

According to *Dei Verbum* and with base in Sacred Scripture, revelation is a long ago started Trinitarian process God have chosen to let us know Him and His will. In the Holy Spirit, we are able to participate in this process through Christ the “mediator and the fullness of all revelation” especially through His death and resurrection (DV, 2). The Church depends on Sacred Scripture for guidance on following the Lord’s commandment of uninterrupted preaching to all men without altering the message received from Jesus Christ directly or from Holy Spirit’s promptings. The apostles and other apostolic men were committed to put in writing Jesus’s message to make it available to future generations. This message is alive and whole thanks to the successors of the apostles who continue teaching and handing down the faith, whose work and ministry is reflected on what is called Tradition (DV, 8). Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are like twin sisters, enriching and complementing each other. “There is a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture”. We need both in order to preserve and keep the purity of Christ’s message and be able to make it available and understandable to men of any age. It is our duty to accept and venerate both equally (DV, 9).

According to *Lumen Gentium*, the Church is the vehicle Jesus uses to come to every man. The Church in Christ is also a sign of the union that exists between man and God and within men themselves (LG, 1). As the Body of Christ and with Christ as head of the Church and the only “Mediator and unique way of salvation”, the Church is necessary for salvation as it is her who administers Baptism. Along with faith, Jesus himself affirmed this sacrament is necessary for salvation (LG, 14). Non-ordained members play a role in the Church since as baptized we are sharers of the common priesthood of the faithful, but also of the prophetic and kingly functions.

In an interrelation with the hierarchical priesthood of the ordained ministers of the Church, we “join in the offering of the Eucharist” offering not only the Victim to God but also ourselves. In addition, we make use of our priesthood in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving. Our nature of Christians is also expressed in the fruitful lifestyle that we adopt as we raise our families, and work in and order the temporal realities, making it possible for the people of God to continue living through the centuries and doing our part “in the saving work of the Church. In a word, <Christians must be to the world what the soul is to the body>” (LG, 10-11, 31, 33, 38).

According to *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the relationship between the Catholic Church and other Christian Churches (the term applied to the Eastern Orthodox Churches) is one of unity built upon Peter who has “the keys of the kingdom of heaven with Christ as the chief cornerstone and shepherd of our souls”. A visible sign that signifies and makes a reality the unity of the Church is the sacrament of the Eucharist instituted by Christ (UR, 2). UR acknowledges the varying degrees of differences between the Catholic Church and other Ecclesial Communities (the term applied to communities separated by the 16th century Reformation and forward) separated from the Catholic Church with blame on all sides. The Catholic Church calls them Christians too, embraces them with affection, accept them as brothers to whom the efforts of unity are also extended since their baptism justifies them in faith, and makes them members of the Body of Christ. As such, the Holy Spirit is actively working in them; however, the Catholic Church declares there is no unity as desired for Christ between the Catholic Church and these ecclesial communities (UR, 3).

After having read and discussed the course's material and having in mind what I learned in a previous course, I cannot but see that the divisions plaguing the Church of Christ since the time of the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church and the whole first millennium of the Church it only got worse during the second millennium. The fragmentation that occurred during the 16th century appears to be more dramatic and the ways the separated brothers went, seem to be much more different from the course set by the Catholic Church. However, the Holy Spirit still guides and moves Christians wherever they go. I dream of a Church where Lutherans were for Catholics another religious family just as the Franciscans or Benedictines are, without the adjective of "separated" brothers; where some from a Wesleyan Church as a tourist in any Catholic parish could join for the weekend a service of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and felt welcomed and at home. May courses like these at the SOT contribute greatly to the pursue of unity in the church from its individual members and as a whole for the advancement and growth of God's kingdom!