the African church to
discover their unique identity in the communion of the Spirit. Considering the Spirit’s
unifying function and the unique charismatic gifts it confers on each local church, I will
argue that the emphasis for the African church should be more on its particularity than its
autonomy. The gifts and resources of this local church should likewise be used for the
good of the whole in order to strengthen its communion with the universal Church. This
form of mutual exchange of gifts is greatly weakened, in my view, if the local church is
autonomous from the universal Church. As a church whose potential is yet to be realized
in the life of the universal Church, I will urge the African church to emphasize its
particularity rather than its autonomy. Towards this end, an attempt will be made in this
dissertation to identify the aspect and sets of values that define and also distinguish the
African church. These qualities include the following: the sense of community life, the
centrality of life and family in African culture, and the dynamic nature of Africa’s
liturgical celebration. These represent in various ways the identity and particularity of the
African church in communion with the universal Church. The subject-matter of this
dissertation should keenly invite further research and dialogue among the pastors,
theologians, and all members of the African church on the merits of this church’s heritage
for the good of the universal Church.
CHAPTER ONE: THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE IMMANENT TRINITY

An account of the nature and function of the Spirit that adequately represents Augustine’s perspective on the subject of the Church’s communion is bound to include his understanding of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity and the Church. For this reason, Augustine’s theology of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity will serve as the starting point of this study on the distinct nature and function of the Spirit. Such a quest is quite significant because the Spirit that functions in the Church as source of communion is itself a divine person of the Trinity. An attempt will, therefore, be made in this chapter to establish the Spirit’s divinity and its distinctiveness in relation to the Father and the Son in order to understand the Spirit’s function in the Church in proper perspective. I will specifically argue that the Spirit is not subordinated to the Father and the Son because the Spirit is divine, equal, and inseparably united with them. At the same time, I will highlight the distinctive nature of the Spirit as the common gift, the bond of love, and the communion between the Father and the Son. Finally, I will show how Augustine’s perspective represents a theology of the Spirit that properly articulates the particularity and function of the Spirit in relation to the Father and the Son as well as the Church.

Since Augustine is situated within the tradition of the Church, I will at this juncture provide a brief historical survey of the Church’s response to the question of the nature of the divine persons of the Trinity.

The development of trinitarian theology in both East and West was partly due to the Arian controversy. This controversy was generated by Arius who claimed that the Son of God cannot be of the same essence or substance with the Father. Therefore, the Son is not equal with the Father in his nature and in his knowledge. The Council of Nicea
in 325 would categorically condemn Arius for denying the divinity and equality of the Son with the Father. Against Arius’ position, the Council would teach that the Father and the Son are one and the same substance as God from God and light from light. The defining concept was *homoousios*, but “*homoousios* needed clarification because it could be wrongly understood to support a Sabellian doctrine about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit constituting an identical and undifferentiated unity, with the persons as being no more than mere names or modes.”\(^{11}\)

The Council of Nicea did not, therefore, end the controversy because “a neo-Arian position spear-headed by Eunomius (d.c.394) asserted that the human intellect can know the *ousia* (essence) of the Father through an understanding of the term ‘ungenerate,’ God’s … fundamental characteristic.”\(^{12}\) Against Eunomius’ point of view, the Cappadocian Fathers, beginning with Basil the Great, would argue that the Father-Son designation of God was more biblical than the ungenerate-generate depiction of God and his Son, Jesus. These terms are not only meaningless to the Cappadocian Fathers; they also lead to the erroneous supposition that God can at least be comprehended in his essence. The claim of the neo-Arians was, therefore, rejected by the Cappadocian Fathers because it amounts to the same error of “the old Arian issue of the subordination of the Son that compromised the unity of the Trinity from a monotheist point of view.”\(^{13}\)

---


\(^{12}\) Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition: Plato to Eriugena* (Louvain: Peeters Press Louvain, 1995), 234-235. The Eunomians are also referred to as the Homoians because they maintained that the Son was at most of like substance to the Father. There were also the Anomeans who maintained that the Son is unlike the Father while the Homoeans held that he is similar to the Father.

\(^{13}\) Carabine, *The Unknown God*, 235.
argue that the Father and the Son are of like substance, the Cappadocian Fathers would insist that such terms as “ungenerate” and *homoiousios* do not signify God’s essence.

While the divinity and equality of the Son were denied and questioned by the Arians and the neo-Arians, the status and divinity of the Spirit was also questioned and rejected by the fighters against the Spirit, also known as *Pneumatomachians*. The latter regarded the Spirit as a mere creature that is subordinate to the Son just as the Son is subordinate to the Father. For that reason, the Spirit cannot be worshipped and glorified in the same way the Father and the Son are worshipped and glorified as God. The Spirit’s divinity and equality with the Father and the Son also had to be defined and defended by the Cappadocian Fathers against the *Pneumatomachians’* objections. Basil’s work *On The Holy Spirit* was, therefore, an attempt to respond to what the *Pneumatomachians* taught, that

> it is not suitable to rank the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son, because he is different in nature and inferior in dignity from them … When the Lord established the baptism of salvation, did he not clearly command his disciples to baptize all nations ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’? He did not disdain his fellowship with the Holy Spirit.\(^{14}\)

In the above statement, Basil appealed to the Scriptures to show that the Spirit is equal to and, therefore, of the same nature with the Father and the Son. In so doing he was able to establish the fact that the Spirit shares the same fellowship or communion with the Father and the Son because it is in their name that believers share God’s divine life through the sacrament of baptism. The Spirit is inevitably united to the Father and the Son in sharing the same communion and is equally divine in nature.

Both Gregory Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa maintained the same position against the teachings of Eunomius and the *Pneumatomachians*. On his part, Gregory of

Nyssa would limit his own argument against Eunomius to these two related themes that “the idea of God should not be unreservedly connected with the first person of the Trinity - it belongs to all three and the divine nature itself cannot be defined and any attempt on the part of Eunomius to do so is ill advised.”\(^{15}\) God is, therefore, infinite and incomprehensible to the human person. The position of the Cappadocian Fathers will eventually prevail over the controversies generated by Arius, Eunomius, and the 

Pneumatomachians at the Council of Constantinople in 381. The divinity and equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was not only reaffirmed; the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed also confesses the Spirit as the Lord and Giver of life. This noteworthy

\[\text{‘innovation’ inserted into the revised creed of 1 Constantinople (381) in the form of ‘the Holy Spirit … who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified’… powerfully affirms the divinity of the Spirit. A negative result – certainly unintended by Basil – is that by making the Spirit the object of worship it lessens the experiential sense of the Spirit as the immanent source of worship.}\]^{16}\]

Even though the Spirit is the object of worship, it is not the case that the Spirit’s immediate presence is to a lesser degree experienced in worship. Such a negative result does not appear to be the case especially in charismatic communities where there is personal awareness of the presence of the Spirit in the lives of these Christians.

The first Council of Constantinople was ultimately a major development in the Church’s teaching on the divinity and person of the Holy Spirit. As a result, the scriptural texts on the Spirit would be given a wider and more trinitarian interpretation in line with

\(^{15}\) Anthony Meredith, *The Cappadocians* (New York: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1995), 65. Gregory apparently developed his mystical apophatic spirituality from his negative theology against Eunomius in which he pointed out that we can only contemplate the glory of God and not the essence of God. We do not know the essence of God, but we know the image of God, according to Gregory, within us in the mirror of the soul. He underscored this fact in *From Glory to Glory: Texts from St. Gregory of Nyssa’s Writings*, 129 by J. Danielou. Augustine will similarly emphasize the incomprehensible nature of God when he discussed the traces or the image of the Trinity within the inner being of the human person.

the Church’s profession of faith. Both the Scriptures and the Church’s trinitarian faith would provide the solid basis from which Augustine would develop and articulate his theology on the unity, equality, procession, and mission of the divine persons in the one Godhead. Augustine was not only informed by the Scriptures, the Tradition, and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed; he was equally attentive to the misconceptions generated by the Arian, Eunomian, and Pneumatomachian controversies. He was, consequently, obliged to state his objective at the beginning De Trinitate that

the reader of these reflections of mine on the Trinity should bear in mind that my pen is on the watch against the sophistries of those who scorn the starting point of faith, and allow themselves to be deceived through an unseasonable and misguided love of reason. Some of them try to transfer what they have observed about bodily things to incorporeal and spiritual things.17

The reason Augustine articulated his trinitarian theology was not simply for intellectual purpose. Rather, he intended to respond to the opponents of the Church’s faith in the divine persons of the Trinity. He, consequently, maintained that it is with the help of the Lord our God, [that] we shall undertake to the best of our ability to give them the reasons they clamor for, and to account for the one and only and true God being a Trinity, and for the rightness of saying, believing, understanding that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are of one and the same substance or essence.18

In addition to defending the content of the Church’s faith in three persons in one God, Augustine would also explore ways and means of understanding and articulating the affirmations of Scripture and the creedal statements of the Church. He would do this in a way that is intelligible, reasonable, and meaningful to those seeking further clarifications on the divinity, unity, equality, and distinctiveness of the divine persons of the Trinity.

18 Ibid., I. 4, 67.
AUGUSTINE’S TRINITARIAN PRESUPPOSITIONS

Augustine’s trinitarian presuppositions about the divine persons of the Trinity were largely informed by the Scriptures, Tradition, and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed which he used to defend the unity and equality of the three persons. If the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ultimately share the same essence or substance as the creed of the Church testifies, there is reason, as far as Augustine was concerned, to perceive the three persons of the immanent Trinity as a unity within the one Godhead. Therefore, Augustine would not only emphasize the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in his trinitarian theology, he would equally illustrate why there is such a unity among three divine persons who are equally distinct. He would identify the particularity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as well in discussing the three persons of the immanent Trinity in their relationality because “they are not called these things substance-wise but relationship-wise.” 19 Based on their common nature and distinction, Augustine would characterize the relation between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as a relationship of love and unity.

For Augustine, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are inherently related to each other in love as a result of the common substance they share. The love relationship between them is not simply an attribute, but more the essence of their being, an embodiment of their common substance. Augustine would, therefore, identify the Spirit in the immanent Trinity as the bond of love between the Father and the Son because the Spirit is what is specifically common to both of them. He would argue that

whether he is the unity of both the others or their holiness or their charity, whether he is their unity because their charity, and their charity because their holiness, it is clear that he is not one of the two [other persons] since he is that by which the two

19 St. Augustine, The Trinity V. 6, 192. Alasdair Heron observed in his book on The Holy Spirit that “here lies the root of what became axiomatic in Western Trinitarian theology: that the divine persons are defined by their relations,” 89.
are joined each to the other … the Holy Spirit is something common to Father and Son, whatever it is, or is their very commonness or communion consubstantial and coeternal. Call this friendship, if it helps, but a better word for it is charity. And this too is substance because God is substance, and God is charity (1Jn. 4.8, 16) … And therefore there are not more than three; one loving him who is from him, and one loving him from whom he is, and love itself.\(^{20}\)

On account of the divine persons’ relationship in one Godhead, Augustine would affirm the unity, equality, and distinctiveness of the three persons of the immanent Trinity.

In Augustine’s own understanding, the Spirit is ultimately the bond of love between the Father and the Son as well as the gift of the Father to the Son. Yet, the Spirit as a gift is not less than the Father or the Son because it is impossible in the immanent Trinity for the Father to give anything less than himself without contradicting his own being. If God is indeed good, holy, and loving in his own nature, then he cannot, in Augustine’s estimation, give anything less than what is good, loving or holy. In identifying the Holy Spirit as the gift of God, Augustine was careful to emphasize the equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. The Spirit is not less or indistinct in itself because he who is “the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father, and the Holy Spirit who is also called the gift of God (Acts. 8:20; Jn. 4:10) is neither the Father nor the Son, they are certainly three.”\(^{21}\) The identity and uniqueness of the Spirit was evidently preserved by Augustine when he established the unity and equality of the divine persons of the Trinity on the basis of their common substance. Since the function of the Spirit in the Church as the source of communion is our subject-matter, it is

\(^{20}\) St. Augustine, *The Trinity* VI. 7, 209-210. Augustine summarized in this passage his understanding of the nature, person, and function of the Holy Spirit within the immanent Trinity. As the Spirit of the Father and the Son, the Spirit is common to both of them and is consubstantial with them but what is indisputable, as far as Augustine was concerned, is that the Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son because it is the one who joins or bonds them together in love. The Spirit is, accordingly, the one Augustine referred to as charity or love to indicate its particularity and distinctiveness within the immanent Trinity because it functions as the bond of love between the Father and the Son. This point of view will consistently be maintained and defended by Augustine throughout his trinitarian theology.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., V. 10, 196.
important to examine Augustine’s arguments on the consubstantiality, unity, and equality of the divine persons. This would help us to understand that the Spirit in the Church that Augustine compared to the soul in the body is not substantially less than the Spirit of God that is also the communion between the Father and the Son in the immanent Trinity.

1.1 THE DIVINE PERSONS AND THEIR COMMON SUBSTANCE

The distinctiveness of the divine persons as a Trinity and their divine consubstantiality as one God was broadly what preoccupied Augustine in his work on *The Trinity*. His main objective was clearly “to teach that according to the Scriptures Father and Son and Holy Spirit in the inseparable equality of one substance present a divine unity; and therefore there are not three gods but one God.”

22 Under this section on the divine persons and their common substance I will, therefore, highlight and analyze the sources, arguments, language, and logic Augustine deployed to affirm the distinctiveness and consubstantiality of the divine persons of the Trinity. These arguments will be drawn from his work on *The Trinity*, as well as his writings and sermons on the nature of the divine persons of the Trinity.

Since the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was rejected by the Arians and the Pneumatomachians, Augustine would appeal to the Scriptures to refute their claims. In defense of the faith of the Church, Augustine would argue that those who have affirmed that our Lord Jesus Christ is not God, … have been confuted by the utterance of the clearest and most consistent divine testimonies, for example *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (Jn. 1:1) … Now in this passage he clearly shows that he is not only God but also of the same substance as the Father, for after saying *and the Word was with God*, he adds, *all things were made through him, and without him was made nothing* (Jn. 1:2) … For every substance that is not God is a creature,

and that is not a creature is God … But all things were made through him; therefore, he is of one and the same substance as the Father.\(^23\)

If the Son is indeed the one through whom all things were made, it means that the Son cannot, in Augustine’s view, be made of a different substance from the Father. The Father and the Son cannot evidently be the source of creation without sharing the same substance. The common nature of the Father and the Son cannot, in that sense, be denied without equally denying the Son’s active participation in the work in creation.

The words of Jesus himself\(^24\) also indicate that the Father and the Son are one and the same substance and at the same time distinct. Jesus was clearly able to say in Jn. 10:29-30 that he and the Father are one because they share the same common substance. He could not possibly say that he and the Father is one because that would not only deny their distinctiveness within the Trinity, it would also give the impression that the Son exists as a modality of the Father. Therefore, in order to recognize their distinctiveness as divine persons and at the same time acknowledge their common substance, “the divine utterances have many ways of saying things about them individually which belong to them all, on account of the indivisible operation of their one and the same substance.”\(^25\)

Therefore, the Father and the Son can be distinguished from each, but they cannot be separated from each other on account of their common substance and operation.

The consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son is also firmly established in the Scripture, from Augustine’s point of view. The mere fact that the Spirit is duly accorded a form of worship and service in the Scriptures that is only proper to

---

\(^{23}\) St. Augustine, *The Trinity* 1. 9, 71.

\(^{24}\) In Jn. 10:29-30 Jesus said “My Father, who has given them [the sheep] to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” Both the oneness and distinctiveness of the Father and the Son are proved in this verse as far as Augustine was concerned.

\(^{25}\) St. Augustine, *The Trinity* 1. 25, 84.
God means the Spirit is not a creature. Because the Spirit is clearly not a creature, the Spirit “is not only God … but also true God; therefore absolutely equal to the Father and the Son, and consubstantial and co-eternal in the oneness of the three.” The one passage Augustine often cited to establish the consubstantiality of the Spirit is 1Cor. 6:15 where Christians are told that their bodies are the members of Christ. This passage shows that if things that are the members of Christ are the temple of the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit is not a creature, since we cannot but owe, to one whom we offer our bodies to as a temple, that service by which only God is to be served, which in Greek is called *latreia*. So he says in conclusion, *Glorify God therefore in your bodies* (1Cor. 6:20).

If our bodies as members of Christ are temples of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit must equally be God dwelling in our bodies because a temple and the service conducted in a temple are reserved for God alone. In essence, it is one and the same God who is worshipped in the Spirit dwelling in the temple. The members of the Church cannot, therefore, worship the Spirit if the latter is not consubstantial with the Father and the Son.

The Spirit must, consequently, be God if the members of the Church are temples of the Spirit. There is no reason on that basis for the Spirit to be regarded as inferior in nature to the Father and the Son … because this Trinity is one God only. Not that the Father is to be understood as being identical with the Son and the Holy Spirit, but the Father remains the Father, the Son remains the Son, and the Holy Spirit remains the Holy Spirit, yet the Trinity is one God.

The oneness of God indicates that the divine persons are consubstantial in nature. Their oneness is ultimately guaranteed by virtue of their common substance, but they still retain

---

26 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* 1. 13, 73.
27 Ibid., 1. 13, 73. The term the Septuagint uses, in Augustine’s estimation, to describe the form of service we need to render the Spirit is not *douleuein* but *latreuein*. In this quotation, Augustine assumed that *doxa* is part of *latreia* but the proper word that is used in the Greek is not *latreia* but *doxa*.
their distinctiveness because “the Father is always the Father, the Son is always the Son, and the Holy Spirit is always the Holy Spirit.” Augustine was not only able to defend the consubstantiality of the divine persons from what is revealed in the Scriptures; he was also able to affirm their distinctiveness in the Trinity. Scripture did not obviously use the word substance in reference to the three divine persons. However, Augustine was able to defend the consubstantiality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit based on what is broadly inferred in the Scriptures.

In addition to the arguments adopted from Scripture to establish the consubstantiality and distinctiveness of the divine persons, Augustine also developed logical and rational arguments to defend the Church’s faith in the triune God. As a result, he was more concise about the distinctions which ought to be outlined against the self-proclaimed ‘critics of our faith’ who deny the consubstantiality of the divine persons. Augustine was, accordingly, precise about specific terms and concepts that although

God is substance, perhaps a better word would be being; … what the Greeks call ousia … Other things we call beings or substances admit of modifications, by which they are modified or changed to a great or small extent. But God cannot be modified in any way, and therefore the substance or being which is God is alone unchangeable, and therefore it pertains to it most truly and supremely to be, from which comes the name being.

This observation is of great importance in understanding Augustine’s whole idea about the consubstantiality of the divine persons because it does not allow him to admit any difference between their substance and being. What the three persons are in substance is, therefore, what they are in being. Their substance is not, consequently, a fourth entity independent of their being, apart from who they are as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

29 St. Augustine, The Trinity, 20, 171.
30 Ibid., V. 3, 190.
From the Arians’ point of view the Father cannot be of the same substance with the Son. The reason for this conclusion is because “being Unbegotten belongs to the substance of the Father and being begotten belongs to the substance of the Son, therefore, Father and Son are of different substances.” In response to this view, Augustine would conduct a rational and linguistic analysis of the concepts used in reference to the divine persons to show that the Arians were wrong to assume that whatever is said about God is said substance-wise. What is said about God in himself must, therefore, be distinguished from what is said about the intra-divine relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The words that specifically refer to God in himself, from Augustine’s perspective, are the words that are said substance-wise. Other words that refer to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are meant to refer to them relationship-wise. There are instances in that case when God is referred to only substance-wise or relationship-wise. A clear example of terms that are used to refer to God relationship-wise are “Unbegotten and begotten” because they refer to the Father and the Son in relation to each other. What is said about God does not always refer to his substance as such because some things are said with reference to something else, like Father with reference to Son and Son with reference to Father; and this is not said modification-wise, because one is always Father and the other always Son … what is signified by calling them Father and Son belongs to them eternally and unchangeably. Therefore, although being Father is different from being Son, there is no difference of substance, because they are not called these things substance-wise but relationship-wise; and yet this relationship is not a modification, because it is not changeable.

32 St. Augustine, The Trinity V. 6, 192.
By clearly introducing the above distinction between the divine persons’ substance and relationship, Augustine was able to devise a temporary solution to the linguistic problem created by the Arian and Eunomian controversies.

The difficulty Augustine eventually encountered in distinguishing the divine persons according to their relations was with reference to the Holy Spirit because the “relationship, to be sure, is not apparent in this particular name.” 33 This name of the third person of the Trinity does not depict its relationship to the Father and the Son in the same way that the former and latter’s relationship is signified by their names. However, Augustine would deal with the problem in two ways: he would seek to distinguish the Spirit from the Father and the Son by arguing that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Secondly, he would identify the Spirit as the gift of the Father and the Son that is related to the giver. Augustine would in that way distinguish the Spirit from both the Father and the Son based on the Spirit’s relationship to them as their common gift. In so doing, Augustine was able to affirm the Spirit’s distinctive function in the immanent Trinity and in the Church.

The consubstantiality of the divine persons of the Trinity is clearly what the specific terms that refer to God substance-wise signify. When we rightly say God is holy, good, just, and almighty, it is nothing but God who is considered in himself. For this reason, Augustine would explore ways and means in which what is predicated of God in himself can also be predicated of each person in the Trinity in himself without necessarily implying or referring to their relationships. He would argue that when Scripture maintains that Christ is power of God and the wisdom of God, it does not effectively amount to a contradiction. The reason for this is that power and wisdom both refer to God

33 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* V. 12, 197.
in himself and each divine person of the Trinity in their being without evoking their relations as Father, Son, and Spirit. Christ is not in that sense the only power and wisdom of God as if

the Father is not powerful with his power or wise with his wisdom … or that to be the Father and to be wise must be understood as two different things, so that he is not wise simply by being … or that the Father is not anything in reference to himself, and that not only his being Father but also his simply being is said with reference to the Son.34

The Pauline text in 1Cor. 1:24 that referred to Christ as the power and wisdom of God was open to such a misinterpretation. However, Augustine was able to explain this text in such a way that it did not imply that Christ is the power and wisdom of the Father and the Spirit in their trinitarian relations. When Scripture refers to Jesus as the power of God and the wisdom of God, it refers to him in his being as God and as a divine person of the Trinity. Augustine would, therefore, argue that

the Father is himself wisdom, and the Son is called the wisdom of the Father in the same way as he is called the light of the Father, that is, that as we talk of light from light, and both are one light, so we must understand wisdom from wisdom, and both one wisdom. And therefore also one being, because there to be is the same as to be wise.35

Exactly how an attribute like wisdom is not any different from a person’s being in himself is difficult to imagine in the realm of material objects where matter is divisible and subject to change. However, in the immaterial realm of the divine persons, their attributes and personal qualities constitute their essence. Their being and substance is not any different from each other because who they are in being is the same as what they are in essence. The fact that God’s nature is not divisible or subject to modification, and the fact that his being and his essence are not different from each other proves, for

34 St. Augustine, The Trinity VII. 2, 218-219.
35 Ibid., VII. 2, 220-221.
Augustine, that God is essentially “simple multiplicity or multiple simplicity”\(^36\) When Christ is referred to as the power of God and the wisdom of God, it does not take away anything from the Father because “it is not one thing that makes him great and another that makes him God; what makes him great is what makes him God, because for him it is not one thing to be great and another to be God.”\(^37\) The Father is wisdom as well as the Son, and the Spirit is also wisdom since it is one and the same “to be” and “to be wise.”

Augustine’s perspective on God’s simplicity is quite critical and central to his trinitarian theology because the idea of God’s simplicity is what helped him to offer a comprehensive interpretation of the Pauline text on Christ as the power and wisdom of God. For Lewis Ayres, it represents a significant shift and development in Augustine’s conception about God from his early thoughts when he “originally conceived of God as an extended, and perhaps infinitely diffused material substance.”\(^38\) But he abandoned this view, as far as Ayres is concerned, and consistently argued that

God is inseparably and eternally greatness or beauty itself. There is no division possible between being and attributes in the God who ‘simply’ is those qualities that we want to predicate of God. Divine simplicity is treated as an essential corollary of Augustine’s conception of God as immaterial, unchangeable and as Truth itself.\(^39\)

The linguistic solution he earlier proposed against the Arians was apparently overtaken by his doctrine of the simplicity of God. This was necessary because Augustine clearly “does not want us to take his division of trinitarian language into essential and relational as indicating that God is one thing or substance with secondary internal divisions.”\(^40\)

---

\(^{36}\) St. Augustine, *The Trinity* VI. 6, 209.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., VII. 1, 218.


\(^{39}\) Ibid., 54.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 64.
fact, it is his doctrine of God’s simplicity that he invoked in defense of the
consubstantiality of the divine persons in order to avoid the logical implications of his
linguistic analysis while being faithful to Scripture. He would, therefore, observe that

with God it is not so, that his substance to be is one thing, and his power to be
able another thing; but whatever is his, and whatever he is, is consubstantial with
him, because he is God; it is not so that in one way he is, in another way is able,
he has the esse and the posse together ... In the Son, power and substance are not
different: the power is the self-same that the substance is; the substance to be, the
power to be able.41

One can, accordingly, understand why Augustine preferred “being” to
“substance” because substance does not readily encompass attributes of God or what God
is able to do in himself. Clearly, the latter is a more limited concept than being because
being also connotes God’s essence and his existential nature. Hence, for Augustine, “God
is called being, which he is called properly, or substance which he is called improperly,
either word is predicated with reference to self, not by way of relationship with reference
to something else.”42 He did not simply want to show how the divine persons of the
Trinity share a common substance; he also wanted to highlight their oneness in being. For
this reason, the substance of the divine persons of the Trinity should not be considered as
something different from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Otherwise, it would become
another entity in addition to the divine persons. Augustine himself observed that

there is nothing else … of this being besides this triad. And yet we do talk of three
persons of the same being, or three persons one being; but we do not talk about
three persons out of the same being, as though what being is were one thing and
what person is another, as we can talk about three statues out of the same gold.43

42 St. Augustine, The Trinity VII. 10, 228.
43 Ibid., VII. 11, 230.
Consequently, it is wrong to say the divine persons of the Trinity are out of the same being because their being or substance is nothing other than who they are. When we rightly consider the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit individually, we are limited by human language according to Augustine. As a result, we are obliged, according to Augustine, to use the word person in response to the question three what? In answering this question “human speech labors under a great dearth of words. So we say three persons, not in order to say that precisely, but in order not to be reduced to silence.” The idea of three persons should not suggest that the substance of the Trinity is also three in number, namely, three gods because it is for convenience’ sake that the idea of three persons is introduced in trinitarian theology.

Augustine would, nonetheless, illustrate how three distinct divine persons share a common substance by way of an analogy. However, his illustrations are simply analogies that should not, he said, be literally compared to the oneness of the three divine persons of the Trinity. When one is, for instance,

asked about a fountain, we cannot say that it is a river; nor again can we say of a river that it is a fountain; nor can we call a drink, which comes from a fountain or a river, either a river or a fountain. Nevertheless, we use the name water when speaking of a trinity of this kind; and to the question as to what each is individually, we reply that it is water … We cite these physical examples not because of their similarity to the divine nature but by reason of their visible unity, to enable us to understand how three objects can have, not only individually but even simultaneously, a single name.

The difficulty as Augustine pointed out in his major work on The Trinity, is not so much how the three divine persons of the Trinity exist in their consubstantiality and unity. The problem is how one can articulate or express their consubstantiality and distinctiveness in a language that is proper, accurate, and in line with the trinitarian statements of the

44 St. Augustine, The Trinity V. 10, 196.
45 St. Augustine, Faith and the Creed 17. 166-167.

38
Scriptures on the equality of the divine persons. Towards this end, Augustine would devise a way of articulating the consubstantiality of the divine persons of the Trinity in order to establish the equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1.2 THE EQUALITY OF THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT

While it was necessary for Augustine to affirm that the Trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have the same common substance, it was equally important to maintain that they are similarly coequal in divinity, unity, and power from all eternity. He would, therefore, insist that in their divine substance as God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not greater or less than one another but equal to each other. Even though the Son and the Spirit were both sent by the Father, and the Son became man and the Spirit descended in the form of a dove, their divinity and equality with the Father were not diminished as a result of the incarnation and the descent of the Spirit. For Augustine, the Son’s incarnation in the form of a human person, and the descent of the Spirit in the form of a dove, must be distinguished from their divine state without denying their equality with the Father. The Spirit that Augustine compared in the Church to the soul in the body is, therefore, not less than the Father and the Son on account of its function in the Church.

The rule that Augustine, accordingly, adopted in response to those who insisted that the Son or the Spirit is inferior to the Father is “that the Son is equal to the Father in his divinity, less than the Father in his humanity. So he [would] interpret all seemingly subordinationist texts as referring to Christ’s humanity.”46 In his human nature, the Son of God is clearly less than the Father when he was sent by the Father to redeem humanity from sin and death. However, in his divinity as God, the Son of God is equal with God in all respects. His human nature is what evidently makes him to become less equal with the

46 Edmund Hill, Introduction to *The Trinity*, by St. Augustine, 88, 47.
Father and that is because the human nature he incarnated was an integral part of himself as a person. The equality of the Son with the Father is, therefore, not an issue because this rule for solving this question in all the sacred Scriptures is laid down for us in this one passage of the apostle Paul’s letter, where the distinction is clearly set out. He says: *Who being in the form of God thought it no robbery to be equal to God, yet he emptied himself taking the form of a servant* (Phil. 2:6). So the Son of God is God the Father’s equal by nature, by condition his inferior. In the form of a servant which he took he is the Father’s inferior; in the form of God in which he existed even before he took this other he is the Father’s equal.\(^{47}\)

Nobody can rightly deny the equality of the Son’s divinity with the Father if the Son is the one who emptied himself of his equality with God without denying his form as God. Even though he is in the form of a servant, he is still equal with the Father as God.

The Spirit is also distinguished from the forms in which it appears. But in contrast to the Son whose servant-form is part of himself, the Spirit is not united to its forms in the same way that the Son is united to his human nature. On that basis, the Son is always the one presented in Scripture as less than the Father in his servant-form. For Augustine, nowhere do we find it written that God the Father is greater than the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit less than God the Father; and the reason is that a created form was not assumed by the Holy Spirit to appear under in the same way that the Son of man was assumed by the Word of God as the form in which to present his person to the world.\(^{48}\)

The Spirit’s equality with the Father cannot forcefully be denied or questioned in any given text of Scripture because the physical form of the Spirit makes no difference to the Spirit’s equality with the Father. There is certainly a distinction between the divine and physical forms, but there is no inequality between them because of the common substance they share. Each of them is evidently equal to the other even in their distinctiveness. Hence, the relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which reflects

\(^{47}\) St. Augustine, *The Trinity* 1. 14, 74.

\(^{48}\) Ibid., II. 11, 104.
their distinctiveness is always one of equality. In essence, it is impossible for their relationships to be any different if the Father, Son, or Spirit is not greater or lesser than all of them taken individually or collectively. The divine persons are, therefore, equal in the immanent Trinity where they all exist and subsist in the form of God.

To deny the equality of the divine persons would have serious implications, as far as Augustine was concerned. Indeed, it would not just suggest that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are subordinate to one another in their relations, it would also imply that they are not of the same divine nature; that they cannot be worshipped as God if they are unequal. But nothing justifies this Arian and Pneumatomachian point of view and nothing gives anyone the reason to think the divine persons in the immanent Trinity are unequal in their nature and relationship. They are all equal because “so total is the equality in this triad that not only is the Father not greater than the Son as far as divinity is concerned, but also Father and Son together are not greater than the Holy Spirit, nor any single person of the three less than the Trinity itself.”⁴⁹ The idea that the Son and the Spirit are not equal to the Father because they are sent by the Father was absolutely rejected by Augustine. In terms of their divinity, it simply cannot be assumed that the Son and the Holy Spirit are unequal to the Father who sent them on mission. Rather, it suggests, in Augustine’s estimation, that the Son and the Holy Spirit are known to come forth from the Father who sent them on mission. The reason the Son and the Spirit are sent by the Father is not that the Father is superior, but that the Father is the principal origin of their being. Therefore, the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal in divinity with the Father who sent them on mission.

⁴⁹ St. Augustine, *The Trinity* VIII. 1, 241.
The equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity is clearly based on their consubstantiality with each other rather than on their origin from the Father. In fulfilling what they were sent to accomplish, the Son and the Spirit are not only obedient to the Father, but also equal to the Father even in their obedience. Their obedience to the Father is not a sign of their subordination or inequality as such, but their absolute oneness and equality with the Father. Our perception of the divine persons of the Trinity in their relations as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit does not fundamentally alter their equality in themselves because they are consubstantial in nature. Hence, the equality that exists among the divine persons is not ultimately compromised for the simple fact that sendings are not mentioned in Scripture because of any inequality or disparity or dissimilarity of substance between the divine persons, but because of the created visible manifestation of the Son and the Holy Spirit; or better still, in order to bring home to us that the Father is the source and origin of all deity.50

The equality of the divine persons of the Trinity is evidently perceived by Augustine as a substantial quality of their being; something that is not accidental to their nature, but a property of their substance. Therefore, it is impossible for their equality to increase or lessen in any shape or form just as it is impossible for their substance to become less than its actuality. The equality of the divine persons of the Trinity is one of perfect equals that admits of no other being outside the immanent Trinity.

Augustine was clearly keen to preserve the equality of the divine persons of the Trinity even when emphasizing their distinctiveness. He, therefore, maintained that in that invisible and inviolable Trinity which the true faith and the Catholic Church profess and proclaims, God the Father is not the Father of the Holy Spirit but of the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is not the Spirit only of the Father or only of the Son, but of both Father and Son [and] … the property of the Father is to be the author and origin of the others, the property of the Son is to be born, the

50 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* IV. 32, 176-177.
property of the Holy Spirit is to be the communion of Father and Son, and the property of the three is to be equal to each other.\textsuperscript{51}

The Spirit is, therefore, what is common to the Father and the Son as the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. Yet, the Spirit does not constitute the equality among the divine persons of the Trinity. Rather, their equality is a property common to them within their inner being and is something inherent to their own divine nature. One cannot, consequently, imagine the three divine persons in their inequality because inequality is simply contrary to the nature and inner being of the Trinity. In their nature as God, God the Father can never be greater than God the Son; God the Son can never be wiser than God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and God the Holy Spirit can never be more loving and holy than God the Father and the Son. In the immanent Trinity, it is purely in their equality that the divine persons can subsist or relate to each other.

Yet, some activities, in Augustine’s view, are proper to the Father, or the Son, or the Spirit despite the fact that they are equal and even inseparable in their work. Creation is specifically proper, for instance, to the Father whereas redemption is proper to the Son, and sanctification is proper to the Spirit. However, it does not necessarily follow, in Augustine’s estimation, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are unequal in themselves because of their activity in creation, redemption, and sanctification. What is proper to them as individuals and what they accomplish as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit does not make them unequal in their relation. Augustine would, therefore, maintain that

although we admit that the Holy Spirit does what they said he does, what they go on to say does not follow from that admission: ‘The Holy Spirit is distinct from the Son in nature and condition, rank and will, dignity and power, virtue and activity.’ After all, the nature of human beings is not different because their works can be separated – something that is not possible in the case of the Trinity … How

can the dignity, power, and virtue not be equal in all of them, since they all do the same things and do them in like manner. For we reject as completely false their claim that they are different in their activities.\textsuperscript{52}

One can, therefore, argue that it is the divine persons themselves who are all at work together \textit{ad extra}. However, some works are ascribed or appropriated to the Father, Son, or Spirit on account of their particularity. This is what is now referred to as the theory of appropriation based on Augustine’s insight. What the Arians, accordingly, failed to realize in this particular case is that the equality of the divine persons does not depend on the work they do as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Rather, it depends more on the consubstantiality of the divine persons of the Trinity.

1.3 THE UNITY OF THE DIVINE PERSONS

Each of the divine persons is God and they are equal to each other even in their distinctiveness. Yet, they are not three gods, but one God within the Trinity. The divine persons of the Trinity are, therefore, united because the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three gods but one God. The unity of the divine persons is, consequently, based on the fact that the Trinity is one God and all share the same substance. Augustine would essentially deduce the unity of the divine persons from the common nature of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The divine persons of the Trinity are fully united in that sense based on their common substance.

The unity of the divine persons of the Trinity is not, consequently, an accidental quality of their being but a substantial quality of their nature. They cannot easily be

\textsuperscript{52} St. Augustine, “The Arian Sermon and Answer to the Arian Sermon XXIII, 31,” In \textit{Arianism and Other Heresies}, translated by Roland J. Teske (New York: New City Press, 1995), 164-165. The idea that the divine persons work together is consistently emphasized in Augustine’s writings. In Letter 11. 2, he reiterated this fact “whatever this Trinity does must be thought to be done at the same time by the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father does not do anything that the Son and the Holy Spirit do not do, nor does the Holy Spirit do anything that the Father and the Son do not do,” 36. This will be discussed later in detail to show that the function of the Spirit does not exclude the Father and the Son.
perceived even in their distinctiveness without taking their unity of substance into consideration. If Augustine ultimately focused on the consubstantiality of the divine persons and emphasized their oneness, it is because he wanted to provide a basis for the equality and unity of the divine persons in their relation. However, he was quite aware of the dangers of overemphasizing their unity at the expense of their distinctiveness. He was, therefore, careful about the way he presented the unity of the divine persons to avoid any misunderstanding about the triune God. Each time Augustine discussed the unity of the divine persons of the Trinity, he emphasized the distinctiveness of the divine person. He highlighted their distinctiveness to ensure that their identity is not confused, that specifically the Son and the Spirit are not subordinated to the Father.

When Augustine first examined the question of the unity of God in *De Trinitate* in light of what is revealed in Scripture, he was quick to point out that although indeed the Father has begotten the Son, … he who is the Father is not the Son; and the Son is begotten by the Father, and therefore he who is the Son is not the Father; and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but only the Spirit of the Father and the Son, himself coequal to the Father and the Son, and belonging to the threefold unity.\(^5^3\)

Augustine was not only able to recognize the unity of the divine persons; he was also able to acknowledge their identity and distinctiveness in the immanent Trinity. However, their distinctiveness as divine persons does not amount to a diversity or a multiplication of gods. The fact that there are three distinct persons in the immanent Trinity, as far as Augustine was concerned, means that the Father is and the Son is and the Holy Spirit is, and that the Son is not the same as the Father is, nor is the Holy Spirit the same as the Father or the Son. So human inadequacy searched for a word to express three what, and it said substance or persons. By these names it did not wish to give any idea of diversity, but it wished to avoid any idea of singleness; so that as well as understanding

\(^{5^3}\) St. Augustine, *The Trinity* 1. 7, 69.
unity in God, whereby there is said to be one being, we might also understand trinity, whereby there are also said to be three substances or persons.\textsuperscript{54}

The unity and the distinctiveness of the divine persons were significantly of great interest and concern for Augustine. The way he clearly attempted to explain why the divine persons are thus identified in the above passage shows how balanced Augustine was in his understanding of the unity and distinctiveness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Augustine was able to maintain that the divine persons are both united and yet distinct because of his own perception of the simplicity of God; that what God is in himself, that is, in his substance, is not different from who God is in his own being. This idea was what enabled him to appreciate the common nature of the divine persons for in using the grammar of simplicity to articulate a concept of Father, Son, and Spirit as each God and as the one God, we find that the more we grasp the full reality of each person – the full depth of the being that they have from the Father – the more we are also forced to recognize the unity of their being. We do not identify the unity by focusing on something other than the persons: it is focusing on the persons’ possession of wisdom and being ‘in themselves’ that draws us to recognize their unity.\textsuperscript{55}

The divine persons are the ones in the final analysis who are united in the Trinity and not their substance. Augustine’s understanding of the unity of the divine persons was not in that sense a betrayal of the faith of the Church in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As Barnes noted, “any application or development of the creed which omits the dialectical content (between unity in God and the reality of distinction in God) is false to the canonical creed.”\textsuperscript{56} The unity that the divine persons constitute can simply be characterized as a unity of equals, a unity of distinct beings as well as a unity of diversity. The latter is the case because

\textsuperscript{54} St. Augustine, The Trinity VII. 9, 227.
\textsuperscript{55} Ayres, “The Fundamental Grammar of Augustine’s Trinitarian Theology,” 66.
our faith insists on this … that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one inseparable trinity or triad; one God, not three gods, but one God in such a way that the Son is not the Father, that the Father is not the Son, that the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but the Spirit of the Father and the Son.57

Augustine was not only able to articulate the unity and distinctiveness of the divine persons of the Trinity, he was also able to conceptualize in a modest way how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united and yet distinct in their being and operations. By using appropriate analogies such as lover, beloved, and love or memory, understanding, and will, Augustine was able to illustrate how three entities that are distinct in identity can in fact be united in their operations and relations. However, he considered these illustrations simply as analogies that cannot fully represent the divine persons and the perfect unity that exists between them. He specifically noted that he is not suggesting that memory is the Father, understanding is the Son, will is the Spirit. I don’t say it, however it may be understood, I don’t dare to … I haven’t introduced these three things as though they were to be equated to that divine triad, to be marshaled into an analogy, that is to say into a strict comparison. I don’t mean that.58

In Augustine’s trinitarian theology and ecclesiology, analogies are carefully used to illustrate how the divine persons operate according to their particularity, but they are not intended to literally replicate what they signify. For this reason, I will argue in Chapter two that Augustine did not intend his Spirit – Soul analogy, which signifies the function of the Spirit in the Church, to suggest that the Spirit is literally the soul of the Church. Augustine was particularly interested in the way memory, understanding, and will, for instance, operate in remembering a word and understanding what is remembered, and loving that which is known to be true more than the faculties themselves. He did not, for that reason, select memory, understanding, and will because they represent the divine

58 St. Ibid., 52. 23,” 62.
persons, but because of their joint operation in remembering, knowing, and loving what is ultimately true, namely, God. His focus was, therefore, on the inner operations of these faculties because

they are not only each contained by each, they are all contained by each as well. After all, I remember that I have memory and understanding and will, and I understand that I understand and will and remember, and I will that I will and remember and understand, and I remember my whole memory and understanding and will all together.\(^59\)

The most appropriate analogy of the unity of the divine persons in their activity was what Augustine was mainly searching for. He would, therefore, narrow his search for an image of the Trinity that reflects the unity of the Trinity to the inner being of the human person. The analogies of lover, beloved, and the love as well as mind, knowledge, and love would evidently be overtaken by those of memory, understanding, and will. Augustine would, therefore, “search in this image of God for some special trinity that is *sui generis*, with the help of him who made us to his own image.”\(^60\) The fact that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God is the reason Augustine focused more on the inner being and mental acts of the human person for what he referred to as traces of the unity of the divine persons of the Trinity. This was quite appropriate for him because

it was not from outside that memory received what it was to retain, nor was it outside that the understanding found what it was to look at, like the eyes of the body, nor was it outside that the will joined these two together like the form of the body and the form derived it in the gaze of the onlooker.\(^61\)

For Augustine, the mind’s capacity to remember, understand, and love itself without receiving anything outside of itself is what reflects the inner unity of the divine persons.

---

\(^{59}\) St. Augustine, *The Trinity* X. 18, 299.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., XIV. 6, 374.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., XIV. 11, 379.
If God is indeed the one the mind remembers, understands, and loves, it is
difficult in a sense to understand how the mind succeeds in remembering, understanding,
and loving God without any outside influence or inspiration. The reason why Augustine
was more interested in the inner operations of the mind, in my view, is not totally
obvious. In other words, it is not self-evident that whatever memory, understanding, and
will process is purely from within the mind because memory equally evokes images from
the past and the mind also obtains its ideas about God from external impressions.
Moreover, memory, understanding, and will are not a unified whole the way the divine
persons of the Trinity are of one and the same substance. Therefore, the idea simply
indicates that

Augustine uses this analogy in ways that draw on our imagination of mental
processes to provide a key analogical base for imagining three things that are
distinct and yet form an inseparable unity. Simultaneously, however, Augustine
wants his readers to see their own inability to grasp the unitary process they
describe as essential to being in the image of God, and he wants his readers to see
that the divine unity exceeds our imagination.\(^\text{62}\)

One should not only take the limitation of the analogy into consideration, but also the
human person’s inability to fully conceive the unity and distinctiveness of the divine
persons of the Trinity. However, if one is fortunate enough to perceive an image of the
Trinity within one’s inner being, one should realize that it is

not really the image of God because the mind remembers and understands and
loves itself, but because it is also able to remember and understand and love him
by whom it was made. And when it does this it becomes wise. If it does not do it,
then even though it remembers and understands and loves itself, it is foolish. Let
it then remember its God to whose image it was made.\(^\text{63}\)

---


\(^\text{63}\) St. Augustine, *The Trinity* XIV. 15, 383.
What makes it possible for anyone to realize the image of the Trinity in his or her inner being is not one’s rational faculties, but rather, one’s contemplation of God, whose image one bears. The extent to which one is able to remember, understand, and love God is the extent to which one beholds the image of the Trinity in one’s inner being.

Augustine’s analogies of the inner unity of the Trinity are definitely limited, but “what he offers by way of analogy is not knowledge but understanding.” He, therefore, expected these analogies of the inner being of the Trinity to be understood purely as analogies and not a replication of the Trinity itself. The limitations of these analogies, however, should not prevent us from appreciating Augustine’s overarching intent in presenting these analogies. The question raised by Gerald O’Collins is whether

Augustine’s psychological analogy pre-eminently avoids the risk of tritheism, but might be seen to encourage a monopersonal, modalist view of God. Does the intra-personal analogy ‘save’ the divine unity but ‘lose’ the threeness of God?

Based on my own study of Augustine’s understanding of the unity of the divine persons of the Trinity, I would argue that Augustine did not emphasize unity at the expense of the relational nature of the divine persons. Considering how Augustine consistently acknowledged their distinctiveness even in their relation as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it is not so evident that he encouraged a modalist view of God.

Augustine is also criticized, in Ayres’ view, by Orthodox theologians for his emphasis on the unity of the divine persons. They believe that

Augustine’s theology is insufficiently ‘personal’. This critique alleges that, because Augustine concentrates so strongly on the unity of God, and on describing this unity through focusing on the shared divine ‘essence’, he fails to

be attentive to the Father’s *monarchia* and to the personal foundation of the divine communion.\(^{66}\)

On the contrary, Augustine acknowledged the fact that the Father is the source and origin from whom the Son is begotten. At the same time the Father is the one from whom the Spirit principally proceeds in its procession from the Father and the Son. In fact, he affirmed the Father’s *monarchia* in a way that avoids the mistakes or misconceptions of the Sabellians who considered the Son and the Holy Spirit purely as modes or manifestations of the Father. The consubstantiality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was ultimately defended by Augustine to show that they are equally one God.

Augustine’s psychological analogy of the inner life of the Trinity in which he compared the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with the lover, beloved, and the love is similarly criticized in the East. He is faulted for depersonalizing the Holy Spirit or at least for not allowing the identity of a distinct person to come through clearly. After all, in the I-Thou relationship, the mutual gift of love that two persons bestow on each other is not a third person or at least does not emerge as an activity that defines a person distinct from the I and the Thou.\(^{67}\)

A literal interpretation of the analogy would amount to a depersonalization of the Spirit. However, if this analogy is properly understood as Augustine intended, the Spirit would be seen as a divine personification of the love between the Father and the Son. In humans, only the lover and the beloved and not the love with which they love one another are clearly persons in the true sense of the word. A husband’s and wife’s love for one another can, nevertheless, give birth to a child that makes them a family of three instead of a family of two. The analogy is not, accordingly, irrelevant if one is cautious of the fact that Augustine’s primary aim was to show that the Spirit cannot be either the

\(^{66}\) Ayres, “The Fundamental Grammar of Augustine’s Trinitarian Theology,” 52.

\(^{67}\) O’Collins, *The Tripersonal God*, 135.
Father or the Son if the Spirit is indeed the love between the Father and the Son. The unity and the distinctiveness of the divine persons are simultaneously taken into consideration by Augustine in this analogy of lover, beloved, and the love between them. If Augustine was more particular about the unity of the divine persons than about their personal traits, it was because of the lingering questions he sought to address and the Tradition behind his trinitarian theology. As Barnes noted,

Augustine’s basic frame of reference for understanding the Trinity is the appropriation of Nicaea. That appropriation takes place within a polemical context, and, moreover, involves rearticulating the creed of Nicaea in terms which were not originally part of the text. In Augustine’s time, the most important of such articulations is that ‘the unity of the Trinity is found in its inseparable activities or operations.’

Augustine’s convictions about the unity of the divine persons are convictions that are also based on the fact that the divine persons are inseparable in their operations ad extra.

1.4 THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT WORK INSEPARABLY AD EXTRA

The Church was prepared to defend the consubstantiality of the divine persons in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed because the divine persons were perceived in the Scriptures and the Tradition of the Church to be inseparable in their work ad extra. If the latter is the case, they must also be inseparable in terms of their nature. The very fact that the divine persons of the Trinity work together is in itself a proof that they have the same substance and the fact that they have the same substance equally proves that they are inseparable in their work. The divine persons’ unity in nature and operations was indisputable, in the Church’s estimation, because catholic trinitarian theology argues that whatever shares the same nature performs the same actions, and what performs the same actions must have the same nature;

the Father and the Son perform the same actions so they must have the same nature, and sharing the same nature they act in unity.69

Whatever was done by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was considered in both East and West to be accomplished together by the three divine persons of the Trinity. Basil would, therefore, argue in his defense of the equality of the divine persons that “in every operation, the Holy Spirit is indivisibly united with the Father and the Son.”70 Each of the divine persons is, consequently, involved in creation in that sense if in fact “the Father creates through the Son and perfects through the Spirit.”71 His position was duly reiterated by Gregory of Nyssa who equally affirmed that

we are not to think of the Father as ever parted from the Son, nor to look for the Son as separate from the Holy Spirit … The Father is always Father, and in him the Son, and with the Son the Holy Spirit. If these persons, then, are inseparable from each other, how great is the folly of these men who undertake to sunder this indivisibility by certain distinctions of time … as to divide the inseparable.72

The same idea is similarly underscored in the trinitarian theology of Ambrose in the West. He also, recognized the fact that the divine persons of the Trinity inseparably work together. For Ambrose,

just as the charity of the Father and of the Son is one, so have we declared that this charity is poured forth abroad through the Holy Spirit … If, then, there is one peace, one grace, one charity, one communication on the part of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, surely there is one operation, and where there is one operation, certainly the power cannot be divided, and the substance separated … Who then shall dare to deny the unity of the name, when he sees the oneness of the operation?73

---

69 Barnes, “Reading Augustine’s Theology of the Trinity,” 160.
71 Ibid., 16. 38, 62.
The fact that the Spirit functions in the Church as the communion of love and unity does not mean that the Father and the Son are not involved in this unique work of the Spirit.

The activities of the divine persons of the Trinity were clearly considered in both East and West to be inseparable. When the Father, the Son, or the Spirit act, it was always regarded as the work of the three persons of the Trinity acting together. The work of each of them was equally understood to involve all the divine persons at once. This idea will greatly inform trinitarian reflection in both East and West because the inseparable operation of the three divine irreducible persons is a fundamental axiom of those theologies which provide the context for the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 and for the reinterpretation of Nicaea, which came to be the foundation of orthodox or catholic theology at the end of the fourth century.  

In accordance with the faith and Tradition of the Church, Augustine would similarly assume in his trinitarian theology that the divine persons of the Trinity are inseparable in their work *ad extra*. He would, therefore, proceed to reflect on the unity and distinctiveness of the divine persons of the Trinity by identifying his faith with the faith of the Church to prove his fidelity to the Church’s teaching on this particular subject.

Scripture and Tradition have all testified, according to Augustine, that “the Father and Son and Holy Spirit in the inseparable equality of one substance present a divine unity.” However, they are not so united and inseparable in substance that they cannot be distinguished from each other. The Father can, therefore, be distinguished from the Son and the Spirit, the Son can be distinguished from the Spirit, and the Spirit from the Father and the Son. Augustine was, consequently, obliged to address this question: how can the divine persons of the Trinity be so distinct and still work inseparably together as the

---

75 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* 1. 7, 69.
Church clearly teaches in its Tradition? Their distinctiveness alone was enough to prove, as far as some of Augustine’s critics were concerned, that the divine persons are separable in their work and operations. If truly they are inseparable in their work *ad extra* they cannot likewise be distinct from each other. The distinction Augustine made between the divine persons would inevitably require him to explain how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct, but inseparable in their work *ad extra*.

He also endeavored to explain a paradox, a kind of separated Trinity that Scripture seemed to present in contradiction to the Church’s faith and teaching that the divine persons are inseparable in their work. If the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are really inseparable in their work *ad extra*, he must equally explain why

> it was not this three that was born of the Virgin Mary … but the Son alone. Nor was it this same three that came down upon Jesus in the form of a dove at his baptism … but the Holy Spirit alone. Nor was it the same three that spoke from heaven … but it was the Father’s voice alone addressing the Son.  

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as far as Augustine’s critics were concerned, should not evidently be separated in time, space and form in the history of salvation if they are essentially inseparable in their work *ad extra*. They should equally be born when Christ was born; they should likewise have descended upon Jesus at his baptism and they should also have spoken to him when the Father’s voice was heard at his transfiguration. The whole Trinity rather than the forms of the divine persons should have manifested itself to confirm that they are inseparable. In view of these misperceptions about the inseparability of the divine persons, Augustine would maintain that

> the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, God the creator, of one and the same substance, the almighty three, act inseparably. But they cannot be manifested inseparably by creatures which are so unlike them, especially material ones; just as our words which consist of material sounds can only name Father and Son and

---

Holy Spirit with their own proper intervals of time, which the syllables of each word take up, spaced off from each other by a definite separation.”

When the divine persons are manifested in the economy of salvation, they are manifested separately from each other, but they still work and operate inseparably together. They are separate in their manifestation, but inseparable in their work. Augustine was apparently able to distinguish the form in which the divine persons of the Trinity manifested themselves separately from their inseparable nature and inseparable operations.

In defense of his position, Augustine would provide practical examples to show how three things that are distinct operate inseparably together. The first clear example is the way memory, understanding, and will work together. Our memory, understanding, and will are all distinct from each other, but none of them can independently function on its own without the others. An act of memory, understanding, or will always involve the act of the other two faculties. Hence, it is impossible, as far as Augustine was concerned, for anyone to understand anything if one fails to remember or will what one wants to understand. The act of even naming memory requires, in Augustine’s estimation,

all three in operation to produce the name of one of the three. The single word ‘memory’ couldn’t be pronounced without will, understanding and memory all operating. The single word ‘understanding’ can’t be pronounced without memory, will and understanding all operating. Nor can the single word ‘will’... So too, the Trinity produced the flesh of Christ, but the only one of them it belongs to is Christ. The Trinity produced the dove from the sky, but the only one of them it belongs to is the Holy Spirit.

Just as memory is what is intended in pronouncing the word ‘memory,’ even though the word itself involves understanding and will, so also is the Son the only person who is born of the Virgin Mary with the cooperation of both the Father and the Spirit.

Accordingly, the Spirit is the only one who appeared in the form of a dove with the

77 St. Augustine, The Trinity IV. 30, 175.
cooperation of both the Father and the Son. In its visible manifestation in the form of a
dove, the Spirit is quite distinct from the Father and the Son. Yet, it operates together
with them as the sanctifier and teacher of the Truth. For Augustine, the Spirit “does these
works, [but] heaven forbid that one thinks that he does them without the Son … As the
Holy Spirit, then, does not teach or enlighten anyone without Christ, so he does not make
anyone holy without Christ.”79 Even as the bond of love and unity in the Trinity and the
Church, the Spirit works in conjuction with the Father and the Son.

A more philosophical explanation of how three things can be inseparable in nature
and operations and still remain distinct was also presented by Augustine in his Letter to
Nebridius. He pointed out that

there is no nature, and no substance whatsoever that does not have in itself and
does not display these three elements: first, that it exists, second, that it is this or
that; and third, that it remains as it was to the extent it can … If you see that it is
necessary that whatever exists is immediately this or that and remains in its kind
to the extent it can, those three do nothing apart from one another.80

Anything that has a nature and a substance must first be in itself and be recognized as this
or that particular object in the course of its life-span. The nature, particularity, and
duration of any object are essentially three of its properties that cannot be separated from
the object itself. In the same way the divine persons of the Trinity are inseparable in their
nature and operations. This analogy involves three terms, but it is important to note that

Augustine introduces the triad not because it is a trinitarian analogy in the sense
that each of the three ‘characteristics’ stands for one of the three persons. The
point of the triadic analysis of substance or nature is to provide an example …
namely, that the Three share common operations, and that such common
operations indicate (and are caused by) their common nature.81

79 St. Augustine, “The Arian Sermon and Answer to the Arian Sermon XXXII, 30” In Arianism and Other
Heresies, 164.
81 Barnes, “Rereading Augustine’s Theology of the Trinity,” 158.
In this analogy, Augustine was careful as in other analogies not to identify any of the
divine persons with the three terms of the analogy. The limitations of the analogies were
fully recognized in his attempt to articulate the unity and distinctiveness of the persons of
the Trinity in a language that is in accordance with Catholic faith. His perspective was
quite trinitarian indeed when he reflected on the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
This is especially true because, for Augustine, “the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit are
inseparably united in themselves, that this Trinity is one God; that all the works of the
one God are works of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

The whole Trinity is actively involved when the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit is at
work. However, on the basis of their own particularity and distinctiveness, Augustine
would associate or identify each of the divine persons with specific operations while
acknowledging their inseparability. His theological and trinitarian perspective equally
takes cognizance of what each divine person does in his particularity in the immanent and
the economic Trinity. The unique role or function of each of the divine persons of the
Trinity is, accordingly, taken into consideration in the trinitarian theology of Augustine.
He, therefore, claimed that

it was neither the Father nor the Son but only the Holy Spirit who appeared both
in the form of a dove and in tongues as of fire, and gave those upon whom he
came power to proclaim in many and various ways the mighty works of God. But
while this miracle refers solely to the Holy Spirit, we cannot exclude from it the
cooperation of the Father and the only begotten Word. Thus it is the Trinity that
performs the works of each of the persons in the Trinity, two of them cooperating
in the work of the other, harmonious action characterizing all three, inability to
perform marking none of them.

82 St. Augustine, Homilies on the Gospel of John, XX, V. 19, 137.
appreciated the fact that each of the divine persons of the Trinity distinctively performs particular functions
that he referred to as works of the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. Each of them is known for a
particular or specific form of work in which the work is appropriated to the Father, the Son, or the Spirit.
But in the process of accomplishing or fulfilling the particular work, Augustine is convinced that it is the

58
Augustine clearly recognized the function that each person of the Trinity uniquely accomplishes as a work of the Trinity as well because of the mutual and on-going cooperation between the divine persons. The Spirit, therefore, accomplishes its unique function with the cooperation of the Father and the Son, and the Son equally fulfills his mission with the cooperation of the Father and the Spirit. There is evidently a mutual cooperation between the divine persons of the Trinity whenever each of them acts to accomplish his function or mission.

The idea or sense of cooperation is significant, in my view, because it suggests that at least one of the divine persons plays a major or leading role in any given work of the Trinity. The one who, for instance, fosters unity in the immanent and economic Trinity with the cooperation of the other two, is in my estimation, the Holy Spirit because the Spirit is, according to Augustine, the communion and the bond of love between the Father and the Son and the source of unity within the community of believers, the Church. Augustine was, accordingly, sensitive to and conscious of the dialectics between what is common or trinitarian and what is particular or distinctive in the work and function of the divine persons of the Trinity.

Augustine was perfectly able to attribute certain qualities and activities to the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, although they apply to all the divine persons. The reason is not that these qualities and activities are unnatural or uncommon to the divine persons of the Trinity. Rather, they are most suitable or fittingly appropriate to the Father, the Son, or the Spirit. For this reason, Christ is uniquely called the power and wisdom of God in 1 Cor. 1:24. He is such, not because the Father and the Spirit are not wise or powerful in

Trinity as a whole that is actively involved in which two of the divine persons cooperate in the work of the other.
themselves, but because power and wisdom are most suitably attributed, according to Augustine, to Christ as the Word of God. If God is ultimately love as Scripture says in 1 Jn. 4:8.16, it means the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are love in themselves. Yet, as the communion between the Father and the Son, through whom God’s love is poured into our hearts (Rom. 5:5), Augustine would argue that the Spirit is most suitably and distinctively named the charity or love of God. In recognizing the inseparable nature of the divine persons and in acknowledging their particularity, Augustine was able, in what is now dubbed the theory of appropriation to account for what is expressed in the Scriptures. In addition to this, he was able to underscore the unique functions of each of the divine persons of the Trinity. The sense in which his appreciation of the unique functions of the divine persons is, subsequently, understood is ultimately critical and important because we still have to understand that the activities of the divine three are inseparable, so that when an activity is attributed to the Father he is not taken to engage in it without the Son and the Holy Spirit; and when it is an activity of the Son, it is not taken without the Father and the Holy Spirit, and when it is an activity of the Holy Spirit, it is not taken without the Father and the Son.84

When creation, redemption, or sanctification, for instance, are respectively attributed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, it should not be to the exclusion of any of them because the divine persons are inseparable in their operations. The idea or theory of appropriation is certainly helpful and revealing in understanding the particularity of the divine persons. However, the theory itself is unfortunately criticized first of all because the attributions often are arbitrary and sometimes contradict biblical ways of speaking about God’s activity, and second because the separateness and individuality of each divine person is more pronounced than interrelatedness and codependence.85

85 LaCugna, God For Us, 98.
This is the charge that is so frequently leveled against Augustine. Yet, a proper understanding of his trinitarian theology and his sensitivity to both the inseparable nature of the divine persons and their distinctiveness reveals that there is interrelatedness and cooperation between the divine persons of the Trinity. The latter can only work and function together in both the immanent and economic Trinity. In Augustine’s view, the reason the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have to work together “is not that each of them is unable to accomplish without the others what he does, rather, they cannot work separately in a case where their nature is not only equal, but also undivided.”

The critics of Augustine’s theory of appropriation, like Catherine LaCugna, cannot fully ignore the fact that there are also allusions in the Scriptures that explicitly or implicitly identify Christ as the Wisdom of God and the Spirit as the love of God. A fair assessment of Augustine’s efforts in his trinitarian theology would consider the theory of appropriation as a “method [that] allows Augustine to affirm meanings found in Scripture while at the same time acknowledging their limitations.” Augustine’s perception of Christ as the Wisdom of God and the Spirit as the Love of God should not, in the light of its biblical foundation, be easily classified as something arbitrary and contradictory as LaCugna suggested. Since it is an established fact for Augustine that the divine persons are inseparable in their work and nature, the unique functions of each of the divine persons of the Trinity can reasonably be discussed, analyzed, and evaluated within the framework of his trinitarian theology. My own reflection on and analysis of the functions of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity and the Church does not in turn aim to deny the

---

inseparability of the divine persons in their nature and work. Rather, it aims to identify

and define the Spirit’s specific functions in the immanent Trinity and the Church because

the operations of the Trinity are inseparable [but] this does not mean that they are

also indistinct. Every divine person, by the very fact that he is distinct from the

others, by appropriation has his own activity in the history of salvation, has a

relationship with creation, and, above all, has a relationship with humanity.88

The fact that the Spirit functions as the animating and unifying principle of the Church’s

unity and love does not ultimately imply that the Father and the Son do not cooperate

with the Spirit in its unique function in the Church.

THE SPIRIT’S DISTINCTIVE NATURE

The unity, equality, and consubstantiality of the divine persons of the Trinity were
discussed in detail in the previous section of this dissertation to underscore the fact that
the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God working inseparably together. However, the

distinctiveness of the divine persons was equally considered based on Augustine’s

understanding of the divine persons and their relations. What I will now examine in this

section is the Spirit’s distinctive nature in order to establish its function and identity in

the immanent and economic Trinity. Augustine would specifically emphasize the

uniqueness of the Spirit from the Father and the Son in his trinitarian theology. The

reason is not that the distinctiveness of the Son from the Father is insignificant, but that

those learned and eminent exponents of sacred Scripture have not so far, in any

extensive or detailed way, applied themselves to the subject of the Holy Spirit.
This would help us to understand what property is unique to him, what constitutes

him as he is, so that we are able to state that he is neither the Father, nor the Son

but the Holy Spirit only. What they postulate about him is that he is the gift of

God, enabling us to believe that the gift God gives in no way ranks inferior to

himself.89

89 St. Augustine, *Faith and the Creed* 18-19, 168.
The distinctive characteristics of the Spirit in immanent Trinity were what Augustine sought to identify in his trinitarian theology. His emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Spirit will, therefore, be taken into consideration for a better understanding of the Spirit in relation to the Father and the Son as well as the Church.

What is precisely unique about the Spirit is what Augustine clearly wanted to understand in order to distinguish the Spirit from the Father and the Son. The Spirit will not, therefore, be distinguished in a way that the Spirit will not have anything in common with the Father and the Son. The sense in which the Spirit is notably distinct from the other divine persons of the Trinity while sharing a common nature with the Father and the Son, was ultimately what was of interest to Augustine. He examined the uniqueness of the Spirit as the gift of God in which the giver of the gift is distinguished from the gift itself. But he also considered the uniqueness of the Spirit as the one who proceeds from the Father and the Son; as the common gift of the Father and the Son; as the bond of love, and communion between the Father and the Son. The Spirit is not the Father or the Son in Augustine’s view; not only because of who the Spirit is as the common gift of the Father and the Son, but because of what the Spirit does as the bond of love and the communion of the Father and the Son. Each of these unique characteristics of the Spirit will individually be considered in detail. This will generate a better appreciation of Augustine’s arguments for the distinctiveness of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. Also, it will make it possible to recognize his contribution towards a proper understanding of the function of the Spirit in the immanent and economic Trinity.
1.2.1 THE SPIRIT PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON

Augustine was prominently the first theologian of the Church who affirmed that the Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but from the Father and the Son. Prior to Augustine, the Spirit was simply known to proceed from the Father. Since the Father is the origin of the divine persons of the Trinity and all forms of being, it was generally assumed that the Spirit proceeds only from the Father. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed which served as a framework of Augustine’s trinitarian theology, thus referred to the Spirit as the Lord and Giver of life who proceeds from the Father. The possibility of the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son was not evidently foreseen apart from what was accepted by most of the Eastern Fathers of the Church like Basil and Gregory of Nyssa that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son.90 By this way of procession, the Spirit is implicitly related to the Son in proceeding from the Father through the Son, but not to the extent of directly proceeding from the Son. In that sense, the Father is strictly the only source from whom the Spirit proceeds.

Augustine was certainly conscious of the Tradition he inherited because he was quite eager to preserve the Church’s belief in the Father as the principle of origin. He was, likewise, aware of the testimony of Scriptures that the Spirit proceeds from the Father (Jn. 15:26), in contrast to his own insight that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. For this reason, he was careful to emphasize that ‘the Spirit proceeds principally from the Father and also the Son and “with reference to the Holy Spirit, they

are one origin; not two origins.”\(^{91}\) The one from whom the Spirit principally proceeds, according to Augustine, is clearly not the Son but the Father; a point that is not often noted or appreciated by Augustine’s critics. However, the Spirit also proceeds from the Son, in Augustine’s view, because it cannot be denied that

the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Son as well; it is not without point that the same Spirit is called the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. And I cannot see what else he intended to signify when he breathed and said *Receive the Holy Spirit* (Jn 20:22) … it was a convenient symbolic demonstration that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father.\(^{92}\)

What Jesus eminently did in breathing forth the Spirit was literally understood by Augustine as signifying the procession of the Spirit from Jesus, the Son of the Father. To understand the text in any other sense, in Augustine’s view, would suggest a distinction between the Spirit Jesus gave by breathing and the Spirit he sent after his ascension. The sense in which Augustine understood this particular text was what ultimately prompted him to conclude that the Spirit equally proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Augustine also used other texts from John’s Gospel to show that the Spirit ultimately proceeds from both the Father and the Son. Above all, he endeavored to show from these texts a more nuanced understanding of the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. Thus, Augustine was convinced that, even though the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as the Spirit of both, it proceeds from the Son on account of the Father as the source of all being. The procession of the Spirit from the Son is in that respect a direct effect of the procession of the Spirit from the Father. When Jesus specifically spoke about the Spirit, according to Augustine, as the one

*Whom I will send from the Father* (Jn. 15:26), the Lord showed that the Spirit is both the Father’s and the Son’s. Elsewhere too, when he said, *whom the Father

\(^{91}\) St. Augustine, *The Trinity* V. 15, 199.

\(^{92}\) Ibid., IV. 29, 174.
will send, he added, in my name (Jn. 14:26). He did not however say, ‘whom the Father will send from me’ as he said whom I will send from the Father (Jn. 15:26), and thereby he indicated that the source of all godhead, or if you prefer it, of all deity, is the Father. So the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son is traced back, on both counts, to him of whom the Son is born.  

The reason why Jesus said he would send the Spirit from the Father and the Father would send the Spirit in his name is that the Father is the source or principle of all Godhead. Clearly, it is significant for Augustine that Jesus did not say the Father will send the Spirit from him because that would suggest the Son is also a source from whom the Spirit proceeds. What the Tradition teaches about the procession of the Spirit from the Father as the source or origin of all being is not contradicted either by the Scriptures, or by Augustine himself. In fact, the Father is still considered by Augustine in these scriptural texts as the source of all Godhead. Augustine’s claim that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son does not amount to a denial of the Father’s Godhead if his interpretations of the above scriptural texts are properly taken into consideration.

In addition to Scripture, Augustine also defended the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son by means of which the Spirit is distinct from both the Father and the Son based on their relationships. Since the Father is the one who begot the Son as the source and origin of all Godhead, the Spirit must likewise proceed from the Father. The Father becomes the “origin not only for what he begets or makes, but also for what he gives.”  

The Spirit and the Son are evidently not identical with each other if the Son is begotten and the Spirit is given by the Father. For Augustine, the Spirit cannot be a son like the begotten Son of the Father because the Spirit comes forth, not as being born but as being given, and so he is not called son, because he was not born like the only begotten Son, nor made and born

93 St. Augustine, The Trinity IV. 29, 174.
94 Ibid., V. 15, 199.
adoptively by grace like us. What was born of the Father is referred to the Father alone when he is called Son ... But what has been given is referred both to him who gave and those it was given to; and so the Holy Spirit is not only called the Spirit of the Father and the Son who gave him, but also our Spirit who received him.95

The fact that the Spirit was not born but given proves not only the Spirit’s distinction from the Son, but the Spirit’s procession from the Father as its source of origin. The Father is the one from whom the Son receives the Spirit that also proceeds from the Son as a distinct person of the Trinity. Considering the Spirit’s distinction from the Son and the fact that the Spirit is the gift of the Father to the Son, Augustine would conclude that

if therefore what is given also has him it is given by as its origin, because it did not receive its proceeding from him from anywhere else, we must confess that the Father and the Son are the origin of the Holy Spirit; not two origins, but just as Father and the Son are one God, and with reference to creation one creator and one Lord, so with reference to the Holy Spirit they are one origin; but with reference to creation Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit are one origin, just as they are one creator and one Lord.96

The way in which the Father and the Son are both perceived as the author or source of creation, is the same manner in which they constituted the *principium*, that is, the single source or principle from which the Spirit simultaneously proceeds from both of them.

Augustine was equally able to defend the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son when he considered the Spirit’s relation to the Father and the Son and distinguished the origin of the Son from the procession of the Spirit. In that case, “the argument Augustine adopted was one drawn from the realm of theory, based on personal distinctions grounded in the notion of relationship.”97 This form of argument is one in

---

95 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* V. 15, 199.
96 St. Augustine, *De Trinitate* V. 15, 199. “Si ergo et quod datur, principium habet eum a quo datur, quia non aliiunde accipit illud quod ab ipso procedit; fatendum est Patrem et Filium pricipium esse Spiritus sancti, non duo principia; sed sicut Pater et Filius unus Deus, et ad creaturam relative unus creator et unus Dominus, sic relative ad Spiritum sanctum unum principium; ad creaturam vero Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus unus principium, sicut unus creator et unus Dominus.” St. Augustine, PL. 42, Col. 0921.
which Augustine reflected on the divine persons’ distinctive relation to each other within
the immanent Trinity. But in order to “implicate the Son in the procession of the Spirit,” he was obliged to point out that the Father and the Son are one origin and the Spirit proceeds from them as from one source. The fact that the Spirit and the Son are distinct and the fact that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, while the Son is begotten by the Father, does not adequately explain, in my view, how precisely the Spirit proceeds from the Son. The reason is that the distinctiveness of the Father, Son, and Spirit is a quality of their being as persons in relation and not necessarily a product of the Spirit’s procession from the Son. Augustine’s argument about the procession of the Spirit from the Son based on their distinction is to some extent open to criticism, but it is still plausible.

Since the Father is the one from whom the Spirit principally (principaliter) proceeds as the origin and source of all Godhead, the Spirit must equally proceed, in Augustine’s view, from the Son while proceeding from the Father. The Father effectively becomes the one from whom his only Begotten Son receives the Spirit that also proceeds from the Son. Augustine would, therefore, claim that

only the Holy Spirit is called the gift of God, and only the Father is called the one from whom the Word is born and from whom the Holy Spirit principally proceeds. I added “principally,” because we have found that the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son. But this too was given the Son by the Father – not given to him when he already existed and did not yet have it; but whatever the Father gave to his only-begotten Word he gave by begetting him. He so begot him then that their common gift would proceed from him too, and the Holy Spirit would be the Spirit of them both.  

The fullness with which the Son was begotten by the Father is what Augustine seemingly identified with the procession of the Spirit from the Son.\textsuperscript{100} There is, in that sense, an overflow of the Spirit from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the Father in such a way that the Spirit equally proceeds from the Son. The movement of the Spirit between the Father and the Son is not, therefore, one-sided. In fact, the Spirit does not “proceed separately from each; rather, there is a single simultaneous procession from both which is a function or immediate implication of the generation of the Son, and in which therefore the primacy of the Father is maintained.”\textsuperscript{101}

Augustine’s understanding of the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son was clearly rejected in the East not only because it diminishes or sacrifices the Father’s originality as the source of all Godhead, but also because of the East’s claim that as a result of the \textit{Filioque}, the Holy Spirit in western thought has become subordinated to the Son – if not in theory, then at any rate in practice. The west pays insufficient attention to the work of the Spirit in the world, in the Church, in the daily life of each person.\textsuperscript{102}

Such concerns are obviously legitimate where the divine persons are not seen in their equality and unity as a Trinity, where Augustine is effectively misrepresented. This occurs when prominence is given in the liturgy or theological reflection to just one of the divine persons more than the others and the redemptive and salvific work of the Son is emphasized at the expense of the sanctifying and unifying functions of the Spirit.

However, from Augustine’s point of view, it is clear that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

\textsuperscript{100} Augustine explained this more clearly in Book XV. 48 that “he from whom the Son has it that he is God – for he is God from God – is of course also the one from whom he has it that the Holy Spirit proceeds from him as well; and thus the Holy Spirit too has it from the Father that he should also proceed from the Son as he proceeds from the Father.” 433. In his book on \textit{The Orthodox Church}, Timothy Ware agrees with Augustine’s view which suggests that “it is from the Father that the Son receives the power to ‘spirate’ or ‘breath forth’ the Spirit” 216.

\textsuperscript{101} Heron, \textit{The Holy Spirit}, 89.

\textsuperscript{102} Timothy Ware, \textit{The Orthodox Church} (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 215.
are equal and inseparable even in their distinctiveness. Yet, the Father is ultimately the one from whom the Spirit principally proceeds while proceeding also from the Son. His efforts in preserving the unity, equality, and distinctiveness of the divine persons while identifying the Father as the original source of all divinity should also be acknowledged. More importantly, Augustine’s understanding of the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son should not be misrepresented because his aim was to guarantee the perfect consubstantiality of the three divine persons. He made sure of this by making the distinction between them consist in the relationship of procession … The Spirit is distinguished relationally from the two in the unity of the divine essence only by proceeding from the two as their common Spirit. If he did not proceed from the Son, he would not be distinguished from him by that relationship which safeguards the divine equality and consubstantiality.¹⁰³

For Augustine, if one admits that the Spirit is a distinct divine person, one must equally recognize that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. In order to establish that the Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son, it has to be shown that the Spirit proceeds not just from the Father through the Son, but from the Father and the Son.

### 1.2.2 THE COMMON GIFT OF THE FATHER AND THE SON

In Augustine’s trinitarian theology, the divine persons are distinguished from each other on the basis of their relationship with each other. However, the Spirit is, in Augustine’s estimation, the Spirit of both the Father and the Son as well as the common gift of the Father and the Son because the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. When the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son and became distinct from them, the Spirit also became related to the Father and the Son as the common gift of their relationship. Thus, it makes sense to rightly say “‘the gift of the giver’ and ‘the giver of

the gift,’ [because] we say each with reference to the other." The Spirit is not only the Spirit of the Father, but the Spirit of the Son from whom the Spirit also proceeds. The same Spirit is what the Father and the Son share between themselves as their common gift to each other. Yet, the Spirit remains a distinct person in the immanent Trinity even as the common gift of the Father and the Son. Consequently, there is no reason to believe that the identity of the Spirit is compromised by Augustine in referring to the Spirit as the common gift because as gift, the Spirit is not one and the same as the giver of the gift.

The Spirit is not, therefore, subordinated to either the Father or the Son as their common gift because the Spirit is always in active procession from the Father and the Son. It proceeds not as two different Spirits from two separate sources, but one and the same Spirit simultaneously proceeding from the Father and the Son as from one single principle. This simultaneous and timeless procession of the Spirit will be discussed later under Augustine’s notable perspective about the Spirit. The Spirit’s distinctiveness as the common gift is not merely temporal or relative because the Spirit exists in the mode of a gift in the immanent Trinity. The Spirit endures in this fashion, so the Spirit cannot become anything other than the common gift of the Father and the Son. In that sense, the Spirit is different from the Son who became a Son only when the Father begot him because

the Holy Spirit always proceeds and proceeds from eternity, not from a point in time; but because he so proceeds as to be giveable, he [the Spirit] was already gift even before there was anyone to give him to. There is a difference between calling something a gift, and calling it a donation; it can be a gift even before it is given, but it cannot be called in any way a donation unless it has been given.105

104 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* V. 12, 197.
105 Ibid., V. 16, 200.
The Spirit in Augustine’s understanding is primordially the common gift of the Father and the Son even before the Spirit is given and received in the immanent Trinity. This Spirit cannot likewise be exhausted or become less than a gift in its relationship with the Father and the Son because it is the Spirit’s nature to exist in the mode of a gift.

The Spirit is the one who, accordingly, avails itself as the common gift of the Father and the Son in such a way that the Father and the Son can engage themselves in a simultaneous act of self-giving and self-communication with each other. Augustine’s understanding of the Spirit as the common gift of the Father and the Son does not only give us a good insight of who the Spirit is in the immanent Trinity, it also gives us an insight of what the Spirit does in the immanent Trinity. This allows one to see the Spirit not as a passive object in the Trinity, but as a person who disposes himself and makes himself available to the Father and the Son. The particularity of the Spirit as the common gift of the Father and the Son precisely lies in its availability and its active movement between the Father and the Son. Therefore, the Spirit as the common gift of the Father and the Son is the expression and personification of what the Father and the Son share or communicate to each other in the immanent Trinity.

In the divine community of the immanent Trinity, the Spirit is evidently unique and particular because the Spirit represents the fullness of the mutual love-relationship of the Father and the Son. The Spirit is the one who signifies the mutual and personal relation of love between the Father and the Son in its capacity as the common gift of the Father and the Son. In that sense, the divine persons of the Trinity are not isolated or preoccupied with their own personal state of being. This is precisely because in the Holy Spirit the intimate life of the triune God becomes totally gift, an exchange of mutual love between the divine persons, and that through the Holy
Spirit God exists in the mode of gift. It is the Holy Spirit who is the personal expression of this self-giving, of this being-love. He is person-love. He is person-gift. 106

In effect, the Spirit can never be monopolized or limited by the Father and the Son as the expression of their self-gift to each other because their love is mediated through the Spirit. The Spirit is what constantly engages the Father and the Son in their mutual act of self-giving as their common gift so that they can encounter each other in love.

Augustine was able to determine the particularity and uniqueness of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity from the Spirit’s relationship to the Father and the Son as their common gift. The third person of the Trinity is ultimately unique and particular in the immanent Trinity because the Spirit is the gift that the Father and the Son share. Only the Spirit is commonly possessed because

the Father is not had in common as the Father by the Son and the Holy Spirit, because he is not the Father of them both; and the Son is not had in common as Son by the Father and the Holy Spirit, because he is not the Son of them both. But the Holy Spirit is held in common by the Father and the Son, because he is the one Spirit of them both. 107

In the life of the divine persons of the immanent Trinity, it is the Spirit who subsists in both the Father and the Son and it is the Spirit who sustains and unites them in their relationship. The Spirit that is both the Spirit of the Father and the Son is likewise called by what is common to the Father and the Son. The divine person who essentially has the capacity to function in the immanent Trinity as the bond of love and the communion between the Father and the Son is the one Augustine identified as their common gift.

1.2.3 THE BOND OF LOVE BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON

The divine persons of the triune God are united in themselves as I earlier indicated by their common substance. However, they are also united in their relationship with each other through the Spirit, whom Augustine characterized as the bond of love between the Father and the Son. The unbegotten Father is united with his begotten Son through the Spirit, who proceeds from both of them as from a single principle. The Spirit is evidently distinct and particular as the bond of love in uniting the Father and the Son in their relationship. Precisely because “he is not one of the two, since he is that by which the two are joined to each other, by which the begotten is loved by the one who begets him and in turn loves the begetter.” The Spirit of God is ultimately unique and distinct from the Father and the Son if the Spirit is the one by which the two are united in love.

The unifying principle of love between the Father and the Son in the immanent Trinity is, accordingly, the Spirit that the Father and the Son both share. In the immanent Trinity the Holy Spirit, according to Augustine,

is something common to the Father and the Son, whatever it is, or is their very commonness or communion, [communio], consubstantial and coeternal. Call this friendship … but a better word for it is charity. And this too is substance because God is substance, and God is charity [charitas] (1Jn. 4:8, 16) … And therefore there are not more than three; one loving him who is from him, and one loving him from whom he is, and love itself. If this is not anything, how is it that God is love (1Jn. 4:8, 16)? If it is not substance, how is it that God is substance?

The Spirit is not only identified by Augustine as the common gift between the Father and the Son, it is also identified as the charity or love between the Father and the Son. This love is a divine substance of the same nature and equality with the Father and the Son because Scripture testifies that God is love and God is substance. The Spirit must,

108 St. Augustine, The Trinity VI. 7, 209.
therefore, be God if God is love as well as substance. However, the Spirit is quite distinct
in the immanent Trinity because its function as the bond of love

\[
\text{means someone loving and something loved with love. There you are with three,}
\text{the lover, what is being loved, and love. And what is love but a kind of life}
\text{coupling or trying to couple together two things, namely lover and what is being}
\text{loved?}^{110}
\]

The divine persons of the immanent Trinity whom Augustine compares here to the lover,
beloved, and love are all distinct and unique. The love that exists in the immanent Trinity
between the Father and the Son is clearly a distinct and unique person in itself. Therefore,
it is impossible for the Father and the Son to love themselves without love, namely, the
Spirit, because love is what, in Augustine’s estimation, unites them.

Augustine as we know did not literally identify any of the divine persons in his
trinitarian analogies of memory, understanding, and will with each of the acts of these
mental faculties. Yet, in the analogy of the lover, beloved, and the love, Augustine was
eager to see whether this transcendent charity is peculiarly the Holy Spirit. If it is
not, then at least either the Father is charity, or the Son or the trinity itself is, since
we cannot withstand the certitude of faith and the great weight of scriptural
authority which says God is charity (Jn. 4:8. 16).\(^{111}\)

The particularity of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity was evidently a great concern for
Augustine, otherwise, he would not have considered which of the divine persons is
distinctly called charity in the immanent Trinity. Since Scripture says God is love, the
testimony of Scripture would simply have sufficed for Augustine if there is no ground to

\(^{110}\) St. Augustine, The Trinity VIII. 14, 255. Augustine frequently used the psychological analogy of lover,
beloved, and love to show that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person within the Trinity as the bond of love
between the Father and the Son. But he categorically objected in Book XII. 5, 324 to any supposition “that
the trinity of the image of God, as far as human nature is concerned can be discovered in three persons; that
is, that it may be composed of the union of male and female and their offspring, in which the man suggests
the person of the Father, what proceeds from him by way of birth that of the Son, and thus the third person
of the Holy Spirit, they say, is represented by the woman …. [it is] an error to think of the Holy Spirit as
the mother of the Son and the wife of the Father.”
\(^{111}\) Ibid., IX. 1, 271.
suspect that the Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son. Augustine would not have taken the pains to establish the Spirit’s particularity as the bond of love against what is written in the Scriptures because “Scripture did not say ‘the Holy Spirit is charity’; if it had, it would have eliminated the major part of this problem.” But he recognized the fact that the Spirit is both the Spirit of the Father and of the Son in the Scriptures, so he had reason to believe that the Spirit is “the common charity by which the Father and the Son love each other.” The Spirit in its particularity as the Spirit of both the Father and the Son is therefore, in Augustine’s view, the one who is properly and fittingly the common charity or the bond of love between the Father and the Son.

Even though God is love, which means that God the Father is love and God the Son is love, it is the Spirit who is distinctly the bond of love between the Father and the Son. In that case, it is not the Holy Spirit alone who is love in the immanent Trinity, but it is distinctively the love or charity between the Father and the Son in the same way that the Word of God is called distinctively the wisdom of God, even though both Father and Holy Spirit are also wisdom. If therefore any of these three can be distinctively named charity, which could it more suitably be than the Holy Spirit? What is meant is that while in that supremely simple nature substance is not one thing and charity another, but substance is charity and charity is substance, whether in the Father or in the Son or in the Holy Spirit, yet all the same the Holy Spirit is distinctively named charity.

Among the divine persons of the Trinity, it is the Spirit that Augustine believed is most apposite to identify as the bond of love in the immanent Trinity because of the function it performs between the Father and the Son. Therefore, it is a question of what is distinctively appropriate to the Spirit in its capacity as the Spirit of both the Father and the Son, as the common gift, and charity between the Father and the Son. Moreover,

112 St. Augustine, The Trinity XV. 27, 418.
113 Ibid., XV. 27, 418.
114 Ibid., XV. 29, 419.
Scripture justifies the idea that the Spirit is uniquely the love of God when it stated that love is from God and love is God (1Jn. 4:7). The love which is from God must either be the Son or the Spirit, in Augustine’s view, because “the Father alone is God in such a way that he is not from God.” In Augustine’s understanding, it is clearly not the Son, but the Spirit for the Spirit is what God has given us so that God can abide in us and we too can abide in him. The one who is properly “meant when we read, Love is God (1Jn. 4:8. 16), is the Spirit. So it is God the Holy Spirit proceeding from God who fires man to the love of God and neighbor when he has been given to him, and he himself is love.”

The uniqueness and particularity of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity is self-evident when the Spirit’s function as the bond of love is taken into consideration. The Spirit’s uniqueness should help us to appreciate what the Spirit does in the Church it unites as the Body of Christ. As Robert Imbelli observed, “this inner-trinitarian property of the Spirit is the foundation for the Spirit’s salvific function as the bond of love which constitutes the life of the Christian community.” Augustine’s understanding of the Spirit as the bond of love is, therefore, fundamental to his trinitarian theology and his ecclesiology. The function of the Spirit as the bond of love is one that needs to be considered in detail because “scholars consistently identify Augustine’s understanding of the Holy Spirit as the bond of love between the first and the second persons of the Trinity as a notable original contribution to the theology of the Holy Spirit.” For this reason, more will be said in the following chapters of this dissertation on the function of the Holy

115 St. Augustine, The Trinity XV. 31, 420.
116 Ibid., XV. 31, 421.
Spirit as the bond of love in the immanent Trinity and the Christian community in an effort to integrate Augustine’s trinitarian theology and ecclesiology.

In spite of his insight, Augustine is, nonetheless, criticized for assuming that the Spirit is the bond of love because

this image, ‘bond of love,’ falls short of attributing personality to Spirit, leaving the possible impression of a binity – Father and Son plus a bond – rather than a trinity. It could reduce Spirit to the fostering environment of love. Spirit is more than that, however, being a distinct Person who, besides bonding others in love, shares and participates in it. Spirit bonds the Trinity by being the witness to the love of the Father and the Son, by entering into it and fostering it, and by communicating its warmth to creatures.\textsuperscript{119}

On the contrary, I submit that Augustine did not categorize the Spirit wholly and solely as a bond or an environment of love between the Father and the Son. He perceived the Spirit as a distinct person who proceeds from both the Father and the Son, who shares the same divine life with them, and who is desired by both the Father and the Son as their common gift. His emphasis on the unity of the divine persons and the function of the Spirit as the bond of love between the Father and the Son does not essentially reduce the Trinity into a binity as Pinnock Clark suggests. The image of the Spirit as the bond of love is more importantly an analogy that does not personify the Spirit in actual terms.

The particularity of the Spirit as the bond of love in itself does not radically compromise the Spirit’s personality and divinity in the immanent Trinity. Furthermore, it does not suggest that the Spirit is the only divine person in the Trinity who is love in substance. The Spirit’s particularity is more about the Spirit’s unique function or mode of being in the immanent Trinity. This is why Dumitru Staniloae suggests in another context that when we

characterize the Spirit as the ‘love’ between the Father and the Son, we must not only avoid identifying him purely and simply with love; we must also not neglect that the Spirit is a Person. Just as when the Fathers call the Son ‘wisdom’ they do not understand wisdom as belonging only to the Son, or as being the only thing proper to the Son, nor as being a non-hypostatic wisdom, so we must proceed similarly in the case of the Spirit. The Spirit plays the special role of ‘bearer of love’ from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the Father.  

The nature, function, and particularity of the Spirit should always be understood in proper perspective when it is considered in the immanent Trinity. Accordingly, Augustine’s own understanding of the Spirit as the bond of love in the immanent Trinity provides a clear perception of the activities and identity of the Spirit in relation to the Father and the Son.

1.2.4 THE COMMUNION BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON

Augustine’s reason for examining the identity, function, and particularity of the third person of the Trinity was that the Spirit was not extensively studied by those who previously commented on the Scriptures. Secondly, the Spirit was not fully understood as a divine person, in Augustine’s estimation, apart from what some have ventured to believe that he constitutes the very communion between the Father and the Son … This means, therefore, that, because the Father is God and the Son is God, the divinity itself is equal to the Father, that is, the divinity by which they are joined to each other … This divinity, which they also interpret as the mutual love and charity of each to the other, they say, is called the Holy Spirit … They find support for their argument from the fact that it is through the Holy Spirit that we are reconciled to God.

The Spirit was evidently considered by some of those who commented on the Scriptures as the communion of the Father and the Son, or the divinity that joins the Father and the Son. Therefore, Augustine would not only argue that the Spirit is the communion of the Father and the Son, he would also argue that the communion of the Father and the Son is itself a divine person that is distinct and unique. The Spirit becomes the third person in

---


121 St. Augustine, *Faith and the Creed* 19, 169.
the union of the Father and the Son. As such, the Spirit is not a temporary aspect of the love between the Father and the Son because the Spirit is common to them and is substantially one with them in their relationship.

The Father and the Son are, consequently, joined together in the Spirit in whom they are in communion with each other because the Spirit is common to both of them. Therefore, the Spirit is the agent of communion between the Father and the Son since the Spirit is the one who fosters the relationship between them as the common Spirit of both. Augustine would, accordingly, identify the Spirit in the immanent Trinity as

a kind of inexpressible communion or fellowship of Father and Son, and perhaps he is given this name just because the same name can be applied to the Father and the Son. He is properly called what they are called in common, seeing that both Father and Son are holy and both Father and Son are spirit. So to signify the communion of them both by a name which applies to them both, the gift of both is called the Holy Spirit.  

The communion the Spirit fosters between the Father and the Son cannot, from Augustine’s perspective, be fully articulated because it is a profound communion of love and unity that is beyond comprehension. The Spirit must equally be inextricably bound to both the Father and the Son in this communion as to form a perfect unity in their relationship with each other. This communion between the Father and the Son is distinctively the work of the Spirit in cooperation with the Father and the Son.

What essentially exists in the immanent Trinity between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is a fellowship of distinct persons in unity. The identity of each of the divine persons is not ultimately confused with another. Within this community of love

the third person, having no special name like ‘Father’ or ‘Son,’ is content with God’s generic name of ‘spirit.’… Spirit is content to be thought of as the medium

---

122 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* XV. 12, 197.
and fellowship of love. He delights in the loving relationships of the divine dance and exults in the self-emptying love that binds Father and Son.\textsuperscript{123}

In the communion of the Father and the Son, the Spirit is both the unifying and animating principle of their love-relationship. Each of them is distinct from each other according to their mode of being and their function within the one fellowship of love. The Spirit is not simply the common element of the Father and the Son in its function as the unifying and animating principle of communion, but rather, the third person of the immanent Trinity.

The Spirit is properly the agent of communion between the Father and the Son. In its capacity as the agent of intra-divine communion, the Spirit is also the agent of communion between the immanent Trinity and the Christian community of believers in the Church. The members of the Church equally participate in the fellowship or communion of the divine persons of the immanent Trinity through the Spirit. This is “because the Spirit represents the eternal mutual love between the Father and the Son and their being-in-communion.”\textsuperscript{124} In the communion of the Spirit, there is not only unity, but unity in diversity within the immanent Trinity itself and between the divine persons and the Christian community. That is essentially the reality in both the immanent Trinity and the Church because

the property of the Holy Spirit is to be the communion of Father and Son … by what is common to them both the Father and the Son wish us to have communion both with them and among ourselves; … they wished to gather us together and make us one.\textsuperscript{125}

The Spirit is the one who perfectly keeps the identity and particularity of the persons he gathers in communion in the immanent and economic Trinity. Augustine’s understanding

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{123} Clark, \textit{Flame of Love}, 39.  \\
\textsuperscript{124} Theological-Historical Commission, \textit{The Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life}, 22.  \\
\end{flushright}
of the Spirit as the communion between the Father and the Son equally informed his perspective on the function of the Spirit in the Church.

**AUGUSTINE’S NOTABLE PERSPECTIVE ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT**

So much was already written and discussed about the Father and the Son by those who commented on the Scriptures before Augustine. Yet, no extensive and detailed discussion, in his view, was fully accorded to the subject of the Holy Spirit. Augustine was, therefore, obliged in his trinitarian theology to reflect on the Holy Spirit in order to understand what is properly unique to the Spirit in its relationship with the Father and the Son and its function in the Body of Christ, the Church. In the following section of this dissertation, I will highlight Augustine’s notable perspective about the Spirit. In addition, I will show how his understanding of the Spirit represents a theology of the Spirit that properly articulates the particularity and function of the Spirit in the immanent and economic Trinity.

**1.3.1 THE SPIRIT’S TIMELESS AND SIMULTANEOUS PROCESSION AS A GIFT**

Although the Spirit is a gift, according to Augustine, the Spirit is not a gift only at a certain point in time when the Spirit was given by the Father and the Son. The Spirit is the gift of the Father and the Son from all eternity even before it was given. In other words, the Spirit is a gift that is not bound by the limits of space and time. The Spirit is not consequently a “donation,” as far as Augustine was concerned, that must be received, but rather, an “everlasting gift” that is giveable even “before there is anyone for him to be given to.”

Nothing forces the Spirit in that respect to become the everlasting gift of the Father and the Son. For Augustine, the Spirit is always the gift of the Father and the Son in its mode of being; an everlasting gift that can only be freely received according to the

---

Spirit’s own determination. The particularity of the Spirit as the gift of the Father and the Son does not, consequently, depend in any way on how the Spirit is perceived or received.

As the everlasting gift of the Father and the Son, the Spirit equally proceeds timelessly and simultaneously, in Augustine’s estimation, from the Father and the Son. The same Spirit that is a gift from all eternity is the same Spirit that timelessly proceeds from all eternity as the everlasting gift of the Father and the Son. For Augustine, the Spirit’s procession is absolutely timeless and simultaneous because

in the supreme trinity which God is there are no intervals of time by which it could be shown, or even asked, whether the Son was first born from the Father, and afterward the Holy Spirit proceeded from both, seeing that the holy scripture calls him the Spirit of them both.127

The Spirit is, therefore, coeternal with the Father and the Son on account of its timeless and simultaneous procession from both of them. Otherwise, the Spirit would simply be a temporal gift, rather than an everlasting gift from eternity. The reason Augustine emphasized the timeless and simultaneous nature of the Spirit’s procession is clearly to defend the divinity and equality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. At the same time, it indicates that the procession is from one principal source. Consequently,

anyone who can understand the generation of the Son from the Father as timeless should also understand the procession of the Holy Spirit from them both as timeless …, should also understand that just as the Father has it in himself that the Holy Spirit should proceed from him, so he gave to the Son that the Holy Spirit should proceed from him too, and in both cases timelessly; and thus that to say that the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Son is something which the Son has from the Father.128

Augustine did not simply underline the timeless nature of the Spirit’s procession from the Father and the Son. He also emphasized that the Spirit simultaneously proceeds from both the Father and the Son to indicate that the procession is not a logical form of

127 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* XV. 45, 430.
128 Ibid., XV. 47, 432.
procession. The Spirit is not, consequently, the Spirit of the Father to the Son, but the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. Although the Father is the source of all divinity, the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Father into the Son and then proceed to sanctify the creature. He proceeds simultaneously from them both, even though the Father gave the Son that the Spirit should proceed from him as he does from himself.\textsuperscript{129}

The Spirit does not, accordingly, pass from the Father to the Son or proceed from the Father through the Son. A logical procession of this sort would raise questions about the coeternity of the Spirit with the Father and the Son which is why I agree with Augustine that the Spirit simultaneously proceeds from the Father and the Son. For Augustine, the procession of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity is not, consequently, mediated because the Spirit simultaneously proceeds from both the Father and the Son as from one source.

What is also clear from Augustine’s understanding of the Spirit as the everlasting gift of the Father and the Son is that the Spirit cannot be monopolized or personalized as anybody’s gift. As a result,

none of [the] disciples ever gave the Holy Spirit; they prayed that he might come upon those on whom they laid hands, they did not give him themselves … That is why the Lord Jesus himself not only gave the Holy Spirit as God but also received him as man … As for us, we can receive this gift in our own small way, but we certainly cannot pour it out upon others. That this might happen, though, we invoke over them the God by whom it is done.\textsuperscript{130}

The Spirit cannot effectively cease to be the gift of the Father and the Son that is given and received because it proceeds timelessly and precisely as their gift. Furthermore, the Spirit is free and unlimited in its procession and its movement in the immanent Trinity.

\textsuperscript{129} St. Augustine, \textit{The Trinity} XV. 48, 433. There is no double procession in the strict sense in Augustine wherein the Spirit logically proceeds first from the Father and secondly from the Son. As Edmund Hill explained in his endnote of Bk IV of \textit{The Trinity}, while the expression “double procession,” is convenient, it is not really accurate, and Augustine is careful to state that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as from one principle or source.” 184. 

\textsuperscript{130} St. Augustine, \textit{The Trinity} XV. 46, 431-432.
and in the economy of salvation. The Spirit of both the Father and the Son will always, in my view, be experienced as a gift throughout the history of salvation. Therefore, the presence of the Spirit in every age and generation will always be felt in the lives and communities of those who are ready to allow the Spirit, that is, the gift of the Father and the Son, to enrich and even transform their lives.

1.3.2 THE SPIRIT THROUGH WHICH THE TRIAD DWELLS IN THE CHURCH

What connects and unites the divine persons of the Trinity and the Christian community, and what enables humanity to participate in the life and love of the Father and the Son is the Spirit in its capacity as the everlasting gift of the Father and the Son. For that matter, it is in the Spirit that the Father and the Son are united and it is in the Spirit that the divine persons are united with the Christian community of faith, the Church. Augustine would rightly argue that

the love which is from God and is God is distinctively the Holy Spirit; through him the charity of God is poured into our hearts, and through it the whole triad dwells in us. This is the reason why it is most apposite that the Holy Spirit, while being God, should also be called the gift of God. And this gift, surely, is distinctively to be understood as being the charity which brings us through to God, without which no other gift of God at all can bring us through to God.131

The Spirit is precisely God’s love that is poured in our hearts and it is the means through which we equally come to know, share, and experience the life and love of the Father and the Son. In effect, it is through the Spirit that the Father and the Son dwell in the Church and it is through the Spirit that we come to participate in their divine life as well.

When we receive the Spirit of the Father and the Son, namely, the everlasting gift of the Father and the Son into our hearts, we also receive the Father and the Son into our hearts through the Spirit. Hence, we become united with the Father, the Son, and the

131 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* XV. 32, 421.
Holy Spirit in our hearts. The Spirit is not ultimately alone in the Church and the Spirit is also not alone in our hearts because the divine persons of the Trinity, in Augustine’s estimation, are inseparable in the activities and functions they accomplish. In that case, it is impossible to experience the love and power of the Spirit in our hearts without sharing or participating in the divine life of the Father and the Son. The reason is mainly that

the Holy Spirit doesn’t dwell in anybody without the Father and the Son, just as the Son doesn’t without the Father and the Holy Spirit, nor does the Father without them. They are inseparable in their indwelling, just as they are inseparable in their working, but they are usually indicated one by one through created symbols, not in their own substance.132

For Augustine, it is the whole triad that dwells in the heart of the person who claims to receive the Spirit or to experience the promptings of the Spirit. Anyone who has the Spirit must equally have the Father and the Son. Likewise, anyone who believes in the Father and the Son must be under the inspiration of the Spirit, because the work of the Spirit is to bring us to a deeper love and unity with the Father and the Son.

The Church is evidently the temple of the Holy Spirit where the Spirit dwells and functions as its animating and unifying principle. But as the temple of the Spirit, the Church is equally the place where the Father and the Son also dwell, from Augustine’s point of view, through the Spirit living in the Church. The divine persons of the Trinity are equally encountered and experienced in the Church through the Spirit because

God dwells in his temple, not only the Holy Spirit but also the Father and the Son. The Son is also said of his body, through which he became head of the Church that is among men, so that he might come to have first place in everything (Col. 1:18) … For the temple of God, that is, of the whole supreme Trinity, is the holy Church, that is, the whole Church, in heaven and on earth.133

The Church clearly participates in the trinitarian life of the divine persons of the Trinity. Accordingly, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equally present in the life, ministry, and mission of the Church. Therefore, the members of the Church are united with the divine persons of the Trinity and they are also united with each other through the Spirit functioning as the bond of love and the source of unity. There is one Church, in that light, where the divine persons work inseparably together, where the triad dwells, in which the Spirit is the bond of love and source of unity. The latter is the case because the Spirit does not evidently have

one temple and God another seeing that the apostle says: ‘know ye not that ye are the temple of God?’ and adds as proof of this, ‘and that the Spirit of God dwells in you.’ God then, dwells in his temple: not the Holy Spirit only but the Father also, and the Son, who says of his own body, through which he was made head of the Church upon earth.134

In Augustine’s estimation, if the Spirit is the one through whom the whole triad dwells in the Church, it means the fullness of God dwells in the Church. If indeed there is only one temple in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit dwell, then it must be the case that the Church should equally be one united Church in every aspect of its life and ministry.

The members of the Church should also imitate the life of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and be transformed into their likeness if the triad is dwelling in their hearts and in the Body of Christ, the Church. To achieve this end, they need to allow themselves to be under the influence, guidance, and inspiration of the Spirit. As LaCugna noted, it is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ [that] brings about the true communion of God and creature. The Spirit is the animating power of the economy, making God’s will and work known and realized in Jesus Christ and in each one of us.

The Spirit humanizes God and also divinizes human beings, making persons theonomous and catholic.\textsuperscript{135} In essence, it is only in the power of the Spirit and in the unity of the Spirit that the members of the Church actively share in the trinitarian life of God. Furthermore, it is in the strength and freedom of the Spirit that they are also liberated from their weakness and the forces of evil to become more like God. In order to participate in the divine life of the triad dwelling in the Church, and in order for the members of the Church to be in communion with each other, each member needs to be renewed in the Spirit. The members of the Church can equally be transformed and raised beyond their nature. That is quite possible because “what the Spirit does is join human beings to the koinonia of the trinitarian life, then ‘deification’ is one of the most apt traditional words.”\textsuperscript{136}

The Spirit is clearly a distinct person in the immanent Trinity. In Augustine’s estimation, it is also a relational Spirit that is not totally an isolated, inactive, and, transcendent being in its existence. The Spirit which is the everlasting gift of the Father and the Son is perfectly related not only to the giver, but the receiver of the gift, that is, those to whom the Father and the Son intend to give their Spirit as their source of life and love. One cannot, therefore, perceive or recognize the Spirit in itself or in its relationship with the Father without any reference to its presence and its activities in the life of the members of Christ’s Body, the Church.\textsuperscript{137} Augustine’s theology of the Spirit is evidently concerned with the relation of the Spirit to the Father and the Son as well as its presence and function in the life of the Church. For Augustine, a quest for the identity and nature

\textsuperscript{135} LaCugna, \textit{God For Us}, 296.
\textsuperscript{136} Eugene Rogers, \textit{After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources Outside the Modern West} (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 47.
\textsuperscript{137} This statement is in reference to the members of the Church. Therefore, it does not limit the activity of the Spirit within the confines of the Church as I will show in the other chapters of this dissertation.
of the Spirit must ultimately include an articulation of the mission and functions of the Spirit in the Church.

1.3.3 THE SPIRIT ALSO GIVES HIMSELF AS GOD

The Spirit is absolutely free, in Augustine’s perspective, even as the everlasting gift of the Father and the Son to offer itself and make its presence felt especially in the life and ministry of the Church. Therefore, the Spirit can operate or move as it wills in its functions in the Church. For Augustine, the presence and activity of the Spirit in the Church and the experience of the Spirit by the members of the Church cannot be taken for granted because the Spirit is not inherently confined to the Church. Since the Spirit is God and remains a divine person of the Trinity, the Spirit is not less than the Father and the Son because they give and he is given. He is given as God’s gift in such a way that as God he also gives himself. You can scarcely say he is not his own master, the one of whom it is said, *The Spirit breathes where he will* (Jn. 3:8), and the text of the apostle’s we have quoted, *All these things does one and the same Spirit achieve, distributing them severally as he wills* (1Cor. 12:11). In this case there is no question of the subject condition of the one given and the ownership rights of the givers.138

As the everlasting gift of the Father and the Son, the Spirit is also free to give itself and distribute its gifts as it wills because the Spirit is the Spirit of God. The givers and receivers of the Spirit, in Augustine’s estimation, do not have much control or right over the Spirit that blows or breathes wherever it wills because it is not subject to either the Father or the Son or the members of the Church without its own cooperation.

The divinity and equality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son was never compromised by Augustine in his trinitarian theology because he perceived the Spirit in its particularity as a divine person of the Trinity in relation to the Father and the Son.

---

Also, he recognized that what the Spirit does in the Church corresponds to its function in the immanent Trinity as the gift of the Father and the Son and their bond of love because the reason why companionship in the unity of the Church of God, outside which no forgiveness of sins occurs, is seen as the proper work of the Holy Spirit (with the Father and the Son, of course, cooperating), is that the Holy Spirit is himself somehow or other the companionship of the Father and the Son.\textsuperscript{139}

The Spirit is clearly not less than the Father and the Son in dwelling within the Body of Christ because the Spirit is still a divine person. For this reason, Augustine would maintain that

\begin{quote}
whether he is supreme charity conjoining the Father and the Son to each other and subjoining us to them, … the Holy Spirit is God \cite{aug267} and scripture cries aloud in the person of the apostle, who says, \textit{Do you not know that you are God's temple} – and he adds straightaway, \textit{and the Spirit of God dwells in you} \cite{1cor316} … The Spirit of God does not live in the temple of God as a minister.\textsuperscript{140}
\end{quote}

Consequently, it is impossible for the Spirit to be controlled, conditioned, or overruled by the Church that is ultimately led and guided by the Spirit towards the unity of the Father and the Son because the Spirit is the Spirit of God. Augustine did not, therefore, present the Spirit in his trinitarian theology as if the Spirit was subject to the Church’s own power and authority. The Spirit should equally be perceived and recognized in the Church as the bond of love and the gift of the Father and the Son to the members of the Church.

In summary, the nature and function of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity is what is discussed in this chapter based on Augustine’s understanding of the Spirit’s divinity and particularity in relation to the Father and the Son. For Augustine, the Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and the Son at the same time distinct among the divine persons of the Trinity. He would, accordingly, emphasize the unity of the divine persons in his trinitarian theology and also identify the uniqueness of the Spirit. The Spirit’s

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{St. Augustine, \textit{The Trinity} VII. 6, 224.}
\end{footnotes}
In this communion, the Spirit is the unifying and animating principle of their inner relationship as well as the agent of communion between the Trinity and the members’ of divinity, equality, and unity with the Father and the Son were, therefore, articulated in the first section of this chapter. In light of their consubstantiality, Augustine would argue that the divine persons inseparably work together. Each of them is, nevertheless, a distinct person in the immanent Trinity and for that reason they perform specific operations with the cooperation of all. Augustine was, therefore, conscious of the dialectics between what is common on the one hand and on the other what is particular to each of the divine persons. Since the Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and the Son and inseparably works with them, it is evident that the Spirit is not subordinated to the Father and the Son. They are also not greater than the Spirit in sending the Spirit on mission.

Among the divine persons of the Trinity, the Spirit is the one Augustine identified as the common gift, the bond of love, and the communion between the Father and the Son. The Spirit is distinctively the common gift in principally proceeding, according to Augustine, from the Father and the Son as from a single source. As such, the Spirit is both the Spirit of the Father and the Son as well as their common gift to each other. In addition, the Spirit is also the bond of love between the Father and the Son that unites them in love. This image of the Spirit as the bond of love is fundamental to his trinitarian theology and ecclesiology because it represents who the Spirit is and what the Spirit does in the immanent Trinity and the Church. In light of the Spirit’s unifying function, Augustine would argue that the Spirit is the communion between the Father and the Son. However, the communion the Spirit creates between the divine persons is beyond human comprehension as a result of its mysterious nature.
Christ’s Body, the Church. As the source of communion, it means that it is through the
Spirit that the members of the Church can participate in the fellowship of the divine
persons. For this reason, Augustine would identify the Spirit as the one through which the
whole triad dwells in the Church. This same Spirit that is consubstantial with the Father
and the Son and that works inseparably with them is the one Augustine would identify in
his ecclesiology as the unifying and animating principle of the Church’s communion. His
insight on the function and particularity of the Spirit as the communion between the
Father and the Son is arguably intertwined with his understanding of the Spirit’s function
in the Church. The latter will, therefore, be discussed in the next chapter on the mission
of the Spirit.
CHAPTER TWO: THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Enough consideration was given to the consubstantiality and the distinctiveness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the previous chapter in order to establish the divinity, unity, and equality of the three persons of the immanent Trinity. Clearly, the divine persons are united and distinct in their relationship to each other. However, Augustine was very clear against his critics that the divine persons work inseparably ad extra. In Augustine’s trinitarian theology, the mission of the Spirit, therefore, involves the Father and the Son because the divine persons of the Trinity are inseparable in their operations. The Father and the Son are not ultimately excluded from the Spirit’s animating and unifying function in the Church. However, the emphasis in this chapter and throughout the whole dissertation is not specifically on the trinitarian work of the divine persons in the Church. Rather, the focus is mainly on the function of the Spirit as the source of the Church’s charismatic gifts, unity, and love among all the members of the Church. This is precisely because the Spirit is distinctively classified by Augustine as the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church as well as the communion between the Father and the Son and between the divine persons of the Trinity and the Church as a whole. In what follows, I will present Augustine’s stance on: the Spirit as a gift to the Church, the Donatists’ claim on the Spirit, the Church and the Sacraments, and his own Spirit – Soul analogy signifying the function of the Spirit in the Church.

In this chapter, I will confine my study of the Spirit’s mission to the Church where the Spirit functions as the source of unity and love. The reason is that the Church is where the love of God that is poured into our hearts by the Spirit is fully actualized. Though the Church is not, from Augustine’s perspective, the only space where the Spirit
is present and active considering the fact that God cannot “be anywhere without his Spirit. If God is everywhere, his Spirit is everywhere too. So the Spirit also was sent to where he was already.” The universal mission of the Spirit is not, therefore, limited to the Church that was formed at Pentecost with the descent of the Spirit. This is precisely because the Spirit of God was already present in the whole of creation. The presence and activity of the Spirit outside the boundaries of the Church was, consequently, noted by Augustine in his theology of the Spirit. He did not in that sense deny the fact that those who are outside the Church may also be under the influence of the Spirit. However, it is the members of the Church, according to Augustine, who are united in the Spirit in a bond of love that the Spirit forms and sustains as a communion in the catholic Church.

What Augustine specifically examined in detail and referred to repeatedly in his stance and his own Spirit – Soul analogy was not so much the general presence of the Spirit in creation and the world. Rather, it was the unique presence and function of the Spirit in the Church since its descent at Pentecost. That was when “there was a kind of giving or sending of the Holy Spirit after Christ’s glorification such as there had never been before … not that there had been none before, but none of this kind.” The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost was, in Augustine’s view, the defining moment of the Church and the occasion in which the Spirit filled the Church as its source of charismatic gifts and its source of unity and love. The one Church was what the Spirit essentially

---

141 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* II. 7, 102.
142 In Augustine’s era up to the great schism of 1054 A.D, the Church that was established at Pentecost was one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church consisting of all believers in Christ. Since this one Church was what Augustine upheld in his works, it is this Church that will hereafter be referred to as the catholic Church or simply the Church. In parts of this dissertation where specific reference is made to the Catholic Church, it is the Churches that are in communion with the Pope I will be referring in the text. These Churches will also be identified in some cases as the Catholic Communion to distinguish them from Churches like the Orthodox Church that is part of the catholic Church but not in communion with the Catholic Church.
established at Pentecost, so there is no more than one Church in which the Spirit as the source of the Church’s charismatic gifts unites its members in a bond of love.

Augustine’s understanding of the nature of the catholic Church was largely based on his interpretation of the mission of the Spirit at Pentecost and its effect on the Church. As a result, the Church’s unity, catholicity, universality, and diversity are directly related to the mission of the Spirit because the giving or bestowal of the Holy Spirit was going to have some special quality about it that there had never been before. Nowhere else do we read that men had spoken in languages they did not know as the Holy Spirit came upon them, in the way that occurred at Pentecost. For then his coming needed to be demonstrated by perceptible signs, to show that the whole world and all nations with their variety of languages were going to believe in Christ by the gift of the Holy Spirit.144

What the Spirit did at Pentecost in enabling the members of the Church to speak the languages of all the nations was a clear testimony, for Augustine, that there is not just unity in the Church, but also diversity. This will later be highlighted when I discuss the Spirit as the principle of the Church’s life and unity. The Church, accordingly, represents in its present state the fulfillment of the events of Pentecost because of the Spirit’s abiding presence in the Church that was co-instituted by the Spirit. Without the Spirit as the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church, the Church would not have been formed and enriched with charismatic gifts. The Spirit’s vitality in the Church as a gift will be discussed in the following section.

**THE GIFT OF THE FATHER AND THE SON TO THE CHURCH**

Augustine did not only consider the Spirit as the common gift of the Father and the Son in the immanent Trinity, as I noted in the first chapter of this dissertation; he equally recognized the Spirit as the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church. The

---

144 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* IV. 29, 175.
Spirit remains in his opinion “the gift of God insofar as he is given to those he is given to,” in order to unite them with God and the other members of the Church. The Church has equally received from both the Father and the Son that which unites them as their common gift. In this section, I will highlight the reasons why the Spirit is given by the Father and the Son, as well as the functions of the Spirit in the Body of Christ, the Church. This will underscore the indispensable part the Spirit plays in the life of the Church whose diverse members are bound together in a communion of love precisely by the Spirit.

The manner in which the Spirit was given testifies that the Spirit was the complete gift of the Father and the Son to the Church. From Augustine’s perspective, it was significant that Christ

being twice glorified, by rising again and ascending, he twice gave the Spirit ... The first time, when he said to his disciples after he had risen again, Receive the Holy Spirit (Jn 20:22)... Next he promises that he is still going to send the Holy Spirit, and he says, You will receive the power of the Holy Spirit coming down upon you (Acts 1:8)... After he had ascended, and they had spent ten days there, he sent the Holy Spirit.  

The one Spirit is what was given to the Church in both cases. For Augustine, the Church was given the Spirit on two occasions because it was very important for the Church to have the fullness of love which the Spirit gives to the members of the Church. This gift enables the members of the Church to actively fulfill their mission in the spirit of service to God and humanity after the example of Christ. For this reason, Christ specifically

145 St. Augustine, The Trinity XV. 36, 424.
146 St. Augustine, “Sermon 265. 8,” In Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons, translated by Edmund Hill (New York: New City Press, 1993), 241. Augustine did not consider the giving of the Spirit in Jn. 20:22 to be one and the same as the Pentecost event of Acts 1:8 because the former took place after the resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Spirit was described in the Book of Acts in very vivid and graphic imagery. In Jn. 16:7-8, Jesus specifically mentioned the coming of the Spirit after his ascension to his heavenly Father.
gave the Holy Spirit on earth after his resurrection and then sent him from heaven … because charity is poured in our hearts through this gift, charity by which we are to love God and neighbor … It was to signify this that the Lord Jesus gave the Holy Spirit twice once on earth for love of neighbor, and again from heaven for love of God.¹⁴⁷

In this passage, Augustine was ultimately stating the cause of the Donatists’ separation from the catholic Church that led them to reject the Church’s sacraments and to perceive the Spirit as an internal gift. The origins of this Donatists controversy in North Africa and their schismatic stance against the Church will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Against the Donatists who were separated from the Church that fully received the Spirit, Augustine contended that they cannot equally have the Spirit. The Spirit is not active in them as long as they were lacking in charity by which the Spirit enables those who are in the Church to preserve the bond of peace and unity. Based on the Spirit’s distinctive nature as the bond of love and how the Spirit enables the members of the Church to live and experience the love of God and neighbor, Augustine would consider the Church where love prevails as the Spirit’s own dwelling place. Therefore, the Donatists should be re-united with the Church where the Spirit makes it possible for the members to live out the demands of the commandment of love. They cannot simply love on their own accord because “man has no capacity to love God except from God.”¹⁴⁸

The Spirit which is given as a gift is meant to have a profound and practical effect on the lives of the members of the Church because the Spirit is what prompts and gives them the capacity to live the commandment of love. The members of the Church should, therefore, depend on the Spirit that they received as a gift from God in order to live in

¹⁴⁷ St. Augustine, *The Trinity* XV, 46, 431.
¹⁴⁸ Ibid., XV. 31, 421.
harmony and grow together in a communion of love. In Augustine’s understanding of the Spirit, one can justifiably affirm with Dryer that

the Spirit has not been relegated to a place in the wings, but is an existential force in the life of the individual believer and of the ecclesial community. Augustine sees the Spirit as a force, leading believers to full and mature knowledge of the things of God. The Spirit also calls and empowers the Church to the very difficult task of living in unity, loving, and forgiving one another.149

From my perspective, it is specifically in the Spirit that the Church continues to exist in unity and it is in the power of the Spirit that the members of the Church as individuals and as a community of faith are in a position to effectively respond to the love of God. The Church and its members cannot possibly be divided or subjected to any other force if indeed the Spirit is the Church’s source of unity and love. The more the members of the Church are filled with the Spirit, the more they will likewise be transformed and brought together into a communion of love where diversity is positively appreciated. However, the Spirit ultimately retains its freedom and its divinity as the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church because for Augustine, the Spirit is not conjoined to its bodily forms.

2.1.1 THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT CONJOINED TO ITS BODILY FORMS

Since the divine persons inseparably work in the Church, where the Spirit functions as the source of unity, it is reasonable to argue that what the Spirit does in the Church is a reflection of its functions in the immanent Trinity. Considering Augustine’s trinitarian theology and ecclesiology, one can agree with TeSelle that

Augustine insists more strongly than earlier thinkers, that the ‘economy’ or ‘dispensation’ reflects the ‘immanent Trinity’ that is eternally within God. The ‘unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’ (Eph. 4:3) applies not only to the Church but to the Spirit through whom the other persons are joined … If love can unify so many human hearts and minds, how much more it unites Father and Son … The economy is even an accurate reflection of the ‘proper’ activities of the persons.

Because the Spirit is the ‘societas’ of Father and Son, the ‘societas’ of the Church is the ‘proprium opus’ of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{150}

On this particular subject, Augustine was slightly at odds with Rahner who claimed “the ‘economic’ Trinity is the ‘immanent’ Trinity and the ‘immanent’ Trinity is the ‘economic’ Trinity.”\textsuperscript{151} In Augustine’s case he was careful to distinguish the bodily and physical forms under which the Son and the Spirit reveal themselves in the economy of salvation from their substantial nature in the immanent Trinity. However, Augustine would not deny the fact that “in God’s self-communication to his creation through grace and Incarnation God really gives himself, and really appears as he is in himself.”\textsuperscript{152} For he clearly admitted that the whole triad dwells in the Church through the Spirit and none of the divine persons can be experienced without the others.

The Spirit’s divinity and equality with the Father and the Son was not evidently minimized, in Augustine’s view, because the Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son or because the Spirit dwells in the Church as its source of unity and love. In relation to the Church, the Spirit is still the Spirit of the Father and the Son and their common gift to the Church. Therefore, the Spirit is substantially God that cannot be conjoined to its bodily forms in which the Spirit is manifested. Augustine would, nevertheless, acknowledge the existential presence of the Spirit in the Church in the analogy he made between the function of the Spirit in the Church and the function of the soul in the body. However, he

\textsuperscript{152} Karl Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity, translated by William Dych (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1978), 136. According to Augustine, “the love which is from God and is God is distinctively the Holy Spirit; through him the charity of God is poured into our hearts, and through it the whole triad dwells in us.” The fullness of God is equally communicated to us, from Augustine’s point of view, if the whole triad dwells in us. The Trinity, XV. 32, 421.
was extremely careful to show that unlike the Son, the Spirit is not of the same nature as the form in which the Spirit is manifested. He insisted that no creature was taken by the Holy Spirit to appear under, in the way that that flesh, that human form, was taken of the virgin Mary. The Spirit did not make the dove blessed, or the violent gust, or the fire; he did not join them to himself and his person to be held in an everlasting union. Nor on the other hand is the Spirit of a mutable and changing nature, so that instead of these manifestations being wrought out of created things, he should turn or change himself into this and that, as water turns to ice. But these phenomena appeared, as and when they were required to, creation serving the creator … in order to signify and show him as it was proper for him to be signified and shown to mortal men.153

The Spirit can only exist in its divine nature in the forms in which it manifests itself. Therefore, the Spirit cannot substantially be joined to the Church where it dwells and functions as its source of unity and love. Augustine did not evidently subordinate the Spirit to the Father and the Son. He did not likewise subject the Spirit to the Church in presenting the Spirit as the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church.

In my own assessment, the Spirit is not limited by Augustine in his ecclesiology. If Augustine insisted that the Spirit is not conjoined to its bodily forms, one can argue that there is more to the Spirit than just the bodily forms in which it reveals itself.

Therefore, the Spirit is more than the Church itself in which it dwells and functions as its source of unity and love. Augustine could not possibly have identified the Spirit with the Church even though he closely associated the Spirit with the Church. He could not in turn have suggested that the Church inherently acquired a divine nature when the Spirit of God dwelt in the Church and began functioning the same way the soul functions in the

153 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* II. 11, 104. The Spirit is not inherently bound to the perceptible forms in which it manifests itself and it is not also transformed by these forms. The forms under which the Spirit manifests itself cannot essentially be identified with the Spirit. Augustine was thoroughly concerned about the divinity and unchanging nature of the Spirit in distinguishing its perceptible forms from the Spirit itself. As such, he would equally maintain the Spirit’s divine nature when he analogically compares its function in the Church to the function of the soul in the body.
body. His claim that the Spirit is not conjoined to its bodily forms should, therefore, argue against any literal interpretation of his Spirit – Soul analogy. The Spirit is not evidently the actual soul of the Church in Augustine’s own understanding. Therefore, the Spirit remains the Spirit of the Father and the Son that is free to blow wherever it wills even outside the Church where it functions as its source of unity and love.

The forms in which the Spirit is manifested in the Scriptures should not also be literally identified with the Spirit. That was precisely the sense in which the Donatists and other opponents of Augustine misrepresented the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost in Acts. 2:1-4. On his part, Augustine would indicate that

though admittedly the point could be argued about the fire, whether it was seen with the eyes or in spirit, because of the words used, it does not say ‘They saw divided tongues as of fire,’ but ‘There appeared to them divided tongues as of fire … It is indeed normal to say both ‘There appeared to me’ and ‘I saw’ in the case of visions of spirit of bodily images; but in the case of things offered to our eyes in their definite bodily shape we usually say ‘I saw’ and not ‘There appeared to me.’ So in the case of the fire of Pentecost there is room for doubt about how it was seen; whether it was inwardly in spirit … or outwardly by the eyes of the head. The dove however is expressly said to have descended in bodily guise.154

The tongues of fire were only a symbolic representation of the Spirit that enabled the Apostles to speak in tongues, rather than the Spirit in its substantiality. In light of this fact, it was important to emphasize the Spirit’s transcendence against those who believed their ability to speak in tongues was a clear indication that they have the fullness of the Spirit. Augustine’s argument was clearly an attempt to correct their misperceptions because the Spirit is not essentially identified with its bodily forms and its gift of tongues.

In terms of who possesses the Spirit, Augustine would favor those who are charitable in the catholic Church where the Spirit functions as its source of unity and love. The Spirit is not, consequently, guaranteed even to all the members of the catholic

Church, from Augustine’s point of view, insofar as some members of the Church are lacking in charity. As Ratzinger shows, it is by no means automatically the case that anyone who remains in the Church thereby has caritas, but there is indeed certainty about the contrary: anyone who deliberately does not remain is departing from caritas. Hence [Augustine’s] formula: However much anyone loves the Church, that is how much he has of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁵

This line of thought is based on the fact that the Church is where the Spirit fosters the bond of unity and love. The reason the Spirit seemingly manifests itself under perceptible signs, according to Augustine, is so that “outward sights might in this way stir the minds of men, and draw them on from the public manifestations of his coming in time to the still and hidden presence of his eternity sublime.”¹⁵⁶ When the Spirit evidently manifests itself in public, its manifestation should attract even those who are not in the catholic Church to a deeper understanding of who the Spirit is and what the Spirit is sent to accomplish in the Church. Augustine was able to preserve the divinity and freedom of the Spirit, at the same time, to establish the unique presence of the Spirit in the Church. He would, therefore, present the Spirit as the indispensable element of the Church’s character and actions which I will endeavor to articulate in the following section.

2.1.2 CHRIST’S ANOINTING BY THE SPIRIT PREFIGURES THE CHURCH

The Church that Augustine perceived and characterized as the Body of Christ is a Church that is essentially universal and unlimited in time and space. It is a Church that is not exclusive in its constitution, but one that is inherently inclusive and diverse in nature. Augustine fully underscored this universal character of the Church when he affirmed that

¹⁵⁶ St. Augustine, The Trinity II. 10, 104.
all of us together are the members of Christ and his body; not only those of us who are in this place, but throughout the whole world; and not only those of us who are alive at this time, but what shall I say? From Abel the just right up to the end of the world, as long as people beget and are begotten, any of the just who make the passage through this life, all that now – that is, not in this place but in this life – all that are going to be born after us, all constitute the one body of Christ, while they are each individual members of Christ. So if all constitute the body and are each individual members, there is of course a head, of which this is the body.  

The Church is evidently constituted of peoples of all times and places who have joined themselves as individuals and as a community of faith to Christ, the head of the Church. As members of Christ’s Body, they have to fully participate in the life of Christ in order to become like him. They are required in that sense to imitate his life, his passion, death, and resurrection and to live according to the demands of his teaching. The fact that Jesus was baptized and received the Spirit means that all the members of the Church should be baptized in order to receive the Spirit. For Augustine, the baptism of Christ is quite significant to the members of the Church because “what he was doing then was graciously prefiguring his body, that is the Church, in which it is particularly those who have just been baptized that receive the Holy Spirit.”

The Spirit that anointed Christ at his baptism and empowered him to fulfill his public ministry is, in my estimation, the same Spirit that descended on the Church at Pentecost and anointed the members of the Church to continue the mission of Christ. The members of the Church can only be effective in their mission and acts of charity if the Spirit rests on them because it was only in the power of the Spirit that Christ was able to proclaim the Good News to the poor and free those in captivity (Lk. 4:18-19). The effect the Spirit had on Christ when it anointed him at his baptism in the Jordan was equally the

---

158 St. Augustine, The Trinity XV. 46, 431.
same effect the Spirit generated when it descended with its sevenfold gifts on the
members of Christ’s Body, the Church. If Christ’s anointing prefigured the Church, there
is reason to believe, from my point of view, that the Spirit will always remain in the
Church. The Church’s members who in turn are open to the Spirit will fully be influenced
by the Spirit insofar as the Church is an extension of Christ’s anointing in the Spirit. For,
the Church is not simply a human organization, but rather, the Mystical Body of Christ.
The latter is the case because the members who constitute the Church are equally filled
and empowered by the Spirit that anointed Christ, the Head of his Body, the Church.

Anyone who is, therefore, baptized in the Church with Christ’s own baptism
formally receives the Spirit the same way Christ received the Spirit at his baptism. The
Spirit is equally received at baptism by those who are not in communion with the catholic
Church when they too were baptized in the Church. For Augustine, the Spirit is also
received by those they will later baptize with Christ’s baptism outside the Church only at
the time of their baptism. However, the Spirit is not effective in them while they are cut
off from the Church in their schismatic state. For those who are baptized outside the
Church, Augustine would maintain that “the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit,
[though] the baptism will not flee from it. And so, as baptism can continue in one from
whom the Holy Spirit withdraws himself, so can baptism continue where the Church is
not.”¹⁵⁹ Their baptism remains, but the Spirit is no longer in them once they are not in
communion with the Church. In fact, Augustine would insist that their sins, particularly
the sin of schism, are also not forgiven because the Spirit which forgives sins is not of

¹⁵⁹ St. Augustine, “On Baptism, Against the Donatists V. 33,” In St. Augustin the Writings Against the
Manicheans and Against the Donatists: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church,
475.
profit to them. I agree with Augustine’s point of view that the sacraments of those who are not in communion with the catholic Church where the Spirit functions as the source of unity are not profitable to them because of their own resistance to the Spirit of love and communion. This will fully be elaborated in detail in the next section when I consider the reasons why Augustine firmly maintained that the Donatists did not actively have the Spirit in their lives. However, it is pertinent to discuss this issue at this point to show the connection Augustine made between the baptism of Christ, the Spirit, and the Church.

At this juncture, I will reflect on the Donatists’ position on the worthiness of the minister of the sacraments and Augustine’s insight on the effectiveness of Christ’s baptism in its own right. When Augustine considered

the role of the dove at Jesus’ baptism (Jn. 1:32-33), he [argued] that at Christ’s baptism, John the Baptist learned something – not that the Christ is God, not that he baptized with the Holy Spirit, but, against the Donatists – that the effectiveness of baptism rests in Christ, not in good or bad ministers.\(^{160}\)

It is Christ’s own baptism that is properly received in the Church and it is in the name of Christ that the Church baptizes its members. The minister of baptism is not one who really makes the sacrament effective because it is in Christ’s name that he baptizes, the same way as John the Baptist is not the one who made Christ’s own baptism effective as a minister. Therefore, the baptism of Jesus is the one that Augustine adopted as the model of all baptisms in which the invisible element of the sacrament is conferred by Christ. When the members of the Church are baptized, they also receive the Spirit like Christ and sacramental grace is conferred on them by Christ. Augustine’s position on this issue was very clear:

as Christ washed the feet of his servants, so was he willing to be baptized with the baptism of a servant. For as he set himself to minister to the feet of those whose

---

\(^{160}\) Dryer, “Spirituality as a Resource for Theology,” 190.
guide he was himself, so he submitted himself to the gift of John which he himself had given, that all might understand what sacrilegious arrogance they would show in despising the baptism which they ought each of them to receive from the Lord when he himself accepted what he himself had bestowed upon a servant, that he might give it as his own.\textsuperscript{161}

The Church evidently inherits its baptismal ritual from Christ. At the same time, the Church takes its authority to baptize from Christ, so the Church strictly follows the order of Christ’s baptism. For Augustine, what the Church does at baptism can likewise be traced back to the baptism of Christ and it is for this reason that the Church’s baptism is valid wherever it is celebrated in Christ’s name. The Church does not, subsequently, intend to replace Christ in the sacrament of baptism because Christ remains the dispenser of the Spirit that is received at baptism. This is precisely why “none of the disciples ever gave the Holy Spirit; they prayed that he might come upon those on whom they laid hands, they did not give him themselves. The Church in its bishops still observes this custom.”\textsuperscript{162} The Spirit is not categorically given by the Church, as far as Augustine was concerned. However, it is in the Church that the Spirit is not only effective in the lives of the baptized, but also functions as the source of unity and love between its members and the divine community of the Trinity. One must effectively distinguish between Christ and the minister of the sacrament of baptism because

\begin{quote}
the Lord Jesus Christ would not give his baptism to any, not that no one should be baptized with the baptism of the Lord, but that the Lord himself should always baptize: that was done, that the Lord should baptize by means of servants, that is to say, those whom the servants of the Lord were to baptize, the Lord baptized, not they. For it is one thing to baptize in the capacity of a servant, another thing to baptize with power. For baptism derives its character from him through whose power it is given; not from him through whose ministry it is given.\textsuperscript{163}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{161} St. Augustine, “On Baptism, Against the Donatists,” V. 9-10, 467.
\textsuperscript{162} St. Augustine, \textit{The Trinity} XV. 46, 431.
When believers are baptized in Christ’s baptism and they receive the Spirit, the baptism they receive must have an effect in their lives. Their baptism in Christ must unite them to Christ and enable them as adopted sons and daughters of God to share a common life in the Church that the Spirit animates. The implications of Christ’s baptism on those who are baptized in his name were equally considered by Augustine in highlighting the brotherly concord which ought to be, and can be, very real. Let all Christians be brothers, let all the faithful be brothers, let those be brothers, who have been born of God and of the womb of mother Church by the Holy Spirit; let them be brothers, let them too have an inheritance to be possessed, and not divided.\footnote{St. Augustine, “Sermon 357. 4,” In Sermons III/10 (341-400) on Various Subjects, 202.}

Unity and brotherhood is what should ultimately characterize those who are baptized in Christ and born of the womb of mother Church. For Augustine, if the Donatists were baptized in Christ’s baptism, and equally received the Spirit, they should be united with the other members of the Church. They had no reason, therefore, to destroy the concord that ought to exist among those who are baptized in Christ. Nor should they consider themselves the true Church because the Spirit they received for a while at their baptism was no longer effective in their lives. Their schismatic act in that regard was not only a violation of their baptismal life in Christ Jesus and an affront to the Church; it was also in Augustine’s view, a grave sin against the Spirit and the spirit of brotherhood. I will specifically discuss the implications of their schismatic act in the next section of this chapter. At this juncture, I will turn to the Church where believers are anointed by the Spirit as members of Christ’s Body sharing the same divine Spirit that is common to all.
2.1.3 THE SPIRIT IS THE SUPREME GIFT TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

The Spirit is not strictly reserved, in Augustine’s perspective, to some particular members of the Church or the teaching authority of the Church. The Spirit is equally received by all the members of the Church who are in communion with each other because the Spirit is God’s supreme gift to each and every member of the Church. None of the members of the Church is evidently without the Spirit and equally nobody can claim monopoly of the Spirit. The outstanding difference in the functions and vocations of the members of the Church is, consequently, based on the particular or charismatic gift each of them received from the Spirit. The latter is the case

because through the gift which the Holy Spirit is in common for all the members of Christ, many gifts which are proper to them severally are divided among them. They do not each have all the gifts, but these have some and those have others, although all have the gift by which their special gifts are distributed to each, that is the Holy Spirit.165

In effect, the Spirit is what is fundamentally shared in common by all the members of the Church. Therefore, the members of the Church must recognize that the Spirit dwells in each and every one of them as individuals and as a community of faith. The presence of the Spirit in the life of each member of the Church and in the Church as a whole is accordingly significant, for Augustine, because it suggests that all of them share in the life of the Spirit and are under the influence of the Spirit. They cannot equally defy the unity of the Spirit like the Donatists in breaking communion with the catholic Church because “such an indwelling supposes that there is a participation in one another’s life

---

165 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* XV. 34, 422-423.
through love. Only love leads us to God, for no other divine gift can effect directly the presence of God in us.”\textsuperscript{166}

Of all the gifts that are given to the members of the Church, Augustine would maintain that “there is no greater gift of God’s than the Holy Spirit … who is both God and from God.”\textsuperscript{167} The Scriptures bear witness to the fact that the Spirit is the supreme gift of the Father and the Son to all the members of the Church. A clear example for Augustine is in Jn. 7:37-39 where

\begin{quote}
the evangelist goes on to add: This he said of the Spirit which those who believed in him were going to receive. That is why the apostle Paul as well says, And we were all given one Spirit to drink (1Cor. 12:13) … Just as we find here that this water is the Holy Spirit, so we find elsewhere in the same Gospel that this water is called the gift of God. When the same Lord was talking to the Samaritan woman at the well, and had said to her … if you knew the gift of God and who it is that says to you, give me a drink … Thus because this living water is the Holy Spirit, as the evangelist explained it, there can be no doubt that the Holy Spirit is the gift of God of which the Lord says here, If you knew the gift of God and who it is that says to you give me a drink.\textsuperscript{168}
\end{quote}

There is nothing the members of the Church can ultimately receive from God that is more precious and more supreme than the Spirit they have already received at their baptism. On that basis, I would argue that the members of the Church are fundamentally equal in themselves because of the Spirit dwelling in them. They simply cannot despise one another on account of their gifts or vocation. Each member of the Church can, consequently, contribute towards the growth, unity, and vitality of the Church if everyone truly makes good use of the gift of the Spirit he or she has received. For this reason, it is important for the members of the Church to understand that

\textsuperscript{167} St. Augustine, The Trinity XV. 37, 424.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., XV. 33, 421-422.
the Holy Spirit is called the gift of God [and] to realize of course that when they
hear the phrase ‘gift of the Holy Spirit’ they are to recognize the same figure of
speech as in the phrase ‘in the stripping of the body of flesh.’ Just as the body of
flesh is nothing but flesh, so the gift of the Holy Spirit is nothing but the Holy
Spirit.169

Those who are baptized outside the catholic Church need to once more be re-
united to Christ’s Body, the Church, before this supreme gift of God, namely, the Spirit
can become effective and fruitful in their lives. They already have Christ’s baptism, but
according to Augustine, “we answer them: … come, in order to have Christ’s Spirit as
well. Be afraid of what’s written: But anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ, that
person does not belong to him (Rom. 8:9).”170 Augustine did not, consequently, deny that
the Donatists had valid baptism and he did not also deny that they had other gifts such as
prophecy, the gift of tongues, and knowledge. They certainly had all these gifts, but they
did not effectively have the Spirit which is the supreme gift of God they need to live in
communion the way the members of the Church were in communion with each other.
They could not also love or be charitable to the members of the Church without the love
of God that ‘is poured into our hearts through the Spirit which has been given to us (Rom.
5:5).’ Their gifts were not useful in turn

unless the Holy Spirit is imparted to make [them] lovers of God and neighbor,
[they] cannot transfer from the left hand to the right. The Spirit is distinctively
called gift only because of the love without which the man who has not got it,
though he speak with the tongues of men and of angels, is booming bronze and a
clashing cymbal … and if he distributes all his substance, and if he gives over his
body to burn, it does him no good.171

The gift of love which those who are not in communion with the catholic Church
do not have is purely identified in both Augustine’s trinitarian theology and in his

169 St. Augustine, The Trinity XV. 36, 424.
171 St. Augustine, The Trinity XV. 32, 421.
ecclesiology with the Spirit. If the Spirit is the one who can inspire them to love the
members of the Church and be part of this communion of love, it means that the Spirit is
not just the bond of love between the Father and the Son. The Spirit is also the bond of
love that conditions the lives of all the members of the Church. The gift of the Spirit
which the members of the Church have received at their baptism is “distinctively to be
understood as being the charity which brings us through to God, without which no other
gift of God at all can bring us through to God.”

Therefore, the members of the Church who have received the Spirit should live the commandment of love of God and neighbor
in a communion of love because the Spirit is the Spirit of love. This close affinity
between the Spirit and love in Augustine’s ecclesiology will fully be explored when I
consider schism as a sin against the Spirit.

In light of the above, the Spirit is, in my view, the gift through whom the
members of the Church are united with each other as well as the divine community of the
Trinity. The Spirit is, therefore, the unique source of unity in the Church as the supreme
gift that is common to all the members of the Church. Unity is, consequently, a divine
and inherent feature of the catholic Church because it is

by what is common to them both [that] the Father and the Son wished us to have
communion both with them and among ourselves; by this gift which they both
possess as one they wished to gather us together and make us one, this is to say,
by the Holy Spirit who is God and the gift of God. By this gift we are reconciled
to the godhead, and by this gift we enjoy the godhead … charity is what we love
by, and it enables us both to know things more thoroughly and to enjoy them
when known more happily. Thus charity has been poured into our hearts through
the Holy Spirit which has been given to us (Rom. 5:5).173

The Spirit is precisely what guarantees the Church’s unity in binding and reconciling the
members of the Church with the Godhead. For that matter, it is for the sake of unity that

172 St. Augustine, The Trinity XV, 32, 421.
the Father and the Son fully and generously bestowed the Spirit on the members of the Church as their common gift. There is no reason for the members of the Church not to live in communion with each other or be divided amongst themselves along racial, political, and ethnic lines because they have received the Spirit that is common to all. Such awareness is required, especially, in some communities in the African church and that is the reason I will argue for a communion of unity in diversity in the fourth chapter.

From my perspective, Augustine’s vision of the Church was profoundly informed by his understanding of the Spirit as the common gift that unites the members of the Church with each other and the community of the Trinity. The Church’s life and unity, accordingly, transcends or goes beyond its ecclesial boundaries. As Lewis Ayres noted, the Spirit leads us to share in that love through forming the Church into a community that participates in the love of the Trinity through incorporation into the body of Christ. Augustine’s understanding of the work of the Spirit seems to involve two aspects. On the one hand, the Spirit is a ‘unifying’ force, drawing us all into a form of loving that participates in the always prior loving exchange of God. On the other hand, the Spirit permits a diversity through calling us to participate in this love by showing love to others that they may be our ‘brothers.’

The Church in this sense will always be drawn into the unity of the divine persons of the Trinity through the Spirit. As a result, the Church will always desire to perfect the unity among its members. The unity that the Spirit creates as the common gift of all the members of the Church is not, therefore, a static unity, but rather, a dynamic and evolving unity that is continually renewed and perfected towards the unity of the divine persons. Perfect unity in the Church will not readily be realized even with the Spirit as

---

174 Lewis Ayres, “Augustine, Christology, and God as Love,” In Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God, edited by Kevin Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 88-89. The communion that exists in the Church is not only among its members. It is a communion that exists between the divine community of the Trinity, the members of the Church here on earth, and the saints in heaven. Such a communion does not only broaden the horizons of the members of the Church, but it allows them to participate in the life of the Trinity and in the fellowship of the saints.
the common gift, because such a unity remains a mystery and an eschatological goal.

This unity is ultimately “the unfinished or unrealized quality of the Church [which] always stands at the center of Augustine’s reflection.” However, the members of the Church should consistently foster a bond of unity and love within the Church where they all share the Spirit as the source of their unique charismatic gifts.

2.1.4 SOURCE OF THE CHURCH’S CHARISMATIC GIFTS

Since its foundation at Pentecost, the Church is endowed with many charismatic gifts for its own good. For Augustine, the source of the Church’s charismatic gifts is the Spirit that all the members of the Church have received in common. The members of the Church who have received the Spirit equally have a unique charismatic gift from the Spirit that should effectively be used at the service of the Church. That is how St. Paul regarded each member of the Church, according to Augustine, because

*to each one of us is given grace according to the measure of the donation of Christ; and to show that the donation of Christ is the Holy Spirit he went on to add, That is why it says, he ascended on high, he took captivity captive, he gave gifts to men* (Eph. 4:7). But it is public knowledge that when the Lord Jesus had ascended to heaven after his resurrection from the dead he gave the Holy Spirit; and being filled with it those who believed began to speak with the tongues of all the peoples.

The Spirit is the only source of the Church’s charismatic gifts from whom the members receive their particular charismatic gifts. However, the gifts are distributed to each according to the Spirit as the Spirit wills (1Cor. 12:11), because there is a variety of gifts, as St. Paul says, but always the same Spirit working through them for the good of all (1Cor. 12:4-7). The Spirit is rightly the one who determines which of the members of the Church receives a particular kind of gift. Yet, it is absolutely essential for Augustine, that

---

176 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* XV. 34, 422.
all members of the Church discover their own charismatic gift once they realize that the
Spirit is given to them. They will then appreciate the value of their gifts which will
enable them to contribute towards the building of Christ’s Body, the Church (Eph. 4:12).

The gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues that some members of the
Church had were obviously a cause for concern for Augustine because the Donatists
claimed they possessed the Spirit by speaking in tongues, instead of the catholic Church.
The mere fact that they spoke in tongues did not mean, in Augustine’s estimation, that the
Donatists necessarily had the Spirit. Their charismatic gifts including the gift of tongues
were likewise useless to the Church as a whole because they totally separated themselves
from the rest of the Church and were uncharitable towards its members. In response to
the Donatists’ claim, Augustine would argue that

anyone who thinks that the Holy Spirit is not given, isn’t worthy to receive it. It
certainly is given nowadays. So why is nobody speaking with the tongues of all
nations, as people spoke who were filled with the Holy Spirit at that time? Why?
Because what that signified has been fulfilled.\footnote{177}

The gift of tongues cannot, therefore, be of any benefit in isolation from the Church that
such a gift is supposed to enrich. In his polemics against the Donatists over the true
Church in which the gift of tongues was seen by the Donatists as a sign of the Spirit of
Pentecost, Augustine was trying to assure his congregation that this gift should not
become a source of division or confusion among them. The reason is that the Spirit, as
the source of the gift of tongues, is the Spirit that fosters unity, understanding, and
fraternal love. The significance of the gift of tongues in relation to the Church as
presented by Augustine will be dealt with in detail in the final section of this chapter
when I reflect on how the Church speaks all languages of the nations through the Spirit.

\footnote{177} St. Augustine, “Sermons 267.3,” In \textit{Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons}, 275.
At this stage, it is sufficient to say with Dryer that “the variety of tongues given by the Spirit pointed to the unity of the world Church that Augustine envisioned, contrary to what he perceived as the narrow, parochial vision of the Donatists.” The Church can still be united even with the different gifts of tongues because the Spirit is the source of these gifts that are given for the unity and common good of the universal Church.

Augustine certainly acknowledged the many charismatic gifts that the Spirit gives at will to the members of Christ’s Body, the Church, such as prophecy, healing, the gift of speech, discernment etc. But against the Donatists, he emphasized not so much the personal aspect of one’s gifts, but the communal purpose of the Spirit’s charismatic gifts. The reason is that the gifts of the Spirit are given for the good of the whole, for the building up of Christ’s Body, the Church. One’s own gift can of course be used to advance one’s own Christian life, but it should not be utilized at the expense of the Church as a whole nor should it be applied without the essential theological virtue of charity. In the case of the catholic Church in Africa, this means that the local churches should discover and make use of their particular charismatic gifts not in isolation, but in communion with the universal Church. The tendency for the local churches to become self-sufficient and self-centered in themselves because of the Spirit’s charismatic gifts should equally be avoided.

AUGUSTINE AGAINST THE DONATISTS

What prompted the Donatists controversy prior to Augustine was the Diocletian persecution in 303 A.D when the Roman emperor sought to suppress Christianity not by the compulsory offering of sacrifice, as Decius had tried to do, but the seizure of its sacred writings. Therefore those clergy and others who

---

apostatized were not now *libellatici* or *sacrificati*, but *traditores* … it was out of such a situation that Donatism arose.\(^{179}\)

The members of the Church were, therefore, divided between those who preserved the sacred books and endured persecution on the one hand and those who handed over the sacred books of the Church and escaped persecution on the other. At the end of the persecution, the former would accuse the latter not only of betraying the faith, but of abandoning the true Church. They would, consequently, insist on re-baptizing these *traditores* before readmitting them to the Church so that the *traditores* will be cleansed of their sins. The outstanding issue of the Donatists controversy pertains to Church membership for those who betrayed their faith. However, the contentious and divisive aspect of this problem that the Church had to resolve at the time was the rigorist demand to re-baptize those who had apostatized.

Among those who once supported rebaptism of the lapsed in the third century against the pronouncements of Pope Stephen, were the Novatianists in Rome and Cyprian of Carthage in North Africa. From the Donatists’, Novatianists’, and Cyprian’s point of view, the baptism of those who betrayed their faith was invalid. Therefore, in baptizing the *traditores*, they were administering valid baptism to them for the first time. While the Novatianists opted to separate themselves from the catholic Church over the question of rebaptism, Cyprian decided to maintain communion with the catholic Church because he strongly believed

> the episcopate is one, the parts of which are held together by the individual bishops. The Church is one which with increasing fecundity extends far and wide into the multitude, just as the rays of the sun are many but the light is one, and the branches of the tree are many but the strength is one founded in its tenacious root … take away a ray of light from the body of the sun, its unity does not take on any

division of its light; break a branch from a tree, the branch thus broken will not be able to bud … Thus too the Church bathed in the light of the Lord projects its rays over the whole world, yet there is one light which is diffused everywhere, and the unity of the body is not separated … By her womb we are born; by her milk we are nourished; by her spirit we are animated.  

Cyprian was fully against readmitting the lapsed into the Church without re-baptizing them. However, for the sake of the unity of the Church, which ought to be preserved, he did not break ranks with the Church or with those who opposed his position. The unity of the Church was foremost and essential for him than the question of discipline and one’s stance on certain issues of concern in the Church. Cyprian was fully determined on his part not to compromise the unity of the Church, but to tolerate those who were against rebaptism and accept the difference of opinion within the Church. His stance towards those who completely abandoned the Church and destroyed its unity was that

even if such men are slain in confession of the Name that stain is not washed away by blood; the expiable and serious fault of discord is purged not even by martyrdom. He cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church … He commanded us to keep the bonds of love and charity uncorrupted and inviolate. He cannot display himself a martyr who has not maintained fraternal charity.  

Augustine would agree with Cyprian on the unity of the Church based on love as I will discuss later in this chapter. He would, however, disagree with Cyprian on rebaptism in affirming the validity of the sacraments of those who have broken communion with the catholic Church.

The advocates of rebaptism in North Africa would, therefore, appeal to Cyprian in the fourth century to argue their case. They would even go beyond him and radically

---

180 St. Cyprian, “The Unity of the Church 5,” In Fathers of the Church, translated by Roy, Deferrari, Vol., 36 (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University Press, 1958), 99-100. The analogy shows that unity can only be found within the Church and it cannot be lost on account of those who separate themselves from the communion of believers. It is, therefore, in the Body of Christ, the Church that unity subsists and to separate oneself from this unity means to deny oneself of life itself. Augustine would similarly allude to this image of the broken branch when he compares schismatics to amputated parts of the body.

181 Ibid., 14, 109.
break communion with the Catholic Church in order to establish their church. Donatism was in effect

the name that was given to [the] schismatic movement in the North African Church which began with the disputed election to the see of Carthage, sometime between 308 and 311 A.D. The division dominated North African history from this double election of both Majorinus and Caecilian; the schism took its name from Donatus, Majorinus’ successor.182

Because Caecilian was alleged to have betrayed the faith as a traditor, he was not equally worthy and pure in the eyes of the Donatists to become the bishop of Carthage. Only those who had preserved the sacred books and endured the Diocletian persecution were truly worthy and holy to constitute the Church and be elected to office because the African Christian tradition had long laid great weight on the ‘separateness’ of the Church from the world and liked to draw a very firm line around the Church. This line enclosed the sphere of purity and holiness in a world of sin and pollution … Holiness was within, beyond it lay this world ruled by hostile demonic powers … This theology was based on the position held by Cyprian and accepted, on the strength of his prestige, in the succeeding half century.183

According to the Donatists, what qualifies a person to become a member of the Church is the person’s moral conduct. If the individual is immoral, sinful, and guilty of a scandalous public act like denying his or her faith in the face of persecution, the person must be re-baptized before he or she can be readmitted into the Church.

Based on such a high moral standard, only a select few were members of the pure Church because many of the clergy in particular were guilty of handing over the sacred books to the emperor. As a matter of fact,

the Donatists went further and insisted that anyone who remained in communion with an apostate bishop participated in his sin and rendered himself also outside the Church. The practical result of this Donatist position was that the Donatists believed that the true, holy Church existed only in Africa within the Donatist...

183 Ibid., 286.
churches; all other churches were false and adulterous communions, devoid of the Holy Spirit and therefore devoid of the sacraments.\textsuperscript{184}

The Donatists were, consequently, eager to embrace martyrdom in their struggle against sin and evil in the world; in their bid to preserve their purity and holiness than to enter into communion with those who had apostatized. As such, they were convinced that they were the only ones who would be saved from eternal damnation. Their primary concern for that matter was “how to survive as a pure and spotless Church in a world filled with sinful Christians. The questions included: how ought a bishop to deal with the clergy … what virtues ought the ascetic to cultivate. In every case, the answer was separation from sinners.”\textsuperscript{185} These matters of concern on baptism, on who constitutes the Church, on morality, and where exactly the Spirit functions would be refuted by Augustine because “this elite and perfectionistic concept of Church endorsed by the Donatists clashes with Augustine’s more inclusive, universal vision.”\textsuperscript{186} Therefore, I intend to draw on Augustine’s theology of the Spirit and his ecclesiology to argue in the fourth chapter not so much for an autonomous African Church, but for an African Church that knows, lives, and celebrates its particularity in communion with the universal Church.

Augustine’s vision of the Church was quite different from that of the Donatists because he understood the profound meaning of the accounts of the great catch of fish before and after the resurrection in Lk. 5:1-7; Jn. 21:4-8; and the parable of the seeds and the weeds in Mt. 13:24-30. These passages are significant because they represent the nature and reality of the Church and its members. Thus, Augustine would broadly utilize

them against the Donatists. For Augustine, the Church in its present state and in its future form are all reflected in these passages. Hence it is important to distinguish between these two catches, one before the resurrection, the other after the resurrection. In the first the nets are cast everywhere; it doesn’t mention the right side, so we can’t understand only the good; it doesn’t mention the left side, so we can’t understand only the bad. So it’s good and bad mixed up together. And the nets were breaking with the amount caught. Broken nets stand for schisms … It is two boats that are filled, because of the two peoples, from the circumcision and the uncircumcision; and they are filled to such an extent that they are overloaded and almost sinking … But because of the good fish, the boats haven’t actually sunk.187

There are likewise Jews and Gentiles, good and sinful people in the Church, in Augustine’s estimation, while the Church is still in the world. However, the Church will never perish or be divided within itself on account of the bad elements in the Church. This is the case because “for Augustine, the whole Church is heavenly because of its origin, because of a number of her citizens (the angels) and because of her ultimate goal. Part of the heavenly Church is on pilgrimage and it is impossible to speak of the heavenly without considering the earthly part.”188 In the world to come, the Church will be formed by the pure and there will be no schisms or broken nets as signified in the second catch of fish after the resurrection in Jn. 21:4-8.

The Donatists had no good reason in that regard to separate themselves from the Church and destroy the unity of the Church. They were supposed to have tolerated or lived in harmony with the so-called traitors of the faith instead of breaking communion with them because there is nothing like a pure exclusive Church until judgment day.

187 St. Augustine, “Sermons 249. 2,” In Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons, 116-117. Augustine had a more inclusive vision of the Church than the Donatists which allowed him to tolerate the presence of sinners and peoples of different background in the Church. The Church in which the Spirit functions as the source of unity and love is not, therefore, reserved for particular members alone because no one is strictly excluded from this Church that is constituted of sinners and virtuous alike.

Augustine’s advice on this particular question of moral discipline which prompted the Donatists to break communion with the catholic Church was

none should desert the threshing floor before the time, they should put up with the chaff during the threshing, they should put up with it on the threshing floor. After all, there won’t be any to put up with in the barn … There will also be a material separation, now preceded by a spiritual one. Always be disconnected from bad people in your hearts, for the time being, be cautiously connected with them socially in the body.189

The catholic Church and not the Donatist church was what stood out in Augustine’s mind as the only true Church that everybody should embrace, in spite of its isolated cases of infidelity and impurity. That is because the catholic Church is where the Spirit functions as the source of unity. This is also where the Spirit has an actual effect on the lives of its members and where love is practised and experienced in its deepest sense by people of different cultural, moral, and social background.

In response to the Donatists’ claim that the catholic Church has lost its legitimacy and credibility, Augustine would contend that

if the communion of wicked men destroyed the Church in the time of Cyprian, [the Donatists] have no source from which they can derive their own communion; and if the Church was not destroyed, they have no excuse for their separation from it. Moreover, they are neither following the example of Cyprian, since they have burst the bond of unity.190

Augustine evidently had a more realistic, positive, and future-oriented vision of the Church than the Donatists. The reason his perspective is quite appropriate and relevant, in my view, is that it identifies the unity, diversity, and tolerance that ought to exist in the catholic Church. The catholic Church should not only recognize such a reality; it should

190 St. Augustine, “On Baptism Against the Donatists, II.3,” In St. Augustin the Writings Against the Manicheans and Against the Donatists, 437.
also promote and celebrate this spirit of unity in diversity that should exist in the Church as a whole. Augustine’s perspective is quite significant in this regard because

against the Donatists’ quest for a pure church, Augustine emphasized charity, which ‘covers a multitude of sins’ (1Pet. 4:8); and against their exclusivism, he argues that the sacraments are not effective for salvation except within the comprehensive unity of the Catholic Church, in which alone dwells ‘the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’ (Eph. 4:3).  

The tendency of being judgmental and exclusive in outlook should absolutely be rejected by the members of the Church in trying to preserve the unity that exists in the catholic Church. Such was the attitude of the Donatists towards the members of the Church based on the Donatists’ position on holiness and rebirth in the Spirit

2.2.1 THE DONATISTS’ STANCE ON REBIRTH IN THE SPIRIT

For the Donatists, it was necessary to re-baptize those who were already baptized in the catholic Church in order to become true members of the pure church. In that way they could receive the Spirit that the members of the catholic Church did not have because the Donatists believed “traditores, or those who had in any way lapsed during the persecution, were held to have lost the Spirit and would not be eligible.” The Donatists were the only ones, in their own estimation, who were eligible to fully confer the Spirit and incorporate anyone into the church on account of their personal holiness and moral purity. Their moral and pure state was, consequently, what made it possible for them to give what the ministers of the catholic Church cannot confer. For them, “they view the Holy Spirit as an internal gift conferred upon them, and abiding within, each

individual soul.” The presence of the Spirit in the Church and in the lives of its members, from the Donatists’ point of view, depended solely on their personal holiness.

According to the Donatists, in order to receive the Spirit and experience the effects and power of the Spirit, one must ultimately be baptized by a Donatist minister. The Spirit was directly linked in that sense to the sacrament of baptism because the Donatists had followed the theology of Cyprian which highlighted the role of the Holy Spirit in the baptismal forgiveness of sins. Cyprian seems to have thought that only baptism guaranteed the gift of the Spirit and the forgiveness of sins. A person who has sinned significantly, particularly by denying the faith, thereby lost the presence of the Spirit.

The sins of those re-baptized by the Donatists were immediately forgiven by the Spirit they now possess following their baptism. As far as the Donatists were concerned, baptism was not evidently received without receiving the Spirit and even experiencing the effects of the Spirit in one’s own life. Cyprian and the Donatists both agreed on the reception of the Spirit at baptism because if one could baptize, he could also give the Holy Spirit. But if he cannot give the Holy Spirit because, established outside, he is not with the Holy Spirit, he cannot baptize the one who comes since baptism is one, and the Holy Spirit is one, and the Church founded by Christ our Lord upon Peter in the origin and established plan of unity is also one.

Once the person was baptized by a Donatist minister he or she automatically received the Spirit as an internal gift. One cannot, therefore, receive the sacrament of baptism at the

---

195 St. Cyprian, “Letter 70.3,” In *The Fathers of the Church*, translated by Rose Bernard Donna, Vol., 51 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1964), 261. Baptism and the Spirit are both received at the same time as far as Cyprian and the Donatists are concerned. So it is impossible to receive one without the other because the sacrament of baptism is baptism in the Spirit. Augustine for his own part would not deny that the Spirit is received at baptism. However, he would insist that unless and until one is in communion with the Church, neither the Spirit nor the baptism received is effective in one’s life.
same time forfeit the Spirit, as far as the Donatists were concerned, if indeed the person was baptized in the Spirit by a Donatist minister.

The reason why the Donatists insisted on re-baptism or rebirth in the Spirit was to allow the members of the catholic Church who were not properly baptized to once again receive the Spirit in its fullness. The condition under which one receives the Spirit, from the Donatists’ point of view, was sharply different from Augustine’s own perspective, because in his view, it was not only baptism that qualified a person to receive the Spirit. What clearly qualified one to obtain the fullness of the Spirit was the fact that one was in communion with the catholic Church where the Spirit united its members in a bond of love. However, the Donatists were not deeply concerned about unity because “the one who corrupts holy discipline could violate the chastity of faith under the by-word of unity, that is, by compelling unity with himself, not with God.”196 With Augustine, it was not sufficient to simply be baptized and be certain on the basis of one’s baptism that the Spirit was effectively received, because

just as we were born in the flesh to our human parents, so too we are born in the Spirit to God our Father and the Church our mother … it’s the same Lord who creates us from those natural parents of ours, and who recreates us from himself and the Church. In that birth we drag with us the stain of sin; in this one we have it broken. There, we are born in order to succeed parents who are going to die; here, to stay close to parents who remain for ever.197

In addition to being baptized and adopted as a child of God, the individual must also, in Augustine’s perspective, be in communion with mother Church in whom he or she is born in the Spirit. By so doing the Spirit will be active and effective in his or her life.

If baptism alone was what conferred the Spirit and if one’s sins against the faith were instantly forgiven, it meant that only those who had the Spirit and were free from sin, constituted the pure church of the Donatists. They equally ought to flee the conspiracy of the traitors, the home of hypocrites, and the judgment of the Pharisees, and the devout must always avoid them … those spiritually born should worthily succeed to the adoption as the sons and daughters of God in the holy Church … such is the nature of the church of the Lord that I do not say ‘this part’ because it is one alone and cannot be split or divided into two parts.¹⁹⁸

Only the members of the Donatists’ church per se were spiritually born or reborn again in the Spirit through baptism. They were, consequently, expected to have nothing in common with those who were not baptized in the Donatist church and were now living in sin. Baptism was, therefore, understood in this church as a rebirth in the Spirit in which the newly born again are transformed and radically changed into pure, sinless sons and daughters of God. Such charismatic gifts as the gift of tongues, prophecy, and passion for martyrdom were considered by Donatists as visible signs of the presence of the Spirit in the lives of those reborn again in the Spirit.

This practice of re-baptism or rebirth in the Spirit would be rejected by Augustine. One who is baptized in the Church cannot receive this sacrament again because the Lord Jesus Christ cleanses his Church by such a baptism that on receiving it no other is required; while John gave a first washing with such a baptism that on receiving it there was further need of the baptism of the Lord, – not that the first baptism should be repeated, but that the baptism of Christ for whom he was preparing the way, might be further bestowed on those who had received the baptism of John.¹⁹⁹

The emphasis on rebirth in the Spirit, from the Donatists’ point of view, was clearly on the individual and the person’s renewed state. In Augustine’s case, the focus or emphasis,
as I will indicate in the following sections of this dissertation, was on the Church. For the
Church is where the Spirit does not only forgive sins, but also unites and gives life to all
its members who are in communion with one another. He, therefore, maintained that the
“rebirth which brings about forgiveness of all past sins, takes place in the Holy Spirit
according to the Lord’s own words in Jn. 3:3. But it’s one thing to be born of the Spirit,
another to be fed by the Spirit.”200 Those who are born of the Spirit at baptism should
also be fed by the Spirit by entering into communion with the Church where the Spirit
gives life to its members who are united in love.

2.2.2 THE SPIRIT AND THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

Augustine was very careful to distinguish the visible signs of the sacraments and
the invisible grace of the sacraments. He clearly distinguished the sacraments as visible
signs from the use or profit of the sacraments associated with the grace of the sacraments.
He also distinguished the reception of the sacraments on the one hand and the reception
of the Spirit on the other against the Donatists’ stance on baptism and the Holy Spirit. For
Augustine, the sacraments are outward visible signs and “it makes no difference, as
regards simply and solely the sacrament itself, if someone receives the sacrament there,
where the unity of Christ is not to be found.”201 If the sacraments are received outside the
catholic Church, as in the Donatists’ case, they are “of no profit to them for the salvation
of their souls if they are without charity, by which they might be grafted into the Catholic
Church.”202 The sacraments are not, consequently, limited to the Church, but the profit or
use of these sacraments is strictly obtained in the Church where the Spirit and its gift of

202 St. Augustine, “On Baptism, Against the Donatists VII. 102,” In *St. Augustin the Writings Against the
Manicheans and Against the Donatists*, 513.
charity are received by the members of the Church. The Donatists had valid sacraments in that regard, but the sacraments were not useful or profitable to them while they were separated from the catholic Church. Baptism was not validly celebrated as a sacrament only in the catholic Church because

within the thought of Augustine any thought of determining the proper ecclesial boundaries for valid baptism is impossible … [but] the “boundary” of effective, beneficial baptism is the unity of the Church Catholic, which, to be sure, in this age is to be identified with the Church in the ‘sacramental communion and the most holy bond of charity.’203

Augustine virtually adopted a different position from the Donatists in affirming the validity of the sacraments beyond the limits of the catholic Church. His position was clearly different because the validity of the sacraments for the Donatists was directly related to the minister of the sacrament.

The sacraments can be received outside the catholic Church, but it does not necessarily follow, in Augustine’s estimation, that those who have received these sacraments are equally active members of the catholic Church. Baptism alone does not effectively make anyone an active member of the Church and Augustine’s argument was

if baptism remains inseparably in him who is baptized, how can it be that he can be separated from the Church and baptism cannot? But it is clear that baptism does remain inseparably in the baptized person; because into whatever depth of evil the baptized person may fall, even to the ruin of apostasy, he yet is not bereft of baptism … But who can ever doubt that a baptized person can be separated from the Church … Wherefore, since it is manifest that the baptism remains in the baptized person when he is separated from the Church, the baptism which is in him is certainly separated with him. And therefore not all who retain baptism retain the Church, just as not all who retain the Church retain eternal life.204

This is a very significant observation that is pertinent to my standpoint if it is established that those who retain baptism do not equally retain the Church. It means that not all those

204 St. Augustine, “On Baptism, Against the Donatists V. 19,” In St. Augustin the Writings Against the Manicheans and Against the Donatists, 470.
who have received valid sacraments such as baptism are united by the Spirit in a bond of love within the catholic Church where the Spirit functions as the source of unity. Only those who retained the Church, in Augustine’s view, were certain of the Spirit abiding in them. The extent to which the Donatists retained the Church is the extent to which one can say they equally received the Spirit as a common gift. Augustine ultimately recognized the validity of their sacraments based on his own distinction between the visible sign and the invisible grace of the sacrament. However, he rejected the Donatists’ claim that they are the true church and the Spirit is actively effective in them. Baptism is certainly common to both the Donatists and Catholics, but we must separate the visible holy sacrament, which can exist both in the good and in the bad, – in the former for their reward, in the latter for judgment; separate it from the invisible unction of charity, which is the peculiar property of the good.205

The Donatists cannot ultimately argue on the basis of their baptism that they received the Spirit if the visible and invisible signs of the sacrament of baptism, the sacrament itself and the gift of the Spirit, are two separate realities of the sacrament. They cannot appeal to the Scriptures either because the Scriptures show in Acts 8:14-17 that it is possible to be baptized and still not receive the Spirit until there is imposition of hands. Similarly, it is possible in Cornelius’ case in Acts 10:44-48 to receive the Spirit before being baptized. The reason the Spirit is precisely received either way is to make sure that nothing here is attributed to human pride, but everything to divine grace and power. And so this distinction between the reception of baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit is sufficient to instruct us, that we should not immediately suppose that those people, whom we cannot deny to have baptism, also thereby have the Holy Spirit. How much more those who are not only

unequipped with any love of Christian unity … because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts.\textsuperscript{206}

The Donatists did not in turn confer the gift of the Spirit, especially when they baptized in the absence of charity, if the same Spirit was not necessarily received when they themselves were baptized. The baptism they received and the baptism they administered to their members was equally ineffective unless and until they renewed their communion with the Church, and the Spirit became active in their lives once more. The distinction between baptism and the reception of the Spirit is highly significant in this particular matter because it clearly shows that not all those who are baptized equally have the Spirit and that baptism is equally ineffective outside the Church where the Spirit dwells.

The effects of the sacraments are clearly not attributed to the visible sign or the holiness of the minister, but rather, the invisible grace of the sacrament because

the water of the sacrament is one thing, therefore, and the water that signifies the Spirit of God is something else. The water of the sacrament is visible; the water of the Spirit is invisible. The former washes the body and signifies what takes place in the soul; by the latter, the Spirit, the soul itself is cleansed and nourished. This is the very Spirit of God, whom heretics and whoever cut themselves off from the Church cannot have. And whoever don’t openly cut themselves off but are cut off by wickedness, and are whirled about within like chaff and are not grain, don’t have the Spirit. This Spirit is signified by the Lord by the word \textit{water … But he said this of the Spirit, whom they were going to receive who were going to believe in him.}\textsuperscript{207}

The baptism of the Donatists was not equally useful and profitable from Augustine’s own perspective. The latter was useless not because the Donatists were not washed by the visible water of the sacrament, but because the invisible grace they received at their

\textsuperscript{206} St. Augustine, “Sermon 269. 2,” In \textit{Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons}, 284.
\textsuperscript{207} St. Augustine, “Sixth Homily 11,” In \textit{Homilies on the First Epistle of John 1/14}, translated by Boniface Ramsey (New York: New City Press, 2008), 99. It is not just those who are not in ecclesial communion with the Church that do not have the Spirit, according to Augustine, but those who are not in spiritual communion with the Church as well. One’s spiritual disposition of heart within the Church can make it impossible for the Spirit to become effective in one’s life. The members of the Church should not only be physically united to the Body of Christ, the Church, they should equally be in spiritual communion with each other by living the same Christian life of faith, hope, and charity.
baptism was dormant and ineffective after they separated themselves from the Church. Augustine would categorically agree that the invisible grace of the sacrament of baptism was conferred on the Donatists at their baptism and

> it is not again conferred on them; whence it is proved, that what they received while in the unity of the Church, they could not have lost in their separation … but as, by reconciliation to unity, that begins to be profitably possessed which was possessed to no profit in exclusion from unity, so, by the same reconciliation, that begins to be profitable which without it was given to no profit.\textsuperscript{208}

The invisible grace is simply dormant and ineffective until they are reconciled with the Church and the Spirit or the gift of the Spirit becomes active once more not by means of a rebirth in the Spirit, but through the imposition of hands. The imposition of hands in this case “is not confirmation at all, but an act of reconciliation … [in order to] receive the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit, which … is only possessed in Catholic unity.”\textsuperscript{209}

The reason Augustine believed that the sins of the Donatists were not forgiven was that they purposely separated themselves from the communion of love, the Church, where the Spirit effects forgiveness of sins. The Donatists were, therefore,

> baptized with the true baptism of Christ, and yet [their hearts], persisting in malice or sacrilege, may not allow remission of sins to be given; and so let them understand that men may be baptized in communions severed from the Church, in which Christ’s baptism is given and received in the said celebration of the sacrament, but that it will only then be of avail for the remission of sins, when the recipient, being reconciled to the unity of the Church, is purged from the sacrilege of deceit, by which his sins were retained, and their remission prevented.\textsuperscript{210}

The Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance were similarly of no avail to the Donatists if they received them while rebelling or sinning against the Spirit that has power to forgive sins in the communion of love created by the Spirit. The catholic Church is where the

\textsuperscript{208} St. Augustine, “On Baptism, Against the Donatists I. 2,” In \textit{St. Augustin the Writings Against the Manicheans and Against the Donatists}, 412.

\textsuperscript{209} Willis, \textit{St. Augustine and the Donatist Controversy}, 163-164.

\textsuperscript{210} St. Augustine, “On Baptism, Against the Donatists I. 18,” 419.
Eucharist can profitably be received as such because “any who receive the sacrament of unity, and do not hold the bond of peace, do not receive the sacrament for their benefit, but a testimony against themselves.” The sacramental grace of confirmation and ordination that the Spirit confers on the individual are also of no profit to the candidate if it is received outside of the communion of the catholic Church. Against the Donatists, Augustine was able to apply to ordination the principle which he taught in relation to baptism, and to say that ordination confers indelible character. That character is unprofitable in schism, where none of God’s grace can be effective to salvation but it lies there latent, and will revive when unification with the Church bestows on a man the revivifying power of the Holy Spirit.

From Augustine’s own standpoint, it is important to be in communion with the Church because that is what indicates that the person has received the Spirit and the Spirit’s gift of grace is active and profitable in his or her life. The effectiveness of the sacraments is, therefore, directly related to the Church where the Spirit functions as the source of unity and love. Augustine’s advice to the members of the Church was precise:

let no one promise you any kind of purification outside the Church, whether in temples or anywhere else, by means of sacrilegious sacred rites. Let nobody do so outside the unity even by means of Christian sacraments, because even if the sacrament is to be found outside the unity – which we cannot deny and dare not violate – still the power and saving effect of the sacrament, making one a fellow heir with Christ (Rom. 8:17), is only to be found in the unity and in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3) of the Church.

Their lack of communion meant that the Donatists had rendered the valid sacraments they received ineffective through their own schismatic act against the Church. What should

---

211 St. Augustine, “Sermon 272,” In Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons, 301.
212 Willis, Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy, 161. Willis speaks of the indelible mark of the sacrament that was used in scholastic works and in sacramental theology today, but Augustine used “the analogy of the military mark which can both be retained, as by deserters, and, also be received by those who are not in the army … it is not changed or renewed when a man is enlisted or brought back to his service.” “On Baptism, Against the Donatists,” 1.4, 414.
have secured their salvation was now a cause for their damnation as a result of their refusal to love their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. As Georges Florovsky noted,

> it was not so important that the sacraments of schismatics are ‘unlawful’ or ‘illicit’ (*illicita*); much more important was the fact that the schism is a dissipation of love. But the love of God overlaps and surmounts the failure of love in man. In the sects themselves and even among heretics the Church continues to perform her saving and sanctifying work. It may not follow, perhaps, that we should say, the schismatics are *still in the Church*; at all events this would not be very precise. It would be more accurate to say that the Church continues to work in the schisms in expectation of the mysterious hour when the stubborn heart will be melted in the warmth of ‘preparatory grace,’ when the will and thirst for communality and unity will burst into flame and burn.214

What prevented the Donatists from retaining the Church in spite of retaining the valid sacraments of the Church was their failure to preserve the bond of love that is fostered by the Spirit among the members of Christ’s Body, the Church. However, the Church continues to work, in Augustine’s view, for the conversion of schismatics like the Donatists, through its members who he expected to be tolerant and charitable towards them.

### 2.2.3 WHY THE DONATISTS DO NOT HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

Augustine was quite convinced that the Donatists did not have the Spirit in separating themselves from the catholic Church. For him, it was only in the catholic Church that the Donatists could once again receive the Spirit which becomes effective in their lives. When the Donatists are reconciled with the catholic Church, it is the Spirit they truly receive so that the sacraments they already have can become effective. The Church’s practice of receiving the Donatists into the Church was a clear proof, as far as Augustine was concerned, that the Donatists did not have the Spirit because

---

they certainly do not receive baptism, which they were able to have outside the framework of the body of Christ but which could not do you any good. But they receive the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3), without which no one is able to see God (Heb. 12:14), and they receive the charity which, as Scripture says, covers a multitude of sins (1Pet. 4:8). Without that great good the apostle bears witness that nothing is of any value – neither the tongues of men and angels, nor the knowledge of all the mysteries, nor prophecy, nor faith … nor one’s body being tormented in the fire.215

The Church’s motive in encouraging the Donatists to become part of the catholic Church to the extent of even compelling them into the communion of love was not out of jealousy for what the Donatists already had. Rather, it was to ensure that the Donatists receive what was lacking in them for which they were divided at heart against each other and against the catholic Church. The Donatists ultimately had everything to gain and nothing to lose, in Augustine’s estimation, if they preserved the bond of peace and unity in the Church. In return the Donatists would get the Church, which they haven’t got; they are going to get unity, which they haven’t got; they are going to get peace, which they haven’t got … The Spirit produces all of them, and they don’t have them … Far be from us to regard these things as nothing, but it’s they that are nothing without these things. If you scorn to receive these things in the Church, you can indeed have baptism; but whatever you have without these things, having it will mean all the greater punishment.216

The question for Augustine was not whether or not the Donatists had the Spirit since the Spirit was not active in them. The real question was why the Donatists were not disposed to receive the Spirit in their schismatic state. The problem was clearly due to the fact that the Donatists did not have the gift of love or charity, the one unique gift that ultimately makes it possible to be in communion with the members of the catholic Church. Their rebellious spirit was what essentially controlled their lives in the absence of this important gift of charity. Their sins could not similarly be forgiven because “what

---

happens with the forgiveness of sins is that the prince of sin, the spirit who is divided against himself, stops reigning in us.”

The Donatists could not, consequently, receive the Spirit without this gift of charity, without the virtue of love because the Spirit is love itself. They were expected, therefore, to examine themselves lest perhaps they have the sacrament and don’t have the sacrament’s power. Question your heart: if the love of your brother is there, be secure. There can be no love without the Spirit of God, because Paul cries out, *The charity of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

Love ought to prevail in their hearts and they should be charitable in thought and in deed before the Spirit can become active and present in their lives. The fact that they were not charitable towards the members of the catholic Church was a clear sign, for Augustine, that they did not have the Spirit as they claimed. One can, therefore, argue that the extent to which a person is charitable towards his or her brothers and sisters in Christ, is the extent to which the person is certain that he or she has the Spirit indeed.

The reason it was rather the catholic Church and not the Donatist church that had the Spirit, from Augustine’s point of view, was that it was in the catholic Church that one finds the communion of love that knows no bounds or limits. The Donatists should not only be charitable and loving, they should also “spread their charity throughout the world [because] if they love a section, they are cut off; if they are cut off, they are not in the body; if they are not in the body, they are not under the head.” If they endeavored to extend their love to all and were part of the bond of love within the Church, then it would be evident from their actions and attitude that they too had the Spirit which is love itself.

---

The difference between the Donatists and the members of the catholic Church was precisely based on the quality of their love and their commitment to preserve the bond of love within the Church. The Donatists were certainly believers because they had the same sacraments as the Catholic Church – where, then, was the real difference? How did they fall short … They have broken the bond of love. They went off because they set their idea of perfection above unity. They have retained everything that makes up the Catholic Church – it was only love they gave up together with unity.220

By separating themselves from the catholic Church, the Donatists clearly demonstrated that they were not committed to preserve the bond of love within the Church. That alone was a clear indication that their love for each other was at best a sectarian kind of love. Such a love is qualitatively different from the love Augustine repeatedly said is poured into our hearts through the Spirit that is given to the members of the catholic Church. This sectarian form of love has its negative consequences for “those who are wanting in God’s love do not care for the unity of the Church; and consequently we are right in understanding that the Holy Spirit may be said not to be received except in the Catholic Church.”221 The love that extends to all is the love that is given by the Spirit and it is such love that cares for unity and is committed to preserve the bond of communion and peace.

The Donatists’ determination to destroy the bond of communion was an outstanding indication, in Augustine’s perspective, that they simply did not have the Spirit in their church. Those who received the Spirit and for whom the Spirit became active and effective in their life, were bound, in Augustine’s estimation, to openly work for unity and peace. They were equally expected even to tolerate differences and entertain unity in diversity for the sake of communion in the Spirit. This means that

221 St. Augustine, “On Baptism, Against the Donatists III. 16,” In St. Augustin the Writings Against the Manicheans and Against the Donatists, 442.
those, therefore, who are outside the Church do not have the Holy Spirit. Of them Scripture, itself says, *Those who keep themselves separate are merely natural and do not have the Spirit* (Jude 19). But one who is in the Church only as a pretense does not receive the Spirit, because Scripture says of such a person, *For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from a hypocrite* (Wis. 1:5). One who wants to have the Holy Spirit, therefore, should avoid remaining outside the Church and should avoid remaining in that pretense so that he may truly grow in union with the tree of life.\(^{222}\)

The connection Augustine established between those who have the Spirit and those who work for unity and peace for the sake of communion in the Spirit is quite important and critical with respect to the challenges facing the African church that I will discuss in the fourth chapter. It means that the catholic Church and the African church in particular must become in the power of the Spirit an agent of peace, unity, and reconciliation in the areas of ecumenism and conflict resolution where there is division and misunderstanding.

2.2.4 SCHISM: A SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT – AN ACT AGAINST LOVE

From what Jesus said in Mt. 12:31-32, it is not quite evident what the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit is in concrete terms. However, it is specifically understood by Augustine to be nothing else but schism which the Donatists and other schismatic groups were guilty of when they broke communion with the catholic Church.

Schism amounts to “the separation of some body or group of people from the true and living Church. Practically, however, such separatists, as experience shows, become also dissociated, as time goes on, from the doctrine which they once professed in the Church.”\(^{223}\) This is, consequently, a very grave sin that Augustine identified as the only unforgivable sin against the Spirit which Jesus spoke about in the Gospel of Matthew.

For Augustine, Jesus was clearly not referring

---


\(^{223}\) Grabowski, *The Church: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Augustine*, 245.
to every sin of whatsoever kind against the Holy Spirit, in word or deed, but would have us understand some special and peculiar sin. But this is the hardness of heart even to the end of this life, which leads man to refuse to accept remission of his sins in the body of Christ, to which life is given by the Holy Spirit.224

Schism represents a direct and deliberate rejection of the grace of forgiveness offered by the Spirit in the Church. At the same time, it also means a refusal to enter into the communion of love created by the Spirit. Schism is not only a sin against the Spirit; it is equally a sin against love that prompted the Donatists to hate the members of the Church instead of tolerating their differences. The commandment of love was not effectively observed in that respect when the Donatists separated themselves from the catholic Church and formed their own church. Their baptism was not equally profitable “because of the baptized person’s continuing ill will, evident in the sin of schism.”225

The reason the Donatists were guilty of the sin against the Holy Spirit and why they were not also charitable towards one another is precisely that they were no longer in communion with the catholic Church. In effect, it was directly an act against the Spirit of love when the Donatists broke communion with the catholic Church because anyone who had broken off communion with the true Church and joined a heretical or schismatic group was guilty of a grave sin against charity … ecclesial communion and charity were synonymous; whoever sinned against one sinned against the other.226

Before the Donatists can, subsequently, love one another, they must in Augustine’s estimation be in communion with the catholic Church. They will not equally reject or sin against the Spirit because they will be in communion with the Church where they will

receive forgiveness of sins from the Spirit. In order to be charitable and not sin against the Spirit, it is absolutely necessary to be in communion with the catholic Church. The sin against the Spirit and the sin against love are closely related to communion with the catholic Church because anyone who is in communion with the Church also receives the Spirit. The implications of breaking communion with the catholic Church were, therefore, what Augustine repeatedly expressed against the Donatists so that they could relent, be sanctified, and healed in the Spirit.

The act of breaking away from the catholic Church and the communion of love was evidently what Augustine considered to be the word that is spoken against the Holy Spirit. The sin against the Spirit is not a sin of speech or blasphemy in the strict sense of the word, but rather, a rebellious act that becomes a persistent and deliberate way of life. The reason schism is ultimately a sin against the Spirit, rather than a sin against the Church is that the Spirit is the source of forgiveness; the only one who confers forgiveness in the Church rejected by the Donatists. The Church was not so much what the Donatists disassociated themselves, as far as Augustine was concerned, but rather, the forgiveness of sins that is offered by the Spirit through the Church. It means that anyone guilty of impenitence against the Holy Spirit, in which the Church is gathered as a unity, a companionship, a communion, will never be forgiven, because he has shut the door of the place of forgiveness in his own face. He will deservedly be condemned with the spirit who is divided against himself, because he himself is divided against the Holy Spirit who is not divided against himself.\footnote{St. Augustine, “Sermon 71. 34,” In \textit{Sermons III (51-94) on the New Testament}, 267.}

The emphasis in the sin against the Holy Spirit is precisely on the person’s hardness of heart in refusing to receive forgiveness of sins from the Spirit through the catholic Church. That was exactly what the Donatists did in separating themselves from the catholic Church where the Spirit confers forgiveness of sins. Their sins could not equally
be forgiven as long as they persisted in that disobedient and unrepentant state of life. In
any case, Augustine did not fully believe that all Donatists were blameworthy and guilty
of the sin against the Spirit because he clearly distinguished

between the case of those who unwittingly joined the ranks of these heretics, under the impression that they are entering the true Church of Christ, and those who know that there is no other Catholic Church save that which according to the promise, is spread abroad throughout the whole world, and extends even to the utmost limits of the earth.228

Among the Donatists there were some, in Augustine’s estimation, who were innocent of the sin against the Spirit because of their ignorance. They were equally not included among those whose sins would not be forgiven on account of their sin against the Spirit.

For Augustine, any Donatist who believed there is no other true Church but the catholic Church could be redeemed if one decided to become a member of the Church. The Donatists could also be saved if they no longer sinned against the Spirit. Therefore,

Augustine’s harsh language about the Spirit’s presence or absence to ecclesial insiders and outsiders must be juxtaposed with his struggle for reconciliation. Against the Donatists, Augustine underlined the importance of the forgiveness that can be offered only within the Church.”229

His ultimate aim against the Donatists was not to condemn them out right, but to let them realize the harmful nature of their schismatic act and to reconcile them with the Church. Given the possibility of the Donatists becoming members of the Church once again

it is impossible to judge this impenitence or unrepentant heart. We mustn’t despair of anybody, as long as God’s patience is beckoning to repentance … He is a pagan today; how do you know he won’t be a Christian tomorrow? … He is a heretic today; what if tomorrow he adheres to Catholic truth? He’s schismatic today; what if tomorrow he embraces Catholic peace?230

228 St. Augustine, “On Baptism, Against the Donatists I. 4,” In St. Augustin the Writings Against the Manicheans and Against the Donatists, 414.
This is a clear indication that Augustine was optimistic that the Donatists could repent of their schismatic act, be reconciled with the Church, and be saved as a result. There is no obvious reason to suggest that Augustine was convinced that the Donatists were already destined to eternal damnation on account of their schismatic act because salvation was still possible for them if they repented of their sin against the Spirit of love.

Augustine was not totally pessimistic about the salvation of those who were outside the Church such as the Donatists, as Cyprian was in his assessment of their fate.

For Cyprian

whoever is separated from the Church and is joined with an adulteress is separated from the promises of the Church, nor will he who has abandoned the Church arrive at the rewards of Christ. He is a stranger; he is profane; he is an enemy. He cannot have God as a father who does not have the Church as a mother. If whoever was outside the ark of Noah was able to escape, he too who is outside the Church escapes … He who breaks the peace and concord to Christ acts against Christ; he who gathers somewhere outside the Church scatters the Church of Christ … He who does not hold this unity, does not hold the law of God, does not hold the faith of the Father and the Son, does not hold life and salvation.231

Cyprian would not admit in this particular passage, as Augustine would confess, that those who are outside the Church like the Donatists stand a chance of being saved, because for Cyprian they are bound to perish. What Cyprian stated, however, in his letter to his fellow bishops, that “there can be no salvation for anyone except in the Church,”232 should properly be understood within the context of his statement. This is important, as Francis Sullivan indicated, because

some of his statements, if taken out of context, would exclude from salvation everyone who was outside the Church, and not just Christian heretics and schismatics .. [In this case] the context shows that he is not directing this warning to pagans and Jews, but to Christians whom he judged guilty of persisting in sins

---

against faith and charity by reason of their allegiance to heretical or schismatic sects.233

The members of the Church whose conduct was going to amount to excommunication from the catholic Church were the ones to whom Cyprian directed his specific warning that there is no salvation outside the Church.

In affirming that the Spirit is not actively effective in their lives, Augustine may be accused of denying salvation to those who are outside the Church like the Donatists. But it is not an accurate and fair criticism against Augustine if one takes into consideration the distinction Augustine made above between the Donatists who were willfully guilty of the sin against the Spirit of love and those who were not within the communion of the Spirit out of ignorance. Since the latter were not responsible for their guilt, their punishment was not comparable to that of the former. In fact, the criticism cannot be sustained because Augustine did not explicitly affirm against the Donatists that only those in the catholic Church are bound to be saved. On the contrary, he believed that there are some also who as yet live wickedly, or even lie in heresies or the superstitions of the Gentiles, and yet even then ‘the Lord knoweth them that are his.’ For in that unspeakable foreknowledge of God, many who seem to be without are in reality within, and many who seem to be within yet really are without. Of all those, therefore, who, if I may so say, are inwardly and secretly within … the divinely imparted gifts of these are partly peculiar to themselves … partly they are common with evil and perverse men, as in all the other things in which consist the holy mysteries.234

The evidence shows that Augustine recognized the fact that the Donatists and even unbelievers who are outside the Church can obtain eternal salvation out of God’s gracious love for them. He, nevertheless, sought to bring the Donatists into the

234 St. Augustine, “On Baptism, Against the Donatists V. 27,” in St. Augustin the Writings Against the Manicheans and Against the Donatists, 477.
communion of the catholic Church so that they would no longer sin against the Spirit and, therefore, obtain forgiveness of sins in the Church.

Salvation is not ultimately reserved for the members of the catholic Church alone. Therefore, Augustine was very conscious and open to the idea that the Donatists could undergo a change of heart and be saved. He was not only positive and tolerant in his approach towards the Donatists; he also encouraged the members of the catholic Church to work towards the conversion of the Donatists so that they could be in communion with the Church. For the members of the Church, it is

a test of charity, they too must be loved … charity obliges us to be at the service of such people. And although we are a troublesome nuisance to both sorts, both by shaking the lethargic and by restraining the frenzied, still we love them both all the same.\textsuperscript{235}

What the members of the Church are expected to do is not to isolate themselves from those who are not in communion with them. Rather, they are required to reach out to them in a spirit of charity so that they can be converted and reconciled with the Church.

**AUGUSTINE’S SPIRIT – SOUL ANALOGY**

Analogies are often used by Augustine to illustrate or explain the inner unity and distinctive nature of the divine persons of the Trinity. Some of these analogies were discussed in the first chapter, such as the psychological analogies of lover, beloved, and the love and memory, understanding, and will.\textsuperscript{236} In these analogies, however, Augustine did not substantially identify the divine persons with any particular aspect or component of the analogies. With reference to Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy, it should also be emphasized that he made

\textsuperscript{235} St. Augustine, “Sermon 359. 8,” In *Sermons III/10 (341-400) on Various Subjects*, 205.
\textsuperscript{236} St. Augustine, *The Trinity* VIII. 14, 255; X. 18, 298-299.
use of similitudes [analogies] that what is imperfectly understood may be made clear by example. As, suppose, God is gold, his Son is gold also. If similitudes ought not to be given for heavenly things from earthly, how is it written, ‘Now the Rock was Christ’? … Certainly he may be compared, but not as you suppose, in strictness of expression, but for a similitude.237

The sense in which Christ, for instance, is rightly compared to a rock in Scripture is the sense in which Augustine similarly compared the Spirit in the Church to the soul in the body. It is equally my thesis that Augustine did not intend the Spirit – Soul analogy to be taken in a literal sense or be understood as an ontological analogy because the Spirit is not substantially the soul of the Church. Like other analogies Augustine used, this analogy was meant to provide a better understanding of the unique function of the Spirit in the Church. He consequently “had little interest in, and nothing original to say about, the nature of the soul; what fascinated him was its functioning.”238

Once it was evident to Augustine that the catholic Church is the only Church where the Spirit dwells as its source of love and communion, he endeavored to examine the specific functions of the Spirit in the catholic Church. These functions that are particular to the Spirit as the third person of the Trinity are specifically performed by the Spirit in the catholic Church. Thus, “in addition to defining the Church over against its enemies, Augustine wanted to establish the Spirit’s ongoing presence and function in the Church.”239 The function performed is based on what the Spirit does in the immanent Trinity because his ecclesiology is informed by his understanding of the function of the

Spirit in the immanent Trinity. In order to appreciate his ecclesiology, one must consider his trinitarian theology as Plummer rightly indicated, because

Augustine’s ecclesiology is linked with his understanding of Trinity: as the Spirit is the bond of love between the Father and the Son, so the Spirit is the bond of love between believers, and thus the unity of the Church is a reflection of and a participation in the unity of the triune God … In these matters as in so many others Augustine’s influence on the development of Western Christian thought has been momentous.²⁴⁰

The Spirit’s unique function in the immanent Trinity has already been discussed in detail in the first chapter of this dissertation. In this section, the particular functions of the Spirit in the catholic Church will now be the subject of my reflection on Augustine’s communion ecclesiology. The focus and emphasis of my study is explicitly on the Spirit because

for Augustine unity of charity and communion is the essential mark of the Church, for the unity of mutual love is the distinctive reality of the Holy Spirit who even within the Trinity unites the Father and the Son as the bond of charity. Apart from this bond of charity there is no Holy Spirit and no salvation. However, this bond of unity in love is nothing other than the Catholic Church in which alone the Holy Spirit dwells.²⁴¹

The unity that exists in the immanent Trinity is, consequently, the model of the unity of the Church if the same Spirit that is the bond of love between the Father and the Son is equally the source of unity in the catholic Church. The identity and equality of each member of the Church in the unity of the Spirit is not likewise diminished if the identity and equality of the Father and the Son are preserved in the unity of the Spirit. These members of the Church are, nonetheless, one body in Christ because “the principle of Catholic unity is the Holy Spirit, who is also the bond of the unity of the Godhead in

Trinity; and this unity of the Church is organic and not institutional, an unity of faith and hope and charity.”

Therefore, it is in the Spirit that all the members of the Church are united in faith, hope, and love and it is in the Spirit that the unity of the Church is guaranteed throughout the ages. For Augustine, the unity of the Church is not fundamentally based on its structural institutions or its liturgical discipline, but rather, its communion in the Spirit. I would, therefore, argue that if members are not united in the Spirit, internal divisions would be inevitable within the Church. If on the other hand, they are united there will be harmony that will always be deeply appreciated and preserved. The reason is that “anyone who has learned the intelligent art of this kind that is to be found in the parts of the human body is so amazed, so delighted, that this art, this harmony, this proportion is preferred by those who understand it to all visible beauty.” The unity in the Church can, therefore, become in my view, an ideal or a sign of harmony which other communities and bodies in the world can value as a model if such a unity is realized.

In Augustine’s perspective, the Church is essentially a unity of different members in the same way that the human body is a unity of different parts functioning in harmony. The members of the Church are also like the parts of the human body that are so diverse, but bound together within one body. Augustine would analogically compare the function of the Spirit in the Church as its source of unity to the function of the soul in the body as the unifying principle of the parts of the body. For within the human body,

the functions of the different parts vary, but the unity of the spirit coordinates them all. Many things are commanded, many things are done; but it’s just one who commands, and one who is served. What our spirit, that is our soul, is to the parts or members of our body, that the Holy Spirit is to the members of Christ, to

---

242 Willis, *St. Augustine and the Donatist Controversy*, 114.
the body of Christ. That’s why the apostle, after mentioning one body, in case we should take it as a dead body – One body, he says. But I ask you, is this body alive? It’s alive. What with? With one spirit. And one spirit.244

In comparison to the soul of the body, the Spirit does not only function as the animating or unifying principle of the Church, but also as the principle of life for the members of the Church. These vital functions of the Spirit in the Church will effectively be discussed in detail in the following sections of this dissertation for a better and proper understanding of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy. The obvious reason the members of the Church are absolutely united in a communion of love and equally alive and active in the Church is precisely that the Spirit functions as the source of the Church’s life and unity. This indicates that

the doctrine of the Holy Spirit [functioning] as the soul of the body of Christ is an indispensable part of Augustine’s concept of the Church … the bishop cannot conceive of the Church unless he conceives of it as the mystical body of Christ; nor can he think of the mystical body of Christ unless he thinks of its soul, the Holy Spirit.245

In Augustine’s understanding, the Church is fundamentally a living body of believers in Christ who are in communion with each other through the Spirit that animates and inspires them to fulfill the demands of their individual vocations. If the Church wants to grow and be active, its members must, in my estimation, be filled with the Spirit that functions as the Church’s source of unity and love.

2.3.1 THE ANIMATING PRINCIPLE OF THE CHURCH’S UNITY

The Spirit is what animates and coordinates the unity that exists within the catholic Church, and it operates in a similar fashion like the soul of the human body that

244 Ibid., 268. 2, 279. The unity and life of the one Church of Christ are both emphasized by Augustine in this section of his sermon and it is the Spirit that guarantees both of these essential aspects of the Church. It means that the Church in which the Spirit functions as the source of unity and love is not made up of different churches or ecclesial communities, but one united Church that is animated by the Spirit.

245 Grabowski, *The Church: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Augustine*, 234.
animates the different parts of the body. If we want to understand how the Spirit functions or works in the Church, we should consider, in Augustine’s view, how the soul also functions in the human body. According to him,

our spirit by which every single human being lives, is called the soul. And you can see what the soul does in the body. It quickens all its parts; it sees through the eyes, hears through the ears, smells through the nostrils, speaks with the tongue, works with the hands, walks with the feet. It’s present simultaneously to all the body’s parts, to make them alive; it gives life to all, their functions to each. The eye doesn’t hear, the ear doesn’t see, the tongue doesn’t see, nor do the ear and eye speak. But they’re alive, all the same; the ear’s alive, the tongue’s alive; different functions, life in common.246

The soul is what fully and effectively enables all the different parts of the human body to function according to their nature within the one body. Accordingly, the soul makes it possible for all the parts of the human body to simultaneously function in harmony and unity without any conflict of interest. Each part of the human body is fully animated by the same soul and the whole human body is likewise informed, shaped, and harmonized by one human soul. The soul is not limited to any part of the human body because it is simultaneously present, according to Augustine, to all the parts of the body. The whole human body is, therefore, permeated by the soul that is present in all its parts, but the soul is not substantially of one and the same nature as these body parts. Even though the soul is present everywhere within the human body, it remains a distinct entity in itself while effectively controlling and coordinating the whole human body. If the soul of the human body is no longer present and active in some parts of the human body, they will not

“Spiritus noster quo vivit omnis homo, anima vocatur, spiritus noster quo vivit singulus quisque homo, anima vocatur: et videtis quid faciat anima in corpora. Omnia membra vegetat; per oculos videt, per aures audit; per nares olfacit, per linguam loquitur, per manus operator, per pedes ambulat: omnibus simul adest membris, ut vivant; vitam dat omnibus official singulis. Non audit oculus, non videt auris, non videt lingua, nec loquitur auris et oculus; sed tamen vivit auris vivit lingua; official diversa sunt, vita communis.” Augustine, *PL*. 38, Col. 1231.
equally be animated. For Augustine, these parts of the human body will not effectively function according to their nature.

Within the Church, there are likewise different members and a variety of charisms, but they are all animated and coordinated by one and the same principle as in the human body. The Church is not, therefore, constituted of uniform members, but of diverse members with particular charismatic gifts and ecclesial traditions. For Augustine, the Church of God is like that; in some of the saints it works miracles, in other saints it proclaims the truth, in other saints it preserves virginity, in other saints it preserves married chastity; in some this, in others that. All doing their own thing, but living the same life together. In fact, what the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the body of Christ, which is the Church. The Holy Spirit does in the whole Church what the soul does in all the parts of one body.247

This portion of Augustine’s Pentecost sermon encapsulates Augustine’s communion ecclesiology in which the Spirit is the source of the Church’s unity in diversity. The way in which the Spirit functions as the source of unity and diversity is analogically compared to the function of the soul in the body without identifying the Spirit as the actual soul of the Church. In this dissertation that takes its title from these words of Augustine’s sermon, the Spirit is the one who is identified as the source of communion between the divine persons of the Trinity and the Church, between the universal Church and the local churches, and between the hierarchical and charismatic members of the Church. The catholic Church, in Augustine’s view, is enriched with diverse charismatic gifts, ministries, and vocations. There is evidently diversity in the catholic Church if it is

constituted of members with different charismatic gifts and vocations. Therefore, each member has his or her own special gift or vocation that is given for their individual good and the good of the whole Church. These charisms must be discovered and valued by each member of the Church as unique gifts of the Spirit that should not misused or neglected.

No one is, accordingly, blessed or endowed with all the gifts and charisms that exist in the Church: if miracles are worked only by some, if the truth is proclaimed only by some members of the Church, and if some are not called, for instance, to the celibate and chaste life. If a particular gift or charism is, therefore, stifled in the Church, it is bound to impoverish the members of the Church because the Church is by its very nature constituted of different members working for the good of the whole. Each member of the Church can live out his or her own vocation in the Church according to his or her own charism in a way that allows him or her to participate in the life of the Church. Anyone who is gifted by the Spirit can ultimately work in harmony with other members for the good of the Church because ‘the same Spirit that works in the whole Church, what the soul does in the one body’ will perfectly animate and unite all the members in love.

The Church is inherently a unity in diversity mainly because the Spirit enriches its members with diverse gifts and binds these members together in a bond of love. The function of the Spirit in the Church as the source of unity was, therefore, emphasized by Augustine as an indispensable element in the life of the Church

because unity is the strength of every multitude; and a multitude, unless it is bound together by unity, is quarrelsome and torn by disputes; but a harmonious multitude makes one soul, as in fact those who received the Holy Spirit, as Scripture says, had one soul and one heart in God (Acts 4:32).²⁴⁸

The members of the Church should not only preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of love, they should actively and diligently work towards promoting the unity that the Spirit forms in the Church. This is done by ensuring that the different gifts of the Spirit are first of all put to good use for the common good of the Church as a whole; second, that the unity of faith and charity that exists in the Church is not readily compromised in any way. The work of the Spirit would not, consequently, be hindered because “the Holy Spirit, animating the multitude of members of the mystical body of Christ, affects various members diversely with his spiritual life according to the various functions they are to perform.”249 Both unity and diversity in the Church were precisely appreciated by Augustine. He acquired such a profound vision of the nature of the Church because of the analogy he made between the Spirit in the Church and the soul in the body.

The Spirit functions as the animating principle of the unity of all the members of the Church in order to sustain them in a communion of love. So it is accurate to say that the achievement of communion (koinonia) is the proper work of the Spirit of God, Spirit of Jesus Christ. The Spirit gathers together in Christ persons who would not otherwise gather, making possible a true union of hearts and minds, the ground of which resides not in individual differences – age, gender, opinions, abilities – but in the very being of God. The Spirit accomplishes unity-amidst-diversity, a communion that abolishes solitariness but not individuality. The uniqueness of the Spirit’s personhood (the Spirit’s proprium) lies in what the Spirit does: uniting everyone and everything with God through Jesus Christ.250

However, the Spirit was not wholly identified by Augustine as the living soul of the catholic Church in the same way that the soul is inherently related to the human body. He merely compared the function of the Spirit to the function of the soul when he said “what the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the Body of Christ, which is the

---

Church. The Holy Spirit does in the whole Church what the soul does in all the parts of one body.”

This statement, in my view, should not be misinterpreted or misunderstood as a substantial incorporation of the Spirit in the Church. The reason is that the Spirit is God and is not inherently conjoined to its bodily forms as Augustine clearly explained in his trinitarian theology.

Augustine did not explicitly or implicitly suggest that the Spirit is the soul of the Church. This would not only have limited the Spirit to the Church, it would have reduced the Spirit to a structural force or power, if he considered the Spirit to be the soul of the Church. He couldn’t possibly identify the Spirit as the soul of the Church because for him the Spirit proceeds timelessly and simultaneously from the Father and the Son. Also, the Spirit gives itself as God even as the everlasting gift of the Father and the Son to the Church. A thorough analysis of Augustine’s trinitarian theology such as I have made in the first chapter of this dissertation indicates that the Spirit is not subject to either the Father or the Son. The Spirit cannot, therefore, be subjected to the Church it unites as the Church’s source of communion. One needs to fully consider Augustine’s understanding of the function of the Spirit in the Church in light of his trinitarian theology in order to appreciate the function and particularity of the Spirit as the bond of love and communion.

A functional analogy was clearly what Augustine established between the activities of the Spirit in the Church and the function of the soul in the human body when he argued “what the soul is to the human body, the Spirit is to the body of Christ, which is the Church. The Holy Spirit does in the whole Church what the soul does in all parts of the one body.”

From his own applications of analogies, it is evident that Augustine


\[252\] Ibid., 267.4, 276.
always underscored the limitations of the analogies “as a protection against blasphemies.”\(^{253}\) This is due to the fact that analogies cannot substantially be identified with the particular divine person they represent. In the case of the Spirit – Soul analogy Augustine used to illustrate the Spirit’s function in the Church, it is evident that the Spirit cannot virtually be identified as the soul of the Church as some documents of the Magisterium I will examine in the third chapter apparently suggested. The comparison, in my estimation, is only an analogy. As such, it cannot comprehensively illustrate in detail the unifying and animating functions of the Spirit in the one catholic Church. My task is not to justify that the Spirit is the soul of the Church, but to contend that the Spirit distinctively functions as the source of communion and love in the catholic Church. In the fourth chapter of this dissertation, I will specifically argue that the unity, vitality, and mission of the catholic Church can profoundly be realized, sustained, and renewed especially in the African church in and through the Spirit of God.

From Augustine’s perspective, it is clear that the catholic Church is the only Church in which the Spirit functions as the source of unity and life and the animating principle of its members. The analogy he accordingly portrayed between the Spirit in the Church and the soul in the body is such that the Spirit “cannot unite a multitude of churches as his body … Whosoever will be animated by the life of which the Holy Spirit is the source must become a member of the body which [the Spirit animates].”\(^{254}\) Those churches that are not in communion with the catholic Church are invited by Augustine to enter into communion with the catholic Church so that they can be animated by the Spirit in one united Church. That doesn’t mean Augustine totally failed to recognize the

---

254 Grabowski, The Church: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Augustine, 235.
presence of the Spirit beyond the catholic Church because he equally believed “the Spirit breathes where he will (Jn. 3:8), and in the text of the apostle’s … All things does one and the same Spirit achieve, distributing them severally to each as he wills (1Cor. 12:11).”

The issue at stake in this particular analogy between the Spirit in the Church and the soul in the body is precisely the function of the Spirit in the one catholic Church. Therefore, the analogy does not, in Grabowski’s estimation,

serve to illustrate the relation of the Holy Spirit to the outside world, and Augustine does not use it for this purpose … The Spirit continues his work on the outside of the temple which he inhabits and outside of the body which he animates. He imparts his light to the minds of men outside the Church for without his aid faith and charity cannot be engendered in the minds and hearts of men. In doing this he draws them to the only source of the life of grace – the mystical body of Christ – and to the only institution of salvation, the Catholic Church.

The activities of the Spirit beyond the catholic Church are ultimately geared towards the advancement of its functions in the Church as the source of unity and love. Hence, it is directly as a result of the Spirit’s work that Augustine entertained the possibility of a schismatic group like the Donatists entering into communion with the catholic Church.

2.3.2 THE SPIRIT GIVES LIFE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

In addition to animating the members of the catholic Church and uniting them in a communion of love, the Spirit also gives life to the members of the Church the same way the soul gives life to the human body. Those who are united in the Church by the Spirit are equally alive in the Spirit because the Spirit is the source of life for the members of the Church. Anyone who wants to be alive in the Spirit or become an active Christian must likewise be a member of the catholic Church because

it is the Spirit that quickeneth, for it is the Spirit that makes living members. Nor does the Spirit make any members to be living except such as it finds in the body,

255 St. Augustine, The Trinity XV, 36, 424.
256 Grabowski, The Church, 248-249.
which also the Spirit itself quickens. For the Spirit which is in thee, O men, by which it consists that thou art a man, does it quicken a member which it finds separated from thy flesh … These things are said to make us love unity and fear separation. For there is nothing that a Christian ought to dread so much as to be separated from Christ’s body. For if he is separated from Christ’s body, he is not a member of Christ, if he is not a member of Christ, he is not quickened by the Spirit of Christ.\footnote{St. Augustine, “Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel of John XXVII. 6,” 175-176. One cannot conclude from this statement there is no salvation for schismatics who are cut off from the Church because Augustine clearly distinguished “the case of those who unwittingly joined the ranks of these heretics under the impression that they are entering the true Church of Christ, and those who know that there is no other Catholic Church.” “On Baptism, Against the Donatists ,” 1.4, 414.}

The Spirit is ultimately, in Augustine’s understanding, the one on whom the members of the catholic Church essentially depend for their Christian life. Without the Spirit, it is impossible for the members of the Church and the Church as a whole to be alive. The Spirit – Soul analogy of Augustine’s communion ecclesiology does not only give us an insight into the functions of the Spirit in the Church, it also reveals or illustrates the degree to which the Church depends on the Spirit as its source of life.

There is no reason why the members of the Church should in any way be passive and ineffective in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ and bearing witness to him in public because the Spirit is what empowers them with its own life. On that ground, I would argue that it is untenable for the members of the Church to be indifferent to the presence of the Spirit. This is especially true because “the Spirit’s distinctive role is as an agent of visible change and renewal. Frigid hearts, locked lips, diffidence, fear of speaking the truth, bondage, and mourning for sin – all are transformed in the power of the Holy Spirit.”\footnote{Dreyer, “Spirituality as a Resource for Theology,” 189.} The Spirit is the one who transforms the lives of every member of the Church in a radical way so that they can fulfill the particular mission of their vocation. If the members are, therefore, ignorant of the fact that they are alive in the Spirit; that the Spirit

\textit{...}
is the Church’s source of life itself, they will essentially be denying themselves a vital force of their Christian life in the Church. The function of the Spirit as the source of life for the members of the Church is indispensable, in Augustine’s estimation, because the Spirit is what sustains the life of each member of the Church.

Like the human body where the soul functions as the source of life, the catholic Church is also where the Spirit functions as the source of life. Anyone who is outside the catholic Church where the Spirit dwells as its source of life cannot be alive in the Spirit. This is precisely “because the Catholic Church is the body of Christ, of which he is the Head and Savior of his body. Outside of this body the Holy Spirit giveth life to no one.”259 If anyone is alive in the Spirit, the person is part of the catholic Church because, from Augustine’s point of view, there is no other body in which the Spirit functions as the source of life. Therefore, it is important to notice what you should beware of, see what you should notice, notice what you should be afraid of. It can happen in the human body – or rather from the body – that one part is cut off, a hand, a finger, a foot; does the soul follow the amputated part? When it was in the body, it was alive, cut off, it loses life. In the same way too Christian men and women are Catholics, while they are alive in the body; cut off, they have become heretics, the Spirit doesn’t follow the amputated part. So if you wish to be alive in the Holy Spirit, hold on to loving-kindness, love truthfulness, long for oneness, that you may attain to everlastingness. Amen.260

Nothing is more dreadful, in Augustine’s view, than the mere thought of being separated from the catholic Church and being deprived of the life-giving Spirit in one’s life. What every Christian or member of the Church should, therefore, avoid under all circumstance is to break up communion with the catholic Church because he or she will no longer be alive in the Spirit by that very schismatic act. The aim and obligation of all members of

259 St. Augustine, “The Correction of the Donatists XI. 50,” In Augstin the Writings Against the Manicheans and Against the Donatists, 651.
the Church should always be to preserve the unity of the Church and be part of its communion of love so that they can be alive in the Spirit. The analogy between the amputated parts of the body and those who are not in communion with the catholic Church may be too stark given the possibility of schismatics reconciling themselves with the Church. The soul does not certainly follow the amputated parts of the body, but those who are cut off from the Church are still influenced by the Spirit to be reconciled with the Church. Instead of simply being influenced by the Spirit outside the communion of love in the Church, it is more desirable and noble, in my view, to be alive in the Spirit in the Church. For the Church is where the Spirit binds all in unity of mind and heart and also gives life to the members of the Church so that they can be effective in their vocation.

The function of the Spirit as the source of life is what clearly makes the difference, in Augustine’s understanding, between the members of the Church and those who are outside the Church. For the members of the catholic Church, the Spirit is what they essentially have as their source of life and that Spirit is inactive among those who have broken communion with the catholic Church. One cannot fully abandon the catholic Church and still expect to retain the Spirit as his or her source of life because if a member is cut off from the body, the spirit doesn’t follow, does it? And yet the member can be recognized for what it is; it’s a finger, a hand, an arm, an ear. Apart from the body it retains its shape, it doesn’t retain life. So too with persons separated from the Church. You ask them about the sacrament, you find it; you look for baptism, you find it; you look for the creed, you find it. That’s the shape or form; unless you are quickened inwardly by the Spirit, any boasting you do about the outward form is meaningless.261

The same sacraments may, therefore, be celebrated by those outside the Church, but if the Spirit does not give life to them, their sacraments and creed are equally ineffective and meaningless. The effects that the Spirit imparts to the members of the Church through the

---

sacraments must be valued more than the ritual celebration of the sacraments because the latter is meaningless without the sanctifying effect of the Spirit. The sacraments and creed alone are not what characterizes the members of the Church. Rather, it is the presence and function of the Spirit that renews and sustains them with its own divine life. The members of the Church cannot, subsequently, resist the power and influence of the Spirit in the life of the Church and in their own lives because by analogy with the physical human body, in which the soul or the mind keeps alive, moves, and coordinates its many members, the Holy Spirit makes the Church a living body … All the members have to be united with the universal body of the Church. Only then can the Church perform its vital functions.  

In my view, the analogy does not mean the members of the Church should adopt a spiteful attitude towards those who are not alive in the Spirit. For they are expected to “grieve for those who cut themselves off from the Church … If one member is hurt in any way, all the other members sympathize with it.” Augustine was clearly sensitive in his approach towards those who are not in communion with the catholic Church and he expected the members of the Church to adopt the same attitude as far as possible.

Charity should, therefore, prevail on the part of the members of the Church in their relationship with those who are separated from the Church. They ought to be charitable in thought before they can fully accommodate the latter in their schismatic state. However, it is important for the members of the Church to diligently maintain and preserve the bond of unity by loving each other. That way the members of the Church will be able to sustain the common life they share in the Spirit that provides not only life but also the power by which the intimate, spiritual union is accomplished. The life which the Spirit imparts is through grace, the power through which the Spirit binds Christ’s members into unity is charity. Like cells

---

263 St. Augustine, “Sermon 268. 2,” In Sermons III/7 (230B-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons, 279.
that grow into an organism by virtue of the mysterious powers of the soul so, too, the individual members of the Church are brought into a homogeneous unity by the invisible power of the Holy Spirit.264

In reality, it is ultimately the Spirit that sustains the life of the members of the Church by pouring the gift of love into their hearts so that they can always be alive in a bond of unity. Love is precisely what keeps alive the very life the Spirit gives to the members of the Church. Thus, the Church is bound to be a living body of believers if charity prevails among them. In order to be alive in the Spirit, and in order to maintain the bond of unity, catholics must endeavor to foster or create a loving relationship with one another. They should also be committed to the common good of the Church in a spirit of love because “anyone who grows cold in love is sick in the body of Christ. But God … has the power to heal the sick members, provided, that is, that they haven’t amputated themselves by extreme wickedness, but stick in the body until they are healed.”265

Because of the Spirit’s function in the Church as the source of unity and life, the Church is radically different in nature from all other kinds of communities and associations. The nature of the Church is not only institutional and hierarchical, but charismatic in structure because of the life and gifts which the Church receives from the Spirit. One obvious reason the structure of the catholic Church is both hierarchical and charismatic is the presence and function of the Spirit in the Church. Therefore, the Church cannot be reduced to the level of a constitutionally organized body. Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy underscores this fact, according to Grabowski, because

the Spirit does not allow the Church to remain a hierarchic and juridic body which would make it belong to the category of the state and social organizations, but


The Church’s external and canonical structures alone cannot unify and at the same time give life to the members of the Church without the life-giving breath of the Spirit. If the Church fails to recognize the Spirit’s function as its source of life and unity, it runs the risk of becoming a constitutionally organized body that is only bound together by its laws and rubrics. The Spirit is the one who primarily makes the Church what it is as the Mystical Body of Christ. For this reason, it is the Spirit that ultimately unites the diverse members into a communion of life and love for the common good of the Church.

2.3.3 THE CHURCH SPEAKS ALL LANGUAGES BECAUSE OF THE SPIRIT

Within the human body, the different parts of the body are animated and coordinated into a unity by the human soul. The different languages that are equally spoken by the members of the Church are not only the gifts of the Spirit; they are also harmonized into a unity by the Spirit. The function of the Spirit as the source of unity and harmony is what distinguishes, in Augustine’s view, the tower of Babel from the Church that harmoniously speaks all languages. As a result of the Spirit’s function in the Church, the Church is now bringing together what that tower had sundered. Of one tongue there were made many; marvel not; this was the doing of pride. Of many tongues there is made one; marvel not; this was the doing of charity. For although the sounds of tongues are various, in the heart of one God is invoked; one peace preserved. How then should the Holy Spirit have been manifested when signifying a unity, if not by the dove, so that it might be said to the Church brought into a state of peace, ‘My dove is one?’

The Spirit is what enables the Church to speak all the languages of the nations and to remain united in a bond of peace and in a communion of love. The chaos and disorder that followed the tower of Babel cannot possibly exist within the Church because of the

---

266 Grabowski, *The Church: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Augustine*, 230.
Spirit functioning as the animating and life-giving principle of the Church. Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy clearly justifies the free expression of all the different languages of the Church. At the same time, it affirms the oneness that exists among the different languages and nations within the Church. Therefore, the members of the Church may speak different languages in worship and in theological discourse, but they are one in faith, hope, and love on account of the Spirit’s function as their source of unity.

The catholic Church, in my view, is not where one particular language and liturgical rite should totally dominate and be adopted as the standard for other forms of expression. Rather, the catholic Church that has the Spirit as its source of unity and love is where people of all languages and cultural backgrounds are precisely gathered and inspired by the Spirit to proclaim the marvels of God in their own gifted tongues. Language should not, therefore, be considered an obstacle in the catholic Church today as it is in the world of business, politics, and social network. That is because the Spirit is the one speaking in every tongue that celebrates or professes faith in the risen Christ living in our midst. When different voices and languages resound in worship and when different linguistic concepts are utilized in theological discourse, it is important to listen attentively to what the Spirit is saying in each given context. There is need for the catholic Church in that regard to readily entertain the languages of all the nations in order to foster its world-wide communion in the Spirit. This is particularly important because

it is on account of this companionship that those on whom the Spirit first came spoke with the tongues of all nations. Because it’s languages that bind human societies more closely together; so it was appropriate to signify by the languages of all nations this companionship of the children of God and members of Christ that was going to exist in all nations … That’s why the apostle says, Eager to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3).268

If the presence of the Spirit and its diverse gifts to the Church are taken seriously, the languages of the nations that are spoken in the Church should also be highly valued.

What occurred when the Spirit descended on the Apostles and each of them began speaking the tongues of the nations was very significant for Augustine. Diversity in unity was evidently introduced as an inherent and permanent quality of the Church for each individual was speaking in all tongues, because the Church that was going to exist in all tongues was being foretold. One individual was the sign of unity; all tongues in one individual, that meant all nations in that unity. Those who were filled were speaking; those who were empty were astonished; and what is more reprehensible, they were astonished and finding fault.269

From my perspective, the Church is where the languages of all the nations are spoken in the power of the Spirit. The reason this is the case is that it is the same Spirit that enabled the Apostles to speak in the tongues of the nations that makes it possible for the Church to also speak all the languages. However, the reason the members of the Church are not speaking in tongues nowadays following the example of the Apostles is because what has been signified is now fulfilled. Then, you see, each single believer was speaking in all languages; and now the unity of believers is speaking in all languages. And so even now all languages are ours, since we are members of the body in which they are to be found.270

The universality of the Church is vividly presented and attested by Augustine in affirming that the whole Church speaks the languages of all the nations. By speaking the languages of the nations, the Church is universally present throughout the world because Ὄλον means not ‘one,’ but ‘the whole;’ and that καθ’ Ὄλον means ‘according to the whole:’ whence the Catholic Church received its name according to the saying of the Lord … ‘ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and even to the whole earth.’271

269 St. Augustine, “Sermon 266. 2,” In Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons, 267-268.
270 Ibid., 269.1, 284.
271 St. Augustine, “The Letters to Petilian, the Donatist, II. 38,” In St. Augustin the Writings Against the Manicheans and Against the Donatists, 554. Augustine made use of the two senses of catholicity in this
The more the Church is open to the Spirit and appreciates the function of the Spirit as the source of unity, the more the Church will likewise be enriched by the different languages it speaks. That will definitely assist the Church to be more effective in actually fulfilling its mission especially in the area of evangelization and ecumenism.

The fact that the languages of all the nations are clearly spoken by the Church is a real sign for Augustine that the Spirit is present in the Church. The catholic Church cannot simply be so diverse and universal in its nature without the presence of the Spirit in the Church. If one belongs wholly and solely to a sectarian church one cannot equally argue that he or she has the Spirit in its fullness because whoever has the Holy Spirit is in the Church, which speaks the languages of all people. Whoever is outside this Church, hasn’t got the Holy Spirit. The reason, after all, why the Holy Spirit was prepared to demonstrate his presence in the tongues of all nations, was so that those who are included in the unity of the Church which speaks all languages might understand that they have the Holy Spirit. One body, says the Apostle Paul, one body and one spirit (Eph. 4:4). Consider our own bodies and their parts.272

This is an important point that is relevant to what I will discuss in the fourth chapter concerning the priority of the universal Church over the local church. The Spirit’s communion is equally relevant to my overall position on unity between the universal and local church, because it shows that the local church cannot strictly be autonomous from the universal Church that speaks all languages through the Spirit. If the local church becomes fully autonomous from the universal Church, it will not only fail to speak the languages of all the nations. In fact, it will also be difficult to justify the presence of the Spirit in this church that lacks a diverse and universal dimension to its nature. Augustine

______

quotation. For him catholicity means the universality of the Church throughout the world, but the etymological sense of the word means according to the whole.

272 St. Augustine, “Sermons 268. 2,” In Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons, 278.
would, therefore, argue “that just as at that time the languages of all nations in one person indicated the presence of the Holy Spirit, in the same way he is now indicated by the love of the unity of all nations.”

The reason the catholic Church is truly and effectively where Augustine believed the Spirit dwells and functions as its source of communion is that the languages of all the nations are spoken in the catholic Church. In order to receive the Spirit and be united in mind and heart with other people of different languages and cultures, one must become a member of the catholic Church that speaks the languages of all the nations. For Augustine, the members of the catholic Church have good reason to believe that the Spirit is fully active in the Church because

among you, after all, is being fulfilled what was being prefigured in those days, when the Holy Spirit came. Because just as then, whoever received the Holy Spirit, even as one person, started speaking all languages; so too now the unity itself is speaking all languages throughout all nations; and it is by being established in this unity that you have the Holy Spirit; you that do not break away in any schism from the Church of Christ which speaks all languages.

In actual fact, it is the work of the Spirit that only the catholic Church speaks the languages of all the nations. Also, it is the work of the Spirit that its members of different languages and cultures are profoundly in communion with each other while maintaining their diversity. The Spirit is, consequently, what makes the catholic Church unique in its nature in a world where diversity generates discord. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for the members of the Church to vigorously preserve the bond of unity and peace that the Spirit creates in the catholic Church.

2.3.4 UNITY IS THE FINALITY OF THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

If the gifts of the Spirit are for the common good of the Church as a whole (1Cor. 12:7), it means that unity is the finality of these gifts of the Spirit to the members of the Church. The ultimate aim of the Spirit in its function as the source of unity and love in the Church is simply to ensure that the gifts are properly used to enhance and consolidate the unity of the Church. Unity must prevail among the members of the Church even if they speak different languages with diverse charismatic gifts because it’s the Holy Spirit himself who assembles us, and gathers us together … The unity of the body of Christ, you see, is gathered together from all tongues, that is to say, throughout all the nations that are spread over the whole world … Now the apostle says, Bearing with one another in love, which is charity, doing all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:2-3). So because the Holy Spirit assembles us from many into one – he is received, though, through humility, repelled through pride … unity is impressed upon us.275

The gifts of the Spirit should not, therefore, be a source of division in the Church if they are really recognized as such because they are given by the Spirit with the sole purpose of building the Church into a communion of love and unity. If one undermines the unity of the Church with his or her own charismatic gift, it means that the person is directly working against the Spirit in its function as the source of unity and love in the Church. The charismatic gift of each member of the Church should always serve the unity and common good of the Church no matter how special or unique it is within the Church. The unity of the Church is what the members of the Church should, therefore, love above all. This unity “that joins believers together as members of one body can be effected only by the love that is ‘poured out’ by the Holy Spirit, a love that ‘quickens’ and ‘enlivens’ both individual members of the Church and the body as a whole.”276

275 St. Augustine, “Sermon 270. 6,” In Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons, 294.
Unity between the members of the Church and between the universal Church and the local church is what Augustine persistently maintained in general and what his Spirit – Soul analogy represents. He could not, therefore, endorse the Donatists’ position because they sacrificed the unity of the Church for their own personal elitist moral convictions. There is apparently no reason, in Augustine’s estimation, why any member of the Church should deliberately rend the unity of the catholic Church or break communion with the Church where the Spirit functions as the source of unity and love. Even differences over discipline and devotional practices cannot justify a split within the Church as Cyprian exemplified because it is unity in the Spirit that forms the foundation of the Church. Hence, in situations of conflict of interests and opinion, priority should always be given to unity.

Those who are in favor of the autonomy of local churches and who place less emphasis on unity in the Church would clearly disagree with Augustine on this issue. They would align more with Dryer’s position that

as a community, we struggle to distinguish genuine unity from uniformity. It is dangerous to claim upon the Spirit to defend the kind of unity that excludes or diminishes others who are different from us. When we feel overwhelmed by the pluralism of the world, it is too easy to retreat to sameness or to an unexamined past.277

However, from my study of Augustine’s trinitarian theology and ecclesiology, I believe that what he rightly commended is not uniformity or exclusivism, but rather, unity in diversity. He was not, consequently, defending any form of unity that excludes diversity among the members of the Church in his theological understanding of the Spirit as the source of unity. He fully recognized the diverse gifts that the Spirit confers on the

members and the multitude of nations that constitute the Church’s universal nature. In Augustine’s estimation, the unity that exists in the Church is precisely similar to

the many grains mixed into one loaf in order to produce the visible appearance of bread, as though what holy scripture says about the faithful were happening: *They had one soul and one heart in God* (Acts 4:32); so too with the wine. Brothers and sisters, just remind yourselves what wine is made from; many grapes hang in the bunch, but the juice of the grapes is poured together in one vessel. That too is how the Lord Christ signified us, how he wished us to belong to him ... Any who received the sacrament of unity, and do not hold the bond of peace, do not receive the sacrament for their benefit, but a testimony against themselves.\(^{278}\)

Throughout this chapter, the unifying and animating functions of the Spirit in the Church were analyzed and discussed in detail. This is because the Spirit is uniquely the one who fosters unity and love in the immanent Trinity and among the members of Christ’s Body, the Church. In this Church, the Spirit is, in Augustine’s view, the supreme gift of the Father and the Son to the Church that is common to all the members. The Spirit is equally the source of the Church’s charismatic gifts who also makes it possible for the Church’s sacraments to be effective. As the supreme gift that is common to all the members of the Church, the Spirit is not evidently reserved to a select few. The members of the Church are, accordingly, equal as a result of the Spirit they share in common. Despite their unique charismatic gifts, the diverse members of the Church are also united in love because of the Spirit’s unifying and animating functions in the Church. Such gifts as the gift of tongues and prophecy were all recognized by Augustine as the Spirit’s gifts. In response to the Donatists who considered their charismatic gifts and sacraments as a direct result of their holiness, Augustine would attribute these gifts to the power of the

\(^{278}\) St. Augustine, “Sermon 272,” In *Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons*, 301. Augustine presented this Eucharistic imagery of the Church to highlight the unity in diversity within the Church that is created, sustained, and lived in the Spirit of Christ.
Spirit in the Church. He would, consequently, emphasize the communal dimension of these gifts rather than the personal aspect of one’s charismatic gift.

On account of the Spirit’s indispensable role in the Church, Augustine would compare the function of the Spirit in the Church to that of the soul in the body. The Spirit is in that sense the one who coordinates and animates all the members of the Church so that they can be active in accordance with their vocation. What this analogy, accordingly, suggests and reveals is that in the catholic Church, where the Spirit dwells as its source of communion, there is unity in diversity among the members of the Church because of the Spirit. Anyone who wants to share in the life of the Spirit, be animated by the Spirit, and be effective, must not only receive baptism, he or she must also be in communion with the catholic Church. Since the soul does not give life to the parts of the body that are cut off from the whole, the Spirit does not also give life, in Augustine’s view, to those who are no longer in communion with the Church. This analogy does not only give us an insight into the functions of the Spirit in the Church, it also underscores the consequences of breaking communion with the Church. One must, therefore, be part of the communion the Spirit creates in the Church in order to be renewed and empowered by the Spirit. The life-giving breath of the Spirit is what makes the members of the Church alive. They are equally empowered to speak all the languages of the nations by the Spirit that fosters understanding among them. As an analogy that is apparently open to different interpretations, I will consider in the next chapter the divergent and complementary interpretations that the Spirit – Soul analogy of Augustine generated from the Magisterium and from Congar’s perspective.
CHAPTER THREE: DIVERGENT AND COMPLEMENTARY INTERPRETATIONS OF AUGUSTINE’S SPIRIT – SOUL ANALOGY

The overall theme of the previous chapter was the unifying and animating functions of the Spirit in the Church based on Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy. As the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church, Augustine would compare the Spirit’s function in the Church to the function of the soul in the body in an analogical rather than a literal sense. The Spirit is, therefore, the unique force in the Church that he identified as the source of unity and love. Those who are not, consequently, in communion with the catholic Church where the Spirit animates, unifies, and gives life to its members cannot, in Augustine’s view, be part of the unity the Spirit constitutes. From this analogy of the Spirit in the Church and the soul in the body, I was able to delineate Augustine’s communion ecclesiology as a unity in diversity where different charismatic gifts and languages prevail in the Church. In what follows, I will examine the divergent and complementary accounts of the interpretations of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy in selected documents of the Magisterium and in the writings of Yves Congar. Such a study will not only underscore Augustine’s influence, but also the significance of his analogy towards a better understanding of the nature of the Church.

A brief glance at the ecclesiological perspectives of theologians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would shed light on how Augustine’s analogy was misinterpreted in a literal sense in direct contrast to his analogical sense. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Matthias J. Scheeben (1835-1888) would argue that the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the members of the Church, as the members of Christ, must be intimate and mysterious to a high degree, inasmuch as it is the emanation and continuation of that presence and activity in which he dwells in the humanity of the Son of God. Since the Holy Spirit himself proceeds from the Son of God and as such belongs to him, he necessarily enters into the
Son’s humanity and into his whole mystical body, and belongs also to the latter … In the Son and through the Son the Holy Spirit dwells there also personally and essentially. He is the very Spirit and, as it were, the soul of the Church.\footnote{Matthias Scheeben, \textit{The Mysteries of Christianity}, translated by Cyril Vollert (St. Louis, Missouri: B. Herder Co., 1946), 545.}

Augustine would concede that the same Spirit that dwells in Christ’s humanity is also the Spirit that dwells in the Church. However, in Augustine’s perspective, the Spirit is present and active in the Church as the source of the Church’s unity and communion, not as the existent soul of the Church. By literally identifying the human body of Jesus with his Mystical Body, the Church, Scheeben was compelled to classify the Spirit as the actual soul of the Church. He would, therefore, conclude that “the Church is the temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in it as the soul of its own body … He is active in the Church not only in a way in which … he guides and directs all well-regulated societies … No, he must be active in the members of Christ’s Body as he was in the real body of Christ.”\footnote{Ibid., 544.}

Accordingly, Scheeben would perceive the Church, in Congar’s view, as a “kind of incarnation of the Holy Spirit.”\footnote{Yves Congar, \textit{I Believe in the Holy Spirit}, translated by David Smith Vol., 1 (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983), 155.} The Spirit is in that sense embodied by the Church which, in my view, is at odds with Augustine’s position that the Spirit is not conjoined to its bodily forms. The notion that the Church is an incarnation of the Spirit clearly limits the Spirit to the Church and that undermines the meaning of the Spirit – Soul analogy.

In the twentieth century prior to Vatican II, Fulton J. Sheen would rightly correct Scheeben’s view on the Mystical Body of Christ by noting that “the head of the Body is Christ – not the visible Christ who was born in Bethlehem … The Christ who is the head of his Body which is the Church is the risen, glorified Christ, seated at the right hand of
the Father." The Mystical Body that is now under the glorified Christ is quite different in that sense from the visible body of Christ. However, Sheen would in turn identify the Spirit as the soul of the Church because

the Church is the Body of Christ, and Christ is the invisible head of the Church, with Peter as his vicar. But there should be some bond of union between the head and the body, for what would a Body be without a soul. In like manner, the Church itself must have a vivifying, energizing principle and that soul is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the blessed Trinity.  

While the Spirit is the one who unites and animates the Church, according to Augustine, it is not identified as the soul of the Church as Christ is the head of his Body, the Church. The Spirit is not, therefore, a living soul contained in a body in the sense in which Sheen indicated above. More importantly, the Spirit does not simply animate a pre-existing body as Congar would affirm. Even though Sheen perfectly considered the Spirit as the bond of union between the head and the body in line with Augustine’s perspective on the function of the Spirit in the Church, it is not sufficient to conclude that the Church as a whole “is a body animated by a living soul – the Spirit of God.” The reason is that the Spirit is primarily the co-instituting principle that defined the Church’s charismatic structure. In light of the above interpretations of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy I will now examine the shifts in the Magisterium’s interpretations of the analogy followed by Congar’s perspective on the function of the Spirit in the Church.

SHIFTS IN THE MAGISTERIUM’S UNDERSTANDING OF THE ANALOGY

In defining the nature, unity, and mission of the Church as well as the function of the Spirit in the catholic Church, the Magisterium has, through the centuries, appealed to

---

283 Ibid., 106.
284 Ibid., 110.
Augustine’s teaching. His influence on the official teaching of the Church on these issues cannot, consequently, be underestimated because of the extent to which his saying reverberated down the centuries [namely] ‘what the soul is in our body, the Holy Spirit is in the body of Christ, which is the Church.’ (Serm 267.iv.4) The same theme has been powerfully expressed in two of the most important Roman Catholic ecclesiological statements of modern times – Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus* in 1897 (DS 3328) and Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* in 1943 (DS 3807-3808) – though Vatican II put the matter rather less absolutely in *Lumen Gentium* 1.7 … Clearly there is a sense in which it is perfectly valid: if the Church is not vitalized by the Holy Spirit, it ceases to truly be the Church.\(^{285}\)

Each of these magisterial documents mentioned above will be separately examined to determine the degree in which Augustine was represented by the Magisterium. This will bring to light the subtle shifts in the Magisterium’s understanding of Augustine’s analogy which the Magisterium broadly used to justify the Spirit’s function in the catholic Church. The intent is not to discredit some of the Magisterium’s interpretation of the analogy, but rather, to highlight its significance in the teaching of the Church.

3.1.1 LEO XIII’S ENCYCLICAL: *DIVINUM ILLUD MUNUS* (1897)

Shortly before Leo XIII issued this unprecedented encyclical entirely devoted to the subject of the Holy Spirit, he underscored the unity of the Church in *Satis Cognitum*. In this encyclical, Leo sought “to describe the exemplar and, as it were, the lineaments of the Church. Amongst these the most worthy of our chief consideration is *Unity*. This the divine author impressed on it as a lasting sign of truth and of unconquerable strength.”\(^{286}\)

Unity in the Church was, therefore, an important theme for Leo because he was concerned about “those internal, and as it were domestic dissensions among some of ourselves; dissensions of which it is hardly possible to say how much they break or relax


the bonds of charity, to the great detriment of souls.” In emphasizing the unity that ought to exist in the Church, Leo XIII would affirm that the Church is “a body living and duly organized and composed of many members; members indeed which have not all the same functions, but which, united one to the other, are kept bound together by the guidance and authority of the head.” For Leo, the unifying and vivifying force of the Church is essentially associated with Christ, the head of the Church. The Church’s life and unity in that regard was predominantly Christological in form in contrast to Augustine’s Spirit-animated Church. For this reason, the Spirit was rather identified by Leo simply as the source of the Church’s gifts and strength when he made reference to Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy in Divinum Illud Munus.

The objective of this encyclical on the Holy Spirit was specifically to examine “the indwelling and miraculous power of the Holy Spirit; and the extent and efficiency of his action, both in the whole body of the Church and in the individual souls of its members, through the glorious abundance of his divine graces.” Clearly, the presence and activity of the Spirit in the catholic Church and its members was of particular interest to Leo XIII. On account of the Spirit, he would affirm that

the Church is a divine institution clearly proven by the splendor and glory of those gifts and graces with which she is adorned, and whose author and giver is the Holy Spirit. Let it suffice to state that, as Christ is the head of the Church, so is the Holy Spirit her soul. ‘What the soul is in our body, that is the Holy Spirit in Christ’s Body, the Church’ (St. Aug., Serm. 187, de Temp.). This being so, no further and fuller ‘manifestation and revelation of the Divine Spirit’ may be imagined or expected.

288 Leo XIII, Satis Cognitum, 10.
290 Ibid., 6.
In this statement, the Spirit was identified by Leo as the source and giver of the Church’s charismatic gifts. However, the analogy Augustine established between the Spirit in the Church and the soul in the body was not accurately interpreted by Leo. While it is reasonable and proper to consider Christ, the Head of the Church that is his Mystical Body, it is not accurate to consider the Spirit as the soul of the Church because the latter is not the Spirit’s body. Augustine’s analogy was, accordingly, understood by Leo in literal terms and that is why he considered the Spirit as the soul of the Church. He, consequently, identified the Church in the above passage purely as a divine institution whereas the Church is both a human and divine institution. This represents a shift from Augustine’s position because, for the latter, the Spirit only functions in the same fashion as the soul functions in the human body. The Spirit was not, therefore, identified by Augustine as the inherent structural soul of a divine Church in this analogy between the function of the Spirit in the Church and the soul in the body.

In addition to articulating the presence and function of the Spirit in the Church as a whole, Leo XIII would also comment on “the manner and extent of the action of the Holy Spirit in individual souls [that is] no less wonderful, although somewhat more difficult to understand, inasmuch as it is entirely invisible.”\textsuperscript{291} For him, the Spirit does not only function in the Church the same way as the soul functions in the human body as Augustine suggested. The Spirit also dwells in the individual souls of the members of the Church. Therefore, it is not just what the Spirit does in the Church that is considered in this case, but also what the Spirit does in the lives of individuals. The personal form of the Spirit’s indwelling in individuals was obviously not considered by Augustine because

\textsuperscript{291} Leo XIII, \textit{Divinum Illud Munus}, 7.
he was more concerned about the unifying function of the Spirit in the Church against the Donatists who perceived the Spirit as an internal personal gift.

The unity and dynamism of the Catholic Church under the influence and animation of the Spirit was simply what Leo XIII intended to articulate and emphasize when he characterized the Spirit as the soul of the Church. Unfortunately, he was not aware of the implications that his understanding of Augustine’s Spirit–Soul analogy bore on the nature of the Church. By referring to the Spirit as the soul of the Church, Leo was, in my view, slightly misinterpreting Augustine’s analogy. This is especially true because “the problem with this approach is that it makes the Church and its structures absolute, divine in its origin, while the only task of the Spirit is to ‘animate’ the already existing ecclesiastical apparatus.”292 This criticism is quite valid, in my view, because even though the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, it is also constituted of human elements that are not essentially en-souled by the Spirit. As such, the Church needs to be renewed and transformed by the Spirit that transcends the boundaries of the Church. A literal interpretation of Augustine’s analogy in Leo’s case virtually echoes traits of Scheeben’s mistaken understanding of the Church as a ‘kind of incarnation of the Holy Spirit.’

The idea that the Spirit is the soul of the Church is, in my view, inconsistent with Augustine’s trinitarian theology and ecclesiology. Most importantly, it also confines the Spirit within the limits of the Catholic Church. Whereas, the Spirit is presented in Augustine’s trinitarian theology and ecclesiology as a divine person who is not conjoined to any bodily form. Clearly, Leo did not deliberately intend to substantially identify the

Spirit with the Church. However, his statement that the Spirit is the soul of the Church is open to a literal interpretation of Augustine’s analogy. Since the visible hierarchical nature of the Church was the established image of the Church, Leo’s attempt to present the Spirit as the source of the Church’s charismatic gifts is to some degree a development in the Church’s self-understanding.

3.1.2 PIUS XII’S ENCYCLICAL: *MYSTICI CORPORIS CHRISTI* (1943)

The nature of the Church was further defined by Pius XII in *Mystici Corporis* which affirmed that the hierarchical and charismatic structures of the Church both constitute the Church. This particular encyclical represented the most significant shift in ecclesiology (the theological understanding of the nature and mission of the Church) since the Counter-Reformation of the late sixteenth and early seventeen centuries. For the first time in the modern history of the Church, a pope was rooting his teaching on the Church in Scripture, especially in the writings of St. Paul as the Body of Christ. The encyclical qualified the Pauline image with the adjective ‘mystical,’ to distinguish it from the Eucharist and the earthly, risen, and glorified bodies of the Lord.

The shift in question is evident in the way the Church has since been characterized and perceived. In place of “the heavily one-sided ecclesiology of Vatican 1, which so emphasized the institutional element of the Church that its inner, divine dimension was hardly recognizable,” the Church was, rather, perceived as the Mystical Body of Christ. Both the visible and invisible as well as the Christological and charismatic elements of the Church were fully represented in this image of the Church as the Mystical

---

293 In *Mystici Corporis Christi*, Pius XII affirmed that “one must not think, however, that this ordered or ‘organic’ structure of the body of the Church contains only hierarchical elements and with them is complete; or, as an opposite opinion holds, that is composed only of those who enjoy charismatic gifts.” 17.
Body of Christ. The change in concept was, therefore, very appropriate and significant because

the image of the Body of Christ is organic, rather than sociological. The Church is seen on the analogy of a human body equipped with various organs. It has an inbuilt vital principle thanks to which it can grow … The Body of Christ as distinct from any natural organism, has a divine life-principle. On most explanations this is said to be the Holy Spirit.296

In this encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ, Pius XII would also identify the Spirit as the source of life and unity for the members of the Body of Christ, the Church.

The fact that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ clearly signifies that there is unity between the different members of the Church who constitute this one Body of Christ. What Pius evidently intended to explain was

the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and of the union of this Body of the faithful with the divine Redeemer … Our purpose is to throw an added ray of glory on the supreme beauty of the Church; to bring out into fuller light the exalted supernatural nobility of the faithful who in the Body of Christ are united with their Head; and finally, to exclude definitely the many current errors with regard to this matter.297

Within the Church, the members are not only united among themselves, they are also united with Christ as members of his Mystical Body. The unity that, consequently, exists in the Church is a unity of diverse members, but it is also a unity under Christ because all the members are united in Christ as the Head of the Church. For Pius XII, this unity is created and fostered by the Spirit because

... to this Spirit of Christ, also, as an invisible principle is to be ascribed the fact that all the parts of the Body are joined one with the other and with their exalted Head; for he is entire in the Head, entire in the Body, and entire in each of the members. To the members he is present and assists them in proportion to their various duties and offices, and the greater or less degree of spiritual health which they enjoy. It

297 Pius XII, Mystici Corporis Christi, Encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1943), 11.
is he who, through his heavenly grace, is the principle of every supernatural act in all parts of the Body.298

Following Leo XIII’s trend of thought, Pius also identified the Spirit as the source of unity between the members of the Church. However, in contrast to Leo, Pius would emphasize the fact that the same Spirit is entirely present in the Head and the members of the Church to show that the Spirit is simply the Spirit of Christ functioning in all parts of his Body, the Church. This salient point, as I will later indicate, was refined and succinctly expressed by Vatican II in Lumen Gentium to emphasize the relation between Christ and the Spirit.

In Mystici Corporis Christi, Pius XII would in similar terms advance the idea that the Spirit is the soul of the Church. He would invoke Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy to explain the function of the Spirit in the Church not only as the source of unity, but also as the source of action. According to him,

the Spirit is he who, while personally present and divinely active in all members, nevertheless in the inferior members acts also through the ministry of the higher members … This presence and activity of the Spirit of Jesus Christ is tersely and vigorously described by Our predecessor of immortal memory Leo XIII in his Encyclical Divinum Illud in these words: ‘Let is suffice to say that, as Christ is the Head of the Church, so is the Holy Spirit her soul.’299

In directly quoting Leo XIII on this theme, Pius XII was also adopting a literal interpretation of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy. For this reason, he precisely “taught that the uncreated Spirit of God is the life-giving principle, the soul, of the Mystical Body

298 Pius XII, Mystici Corporis Christi, 57. This passage is quoted in its entirety in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (see No. 797), concerning the Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit fully dwells in the Church as a whole, according to CCC, because the whole Spirit of Christ is present in the head, the body, and each of the members. There is no greater or lesser presence of the Spirit in any part of the Church because the whole Spirit is equally present in the Mystical Body of Christ. By virtue of their baptism in Christ, every member of the Church is gifted with the same Spirit of Christ that unites them and makes them equal members of the Church.

299 Ibid., 57.
of Christ, the Church.”\textsuperscript{300} Equally worthy of note is Pius’s own perception of the way in which the Spirit functions as the soul of the Church. He claimed that ‘the Spirit is present and active in the inferior members through the ministry of the higher members.’ This position appears to be a departure from Augustine’s analogy of the function of the Spirit. The reason this is the case is that in Augustine’s analogy there is no indication that the Spirit functions in a mediated way through the ministry of the higher members of the Church. He simply compared the function of the Spirit in the whole Body of Christ, the Church to the function of the soul in the human body. For Augustine, the Spirit animates and vivifies all the members of the Church into a unity the Spirit forms as their source of communion. In its function as the source of unity and life, the Spirit is not evidently dependent on the higher members of the Church in order to be active and effective in the lives of those Pius XII referred to as the inferior members of the Church. As the one who does in the Church what the soul does in the body, the soul that Augustine claimed is “present simultaneously to all the body’s parts, to make them alive,”\textsuperscript{301} the Spirit is simultaneously present and active in all members of the Church.

On a positive note, Pius XII would offer a complementary point of view to Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy. This insight concerns the uniqueness of the Spirit’s binding force on the members of the Church. He rightly observed that

> in a natural body the principle of unity unites the parts in such a manner that each lacks in its own individual subsistence; on the contrary, in the Mystical Body the mutual union, though intrinsic, links members by a bond which leaves to each the complete enjoyment of his own personality.\textsuperscript{302}

\textsuperscript{300} Michael Lawler and Thomas Shanahan, Church: A Spirited Communion (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 141.


\textsuperscript{302} Pius XII. Mystici Corporis Christi, 61.
Augustine clearly recognized the unity in diversity that exists in the Church on account of the Spirit. The uniqueness of each member of the Church, from my point of view, is nevertheless amplified by Pius XII in claiming that each member enjoys his own personality in the unity of the Spirit. Uniformity is not, therefore, what the Spirit imposes on the Church because

in the Mystical Body, each member’s individuality and freedom of will and conscience are maintained, even in their unity. Individuals are not merely subsumed in the whole but, on the contrary, the Church exists for the good of its individual members. The critical distinction between the Mystical Body and other forms of moral bodies is the existence in the form of ‘an internal principle,’ namely, the Holy Spirit, who vivifies it with genuine unity of life and thought and raises its purpose to that of its divine source. The source of unity and common action for merely moral bodies remains the common ends for which they are organized.303

In reality, the Spirit effectively enriches the Church which it unites in a bond of love by enabling each member to enjoy his or her own personality. Such a freedom allows the members of the Church to willingly and generously offer their respective gifts and talents at the service of the Church.

The criticism that is generally leveled against Pius’s model of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ cannot evidently be justified. For those who reject this model, “if the Holy Spirit were conceived as the life principle of the Church, all the actions of the Church would seem to be attributable to the Holy Spirit. This would obscure the personal responsibility and freedom of the members.”304 In this model of the Church, the personality of the individual, in my view, is not effectively obscured by the Spirit that is active in his or her life. In fact, Pius XII would condemn

304 Dulles, Models of the Church, 47.
the dangerous error of those who endeavor to deduce from the mysterious union of us all with Christ a certain unhealthy *quietism*. They would attribute the whole spiritual life to Christians and their progress in virtue exclusively to the action of the Divine Spirit, setting aside and neglecting the collaboration which is due from us. No one, of course can deny that the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ is the one source of whatever supernatural powers enters into the Church and its members … But that men should persevere constantly in their good works, that they should advance eagerly in grace and virtue … – all this the heavenly Spirit does not will to effect unless they contribute their daily share of zealous activity.\(^{305}\)

The reason the Spirit functions in the Church as the source of unity and life, in Pius’s view, is that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. One should not only be in communion with the Church in order to be alive in the Spirit; each member of the Church should equally fulfill his or her own vocation in response to the Spirit. The Church would not only be united, it would also grow and realize its full potential through the active participation of the members in the life and mission of the Church. In adopting the image of the Mystical Body of Christ as the defining notion of the Church in which the Spirit unites all the members of the Body, Pius was consistent with Augustine’s understanding of the Spirit’s function in the Church. Unfortunately, he departed from Augustine in claiming that the Spirit is present and active in the inferior members through the ministry of the higher members because for Augustine the Spirit is common to all members.

3.1.3 VATICAN II: *LUMEN GENTIUM* (1964)

The Second Vatican Council is generally recognized as a turning point in the Catholic Church’s understanding of its nature and mission. This is the case because “the principal paradigm of the Church in the documents of Vatican II is that of the People of God … In the second chapter of Vatican II’s Constitution on the Church, the new People of God is described as a Spirit-filled community, ‘a fellowship of life, charity, and

---

\(^{305}\) Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 87.
truth.”

Other images of the Church were also adopted by the Council. Among these images, the image of the Church as the Body of Christ is quite prominent and clearly articulated by Vatican II because for the latter

a diversity of members and functions is engaged in the building up of Christ’s body, too. There is only one Spirit who, out of his own richness and the needs of the ministries, gives his various gifts for the welfare of the Church … The same Spirit who of himself is the principle of unity in the body, by his own power and by the interior cohesion of the members produces and stimulates love among the faithful. From this it follows that if one member suffers in any way, all the members suffer, and if one member is honored, all the members together rejoice (See 1 Cor. 12:26).

In both paradigms of the Church as the People of God and as the Mystical Body of Christ, the Spirit is portrayed by Vatican II as a principle that is present and active in the members of the Church who are united and vivified by the Spirit. The Spirit is, therefore, the source of the Church’s unity and life because the Spirit is the one who dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple (1 Cor. 3:16) prays and bears witness to them … He guides the Church in the way of all truth (Jn. 16:13) and, uniting it in fellowship and ministry, bestows upon it different hierarchic and charismatic gifts and in this way directs it and adorns it with his fruits.

The Spirit is not only the one who unites the different members of Christ’s Body; it is also the one who inspires, prays, and enables God’s people to faithfully live out their vocation. Indeed, the presence and function of the Spirit in the Church was highly noted by Vatican II in placing “a renewed emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in forming and giving life to the Church, empowering it with spiritual gifts.”

Considering what the Spirit does in the Body of Christ, the Church, the Second Vatican Council equally invoked Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy to illustrate the

---


181
unifying and animating functions of the Spirit. However, an attempt was made on the part of the Council to express what was not so explicitly represented in Augustine’s analogy. This aspect of the analogy is the Spirit’s relationship to Christ, the Head of the Church, as the unifying and animating principle of the members of Christ’s Body, the Church. But rather than attributing the unity of the members of the Church to Christ as Leo XIII proposed, Vatican II recognized the unity of the members of the Church as the work of the Spirit in relation to Christ. The Church is not only the Body of Christ; it is also joined to Christ, the Head of his Body by one and the same Spirit. Therefore,

in order that we might be unceasingly renewed in him (see Eph. 4:23), he has shared with us his Spirit who, being one and the same in head and members, gives life to, unifies and moves the whole body. Consequently, his work could be compared by the Fathers of the Church to the function that the principle of life, the soul, fulfills in the human body.  

In this statement, the Council did not only shift away from Leo XIII and Pius XII’s literal interpretation of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy, the council also expressed in a very succinct way the Spirit’s unifying function in the Church as the Spirit of Christ. This was precisely an attempt to underscore the significance of Christ’s relation to the Spirit within the Church. Congar is quite convinced that this emphasis on Christ and the Spirit was deliberate on the part of Vatican II in order to preserve

the Christological reference which is fundamentally biblical and the essential condition for the soundness of any pneumatology … It stresses that the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; he carries out the work of Christ and builds up the Body of Christ. Again and again, the Holy Spirit is called the principle of the life of the Body, which is the Church.  

310 “Lumen Gentium 7,” 8. The same Spirit that is at work in the life of Jesus and empowered him to fulfill God’s will in total service and obedience is the same Spirit that is also at work in the lives of the members of the Church. For Congar “a better way of expressing this idea is that the identically and personally same Spirit, idem numero, is both in the Head, Christ, and in his Body, the Church or its members.” 2:19.

As the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit cannot, therefore, be perceived as the soul of the Church in the literal sense of the word. In emphasizing that it is one and the same Spirit in Head and members who fully animates and unites the whole body, Vatican II has succeeded in preserving Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy from further misinterpretation.

In comparison to Vatican II, Augustine did not explicitly refer to Christ as the Head of the Mystical Body, the Church, in his comparison of the function of the Spirit in the Church and the soul in the body. The reason this is the case, from my point of view, is that Augustine already presupposed that the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ which he gave to the Church as a gift. In any case, it was important for Vatican II to recover this notion, at least, to indicate that

the image of the ‘Church as body’ contains the notion of Christ as ‘head of the body’ and of the Spirit as ‘soul’ in the body, giving life and thus definitely leaves behind the metaphor of the body politic and the like which was popular in ancient philosophy. It would also be wrong to interpret the relationship of head and body which exists between Christ and the Church as something ‘impersonal’ in terms of the body.\(^{312}\)

Vatican II had good reason to complement Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy in order to capture the distinctive nature of the Church not as an embodiment of the Spirit, but as the Mystical Body of Christ united to its Head. The analogy is, nevertheless, significant and pertinent because this “critical insight of Lumen Gentium … understands the Spirit of Christ as forming all of the members of the Church, individually and as a whole, into Christ’s image, literally giving life to his Body as a soul gives life to a human body.”\(^{313}\)

The ultimate aim of the Spirit in uniting the members of the Church in love is to bring them to the fullness of life in Christ whom they all serve and obey. As a result, “the

---


\(^{313}\) Markey, Creating Communion, 166.
relation between Christ and the Church is such that the life of the risen Christ is diffused in the members of the Church … Christ is the head and his fullness fills all.”\(^{314}\) Without the Spirit, the members of the Church cannot be conformed into the image of Christ and if they are not united to Christ, they cannot equally share in his divine life. The members of the Church, therefore, depend on both Christ and the Spirit for their life and formation.

For this reason, the Church in which the Spirit fulfills what the soul does in the human body is one that has both a hierarchic and charismatic structure. These two dimensions of the Church are not opposed to each other because the Spirit is at work in both the hierarchic and charismatic structures that constitute the Church. The unity that ultimately exists between these two features of the Church is compared by Vatican II in no mean analogy, to the mystery of the incarnate Word. As the assumed nature, inseparably united to him, serves the divine Word as a living instrument of salvation, so, in somewhat similar fashion, does the social structure of the Church serve the Spirit of Christ who vivifies it, in the building up of the body (Eph. 4:16).\(^ {315}\)

In its function as the source of the Church’s life and unity, the Spirit uses the services of the hierarchical structure to build up the members of the Body of Christ, the Church. However, it is important to note that the Spirit does not only function through the mediation of the hierarchy, because the Spirit equally has direct access to each member of the Church. Therefore, the hierarchical structure of the Church does not have a monopoly of the Spirit that makes such a structure effective. The idea that Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy tends to subject the Spirit to the Church is contested in this case by Vatican II in affirming that the hierarchical structure in particular is at the service of the


\(^ {315}\) “Lumen Gentium 8,” 9.
Spirit of Christ. Hence, the reason there is unity in the Church is not that the Church is hierarchically organized, but that

the Spirit’s power to stimulate genuine love in the hearts of each member emerges as the key to this interpersonal unity between the members through and in the Spirit. Furthermore, a thorough interdependence between the members characterizes the interpersonal bond formed by the Spirit … The image of the Body of Christ, therefore, functions to explain not only how the Church acts as a communion of persons that truly represent Christ in history but also how the Spirit of Christ operates as the organizing and unifying force at the heart of the Church.316

In *Lumen Gentium*, Vatican II did not only present a comprehensive understanding of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy. The Council also safeguarded this analogy by affirming that the visible hierarchical structure of the Church, rather, serves the Spirit of Christ who organizes and unifies the members of the Church.

3.1.4 JOHN PAUL II’S ENCYCLICAL: *DOMINUM ET VIVIFICANTEM* (1986)

The ways and means in which the Spirit is the Lord and Giver of life to the members of Christ’s Body, the Church, is what John Paul II reflected on in this encyclical on the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and the World. He reiterated in similar terms the teaching of Vatican II on this matter that “the Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple … prays and bears witness … guides the Church into the fullness of truth and gives her a unity of fellowship and service.”317 The Spirit effectively gives life to the members of the Church in a concrete way when the Spirit prays, testifies, and inspires them to the fullness of truth, which binds them in a mutual communion of love. According to John Paul II,

317 “Lumen Gentium 4,” 3 According to John Paul II “there is a whole Patristic and theological tradition concerning the intimate union between the Spirit and the Church, a union presented sometimes as analogous to the relation between the soul and the body in man.” See footnote 96 of *Dominum et Vivificantem*. 
these passages quoted from the Conciliar Constitution Lumen Gentium tell us that the era of the Church began with the coming of the Holy Spirit. They also tell us that this era, the era of the Church, continues. It continues down the centuries and generations … the teaching of this Council … is permeated by the truth about the Holy Spirit, as the soul of the Church. Following the guidance of the Spirit of truth and bearing witness together with him, the Council has given a special confirmation of the presence of the Holy Spirit – the Counselor. In a certain sense, the Council has made the Spirit newly ‘present’ in our difficult age.318

The statement that ‘the teaching of the Council is permeated by the truth about the Holy Spirit, as the soul of the Church,’ can be misunderstood to suggest that John Paul II also reverted to a literal interpretation of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy. However, there is evidence to indicate that John Paul II used this expression in an analogical sense. He actually intended to compare the function of the Spirit in the Church to the soul in the body. This is clearly evident from subsequent discourse, where he explained that

the Holy Spirit as ‘soul of the Church’ and ‘heart of the Church’; this is a beautiful aspect of Tradition which we must delve into more deeply. It is clear that, as theologians explain, the expression: ‘the Holy Spirit animates the Church’ is understood as an analogy. He is not the ‘substantial form’ of the Church as the soul is for the body, together with which it forms the one substance we call the human being. The Holy Spirit is the vital principle of the Church, intimate yet transcendent. He is the giver of life and unity to the Church, along the lines of the efficient cause, that is, as the author and promoter of divine life in the Body of Christ.319

There is ultimately no contradiction in meaning between the Second Vatican Council and John Paul II’s understanding of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy.

In addition to reiterating the teaching of Vatican II on the presence and function of the Spirit in the catholic Church, John Paul II also introduced the idea of two distinctive acts that the Spirit fulfills in the Church as the Lord and Giver of life. These are the sanctifying and teaching functions of the Spirit in the Church. Therefore, the

Spirit does not only unite the members of Christ’s Body, the Church, the same way the soul unites the body; the Spirit also sanctifies the members of the Church. This is precisely because

when God the Father ‘sends the Spirit of his Son into our hearts,’ then ‘we receive a spirit of adopted sons by which we cry Abba Father!’ Hence the divine filiation planted in the human soul through sanctifying grace is the work of the Holy Spirit … Sanctifying grace is the principle and source of man’s new life: divine, supernatural life … Thus there is a close relationship between the Spirit who gives life and sanctifying grace and the manifold supernatural vitality which derives from it in man: between the uncreated Spirit and the created human spirit.320

The reason the Spirit is given to the members of the Church is to sanctify their lives in order to become children of God. Sanctification is, therefore, the new form of life that the Spirit gives to the members of the Church as the soul gives life to the human body. This is arguably the principal effect of the Spirit in the Church, according to John Paul II, because

holiness is the first and the basic form of life that the Holy Spirit, like ‘life-giving soul,’ infuses into the Church – holiness after the model of Christ ‘whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world’ (Jn. 10:36). Holiness constitutes the Church’s basic identity as the Body of Christ, given life and sharing in his Spirit. Holiness gives the Body spiritual health. Holiness also determines its spiritual beauty, a beauty which surpasses all natural or artistic beauty.321

Compared to previous magisterial documents which invoked Augustine’s analogy and emphasized the Spirit’s unifying function in the Church, John Paul II appears to be distinct in identifying holiness as the first and basic effect of the Spirit in the Church.

The next function that John Paul ascribed to the Spirit that operates in the Church as the soul functions in the body is that of teaching the truth. Part of this function of the

320 John Paul II, Dominum et Vivificantem, 52.
321 John Paul II, “The Soul of the Church,” General Audience – November 28, 1990. The Spirit is the one who enables the members of the Church to undergo conversion and renewal in order to be holy. For John Paul II, “the hidden giver of this saving power is the Holy Spirit: he whom the Church calls ‘the light of consciences’ penetrates and fills ‘the depths of the human heart.’ Through just such a conversion in the Holy Spirit a person becomes open to forgiveness, to the remission of sins.” Dominum et Vivificantem, 45.
Spirit is to “convince concerning the sin that happened at the beginning, that sin which is the root of other sins and the source of man’s sinfulness on earth, a source which never ceases to be active.”322 At the same time, the Spirit is also present and active in the members of Christ’s Body, the Church in order to help people to understand the correct meaning of the content of Christ’s message … [to] ensure continuity and identity of understanding in the midst of changing conditions and circumstances. The Holy Spirit, then, will ensure that in the Church there will always continue the same truth which the Apostles heard from their Master.323

The Spirit is evidently the one who ensures that the Church is faithful to the Gospel of Christ throughout the ages as the source of the Church’s teaching on the truth that is revealed in the Scriptures. Under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit, there is an identity of understanding, according to John Paul II, that would not allow any form of dissent against revealed truth. In his own estimation,

the Holy Spirit is called the ‘Church’s soul’ in the sense that he sheds divine light on all thought within the Church, and ‘guides to all truth,’… Therefore it is by the Holy Spirit’s light that the Church comes to the announcement of the revealed truth, and a deepening of faith on all levels of the Body of Christ is at work: among the apostles, among their successors in the ministry, and regarding the ‘sense of faith’ of all believers, among whom are catechists, theologians and other Christian thinkers. All is and must be enlivened by the Spirit. The Spirit is also the source of dynamism in the Church, whether we are referring to the witness she must give to Christ before the world, or to the spread of the Gospel message.324

The different members of the Church would ultimately share the one faith because of the Spirit. Their communion in faith would equally manifest itself in “a universal consensus in matters of faith and morals,”325 based on the inspiration and guidance of the Spirit.

322 John Paul II, Dominum et Vivificantem, 35.
323 Ibid., 4.
325 “Lumen Gentium 12,” 17.
In conclusion, I will reiterate that while Vatican II provided a comprehensive understanding of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy, John Paul II would expand the functions of the Spirit as the source of unity to include its role as the sanctifier and teacher of the members of Christ’s Body, the Church. This development in the interpretation of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy is one of many subtle shifts in the Magisterium’s understanding that I endeavored to expose in this section of the dissertation. For Leo and Pius, their perception of the Spirit as the very soul of the Church is conflicting in meaning because this makes the Church an exclusively divine institution that is supreme and absolute. Vatican II’s attempt on the other hand to highlight the relationship between the Spirit and Christ in its functions as the source of unity is a positive development. At least, it specifies that it is one and the same Spirit that unites the members of the Church to one another and Christ, the Head. What is clearly evident from this study is not simply how dominant Augustine’s influence is on the Magisterium. Rather, the renewed and growing interest of the Magisterium in the active role of the Spirit in the Church is very notable. Clearly, the Church is alive because of the Spirit of Christ that is active in the members of the Church.

CONGAR’S PERSPECTIVE ON THE FUNCTION OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH

Yves Congar is the most prominent Catholic theologian of the last century who has written extensively on both ecclesiology and pneumatology. He is widely considered “the greatest ecclesiologist not only of the 20th century but of the entire history of the Church as well. Indeed, his impact on the Second Vatican Council was so profound that
Avery Dulles suggested that it ‘could almost be called Congar’s council.’ In actual fact, Congar’s ecclesiology and pneumatology are closely interrelated because he concisely defines pneumatology as

something other than a simple dogmatic theology of the third Person. I also mean something more than, and in this sense different from, a profound analysis of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in individual souls and his sanctifying activity there. Pneumatology should I believe, describe the impact, in the context of a vision of the Church, of the fact that the Spirit distributes his gifts as he wills and in this way builds up the Church. A study of this kind involves not simply a consideration of those gifts or charisms, but a theology of the Church.

The presence and function of the Spirit in the catholic Church is, consequently, very significant in Congar’s understanding and vision of the Church. Therefore, in this section of the dissertation, I consider his perspective on the function of the Spirit in the Church as a complement to Augustine’s understanding of the function of the Spirit as the source of unity and diversity. He similarly adopted Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy. However, Congar was cautious in employing this analogy to explain the function of the Spirit in the Church because of its limitations. For this reason, he offered a caveat to the analogy in noting that it is a functional and not an ontological analogy because the latter would mean that the Church is purely divine in nature and the Spirit is embodied by the Church. The contribution of his own perspective towards a deeper understanding of the function of the Spirit in relation to the Church will, nonetheless, be noted where possible.

Congar profoundly agrees with Augustine that the Spirit is the principle of unity in the catholic Church because the Spirit is itself the bond of love and unity in the immanent Trinity. He also maintains that

---

327 Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, 1:156.
when the Spirit is given to us, he unites us to God and with each other by the same principle that seals the unity of Love and Peace in God himself. It is not enough to speak here of the created gift of grace, even though it is in effect through that gift that the Spirit is given to us. The Spirit, however, is given as the principle of the Church’s unity.  

The Spirit is in that sense the one Congar identifies as the source of unity among the members of the Church and between the Church and the divine community of the Trinity. His understanding of what the Spirit does in the Church is, therefore, based on his insight into the nature and function of the Spirit as the bond of love between the Father and the Son. In this regard, Congar was influenced by Augustine because the latter’s view of the Church is also very profound in a truly theological sense; he wants us to believe that God aims to bring us together and unite us to himself by the same Spirit, who is the bond between the Father and the Son. … The part played by the Spirit in the Church and in our own personal lives of grace is of the greatest importance.  

Congar would, nonetheless, critique the application in the past of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy by the Magisterium. His view point is that the descent of the Spirit rather co-instituted the Church in unity and enriched the Church with its charismatic gifts before animating the Church. An already pre-existing constituted Church that was simply animated by the Spirit was, therefore, inconceivable from Congar’s standpoint. With regard to the Church’s unity, Congar would “in more Augustinian mood stress particularly the role of the Holy Spirit as unifier for us as for the divine Trinity since the Spirit is the gracious source of all the supernatural gifts and virtues.” The Church is, therefore, the dwelling place of the Spirit in whom the members of Christ’s Body, the Church, are united and gifted with different vocations for the good of the whole Church.

329 Ibid., 1:80.
3.2.1 A FUNCTIONAL AND NOT AN ONTOLOGICAL ANALOGY

The analogy between the Spirit in the Church and the soul in the body was what Congar used to depict the function of the Spirit in the Church as a source of unity when he wrote his early work on *The Mystery of the Church*. He argued that

a body is gradually formed by the operation of an interior law of organization which, starting from a first germ, small enough but rich in its consequences, fashions the various organs and assigns each its place … The same principle of organization subsequently ensures the concurrence of all the functions, organs and limbs in the unity of a single life. Now, what the life of a man or his soul does for his body, the Holy Spirit does for the body of Christ, of which he is the inmost laws of its being, and he follows the two stages we have just described. His action starts out from Christ, and he distributes all the different gifts which come from our Lord; and, in addition, he makes the gifts he places in each person work together in unity.331

From this passage we can sense two subtle differences between Augustine’s and Congar’s understanding of the Spirit – Soul analogy. The latter clearly identified two stages in the formation and growth of both the human body and the Church, stages he attributes to the soul and the Spirit respectively. Augustine merely compared the Spirit to the unifying and vivifying functions of the soul in an already constituted human body. In comparison to Augustine’s perspective, Congar’s understanding of the formation of the Church in stages is significant because it shows that the Church develops and matures over time and is not a perfect and static entity. Secondly, Congar highlights what was later taken up by Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium*, that is, that the action of the Spirit in the Church starts from Christ in distributing “to individuals and imparting to them interiorly the numerous gifts flowing from the riches of Christ, our Head … The special function of the Holy Spirit is to communicate to all and each something of the fullness of Christ.”332

332 Ibid., 23.
This was presupposed by Augustine as I earlier noted because for Augustine, the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church.

The reason the Spirit is present and active in all the parts of the Church, in Congar’s estimation, is that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. However, Congar would observe that

the Church has the Spirit, but it is not itself the Spirit. Yet the Pentecost gift is so entire, so perfect and complete, the Church is so dependent on the Spirit for all that it is, that the Fathers looked on the two passages of the Creed, *credo in Spiritum Sanctum* and *Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam*, as forming in reality one single article. They interpreted it as meaning ‘I believe in the Holy Spirit who unifies and sanctifies the Church, makes it Catholic and apostolic, making it thereby truly the Communion of saints in the Body of Christ.’

The Church depends on the Spirit as the human body depends on the soul, but unlike the soul and the human body, which form one substantial and integral whole, the Church is not one and the same with the Spirit of Christ. This notable difference between the Church and the body was well recognized by Augustine when he noted that analogies can be compared, but “not as you suppose, in strictness of expression, but for a similitude.”

Based on these observations, coupled with the fact that the Spirit is God above all, rather than the soul of the Church, Congar would argue that

St. Augustine’s comparison is, however, not to be pressed too far. Every comparison, of course, has its limits, otherwise it would no longer be a comparison, but an expression of the thing in itself. Though the Holy Spirit is the soul animating and indwelling the Body of Christ, he does not make up, with this Body, a physical and substantial whole, as does our soul with our body. It is more a matter of a union between two realities, the Spirit and the Church, each having its own subsistence – a kind of marriage as if between two persons.

---

335 Congar, *The Mystery of the Church*, 35.
The analogy of the Spirit in the Church and the soul in the body is not meant to represent the substantial nature of the Spirit itself or to bind the Spirit to the Church in literal terms. For Congar, this analogy is meant to signify the function of the Spirit in the Church as a source of unity, provided its limitations are taken into consideration. This function is what I intend to explore in the fourth chapter of this dissertation because it tells us about the source of the unity of the catholic Church as a communion of love. In clear terms, its shows that the unity of the Church is fully guaranteed because it is primarily created not by the visible structures of the Church, but by the Spirit of Christ.

The sense in which Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy was understood in both *Divinum Illud Munus* and *Mystici Corporis Christi* is a clear example, in Congar’s view, of how Augustine’s comparison can be pressed beyond its limits. In both cases, the Spirit was identified as the soul of the Church which is far reaching. Taken literally, it clearly points to an ecclesiological monophysitism. It is distasteful to Protestant Christians, because it seems to give an absolute value to the acts and structures of the Church … Augustine, however, said: What the soul does in our body, the Holy Spirit is for the Body of Christ, which is the Church. This statement, then, is functional and not ontological. This is an important difference, which was understood by Vatican II.336

Clearly, an ecclesiological monophysitism is not what I am proposing in examining the function of the Spirit as the source of unity in the catholic Church. This is because the Spirit is not recognized in our analysis as the substantial soul of the Church. The possibility and indeed the opportunity of Protestants, Orthodox, and Catholics forming a united communion is not also undermined by my interpretation of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy. On the contrary, it should encourage and challenge Protestants, Orthodox,

---

336 Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:154. From Congar’s point of view, ecclesiological monophysitism means that the Church is only divine in nature. However, there is also another meaning of the term which claims that the Church is purely a human institution. Both meanings are clearly incorrect because the Church is both divine and human in its constitution.
and Catholics to recognize the Spirit as the one who can animate and unite them in a
communion of love. The analogy is not, therefore, irrelevant even from an ecumenical
perspective if the unifying work of the Spirit is recognized. This is especially true
because

the soul is the actualizing and unifying principle of any living being, and in the
mystical body this role belongs [by appropriation] to the Holy Spirit. This must be
understood in a qualified sense, for the Holy Spirit is not the soul of the mystical
body in precisely the same sense in which the human soul is the unifying principle
of the human body; if this were the case the Church would be ontologically
divine.337

If indeed the functional dimension of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy is seriously taken
into consideration, it would make a difference. The Church would not only have reason to
depend on the Spirit, it would also be open to what the Spirit does towards healing and
reconciling the divisions between Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic Churches.

As the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit in which unity is fostered, the Church is
profundely related to the Spirit that is simultaneously present in all its different members.
While the Church is not ontologically divine, Congar would argue that

the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Church in terms of habitation, being with,
implies an intersubjective ontology. The Holy Spirit does not inform the Church by
entering into a physical composition with it to constitute a single substantial being
which is both divine and human; he is with it to guide and assist it, to enable it to
perform actions which, while outwardly human, are bearers of a divine virtue,
virtus Spiritus Sancti. What sort of a union, then, is it, if it is not one of actual
being? It is a union of alliance, grounded on God’s decree for man’s salvation.338

The idea that Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy depersonalizes the Spirit, that it limits
and subjects the Spirit to the visible and hierarchical structures of the Church, is refuted
here by Congar. In its function as the source of communion in the catholic Church, the

337 Elizabeth Groppe, *Yves Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Oxford University Press,
2004), 121.
divinity of the third Person of the Trinity is not, consequently, minimized because the Spirit “remains totally transcendent to it while being immanent in it.” This aspect of the Spirit does not deny the fact that the Church is the Body of Christ and the Temple or dwelling place of the Spirit. Rather, it signifies that the Spirit is radically distinct from the Church which is a divine and human institution. In that respect, it is the Church that is renewed and transformed by the Spirit to fully realize itself as the Body of Christ and not the Spirit that is conditioned by the Church. Consequently, the members of the Church have to cooperate with the Spirit in its functions as the Spirit animates, unifies, and guides the Church to accomplish its mission.

3.2.2 THE SPIRIT ANIMATES AND DWELLS IN THE CHURCH

The main theme of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy that is often taken into consideration is the animating and vivifying functions of the Spirit in the Church as the source of unity in diversity. This is not the case with Congar because the Spirit is first and foremost the co-institutor of the Church that was, subsequently, animated by the Spirit. From Congar’s point of view, the animating and vivifying function of the Spirit is rather one of two aspects of Augustine’s analogy that equally have to be appreciated. According to him, the Spirit functions

indeed, in two aspects important and easy to distinguish. He is, first of all, the animating soul, the source of all the activities concerning or aiming at holiness and salvation, activities peculiar to the Church and to the individual Christian. He is the source of my prayer … the source, too, of the acts by which the priesthood and the hierarchy sustains and guides the Body of Christ … Besides this, he is the indwelling soul; he not only acts in the Church, but dwells in it. The House of the Lord was not just made just for him to gaze on its beauty, but to receive him as its guest. It is, in fact, precisely because he is its guest that it practices holiness and justice.

---

340 Congar, The Mystery of the Church, 34-35.
These two aspects of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy will, subsequently, be examined in this section of the dissertation. This will show how Congar’s perspective supports and complements Augustine’s position on the presence and function of the Spirit in the Church. In both aspects of the analogy, either as the animating or the indwelling soul, Congar would insist that the Spirit

inhabits and animates the institution, but the activity he unfolds within it is not reducible to the fact that he is given and bound closely to it. This activity of his makes it evident that, though given to the Church and the faithful to the promises of the new alliance, he remains transcendent to the Church he dwells in; he is not just a divine force giving supernatural efficacy … but a Person sovereignly active and free.\(^{341}\)

Neither Augustine nor Congar compromised the divinity and freedom of the Spirit in comparing the function of the Spirit in the Church to the soul in the body. As far as they are concerned, it is the Church that is subject to the Spirit without which the Church is not active and alive.

One and the same Spirit is what obviously animates and dwells in each member of the Church and the Church as a whole. Both the personal and communal aspect of the Spirit’s presence and function in the life of the members of the Church would similarly be emphasized by Congar. For the latter, there is reason to suggest that

the whole body is animated and indwelled by the Holy Spirit. But the Church is an organism, that is to say a body having different functions, where each part is animated in view of its own being and to perform its special work to the advantage of the whole … The Church is a body whose soul, the Holy Spirit, itself always one and the same, distributes his gifts to the different members according to their different functions … On the one hand, it is the whole Body which is indwelled, animated and in action. On the other, there exist, within the Body, hierarchical functions, which themselves are functions of service … All the members are living and animated, but each according to what he is and to perform

\(^{341}\) Congar, *The Mystery of the Church*, 178.
what he is called to do within the body. That is the law of the Church’s being and which regulates its growth.  

Even though the Spirit is present and active in each member of the Church, it functions in each member, in Congar’s estimation, according to their vocations in the Church. Contrary to Pius XII who suggested that ‘the Spirit acts in the inferior members through the ministry of the higher members,’ Congar is more consistent with Augustine in stating that each member of the Church is animated by the Spirit according to one’s vocation. Furthermore, he would reveal that “the distinctive aspect of the Spirit is that, while remaining unique and preserving his identity, he is in everyone without causing anyone to lose his originality. This applies to persons, peoples, their culture and their talents.”

The Church’s unity in diversity is also recognized by Congar, based on his own interpretation of Augustin’s functional analogy of the Spirit’s work in the Church.

While the members of the Church are animated by the Spirit, the whole Church is also animated and filled by the Spirit that dwells in the Church. The Spirit also dwells in and animates the whole Church with the ultimate aim of uniting the different members into a communion of love. Unity is the Spirit’s primary objective in the Church because “it is the Spirit who, as ‘an invisible principle,’ creates and sustains unity among all parts of the Body and with their risen and exalted Head.” This is the very reason why Congar believes the Spirit animates every member of the Church in order to bind them in unity for the common good of the whole Church. The Church is, from Congar’s perspective, “a communion, a fraternity of persons. This is why a personal principle and a principle of unity are united in the Church. These two principles are brought into

---

342 Congar, The Mystery of the Church, 36-37.
343 Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, 1:44.
harmony by the Holy Spirit.” Therefore, individual members of the Church are not animated or filled with the Spirit in isolation from the other members of the Church or apart from the Church itself. Congar would for that reason insist that while the Holy Spirit makes Christianity inward and personal he is given to the whole Church, as Church, to be its unifying principle. He is in each member, intimately with each, but he is one and the same in all … This Spirit then is given to each, but in company with the rest. He is the principle of unity, as the soul is for the different parts of the human organism. He dwells within each person, in his heart of spirit, as the inner law of fellowship and unity … If my members are separated one from another, they cease to live. Just so he who is the principle of personal faith and individual Christian life is given us within a united organism and for a unifying purpose. The office of the Holy Spirit is precisely to bring together in unity the gifts that he implants in individual persons.

The necessity of maintaining communion with the catholic Church as a whole in order to be alive in the Spirit is thoroughly reechoed here by Congar. Even the members of the catholic Church itself who are not bound together in a communion of love cannot likewise be alive in the Spirit. In accordance with Augustine, Congar is also of the view that the catholic Church is where the Spirit actively functions as the source of life and unity for those who are one in love.

One cannot, consequently, be animated and vivified by the Spirit, from Congar’s grasp of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy, without being at least in some form of communion with the catholic Church. This means that “in order to live from the Spirit, it is necessary to belong to the Body (of the Church). We are of the Body of the Church, firstly if we have the spirit of communion and unity, and then, if we eat the sacrament of

346 Yves Congar, “Holy Spirit and Spirit of Freedom,” In Theologians Today: Yves M. –J. Congar, edited by Martin Redfern (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1972), 30. Congar ultimately confirms Augustine’s position against the Donatists which I noted in Chapter Two of this dissertation. He also believes that anyone who is separated from the catholic Church may have all the sacraments, but they remain ineffective as long as the person is not in communion with the members of the Church. The effectiveness of the Sacraments is, therefore, related to the Spirit that is active among the members of the Church it unifies in a bond of love.
the body.”347 What makes the catholic Church so vital, in Congar’s perspective, is because the Spirit is

for the threefold deposit of faith, the sacraments and the apostolic powers, what the vital principle is for an organism ... It is not, however, to be taken in the sense of a soul entering into composition with the body of the Church ... There is no question of an incarnation, of union in actual being, such that all the actions of the Church would be physically and personally the actions of the Holy Spirit and have no other subject of attribution than him.348

The sacraments and the apostolic powers are only effective in and through the Spirit that is present and active in the whole Church as its source of life and unity. Once the members are in communion with the catholic Church, the sacraments and apostolic powers will also be effective in them. That is not so for those who have separated themselves from the Church because “what the Spirit has brought about in Christ in order to make him the Head of the Body, he has also to bring about in us to make us his members and to complete and sanctify his Body.”349

The immediate impact of the Spirit on the life of each member and on the Church as a whole is more pronounced perhaps in Congar’s perspective than in Augustine’s. In my view, the former was able to establish that the Spirit also dwells in the members of the Church. The abiding presence of the Spirit is, consequently, felt because “the Spirit is not only active, it dwells. It does not intervene only at times, but is given to the Church as the proper principle of her life.”350 The Spirit is always available in that sense to the members of the Church to empower them and bring them to a closer union with Christ. In the presence of the Spirit, an activity like

348 Congar, The Mystery of the Church, 170.
prayer appears as a mystery of God in us and an event of the Spirit, because it is the function of the Holy Spirit to be the desire of God in God himself and also the desire of God in us. The Spirit forms, deepens, expands, and adjusts our desire to the desire of God by giving it the same object. The Spirit makes our desire live from the life of God himself, to the point where God himself comes to desire at the heart of our desire.\(^{351}\)

This point of view is a very important consideration in understanding the function of the Spirit in the Church and its relation to the members of Christ’s Body, the Church. At least, it brings to light the power and reality of the Spirit in the life of the Church and its members. For the members of the Church, “the indwelling Spirit, is a supernatural gift that transcends the created order … Through the indwelling of the Spirit, our lives are elevated by a divine principle of life and action.”\(^{352}\) Their lives should, therefore, be renewed and enriched by the Spirit that constantly dwells in their hearts.

3.2.3 THE SPIRIT CO-INSTITUTES ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Although Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy illustrates that the Spirit is the source of the Church’s unity in diversity, the Spirit’s role in the constitution of the Church itself is not sufficiently represented in this analogy. I will, therefore, consider Congar’s perspective on the role of the Spirit in the formation of the Church as a complementary insight to Augustine’s position on the function of the Spirit in the Church. According to Congar’s initial point of view, “Pentecost was not the beginning (birth) of the Church, if by that we mean its constitution … That was done in the course of Christ’s own life, inasmuch as he proclaimed the Gospel … founded the primacy of Peter, inaugurated the sacraments.”\(^{353}\) The function of the Spirit in such an already constituted Church, in his estimation, was rather “to give life and impetus to it [and] launch it into the world as


\(^{352}\) Groppe, *Yves Congar’s Theology of the Spirit*, 95.

\(^{353}\) Congar, *The Mystery of the Church*, 42.

201
something in the world … There only remained to give breath and life: that was the work of the Spirit.”354 Such thoughts were typically what characterized the assumptions of Augustine’s analogy. Congar would, however, advance beyond his initial position and assign a more fundamental role to the Spirit beyond its animating and unifying functions in the Church when he later on examined the nature and structure of the Church.

Following his innovative finding that “both in its life and its origin, the Church is the fruit of two divine missions,”355 Congar was convinced that the Spirit was directly involved in the constitution of the Church. This is the case because “the Spirit did not come simply in order to animate an institution that was already fully determined in all its structures, but that he is really the ‘co-instituting’ principle.”356 Therefore, the Spirit is comparatively more than the soul that simply unites an already constituted body. The Spirit is, rather, the one who together with the Word constituted the Church and gave the Church its charismatic structure as well as its hierarchic structure. The sacramental and ecclesial elements of the Church only came into effect in that regard when the Spirit became present. In comparison to Augustine and the ecclesiology of Pius XII in which the Spirit did not co-constitute the Church as much as it entered in to strengthen and assist what Christ already had constituted in completeness, Congar reaches a wider notion and bolder formulation of the mission of the Spirit … The language of ‘co-instituting’ for the Spirit’s activity in the Church was new and not part of earlier Mystical Body ecclesiology … This attributed more to the Spirit than animating with divine power what Christ already had fully determined and established.357

For Congar, the Spirit is primarily the co-instituting principle of the Church, and at the same time, the animating and vivifying principle of the Church’s unity. The analogy

---

356 Ibid., 2:9.
Augustine used to depict the function of the Spirit is not completely redundant at least because what Congar notably introduced is mainly the Spirit’s indispensable and central role in the life of the Church it unites in love. In its capacity

as co-institutor of the Church, the Holy Spirit ensures the efficacy and fruitfulness of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, forms and re-forms the members of the Church into a community, confers charisms upon the institutional Church and its individual members, and inspires and guides the Church’s mission and ministries.358

In Augustine’s and Congar’s views, the Church cannot, therefore, exist in unity and be alive without the dynamic involvement of the life-giving breath of the Spirit.

When the Church was co-instituted by the Spirit, the Church was constituted as One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. The Spirit was, therefore, what gave the Church its distinctive marks from the very beginning. For this reason, “Congar [would] further develop the significance of the Spirit’s role as foundational for the Church by offering reflections on the Spirit as the principle of the Church’s unity, catholicity, apostolicity, and holiness.”359 His point of view is quite important and noteworthy because he shows more than Augustine that the unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the Church is something that is inherent in the Church’s own nature. Since the Church was co-instituted as One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic by the Spirit, the Church will always retain these essential marks of its constitution because of the Spirit. The Spirit is therefore, in Congar’s estimation, the one who guarantees the unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the Church. Congar’s perception of the Spirit as the principle of these marks of the Church will briefly be discussed to further an appreciation of his contribution towards a profound understanding of the Spirit’s function in the Church.

There is only one Church, in Congar’s view, that is animated and indwelt by the Spirit. However, he would attribute the oneness of the Church entirely to the Spirit. The reason this is the case is based on the fact that if the Spirit is received when believers are together, it is not because there is one body that there is only one Spirit – it is rather because there is only one Spirit of Christ that there is only one body, which is the Body of Christ. The Spirit acts in order to enable men to enter that Body, but he is given to the Body and it is in that Body that we receive the gift of the Spirit.\(^{360}\)

The organic and hierarchical structure of the Church is not what makes the Church one, but the Spirit that gathers and forms the members of the Church into the Body of Christ. If there is only one Church, from Congar’s point of view, the reason is because there is only one Spirit that is given to form one Body of Christ. There cannot possibly be more than one Church where the Spirit is the source of life and unity if the Spirit’s specific purpose is precisely to enable believers to become an integral part of the one Body of Christ. The members of this Church that the Spirit gathers into one are certainly diverse in culture and social status, but the Spirit unites them in faith, hope, and love because nothing less than the Spirit of God is needed to bring all these different elements to unity, and to do so by respecting and even stimulating their diversity. Not, however, at any price … [The Spirit] does not bring about unity by using pressure or by reducing the whole of the Church’s life to a uniform pattern. He does it by the more delicate way of communion.\(^{361}\)

Regardless of the diversity of the members, the Church is still one because all its members are in communion with each other through the Spirit. Uniformity is not what the Spirit fosters in the Church, but communion of its members in their particularity.

\(^{360}\) Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, 2:15.
\(^{361}\) Ibid., 2:17. Unity, diversity, and communion are closely identified in this passage with the Spirit. None is achieved at the expense of the other because the Spirit maintains a unity in diversity among the members of the Church. Where there is unity in diversity, there is also communion in faith, hope, and love.
Holiness, in Congar’s view, is similarly conferred on the Church by the Spirit as one of the Church’s inherent marks from the moment it was constituted. The holiness of the Church is, therefore, derived from the Spirit who also dwells in the Church. Therefore, the Church will always be holy on account of the Spirit in spite of the weakness and infidelity of its members. In its holiness as the dwelling place of the Spirit, the Church is a sign of the presence of God. It is a ‘hagiography’, revealing the reality and the presence of another world, an anticipation of the kingdom in which God will be ‘everything to everyone’ (1Cor. 15:28) … It is the Spirit who causes this radiation of holiness. Such a crop is produced by souls who are hidden in God, who are totally abandoned and lost to the world and who give themselves unconditionally to God.362

While the Church cannot lose its holiness on account of the Spirit, the Church is, nevertheless, imperfect and weak in its organizations and actions because of the human condition of its members. This can affect the Church’s image, credibility, and effectiveness as a witness of the Gospel of Christ and a sign of the Kingdom of God in the world. However, the Church can overcome its own weakness and limitations because the Spirit furthers the cause of the Gospel. He encourages great initiatives to renew the Church, missions, the emergence of new religious orders, great works of the mind and heart. He 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 … We can listen and cooperate with him so that we can ‘reflect the glory of the Lord’ and be ‘changed into his likeness’, by the Lord ‘who is the Spirit’ (2 Cor. 3:18).363

The more the Church and its members are open to renewal and reform under the inspiration of the Spirit, the more the Church will reflect the holiness of the Spirit. Even though “the union of the Bride and Lord is still imperfect [and] she possesses the Spirit

363 Ibid., 2:57-58.
only as ‘first fruits,’ the members of the Church can make a real difference, as far as the credibility of the Church is concerned, if they cooperate with the Spirit.

By its very nature, the Church is catholic, in Congar’s estimation, because of the unity that the Spirit confers on the Church. Yet, the Spirit itself is the principle of the Church’s catholicity because “the Spirit enables all men to be one and unity to be a multitude.” Once unity was conferred on the Church, the Church equally became catholic because the unity “is in fact a unity of many ‘according to the whole’ and it is this that points to the aspect of catholicity. What is more, unity has, by its very vocation, a universal extension, and this is also incontestably an aspect of the mark of catholicity.”

The catholic nature of the Church is understood by Congar in similar terms as those of Augustine, namely, that the Church is both universally present in the world and at the same time one according to the whole. Catholicity and unity are evidently two inherent properties of the Church that are closely related to each other with one variable difference:
catholicity is the universal capacity for unity, or the dynamic universality of the Church’s principles of unity [while] unity is given straightaway, catholicity being its universality, is something potential, not, indeed, in the sense that it is quite indeterminate … but in the sense that such a property, however, definite in itself, is not expressed forthwith … Such a capacity implies that every human value, while retaining its own specific character, can be ‘recapitulated’ in Christ, that is to say revivified by his Spirit and taken up into the unity of his Body, which is the Church.

The Church is, consequently, universal or catholic in nature because the Church includes peoples of all races and cultures and is fully present in all ages throughout the world. This is effectively the work of the Spirit who “catholicizes the Church in her outreach across

---

364 Nichols, Yves Congar, 158.
366 Ibid., 2:24.
367 Congar, The Mystery of the Church, 142-143.
both space and time … Congar sees the Spirit as additionally, pushing forward the Gospel into the ‘not yet happened’ of future time.’

Secondly, the Church is also catholic because each portion of this Church is one according to the whole. The basis on which this one Church is fully present in a particular place much in the same way it is fully present throughout the world and vice versa is also addressed by Congar. In his estimation, it is through the mission and gift of the Holy Spirit, [that] the Church was born universal by being born manifold and particular. The Church is catholic because it is particular, and it has the fullness of gifts because each has his own gifts. The Church overcame Babel, not by a return to uniformity that existed before Babel, but by proclaiming an implantation of the same gospel and the same faith in varied and diverse cultural soils and human spaces.

This is indeed a noteworthy and significant argument that tends in favor of the universality or catholicity of the local churches. The argument will, however, be examined in detail in the next chapter when I review the debate over the ontological priority of the universal Church over the local churches. At this juncture, it should be emphasized that, according to Congar, the mission of the Spirit is what makes it possible for the Church to be universal and particular at the same time. The fullness of the Church is, therefore, realized in every particular place where the Church is present throughout the world because of the Spirit. Hence “it is the task of the Spirit to contain and resolve the fertile tension between the particular and unity [because] unity and pluralism are both necessary.”

The Spirit resolves the tension that exists among the members of the Church in their different vocations as well as the tension that exists between the universal and the

---

368 Nichols, Yves Congar, 156-157.
370 Ibid., 2:27.
local churches. In the case of the former, there is a growing awareness that the Spirit is the source of the different vocations and charismatic gifts of the members of the Church. This is gradually changing their perception to appreciate each other’s gifts and talents they received for the good of the Church. In the case of the latter, I believe the Spirit is not fully perceived as the one who binds the universal Church and the local churches into one inseparable Church. Therefore, it is the implications of the Spirit as the source of unity that will be considered in detail in the next chapter. Each member of the Church can likewise reduce the tension at hand if he or she acquires a true catholic spirit with regard to their charisms and gifts because

the Church’s catholicity calls for these gifts to be gathered together and exchanged, and for the different parties contributing them to be aware of the whole and its unity. This is illustrated at the level of mutual aid by St. Paul’s collection, Koinōnia tēs diakonias, a sharing or service for the benefit of the saints. At the level of mutual contributions of knowledge and of a revelation of the wealth of Christ, as well as of spiritual help and reciprocity, it is illustrated in an exemplary and typical way in the theory and practice of catholicity.371

Even though the Spirit is the principle of the Church’s catholicity, the members and the local churches have a responsibility to actualize the spirit of the Church’s catholic nature.

Finally, the Spirit is the source of the Church’s apostolicity when the Church is co-instituted by the Spirit. The Church is, therefore, Apostolic in nature not simply because the Church was founded by the Apostles, although that is part of its apostolicity. Rather, the Church’s apostolicity is due to the fact that “the Spirit is given to the Church as its transcendent principle of faithfulness.”372 The work of the Spirit in its capacity as the source of the Church’s apostolicity is to keep the Church faithful to the Gospel of Christ and the teaching of the Apostles that is handed down in the Tradition of the

372 Ibid., 2:43.
Church by the Magisterium. In that light, the Spirit enables all members to be receptive to the Church’s teaching in matters of faith and morals which is free from error because of the Spirit. The emphasis, however, is not only on fidelity to the Church’s apostolic origins. The reason is largely because “Congar thinks of apostolicity not only as fidelity to the past but as openness and fidelity to the future. The Spirit keeps the Church faithful both to its origins and to its future – to Christ as the Church’s beginning and as its end, its Alpha and Omega.”\(^{373}\) In every age, the Church is certain that it will be faithful because “the Spirit is given to the Church so that she may keep indefectibly the faith received from the Apostles.”\(^{374}\) The Spirit does not only unite the members of the Church in a communion of love as Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy signifies; the Spirit also unites them in faith by keeping them faithful to their Apostolic faith. Only one faith is, accordingly, professed in the Church in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

3.2.4 THE CHURCH INVOKES THE SPIRIT – THE EVENT OF THE SPIRIT

The underlying assumption in the case of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy is that the Spirit is readily given to the Church and it functions in the Church as its source of communion and love. While the assumption is quite reasonable in itself, it is equally problematic, in my view, if this assumption creates in the Church a complacent and lukewarm attitude towards the Spirit. This is the danger that Augustine’s analogy presents because the Spirit can easily be seen as a given factor in the Church. Above all, the Spirit’s unifying function can also be perceived in mechanical terms. Even the Church can easily take for granted that the Spirit is at the service of the Church, instead of the Church at the service of the Spirit. Such dangers and misperceptions are not obviously

\(^{373}\) Edwards, *Breath of Life*, 95.

\(^{374}\) Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 157.
the intended aim and focus of Augustine’s analogy. Congar would, therefore, present his point of view on the Church’s own obligation towards the Spirit and the Spirit’s interventions in the life of the Church. His perspective is evidently a corrective measure against any misguided perceptions about the function of the Spirit in the Church.

The notion that the Spirit is programmed to act in the Church as its source of life and unity can perfectly be revised, as far as Congar is concerned, provided the meaning of Augustine’s analogy is understood in proper terms. Rather than simply affirming that the Holy Spirit performs in the Church that function that is carried out in the body by the soul, this idea can be expressed in contemporary language by saying that there is the institution of the Church which comes from Christ, the Word, the sacraments, and the ministry, but that, if this institution is to bear the Christian fruit of salvation and communion with God, there must also be the event of the Holy Spirit. The word ‘event’ expresses in this case the values of not being given in advance, of contemporaneity, and penetration. If, however, the Church is seen as a whole, the Spirit always dwells in it.375

Every action of the Spirit from this statement should rightly be seen as an event of the Spirit at the given moment because the Spirit is not determined or conditioned in its actions in the Church. Otherwise, the occasion of the Spirit’s action would not, in my view, be appreciated as a moment of grace and the Spirit itself would not be perceived as the initiator of its own actions. Each action of the Spirit must become palpably new and unique for the members of the Church and it must be seen as a creative and personal act of the Spirit. The unity the Spirit creates in the Church should also be considered as an on-going event of the Spirit and not simply something that is already fixed and predetermined. Each time the Spirit acts in the Church, it acts in a unique way within a given space and time according to the needs of the members of the Church.376

376 According to Congar in The Word and the Spirit, “it is the Spirit who gives time, which he penetrates and dominates, that special quality which makes it sacramental time.” 35.
According to Congar, the Church on its part constantly needs to call upon the Spirit in all its activities in order to be effective. This is important because “the role of the Spirit has often been presented in an automatic and institutional way. Congar insists that the Spirit cannot be reduced to an automatic juridical principle.”\textsuperscript{377} The Spirit is not, therefore, at the mercy or disposal of the institutional Church in such a way that the latter can manipulate the Spirit at will without formally invoking the Spirit in prayer. Consequently, “whenever the Christian mystery or our \textit{vita in Christo} has to be made present here and now, the Spirit has to be invoked.”\textsuperscript{378} There is absolutely no reason, in my view, to be fully confident that the Spirit will always act by virtue of the fact that the Spirit is present in the Church. Even when the Spirit is invoked by the Church, the Spirit will only act of its own free accord in fulfillment of its own mission from the Father and the Son. What the members of the Church require in effect is “a more historical view of the work of the Spirit in the Church. The concept of the Spirit as given to the Church once for all at the beginning can all too easily lead to complacency. If the Spirit comes to us in history, then, the Spirit needs to always be invoked anew.”\textsuperscript{379} On the Church’s part, the Spirit clearly needs to be invoked, but on the part of the Spirit, the Spirit is free to act at will without any invocation. One should, therefore, realize that Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy does not imply that the Spirit is given to the Church only once and for all. The Spirit is still given and received at its own will when it is invoked.

Based on the fact that the Church always invokes the Spirit especially in its liturgical and sacramental celebrations, Congar would underscore the epicletic character of the Church. This means that the Church is permanently oriented towards the Spirit it

\textsuperscript{377} Edwards, \textit{Breath of Life}, 95.
\textsuperscript{378} Congar, \textit{I Believe in the Holy Spirit}, 3:270.
\textsuperscript{379} Edwards, \textit{Breath of Life}, 82.
invokes in action. The one outstanding quality of the Church which distinguishes it from other forms of organized communities is the Church’s built-in disposition to invoke the Spirit in prayer. This act of invocation that bestows divine grace and favors is a recognition on the part of the Church of the role played by an intervention of the Holy Spirit … that neither the ‘earthly means’ nor the institution of the Church produces these by themselves. What we have here is an absolutely supernatural work that is both divine and deifying. The Church can be sure that God works in it, but, because it is God and not the Church that is the principle of this holy activity, the Church has to pray earnestly for his intervention as a grace … the Church does not in itself have any assurance that it is doing work that will ‘well up to eternal life’; it has to pray for the grace of the one who is uncreated Grace, that is, the absolute Gift, the Breath of the Father and the Word.380

Without the intervention of the Spirit in the liturgy and the sacraments that the Church celebrates, the actions of the Church cannot be effective and profitable. The grace and power of the Spirit is what transforms the actions of the Church into means of eternal life. Therefore, the sacramental actions of the Church are always infused by the actions of the Holy Spirit. Congar in this case is perhaps more emphatic and specific on the Church’s dependence on the Spirit than Augustine, because for the former the entire life of the Church is ‘one long epiclesis,’ that is, of the Church’s calling down of the Spirit upon itself and upon the world it has been sent to serve. The epicletic character of the Church is evident in many realms of ecclesial activities, but especially in its sacramental life.381

Although the Spirit functions in the Church as a source of unity and life for its members, Congar makes it abundantly clear that the Spirit still needs to be invoked. This underscores the fact that the Spirit is God and is not automatically subject to the institutional structures of the Church.

THE QUESTION OF THE AUTONOMY OF THE SPIRIT

Given the Spirit’s position as the gift of the Father and the Son to the Church and its function in the catholic Church as the source of unity and love, the autonomy of the Spirit was discussed by Congar. The question of the autonomy of the Spirit is perfectly relevant to the subject-matter of this dissertation because Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy can be erroneously misinterpreted as subjecting the Spirit to the Church. Congar’s perspective on this issue will, subsequently, be examined. This will illustrate in proper perspective the relationship of the Spirit to Christ as well as the Church in its function as the Church’s source of communion. As Congar concisely noted,

382 Congar, The Mystery of the Church, 169.

From this statement, the Spirit cannot be subject to the Church anymore than the Spirit is subject to Christ because the Spirit is a divine person with a specific mission. However, the Spirit works inseparably with Christ, the Word of God, because the divine persons from Congar’s and Augustine’s perspective are inseparable in their operations ad extra. An effort will, therefore, be made in this section of the dissertation to explain how the Spirit and the Word work together without being subject to each other.

In relation to the Church, Congar would also like Augustine categorically defend the autonomy of the Spirit, that the Spirit is not bound or subject to the Church in its function as the source of communion. Even though Congar claimed that the Spirit

382 Congar, The Mystery of the Church, 169.
functions not only as the ‘animating soul,’ but as the ‘indwelling soul,’ he would argue that the Spirit is free and autonomous in the Church. He observed that though the activity of the Spirit is ever directed to the building up of the Church as the community of believers or of the saved, it is not presented as invariably bound up with the established means, but rather as preserving a kind of autonomy which shows itself in two series of facts – the charismata and the sudden visitations or unpredictable leadings of the Spirit. The charismata appear in the New Testament as spiritual gifts … given directly by the Holy Spirit … there is no opposition between the charismata and the hierarchical ministry.383

What proves that the Spirit is autonomous, according to Congar, is the way in which the Spirit itself freely distributes its charismatic gifts to the members of the Church for the good of the whole Body of Christ. The charisms are, therefore, a direct gift from the Spirit dwelling in the Church. These charisms cannot, accordingly, be suppressed or manipulated by those who exercise authority and power in the Church. The need to equally recognize and preserve the charismatic element of the Spirit in the Church was underscored by Congar. He would, therefore, assert that if the Church is always the work of the Holy Spirit who dwells in it, it is not that of the Spirit exclusively as bound to the institution and working in and through it. The Holy Spirit retains a kind of freedom of action which is immediate, autonomous and personal. In this way, there exists a kind of free sector which constitutes one of the most salient features of the life of the Church.384

There is no reason why, if the catholic Church is true to its own nature the Spirit cannot, accordingly, operate freely as the source of unity and life for the members of the Church.

3.3.1 DEVELOPMENTS IN CONGAR’S PERSPECTIVE

In the course of Congar’s theological discourse on the Spirit and its relation to Christ and the Church, his perspective on the autonomy of the Spirit would progressively undergo some developments. Scholars have indicated that

383 Congar, The Mystery of the Church, 174.
384 Ibid., 180.
there were important changes in his conceptualization of this relationship. In the
1950s and 1960s, Congar portrayed the Holy Spirit as ancillary to the Word
incarnate in Jesus Christ, while in the writings from the 1970s and 1980s he
emphasized the inseparability and nonduality of the missions of the Word and the
Spirit.385

The reason Congar obviously maintained his earlier position and the reason he was
equally obliged to gradually revise his perspective on the autonomy of the Spirit was
fully articulated by Congar in his later works. He ultimately intended to
call attention to the truth and importance of the mission of the Holy Spirit as
something more than a simple replacement for Christ. I worked, however, too
exclusively in a context of dualism and made too radical a distinction between the
institution as derived from Christ and free interventions on the part of the
Spirit.386

His intent was simply to affirm the distinct significance of the mission of the Spirit.

However, in the process of drawing attention to this fact he failed, as he clearly admitted,
to properly integrate the mission of Spirit and the mission of the risen Christ. The reason
was that he “followed Acts more closely than the Pauline epistles … As a result I was not
sufficiently conscious of the unity that exists between the activity of the Spirit and that of
the glorified Christ, since the Lord is the Spirit.”387 The Spirit that ultimately functions in
the Church as the source of unity is, according to Congar, the Spirit of Christ, the risen
Lord. The freedom of this Spirit of Christ in the Church is what Congar still wants to
preserve as something that cannot be denied. This is especially true because “the whole
Christian history bears witness to the fact that this freedom really exists, but it is the
freedom of the living and glorified Lord Jesus together with the Spirit. They are what

387 Ibid., 2:12.
Irenaeus called in a very fine image the ‘two hands of God’. Congar does not, therefore, deny the fact that the Spirit is free, provided that the Spirit is recognized in its function in the Church as the Spirit of the risen and glorified Christ.

3.3.2 FREEDOM OF THE SPIRIT IS NOT A SUFFICIENT FORMULA FOR ECCLESIOLOGY

An ecclesiology that is exclusively informed and defined by the freedom of the Spirit is, in Congar’s view, an ecclesiology that misrepresents the true nature of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. This form of ecclesiology is equally deficient and at odds with Congar’s proper vision of the Church. Against those who believe the freedom of the Spirit is the defining principle of the Church, Congar would argue that if the Holy Spirit is really at work and if it is wrong to make for the Church as an institution claims so exclusive, so purely legalistic, as to leave no room for the action of the Spirit, it would be an error at least as great and certainly more dangerous ... to appeal to the Holy Spirit and to expect everything directly from him, while ignoring the positive datum, derived from Christ’s institution, which it is precisely the mission of the Spirit to make real and actual in us. In so saying, I am thinking of all the ‘illuminisms’ which lack any external rule, the various ‘spiritual’ sects following one after the other throughout the Church’s history.

Congar clearly avoids the extreme positions of either an institutional-based ecclesiology or a spirited and freedom-oriented ecclesiology while articulating a proper vision of the Church. He admits that the Church is where the Spirit of the risen Christ freely functions as the source of communion and moves its members to use their charisms for the building up of the whole Body. However, “there neither is, nor can be, a ‘Church of the Spirit’, a Christianity derived from interior inspiration, other than the Church of the Incarnate Word.”

---

390 Ibid., 18.
and organization of the Church, the members of the Church are likely to depend on the internal inspiration of the Spirit. The problem with this trend is that the members can easily, in my view, be misled to follow their interior personal convictions. They are likely to also lose sight of the fact that they are subject to the authority of the Church founded on the Word of God. The freedom of the Spirit cannot, therefore, be the only organizing principle of the life and mission of the Church without the authority of the Word as well.

Every charismatic gift that is received from the Spirit in Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy is freely given by the Spirit as the Spirit wills for the good of the whole Church. The members of the Church are thus gifted in order to enrich and build up the Body of Christ, the Church. They cannot, therefore, use their charismatic gifts in an arbitrary manner under the pretext of the freedom of the Spirit in order to realize their own personal aspirations and convictions. On this subject, about the distribution and use of the charismatic gifts of the Spirit, Congar would observe that

the Spirit blows where he will. Is there a freedom of the Spirit with regard to what the word has affirmed and still affirms … God is free to intervene ubi et quando – where and when he pleases. We cannot, however, make that freedom the formula of our ecclesiology without denying the existence of the historical interventions by means of which God has revealed and carried out his plan to constitute a people for himself – his People – within the world.391

Any member of the Church, in my estimation, can freely be used by the Spirit to enhance the Body of Christ with his or her gift. However, if the gift is authentic and if the person is under the influence of the Spirit, the individual would act within the provisions of the institutional structures and magisterial teachings of the Church. These provisions are meant to ensure that there is order, discipline, and efficiency in exercising one’s charisms for the good of the Church. These unique features of the Church are not fully guaranteed,

in Congar’s estimation, where the freedom of the Spirit is the organizing principle of the Church’s life and mission. He would, therefore, maintain that

the gifts of grace make believers into members, each carrying out a function within the body. Although this is accomplished by the Spirit, it constitutes not the Body of the Spirit, but that of Christ … There is no autonomy of pneumatic experience with regard to the Word and therefore with regard to Christ. The confession; ‘Jesus is Lord’ is a criterion that the Spirit is at work (1Cor. 12:3).392

Charismatic gifts cannot, therefore, be used against the will of Christ, the Head of the Church. This is due to the fact that the charisms are given by the Spirit in order to bring life and unity to the members of the whole body.

Another good reason the freedom of the Spirit cannot, in Congar’s view, be a formula for a fully developed ecclesiology is that the catholic Church is spiritually and visibly structured in unity. According to him,

the Church is not simply a communion in and through the Spirit – it is also sacrament. It is also the word and the confession of faith. It is the celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments. It is a community and it is ministries. It is a personal and communal discipline.393

Over and above the communion that the members of the Church share in the Spirit, they are also united by their faith and the Eucharist they share. There is not only spiritual communion in the Spirit; there is also visible and sacramental communion in the catholic Church. The latter is not highly prized in an ecclesiology that is centered on the freedom of the Spirit because in this ecclesiology what counts is the spontaneous movement of the Spirit in the members of the Church. From Congar’s point of view,

it is marvelous to see pretty well everywhere an upsurge of the Gospel in the lives of men and women who, through the coming of the Holy Spirit, rally in various ways to the cause of Jesus Christ, the living Lord. In this way a new Church texture of real evangelical significance is being woven. But it runs the risk of not being securely knit together. A properly woven texture needs the firm

393 Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, 2:207.
interweaving of woof and warp, in the present instance, the institutional and the spontaneous, both of which are fostered by the living Lord for the self-same purpose, namely, the building up of the Body made up of human beings.394

The emphasis in Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy on the Spirit as the source of communion and love for the members of the Church is evenly balanced here by Congar in showing the visible and sacramental unity that needs to exist among the members. This unity cannot, in my view, be compromised in the Church under the guise of the freedom of the Spirit because the Spirit’s goal is to gather all members of Christ’s Body, around the Eucharistic banquet table of the Lord in accordance with Christ’s will.

Instead of a ‘Church of the Spirit’ where the freedom of the Spirit is the organizing principle of the life and mission of the Church, Congar would envision one that is centered on the Spirit’s fulfillment of the mission of Christ in the Church. In this Church, the freedom of the Spirit is understood in proper perspective because the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. He does not come to do some new and different work, but to do that work whose essential elements have been fixed by the Word made flesh. There is no law of the Spirit which can go against these essential things, no ‘inner voice’ that can truthfully gainsay Christ’s own work.395

Where the work of Christ who intended to form one flock under one shepherd (Jn. 10:17), is not perfected by those acting in the name of the Spirit, it means that they are not working under the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit is not, therefore, given to the members of the Church by Christ so that they can disrupt the life and unity of the Church. There is no opposition in that regard between the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit because they share a common purpose. For Congar, the Spirit makes no innovations, he does not create anything that bears no relation to the work of Christ – this is a sufficient objection to the various movements based on

an action of the Spirit independent of express relationship to the work already accomplished by Christ. What the Spirit does is to bring all to fulfillment … He it is essentially who spoke by the prophets and brings into the Church a kind of prophetic dimension, a movement by which it is led to accomplish, right to the end, all that Christ placed in it in embryonic form.396

Clearly, the members of the Church are called to fulfill the prophetic mission of the Church in the power of the Spirit. However, they are expected to also be faithful and obedient to the message that Christ proclaimed in the Scriptures.

3.3.3 THE WORD AND SPIRIT WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH

Augustine did not discuss the role of the Incarnate Word in what the Spirit does in the Church in his Spirit – Soul analogy because he assumed that the divine persons inseparably work together in their operations ad extra. Congar on his part was more specific about the Word and the Spirit working together in the life of the Church to achieve the common purpose of their mission. An insight of this nature was necessary to articulate, from Congar’s point of view, because

theologically the twofold action of God for the building up of the ecclesial Body of Christ is linked with the double mission of the Son who is the Word and the Holy Spirit who is the Breath, the Wind. St. Irenaeus, in his endearing genial way, imagines them as the two hands of the Father with which he moulds the human person. If we were to select just one of the many conclusions arrived at the vast study of the Holy Spirit, I think it would have to be the recognition of the union between pneumatology and Christology, the assertion that there can be no spoken Word without the Breath and no Breath without the spoken Word. If any charismatic renewal is to be sound it must embody the Word of God, truth, and doctrine. But a doctrinal statement bereft of the Breath is a dead letter.397

One cannot deny that the Word and the Spirit work together and there is a relationship between pneumatology and Christology. However, I believe it is important to specify that the double mission of the Word and the Spirit are two distinct missions of the divine persons of the Trinity working together. Since the Word and the Spirit are not specifically

396 Congar, The Mystery of the Church, 151-152.
397 Congar, Called to Life, 84.
shown to be working together in Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy, Congar’s perspective on this subject is indeed a complement to Augustine’s position. This additional insight is critical because

a theology that is exclusively focused on the Word will not only rightly stress what comes from Christ, such as his words, the Eucharist, and the apostolic mission, but will also have a tendency to overemphasize the visible and structural side of church life … On the other hand, a church that is exclusively Spirit-centered will have a tendency to overemphasize the experiential side of church life. It may lead to individualism and a negative attitude to all authority. It may tend to lose sight of the value of the Christian tradition and end up rejecting the very structures that enable the Gospel message to be passed on in the life of the Church.398

Both the Word and the Spirit must be perceived to be working together in a communion ecclesiology where the Spirit functions as the source of unity in diversity between the universal Church and the local church.

There is surely a close connection between what the Incarnate Word does in the Church and what the Spirit does as the source of communion, because the Spirit fulfills the intention of the Word. Congar would, consequently, argue that

the mission or work of the Holy Spirit and the mission or work of Christ are homogeneous, in the first place, by reason of their purpose and content. From this point of view, the work of the Spirit is, indeed, the work of Christ. His function is to ‘bring to mind’ all that Christ said (Jn. 14:26), to bear witness to Christ (Jn. 15:26). What he works in men has no other purpose or content than to bring to pass what Christ worked for the sake of men … The identity of the work of each is such that it can be attributed indifferently to Christ and to the Spirit for, after all, the active presence of the latter is equivalent to that of Christ himself.399

The work of the Spirit as the source of unity ultimately has a direct reference to Christ if the Spirit is the one who confirms the members of the Church in their faith by reminding them of the teaching of Christ. Consequently, what the Spirit and the Word do in the Church is not isolated from each other because the former is at the service of the latter. In

398 Edwards, Breath of Life, 93.
399 Congar, The Mystery of the Church, 150.
light of what the Spirit and the Word accomplish together in the Church, Congar would, accordingly, stipulate that

the unity of the glorified Christ and the Spirit is functional, that is to say, it is an operative unity. The work to be done in believers is common to both of them and the two ‘hands’ proceeding from the Father do conjointly whatever the Father, who is Love, wishes to do. When Christians speak of this, they do so both in terms of the inner Word or Wisdom and in terms of the Holy Spirit. Paul joins the two together under the name of the Lord, who became the ‘life-giving Spirit’ (1Cor. 15:45).400

In the age of the Church in which the Spirit is mysteriously and invisibly at work in the midst of God’s people, the Spirit is effectively continuing the work of Christ and bringing it to perfection. Whoever resists the work of the Spirit in the Church is, therefore, opposing and undermining the work of the Incarnate Word. The two are not unrelated, in Congar’s estimation, because “as regards the content of a work of the Spirit as opposed to a work of Christ, it is neither autonomous nor different.”401

Members of the Church should evidently be open to both the Word and the Spirit in order to experience their influence in the life of the Church. Otherwise, they would not effectively participate in the life of the Church, in my view, because the Church’s activities basically involve the Word and the Spirit. The importance of both the Word and the Spirit in the life of the Church cannot, therefore, be underestimated because

the Spirit is the breath and he is the dynamism; he is both the inner life and the power. He makes the gift of God that comes to us in Jesus Christ personal and inward – he is ‘sent into our hearts’ (Gal. 4:6). At the same time, he also urges the gospel forward, within the unknown context of the ‘things that are to come’ (Jn. 16:13) … The Spirit together with the Word, has entered man’s history and in that history they have together brought about the Church, its Tradition and the testimony of the saints.402

402 Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, 2:210-211.
The continuation of the Tradition and mission of the Church in the midst of changing situations must also involve the Word and the Spirit. They are equally vital to the life of the Church because it is “Christ and the Spirit [who] act inseparably to establish what Congar typically called the ecclesial ‘means of grace’ – the Word, the Sacraments, and the apostolic ministry.” \(^{403}\) These means of grace are what make it possible for the members of the Church to become active in fulfilling their vocation and to share in God’s divine life. The members of the Church are, therefore, required to respond to the Word and the Spirit so that they can experience the effects of both in their own lives.

Because the Word and the Spirit are working together in the life of the Church, Congar would also affirm that there is no opposition between elements of the Word and the charisms of the Spirit in the Church. The institutional elements of the Church which are derived from the Word are not, therefore, in conflict with the charismatic gifts the Spirit has given to the Church. Congar adopted this position because

> theologically, if the false opposition is accepted and a sharp division is made between charisms and institution, the unity of the Church as the Body of Christ is destroyed and the claim is made that everything can be regulated and conducted, on the one hand without spirituality and exclusively in the name of power and, on the other hand, anarchically, in the name of the Spirit. \(^{404}\)

In this context, there should be no opposition between those who represent the institutional dimension of the Church and those who are gifted with the charisms of the Spirit. Rather, they should appreciate each other’s gifts and responsibilities in the spirit of mutual respect. The difference in vocation and talents should not, consequently, amount to a division in the Church because the Word and the Spirit are perfectly working together in the Church. Congar would, therefore, conclude that “the idea that institution


and charism are opposed to each other can be abandoned … There is, of course, a certain
tension between the two – that is in the nature of things. This tension cannot
ultimately be avoided, but it should also not be exploited or abused for selfish ends that
would ultimately jeopardize the life and unity of the Church as a whole.

The tendency of emphasizing either the elements of the Word over the Spirit or
the Spirit at the expense of the Word is less evident nowadays, in Congar’s view, than in
the past. This is largely because

it is widely recognized that there are two types of activity and that, although they
are different in the way in which they present themselves and in their style, they
lead to the same end, which is the building up of the work of Christ. They are, in
other words, complementary.

A better understanding of the Word and the Spirit has obviously emerged over the years
and it has enabled the members of the Church to realize that both are complementary to
each other. However, the Spirit’s unique role as the source of unity in the Church, in my
estimation, is not always emphasized as it should. In light of this omission on the part of
the Magisterium, it is important to reiterate Congar’s position on the unique function of
the Spirit, that

though the Holy Spirit performs the very work of Christ, he has, nonetheless, his
own special function whose nature is clearly indicated in the New Testament.
Christ established an objective reality of grace and truth, of salvation and
revelation; the Holy Spirit applies it to the interior of each of us. Christ effected
once and for all, in himself, the union of mankind with God; the Spirit brings
within its scope a vast number of individuals. Christ proclaimed the word of God;
the Spirit brings it to the mind and inclines the heart to understand it. Christ built
the house and the Spirit comes to dwell there (Eph. 2:22) … The mission of the
Holy Spirit makes these all produce their effects, gives the body of the Church its
soul and brings the saving gifts to their fulfillment.

407 Congar, The Mystery of the Church, 151.
While it is important to emphasize the fact that the Word and the Spirit work together, it is equally relevant, in my view, to focus on the unique function of the Spirit in the Church. This is highly important at this stage of the Church’s self-awareness more than ever before so that “the essential element of pneumatology would [not] be eliminated from ecclesiology.” Since the charismatic element of the Church is as important as the institutional dimensions of the Church, it must be rescued from further neglect.

3.3.4 PRESERVING THE CHARISMATIC ELEMENT OF THE CHURCH

Charisms need to be properly understood in the true sense of the word as a first step towards preserving the charismatic element of the Church. Otherwise, the charismatic element of the Church would not be recognized as an indispensable feature of the life of the Church. In Congar’s view, charisms are not accurately perceived because “charism is often regarded as a particular gift of the Spirit representing a special register of activities.” This is rather a limited meaning of charism that does not fully represent the full sense of the word in reference to the Church. Only a few individuals in that case are gifted with some special charisms instead of the Church as a whole. These charisms are, therefore, considered to be very rare and spectacular for a select few who are gifted by the Spirit. Congar would, therefore, caution that

we should be on our guard against the danger of allowing the extra-ordinary and the sensational and, on occasions, out of hand enthusiasm over some happenings or other, to lead people to identity charisms with the unusual … A more serious issue is the naivety with which some people claim to see an immediate intervention of the Holy Spirit in every imaginable occurrence. ‘Immediate’ is the telling word. They imagine that God shows us in a flash and all-ready work out in detail what we have to do, short-circuiting the healthy use of prudence.

---

408 Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, 2:11.
409 Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, 1:35.
410 Congar, Called to Life, 81-82.
The charisms of the Spirit to the Church are clearly more than the individual gifts of some members or the spectacular and occasional instances of divine interventions. These charisms are precisely services, ministries, and grace given by the Spirit to all members for the good of the whole Church. Since the whole Church enjoys these charisms, they “should be treated not simply as gifts for personal spiritual enrichment or ornamental additions to a self-sufficient ecclesial institution, but rather as a contribution to the Church’s very constitution.”411 The charisms are, therefore, an integral part of the Church without which the Church cannot realize itself as the Mystical Body of Christ.

A comprehensive understanding of the charisms would, consequently, be articulated by Congar to correct the misperceptions of these essential gifts of the Spirit. Besides the ordinary and limited sense of the charisms, Congar would affirm that he is inclined to see the charisms above all from the point of view of ecclesiology. It is, in other words, God who builds up his Church. In order to do this, he instituted, through Jesus Christ his faithful servant, the structures of that Church. At the same time, he continues to build up, at all periods in history, by the gifts (charismata), the services or ministries (diakoniai) and the various energēmata or ‘ways of working’ to which Paul refer in 1Cor. 12:4-6. He does this by distributing talents and gifts to all believers. That is why I have been reluctant to accept the term ‘charismatic movement’ that has been applied to Catholic neopentecostalism and have been formally critical of it … All believers are therefore charismatic and all are called to use their gifts for the common good.412

In this broader level, the charisms are not only limited to individual talents and gifts. The charisms include the sacramental ministries of the ordained ministers of the Church as well as the services of the lay faithful. Their vocation and ministries are equally charismatic gifts of the Spirit given solely and wholly for the building up of the Church. These ministries are also possible and effective only in and through the Spirit working in those who are commissioned and anointed by the Spirit. Congar’s observation is clearly

significant because “a theology of the church in which the Spirit is given a proper place will involve an understanding of the charism as central to the life of the church.”

Without the sacramental ministries and services the Spirit has bestowed on those who are called to serve, the Church cannot become what it is required to be as the community of believers sharing in Christ’s own divine life.

Properly understood, charisms can fully shed light on the charismatic element of the Church that is so fundamental to its life and mission in the world. This charismatic element of the Church is what needs, in my view, to be preserved because it has the potential of effectively changing our understanding of the Church itself. For Congar,

the present emphasis on pneumatology is one of the factors that is currently changing the face of the Church and the significance of our membership of it as a living reality. This applies above all to the present importance given to the charisms in the sense in which Paul speaks of them especially in Rom. 12:6 and 1Cor. 12:4ff … The Church is, in this sense, no longer defined in terms of its priesthood, consisting of priests carrying out their task with lay people as their ‘clients’. Instead, it is seen as a community that is being built up by the brotherly contributions made by all its members. This does not mean that the ordained ministry is no longer required. That ministry is still indispensable. It does, however, mean that the Church can be and is being declericalized.

This relationship between the priests and the faithful in which both of them are actors is what is currently needed, in my estimation, if the Church wants to empower its non-ordained members. The burden of serving the Church will not only be on the ordained ministers who have dominated the affairs of the Church, but also on the lay faithful fulfilling their own mission in the Church. Failure to preserve the charismatic element of the Church would, subsequently, amount to a more hierarchical understanding of the Church where participation in the life of the Church is limited to the ordained ministers. The more the Church’s charismatic element is appreciated the more the power of the

---

413 Edwards, Breath of Life, 93.
Spirit will be seen at work in the life and service of every member of the Church. Such a positive outlook towards the charisms of all the members of the Church is what should prevail after “the Second Vatican Council rediscovered the charisms.”  However, as Congar himself observed, “we are still a long way from opening the life of the Church, its parishes and its organizations to the free contribution of the charisms.”  The full participation of all members in the life and mission of the Church will not, therefore, be achieved beyond the present state of affairs unless the charismatic element of the Church is brought into sharp focus in catechetical and theological discourse.

The life and mission of the Church are, consequently, bound to suffer, in my view, if the charismatic element of the Church is not well recognized and preserved from the risk of being overshadowed by the institutional dimension of the Church. For this reason, the Spirit’s indispensable function in the formation of the Church is particularly emphasized in this dissertation. This idea produces a relevant and practical result because to overlook the radical nature of the church’s dependence on the Spirit in the church’s being and acting is to succumb to ecclesiastical Pelagianism. Romans says that the Spirit is poured out into our hearts, and in light of Augustine’s teaching on grace this outpouring is ordinarily understood in reference to individual believers within the Church. But on Pentecost it is true as well of the whole church in its visible, social reality. ‘A new Pentecost’ interprets the epicletic structure of the church as not only a confident invoking of the Spirit in the face of what exceeds human capacities but as a Spirit-dependent community through the length and breath of all its activities, both institutional and charismatic, in expressing reception of the Spirit.

One way in which those who are related to the institutional and hierarchical structure of the Church can be prevented from attributing the positive achievements of the Church to themselves is to acknowledge the Spirit’s charismatic effect in the life of the Church. The

---

Church would then be seen as less than a human organized society and more as a Spirit-filled community of the members of Christ’s Body. All this indicates that it is essential to preserve the charismatic element of the Church because 

the Church perceived as a creation of the Holy Spirit, opens a new way of conceiving itself as a charismatic community in which every member has a function to fulfill. Each member has received a charism for building up the whole community (Rom. 12; 1Cor. 12). Not only is there a hierarchical structure in the Church, but equally basic is the charismatic structure that calls every member to participate actively in the mission of the Church. These gifts are given directly to the individual by the Spirit … The pneumatological image of the Church brings into focus the charismatic element.418

The challenge that remains for the members of the Church where the charismatic element retains its prominent significance is to discover their own charismatic gifts and use them effectively for the building up of the whole Body of Christ.

In this chapter on the divergent and complementary interpretations of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy, I have examined how the Magisterium in selected texts and Congar in his writings articulated the Spirit’s presence and function in the Church. Augustine’s analogical sense of the function of the Spirit was not consistently represented by the Magisterium. In Divinum Illud Munus for instance, Leo XIII identified the Spirit as the soul of the Church to the extent that he perceived the Church as a divine institution. His position is, in my view, a shift from Augustine’s view because it limits the Spirit to the Church in such a way that the Church embodies the Spirit as its soul. Similarly, Pius XII adopted a literal interpretation of the analogy and affirmed that the Spirit is present and active in the inferior members through the ministry of the higher members of the Church. This statement is not in accord with Augustine’s analogy because the latter does not indicate that the Spirit functions in a mediated fashion. He simply acknowledged that the

418 Fuellenbach, Church, 62.
Spirit animates and vivifies the Church and is common to all members. Vatican II on its part was more faithful to Augustine in analogically comparing the Spirit’s function in the Church to the soul’s function in the body. Moreover, the Council expressed what was not explicitly signified in Augustine’s analogy, that is, the Spirit’s relationship to Christ, the Head of the Church. The idea was an attempt to specify that it is one and the same Spirit that unites the members of the Church to one another and Christ, the Head. For John Paul II, the Spirit as the Lord and Giver of Life fulfills two additional functions, namely, sanctifying and teaching the members of the Church. Sanctification is in that sense the new form of life that the Spirit gives and it also inspires the members to fully understand the meaning of Christ’s message of reconciliation. Vatican II and John Paul’s perspective offers in that light complementary insights to Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy.

Congar would likewise provide a complementary point of view in his analysis of the above analogy based on his standpoint on the Church as the fruit of the missions of Christ and the Spirit. As far as he is concerned, the analogy is functional in meaning and not ontological in nature. Therefore, the Spirit is not the soul of the Church, for that would amount to ecclesiological monophysitism in which the Church becomes a purely divine institution. The analogy precisely signifies the Spirit’s functions in the Church without essentially limiting the Spirit to the Church even as its source of unity and life. Contrary to what the analogy seems to suggest, Congar would indicate that the Spirit is not given to an already constituted Church that needed to be vitalized and renewed by the Spirit. Rather, the Spirit is, in his view, the co-instituting principle that conferred unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity on the Church from its foundation. For this reason, the Spirit is more than simply the Church’s unifying and animating principle. Together
with the Word, the Spirit is involved in the constitution of the Church’s hierarchical and charismatic structures. The Church on its part must invoke the Spirit, according to Congar, in order to be effective in its liturgical actions. Even so the Spirit is not bound to act, because the Spirit is free to operate at will. In that case, Congar offers a correction to the assumption that the Spirit is necessarily at the disposal of the Church as its source of unity and life. Although the Spirit freely functions in the Church, Congar would insist that the Word and the Spirit work together in forming the Church. There is no opposition on that basis between the Church’s hierarchical and charismatic structures. However, the focus in this study is on the Spirit because the Spirit is the one who distinctively functions as the source of communion in the Church. The implications that the Spirit’s function bears for Communion Ecclesiology is what I will consider in detail in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR: **THE SPIRIT AS THE SOURCE OF COMMUNION BETWEEN THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH AND LOCAL CHURCHES**

From the selected documents I reviewed in the third chapter outlining the shifts in the Magisterium’s view of Augustine’s analogy, it is clear that there is a development in the Church’s teaching on the Spirit as the source of communion. Following his assertion in *Satis Cognitum* that the members of the Church are united by the guidance and authority of Christ, Leo XIII would argue in *Divinum Illud Munus* that the Spirit is the author and giver of the Church’s gifts. He, therefore, concluded that as Christ is the head of the Church, so the Holy Spirit is her soul. Although this was reiterated by Pius XII, I clearly indicated that the Spirit cannot be identified as the soul of the Church in the same way as Christ is identified as the head of the Church. While Christ is the head of his own Body, the Church, the latter is not properly the Spirit’s own Body in which the Spirit is its actual soul. Vatican II would, therefore, resolve the question of the presence and function of the Spirit in the Church by affirming that it is one and the same Spirit both in the head and the members who fully animates and unites the whole Body of Christ. This shows that there was a renewed emphasis on the function of the Spirit as the source of communion in the Church. Rather than ascribing the unity of the Church’s members mainly to Christ as Leo proposed, Vatican II clearly affirmed in *Lumen Gentium* that the unity of the members is the work of the Spirit in relation to Christ. The Spirit is in that regard the unifying and animating principle of the Church, as well as, in Congar’s view, the co-instituting principle of the Church’s unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity. The charismatic element of the Church is for that reason an indispensable structure of the Church that I explicitly endeavored to preserve from further neglect in the Church.
In this chapter on the Spirit as the source of communion, I will specify the relevance of Augustine’s trinitarian theology and ecclesiology, as well as Congar’s perspective on the Church’s communion. I will, therefore, argue that the nature, mission, unity, and diversity of both the universal Church and local churches can adequately be realized, sustained, and renewed in the Spirit functioning as the unifying and animating principle of communion. Such an enterprise is particularly significant in light of recent developments in official Church documents concerning the source of the Church’s communion. Properly understood, “ecclesial communion is at the same time both invisible and visible.”419 Therefore, the Spirit should, in my view, be considered as the source of the Church’s visible and invisible communion. Yet, it appears from this Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church that the Spirit is more associated with the Church’s invisible than visible communion. On one hand, invisible communion is “communion of each human being with the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit, and with others who are fellow sharers in the divine nature.”420 On the other hand, there is scarcely any reference to the Spirit in terms of the visible communion of the universal and particular Churches, unity and diversity in ecclesial communion, and ecclesial communion and ecumenism. Such an omission is inconsistent with what Vatican II affirmed, namely that “God sent the Spirit of his Son, the Lord and giver of life, who for the Church and for each and every believer is the principle of their union and unity in the teaching of the apostles and communion, in the breaking of bread and prayer.”421 My task in what follows in each section of this chapter is to underscore the significance of the Spirit as the

420 Ibid., 6.
fundamental source of communion in all levels of the Church’s being and activity. For this reason, I will examine the nature of the universal Church and local church, as well as the mission of the Church as a whole. This would enable the members of the Church to clearly realize and appreciate what inherently binds them in unity as a community of love with the divine community of the Trinity.

**THE NATURE OF THE UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL CHURCH**

A comprehensive understanding of the origins, attributes, and life of the Church is a necessary condition for an authentic view of the Church as a community of faith. Such an insight is very useful to this enterprise on the significance of the Spirit as the source of communion because it sheds light on the Church’s dependence on the Spirit. The latter is not always acknowledged. For that reason the hierarchical, more than the charismatic dimension of the universal Church and local church is what eclipses the life and ministry of the Church. This has affected the level of participation resulting in the passivity of Church members who could have contributed towards the Church’s growth through their charisms. In this section on the nature of the universal and local Church, I will identify and analyze the constitutive elements and mission of both in order to provide a holistic vision of the universal Church and local church. Also, I will reflect on the current debate on the ontological and temporal priority of the universal Church over the local church in order to correct unwarranted misperceptions. Series of images and analogies from Scripture and Tradition such as the image of a sheepfold, temple, and people of God were used by Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium* to depict the nature of the Church. However, in connection with the Spirit, the image of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ is
preferable because this image captures the form of communion the Spirit creates among
the different members of the Church and between the universal and local Churches.

4.1.1 THE NATURE OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

The universal Church is often equated with the visible ecclesial structures that are
predominantly present throughout the whole world. Considered in that light, the
universal Church is erroneously perceived as a classic worldly institution that has its
central administration in Rome. Such a mistaken perception of the universal Church does
not adequately represent the true nature of this Church. In fact, it disregards the basic
assumptions of Augustine’s trinitarian theology and ecclesiology that I discussed in the
first two chapters of this dissertation. For Augustine, it was

by what is common to them [that] both the Father and the Son wished us to have
communion both with them and among ourselves; by this gift which they both
possess as one they wished to gather us together and make us one, that is to say,
by the Holy Spirit who is God and the gift of God. By this gift we are reconciled
to the godhead, and by this gift we enjoy the godhead.422

From Augustine’s point of view, it is clear that the universal Church has a divine origin
or foundation and the Spirit is its source of communion. These two realities of the
universal Church, namely, its divine origin and its communion in the Spirit are directly
linked because they define the Church as a whole. In view of the Church’s divine origin,
its communion in the Spirit, and its double structure, it is pertinent to appeal to Augustine
in order to affirm the Spirit’s role in the Church’s divine constitution. Augustine’s
perspective is very significant in this regard because he fully acknowledged the trinitarian

Hill (New York: New City Press, 1991), 256. Augustine’s perception of the universal Church as a
communion with God and among ourselves was reechoed by Vatican II in Lumen Gentium when this
Council defined the Church as ‘a sacrament – a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of
the unity of the entire human race.’ 1.
nature of the Church while defending the Spirit’s uniqueness in the life of the universal Church. For this reason, I would argue that the life and unity of this Church is modeled on the communion of the divine persons of the Trinity. Thus, the universal Church, in my view, is best described as a Communion with God and of the unity of all the faithful because the visible and invisible dimensions of this Church are fully accounted for in this concept that is linked to the Spirit’s function as the source of unity and love.

Augustine certainly recognized the trinitarian foundation of the universal Church when he affirmed in his trinitarian theology that the divine persons inseparably work *ad extra* because they share a common substance and are united in their being. He observed that “we still have to understand that the activities of the divine three are inseparable.”423 This is, in my view, an important observation in relation to the Church because the Church is often perceived as the creation of either Christ, the Spirit, or both. As such, the Father’s involvement in the formation of the Church is not generally taken into consideration. Perhaps the problem of a ‘divided economy in the Scriptures’ which was discussed in the first chapter of this work is responsible for such a narrow view of the Church’s constitution. In that light, it is relevant to stress the central themes of Augustine’s trinitarian theology. First, the divine persons can be distinguished from each other but they cannot be separated. Second, the divine persons are manifested in salvation history, but they still work together in cooperation with each other.

In light of the above, one can argue that the three divine persons were involved in the constitution of the Church when they shared their divine life and the love they have in common with all the Church’s faithful. From Augustine’s point of view, the divine origin of the universal Church can, therefore, be traced back to the moment when

the love which is from God and is God [which] is distinctively the Holy Spirit, [was] poured into our hearts, and through it the whole triad dwells in us … this gift, surely, is distinctively to be understood as being the charity which brings us through to God, without which no other gift of God at all can bring us through to God.424

What is noted in this passage is relevant towards an adequate and authentic understanding of the nature of the universal Church. From my point of view, it means that first, the universal Church participates in the divine love of God and is, therefore, partly divine or theanthropic in nature. Second, the fullness of the divine persons also dwells in the Church. Third, there is unity between the community of the divine persons and the universal Church, and the Spirit is the source of communion between them. Fourth, the Church is one in communion with the Trinity. Finally, the Church absolutely depends on the gift of the Spirit without which other gifts become ineffective. Although the Church is not essentially divine in itself, the Church’s invisible divine structure is derived from its participation in the life of the triad. The Church is also rooted in the life of the Trinity which enables the Church to model itself after the divine community.

In addition to affirming the trinitarian foundation of the universal Church, Augustine’s trinitarian theology also defined the Spirit’s unique function in the Church based on its distinctiveness in the immanent Trinity. For Augustine, “the property of the Holy Spirit is to be the communion of the Father and the Son, and the property of all three is to be equal to each other.”425 The Spirit is specifically the one who creates and fosters communion between the Father and the Son without the divine persons losing their identity and equality. For this reason, the Spirit is also the one who creates the communion between the immanent Trinity and the universal Church and between the

universal Church and the local churches. The universal Church is not a Church that exists in isolation on its own, nor is it a Church that is confined within the space and time of this universe. On the contrary, the universal Church is in direct communion with the community of the divine Trinity through the Spirit. While this Church’s perfection stems from its divine component, the Church also remains imperfect and even sinful because of the human element of its nature.

The universal Church fully exists in communion, but this communion is not merely a product of the Church’s visible structure. Rather, it is primarily the work of the Spirit that is present in the Church because, “the companionship in the unity of the Church of God … is seen as the proper work of the Spirit (with the Father and the Son, of course, cooperating) … the Holy Spirit is himself somehow or other the companionship of the Father and the Son.”426 I consider this insight a very significant description of the indispensable function of the Spirit in the Church and above all an authentic depiction of the Church’s form of communion. Since the unity of the universal Church is often associated with its visible hierarchical structures, it is relevant, in my view, to recall Augustine’s stance on the unique function of the Spirit in the Church as the source of its communion. His perspective on the Spirit as a source of communion is quite different from one that espouses a purely charismatic or Spirit-based Church because he clearly maintained that the Spirit works in cooperation with the Father and the Son. In effect, the Church’s hierarchical and sacramental dimensions are properly incorporated. Therefore, it is vital and suitable at this juncture of the Church’s history to recover Augustine’s teaching on the Spirit’s unique function in order to understand the nature of the Church.

An awareness of the Spirit’s function as the unique source of communion would not only

---

make the Church more inclusive, it would also encourage the members of the universal Church to be more receptive to the Spirit that unites them with the divine Trinity.

In terms of the members of the universal Church, I consider Augustine’s account very significant and insightful because of the inclusive and diverse nature of this Church’s composition. He provided a very broad-based outlook on the members of the universal Church transcending the limits of space and time. According to Augustine,

all of us together are the members of Christ and his body; not only those of us who are in this place, but throughout the whole world; and not only those of us who are alive at this time, but what shall I say? From Abel the just right up to the end of the world, as long as people beget and are begotten, any of the just who make the passage through this life, all that now – that is, not in this place but in this life – all that are going to be born after us, all constitute the one body of Christ, while they are each individual members of Christ. So if all constitute the body and are each individual members, there is of course a head, of which this is the body.427

From this text, it is evident that the members of the universal Church are not only present throughout the world, but they include the saints and all the faithful departed who are spiritually in communion with the members of the Church on earth. The relevance of such a statement cannot be underestimated because it borders on the current debate on the priority of the universal Church over the local Church which I will shortly consider in this section. Augustine’s inclusion of all members “from Abel the just to the end of the world” is equally significant, nonetheless, because it demonstrates that the universal Church includes the living and the dead and is a unity in diversity not destined only for a chosen few. If everyone is conscious of this fact, the members of the Church will effectively become less judgmental towards the people who are not in visible communion with them. Even though the universal Church is constituted of countless peoples as

depicted above, it is significant to note that, for Augustine, the Church speaks all
languages because of the Spirit and not because of its numbers. The relevance of this
point will be further developed when I reflect in the next section on unity in diversity in
the Church’s communion.

Commenting on all these diverse members of the universal Church, Augustine
would submit that they all share a common gift that is in fact greater than all of their
individual gifts combined. For Augustine, it is

through the gift which the Holy Spirit is in common for all the members of Christ,
[that] many gifts which are proper to them severally are divided among them.
They do not each have all the gifts, but these have some and those have others,
although all have the gift by which their special gifts are distributed to each, that
is the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{428}

The very idea that the Spirit is the gift that is common to all members of the universal
Church is, in my view, an assertion with many significant implications for the members
of the Church. Their common gift indicates that the members of the Church are primarily
equal and gifted in their different vocations in life. Second, they share a common life in
the Spirit that empowers each and every one of them. Third, the members of the universal
Church also enjoy the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit in their understanding of the
faith. Finally, the presence of the Spirit in each member requires them to listen to what
the same Spirit is inviting them to achieve and become in the Church. The Spirit is not,
therefore, reserved for some particular members of the universal Church to the extent that
other members have nothing to contribute towards the building up of the Church. Simply
knowing that the Spirit is a common gift to all the members of the Church is critically
important for a holistic vision of the universal Church because it means that the whole
Church is enriched and renewed by the gift of the Spirit. Therefore, for the sake of the

\textsuperscript{428} St. Augustine, \textit{The Trinity} XV. 34, 422-423.
Spirit that is at work in all the members, no member of the Church should be silenced or excluded from this Church.

Given the nature of the universal Church discussed in this segment, one can argue that the Spirit is indispensable to the Church. Augustine specifically justified the Church’s dependence on the Spirit when he compared the Spirit’s function in the Church to the function of the soul in the body. While it is a useful comparison signifying the universal Church’s unity in the Spirit, the comparison seems to suggest that the Church was an already formed Body that only needed the Spirit to become alive. In light of this, I consider Congar’s perspective to be a complementary position to Augustine’s comparison. For Congar, the Spirit co-instituted the Church as One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic from the moment of its foundation. This particular insight is important, in my view, because it indicates that the unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the Church are inherent to its nature. Second, it means that the Spirit is the one who also guarantees these four marks of the universal Church as their principle of origin. Where the Spirit is relegated to the background or seen as an external and additional force to the life and mission of the Church, the authentic nature of the Church would be minimized. In such a situation, the Church would perhaps be seen as an institution, rather than a communion of the divine community of the Trinity and the community of believers. My own objective in underscoring the unique function of the Spirit in the constitution of the Church is precisely to correct this narrow perception of the universal Church.

4.1.2 THE NATURE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

The local church is, in my view, a manifestation or actualization of the universal Church in a particular area that bears the latter’s essential elements and marks. On that
basis, the local church is an integral part of the universal Church. Such a church is complete in itself as an embodiment of the universal Church in that geographic location. Wherever the universal Church is on earth, the local church is equally in existent under the pastoral leadership of a bishop, and wherever the local church is present in turn, the universal Church is embodied and manifested. Hence, the local church fully reflects all the aspects of the universal Church, but the former is not independent of the latter and vice versa because they are in communion with each other by virtue of their unity. One cannot evidently consider the local church as an extension of the universal Church because it is an integral part of the latter. As one Church in communion with each other, the universal and local church, are consequently inseparable from each other.

The idea of the local church becoming fully autonomous from the universal Church in matters of sacraments, administration, and ecclesial discipline is, in my estimation, impossible to comprehend or to even justify. Each of these is actually meant to promote and preserve the communion of the universal Church with the local church. Vatican II was quite precise concerning discipline and administration that

all bishops, in fact, have the obligation to foster and safeguard the unity of the faith and to uphold the discipline which is common to the whole church … it is a fact of experience that, in governing their own churches as parts of the universal Church, the bishops contribute effectively to the welfare of the whole Mystical Body, which is also a body of churches.429

The issue of autonomy is, therefore, problematic because the local church is by its very nature a church based on the fact that it is in communion with the universal Church. Second, the local church exists precisely as a manifestation of the one universal Church in a given locality. For this reason, Augustine would argue that the Jerusalem church, for instance, “was speaking with the tongues of all nations, what else could it signify but that

429 “Lumen Gentium 23,” 32.
this great Church *from the rising of the sun to its setting* (Ps. 113:3) was speaking with
the tongues of all nations?"430 Because the local church signifies the universal Church, it
means that the former cannot be autonomous from the Church it represents within its
boundaries. This is noteworthy to emphasize because the local church runs the risk of
assuming that it can exist apart from the universal Church that is only an abstract,
intangible reality. I fully believe that the local church which signifies the universal
Church bears the features of the latter. However, the local church is not for that same
reason equivalent or at par with the universal Church to the extent that the former can
become independent of the latter. In fact, it is only in communion with the universal
Church that the local church fully realizes its fundamental nature as a church.

On the grounds that the local church is an expression of the universal Church,
Augustine would submit that the whole Triad also dwells in the local church that is in
communion with the divine community of the Trinity. He would also agree that the
divine persons work inseparably together in the local church. More importantly for
Augustine, the local church also “received the Holy Spirit; it consisted of a few people,
but it consisted of all the languages of the whole world.”431 Therefore, one can argue that
the Spirit is what makes it possible for the local church to speak all the languages of the
world that reflect the church’s unity in diversity. The Spirit’s unique function in the local
church as the source of unity, consequently, deserves to be brought to the fore. This is
relevant, in my view, because even Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium* was not very specific
about the Spirit’s role as the source of communion in the local church when it claimed
that “individual bishops are the visible source and foundation of unity in their particular

430 St. Augustine, “Sermon 267.3,” In *Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons*, translated by
431 St. Augustine’s “Sermons 267.3,” 275.
churches, which are modeled on the universal Church.**432** A statement of this nature implies that the bishops are principally the visible source and foundation of unity in the local churches or the Spirit is only the source of communion for the local church’s invisible unity. In either case, the Spirit’s function as the church’s source of communion is minimized and overshadowed by an expressed concern for the Church’s visible unity. Yet, the Spirit is the one who primarily gathers all the diverse members of the local church into a unity in which the bishops and faithful alike are united in matters of faith and morals. Therefore, it is important to affirm the Spirit’s function in the local church as well so that the faithful can realize the fundamental source of their unity in diversity and their communion with the universal Church.

I also believe it is significant to highlight the Spirit’s primordial and distinct relation with the local church because, in my view, the Spirit is what bequeaths to each local church its particular character among other churches. According to Vatican II, it has come about through divine providence that, in the course of time, different churches set up in various places by the apostles and their successors joined together in a multiplicity of organically united groups which, while safeguarding the unity of the faith and the unique divine structure of the universal Church, have their own discipline, enjoy their own liturgical usage and inherit an theological and spiritual patrimony … This multiplicity of local churches, unified in a common effort, shows all the more resplendently the catholicity of the undivided church.**433**

From my point of view, the discipline, liturgical, theological, and spiritual patrimony that these churches are privileged to enjoy, are all unique gifts of the Spirit that distinguish the local churches. Rather than simply saying this comes about through divine providence, I would argue that the Spirit, with the cooperation of the Father and the Son, is the dispenser of these gifts that characterize these local churches. The identity of each local

**433** “Ibid., 23,” 33.
church properly depends on the gifts of the Spirit. Emphasizing the Spirit’s central position in the local church will ultimately enable each of the local churches to discover and recognize its own unique gifts from the Spirit. This is significant because it enhances the self-identify of the local church. For this reason I would argue in the third section of this chapter for the particularity rather than the autonomy of the African Church. There is enough evidence such as the Spirit’s particular gifts that should enable the local churches to realize that Church is not a uniform Church devoid of diverse gifts.

For the members of the local churches, Augustine would insist that “if they wish to be alive with the Holy Spirit, they must hold on to loving-kindness, love truthfulness, long for oneness, that they may attain to everlastingness.”

434 Those who form the local church within a particular locality are, in my view, those who are ready and willing to embrace each other in love in spite of their differences, in order to attain unity and eternal life. The unity that exists among the members of the local church is not a unity that may be taken for granted. Such a unity must be nurtured and fostered by all the members of the local church through love. Members of the local church are, therefore, required to cooperate with the Spirit in order to sustain the communion that the Spirit creates within the local church. Augustine’s stipulation regarding the members of the local church is significant, from my perspective, because it indicates that the local church is essentially a community of faith bonded together in love through the Spirit. If the local church can actually be considered less as a religious establishment and more as a community united in love under the Spirit, there will be stronger solidarity among its members. In order to cultivate this image of the local church, it is equally necessary to recognize that the Spirit is the source of both unity and communion in the local church. Following the above

analysis of the nature of the universal Church and local church, I will now examine their mission to further highlight the Spirit’s function in the life of the whole Church.

4.1.3 THE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL CHURCH

Since the Spirit is the one who functions in the universal and local church as the principle of life and unity, I would maintain that it is under the power and influence of the Spirit that the whole Church fulfills its mission. For this reason, I will consider the significance of the Spirit’s agency in the mission of the universal and local church in order to offer a proper understanding of the mission of the Church as a whole. As Vatican II clearly stated, “the Church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

The universal and local church are likewise missionary in nature because the whole Church is a direct result of the mission of the Son and the Spirit. While the Church’s missionary nature is affirmed and well understood, what needs to be further underscored in this respect is the difference the Spirit makes in the mission of the Church. I therefore, intend to highlight the practical effects of the Spirit on the mission of the Church in order to fully appreciate the function of the Spirit in the life of the Church. The idea is not only to show that the mission of the Church is essentially the work of the Spirit, but also to identify some of the important and challenging apostolates that the Church needs to undertake on account of the Spirit. This will provide a broader understanding of the universal and local church’s mission that is necessary for them to be relevant.

In obedience to Christ, the universal and local church is sent to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

---

Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Jesus commands (Mt. 28:20). In order to understand and appreciate the difference the Spirit makes in the mission of the Church, I will reflect on Augustine’s perspective on the Spirit and the Sacraments of the Church. For Augustine,

> the water of the sacrament is one thing and the water that signifies the Spirit of God is something else. The water of the sacrament is visible; the water of the Spirit is invisible. The former washes the body and signifies what takes place in the soul; by the latter, the Spirit, the soul itself is cleansed and nourished.\(^436\)

A distinction of this nature between the reception of the waters of baptism and the waters of the Spirit clearly indicates that not all those who were baptized in the Church equally received the Spirit. Therefore, it is not enough for the Church to simply baptize, but to ensure that those who are baptized by water receive the Spirit that purifies their souls of sin. The Church can achieve this, according to Augustine, by making sure that those who are baptized are in communion with the Church and are participating in the life of the Church. This is because the catholic Church is where the members can actively experience the effects of the Spirit in a communion of love. In reality, the Church’s mission goes beyond preaching and making new disciples as traditionally conceived. The mission of the Church also involves the animation and conversion of the already baptized members of the Church that enables their lives to be transformed by the Spirit. Such a mission is more relevant today than ever before because many of the Church’s baptized members are no longer practicing members.

For the sake of the Spirit, the universal Church and local church should also be ready to reach out to non-Christians and even those who deny the faith of the Church. This is also part of the Church’s mission because the Spirit in its own way is free to

---

influence their lives. For this reason, Augustine would argue in a tone characteristic of his times that

as long as a person lives in the body of this life, it is impossible to judge his impenitence or unrepentant heart … He’s a pagan today; how do you know he won’t be a Christian tomorrow? He’s an unbelieving Jew today; what if he believes in Christ tomorrow? He’s a heretic today; what if tomorrow he adheres to Catholic truth?437

Properly understood, it means that salvation is not limited only to the members of the Church. Therefore, the possible conversion of non-Christians requires the Church to be more accommodating in its relationship with them. The Church’s mission in this case is to dispose itself at the service of even non-Christians in order to maintain its credibility and possibly become an effective instrument of their conversion and salvation.

Augustine’s position towards non-Christians is, therefore, significant in understanding the mission of the universal and local church because it shows that the mission of the Church is not confined to the ecclesial boundaries of the Church. Such an insight is very useful to the Church that is often inward looking because it challenges the Church to be attentive to the presence of the Spirit in the world as a whole. A positive and outward approach towards all peoples and the world as a whole would ultimately open up the Church to new challenges. Second, it would enable the Church as part of its mission to effectively address the signs of the times and to account for the hope to which the Church bears witness (1 Pet. 3:15). The mission of the universal Church and local church is, therefore, determined by the Spirit that functions as their principle of communion.

Under the inspiration and guidance of the Spirit, the universal and local church can likewise become more prophetic in its mission in the world. If the members of the universal and local church are individually and collectively conscious of the fact that the

Spirit is the animating principle of the Church, they will not be indifferent to the status-quo of poverty, injustice, and oppression in the world. They will fully be empowered to become the voice of the voiceless who will transform the sinful socio-political structures of our human society. Augustine would have considered such a prophetic action, from my point of view, as part of the Church’s mission. The reason at hand is that Christ’s anointing in Lk. 3:22, which enabled Christ to fulfill his own mission, “was graciously prefiguring his body, that is the Church, in which it is particularly those who have just been baptized that receive the Holy Spirit.” Augustine’s assertion in this statement is very significant because he makes no exception for the members of the Church. Therefore, it means that anyone who is baptized and received the Spirit must become Christ-like in his or her prophetic ministry in the society. All the members of the Church are, therefore, expected at the grassroots and state-official levels to actively participate in changing the sinful social structures of their society in order to improve the quality of the people’s lives. In an age in which the Church is often criticized by victims of injustice for not publicly fulfilling its prophetic ministry as it should, it is important for the Church to realize that it can become a credible witness of the values of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit. Actions for justice and peace that are gradually developing in the Church are indeed an integral part of the universal and local church’s mission because of the Spirit.

In summary, I would conclude that it is not the Spirit that is at the service of the universal and local church in their mission, but the whole Church that is at the service of the Spirit. Whether the Church is seeking the lost sheep, reaching out to non-Christians, or involved in justice and peace issues, “the Church serves the Spirit by being the human vehicle for witness to Christ and is able to do so only because of and in dependence on

---

438 St. Augustine, *The Trinity* XV. 46, 431.
Clearly, there is a difference between the Spirit serving the Church and the Church serving the Spirit. If the former were the case, the Church would be the one to initiate and define its missionary activities, but in the latter, the Spirit is the one who initiates and directs the mission of the Church. The Church, consequently, participates in the mission of the Spirit. Specifically, it means that the universal and local church ultimately respond to the activities of the Spirit in the Church and the world at large. On this particular issue, Augustine’s perspective on the Spirit as the everlasting gift which I discussed in the first two chapters of this dissertation is very significant. It indicates that the Spirit cannot be manipulated or confined to the Church, even in relation to the Church’s mission. The Spirit remains the Spirit of the Father and the Son that is given in order to become the source of communion between the divine community of the Trinity and the community of the faithful. Until the Spirit accomplishes what it is sent to achieve, which is to unite all things with God, it means that the mission of the Church will continue unabated to the end of time. While the universal and local church share the same mission under the inspiration and guidance of the Spirit, I will in the following section offer my perspective on the debate over the ontological priority of the universal Church over the local church.

4.1.4 THE DEBATE OVER THE ONTOLOGICAL PRIORITY OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

When the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith affirmed that the universal Church “in its essential mystery, is a reality ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular Church,” it generated a debate between Cardinal Ratzinger who...
was the head of the CDF and Cardinal Kasper. I will, therefore, outline the key arguments they advanced to support their positions before offering my point of view based on Augustine’s and Congar’s perspectives. Cardinal Ratzinger affirmed that

the Church is the greater Israel that pre-existed in accordance with God’s will … [and] the basic idea of sacred history is that of gathering together, of uniting – uniting human beings in the one body of Christ, the union of human beings and through human beings of all creation with God. There is only one bride, only one body of Christ, not many brides, not many bodies … The inner priority of unity, of the one bride to her essential variety, seems to be plainly evident.441

Cardinal Kasper on his part did not deny the pre-existence of the Church. However, he rejected the idea that it supports the ontological priority of the universal Church. Rather, he affirmed the simultaneous pre-existence of the universal and local churches. For him the starting point must be the Scriptures … When in his principal letters Paul uses the word ‘church’ (ecclesia) in the singular, he refers to a particular church or to a given community. When he speaks of ‘churches’ in the plural, he refers to several local assemblies. For Paul, the one church of God comes to life in each local church. Thus there is the church of God in Corinth and so forth. The Church of God is present in each of them.442

On my part, I endorse the ontological and temporal priority of the universal Church over the local churches. Thus, I find Cardinal Kasper’s reference to Paul in support of his position on the simultaneous pre-existence of the universal and local churches less convincing and more susceptible to criticism. The local churches cited by Paul in the above passage were perceived in their concrete existence not in their pre-existence. Secondly, a simultaneous pre-existence of the universal and local churches as Kasper suggested would imply the pre-existence of two churches. Contrary to this idea, only one

Church pre-exists and it is that Church that manifests or actualizes itself in different localities throughout the world when it comes into existence.

I would further differ with Cardinal Kasper over the simultaneous pre-existence of the universal and local churches considering the fact that the local churches according to Vatican II “are modeled on the universal Church.” A model is meant to be the prototype and pattern after which an image or body takes its shape and form. In the case of the human person who is created in the image and likeness of God, one can say that God is the model after which humanity is created. The idea of a simultaneous pre-existence between the image of God and the created human person is hard to justify because the image pre-existed before the human person is created after the image of God. The time-factor or the priority at hand cannot be ignored with respect to a model and a replica of the model. As the model that the local churches emulate and embody, the universal Church is also ontologically and temporally prior to them. Therefore, this Church predates the local churches in terms of its form and origin and it is for this reason that the former qualifies to become the model of the local churches. The churches are, consequently, in a position to participate in the life of the universal Church and to reflect its life and presence. As a result, it is one and the same Church that exists in all the local churches. The universal Church, accordingly, exists in the local churches that manifest this one Church which came into effect with the proclamation of the Gospel to all nations. Recognizing the ontological and temporal priority of the universal Church is important because it confirms that the local churches derive all their sacramental and ecclesial elements from this one Church.

The idea of a simultaneous pre-existence between the universal and local churches is also, in my view, problematic if it is applied, for example, to local churches in recent history. Their histories can fairly be traced back to the period in time when the seed of faith was sown and missionaries began preaching the Gospel, administering the sacraments, and confirming the faithful in faith, hope, and love. For example, one can to some extent determine the genesis and locality of the church in The Gambia and other parts of Africa. The same cannot, however, be applied to the universal Church because it transcends the limits of space and time. These young local churches that came into existence as a result of the work of missionaries cannot possibly attain a simultaneous pre-existence with the universal Church. While these churches were formed in a given space and time, the universal Church came into being following God’s plan to enter into communion not just with a particular people in a given locality, but with humanity as a whole. The universal Church which encompasses humanity as a whole is, therefore, ontologically and temporally prior to the local churches whose members are fully incorporated into the one Church of God. I would, consequently, consider the local churches that have been formed and those yet to be formed as manifestations and end results of the universal Church that continuously commissions its members to establish new churches around the world.

From Congar’s point of view, the universal and local churches are intricately connected in such a way that one conditions the other in their respective positions. He would affirm that “the Church was born universal by being born manifold and particular. The Church is catholic because it is particular, and it has the fullness of gifts because
each has his own gifts. This relationship between the universal and local church apparently justifies Kasper’s position on the simultaneous pre-existence of the former and the latter. Such is the case because Congar appears to identify the birth of the universal Church with the emergence of the Church in Jerusalem and its surroundings after the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. In this light, Pentecost is, in Congar’s view, the moment in which the universal Church was born and existed as a local church. However, the universal Church, in my view, was not just born at Pentecost with the descent of the Spirit. Rather, the universal Church was born precisely when the divine persons of the Trinity entered into communion with all peoples and gave the Church its trinitarian foundation. In this case, the universal Church originated with God’s plan of redemption in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. The question of the ontological and temporal priority of the universal Church over the local church ultimately depends on one’s understanding of the origins of this Church. I therefore, believe that Cardinal Kasper’s and Congar’s standpoint on the simultaneous pre-existence of the universal and local church is limited in its vision of the universal Church. The reason is that the universal Church is one and the same Church that actualizes itself in the local churches and it is this one Church that derives its origins from the communion of the divine persons of the Trinity.

Because of these reasons which I outlined against the simultaneous pre-existence of the universal and the local church, I would rather agree with Cardinal Ratzinger that the universal Church is ontologically and temporally prior to the local churches. I fully endorse this position based on Augustine’s understanding of the nature of the universal Church.

Church I discussed earlier in this section. He considered the universal Church primarily as the one Body of Christ that is constituted of all peoples “from Abel the just right up to the end of the world.” For this reason, the universal Church in my view, is prior to the local churches both in being and in time because, as far as its formation is concerned, it stretches back to Abel and beyond. In that sense, the universal Church encompasses not just a particular group of people in time but the whole of humanity throughout the ages. Augustine is equally relevant in this debate between Kasper and Ratzinger because he provides a comprehensive vision of the universal Church that is not only inclusive of all, but also transcends the limits of any given local church in space and time. The latter cannot, therefore, be co-extensive with the universal Church because the local church is limited in itself. Moreover, Augustine considered the universal Church as the one Church in which the Spirit reconciles us with the godhead. This Church is, therefore, the ultimate grounds where the beginning and the end of the Spirit’s work of reconciliation is fully realized. On that basis, the universal Church, in my view, is ontologically and temporally prior to the local churches that, subsequently, participate in the Spirit’s work of reconciliation in this one Church.

Under this section on the nature of the universal and local church, I have examined the divine origins of the Church and the Spirit’s distinctive function in the constitution and mission of the Church as a whole. I endeavored to highlight the trinitarian foundation of the Church and the difference the Spirit makes in the life and mission of the Church because these qualities are not often appreciated. For this reason, I emphasized these two significant aspects of the Church’s nature in order to provide a comprehensive and authentic vision of the Church that represents the true image of the
Church. The universal and local church should equally be perceived as the Mystical Body of Christ where the Spirit is the source of communion for both the invisible and visible dimensions of the Church. Each of them is at the service of the Spirit because it is only in the power of the Spirit that the Church can effectively fulfill its mission. The mission is common to both the universal and local church, but the former is ontologically and temporally prior to the latter because it transcends the limits of space and time. As a result of the universal Church’s pre-existence, the local churches are properly manifestations and actualizations of this one Church coming into existence. In view of the Church’s dependence on the Spirit, I will now reflect on the implications of the Spirit as the source of communion in the Church.

**IMPLICATIONS OF THE SPIRIT AS THE SOURCE OF COMMUNION**

Throughout this dissertation, I have emphasized the distinctive function of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity and the Church as the source of communion and love. Following Augustine’s and Congar’s perspective on the Spirit as the bond of love, the common gift, the unifying, animating, and co-instituting principle of the Church, I have argued for an ecclesiology of communion that is fully realized and sustained in the unity of the Spirit. In order to maintain in proper perspective the Spirit’s function in the Church as the source of communion, I will briefly note what needs to be kept in mind with respect to Augustine’s and Congar’s points of view. For Augustine, even though the Spirit is the unity, charity, and communion of the Father and the Son, the Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. The Spirit is also not conjoined to its bodily forms in which the Spirit manifests itself. In Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy in which he compared the function of the Spirit in the Church to that of the soul in the body, the Spirit is not,
consequently, embodied by the Church nor does the Spirit possess the same nature as the Church. Congar would, therefore, insist that the analogy between the Spirit in the Church and the soul in the body is a functional and not an ontological affirmation. These are significant qualifications that should fully be taken into consideration in order to safeguard the divinity and freedom of the Spirit as the Church’s source of communion. In what follows, I will examine the implications of the function of the Spirit as the source of communion in the catholic Church. I will, consequently, focus on: unity and diversity in the Church, the relationship between the universal and local church, the Church’s infallibility, Church reform, Ecumenism, and Inculturation. Each of these will show the distinct reality and demands that the Spirit imposes on the Church as its source of communion.

4.2.1 THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNION – A MYSTERY

Once the Spirit is recognized as the source of communion in the catholic Church, it means one’s perception and articulation of the Church’s communion must include its horizontal and vertical dimension as well as its visible and invisible features. The emphasis on communion in the Church will not simply be limited to only one particular aspect of the Church’s nature because both the visible and the invisible unity of the Church in the Spirit will be taken into account. Above all, the element of mystery will also be included in this articulation of the communion of the Church that is often presented in very definitive concepts and categories. On these two points of concern, Augustine would offer a significant contribution in depicting the Spirit as “a kind of inexpressible communion or fellowship of the Father and the Son.” This is the same Spirit he identified as the one through whom the divine persons want us to be in

445 St. Augustine, The Trinity V. 12, 197.
communion with them. In light of the Spirit’s inexpressible form of communion, Augustine could only use analogies to illustrate the unity and communion it forms in the immanent Trinity and the Church. The limitations of these analogies such as the Spirit – Soul analogy in representing what is inexpressible are well noted in this work. For this reason, I have not only justified the inclusion of non-believers in the communion of the Spirit, I have also emphasized the Spirit’s freedom to act independently of the Church. The Church’s communion that has the Spirit as its source should likewise be recognized as a dynamic and open-ended communion that is directed towards communion with God in the Spirit. Overall, the members of the Church should not simply be drawn towards each other; they should also enter into communion with the divine persons of the Trinity.

Another issue that requires serious consideration when the Spirit is acknowledged as the source of communion is the mode in which this communion is constituted and realized among the members of the Church. The way a communion of this nature is going to be concretized in reality will require cooperation with the Spirit on the part of the members and not mere submission to authority. Concerning this issue, Congar offers a significant perspective because the Spirit does not bring about unity by using pressure or by reducing the whole of the Church’s life to a uniform pattern. He does it by the more delicate way of communion … The Spirit, who is both one and transcendent, is able to penetrate all things without violating or doing violence to them.  

Properly understood, it means that the communion the Spirit fosters in the Church should not, in my view, be confused with uniformity. The tendency of imposing uniformity in matters of liturgy and discipline should not, therefore, be perceived as the only means towards the Church’s communion in the Spirit. The reason is precisely that the latter is a

---

unique form of communion that involves the participation of all, regardless of their particularity within the Church. Instead of uniformity, the Church should be concerned about the active participation of all its members in the life of the Church because their participation is what reflects their communion in the Spirit. Because of the delicate way in which the Spirit fosters communion in the Church, I would suggest that the Church should equally be tactful in creating and enhancing communion among its members. The Church should encourage and promote the initiatives of all its members who are under the influence of the Spirit so that their communion in the Spirit is strengthened and enriched. Loyal dissent on theological positions should also be more easily tolerated by the Church as part of the Church’s effort towards communion in the Spirit.

4.2.2 A COMMUNION OF UNITY AND DIVERSITY OF GIFTS

In the Church where the Spirit functions as the source of communion, there is unity as well as diversity of gifts, charisms, and traditions. I considered this very subject in detail when I discussed in previous chapters the source of the Church’s charismatic gifts, Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy, and Congar’s perspective on the function of the Spirit in the Church. There is unity as well as diversity of gifts in the Church because the same Spirit that is the principle of unity is also the principle of diversity in the Church’s communion. Unity in the Church is not, therefore, opposed to diversity and vice versa precisely because the Spirit is at work in the Church to reconcile and harmonize the different gifts. The idea that the unity of the Church will be undermined if diverse gifts, cultures, and languages are entertained is not justified, in my view, because one does not exclude the other. Against this idea, Augustine would offer a valuable insight that unity is the strength of every multitude; and a multitude, unless it is bound together by unity, is quarrelsome and torn by disputes; but a harmonious
Diversity is not ultimately a problem as long as the different gifts, charisms, and languages are integrated in unity which is precisely what the Spirit does in the Church. Rather than being skeptical of the diversity of gifts in the Church, the ecclesial authorities should rely on the power of the Spirit to coordinate all these diverse charisms into a communion of unity in diversity. The Spirit is effectively the one who ensures that the unity of the Church is not undermined, but enriched by the diverse gifts and charisms of its members. Whoever opposes diversity in the Church is, therefore, working against the Spirit that uses these gifts and charisms for the good of the Church.

A change of outlook and approach towards non-ministerial vocations and charisms in the Church is also required where the Spirit functions as the source of communion. No longer will the emphasis be solely and wholly on the hierarchical structure or the ministerial priesthood of the Church. The emphasis will, rather, be on the individual vocation of each baptized member of the Church as well as on the hierarchical and charismatic structures of the Church. Everyone in the Church will, therefore, be required to participate actively in the life of the Church and to make good use of one’s vocation at the service of the whole Church. Service in the Church will not, consequently, be limited only to those who are consecrated to the religious or priestly life as is the case in most ecclesial contexts in the catholic Church. The obvious reason for this unfortunate mistake, from my perspective, is that the Spirit is not primarily recognized as the source of all the Church’s charisms and vocations. In that light, Augustine is quite relevant in his assessment of the function of the Spirit in the Church. He clearly admitted that “in some

of the saints, [the Spirit] works miracles; in other saints it proclaims the truth, in other saints it preserves virginity, in other saints it preserves married chastity; in some this, in others that. All doing their own thing, but living together."⁴⁴⁸ Therefore, the Spirit is at work in all the different vocations and ministries in the Church for the common good of the whole Church. One cannot, consequently, prevent or discourage anyone from actualizing his or her vocation without stifling the Spirit. Nor can one reasonably argue that some vocations are more important and effective in the Church than others because the Spirit is at work in all of them. The right and valuable approach for the catholic Church is to allow all vocations and ministries to operate equally in the Church.

Those who are duly called to fulfill these non-ministerial vocations in the Church, from my perspective, will have to obey the Spirit that coordinates all their charisms. In that case, it means they cannot freely conduct themselves as they please except in accordance with the demands of the Spirit. They cannot equally exploit their vocation or charism for their own selfish agenda to the detriment of the common good of the Church. The extent to which the common good of the Church is served will be the criterion by which the members of the Church will determine how genuine is their vocation and charisms. Where the Spirit is the source of communion, the members of the Church are not subject in turn to their own personal disposition because they are under the authority of the Spirit in the Church. One cannot, therefore, argue that if the Spirit is the source of the visible and invisible communion of the Church, the laws and unity of the Church will be disregarded. On this issue, namely, the Spirit’s authority over the diverse members of the Church, Augustine would offer a significant insight in comparing the function of the Spirit in the Church to the soul in the body. He argued that

the body consists of many parts, and one spirit quickens all the parts. By the human spirit, by which I am myself this human being, I bind together all parts of my body; I command the limbs to move, I direct the eyes to see … The functions of the different parts vary, but the unity of the spirit coordinates them all. Many things are commanded, many things are done; but it’s just one who commands, and one who is served. What our spirit, that is our soul, is to the parts of our body, that the Holy Spirit is to the members of Christ, to the body of Christ.449

This statement is very relevant because it does not only demonstrate that the different parts of the Church are a unity in diversity; it also underscores the authority of the Spirit over all the members of the Church. For it is under the power and guidance of the Spirit that the mission and liturgical actions of the Church are effective and profitable to the members. The challenge facing all the members of the Church in that light is to listen attentively to the Spirit and to appreciate its power to maintain unity in the Church.

Recognizing the Spirit’s authority over all the members of the Church, in my view, would have a positive effect on the way the diverse members of the Church regard each other. They would see themselves as equal members of the Church under the authority of the Spirit who do not have any singular monopoly over the Spirit. No one in that sense will consider himself or herself independent of the Spirit by virtue of his or her own office, charism and vocation. The focus of the members’ attention will not, consequently, be on their individual differences, but on what unites them under the authority of the Spirit. The awareness of their equality before the Spirit will radically transform their relationship and that will enable them to respect their diverse charisms in their own right. The unity in diversity that exists in the Church is not practically impossible to sustain, in my estimation, if the Spirit is recognized as the source of unity as well as the authority over all the members of the Church.

449 St. Augustine, “Sermon 268.2,” In Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons, 278-279.
On this subject of the Spirit’s prominent role in creating equality and preventing anyone from exalting his or her charism over another, Congar would offer a significant contribution that is worthy of consideration. According to him, “nothing less than the Spirit of God is needed to bring all these different elements to unity, and to do so by respecting and even stimulating their diversity.”\textsuperscript{450} One can, therefore, argue that there is equal possibility that everyone’s charism will be appreciated in a Church where the Spirit is the source of communion. The members of the Church do not, accordingly, have any reason to boast of their charisms to the detriment of their unity in diversity because of their equality in the Spirit. The burden is, therefore, on all members to ensure that everyone is given equal opportunity to fully apply his or her charisms in the Church without fear or favor.

Finally, the unity in diversity that exists in the Church where the Spirit is the source of communion should create awareness among the members of the Church that they do not have all the gifts of the Spirit. No member of the Church can ignore this fact because each of them has a gift that another person does not likewise possess in the Church. They are not equally self-sufficient on their own without the support of other members in the Church. Such an awareness should motivate them all the more to share their unique gifts with others for the benefit of the whole Church. Where unity in diversity prevails in the Spirit, the members of the Church should, in my view, be open to what others have to offer and also be ready to make their own contribution. For this reason, they are expected to listen and discern the promptings of the Spirit. Their primary interest in that case should not only be to preserve their unique gift, but make available their gifts for the good of all. In short, a spirit of generosity is required of all members in

\textsuperscript{450} Congar, \textit{I Believe in the Holy Spirit}, 2:17.
the Church where the Spirit functions as the source of the Church’s unity in diversity.

Unfortunately, that spirit is not well established as it should among the members of the Church and between local churches. For this reason, Congar would present a very significant challenge to all by affirming that

> the fullness of the gifts of the Spirit only exists within the communion of Churches. The Spirit, who is the same in all churches, is the guarantee both of that communion and of the diversity of the gifts. This life in communion calls for various interchanges between the churches.\(^{451}\)

Unless and until the members of the Church are willing to share their gifts, they cannot, in my view, experience the fullness of the Spirit’s gifts. The mutual exchange of gifts among Church members and between the churches should be on both a personal and official level. In view of this relationship, I will now reflect on the implications of the Spirit’s function in the communion between the universal Church and local churches.

### 4.2.3 A COMMUNION OF MUTUAL INTERIOITY BETWEEN THE UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL CHURCHES

On account of the Spirit’s distinctive function in the immanent Trinity as the communion of love between the Father and the Son, I have consistently argued that the Church’s communion is modeled on the communion of the three divine persons. From what I also discussed in Chapter one about Augustine’s understanding of the communion of the divine persons, it is evident that although the Father, Son, and Spirit share a common life, they remain distinct in their relations. As a result of their unity and distinctiveness, Augustine would use analogies and philosophical arguments to show how three persons share a common nature yet are distinct in person. The communion of the divine persons based on Augustine’s illustration is significant, in my view, because it

sheds light on the communion of mutual interiority between the universal Church and local churches. As the model on which the latter is based, the communion of the divine persons indicates that once the universal Church came into existence, it shared a common life with the local churches and they are inseparably united as one Church. At the same time, it shows that the universal and local churches are also distinct in their mutual relationship. What the Spirit does in the communion of the divine persons as the source of unity and love is, therefore, what the Spirit does in the communion between the universal and local churches. Given the Spirit’s unifying function, I will now examine the implications it has for the mutual interiority that exists between the universal Church and local churches. This will clearly shed more light on the form of relationship that is meant to exist between the former and latter.

The fact that the Spirit is the source of communion between the universal Church and local churches also means that the former and the latter are inseparable in their mutual interiority. Each of them is in that sense an integral part of the other through the Spirit that unites them in a communion of love. The local churches, consequently, form a whole with the universal Church and they also share the fullness of this one Church through the Spirit. In this regard, the Spirit is, in my estimation, the one who makes it possible for the local churches that are in communion with the universal Church to have a full share of the life and elements of the catholic Church. To show how inseparable the universal and local churches are in their mutual interiority, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith would affirm that “the formula of the Second Vatican Council: The Church in and formed out of the churches (Ecclesia in et ex Ecclesiis), is inseparable from this other formula: The Churches in and formed out of the Church (Ecclesiis in et ex
While this statement signifies how the universal Church and local churches embody each other, it does not fully represent their communion in the Spirit by which one is formed in and out of the other and vice versa. For this reason, I would consider Congar’s perspective quite significant because for him communion in the Spirit is the way in which there is a realization of that mutual interiority of the whole in each which constitutes the catholic sense: kath’ holou, being of a piece with the whole. The Spirit enables all men to be one and unity to be a multitude … This communication consists in living and behaving as a conscious member of an organic whole.

When the universal and local churches’ communion in the Spirit is equally appreciated, it requires the members to conduct themselves as integral parts of an organic whole.

On its own part, the universal Church is not only expected to support the local churches, but also to value the vital role they fulfill in the Church’s life and mission. That is because it is through the local churches that the universal Church is enriched with so many languages, cultures, and charisms that the Spirit bestows on these churches. To some extent, Vatican II recognized how important the contributions of the local churches are to the welfare of the whole universal Church. According to this Council each of the bishops of the local churches is bound to be solicitous for the entire church; such solicitude, even though it is not exercised by an act of jurisdiction, is very much to the advantage of the universal Church. All the bishops, in fact, have the obligation to foster and safeguard the unity of the faith and to uphold the discipline that is common to the whole church … Besides, it is a fact of experience that, in governing their own churches properly as parts of the universal Church, they contribute effectively to the welfare of the whole Mystical Body, which is also a body of churches.

---

While the above statement can be considered a positive assessment of the contribution of the local churches to the universal Church, it does not sufficiently encompass all that the local churches can offer at different levels. In this statement, the concern, from my point of view, is mainly on the contribution of the local churches at the hierarchical or administrative levels. However, as important as the bishops’ administration of their local churches may be to the universal Church, there are various forms and levels at which the local churches enrich the universal Church. For instance, the local churches can enhance the universal Church through the charisms and cultures of the diverse members of the churches. Such gifts and values that ordinary members of the local churches offer at a personal level should also be acknowledged by the universal Church for the benefit of the communion that the Spirit creates between the latter and the former.

The universal Church and local churches’ relationship to each other based on their communion in the Spirit should, consequently, create a form of reciprocity. Both the latter and the former should, therefore, be open and committed to what each of them has to offer the other. This reciprocal endeavor will clearly involve cooperation, sacrifice, and even compromise on the part of the universal and local churches in matters relating to the life, discipline, and mission of the Church. However, it is worthy and also commendable for the universal and local churches to take the risks involved in their reciprocal exchange of gifts and resources because of the benefits at stake. The obvious fear on the part of universal Church is that the unity and discipline of the Church as a whole would likely be weakened if this Church is regulated by the local churches. On the part of the local churches, the concern is that they will also lose their unique identity if the universal Church imposes its interests and order on them. For these reasons, there is
an implicit element of mistrust and conflict between the universal and the local churches that casts a shadow over their reciprocity. In this regard, Congar would provide a significant contribution by affirming that “it is the task of the Spirit to contain and resolve this fertile tension between the particular and unity. Unity and pluralism are both necessary – pluralism in unity and unity without uniformity.”455 Unity and particularity in that light are not exclusive of each other as is often assumed. I would, therefore, note that the fear and conflict between the universal and local churches over unity and particularity would be less acute if the Spirit is recognized as their source of communion. Such tensions are gradually being resolved between the hierarchical and charismatic structures of the Church because the Spirit is now recognized as the source of gifts for both structures. If the Spirit is equally considered the source of communion between the universal and local churches, the tensions would not only be reduced, but their communion would truly become a clear sign of the Spirit at work.

4.2.4 COMMUNION BETWEEN THE UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL CHURCHES – A SIGN OF THE SPIRIT

Each local church is required to remain in the communion that the Spirit creates between the universal and local churches. Otherwise, they will not, in my opinion, be able to realize the unifying and animating effects of the Spirit in the communion of the universal and local churches. Therefore, the communion in which the Spirit functions as the source of unity and life, where the presence and work of the Spirit is fully revealed, is the communion between the universal and local churches. For this reason, the local churches should not under any circumstance attempt to separate themselves from this communion because they will not be animated and unified apart from the Spirit’s

communion. Concerns about their charisms and particularities are evidently not sufficient reasons for these churches to break away from the communion of the universal and local churches. This is precisely why Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy is very relevant, in my view, because it clearly depicts the Spirit as the principle of the Church’s life and unity. At the same time, it signifies the serious consequence of breaking away from the communion of the universal and local churches. The analogy argues against isolating oneself from this communion because “the Holy Spirit does in the whole Church what the soul does in all parts of one body … [and] the Spirit doesn’t follow the amputated part.”\textsuperscript{456} Instead of preserving their charisms and heritage and depriving themselves of the Spirit’s communion which makes these gifts profitable, I would argue that the local churches should, rather, preserve their communion with the universal Church. As far as I am concerned, it is part of their sacrifice and concession for the benefit of the whole Church.

Another related question that will also demand that local churches preserve their communion with the universal Church, is the communion’s ability in the Spirit to speak the languages of all the nations. Each local church clearly has its own languages and cultures, but in order to speak the languages of all nations, the local churches must, I believe, be an integral part of the Spirit’s communion. If a local church is not in communion with the universal Church, it means that the local church will no longer be in a position to speak or understand the languages of all the nations. In reality, this means that the local church will be too limited and impoverished in its means of communication and interaction with other churches in the communion of the Spirit. Similarly, a local church that does not preserve its communion with the universal Church will forfeit, in my

estimation, the Spirit’s gift to speak all the languages. The churches that are in communion with the universal Church are the ones that are more gifted with the medium of communication that is shared by all. With regards the languages of the nations, Augustine would provide a notable point of view. For him “the reason why the Holy Spirit was prepared to demonstrate his presence in the tongues of all nations was so that those who are included in the unity of the Church which speaks all languages might understand that they have the Holy Spirit.”457 This emphasizes, from my point of view, the importance of speaking the languages of all the nations because such a gift is a clear indication that the churches concerned have the Spirit. Otherwise, the churches will not be able to communicate in diverse languages and at the same time be united in communion. For the churches that are in communion with the universal Church in the Spirit, their communion also means speaking the languages of all the nations.

The communion between the universal and local churches also imposes a certain disposition and outlook on the members signifying the presence of the Spirit in the Church. Members of this communion are, therefore, expected to responsibly conduct themselves in a way that only the Spirit is capable of initiating. Charity must evidently prevail between the universal Church and the local churches because of their communion in the Spirit. There must be a bond of love between the former and the latter that enables them to become very sensitive to their needs and concerns. In that way, the universal Church and local churches will not easily be in conflict with each other as is sometimes the case. A spirit of solidarity and understanding is ultimately necessary between the universal and local churches in order to maintain their communion in the Spirit. Under these conditions, the universal and local churches will not only support each other, they

457 St. Augustine, “Sermon 268.2,” 278.
will also extend their assistance to churches that recognize each other’s sacraments. On this subject of communion in the Spirit and its ramifications for the universal Church and local churches, Augustine would present a significant insight that calls for humility on the part of the former and the latter. According to him,

\[
\text{the time you can be sure you have the Holy Spirit, is when you consent through sincere charity firmly to attach your minds to the unity … As for ourselves, brothers and sisters, let us present them with the example of good works, neither being proud because we happen to stand firm ourselves, nor despairing of those who are still lying flat on their faces.}\]

458

In accordance with Augustine’s statement, I would affirm that the burden is rather on the universal Church and local churches to be attentive to the churches that are to some degree a part of the universal Church. The challenge facing the universal Church and local churches in light of their communion in the Spirit is to become inclusive in their acts of charity while enhancing their unity in diversity. This will greatly help the whole Church to become more authentic and credible as a witness of unity.

4.2.5 THE SPIRIT GUARANTEES THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

In the Scriptures, the Spirit is presented by Jesus as the Spirit of truth who will teach his disciples and bring to their remembrance all that he has said to them (Jn. 14:26). If this Spirit also functions in the Church as the source of communion among the members of the Church and between the universal and local churches, it means, from my point of view, that the whole Church will be united in truth and preserved from error. The Spirit will then be acclaimed as the teacher and defender of the truth that is maintained and interpreted by the whole Church. Every member of the Church will likewise realize that the Spirit who teaches the truth is one that is common to all. This matter was clearly stated by Vatican II when it affirmed that

458 St. Augustine, “Sermon 269.4,” In Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons, 286.
the whole body of the faithful who have received an anointing which comes from the holy one (1Jn. 2:20, 27) cannot be mistaken in belief. It shows this characteristic through the entire people’s supernatural sense of the faith, when, ‘from the bishops to the last of the faithful,’ it manifests a universal consensus in matters of faith and morals. By this sense of the faith, aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth, the people of God guided by the sacred magisterium which it faithfully obeys, receives not the word of human beings, but truly the word of God (1Th. 2:13).459

While Vatican II’s position on sensus fidei represents a major development from Pius XII on the Spirit ‘acting in the inferior members through the ministry of the higher members,’ there is clearly a limit on the faithful’s input on matters of faith and morals. On this issue, I share the view expressed by Francis Sullivan “that on certain issues the official teaching of the Holy See (encyclicals, declaration of the CDF) seems to reflect, in too narrow a way, theological options which are not seen as representing the most widely respected theological opinion available to the Church today.”460 Therefore, a cross section of the faithful who are also guided by the Spirit should, I believe, be consulted for a lay person’s point of view on issues of faith, morality, and culture. Their insights are equally free from error insofar as they are guided by the Spirit of truth.

An individual or group of persons does not, consequently, have any monopoly over truth in the Church where the Spirit functions as the source of truth and communion. Rather, there is, in my estimation, a shared knowledge of the truth among the members of the whole Church who are also taught by the Spirit of truth. By virtue of their charism and office, some members of the Church are specifically appointed to teach with authority in accordance with their vocation. However, it is important for all the members of the Church to listen to one another in order to acquire the fullness of truth that the

460 Francis A. Sullivan, Magisterium: Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 210-211.
Spirit intends to reveal to the Church. Everyone’s idea and experience in that case is, accordingly, very crucial and worthy of note. I would, therefore, maintain that it is counterproductive to silence any member or party of the Church because such an action has the potential of stifling the Spirit-inspired truth that is under consideration. The Church’s own credibility and authenticity is also called into question when one of its own members is silenced because it gives the impression that the Church cannot tolerate dissent and diverse points of view. For the Church to represent the fullness of truth in its teaching and be credible, it is better for the Church to fully consider what the Spirit is saying not just to select few, but to all the members of the Church. Augustine is worth noting in this context because, as far as he is concerned,

we have been reconciled in friendship with God, we are in the position to know all the hidden things of God, and so it is said of the Holy Spirit: He will lead you into the whole truth (Jn. 16:13). This was the reason that the confidence which filled the apostles at his coming and enabled them to preach the truth is, with justification, attributed to the Spirit … It is, therefore, called the gift of God.461

The Church’s primary focus in light of the above statement, from my perspective, should be on the Spirit as a gift that is shared by all the members of the Church before considering the particular gifts that are proper to individuals. Regrettably, the latter seems, in my view, to take precedence over the former which gives some members of the Church the reason to believe that they have a monopoly of the truth.

The human element of the Church and the limitations of its teaching cannot wholly be denied even with the Spirit as the source of communion and truth in the Church. While this is true about the Church and its members who are subject to human error, it is equally certain that the Church enjoys the assurance of the Spirit’s good

counsel even on disputed conclusions. In the Church where the Spirit functions as the source of communion and truth, it means that the members of the Church have an added reason to be more receptive to the teachings of the Church. This is because the Spirit supplements the failures of the Church as the guarantor of the Church’s teaching authority. The benefit of doubt in this case must always be given to the teaching authority of the Church, at least, for the sake of unity and above all in honor of the Spirit that is ultimately the teacher and guardian in matters of faith and morals. On these grounds, the members of the Church should, consequently, be humble and less presumptuous in their criticism of the Church’s teaching. A more balanced approach in this regard would be to critique their own assumptions before undertaking an objective analysis of the Church’s doctrine in question. They would then be in a position to loyally dissent from the Magisterium if necessary. Regarding the teaching authority of the Church and the Spirit, Congar would offer a significant clarification that, I believe, would improve the reception of the Church’s doctrine. For Congar,

the Holy Spirit not only keeps the Church faithful to the faith of the apostles and the structures of the covenant, but also helps the Church, so that, when it is called on to confess, affirm, and define that faith, it can do so in a confident and even, we have to say, an ‘infallible’ way … The Church has, in its pastoral magisterium approached truth in different ways. It has made mistakes … The Spirit helps the Church ne finaliter erret – so that error will not ultimately prevail (Mt. 16:18).\footnote{Congar, \textit{I Believe in the Holy Spirit}, 2:46.}

Once the limitations of the Church are distinguished from the Spirit’s intention and the Spirit is perceived as the one who preserves the Church from error, the teaching of the Church will more easily command the obedience of faith. The challenge facing the Church in which the Spirit is the source of communion and truth, in my view, is to fully
admit its mistakes and limitations where applicable and entrust itself to the Spirit. In that way, the Church will become more positive and open to change and renewal in the Spirit.

4.2.6 RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH IN THE SPIRIT

As a result of the Spirit’s function in the Church as the source of communion, the members and the Church as a whole are duty bound to embrace change and renewal in accordance with the will of the Spirit. Since the Spirit animates the Church and is the agent of the Church’s mission and identity, it means, from my point of view, that the Church has to transform itself anew as intended by the Spirit. The Church cannot, therefore, afford to remain the same or be indifferent towards reform because the Spirit that gives new life is the Spirit that effects change and renewal in the Church. The need for change and renewal in the Church should, accordingly, be understood not merely as a human privilege, but as a necessary requirement of the Spirit. For this reason, the Church is obliged to carefully discern the will of the Spirit in the signs of the times in order to attain the change and renewal that is demanded by the Spirit. Otherwise, the Church will be at variance with the Spirit by either rejecting a necessary change or embracing a change that is not in accordance with the Spirit’s will. Against these dangers, the Church is called to constantly and faithfully respond to the Spirit in the sure hope that it will not be misled or betrayed by the Spirit. The Church should, therefore, embrace change and renewal. As Congar significantly observed, “there must be a link between what has already been given and the unexpected, between what has been acquired once and for all and what is always new. This link is forged by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus.” The fact that the Spirit is the link between the ‘known’ and the ‘unknown’ should indicate, in my estimation, that change and renewal in the Church is not actually a complete break

---

463 Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, 2:34.
from the past. This is noteworthy, especially in this day and age when change and renewal is often identified as a total abandonment of traditional forms and practices. Rather, the renewal of the Church in the Spirit is a faithful and responsible adaptation of the Church to changing contexts.

Because the Church is a united communion in the Spirit, any renewal and reform in the Church, I believe, should also be done not in isolation, but in communion. The universal Church and local churches that are in communion with each other cannot independently undergo change and renewal without undermining their unity in the Spirit. Cooperation and mutual understanding between the former and the latter are, consequently, required before any renewal can take place in order to secure the common good of the whole Church. When the communion between the universal and local churches is ultimately weakened by some form of renewal, there is reason to abandon this project. The Church’s renewal in the Spirit cannot, in my view, be done at the expense of its communion in the Spirit because it is tantamount to destroying the foundation of the Church. One way in which the Church can, therefore, determine the merit of any form of renewal is the extent to which the reform in question preserves or even promotes the unity of the Church in the Spirit. This is what the local churches in particular should take into consideration as they crave for changes in Church discipline and organization that are likely to impinge on the unity of the whole Church. With respect to the Church’s communion in the Spirit on the one hand and renewal on the other, Augustine would offer in his Spirit – Soul analogy a significant analysis of the consequences involved. For Augustine when a finger, for instance, is cut off from the body it retains its shape, it doesn’t retain life. So too with persons separated from the Church. You ask them about the sacrament, you find it; you
look for baptism, you find it; you look for the creed, you find it. That’s the shape or form; unless you are quickened inwardly by the Spirit, any boasting you do about the outward form is meaningless.\textsuperscript{464}

In this passage, Augustine was referring to the Donatists who separated themselves from the Church in favor of their own moral standards. However, the same can also be said of any local church that implements reforms in isolation from the whole Church. In such a situation, the local church would only retain the forms of its nature, but would deprive itself of the unity and life that only the Spirit offers to the catholic Church in communion. Without these qualities of the Spirit, the Church would not only be incapable of renewing itself; the Church would also be ill-equipped to engage itself in ecumenical dialogue and inculturation.

4.2.7 ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE AND INCULTURATION

If the Spirit is the source of communion in the Church, it equally means that the Church, in my view, is required to engage itself in ecumenical dialogue and inculturation in obedience to the Spirit. The Spirit of God will in turn inspire the Church to seek mutual understanding with other believers and to acknowledge the values that are not in the catholic Church. Ecumenism and inculturation will in that case become an integral part of the mission of the Church on account of the Spirit that fosters communion in the Church. The Church is not, consequently, limited to itself; rather, the Church is called to enter into dialogue with other ecclesial churches and cultures in the world. A dialogue of this nature would not necessarily destroy the unity of the Church, in my view, because the unity of the Church is guaranteed by the Spirit who functions as the source of communion. On the contrary, the Church’s ecumenical dialogue and inculturation would definitely enhance the unity of the Church because the Church would ultimately be more

\textsuperscript{464} St. Augustine, “Sermon 268.2,” In \textit{Sermons III/7 (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons}, 279.
informed and enriched in its principles and orientation. For this reason, it is important for the Church to recognize that even though the Spirit functions in the Church as the source of communion, the Spirit is not confined to the Church alone. Otherwise, the Church will not be drawn to cooperate with the Spirit that seeks to be inclusive. A proper understanding of the function of the Spirit as the source of communion is, therefore, necessary to ensure that the Spirit is not limited to the Church. In this case, Congar offers a noteworthy caution against a literal interpretation of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy that identifies the Spirit as the soul of the Church. He observed that if the analogy is taken literally, it clearly points to ecclesiological monophysitism. It is distasteful to Protestant Christians, because it seems to give absolute value to the acts and structures of the Church … Augustine, however, said: ‘What the soul does in our body, the Holy Spirit does in the Church; what the soul is for our body, the Holy Spirit is for the Body of Christ, which is the Church.’ The statement, then, is functional and not ontological. 

From my own perspective following the analysis of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy, the catholic Church is not an embodiment of the Spirit to the extent that its acts and structures are absolute. Rather, the catholic Church is where the Spirit that is also active outside the Church functions as its source of communion. The catholic Church is, therefore, required to engage in ecumenical dialogue and inculturation in order to fulfill the mission of the Spirit which is to unite all things in Christ so that God will be all in all.

The communion that the Spirit fosters in the catholic Church is not, consequently, a fixed and closed form of communion. I would argue that this communion is an ongoing and dynamic communion that continues to evolve until the mission of the Spirit is accomplished at the end of time. On its part, the Catholic Communion’s ultimate aim in engaging itself in ecumenical dialogue is not in any way to promote its own image, but to

---

advance the unifying mission of the Spirit. Thus, the Catholic Communion should be
committed to ecumenism as much as it is committed to its own self-renewal because
these commitments are works of the Spirit that are necessary for the cause of
communion. Recognizing the Spirit as the source of communion would, accordingly,
enable the Catholic Communion to realize that its communion is not perfect and absolute.
This is especially true since the Spirit is still working to complete the communion
between the divine community and the community of believers. Therefore, the Catholic
Church should allow the work of the Spirit to continue through its own dialogue with
other believers who are not visibly in communion with this Church. The members of the
Catholic Church should, accordingly, be involved in ecumenism without prejudice so that
the work of the Spirit would not be obstructed. This open-minded approach to all was
significantly noted by Augustine when he stated that “we mustn’t despair of anybody …
What if those whom you mark down as being in the grip of any kind of false doctrine you
like, and whom you condemn as absolutely beyond hope, should repent before they finish
this life and should find true life?”⁴⁶⁶ Anyone can, therefore, become a member of the
communion the Spirit creates in the universal Church. Therefore, nobody has the reason
or cause even on the basis of doctrinal differences to condemn the other. In the Church
where the Spirit is the source of communion, the members should realize that the Spirit
continues to extend the Church’s communion.

Since the communion the Spirit creates in the catholic Church is a communion of
unity in diversity, I propose that the noble values and practices of diverse cultures should
be inculturated into the life and liturgy of the Church. The positive values of each culture
must, therefore, be recognized and valued by the Church as a contribution towards the

building up of the whole Body of Christ, the Church. The Church should not, consequently, project any set of cultural values and practices as the normative standard for all. Nor should the Church impose on its members the values that are unique and specific to a particular culture. Rather, the Church needs to encourage its members to adopt the good values and practices of their cultures and incorporate them into the life and liturgy of the Church. This will enable the members to identify themselves more closely with the Church’s celebration and even find meaning in its principles and activities. Inculturation is, therefore, an important task for the Church and cannot be disregarded because this process enriches the Church’s own life and liturgy while rooting the faith and values of the Church in the living culture of its members. The Church that acknowledges the Spirit as the source of communion should ultimately carry out this task in cooperation with the Spirit that prevails in all the cultures of its members. On this salient subject, Congar offers a significant insight about the Spirit because

the distinctive aspect of the Spirit is that, while remaining unique and preserving his identity, he is in everyone without causing anyone to lose his originality. This applies to persons, peoples, their culture and their talents. The Spirit also makes everyone speak of the marvels of God in his own language.467

What the Church must, consequently, accomplish in light of the above statement is to preserve the cultural values and practices of its members who are all united in one and the same Spirit in their diversity. This would enable each culture, in my view, to give expression to its own experience of the Spirit in a way that is profound and personal. Unless and until the Church recognizes the presence of the Spirit in all the cultures of its members, inculturation would remain an incomplete endeavor for the Church.

467 Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, 1:44.
From my analysis of the significance of the Spirit in the Church in this section of the dissertation, there are several implications of the Spirit as the source of communion in the catholic Church. Under this topic, I have considered the Church’s visible and invisible communion, the communion of unity in diversity, the mutual interiority between the universal and local churches, the infallibility of the Church, the Church’s renewal in the Spirit, ecumenism, and inculturation. In each case, the distinct reality and demand the Spirit imposes on the universal and local churches were clearly identified and examined in detail in order to underscore the significance of the Spirit’s function in the Church as the source of communion. The fact that the Spirit is the one who forms the communion of the catholic Church means that the authority of the Spirit to coordinate the diverse gifts and charisms into a unity must be recognized. In the case of the universal Church and local churches, it means that they are inseparably united to form an integral part of the whole in which there is reciprocity and solidarity within the whole Church. As the source of communion in the Church, the Spirit is also the one in whom the members of the Church are united in the truth. The Church’s teaching in matters of faith and morals should then command the obedience of faith because it is the Spirit that guarantees the infallibility of the Church. However, the Spirit expects the Church to also renew itself in a faithful and responsible way according to changing contexts. Because the Spirit is not confined to the Church, it means that the Church should equally engage itself in ecumenical dialogue and inculturation as part of the Spirit’s unifying mission. These implications of the Spirit as the source of communion apply in a general way to the universal and to all the local churches in communion. I will now select the African
church in particular and discuss what the function of the Spirit as the source of communion specifically means for this local church.

**WHAT COMMUNION IN THE SPIRIT MEANS FOR THE AFRICAN CHURCH**

From my presentation of the Spirit’s communion in the immanent Trinity and among the members of Christ’s Body, the Church, the following can be deduced: A. the unity, equality, and particularity of the divine persons in communion. B. the unity in diversity of the members of Christ’s Body, the Church. C. each member of the Church is gifted by the Spirit that is common to all. D. the Church is alive in the Spirit that animates all the members of the Church. E. the Church is not an embodiment of the Spirit that makes this Church effective. F. the Spirit determines the mission of the Church. Based on these deductions, I would argue that, since the church in Africa is part of the communion the Spirit forms between the immanent Trinity and the whole universal Church, the African church also bears the above characteristics of the Spirit. This means that the African church is also distinct in its communion with other members of the universal Church.\(^{468}\) Second, the church in Africa is a unity in diversity in itself and within the communion of the whole Church. Third, the members of the African church are also gifted and empowered by the Spirit to participate in the life of the Church. Fourth, the unique gifts of the African church should be used for the good of the whole Church. Finally, the church in Africa is called to participate in the mission of the Spirit in terms of reconciliation. For these reasons, I would underscore the importance of forming and organizing the church in Africa in the form of a church-family that allows its members to contribute and participate in the life of the Church. In addition, I would emphasize the particularity, rather than the autonomy of the African church that the pastors and

\(^{468}\) Hereafter I will refer to the local church in Africa in communion with the universal Church.
theologians of this church are required to discover and preserve. As a church that is in communion with the universal Church, the African church cannot be autonomous in matters of sacraments, administration, and ecclesial discipline. The African church’s particularity that is so critical and important, I believe, should be fully considered because it represents the form of contribution that the African church can offer the whole universal Church. The nature of this contribution is not always properly identified nor is the Spirit’s unique gift to the African church openly and explicitly recognized by the universal Church. This exercise on what communion in the Spirit means for the African church is, therefore, an attempt to rectify this mistake so that the particularity of the African church will be fully acknowledged.

4.3.1 PARTICIPATORY STRUCTURES OF THE AFRICAN CHURCH – FAMILY

Following the rebirth of the Church on the continent of Africa in modern history, the growth and maturity of this church is not only remarkable, but encouraging and overwhelming over the last five hundred years. The local church is not only present in all parts of Africa; it is fully alive, firmly established, and increasing in numbers, especially in countries south of the Sahara. The faithful are, consequently, receiving the sacraments on a regular basis while vocations to the priesthood and religious missionary life are equally growing in record numbers. There are also many African bishops who are now the shepherds of the local church in Africa, which indicates the extent to which this church has developed and matured over the centuries. As a result of the growth in numbers and the capacity to respond to its own needs, the local church in many parts of Africa has become a ‘self-reliant’ church. One can, therefore, argue that this church is no longer a mission church that depends on missionaries who are sent to evangelize and
attend to the needs of the church. Rather, the local church in Africa is a fully-fledged indigenous church that is missionary to itself and the rest of the universal Church. For these reasons, it is generally considered in Africa and beyond that the African church potentially represents the Church’s future growth. This future is currently undermined by dwindling numbers of the priests, religious, and faithful in Europe and America. In this scholarly enterprise, I purely consider the local church in Africa an indispensable part of the life of the whole Church. This is precisely the reason why it is important in this work to identify the particularity and contribution of the African church towards the universal Church in order to appreciate the impact of the African church on the whole Church.

In the midst of these positive signs I have listed above, there is, however, a cause for concern regarding the level of participation of the faithful and non-ordained religious in the life and mission of the African church. Those who are fully and actively involved in the administration of the sacraments and the mission of the local church in Africa are mainly the clergy and bishops of the church. The faithful and non-ordained religious on their part are passive actors because of their vocation in life. Such a concern is not meant to suggest that the latter should assume the role and ministries of the clergy, or else they will not actively participate in the life and mission of the Church. Rather, the concern here is to find ways and means in which the faithful will at different levels play their part in the celebration of the sacraments and in the mission of the Church. This situation of the local church in Africa corresponds to what Congar described when he noted that on the one hand, the freedom with which women and men have, under the influence of the Spirit, created groups and religious communities in the Church is quite admirable. On the other hand, however, we are still a long way from opening the life of the Church, its parishes and its organizations to the free contribution of the charisms.469

What should clearly be examined based on this statement are the services and ministries at parish and diocesan levels that allow the faithful and non-ordained to become actively involved in the life and mission of the church. In order to achieve this, the local church needs to organize itself in the form of a family where there is mutual solidarity, respect, and gratitude for one’s status and talent. In what follows, I will examine the structures that the African church, in which the Spirit is the source of communion, is meant to create so that all will participate in the life and mission of the African church-family.

One may question the suitability and validity of the African family system for the purpose of creating participatory structures in the local church in Africa because of the problems associated with this system. For some people, the African family is largely traditional, gender-role oriented, and patriarchal in nature. As such, it offers little or no opportunity to women, children, or to innovative individuals who want to transcend the boundaries marked by family custom. This criticism has some element of truth in it because of the abuses to which women and children are subjected in some African families. However, in an ideal and normal African family, women, children, the elderly, and the sick, are in fact the ones who are supported and given every opportunity to express their voice, talents, and wisdom. The strengths that characterize the African family, from my point of view, are therefore, greater than the negative elements of this structure in which everyone’s contribution to the family good is acknowledged and encouraged. Because of the positive qualities of the African family and its symbolic significance, the Synod Fathers of Africa affirmed that

the mystery of the love of the Triune God is the origin, model and purpose of the Church (LG, 4; AG, 2; GS, 40), a mystery which finds suitable expression for Africa in the image of the Church–as–Family. For this image emphasizes care for
the other, solidarity, warmth of relations, acceptance, dialogue and trust. It shows also how authority is exercised as service in love.\footnote{Synod Documents. “Preposition 8,” In The African Synod Documents, Reflections, Perspectives, compiled and edited by the Africa Faith and Justice Network (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 89.}

When the local church in Africa organizes itself in the form of the African family, all the members of the church will, therefore, be in the position to express their voice and fulfill their rightful duties in the church. A sense of belonging and solidarity should, therefore, be created in the church so that members will see themselves as a church-family.

The first step towards the creation of participatory structures at the grassroots level of the local church in Africa is, in my estimation, the formation of Small Christian Communities. Within the boundaries of every parish, there should be Small Christian Communities consisting of parishioners living in the neighborhood. These units of parishioners are not merely prayer groups within the parish, but multi-purpose household assemblies of the faithful witnessing to their faith in word and deed. According to the Synod Fathers of Africa, the Small Christian Communities are

living or basic ecclesial communities … which are cells of the Church–as–Family [in which] one is formed to live concretely and authentically the experience of fraternity. In them the spirit of disinterested service, solidarity, and a common goal reigns … It is such communities that will provide the best means to fight against ethnocentricism within the Church itself and, more widely, within our nations.\footnote{Synod Documents. “Message of the Synod 28,” 78.}

The purpose of these communities as the Synod stipulated is to apply in action the faith-based values that are common to the members. In addition to their own personal commitments, the members are obliged to actualize their faith and love in the community. Furthermore, a sense of initiative is required in the formation and animation of these communities so that the members can freely act out of their own convictions.
Consequently, there should be less control from the clergy so that the faithful can responsibly take charge of their immediate situation and use their charismatic gifts at the service of all. The parishioners will then be in a position to discover the gifts of the Spirit within the community which need to be explored for the good of the church. Once these communities are formed, the African family’s sense of unity and solidarity will also be created for all to participate in the wider mission of service that is delegated to the parish.

At the parish level of the church in Africa, a variety of lay ministries should also be introduced, I believe, as a second step towards the inclusion of the faithful in the life and mission of the church. Anyone who has expressed the desire to minister and is approved by the community of faith should, therefore, be allowed to become a lector, Eucharistic minister, married deacon, and even master of ceremonies. Presently, there are many parishes in Africa where the faithful are installed as lectors and Eucharistic ministers. However, some parishes have yet to embrace the idea of a lay person giving holy communion in church and administering it to those who are house bound. In this case, it is necessary for the clergy to also educate the parishioners about the significance of this ministry as an act of participation in the celebration of the Word and Sacrament. The case of married deacons and master of ceremonies is surely more difficult to introduce in a local church that rarely had these forms of ministry. Introducing these ministries would be a novelty, but it is equally worthwhile to the degree that the faithful are included in the ministry of the sacraments. This would serve as a step forward against “a certain idea of Church that produced a type of lay person who was too passive … All pastors are invited to develop a pastoral program, in which the laity rediscover their
Such passivity on the part of the faithful is impossible in a church animated by the Spirit in Augustine’s analogy because the parts are active and alive in the Spirit. In the ministry of the sacraments when all are gathered in unity, it is not proper for the faithful who are parts of the Body of Christ to become passive observers. Allowing the laity to minister as deacons and masters of ceremonies would at least enable the faithful to play an active part in the celebration of the sacraments.

Since the Church uses the means of modern communication to disseminate its message, the African church can also utilize the services of the faithful in this area as a third step towards the faithful’s participation in the ministry of the Word. Aside from the clergy whose training and ordination do not necessarily qualify them for this particular ministry, the faithful in this profession have the advantage of propagating the church’s message in a very effective manner. Their invaluable contribution through the media should, therefore, be explored in order to maximize the church’s outreach to the public that relies so much on media communication. At parish and diocesan levels, the communication skills the Spirit has given to the faithful should be identified and developed for the good of the local church. In that way, the faithful would become agents of the church’s mission of evangelization that is not only limited to the proclamation of the Word in the assembly of the faithful. During the Synod of Africa it was noted that apostles must be formed to witness therein and to speak with competence of the Word of truth and of life … The Church owes it to itself to foster creativity in this area: as long as we remain only consumers in this domain we run the risk of changing our culture without wishing to and without even knowing that we are doing so … It is recommended that the local churches exploit judiciously the hours that are available to them on regional and national stations.

---

472 Synod Documents. “Message of the Synod 57,” 84.
473 Ibid., 47, 82.
In this statement on the use of modern media by the local church to proclaim the Word and preserve the values of the Gospel, creativity is the key word. In that case, the local church, in my estimation, does not need to depend on the national media alone. For its own good, the local church can also establish its own media station. The cost involved may be great, but it is incommensurable to the double gain of the faithful’s participation and the public’s reception of the church’s teaching on faith and morals. The African church should equally invest in mass communication to promote its ministry of the Word.

More needs to be done to also form the faithful in disciplines such as theology, scripture, and ecumenism as a fourth step towards the inclusion of the faithful in the life and mission of the Church. These subjects were only studied by priests and seminarians until recently when few laity and religious obtained various degrees in these disciplines. This trend needs to be reversed so that a cross section of the latter would also be qualified to articulate the faith of the church using the categories and symbols that are meaningful to their people. For the bishops of Africa, the mission of these theologians is a great and noble one in the service of inculturation which is the important work site for the development of African theology … without the conscientious and devoted exercise of [their] function something essential would be lacking. The Synod expresses its gratitude and its encouragement to you to continue working with your distinctive role certainly, but in communion with your pastors so that the doctrinal riches which will flow from this Assembly may be deepened for the benefit of our particular churches and the Universal Church.474

In spite of this express support for African theologians from the bishops, it is incumbent on the bishops to ensure that the faithful have the opportunity to acquire the competent knowledge required in these disciples. This does not seem to be the case especially in English speaking West Africa, where the theological faculty for the church in this region is predominantly populated by priests studying various disciplines. There should also be

---

provision for a good number of the faithful so that they can study theology at this level. Some of the faithful clearly have more profound knowledge of the local culture than the priests. They are, therefore, in a better position to integrate the culture of the people and the faith of the church in a given ecclesial context. Hence, it is an opportunity for them to be involved in the mission of the church under the guidance of the Spirit that will animate them to apply their knowledge for the good of the whole church.

For the local church in Africa to become a vibrant and active church-family, the church should create all these structures that I have suggested above. Providing these structures would clearly give the opportunity to both the faithful and the non-ordained religious to apply their special gifts from the Spirit for the good of the whole church. This is what transpires in an African family system where each member from the oldest to the youngest is respected and embraced as a person of wisdom, talent, and immense potential. The same should equally apply in the church in which the Spirit is the source of communion so that every member will be integrated and be active in the life and mission of the church. Any attempt to systematically prevent the faithful from utilizing their gifts is contrary to the African family model, at the same time, at odds with Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy and his perception of the faithful. He insisted that

\[
\text{the Spirit is in common for all the members of Christ, [and] many gifts which are proper to them severally are divided among them. They do not each have all the gifts, but these have some and those have others, although all have the gift by which their special gifts are distributed to each, that is the Holy Spirit.}^{475}
\]

In light of this statement, ministry and service should not be conducted as if the ordained ministers are the only ones who have the gift of the Spirit and the rest cannot participate in the life and mission of the church. This would not only, in my view, confine the

\[475\] St. Augustine, *The Trinity* XV. 34, 422-423.
faithful to a passive status, it would further impede the local church from discovering its talents. The contribution of each member according to one’s charismatic gift should fully be valued in the African church as a sign of the Spirit and a positive means towards the growth of the church. As a church that is in full communion with the universal Church in the Spirit, the African church should ultimately be more concerned about its particularity than its autonomy because the former represents the Spirit’s gift to the church.

4.3.2 EMPHASIS IS ON PARTICULARITY AND NOT AUTONOMY OF AFRICAN CHURCH

Despite the fact that the divine persons are united in one nature, they still retain their own particularity in their communion in the Spirit. Each local church also retains its particularity in the communion that the Spirit forms among the local churches within the universal Church. I would, therefore, argue that the local church in Africa should also preserve its particularity rather than its autonomy because autonomy does not prevail where the Spirit is the source of communion. From my point of view, particularity means the distinctive characteristics of a local church within a cultural, historical, and geographical setting that signifies and embodies the church’s identity, constitution, and experience among other members of the universal Church. These unique features that I believe are gifts of the Spirit are what readily determine and define the local church’s image, heritage, and contribution towards the universal Church. The particularity of a local church in that case includes the cultural values, spiritual experience, and the charisms of its members. The above definition of particularity and my summons for the African church to preserve and promote its distinctiveness is different from autonomy as presented by Elochukwu Uzukwu. In his case, autonomy means depending on one’s resources which implies a form of self-sufficiency. Particularity on the other hand is first
of all about the unique identity of the African church. Secondly, it concerns the use of the
African church’s gifts from the Spirit to enrich the universal Church and strengthen the
communion between them. Therefore, particularity in my view is not a matter of
depending on one’s unique gifts.

In the divine communion of the Trinity, for instance, the Father, Son, and Spirit are clearly not autonomous persons, but related persons who are united and inseparably working *ad extra*. Since the local church in Africa is also in communion with the universal Church in the Spirit, it means that the African church cannot, in my view, be autonomous from the universal Church without undermining its communion. What the African church should, therefore, discover and appreciate in its attempt to assert itself is not its autonomy, but particularity. The latter is the means by which the African church recognizes its own identity and contributes in turn to the common good of the universal Church. The uniqueness of the African church can be manifested even if this church is not autonomous because it is an inherent feature of this particular church among other local churches. Discovering its own particularity would clearly make it possible for the church in Africa to value the unique gifts that the Spirit has specifically given to this church compared to the gifts the Spirit has given to other churches. In what follows, I will endeavor to identify the unique gifts the African church has received from the Spirit that constitute its particularity in the catholic communion. In contrast to Elochukwu Uzukwu, who strongly defends the autonomy of the local Church in Africa, I will further indicate why it is dangerous and paradoxical for the African church to attain its autonomy instead of preserving its own particularity.
The first feature of the African church that exemplifies its particularity is the diverse cultural, social, and linguistic heritage of this church. No single church in the communion of the universal Church and local churches exhibits, in my view, the diversity of cultures, communities, and languages one finds in the African church. The diversity at hand is largely because the local church encompasses the whole African continent where languages and cultures vary from country to country and from region to region. The cultures and languages of this church cannot, consequently, be quantified or reduced to a minimum. Whatever is, therefore, valuable in all these diverse cultures and languages of the African church is notably the Spirit’s gifts to this church that the latter needs to treasure and preserve. The same is equally true for the unity that exists in this church that is so diverse. This is also the Spirit’s gift to the African church because the Spirit is the one who makes “unity the strength of every multitude; and a multitude, unless it is bound together by unity, is quarrelsome and torn by disputes; but a harmonious multitude makes one soul.”476 The one local church that I clearly believe to exemplify this harmonious multitude in unity referred by Augustine in this statement is the African church. This church is, therefore, in the position to share with the universal Church its positive experience of unity in diversity as it is lived and renewed in the ecclesial life of the African church. In light of its own experience of unity in diversity, the African church can bring the following points of conviction to the attention of the universal Church: no particular culture and language is more important than the other in the Church; there is no absolute form of celebrating one’s faith in God within the Church; diversity is clearly not opposed to unity, rather, diversity enriches the Church and makes it more vibrant.

In addition to the diverse nature of the African church, the communal spirit of its members is also a mark of this church’s particularity in the communion of the universal Church and local churches. The African church is well known for its deep sense of community because in all its celebrations and activities, the community is the one that is fully involved in these matters. For this very reason, the members of the church can only act and celebrate as part and parcel of the whole community. Consequently, in this church the culture of individualism in which every person and organization is preoccupied only with his or her own affairs does not prevail among its members. What does prevail is, rather, a communitarian sense of belonging to the church-family in which the joys and sorrows of the members are all celebrated and lamented at community level. There is, accordingly, a spirit of community and solidarity in the African church that clearly distinguishes this church from other churches where celebrations like births, baptisms, marriages, and funerals are limited to immediate family members. The communal dimension of the African church’s celebrations as well as the members’ tendency to identify with the community is, in my view, the work of the Spirit. Only the Spirit can create and sustain this sense of community among people of diverse ethnic backgrounds. This is because the Spirit is the bond of love, “which unites all the good angels and all the servants of God in a bond of holiness, conjoins us and them together, and subjoins us to itself. And the more we are cured of the tumor of pride, the fuller we are of love.”\textsuperscript{477} As a church that is formed and grounded on the strength of the community, the African church can encourage the universal Church to revive the communal dimension of its sacramental celebrations. This would make a difference in the life of the universal Church because communities would assume a greater responsibility in the celebrations of the Church.

\textsuperscript{477} St. Augustine, \textit{The Trinity} VIII. 12, 253.
At this time when the culture of life is under threat especially in churches in the West, I would argue that the centrality of life and family in the African church is also another testimony of its particularity. Whereas the lives of the unborn child and terminally ill patients as well as family values are facing annihilation in these churches in the West, human and family life in all its forms is preserved in the African church as sacred gifts from God. There is evidently a greater love and respect for human and family life within the African church that distinguishes this church in the communion of the universal and local churches. Children are, therefore, born in large stable families of the African church while the terminally sick are cared for by their relatives and friends. As a result of how children and family life are strongly valued in the African church, the church is not simply growing in numbers, it is also morally established to promote the culture of life over death within human society. For the bishops of Africa,

the Christian family is the first cell of the small Christian community … a privileged place for evangelical witness because of its quality of life, the love between the members, and its hospitality. It ought to be a place of human and spiritual growth for parents, children, the youth, and the aged. For this, it is necessary to promote movements of the Apostolate of the family.\textsuperscript{478}

The family as it is presented above is clearly the foundation of the African church. As long as there is good family life, it means that the African church will continue to grow in charity and strength. There is good reason to likewise believe that the Spirit is the one who has gifted this church with a strong sense of human and family life because the Spirit is the Spirit of life that animates the church formed out of these families. In a positive way, the African church can contribute towards the growth of the universal Church by continuing to support human and family life and inspiring other churches to follow its example.

Our liturgical celebration is also another outstanding feature that distinguishes the African church from other churches in the catholic communion. The liturgy of the African church is not only performed at length, it is also vibrant and dramatic. As such, the African liturgy involves bodily gestures that evoke a personal response towards God in the form of singing, clapping, and dancing. Liturgical celebrations in the African church are not, therefore, ordinary religious rites of obligation, but moments of personal encounter with the sacred in which the individual and the community express their human sentiments before God. These celebrations are evidently lengthy, lively, uplifting, and colorful in nature because of the importance of the sacred time and space devoted to God. Everyone knows what to expect when they gather in worship because they understand the value of devoting one’s time, energy, and talent to God. In light of these qualities of the African liturgy, I would posit that this form of liturgy is not simply the Spirit’s gift to this church; it is also a sign of the Spirit at work in the African church. The Spirit is in that case the one who animates and energizes the African church to celebrate the liturgy in an enduring and vibrant fashion. This is precisely because it is the Spirit who makes the work of Christ present in the time of the church and its doxology. He concelebrates with us in order to make Christ’s work a reality here and now. It is the Holy Spirit who gives time, which he penetrates and dominates, that special quality which makes it sacramental time, in which the commemoration of the past makes it present, active and effective with the absolute future in view.\footnote{Congar, \textit{The Word and the Spirit}, 35.}

In the African liturgy that is so lively, the members of the church are only responding to the actions and promptings of the Spirit that is at work in the liturgy. Other churches in the catholic communion can likewise learn from this experience of the Spirit so that their liturgies can also be dynamic and uplifting like the liturgy of the African church.
The particularity of the African church, from my perspective, is clearly evident in its diverse nature, sense of community, valuing of human and family life, and its lively liturgical celebrations. These unique qualities are what the African church should fully discover and preserve if this church wants to maintain its identity, offer its contribution, and also imprint its impact on other churches in the catholic communion. For this reason, I would disagree with Elochukwu Uzukwu who maintained that “only a local church which is aware of its autonomy and universal mission, based on the experience of the resurrected one, may hope to be a challenge to the world – in other words, the one church is realized and bears witness to the Christ only as local church.”\textsuperscript{480} A local church, in my estimation, cannot be autonomous from the universal Church in the full sense of the word insofar as the Spirit is the source of communion between the universal and local churches. More importantly, it is only in communion with the universal Church that a local church like the African church can uniquely contribute towards the good of the whole Church and effectively bear witness to Christ.

Since ‘a listening Church in communion with the African church’ is what Uzukwu sought to portray in his book, perhaps autonomy is not the most suitable term to signify the distance he claims is necessary to maintain the tension between the universal Church and local churches. This term is ambiguous and misleading, in my view, given the sense in which it is used in this book. On the one hand autonomy is “being free and dependent on our own resources and our deliberate opening out toward other communities (communion).”\textsuperscript{481} On the other hand the author insists that “the division of the Eastern and Western church into various liturgical rites and families is the most


\textsuperscript{481} Uzukwu, \textit{A Listening Church}, 7.
eloquent testimony of the localization and autonomy of the churches in the one
Church." In the first instance, I would contend that a local church that is in communion
cannot in turn depend wholly and solely on its resources because the sacramental,
spiritual, and material properties of the church are shared in communion with the
universal Church. Secondly the various liturgical rites in Eastern and Western churches
are in fact a testimony of the particularity of these churches, rather than their autonomy in
the catholic communion. The particularity of the local churches, in my view, is more
emblematic of the identity and character of these churches than the idea of autonomy. I
would, therefore, comment on why it is in any case dangerous and paradoxical for the
African church to become an autonomous church rather than a local church with a
particularity of its own.

An autonomous local church invariably undermines and ultimately destroys its
own communion with the universal Church. Although such a church is not synonymous
with a schismatic church, and Uzukwu never suggests a separation, an autonomous
church can lead to the latter. Such a possibility is bound to happen, in my view, if the
distance or space between the universal Church and an autonomous local church amounts
to exclusion. As the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith affirmed,

history shows that when a particular church has sought to become self-reliant, and
has weakened its real communion with the universal Church and with its living
and visible center, its internal unity suffers too, and it finds itself in danger of
losing its own freedom in the face of the various forces of slavery and
exploitation.*

The Donatist church, which I discussed in detail in Chapter two, is a case in point. There
a local church sacrificed its own communion with the universal Church in favor of its

---

482 Uzukwu, A Listening Church, 53.
own self-determination in matters of moral discipline. As far as this church was concerned, only those who were morally pure could be admitted to the church or else be re-baptized in the Donatist church. Only the Donatist church was in that sense qualified to determine who was a member of the church that was made up of purely holy and perfect believers. Once the Donatists’ position on re-baptism was rejected by the Pope and Augustine, the Donatists opted to break communion with the universal Church. They were quite convinced that they are the true church that actually has everything a church can possibly have in order to function. For the Donatists, they were sufficiently established to operate as an independent church. Augustine on the other hand would maintain that even though they have the sacraments of the Church, they do not equally have the Spirit that makes these sacraments effective in the catholic Church. Therefore, the Donatists should enter into communion with the universal Church before the Spirit can once again become the unifying and animating principle of their lives. Their church is not equally the true Church that is catholic in nature as the Donatists tend to believe because the catholic Church “is not in Africa alone, nor only among the Africans who send a bishop from Africa to Rome.”

These basic truths that Augustine noted against the Donatists are not only true in polemic situations. What he affirmed about the Spirit and the Church can also be applied to the African church that will solely depend on its resources as an autonomous self-sufficient church governing its own affairs. Such a local church cannot, in my view, have all the powers it needs to function without the Spirit that functions in the Church like the

---

soul in the body. Although an autonomous church would have the sacraments, creed, talents, and gifts, it would not have the Spirit of love and life that is needed to live in communion with others who are different in their opinion. Furthermore, an African church that is autonomous in the full sense would radically be confined to its geographical boundaries. Such a church would be hard-pressed to claim catholicity for itself because what makes a local church catholic is the fact that it is one with the whole as an integral part of the universal Church. For these reasons, the African church should secure its particularity, more so than its autonomy from the universal Church.

Another reason why the African church cannot be autonomous, in my view, is because autonomy goes against the ultimate goal of the Spirit in enriching this church with some particular gifts in the catholic communion. An autonomous African church would really not realize how distinct it is among other local churches within the catholic communion. In its self-sufficient and confined position, the African church would only be attentive to its own individual gifts and resources which should really be considered in totality with the other gifts of the local churches. Second, the purpose of the Spirit’s gifts to the African church would seriously be disregarded in a church that is autonomous. These gifts would only be used for the welfare of this autonomous church, not for the good of the whole universal Church as intended by the Spirit. The reason why the African church cannot, therefore, be autonomous on its own is that this church has received special gifts from the Spirit that should not only serve its needs, but also the needs of other churches. If the African church became autonomous, it would, in my view, be tempted to monopolize the gifts of the Spirit for its own good. Ultimately, the African church needs to understand that it did not receive the gifts of the Spirit in isolation from
other churches. The many gifts the Spirit has given the African church should actually prevent this church and its members from becoming autonomous entities. For Congar there are many gifts of the Spirit – a multiplicity of gifts ... They are gifts made to persons, but those persons are not monads with individual autonomy. They belong to a people, a tradition, a culture, and a sociological group, to which their gifts are in a sense appropriated.485

The mere fact that the African church is part of the universal Church is precisely the reason why this church is well gifted by the Spirit. In return, the African church is duly expected to use its particular gifts and resources for the good of the whole Church.

4.3.3 THE GIFTS AND RESOURCES MUST BE USED FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH

Given the Spirit’s function as the source of communion between the universal and the African church, it means that the African church should use its gifts and resources for the good of the universal Church. The latter should in turn offer its gifts for the good and welfare of the African church. An exchange of gifts and resources is in that way fostered between the universal and the African church by the Spirit that is their source of communion. The exchange of gifts and resources between the universal and African church should be encouraged because sharing their gifts is one effective way they can maintain their communion in the Spirit. There was no exchange of gifts between the Donatist church, for instance, and the universal Church because the Donatists perceived their charismatic gifts as gifts that are personally given to them on account of their holiness. Ecclesial communion could not, therefore, be established between the universal and the Donatist church. The Donatists’ personal claim on the charismatic gifts of the Spirit was, consequently, rejected by Augustine in emphasizing the communal dimension

485 Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, 2:26. Just as persons belong to a wider community, the African church is in turn situated within the universal Church by virtue of its catholicity. The African church is not in that sense a monad that exists as an independent entity. Therefore, it cannot be an autonomous church.
of the Spirit’s gifts to the Church. As a church that is in communion with the universal Church, the African church cannot likewise use the gifts exclusively for its own benefit. Rather, this church should dispose its gifts and resources at the service of the universal Church in order to maintain the communion that exists between them. While the African church struggles to satisfy its own ecclesial priorities and needs, it should also be generous with its gifts and resources in solidarity with the universal Church. Therefore, I will identify some of the gifts and resources that the African church at this time can judiciously use to fulfill its obligations towards the universal Church that also needs the support of this local church.

Overall, the vocation boom to the priesthood and religious life in recent history is a gift of the Spirit to the local church in Africa. Until the latter part of the twentieth century, the African church largely depended on missionary congregations in Europe and America for priests and religious who would minister to its members. The reverse is now the case because the African church is copiously blessed by the Spirit with vocations to the priesthood and religious life. For this reason, the African church has transformed itself from a purely mission church to a missionary church. This church is now in a position to send its own priests and religious to evangelize other churches including older missionary churches in Europe and America. Indeed, there are a number of African priests and religious currently ministering as parish priests, formators, chaplains, teachers, and administrators in these churches in the West. However, there are misperceptions on both sides that need to be addressed in order to strengthen the communion that ought to exist between the African church and other churches in the West. For some of the African bishops, priests, and religious, undertaking new forms of
apostolate in Europe and America is not a priority at this moment because there are more urgent ministries and needs that should be fulfilled within the local church in Africa. These include primary evangelization, education, youth ministry, and ecumenism. On their own part, some bishops and priests in Europe and America are also insecure with the presence of African priests and religious in their churches.

Neither of these concerns, in my view, is clearly justified because the Spirit is the source of all the Church’s gifts and unity. For Congar, “the Church’s catholicity calls for these gifts to be gathered together and exchanged, and for the different parties contributing them to be aware of the whole and of its unity.”486 Those who are not open to African priests and religious working in other churches are not only ignoring the fact that the Spirit is the one using these gifts to build up the whole Church; they also do not have a complete sense of catholicity. At this moment when many parishes and ministries in the West are increasingly in difficulties because of lack of personnel, there should be an exchange of ministerial gifts. This would not only foster the growth of these churches in the West; it would build up the universal Church that is weakened to some extent by the dwindling numbers of its members in the West.

The African church can also share its spirituality with members of other churches within the catholic communion that would give meaning to the realities of life and transform their perception of the world. This form of spirituality is rooted in the Africans’ worldview, namely, their sense of the sacred, of life and death, and the world as it is experienced by the community. In the African worldview, the sense of the sacred is the defining lens through which every other event and experience is interpreted and related. The individual and the community are, therefore, conscious of the presence of the sacred

in all aspects of life. In response, they seek ways and means to be at peace with the sacred before which they are utterly powerless. There is, consequently, a constant dialogue with the sacred to ask for blessings and protection and also to seek solutions to problems, mysteries, and evil occurrences. This sense of the sacred is also brought to bear on life and death in which the living are dearly beloved and the dead are venerated as living ancestors of the community.

A holistic spirituality and outlook on life of this nature can make a difference if the African church is able to share this spirituality with other churches in the catholic communion. For the members of the Western churches whose worldview is divided into sacred and profane, material and spiritual, this spirituality can transform their lives and their view of the world into a divine-centered universe where they are at peace with the sacred. A spirituality of this kind would help them to fully transcend the anti-religious attitude that threatens the future of the catholic faith in Western societies. The way in which ancestors are venerated in Africa will also influence the members of these churches to consider the dead as living ancestors of their communities whose spirits are present in their midst. All of these African spiritual beliefs will at least generate in Western societies a renewed personal dedication towards the omnipresence of the sacred and it will have a positive impact on the whole Church.

Another African resource that the local church in Africa can likewise utilize to enrich the universal Church is the art and symbols of African culture. Africa’s art and symbols are, in my view, gifts from the Spirit signifying the creativity of the Spirit in African culture that is meant to elevate the mind towards the sacred. These include the golden stool – a symbol of divine power; the calabash – a symbol of fecundity; mother-
child carvings – a symbol of life-giving love; the kola nut – a symbol of life, unity, and goodness. In spite of their rich symbolic meaning, African cultural art and symbols, I believe, are yet to be introduced and accommodated in the existing collection of sacred art and symbols within the whole Church. The project of admitting African art and symbols into the catholic Church is, therefore, one that the African church should undertake in collaboration with the universal Church. Such a venture is not only worthwhile, but also necessary and proper because for Vatican II,

> the Church has not adopted any particular style of art as its own, but guided by people’s temperaments and circumstances, and the needs of the various rites, it has admitted styles from every period … The art of our own times from every race and country should also be given free scope in the church, provided it brings to the task the reverence and honor due to the sacred buildings and rites.  

There is clearly, in light of this statement, a definite and rightful place for African art and symbols in the universal Church. Introducing African art and symbols will, therefore, challenge and correct the notion that was once held by earlier missionaries and is still sustained by some individuals in the Church that African cultures are purely pagan. The communion between the universal and African church will be strengthened further as a result of a positive reception of African art and symbols. At the same time, the universal Church will be enriched with these works of art signifying the divine qualities of the sacred in African cultures. As the embodiment and of this Church in Africa, the African church is, likewise, expected to be an agent of reconciliation in order to overcome the ongoing conflicts in Africa that are also a cause of concern for the universal Church.

---

4.3.4 THE AFRICAN CHURCH – AN INSTRUMENT OF RECONCILIATION

On account of the Spirit’s work in the African church as its source of unity, this church should not only become a model of unity in Africa, but an instrument of unity and reconciliation where there is conflict and division. The African church is, accordingly, expected to witness to the unity of the Spirit in a continent that is plagued by ethnic, religious, and political conflict. Unity and reconciliation in Africa can evidently be lived and fostered in and through the African church because this church is empowered by the Spirit of unity to fulfill this mission. The divisions and conflicts that are detrimental to Africans also require a resolve and a line of action from the local church in Africa. In some cases, the African church has publicly denounced the violence and injustice and condemned the perpetrators. However, the position of the African church in these matters is not always a very effective line of action. For Archbishop Michael Francis,

> it is one thing to tell our flocks what the problem is and what the seeming solutions are and another thing to be seen implementing these decisions. It seems to me that the church in Africa has failed to be a leaven of justice, peace, and unity in our continent. In many African countries the church in the past has not spoken up against the violations of the fundamental rights of its people.488

The church in Africa cannot, in my view, justify these postures under the pretext of separating politics and religion or church and state. For the evil at stake requires not simply a response from the church, but a long-term commitment to eradicate the root causes of violence and injustice in the society. In these instances where there is neither the resolve nor the initiative on the part of the African church to translate its words into action as an instrument of reconciliation, the church also loses its credibility. As a witness of unity in diversity, the African church should likewise take concrete steps to address the

---

situations that generate division in the society so that justice, peace, and unity will prevail.

In situations where there are deep-seated ethnic divisions and ongoing deadly violence, reconciliation can be a daunting task for the local church in Africa. If the parties involved are intransigent and little progress is being made to resolve their differences, the church can be despondent and even adopt an indifferent approach to the conflict. Yet, no situation is beyond the limits of the local church in Africa because the mission of this church equally involves the resolution of the most intractable conflicts in the continent. While the task of reconciliation may be challenging and painful, the African church must not allow itself to lose sight of its Spirit-led mission to unify and heal the wounds of division and violence in its territory. The church’s active and enduring involvement in this venture is, in my view, an indispensable service that the church can offer to the continent without counting the cost. This means that the local church in Africa should be patient and confident that ethnic, cultural, and political divisions can ultimately be resolved in the course of time.

For Augustine, there is good reason to be positive even in unpromising situations as in the case of the Donatists. Thus, “we mustn’t despair of anybody, as long as God’s patience is beckoning to repentance; as long as God does not desire the death of the wicked, but rather that he turns again and live, does not snatch the wicked from this life.” The immediate or short-term results that are expected in this mission of reconciliation should not easily circumvent the long-term goals of this indispensable service of the African church. Rather, the church should be inspired and guided by the Spirit that functions as its source of unity in building bridges of unity and peace across

\footnote{St. Augustine, “Sermon 71.21,” In 	extit{Sermons (51-94) on the New Testament}, 258.}
ethnic, cultural, and political divisions in Africa. This would improve the image of the African continent, an image that is often presented to the rest of the world in a negative light because of these conflicts and the system of endemic injustice at work.

In this chapter that focuses on the Spirit as the source of communion between the universal and local churches, I have examined the Spirit’s function in the Church’s trinitarian foundation to establish the Church’s visible and invisible unity in the Spirit. The Spirit is not only the principle of the Church’s invisible communion as is often emphasized in the Magisterium’s documents, but also the principle of the Church’s visible communion. In both cases the Church depends on the Spirit because the Spirit is the one who fosters communion between the divine community of the Trinity and the universal Church and between the universal and the local churches. The universal and the local churches are, therefore, partly divine and inseparably united in nature because of the Spirit through which the whole Church shares in the life of the Trinity. However, the local churches are unique in nature because of their locality and the Spirit’s distinctive gifts to these churches. Yet, they share the same mission with the universal Church under the agency of the Spirit that empowers the Church to reach out to non-Christians and fulfill its prophetic ministry. The difference in the case of the universal Church is that this Church is ontologically and temporally prior to the local churches. I endorse this idea because the local churches, in my view, are modeled after the universal Church that transcends the limits of time and space and gives birth to these churches.

Under this chapter I have also examined the implications of the function of the Spirit as the source of communion in the catholic Church. I discussed what communion in the Spirit means for the whole Church and the difference the Spirit makes in the
constitution, life, and ministry of the Church. This means that there is unity in diversity where the Spirit is the one who ultimately ensures that the Church’s unity is not undermined, but enriched with the diverse gifts of the members. The non-ministerial gifts of the members of the Church are likewise meant to be utilized and integrated in the life of this Church for the good of all. The fact that the Spirit is the source of communion also means that the universal and local churches share a common life in a communion of mutual-interiority. In this case, the universal Church is required to support the local churches in a spirit of solidarity while the local churches enrich the universal Church with their cultural and charismatic gifts. Their mutual communion in a bond of love is similarly meant to be a sign of the Spirit at work in the Church. In matters of faith and morals, communion in the Spirit means that the whole Church is preserved from error by the Spirit that guides and unites the whole Church in the truth. There is no monopoly of the truth by some members because all the members of this Church have a shared knowledge of what the Spirit teaches the Church. For its own part, the Church is also expected to transform and renew itself in accordance with the will of the Spirit that functions as its source of communion so that the Church can serve the Spirit more effectively in various contexts. This same Spirit likewise requires the Church to engage in ecumenism and inculturation for the sake of unity and charity towards all.

For the local church in Africa, communion in the Spirit requires the formation of participatory structures at all levels of the African church. The reason is that all the members are also gifted by the Spirit to participate in the life and mission of the African church. As a local church that is uniquely gifted by the Spirit within the catholic communion, the African church has its own identity that is reflected in its particularity. In
its communion with the universal Church, the African church should, therefore, emphasize its particularity, not its autonomy because the latter cannot be realized where the Spirit is the source of communion. For this reason, the African church is expected to use its unique gifts for the good of the whole Church in order to strengthen its communion with the universal Church. On the other hand, the African church that is united in the Spirit is required to bear witness to this unity as an instrument of peace and reconciliation in order to heal the ethnic, cultural, and political divisions on the continent. The reason the Spirit should be acknowledged as the source of communion, in my view, is that the Spirit is the common gift of the Father and the Son to the Church that animates and unites the Church. The nature, mission, unity, and diversity of both the universal Church and local churches can adequately be realized, sustained, and renewed in the Spirit functioning as the unifying and animating principle of the Church’s communion. In what follows in the general conclusion, I will present the summary, appraisal, and recommendations to my research on Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy and its implications for communion ecclesiology.
CONCLUSION

In all aspects of the Church’s life and nature, the Spirit is uniquely the one who animates and unites the whole Church. The Spirit’s function as the source of communion was, therefore, emphasized in the previous chapter in an attempt to enlighten the members of the Church about the Spirit that unites them with the Trinity. The fact that the Spirit is identified as the Church’s source of communion is significant, in my view, because it indicates that the Spirit creates and preserves the unity in diversity among the members of the Church and between the universal and local churches. Since the Spirit is the life-giving principle of the Church, it means that it is under the guidance and strength of the Spirit that the Church fulfills its mission, exercises its infallibility, and reforms itself in order to be credible and effective. For the African church that is in communion with the universal Church in the Spirit, it means that the faithful who are gifted by the Spirit should actively participate in the life and mission of this church. As a church that has its own gifts from the Spirit, the African church should also discover and preserve its particular resources that should be used for the good of the whole Church. In a continent that is generally plagued by ethnic, religious, and political conflict, the Church’s unity in the Spirit should likewise empower and challenge the African church to become a model of unity and an instrument of unity and reconciliation.

By way of conclusion, I will summarize in the following section the Spirit’s distinctive function in both the immanent Trinity and the Church that I consistently highlighted in this dissertation. On this subject, Augustine and Congar are relevant because they acknowledged that the Spirit is the common gift of the Father and the Son to the Church and the unifying principle of communion among the members of the Church.
SUMMARY

In defense of the Church’s faith in three persons in one God, Augustine would affirm the unity and distinctiveness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit based on their common nature and relation to one another. As well as emphasizing the unity of the three divine persons in his trinitarian theology, Augustine would also illustrate by way of analogy how three entities that are united are likewise distinct from each other. He compared the unity and distinctiveness of the divine persons to that of memory, understanding, and will on the one hand and the lover, beloved, and the love on the other. These analogies are, however, limited for Augustine, because they do not fully represent the divine persons and the perfect unity that exists between them. In light of their consubstantiality, Augustine would strongly argue that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in nature and at the same time inseparable in their work *ad extra*. The Spirit is not, consequently, subordinated to the Father and the Son as their bond of love. Moreover, they are not greater than the Spirit in sending the Spirit as their common gift because their unity and equality is a substantial quality of their being. Even though the Spirit is the one sent to empower and unify the members of the Church, Augustine would maintain that the Father and the Son are also involved in the work of the Spirit. For this reason, Augustine would identify each of the divine persons with specific functions while acknowledging their inseparability. He was, therefore, conscious of the dialectics between what is common or trinitarian and what is particular to each of the divine persons. As such, he was able to articulate the distinctive nature and function of the Spirit in the immanent and economic Trinity, not because these qualities are uncommon to the divine persons, but because they are fittingly attributed to the Spirit.
Within the divine community of the Trinity, the Spirit is the one whom Augustine identified as the common gift, the bond of love, and the communion between the Father and the Son. The Spirit is distinctively the common gift, in his view, because the Spirit principally proceeds from the Father and the Son as from a single source. Therefore, the Spirit is in that respect the Spirit of both the Father and the Son as well as the common gift that they share. Considered in this sense, the Spirit is clearly distinct from the giver of the gift, namely, the Father and the Son because the Spirit is itself the personification of their self-gift to each other. For this reason, Augustine would classify the Spirit as the bond of love by which the Father and the Son are joined to each other in love.

This notion of the Spirit is fundamental to his trinitarian theology and ecclesiology because it provides an insight into who the Spirit is and what the Spirit does in the immanent Trinity and the Church. Unless the Spirit enables the Father and the Son and the members of the Church to be united in love, it means that the relationship between them will not be mutually experienced. Based on the Spirit’s unifying function, Augustine would also consider the Spirit as the communion between the Father and the Son. The form of communion the Spirit fosters between them cannot, however, be fully articulated, given its mysterious nature. In this communion, the Spirit is the unifying and animating principle of their inner relationship with each other. The Spirit is, therefore, the agent of divine communion as well as the agent of communion between the Trinity and the members of Christ’s Body, the Church. The latter can only participate in the fellowship of the divine persons through the Spirit because the Spirit is the one through whom the whole triad dwells in the Church. In this communion of the Spirit, there is not only unity, but also diversity that is sustained and preserved by the Spirit.
Augustine’s trinitarian theology was thoroughly examined in this first chapter as a prelude to his ecclesiology because the former is what significantly informs the latter. In general, there is a connection between Augustine’s trinitarian theology and ecclesiology. This link is based on the fact that the unity of the divine persons is rightly the model of the Church’s unity because the Spirit that functions as the bond of love is the source of communion in both the divine community and the Church. The communion the Spirit creates in the Church can, therefore, be traced back to the form of communion among the divine persons of the Trinity. In light of these observations, I consider Augustine’s insight on the particularity and function of the Spirit quite significant because it enables one to appreciate how dependent the Church is on the Spirit from its foundation.

The subject-matter of the second chapter was specifically confined to the mission and function of the Spirit in the Church. Even though the Spirit is present and active beyond the boundaries of the Church, the latter is where the Spirit binds its members in a communion of love. The Spirit is, in Augustine’s view, the supreme gift that is common to all members. The Spirit is also the source of the Church’s charismatic gifts as well as the efficient cause of the sacraments of the Church. In order to benefit from these charismatic gifts and sacraments the Spirit provides the Church, one must equally be in communion with this Church. Since the Donatists refused to enter into communion with the Church, Augustine would argue that their charismatic gifts and sacraments are not useful and effective as a result of their sin against the Spirit of charity.

As the supreme gift that is common to all the members of the Church in communion, the Spirit is not ultimately reserved for a select few. All the members of the Church are, therefore, equal in sharing the same Spirit. They can likewise contribute
towards the common good of the Church on account of the Spirit that is present and active in their lives. The whole Church is also gifted by the Spirit with many charismatic gifts that should be used at the service of all its members. Although there is diversity of gifts in the Church, the members of the Church are still united in love because the Spirit is the source of all these gifts. Each member should, therefore, discover his or her own gift and use it for the benefit of the community. The gifts of tongues and prophecy in the Church were all recognized by Augustine as the Spirit’s gifts, but against the Donatists he would emphasize the communal purpose of these gifts rather than their personal benefits. While the Donatists considered their charismatic gifts and sacraments as a result of their holiness, Augustine would relate these gifts to the power of the Spirit in the Church. The Donatists were, therefore, determined to form a church that is pure, uniform, and independent on its own lest its members be corrupted by those who betrayed their faith.

For Augustine, one can be confident that he or she has received the Spirit and the Spirit is effective in one’s life if he or she is in communion with the Church and is charitable towards the other members. The necessity of preserving the communion of the Spirit through charity was, therefore, underscored in this dissertation because the Spirit is love that unites rather than divides those in whom it dwells. If a member deliberately destroys the communion the Spirit creates in the Church, it means that the person is likewise opposed to the Spirit of love. One will not only be separated from the life-giving Spirit, one will also become an inactive member of the Church. Such statements do not, in my view, suggest that the Spirit is given by the Church or that only those who are in communion with the Church have access to the Spirit because the Spirit is not limited to the Church. Rather, it signifies the importance of the Spirit in the life of the members of
the Church who are in communion with one another. Unless one is alive in the Spirit, one
cannot in turn be an active member of the Church. For this reason, I consider Augustine’s
distinction of the reception of the Spirit on the one hand and the reception of the
sacraments on the other to be very relevant. In the sense that the distinction indicates that
in addition to receiving the sacraments, one must also be in communion in order to
experience the power and effects of the Spirit in the Church. This needs, in my view, to
be seriously taken into consideration by the Church especially in its missionary endeavors
to ensure that those who received the sacraments are alive in the communion of the Spirit.
Every member of the Church should, accordingly, treasure their communion in the Spirit
and be charitable towards each other. In that way, the Church would become a sure sign
of the presence of the Spirit in the world.

In essence, the Spirit is indispensable to the Church, as far as Augustine was
concerned, because the latter depends on the Spirit for its life, unity, and gifts. He,
therefore, compared in his Spirit – Soul analogy the function of the Spirit in the Church
to that of the soul in the body to illustrate the necessity of the Spirit in the Church. Many
parts clearly form the human body and each part has its own important function in the
body. Yet, all these parts function in a harmonious way and are alive in the body because
the human soul animates and unites all the different parts of the body. Similarly, the
Church is like the human body with different members who have diverse gifts, vocations,
and languages. The Church is, nonetheless, a united and living Body of Christ with all the
members actively functioning in harmony because of the Spirit dwelling in the Church.

Like the soul of the human body, the Spirit is not only the unifying principle, but
also the principle of life for all the members of the Church. The Spirit is, therefore, the
one who enables all the different members of the Church to be united in love and to function in accordance with their vocation and charism. For this reason, the Spirit was uniquely identified by Augustine as the source of unity and diversity in the Church. The Church is not constituted of uniform members. On the contrary, the catholic Church is enriched with diverse gifts, ministries, and vocations that are organized by the Spirit that is present and active in the Church. There is no reason to limit the gifts and vocations that should prevail in the Church if indeed the Spirit is the one who coordinates and preserves the unity that exist in the Church. Anyone who is, therefore, gifted by the Spirit can work in harmony with other members of the Church for the good of the whole. The members of the Church should not only preserve the unity of the Spirit in a bond of love, they should also use their gifts to promote the unity that the Spirit creates in the Church.

In order for the members of the Church to be active and alive in their vocation, they must be part and parcel of the Church where the Spirit is the principle of life. Those who are in communion with the Church are equally alive in the Spirit because the Spirit is the source of life for the whole Church. Since the soul does not give life to the parts of the body that are cut off from the whole, neither does the Spirit give life, in Augustine’s view, to those who are no longer in communion with the Church. Without the Spirit, it is impossible likewise for the members of the Church to be active members. The Spirit – Soul analogy does not only give us an insight into the functions of the Spirit in the Church, it also underscores the consequences of breaking communion with the Church. The aim and obligation of every member of the Church should always be to preserve the unity of the Church and be part of the communion of love that the Spirit creates.
One can, therefore, argue that the sacraments and creed alone are not what ultimately distinguishes and animates the members of the Church. Rather, it is the presence and function of the Spirit that renews and empowers the members with its own divine life. If the members of the Church are totally ignorant of this fact that the Spirit is the source of the Church’s life, it means they are essentially denying themselves a vital force of their Christian life in the Church. Based on the fact that the Spirit is the Church’s principle of life and unity, it means that the Church is radically different in nature from all other forms of communities and institutions. The life-giving breath of the Spirit is what ultimately sets the Church apart and keeps it in being. As a result of the presence of the Spirit in the Church, the latter is able to speak the languages of all the nations without the chaos and confusion that prevailed in the tower of Babel. The more the members of the Church are alive in the Spirit, the more the Church will be enriched with diverse gifts for the good of the whole.

Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy was variously interpreted over time by the Magisterium and theologians alike in articulating the function of the Spirit in the Church. An effort was, therefore, made in Chapter three to examine from selected documents the shifts in the Magisterium’s understanding of this analogy and Congar’s perspective on the function of the Spirit in the Church. While Augustine did not identify the Spirit as the soul of the Church, Leo XIII would clearly assert in Divinum Illud Munus that “as Christ is the head of the Church, so is the Holy Spirit her soul.”\textsuperscript{490} As such, he would consider the Church as a divine institution that is essentially perfect and self-sufficient in itself to the extent that no other manifestation is required as a result of the Spirit. Identifying the Spirit as the soul of the Church is, in my view, a shift from Augustine’s position because

it makes the Church and its structures supreme and purely divine in essence. At the same
time, it limits the Spirit to the Church as if the Spirit and the Church are conjoined
together. In Augustine’s case, the Spirit is not conjoined to the Church in which it
functions in a similar way as the soul functions in the human body.

Like Leo, Pius XII also adopted a literal interpretation of the analogy in referring
to the Spirit as the soul of the Church. Furthermore, he argued that the Spirit is present
and active in the inferior members through the ministry of the higher members. Such a
claim is a departure from Augustine’s analogy of the function of the Spirit in the Church
because the latter only affirmed that the Spirit animates and vivifies all the members of
the Church. Pius was, however, precise in affirming that the freedom and uniqueness of
each member of the Church is preserved by the Spirit as the source of unity and diversity.
The Spirit is in that case the one who harmonizes the differences among the members of
the Church.

Vatican II was more faithful to Augustine in analogically comparing the function
of the Spirit in the Church to that of the soul in the body. This Council would even
attempt to express what was not so explicitly represented in Augustine’s analogy,
namely, the Spirit’s relationship to Christ, the Head of the Church. The Spirit was clearly
linked to Christ, the Head of the Church because the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ.
Therefore, the Church in which the Spirit functions is not just the Body of Christ; it is
also joined to Christ, the Head of this Body by one and the same Spirit. In this case, the
Spirit does not only unite the members of the Church to one another, the Spirit also unites
them to Christ the Head. Considered in this light, the Church is not an embodiment of the
Spirit in which the Spirit is the soul, but the Mystical Body of Christ, united to its Head in
the Spirit. The Council did not only shift away from Leo XIII’s and Pius XII’s literal interpretation of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy, the council also expressed in a very concise manner the Spirit’s work in relation to Christ, the Head of the Church.

In interpreting this analogy, John Paul II would introduce two distinctive functions that the Spirit fulfills in the Church as the Lord and Giver of life. These are the sanctifying and teaching functions of the Spirit in the Church. In addition to its animating function, the Spirit also sanctifies the members of the Church, in his view, because it is through the Spirit that the members are adopted as children of God, the Father. Sanctionification is in that sense the new form of life that the Spirit gives to all the members of the Church. Part of the Spirit’s function in the Church, in John Paul II’s view, is also to convince the members of evil and sin, and to help them understand the full meaning of Christ’s message. In this case, the Spirit sheds light on what is known to be true in the Church the same way the soul enables the human person to perceive the realities of life.

A complementary point of view was provided by Congar following his analysis of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy and his stance on the Church as the fruit of the divine missions of Christ and the Spirit. He retained the analogy between the Spirit and the soul, but he insisted that it is a functional and not an ontological analogy. The Spirit is not, therefore, the soul of the Church that makes the Church essentially a divine institution as some documents of the Magisterium have suggested. For this reason, the analogy should not be stretched beyond its limits because that would amount to ecclesiological monophysitism. Congar would, therefore, argue that the Spirit is not reducible to the fact that it is closely bound to the Church even as its principle of unity and life. The Spirit is not also given to an already constituted Church as the analogy tends to suggest. Rather,
the Spirit is in Congar’s view, the co-instituting principle that conferred unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity on the Church from its foundation.

For this reason, the Spirit should not be considered as the unifying and animating principle of an already formed Church that is independent of the Spirit because it constituted the Church and gave the latter its charismatic and hierarchical structures. To some extent Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy can easily suggest that the Spirit is wholly and solely the Church’s source of communion. This seems to be the case since the Spirit’s role in the constitution of the Church is not sufficiently represented in this analogy. In light of this limitation, Congar’s perspective on the Spirit in relation to the Church was duly represented in this study to highlight the fact that the Church is a direct result of the mission of the Son and the Spirit. As such, the Spirit is directly involved in the formation of the Church and it is this Spirit that also guarantees the Church’s life and heritage. Properly understood, the Spirit is ultimately the co-instituting principle of the Church, and at the same time the source of communion in the Church. In both cases, the Spirit is clearly indispensable to the Church and it is for this reason I endeavored to emphasize the Spirit’s unifying and animating functions in the Church as well as to preserve the charismatic element of the Church. The latter is not fully regarded as an inherent structure of the Church the same way as the hierarchical structure of the Church is perceived. Consequently, it is the Church’s hierarchical structure that dictates the life and mission of the Church. On account of its charismatic structure, the Church should also acclaim the charisms of its members.

Congar also corrected the assumption that the Spirit is automatically at the disposal of the Church as its source of unity and life. He specifically noted that the
Church needs to invoke the Spirit in all its activities in order to be effective. The Spirit on its part is not bound to act when it is invoked because the Spirit is free to operate at will. Every action of the Spirit, in Congar’s view, should rightly be perceived as an event of the Spirit. Even though the Spirit freely functions in the Church, it still works together with Christ in forming the members of the Church. For this reason, there is no opposition, in Congar’s view, between the charismatic and hierarchical structures of the Church. However, the former needs to be preserved and highlighted, in my view, because of the excessive emphasis that the catholic Church places on the latter.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the Spirit as the source of communion between the universal and local churches in which the Church’s visible and invisible unity in the Spirit is established. The Spirit is not only, in my view, the principle of the Church’s invisible communion, but also the Church’s visible communion. In view of the Spirit’s role in the life of the Church, the nature of both the universal and local churches was examined in detail because it sheds light on the Church’s relation to the Spirit. Augustine’s and Congar’s insight on the Spirit as the source of communion is, therefore, significant because the Spirit is ultimately the one who constitutes and preserves the Church’s communion in unity. One cannot, consequently, identify the universal Church with the hierarchical structures because an institutional-based view of this Church simply disregards Augustine’s assumptions. For Augustine, the universal Church derives its origin and foundation from the community of the divine persons. Thus, the Church not only participates in the life of the Trinity, the divine persons also dwell in the Church where the Spirit is the source of communion. The unity that prevails in the Church is not, therefore, a product of the Church’s hierarchical structures. If the Spirit is only an
external additional force to the life and mission of the Church, the latter merely becomes
an institution that is confined within space and time. As offsprings of the Church
constituted by the Spirit, the local churches are integral parts of this Church that they
signify. They also bear the elements of this Church because of the Spirit that enables
them to speak the languages of all the nations. However, each local church bears a
particular identity depending on the liturgical and spiritual gifts received from the Spirit.
In spite of this, the local churches still share the same mission with the universal Church
under the agency of the Spirit that empowers the Church to fulfill its mission.

An extensive study was also conducted in the previous chapter on the implications
that the function of the Spirit as the source of communion hold for the catholic Church.
Since the Spirit is the one who constitutes the Church’s unity, the latter is also required to
conform itself to the Spirit’s form of communion and mission. As a communion that
bears a horizontal and a vertical dimension, the members of the Church are expected to
dispose themselves to the Spirit more than mere submission to authority. In such a
communion, there is not only unity but diversity as well because the Spirit that is the
source of all gifts is the one who gathers the different members of the Church in unity.
The members of the Church should, therefore, appreciate each other in their diversity as a
result of their unity and equality in the Spirit.

Given the Spirit’s function as the source of communion, it means that the
universal Church and local churches also share a common life in a communion of mutual
interiority. Each of them is, accordingly, an integral part of the other through the Spirit
that unites them in a communion of love. For this reason, they are expected to support
each other in a spirit of solidarity and charity as a means to strengthening their
communion and becoming a sign of the Spirit at work. In the Church where the Spirit functions as the source of communion, it means that the whole Church is likewise united in truth and preserved from error. An individual or group of members does not, consequently, have an exclusive knowledge in matters of faith and morals because there is, rather, a shared insight of the truth among the members of the Church. However, on account of their office or charism, some members of the Church are appointed to teach with authority in accordance with their vocation. In seeking to conform itself to the Spirit’s form of communion, the Church too is required to renew its image and mission. This should be done in communion, not in isolation since the universal Church and local churches are united in the Spirit. The Church should also be involved in ecumenism and inculturation to further the unifying mission of the Spirit.

Concerning the church in Africa, the Spirit’s function as the source of communion also bears some implications on the church’s life and mission. First and foremost, the African church is expected to create participatory structures at all levels of its formation. Since the Spirit has gifted its members with diverse gifts, each of them should be given the opportunity to utilize his or her gift for the good of the church. In order to achieve this objective, the African church should, in my view, organize itself in the form of a family where everyone is recognized and appreciated for one’s unique gifts and status. In effect, the African church is required to create Small Christian Communities to encourage creativity and participation at the grassroots levels. Also, at parish level a variety of lay ministries should be introduced and the church should employ the services of the faithful in modern means of communication to promote the ministry of the Word.
As a result of its communion in the Spirit with the universal Church, the African church is likewise obligated to emphasize its particularity rather than its autonomy. The reason at hand is that the particular gift the Spirit gave this church is the means by which the African church recognizes its identity and in turn contributes to the good of the universal Church. As a concept as well as a system or form of human constitution, autonomy represents independent self-governance in which the individual or institution is sovereign and reliant on one’s resources. In reference to the African church, autonomy in Uzukwu’s view means being free and dependent on its own resources which I believe should be used for the good of the whole Church. Emphasizing its own particularity more than its autonomy is what is urgently required, in my view, because that will greatly help the African church to assert itself in the communion of the Spirit. This is especially true because autonomy undermines communion with the universal Church. Furthermore, autonomy goes against the goal of the Spirit in enriching each church with particular gifts for the good of all because autonomy in the strict sense engenders isolation. Among the unique gifts the Spirit has enriched the African church, the following were noted: Africa’s diverse cultural and social heritage, the African sense of community life, the centrality of life and family in African culture, the liturgical celebration of Africans, and African symbols and spirituality.

As resources of the African church, these qualities can likewise be shared as a form of contribution and a means to strengthen the communion between the universal Church and the African church. It is for these reasons that I strongly appealed to leaders and members of the African church to discover and treasure their church’s particularity more than its autonomy. Discovering its particularity in comparison to other churches in
the Catholic communion would clearly enable the African church to understand the unique gifts that the Spirit has specifically given to this church. The emphasis, in my view, should be on the African church’s particularity, not on its autonomy because the latter cannot be realized where the Spirit is the source of communion. An autonomous African church is not, therefore, a viable option if communion is seriously taken into account because autonomy in the full sense invariably obstructs the sharing and exchange of resources and services. As a result of the Spirit’s function as the source of communion, the African church should use its gifts to strengthen its communion with the universal Church. On its part, the African church should be an instrument of unity and reconciliation on the continent. In that way, the African church will be at the service of the Spirit and at the same time promote the universal Church’s mission of bringing to fulfillment God’s kingdom of peace, justice, and love.

APPRAISAL

The main focus of this dissertation on Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy and its implications for communion ecclesiology is on the Spirit as the unifying and animating principle of the life and mission of the Church. This is due to the fact that the Spirit is properly the Spirit of life as well as the bond of love that animates and unites the whole Church. Since the Church is essentially a communion of diverse members in unity with the divine persons of the Trinity, it is my thesis that the Spirit is specifically the one who uniquely functions as the source of the Church’s visible and invisible communion. Therefore, the unity between the divine community and the Church, the universal and local churches, and the hierarchical and charismatic structures of the Church should be acknowledged as the work of the Spirit. Towards this end that demands a proper insight
into the particularity and function of the Spirit, I have conducted a study on Augustine’s trinitarian theology and ecclesiology to account for what the Spirit does in the Church. The Spirit clearly functions as the source of communion in the Church and it is because of the Spirit I insisted that unity is not opposed to diversity in the Church. Augustine’s perspective is, therefore, significant because it establishes the unity, diversity, and tolerance that ought to exist in the catholic Church. For this reason, no one liturgical rite or language should prevail in the Church. Since the Church is modeled on the Trinity, the Church should be a unity of diverse members who are equal, irrespective of their background. Closely associated with the Church’s unity in diversity is the theme of inculturation that could not be discussed in depth because of limited space. However, the Church’s unity in diversity is exactly the reason why the Spirit’s unifying function should be acknowledged because the Spirit is the one who preserves this feature of the Church.

In terms of the contribution that this study on the function of the Spirit engenders in the life and mission of the Church, the following are worthy of note at this moment in time. Recent documents of the Magisterium on communion hardly identified the Spirit as the source of the Church’s visible and invisible communion. In view of this oversight, the Spirit is acknowledged in this dissertation as the Church’s principle of unity in order to inform the members of the Church about their unity in the Spirit. Within the Church, there should be mutual respect and tolerance for all the diverse gifts, cultures, and languages that are preserved in unity by the Spirit. Knowing that the Spirit is common to all members of the Church as this study revealed is bound to encourage the active participation of all members of the Church. Their full participation is endorsed in this dissertation that provides solid grounds to justify the inclusion of all members in the
growth and ministry of the Church. Accordingly, the members of the hierarchical structure of the Church are not the only ones who are duty-bound to play an active part in the life and mission of the Church. For this reason, the Spirit is consistently presented in my study as the source of the gifts and charisms of all the members of the Church.

The challenge that this insight, therefore, poses to each member of the Church is to use their charismatic gifts for the good of the whole Church and to foster the Spirit’s unifying mission. Augustine certainly emphasized the importance of each member’s contribution towards the life and mission of the Church because he affirmed that the Spirit is the supreme gift of God that is common to all the members of the Church. There is ultimately no other gift that is greater or more important than the Spirit. Some members cannot, therefore, be active in the Church while others are passive because the Spirit is common to all members. Those who are active cannot, consequently, monopolize this Spirit, in my view, because the Spirit is primarily the everlasting gift of the Father and the Son to the Church. In that sense, the Spirit is free and unlimited in fulfilling its mission in the Church. On the other hand, the Spirit can use the services of other members of the Church. The idea that the Spirit is common to all the members of the Church is, therefore, significant in my estimation, because it enables each member of the Church to respond to the promptings of the Spirit. Such awareness is necessary towards the full use of all the charismatic gifts of the members at different levels of the Church. Furthermore, the Spirit’s presence in each member of the Church clearly validates what is affirmed in this study that the Spirit provides a shared knowledge of the truth in the Church. This position adequately addresses Pius XII’s injunction in *Mystici Corporis* that the Spirit acts in the inferior members of the Church through the ministry of the higher members.
Because of the excessive emphasis on the hierarchical structure, the charismatic structure is represented in this project as an essential dimension of the Church that distinguishes the latter from other institutions. An effort was, therefore, made in this study to specify that the Spirit functions in conjunction with the Father and the Son in order to maintain a balance between the hierarchical and charismatic structures, and the extremes of an overly institutional and exclusively Spirit-based Church. My objective in examining the Spirit’s function in the Church is not to effectively replace a hierarchically oriented Church with a charismatic or Spirit-centered Church. Rather, the aim is to offer an authentic perspective on the Spirit’s function in the Church in order to shed light on the charismatic dimension of the Church. For this reason, I fully reflected on Augustine’s understanding of the Spirit’s distinctive function in both the immanent and economic Trinity. His point of view is quite instructive and objective with respect to the function of the Spirit in the Church because he insisted that the divine persons are inseparable in their operations ad extra. Although the charismatic structure does not have the final word, the Spirit still fulfills its work in the Church with the cooperation of the Father and the Son.

The significance of Augustine’s perspective was clearly noted in this study because he affirmed the trinitarian nature of the Church’s life while defending the uniqueness of the Spirit’s function. While Augustine did not discuss the role of the Word in what the Spirit does in his Spirit – Soul analogy, Congar would specifically affirm that the Word and the Spirit work together in building up the Church. Thus, there is no opposition between the hierarchical and charismatic structures of the Church. This means that there is no conflict between the institutional elements of the Church derived from the Word and the charismatic gifts the Spirit has given to the Church. The fact that the
ordained ministers of the Word are different in vocation from other charismatic vocations in the Church should not amount to a division between them because the Word and the Spirit work together. An authentic insight of what the Spirit does in the Church was provided in this dissertation to resolve this issue. A trinitarian vision of the constitution of the Church is also of immense help in addressing the work of the divine persons in the life and mission of the Church. Such a vision could have been discussed more in this study, but the task was beyond the limits of this dissertation.

As the source of the Church’s charismatic gifts and as the principle of unity between the universal Church and local churches, the Spirit is the one who in turn confers the identity and particularity of the churches in communion. Their communion and the mission they share notwithstanding, the local churches are distinct in their practice and sets of values based on the gifts the Spirit endowed on each of them. On that note, the African church was presented in this study as a local church with its own particularity that should be embraced and celebrated in order to strengthen communion with the universal Church. This approach is a more viable option than the “freedom – autonomy” approach proposed by Kasper and Uzukwu respectively. In discussing the unique gifts of the African church, it is my hope that this venture will enable this church to realize its particularity within the catholic communion and in turn contribute towards the good of the whole Church. Failure to embrace, promote, and preserve its particularity would be counter-productive. Above all, it would perpetuate the present state of affairs in which the African church is not highly represented in the communion of the universal Church.
RECOMMENDATIONS

This study on the function of the Spirit in the Church as the source of communion is by no means exhaustive in depth and in scope. The reason is because I focused only on the Spirit’s unifying and animating functions based on selected works of Augustine and Congar. Therefore, I recommend that more research be conducted on the Spirit’s relation to the Church from other theological works that also offer an informed perspective on this important theme. In this regard, I would suggest that the starting point for such a research should at least consist of the theological works of the Church Fathers like Ss. Ambrose in the West and Gregory of Nyssa in the East who commented on the Spirit in the Church. Like Augustine, they too affirmed that the divine persons are inseparable in their work while noting the sanctifying and life-giving functions of the Spirit in the Church as “co-worker and companion.”491 A study of their work will serve to retrieve the richness of patristic theology of the Spirit in the Church. Also, it will enable one to anchor his or her position in the Scripture that informs the teachings of the Church Fathers.

In the Second Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, it was affirmed that “the ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of the Council’s document.”492 For an authentic articulation of this ecclesiology of communion, one needs to consider the Church’s divine origins and the Spirit’s unique role in the life and mission of this Church. Since there are insufficient theological books and articles on the nature and mission of the Spirit, I would recommend that there should be more theological investigation on the subject of the Spirit and its mission in the Church. This will not only

---

offer an informed perspective on the Church’s indispensable relation to the Spirit, it will also foster a deeper and personal devotion to the Spirit that is not evident at the moment.

While the element of mystery in the Church’s communion is not fully elaborated upon in the course of this study, I would suggest that due consideration should be given to this feature of the Church in articulating the nature and mission of the Church. The element of mystery needs to be included in any project on the Church because the Church is visible and invisible, as well as divine and human in its constitution. For this reason, the nature of the Church cannot fully be represented in concrete material terms without minimizing its mysterious dimension. In that case, Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy of the function of the Spirit in the Church, as noted in this study, should only be understood as a comparative explanation of the Church’s unity in the Spirit.

For future research on the Spirit as the source of communion and its implication for the local church in Africa, I would investigate the differences between the churches of various Episcopal Conferences on the continent. These groupings of churches are based on common regional and cultural heritage that define these churches’ mission and identity. An exploration of their particularity as regional churches based on their cultural and contextual resources would not only show the richness of the African church as a whole, it would also attest to the Spirit’s active presence in these churches. These regional churches were all classified as the African church in this study to provide a general view of the Spirit’s impact on the identity and life of the church on the continent. The next step in this effort should also examine in detail the cultural and ritual practices that can be adopted and integrated into the liturgical celebration of these churches as part of the Spirit’s mission to unite all things in Christ.
This study on the Spirit as source of communion for the Church in general and the African church in particular is absolutely not conclusive in view of the Spirit’s ongoing mission in the Church and the world. Moreover, the implications of Augustine’s Spirit – Soul analogy are far more than what I attempted to articulate in this dissertation. Yet, I am confident that in its animating and unifying functions in the Church, the Spirit will spontaneously generate a renewed understanding and affirmation of communion, charity, charism, and service in the Church. A renewed confidence in the Spirit as the source of life and unity for all members will indeed consolidate the bonds of communion and solidarity between the universal Church and the local churches and the hierarchical and charismatic members of the Mystical Body of Christ that is alive in the Spirit.


——. *De Trinitate*, V. XV (PL 42, Col. 0921).


———. *Sermo* 267.4 (PL 38. Col. 1231).


———. *The Word and the Spirit*, translated by David Smith. San Francisco:


Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal. Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion,


Theological Historical Commission. The Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life, translated


