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**The Theology of Holiness According to St John Paul II  
in the Encyclicals of His Pontificate**

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## **Anotace**

Cíl studie je zaměřen na otázku, jak papež svatý Jan Pavel II. interpretuje teologii svatosti, jaké aspekty a charaktery svatosti zdůrazňuje. Základní teze práce stanoví, že Jan Pavel II. popisuje křesťanskou svatost jako osobní dimenzi - spojení Ježíše Krista s křesťanem a ekleziální - uskutečnění tohoto spojení v církvi. Metodologie aplikuje přístup spirituální teologie. Byly vybrány významné charaktery svatosti včetně christologického, gratuitního a pneumatologického. Každý z nich je zkoumán v samostatné kapitole této práce a souvisí s encyklikami, jež tvoří „trinitární“ skupinu dokumentů, a jsou považovány za exemplární: *Redemptor Hominis*, *Dives in Misericordia* a *Dominum et Vivificantem*. Úvod studie nabízí biblickou perspektivu svatosti. Poté následuje zaměření na všeobecné povolání ke svatosti v konstituci *Lumen gentium* Druhého vatikánského koncilu s určením hlavních charakterů svatosti. Christologický charakter svatosti rozvíjený v *Redemptor Hominis* ukazuje interpretaci svatosti Janem Pavlem II. s důrazem na Krista jako Jediného Prostředníka a nejvyšší duchovní vzor. Kapitola o milosrdenství a gratuitním charakteru svatosti zkoumá, jak papež propojuje milosrdenství se svatostí a jaké jsou související aspekty spojení Krista s člověkem. Poslední kapitola pojednávající o lásce a pneumatologickém charakteru svatosti poskytuje analýzu bohatství duchovního života s působením Boha Ducha svatého v církvi.

## **Klíčová slova**

Sv. Jan Pavel II., svatost, spojení s Kristem, obrácení, všeobecné povolání ke svatosti, milosrdenství, láska, Duch svatý

## Abstract

The study focuses on how St John Paul II interprets holiness and which aspects and characteristics of holiness he emphasises. The basic thesis is that he describes Christian holiness as both personal – the union of Jesus Christ with a Christian – and ecclesial – the realisation of this union in the Church. The methodology applied is that of spiritual theology. Three significant characteristics of holiness are selected for detailed analysis, namely its Christological, ‘gratuitous’ and pneumatological character, and each of these is explored in a separate chapter and related to the three encyclicals that form a ‘Trinitarian’ group of documents and which are considered exemplars: *Redemptor Hominis*, *Dives in Misericordia*, and *Dominum et Vivificantem*. The introduction offers a biblical perspective on holiness. This is followed by a focus on *the universal call to holiness* in the constitution *Lumen Gentium* of the Second Vatican Council and an outline of the main characteristics of holiness. The Christological character of holiness developed in *Redemptor Hominis* shows an emphasis on Christ as *Unicus Mediator* and the Master Spiritual Model. The chapter on mercy and the ‘gratuitous’ character of holiness explores how John Paul II relates the concept of mercy to holiness and the associated aspects of union with Christ. The final chapter on love and the pneumatological character of holiness provides an analysis of the richness of spiritual life in the Church and of the activity of God the Holy Spirit.

## Keywords

St John Paul II, holiness, union with Christ, conversion, universal call to holiness, mercy, love, Holy Spirit

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## **Poděkování**

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My brothers and sisters, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God – what is good and pleasing to him and is perfect. (Rom 12:1–2)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction first presents the aim of the study and the sources on which it is based. There then follows a brief summary of the writings of Pope John Paul II and the reasons for choosing the group of encyclicals that are the main focus of the study. The research methodology and main thesis are then presented, followed by a brief exploration of the biblical perspective on holiness. The theme of the theology of holiness and the person and writings of St John Paul II is rich and broad and demands an extended elaboration of the topic. For the purposes of clarity, therefore, the introduction is approached as an introductory chapter.

## 1.1. Project Aim

St John Paul II was a true innovator, not only within the Catholic Church, but also in its relations with the wider Church and other religions – he was the first Pope to attend an Orthodox liturgy and a mosque – although he also drew criticism for some of his more controversial decisions, writings and pronouncements. He nonetheless formed bridges of communication between God and the people and between religions, connecting what had long been divided and inspiring Catholics and other Christians to live their daily lives in the light of the Gospel.

Through both his life and his writings Pope John Paul II appealed to the vital meaning of ‘the universal call to holiness’.<sup>1</sup> But how does this modern-day saint interpret the notion of Christian holiness in his doctrine? The answer will be explored through an analysis of and reflection on the theology of holiness according to the encyclicals of John Paul II.

In the introduction, I present the project aim related to the theology of holiness of the Catholic Church as interpreted by John Paul II in his encyclicals. I also present the current state of research, the sources I work with and the reasons for choosing encyclicals to reflect on the theme of the theology of holiness. I then move on to clarify the methodology and to explore a biblical perspective on holiness. The next chapter looks at the theme of

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The universal call to holiness in the Church’ was the title of Chapter V of *Lumen Gentium*, one of the principal documents to come out of the Second Vatican Council, which took place during the pontificate of Pope Paul VI.



*the universal call to holiness* as described in the constitution *Lumen Gentium*, one of the fruits of the Second Vatican Council. The methods of spiritual theology are applied throughout the study.

The reason for choosing the theme of holiness stems from my interest in analysing an interpretation of holiness by someone who was a great champion of personal holiness and its realisation in the Church and who was beatified and canonised in such a short period of time:<sup>2</sup> crowds were hailing the late Pope as a saint shortly after his death.

The Catholic concept of holiness is a rich and broad topic in terms of both content and terminology. It is necessary, therefore, to define the subject in a way that enables a focus on its interpretation by our particular interlocuter. The aim is also to create a solid basis on which to develop the topic in the dissertation. The research is directed towards gaining insights into how John Paul II reflects on the theme, which aspects and characteristics of holiness he emphasised, and which sources he based his ideas on and which of those he kept returning to. The chief source for the study will be the encyclicals in and through which the Pope interpreted, developed and applied the theme of holiness in response to *the universal call to holiness* as presented in *Lumen Gentium*. The basic thesis is that St John Paul II described Christian holiness as both *personal* – the union of Jesus Christ with a Christian – and *ecclesial* – the realisation of this union in the Church.

After his election as the Roman pontiff, John Paul II declared that his primary task was to ‘complete the implementation of Vatican Council II’.<sup>3</sup> The Council represented a turning point in the history of the Catholic Church, especially because of its emphasis on the active engagement of and with lay people and on the holiness of all Christians. This latter emphasis has led some authors to call the Second Vatican Council ‘the Council of Holiness’.<sup>4</sup>

The theme of holiness, specifically ‘the universal call to holiness’,<sup>5</sup> was the principal idea of John Paul II’s pontificate from the very beginning. Referring to *Lumen Gentium*,

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<sup>2</sup> Amato ‘suggests that from time to time the holiness and charism of the office of Pope meet in a single person. This was the case with Pope John Paul II, who was exalted in honour of the altar on 1st of May 2011 in Rome by his successor Benedict XVI. It was the first time in history a Pope had beatified his predecessor’. Angelo Amato, ‘Beatifikační a kanonizační procesy. Kritéria, průběh, význam’, *Communio, Mezinárodní katolická revue* 69, no. 4 (2013): 48–58, here 42.

<sup>3</sup> George Weigel, *Witness to Hope. The Biography of John Paul II*, Edition Cliff Street Books (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2001), 267–268; [http://archive.org/details/witnesstohopebio00weig\\_0](http://archive.org/details/witnesstohopebio00weig_0).

<sup>4</sup> Pavel Kohut, *Všeobecné povolání ke svatosti. Různorodé projevy jediné svatosti církve v životě dnešních křesťanů*, n.d., accessed 11 October 2019, <https://bosekarmelitky.cz/duchovni-zivot/vseobecne-povolani-ke-svatosti/>. The author borrows the term ‘Council of Holiness’ from F.R. Salvador. See Federico Ruiz Salvador, *Caminos del Espíritu. Compendio de teología espiritual* (Madrid: EDE, 1998), 285.

<sup>5</sup> See Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, 21 November 1964, paras. 39–42, [vatican.va](http://vatican.va).

the Pope stated that, ‘the Second Vatican Council has significantly spoken on “the universal call to holiness”. It is possible to say that this call to holiness is precisely the basic charge entrusted to all the sons and daughters of the Church by a Council which intended to bring a renewal of Christian life based on the Gospel’.<sup>6</sup> This statement set the trajectory for his interpretation of the theology of holiness as seen in certain of his encyclicals, and it forms the starting point for this study.

## 1.2. Work with Sources

St John Paul II is one of the most prolific spiritual authors of the twentieth century. The Pope’s popularity as a person and as an author inspired and generated a huge number of monographs, articles and other academic and popular writings. The electronic database [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) is a useful source of articles about the life, spirituality and writings of the late Pope. I am yet to discover a comprehensive monograph on the theology of holiness as described in his encyclicals, but Richard Spinello has proved a useful commentator, especially in his constructive and comprehensive work *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*.<sup>7</sup> The first section of that work offers a short biography of Karol Józef Wojtyła, his life as a priest, his philosophy and theology, and his writings before he became Pope John Paul II. There then follows a commentary on all 14 encyclicals, which uses technical language and emphasises the Pope’s anthropological and Christological approaches. Another good source for research on the theology of the holiness of John Paul II is the biography by George Weigel,<sup>8</sup> which provides a comprehensive mapping of the events of the Pope’s life and his work in the Church and the world. John Paul II’s postulator Sławomir Oder<sup>9</sup> and personal secretary Stanislaw Dziwisz<sup>10</sup> have written about the Pope’s theological insights, especially in relation to holiness. I also consider the connection between his interpretation of the theology of holiness and that of the Second Vatican Council, primarily in the document *Lumen Gentium*, and look back at his

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<sup>6</sup> John Paul II. ‘Christifideles Laici. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World’. 30 December 1988, accessed 30 December 2019, Vatican.va.

<sup>7</sup> Richard A. Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II. An Introduction and Commentary* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*.

<sup>9</sup> Sławomir Oder and Saverio Gaeta, *Proč svatý? Zákulisí procesu blahorečení Jana Pavla II.* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Stanislaw Dziwisz and Gian Franco Svidercoschi, *Život s Karolem. Vzpomínky osobního sekretáře Jana Pavla II.* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2007).

predecessors Leo XIII and Paul VI, and his successor-but-one Pope Francis, especially his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate – on the Call to Holiness in Today’s World*.<sup>11</sup> Further contributions to the theology of holiness come from the articles on *Ecclesiam Sanctam* in the theological periodical *Communio*.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.3. A Summary of the Pope’s Writings

St John Paul II was an outstanding author, both as Karol Wojtyła and as Pope. His writings – books, articles, letters – during a papacy which lasted almost 27 years (16 October 1978 to 2 April 2005) cover a broad range of theological concerns. They included, in descending order of legal significance, apostolic constitutions, encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, apostolic letters, letters, and messages.

The writings – both academic and ‘popular’, including sets of catechesis and transcribed interviews – offer an analysis of issues faced by individual Christians, the whole Church, and the wider society, and provide clarity on the issues, often in the light of the Second Vatican Council, and propose possible solutions to tough questions.

Apostolic constitutions represent the decree of the highest degree and are accompanied by a solemn proclamation. They are usually dogmatic or pastoral in nature. John Paul II wrote a large number of apostolic constitutions by which he established dioceses, but 12 general-purpose constitutions. Concerning holiness, it is worth highlighting the constitution *Divinus Perfectionis Magister* (25 January 1983),<sup>13</sup> which aimed to clarify and adjust the procedures for the beatification and canonisation of saints. Through this document, ‘the legal process was replaced by an academic-historical procedure ... it was a radical act of bureaucratic reconstruction’.<sup>14</sup>

Encyclicals are ‘literally, a circular letter; this name, applied to the circular letter of the Popes since the 7th century, has been a technical term since the 18th century. An encyclical is cited by the word with which it opens’.<sup>15</sup> There are two types of encyclical:

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<sup>11</sup> Pope Francis, ‘Gaudete et Exsultate. Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness in Today’s World’, 19 March 2018, accessed 10 October 2020, Vatican.va.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Ecclesiam Sanctam’, *Communio, Mezinárodní katolická revue* 69, no. 4 (2013).

<sup>13</sup> See John Paul II, *Divinus Perfectionis Magister*. Apostolic Constitution, 25 January 1983, accessed 30 December 2019, Vatican.va.

<sup>14</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 448–449.

<sup>15</sup> Karl Rahner, *Dictionary of Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 147, accessed 10 January 2020, <http://archive.org/details/dictionaryoftheo0000rahn>.

*epistolae encyclicae* and *litterae encyclicae*.<sup>16</sup> The former relate a specific matter to a certain community or offer a reflection on an event, as is the case with John Paul II's *Slavorum Apostoli*.<sup>17</sup> The latter are documents of a more magisterial nature addressed to the whole Church. However, 'some of Pope John Paul II's encyclicals, such as *Evangelium Vitae* ('the Gospel of life') are explicitly intended for a wider audience than the Catholic Church. In these cases, the phrase "and to all people of good will" is appended to the greeting'.<sup>18</sup> Spinello suggests that John Paul II's encyclicals 'develop the theological underpinnings for an orthodox interpretation of the major teachings of the Second Vatican Council'.<sup>19</sup>

While considering options for critical reflection, it should be pointed out that the encyclical is the 'pronouncement of the ordinary Magisterium, but not in itself a new dogmatic definition by the extraordinary or the ordinary Magisterium. Its teaching requires an assent that is positive and internal, but not absolutely final'.<sup>20</sup> John Paul II addressed a total of 14 encyclicals, which 'deal with different subjects, but in general ... fall into one of three categories: doctrinal, social and exhortatory'.<sup>21</sup>

Apostolic exhortations come third in legal significance and focus on a specific group such as families or lay people. John Paul II published 15 apostolic exhortations (*exhortatio apostolica*), in which he usually includes a recapitulation of and commentary on the conclusions of a synod.

The Pope's numerous works also include apostolic letters addressed to the faithful, and, last but not least, apostolic letters in the form of *Motu Proprio*, which contain directives and laws. Other documents include various letters and messages written on special occasions, such as anniversaries, Church celebrations such as World Mission Day, and other global commemorations such as World Day of Peace.

The Pope also wrote other, personal works, which although written from the position of Pope, do not come with an official stamp of legal authority. These include *Gift and Mystery*, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, and *Memory and Identity*.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Spinello translates the Latin expression *epistolae encyclica* as 'encyclical epistles' and *litterae encyclicae* as 'encyclical letters'. Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 56. The author also offers a detailed analysis of the history of the encyclical in the Church. *Ibid.*, 56–63.

<sup>17</sup> See Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 56; John Paul II, *Slavorum Apostoli*, 2 June 1985, accessed 30 December 2019, [vatican.va](http://vatican.va).

<sup>18</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 56.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>20</sup> Rahner, *Dictionary of Theology*, 147.

<sup>21</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 56.

<sup>22</sup> John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery* (Rockland: Wheeler Publishing, 1996), accessed 30 March 2020, <https://archive.org/details/giftmystery00john>. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York:

## 1.4. The Choice of Papal Writings for this Study

Our understanding of Christian holiness has traditionally focused on the experience of the individual. The turning point came with the Second Vatican Council and the constitution *Lumen Gentium*, which highlighted and developed the ecclesial nature of holiness: ‘in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy or being cared for by it, is called to holiness’ (LG 39). The ecclesial nature of holiness concerns the realisation of personal holiness in the context of the Church. The post-conciliar era always requires closer reflection on topics and on their implementation. In this respect, Spinello suggests that, ‘given the confusions in the years after the Council ended, the Pope undoubtedly felt compelled to refute claims that the Council had proposed a whole new vision for the Church’.<sup>23</sup>

John Paul II stated that the key task of his pontificate would be to put the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council into practice, and that the central focus would be *the universal call to holiness*. This statement and the turn towards an emphasis on the ecclesial nature of holiness will guide the selection of papal writings for this study, the starting point for which will be the doctrine of the constitution *Lumen Gentium*, especially Chapter V.

The encyclicals of John Paul II form the core of his writing on the theology of holiness. Often now addressed to the whole Church,<sup>24</sup> encyclicals are among the most influential writings of the Catholic Church and they certainly offer the most comprehensive view of its doctrine.<sup>25</sup> We can agree with Spinello that, ‘the encyclical takes center stage among papal pronouncements’.<sup>26</sup> These documents of the Magisterium constitute a collaborative work, but by signing them the Pope expresses his personal attitude. Three encyclicals, which form a ‘Trinitarian’ group of documents, and which I consider to be exemplars, are selected for analysis in this study and will lay the factual basis for further development in the dissertation.

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Alfred A. Knopf, 2005). John Paul II, *Memory and Identity. Conversations at the Dawn of a Millennium* (New York: Rizzoli, 2005), accessed 31 July 2020, <https://archive.org/details/memoryidentityco00john>.

<sup>23</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 63.

<sup>24</sup> The encyclical signifies ‘the circular papal letter addressed to bishops of the whole Church or certain areas; it is nowadays also dedicated to other groups or even to all the faithful while dealing on essential issues’. Rudolf Fischer-Wollpert, *Malý teologický slovník. Přehled papežů* (Praha: Zvon, 1995), 37.

<sup>25</sup> See Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 14.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

## 1.5. Methodology

Any reflection on holiness usually begins with an analysis of the topic in the Old and New Testaments. As this is a well-developed topic, the introduction will offer only a brief outline of the biblical concept of holiness and will also deal with the introduction to the theology of holiness with a special focus on ‘the universal call of holiness’ in Chapter V of *Lumen Gentium*. The main characteristics of holiness are identified from *Lumen Gentium* with a view to specifying the way they interconnect. This will also enable an exploration of the basic New Testament perspective on holiness.

Three main characteristics of holiness are selected, and each is explored in a separate chapter of this work. The encyclicals of John Paul II are mined for references to these characteristics in order to identify how the Pope develops the theme of holiness in his writings: which ideas he follows, what kind of context for holiness he creates, and which elements he emphasises in terms of the realisation of personal holiness in the Church.

The reflection focuses on the Trinitarian<sup>27</sup> group of encyclicals: *Redemptor Hominis*, *Dives in Misericordia*, and *Dominum et Vivificantem*. *Redemptor Hominis* describes the beauty and depth of union with God the Son and the Christological character of holiness. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer, without whom one cannot speak of Christian holiness: he is the One who sanctifies, the One to whom Christians are to conform, and the One they are to follow on their pilgrimage through life and to the fulness of life. God the Father and his mercy invoke the ‘gratuitous’ character of holiness (Latin *gratuitus*) in *Dives in Misericordia*, in which holiness is seen as an unmerited gift. The pneumatological character of holiness is in view in *Dominum et Vivificantem*: holiness is seen as the outworking in the Church of the activity of God the Holy Spirit.

This study will reflect on the chosen theme from the perspective of spiritual theology, the key elements of which are essential for this kind of research and its methodological approach. Spiritual theology has been defined as, ‘the theological discipline which, based on biblical Revelation and qualified Christian experience, systematically examines the union of man with God in Christ by the Holy Spirit in the history of the Church and the world and by human cooperation. And describes his organic development from the

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<sup>27</sup> See Fischer-Wollpert, *Malý teologický slovník*, 291.

beginning to holiness, taking into account diversity and the uniqueness of individual paths'.<sup>28</sup>

This definition of spiritual theology has a prominent Trinitarian dimension, at the core of which is 'the union of man with God in Christ'.<sup>29</sup> This study does not intend to provide a comprehensive theological interpretation of the teachings of the Magisterium, but to view holiness through the eyes of a saint who was himself a living example of holiness. The aim is to apply the approach of spiritual theology and focus on the elements that relate to the union of the human person with God in Christ and to the development of the doctrine from and through Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit, and, in parallel, to the development of spiritual life. This approach will be a golden thread running through the whole research and writing.

## 1.6. A Biblical Perspective on Holiness

This chapter will outline those elements that are important to a definition of holiness as the unity of God and the human person, including the relationship between God and people, the paradox of separation and closeness, the moral aspect, and love.

The holiness of God is first of all a mystery,<sup>30</sup> fulfilled and realised in God's love for all people. It shines through the words of the Bible: 'what is revealed of it in creation and history, Scripture calls "glory," the radiance of his majesty'.<sup>31</sup> God's holiness represents and 'connects all traits of God's character' and his highest 'moral perfection'.<sup>32</sup>

In the Old Testament, the Lord God, the holy *qādōš*,<sup>33</sup> is glorified, especially in Isaiah, who is sometimes called 'the prophet of holiness',<sup>34</sup> at the heart of whose theology is the *Trisagion*: 'Holy, holy, holy! The Lord Almighty is holy! His glory fills the world' (Isa 6:3).<sup>35</sup> In the Old Testament, holiness is primarily 'the quality of God himself, exalted

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<sup>28</sup> Pavel Kohut, *Co je spirituální teologie?* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2007), 34. Here, Kohut modifies and expands a definition offered by Salvador.

<sup>29</sup> This is what Kohut calls 'the very subject of spiritual theology'. Ibid., 35.

<sup>30</sup> 'It is the inaccessible center of his eternal mystery'. 'Catechism of the Catholic Church', n.d., para. 2809, accessed 10 October 2020, Vatican.va.

<sup>31</sup> 'Catechism of the Catholic Church', 2809.

<sup>32</sup> J.D. Douglas, 'Holiness. Holy. Saints', *New Bible Dictionary* (Praha: Návrat domů, 2009), 980–981.

<sup>33</sup> For more on the Old Testament concepts of 'holy' and 'holiness', see Congregazione delle Cause dei Santi, *Le Cause dei Santi. Sussidio per lo Studium*, Terza Edizione (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014), 15–16.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>35</sup> Unless stated otherwise, Bible quotations are from the Catholic Good News Bible: *Catholic Good News Bible with Deuterocanonical Books/Apocrypha* (London: The Bible Societies/Collins, 2005).

incomparably above all creatures’,<sup>36</sup> while ‘created things that are in particular contact with God begin to be called holy in a figurative, analogous sense’.<sup>37</sup> This applies to holy places connected with the Lord God such as the Temple at Jerusalem, to the chosen people of Israel, and to priests.<sup>38</sup> The Lord promises that the chosen people will become holy to God: ‘You will be my chosen people, a people dedicated to me alone, and you will serve me as priests’ (Exod 19:6). Such belonging brings commitment: ‘I am the Lord your God, and you must keep yourselves holy, because I am holy’ (Lev 11:44).

In broad terms, holiness refers to ‘the people or things separated for God and his service’<sup>39</sup> or ‘radical separation from the human world’.<sup>40</sup> With respect to people and their relationship to the Lord God, to be holy means ‘to live in separation but also to have a character different from other people’.<sup>41</sup> In his discussion on holiness and sinfulness, Castellucci considers an approach in which ‘according to Deuteronomistic theology, God’s holiness did not mean separation from the people, but closeness to them’.<sup>42</sup> Separating themselves from the world enables people to have an intimate relationship with God and provides them with a share in his holiness, which in the New Testament becomes an intensely moral issue: people’s separation *from* the world but *to* God by imitating Christ paradoxically opens Christians to others and for the proclamation of the kingdom of God.

With Jesus comes a higher call and a shift towards moral character and love. He is the spiritual model of holiness *par excellence*. Holiness changes from an ‘accent on ritual more to purity of life... [Jesus’] holiness consisted not only in his sinlessness; it also meant absolute devotion to God’s will and plans’.<sup>43</sup> His life and his teaching, especially the Sermon on the Mount (see Matt 5:3–12), are models for the lives of his followers;<sup>44</sup> he also brings love: ‘I love you just as the Father loves me; remain in my love’ (John 15:9). In the realisation of holiness and the imitation of Christ, love and moral character are united, and the mission of Christians is to bear such a witness in their

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<sup>36</sup> Tomáš Špidlík, *Prameny světla. Příručka křesťanské dokonalosti* (Velehrad: Refugium Velehrad-Roma, 2005), 121. See also, Douglas, ‘Holiness. Holy. Saints’, 980.

<sup>37</sup> Špidlík, *Prameny světla*, 121.

<sup>38</sup> See *ibid.* See also, Douglas, ‘Holiness. Holy. Saints’, 980.

<sup>39</sup> Douglas, ‘Holiness. Holy. Saints’, 980.

<sup>40</sup> Kohut, *Všeobecné povolání ke svatosti*.

<sup>41</sup> Douglas, ‘Holiness. Holy. Saints’, 980.

<sup>42</sup> Erio Castellucci, “‘Zjevím na nich svou svatost před očima všech národů’ (Ez 28,25) Misijní význam svatosti církve”, *Communio, Mezinárodní katolická revue* 69, no. 4 (2013): 26–38, here 26.

<sup>43</sup> Douglas, ‘Holiness. Holy. Saints’, 981.

<sup>44</sup> In a study on holiness in the 20th century, Němec presents certain criteria of holiness which he considers valid for all time: ‘strive for a virtues life’ and ‘realize the eight beatitudes according to the Gospel’. Jaroslav Němec, *Svatost laiků ve 20. století* (Olomouc: Matice cyrilometodějská, 2006), 29.



everyday lives. Castellucci speaks of the Christian task of ‘transferring holiness as a gift of God from the ontological level to the existential one’.<sup>45</sup>

The primary Greek term for ‘holy’ in the New Testament, *hagios*, is used mainly to refer to divine holiness; for Christians, the usual term is *hagioi*, saints.<sup>46</sup> When St Paul talks about a holy people, the saints, he means Christians. There are nonetheless various shades of use. In his analysis of Acts and the Pauline Epistles, Castellucci distinguishes between references to ‘exemplary Christians’, ‘Christian [converts] from paganism’ and ‘community leaders and ... martyrs’.<sup>47</sup> He also acknowledges the application of the term *hagioi* to every Christian and its relation to baptism and the call to holiness in Christ.

St Paul urges Christians to be holy when he says, ‘offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him’ (Rom 12:1). Castellucci connects the sacrifice of daily life with its highest manifestation in the Eucharist and speaks of ‘existential sacrifice’.<sup>48</sup> This is in line with Spiretis, who believes that “‘becoming a Christian” does not represent a moral category for Paul, but a reality’.<sup>49</sup> Christians realise this sacrifice within the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, which underlines the ecclesial nature of holiness, of which personal holiness is an integral component. The biblical perspective on holiness is Trinitarian in character, as ‘the Bible attributes holiness expressly to every one of the Trinity, Father (John 17:11), Son (Acts 4:30) and especially to the Holy Spirit as the one who exposes and gives over God’s holiness to people’.<sup>50</sup> To live a life of holiness is a matter not only of human effort but of God’s grace,<sup>51</sup> which precedes the human response and integrates Christians into the Church. Biblical holiness is ultimately, therefore, ecclesial.

This statement still needs to be supplemented by the important concept of the Communion of Saints (*communio sanctorum*). The article of faith concerning the Communion of Saints, which has been part of the Confession of Faith since the fifth century, ‘is based on the New Testament Greek term *koinónia* (communion), which means communion in faith, at the Eucharist celebration, communion with Jesus Christ

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<sup>45</sup> Castellucci, ‘Zjevím na nich svou svatost před očima všech národů’, 36. Amato calls the Beatitudes ‘a code of Christian holiness’. Amato, ‘Beatifikační a kanonizační procesy’, 49.

<sup>46</sup> See Douglas, ‘Holiness. Holy. Saints’, 980–981.

<sup>47</sup> Castellucci, ‘Zjevím na nich svou svatost před očima všech národů’, 34–35.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>49</sup> Ioannis Spiteris, ‘Svatost církve jako život v Kristu a její svátostná povaha podle Mikuláše Kabasily’, *Communio, Mezinárodní katolická revue* 69, no. 4 (2013): 9–25, here 9.

<sup>50</sup> Douglas, ‘Holiness. Holy. Saints’, 981.

<sup>51</sup> Rahner sees Catholic holiness as ‘an effect of man’s justification by sanctifying grace; essentially a participation in the holiness of God, since it is a strictly supernatural grace, that is a self-communication to man of God who is holy by nature’. Rahner, *Dictionary of Theology*, 212.

and all of the faithful with one another'.<sup>52</sup> Weismayer suggests that, 'the basis of *communio* is both sacramental (especially in the Eucharist) and juridical', by which the author means it relates to episcopal authority.<sup>53</sup> Rahner emphasises the holiness of God's people and unity in the Holy Spirit, supported by grace, which becomes the basis on which interaction between the faithful takes place.<sup>54</sup> The Christian life includes relationships with Church members on the earth and with those who are "'in Christ", who have already reached the goal of irrevocable communion with Christ'.<sup>55</sup> The unity of the earthly and heavenly Church, an expression of the *communio sanctorum*, offers help to members of the Church, for example through intercessions. Michal Altrichter has written a valuable theological and spiritual study of eschatological matters including the neglected topic of help for the dead and the importance of the 'dimension of relationships' among all members of the Church in the context of the *communio sanctorum*.<sup>56</sup> To sum up, the Communion of Saints emphasises the ecclesial dimension of holiness and the great importance of the sacraments.

Revealing the mystery of holiness is a process which requires God's grace and human cooperation and humility. The aspects mentioned above show that holiness can be interpreted as union between God and human beings. This union is a gift from God, and the extraordinary relationship at its heart is different from relationships in the world. The Lord God unites the chosen people with Himself through the Old Testament treaty, continued and completed in the New Testament through the birth, life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Human beings are ontologically united with Jesus through baptism, gifted with a share in God's holiness, and live their lives in response to God's love, which is realised in the Church with the call to relationships in the *communio sanctorum*.

Although holiness has been subject to different shades of interpretation and practice in the history of the Church, *Lumen Gentium* brought a return to biblical holiness.

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<sup>52</sup> Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, *Teologický slovník* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2009), 369–370.

<sup>53</sup> Josef Weismayer, *Život v plnosti. Dějiny a teologie duchovního života* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 1994), 67.

<sup>54</sup> See Rahner and Vorgrimler, *Teologický slovník*, 370.

<sup>55</sup> Weismayer, *Život v plnosti*, 67.

<sup>56</sup> Michal Altrichter, *Specifické otázky z eschatologie* (Olomouc: Refugium Velehrad-Roma, 2015), 75.

## 2. HOLINESS IN *LUMEN GENTIUM*: AN INITIAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter will explore elements of the theology of holiness as described in *Lumen Gentium*: first, through a description of its essence, by which the Council fathers endeavour to emphasise the richness and beauty of biblical holiness, especially in relation to the universal call to holiness. Such a reflection points to both the personal and the ecclesial aspects of holiness, which are complementary to one another; secondly, by an analysis of the verbs used with respect to holiness, which highlight Christ as the One Mediator and the interpretation of holiness as the union between Christ and the human person; finally, by distinguishing the various characteristics of holiness, three of which will be the subject of the applied methodology in subsequent chapters. These steps will prepare the ground for a reflection on the topic in the selected encyclicals.

### 2.1. An Interpretation of Holiness through a Description of Its Nature

How should we look at Christian holiness through the eyes of the Council? Should we reflect on its current or future status? Is it more appropriate to understand holiness as a quality in Christians or in relation to God?

Before the Second Vatican Council, the Church related holiness mainly to the religious and the clergy. It did not exclude the possibility of achieving holiness in the lay state, but for the laity, married couples for example, life was more about piety than it was about holiness. The call to be a holy people begins with baptism (LG 40); it is ‘the baptismal call to holiness’.<sup>57</sup> The Council shifted the context of holiness to include the laity to a greater degree: holiness can be achieved in all vocations; the vocations may vary, but holiness does not (LG 41).

The Second Vatican Council speaks much about holiness in its documents, but the topic receives special attention in Chapter V of *Lumen Gentium* with ‘the universal call to holiness’ (LG 39–42).<sup>58</sup> This passage of text, which inspired John Paul II’s commitment

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<sup>57</sup> Brian P. Flanagan, ‘The Universal Call to Holiness and Laity in the Church’, *Toronto Journal of Theology* 32, no. 2 (2016): 219–232, here 219.

<sup>58</sup> Chapter V covers the following: para. 39, The Holiness of the Church; para. 40 The Universal Call to Holiness; para. 41, Different Forms of Realizing Holiness; and para. 42, The Path and Means of Holiness. A profound commentary on this chapter has been provided by Vladimír Boublík, *Boží lid*, Teologie

to bring holiness deeply into the life of every Christian, serves as the basis of the methodological process and the definition of terminology in this study.

The doctrine of the nature of holiness continues in Chapter VII, which has an eschatological focus. The connection between the Church on earth and in heaven is an integral part of the doctrine of holiness as it speaks of the Christian's ultimate goal of eternal life in communion with God. It should nonetheless also be emphasised that in addition to the universal call to holiness, LG presents the doctrine of holiness in the context of specific calls, such as the vocations to bishop, priest, deacon and religious (LG 18–29; 43–47).

Paulo Molinari, an expert on the process of beatification and canonisation,<sup>59</sup> suggests that because the Council Fathers present a view on the *nature* of Christian holiness rather than its *theoretical* definition, there is no need to comment on problematic points of doctrine.<sup>60</sup> It is certainly true that the doctrine of holiness and the concept of being holy suffer from an excess of terminological diversity in the numerous theological treatises. Molinari praises the Council's approach to holiness and states that, 'although the Council did not submit the theoretical or scholastic definition, it provided unambiguously, and positively, the doctrine on the nature of Christian holiness, which is for that matter in perfect harmony with tradition and its authentic teachings'.<sup>61</sup>

The Congregation for the Causes of the Saints also holds that the Council submits a 'description of holiness'<sup>62</sup> rather than a definition. The Congregation recommends that for a theological reflection on holiness and its nature, 'we cannot follow a better guide than Saint Thomas Aquinas as indicated by the Council'.<sup>63</sup> John Paul II also highlighted this outstanding personality from Church history, whom he considered to be his fundamental teacher of theology and from whose doctrine he drew guidance for his life and his writings.<sup>64</sup>

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(Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 1997), 56–57, 172–178. For a commentary on Chapters V and VII of LG, see Congregazione delle Cause dei Santi, *Le Cause dei Santi*, 19–20.

<sup>59</sup> Paulo Molinari SJ, an Italian Jesuit (1924–2014), was the official postulator for beatification and canonisation. He conducted the investigation and prepared the documentation for the canonisation of, for example, St Catherine Tekakwitha and St Philip Duchesne. His writings include *Julian of Norwich. The Teachings of a 14th Century English Mystic*. Molinari worked as a professor of theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

<sup>60</sup> See Stefano De Fiores and Tullo Goffi, eds., *Slovník spirituality* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 1999), 949.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Congregazione delle Cause dei Santi, *Le Cause dei Santi*, 20.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. See also OT 16.

<sup>64</sup> Speaking of his study leave in 1944–1945, John Paul II writes: 'I spent many hours in meditation, walking in the cemetery. I had brought to Raciborowice the books I needed for my studies: volumes of

Concerning ‘the universal call to holiness’, the Council Fathers build their picture of holiness on the foundation of Christ:

Indeed Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is praised as ‘uniquely holy,’(Missale Romanum, Gloria in excelsis etc.) loved the Church as His bride, delivering Himself up for her. He did this that He might sanctify her (Cf. Eph. 5:25-26.) He united her to Himself as His own body and brought it to perfection by the gift of the Holy Spirit for God’s glory. Therefore in the Church, everyone, whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: ‘For this is the will of God, your sanctification’ (1 Thess. 4.3; cf. Eph.1:4). (LG 39)

The conciliar doctrine of holiness in *Lumen Gentium* presents Christian holiness as depending on ‘union with Christ’,<sup>65</sup> who is ‘uniquely holy’ (*solus Sanctus*) (LG 39). Boublík insists that, ‘the holiness of the church is not a human work but depends on participation in the mysterious holiness of Christ’.<sup>66</sup> The sacrament of baptism is fundamental to the participation of the faithful in his holiness (LG 39; CL 16). The verbs used in Chapter V to represent the holiness of Christ and its realisation include praise – celebrate (*celebrare*), love (*diligere*), sanctify (*santificare*), and unite (*coniungere*). Such verbs express the characters of holiness<sup>67</sup> and its transmission from Christ to the life of the Church and the Christian. In this context, it makes sense to use the term ‘chain of holiness’,<sup>68</sup> as suggested by Kohut: a chain of holiness from Christ to the Church to the Christian. Here we see the ecclesial character of holiness in the conciliar interpretation.

## 2.2. A Complementarity: The Personal and Ecclesial Nature of Holiness

Scholarly texts and the more general Christian understanding of holiness sometimes omit a fundamental aspect of the doctrine of holiness, namely its realisation in the Church.<sup>69</sup> The Council Fathers, on the other hand, emphasise the complementary nature of personal and ecclesial holiness, which is manifested in the relationships between God

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Saint Thomas with commentaries. I was learning my theology, so to speak, from the “center” of a great theological tradition’. John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery*, 12.

<sup>65</sup> See De Fiores and Goffi, *Slovník spirituality*, 949.

<sup>66</sup> Boublík, *Boží lid*, 56.

<sup>67</sup> Kohut uses the characters of holiness as the terminology for his interpretation of holiness. Kohut, *Všeobecné povolání ke svatosti*.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> See *ibid.*

and the Church, God and the Christian, and among Christians (LG 39–42). It should be noted that all Council statements stand on the foundation of the Church: ‘the affirmations about the real nature of the Church can only be understood in the light of the Christology of the Word made flesh, which must therefore precede ecclesiology’.<sup>70</sup>

The *ecclesial* nature of holiness (from the Greek *ekklésia* – the Church) as presented in LG means that a person realises their holiness as a member of the Church community, not just as an individual as had been the prevalent view in previous centuries. Holiness is ‘the basic character of God’s people, and all the faithful participate in it and are called to its realisation’.<sup>71</sup> Kohut notes that, ‘the personal holiness to which we, as individual Christians, are called, is at the same time, and above all, a diverse manifestation of the holiness of the Church’.<sup>72</sup> Such a view is demonstrated in the lives of saints who seek to live in holiness as individual Christians but who live their lives intensely and inseparably as part of the Church.

Because the *personal* nature of holiness concerns its realisation in a human being, it consists of both an ontological dimension and a moral dimension.<sup>73</sup> For Rahner, Christian holiness is ‘essentially personal and dialogic’;<sup>74</sup> it is about living the Gospel, growing in the virtues, and developing love for God and neighbour (LG 39–42). The Council states that, ‘fortified by so many and such powerful means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord, each in his own way, to that perfect holiness whereby the Father Himself is perfect’ (LG 11).

Mistaken perceptions of holiness often appear, including that it is some kind of distant matter applicable only to the end of life.<sup>75</sup> The Council Fathers tackle such a misunderstanding. Christian holiness shall be viewed not only as an eschatological fact (LG 7) but as a quality with which the Christian is endowed in their earthly life. The Council emphasises that Christians, ‘are justified in the Lord Jesus, because in the baptism of faith they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature. In this way they are really made holy. Then too, by God’s gift, they must hold on to and complete in their lives this holiness they have received’ (LG 40). Holiness is both ‘a gift’ and

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<sup>70</sup> Rahner, *Dictionary of Theology*, 142.

<sup>71</sup> Boublík, *Boží lid*, 56.

<sup>72</sup> Kohut, *Všeobecné povolání ke svatosti*.

<sup>73</sup> See De Fiores and Goffi, *Slovník spirituality*, 951–952.

<sup>74</sup> Rahner, *Dictionary of Theology*, 212.

<sup>75</sup> Kohut, furthermore, points out the historical differences in the use of biblical terminology and the understanding of holiness as a result of an over-emphasis on the sense of holiness as ‘perfection, doing God’s will, the heroic practice of virtues’. Kohut, *Všeobecné povolání ke svatosti*.

‘a task’.<sup>76</sup> Holiness is therefore not only a quality but also a process in the sense of *becoming* a saint, *attaining* holiness. It is a product of both the leading of the Holy Spirit (LG 40) and the Christian’s efforts to cooperate.

The complementarity of holiness, therefore, expresses the fact that holiness includes the relationship of Christ to the Christian in the Church, the basis of which is baptism, which enables the Christian to participate in the divine nature through the Holy Spirit.

### 2.3. Holiness as Union with Christ

Molinari analyses Chapters V and VII of *Lumen Gentium* to identify the *categories* of holiness described in the Council text,<sup>77</sup> which are instrumental in drawing out the precise nature of holiness. Molinari explains the *category* in terms of both methodology and use: ‘Several references to the category of our participation in the divine life, and similar categories, prove the same: they are expressions and means of expression which describe in different shades both the fact and nature of our unity with Christ, and in Him with the Holy Trinity’.<sup>78</sup> To identify and apply categories to the various characteristics of holiness, the author carries out a detailed linguistic analysis, noting especially the verbs used, to show ‘how Christians’ efforts towards holiness are to be manifested. The verbs include *coniungi* (unite), *consecrari* (sanctify), *conformes fieri* (resemble), *sequi* (follow), *imitari* (imitate), and others which clearly belong to the category of conjunction and unity in the ontological order, and in the intentional and moral order’.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Kohut draws attention to ‘gift and task’ in relation to the universal call to holiness in LG and considers that the call ‘is unilaterally and preferentially perceived as the task and duty of a Christian, while it is much less seen as a gift of God, although this is the primary and initial perspective for a correct understanding and experience of Christian holiness’. Ibid. Rahner interprets holiness as ‘at once a gift and a task’. Rahner, *Dictionary of Theology*, 212.

<sup>77</sup> Molinari also participated in the preparatory work for Chapter VII of LG. See Congregazione delle Cause dei Santi, *Le Cause dei Santi*, 19–20. In the dictionary of spirituality, Molinari very thoroughly elaborated the entry *Holy*. The author reflects on the motifs used by the Council Fathers to clarify the nature of holiness. He also performs a careful linguistic and terminological analysis of the text, distinguishing between holiness from the order of being and morality. At the same time, he explains why holiness is unique, and why, on the other hand, there is talk of a plurality of forms of holiness. In the final sections of the article, Molinari deals with the eschatological aspect of holiness and the relationship between the earthly and heavenly Church. He also evaluates his experience as a postulator of the processes of canonisation and beatification. His careful work with conciliar texts includes not only an introduction to the perspective of the Holy Scriptures but also a helpful terminological analysis. His approach to the text of LG provides readers not only with a useful understanding of the Church’s teaching on the nature of holiness but also with an inspiring discourse on the development of human life and experience from a Christian perspective. See De Fiores and Goffi, *Slovník spirituality*, 949–961.

<sup>78</sup> De Fiores and Goffi, *Slovník spirituality*, 950.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

Based on his analysis, Molinari defines theological categories such as ‘the category of love’, ‘the category of conjunction with Christ’ and ‘the category of union with Christ’.<sup>80</sup> It is interesting that in the Latin and English text of *Lumen Gentium*, and in the commentary by the Italian Congregation, the term *union with Christ* is all-embracing, but in the Czech version there are nuances between *spojení* (‘union’) and *sjednocení* (‘unification’). Molinari also highlights the role of the Holy Spirit with respect to holiness but does not identify that role as creating another category, possibly because the Holy Spirit is involved in all areas of holiness.

‘Union with Christ’ appears to be a core component of the Council’s interpretation of holiness. The Congregation for the Causes of the Saints suggests that the Council’s definition of holiness focuses on the relationship between the Church on the earth and the Church in heaven. Speaking of the lives of the saints, *Lumen Gentium* states:

When we look at the lives of those who have faithfully followed Christ, we are inspired with a new reason for seeking the City that is to come (Cf. Heb. 13:14; 11:10) and at the same time we are shown a most safe path by which among the vicissitudes of this world, in keeping with the state in life and condition proper to each of us, we will be able to arrive at perfect union with Christ, that is, perfect holiness. (LG 50)

The Congregation adds: ‘Here we see holiness associated with perfect union with Christ, and although it is not so directly expressed, we have been able to find this idea in various conciliar texts’.<sup>81</sup> The Congregation also highlights that, ‘on more than one occasion, the Council itself brings holiness back to God and union with God, as in §40 of the LG,’ and clearly understands that, ‘holiness essentially consists in a connection with God which is achieved by grace’.<sup>82</sup>

From the foregoing discussion, the following aspects of holiness can be identified:

(1) Holiness is not only a gift from God to human beings; it also represents a task for the faithful to move forwards along the path of holiness and develop a life of holiness. Part of this process involves maturing in union with Christ,<sup>83</sup> ultimately to achieve ‘perfect union with Him’.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 949–950.

<sup>81</sup> Congregazione delle Cause dei Santi, *Le Cause dei Santi*, 20.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>83</sup> Rahner speaks of maturing in holiness in the context of the veneration of the saints: ‘[through] the existential appropriation of God’s gracious offer, and [so becoming] a distinct component of the holiness of the Church, then this Christian holiness attains that maturity which is known in present ecclesiastical terminology as a heroic degree of the theological and cardinal virtues and becomes sanctity in the sense



(2) The Christian recognises the path of holiness not only by reflecting on the life of Jesus Christ but also by looking on and contemplating the saints, whose lives and testimonies help to guide the Christian on the right path and by God's grace bring holiness into their daily journey here on the earth.

#### 2.4. The Characters of Holiness in *Lumen Gentium*

The previous sections explored holiness through perspectives on its nature. This section will develop such approach and identify the concrete characteristics of Christian holiness. Some commentators agree that conciliar holiness is Trinitarian, Christological and pneumatological, which therefore makes it a fundamental feature of Christian belief. The Council presents holiness as 'union with Christ' (LG 3), a union which is to be nurtured and developed to perfection. Christ is 'the one Mediator' (*Unicus Mediator*) (LG 8). In this sense, Kohut speaks of 'the Christic character of holiness'<sup>84</sup> when commenting on the universal call to holiness in LG, which he explains as referring to 'the specific role of Jesus Christ in the history of salvation as the one Mediator (Hebrews 9:15; 12:24) in divine-human dialogue'.<sup>85</sup> The term *Unicus Mediator* is emphasised in LG, which proves the appropriateness of Kohut's use of the term Christic. The union of Christ with a human being can be realised only by Jesus through the gift of baptism, in which he brings the person to himself in the Church, which he gifted with the Holy Spirit (LG 39).

This union of Christ with a human being forms the foundation for the *Christological* character of holiness. Holiness involves learning about Jesus' life and imitating him,<sup>86</sup> which is not possible without connection – union with Christ: 'I am the vine, you are the branches. Those, who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me' (John 15:5).

The '*Christic*' character of holiness can therefore be distinguished from the more usual term, the Christological character of holiness, which speaks more broadly of the doctrine of Christ and its realisation in the life of the Christian, for whom loving God and

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associated with beatification and canonization and the veneration of saints'. Rahner, *Dictionary of Theology*, 212.

<sup>84</sup> Kohut, *Všeobecné povolání ke svatosti*.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Some authors use the terms Christological or Christoformic to express the theological significance associated with the person and doctrine of Jesus Christ. The latter term emphasises the likening of the human person to Jesus Christ and the person's inner transformation on ontological and moral levels.

neighbour becomes the essential gift and task. The Council Fathers present their interpretation of the Christological character of holiness throughout Chapter V of *Lumen Gentium*, especially where they identify the path that must be taken in order to follow Christ, and what that involves (LG 42). Boublík insists that, ‘following Christ – principally his self-denying, humility, obedience and love – is the essential path for every disciple’.<sup>87</sup> Jesus invites every Christian to follow him: ‘Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest’ (Matt 11:28–29). The Christological character of holiness comprises not only the visible manifestation in a Christian’s life but also their inner transformation in Christ, from which the visible manifestation proceeds.

It is the Holy Spirit who establishes union with Christ (LG 48–49). Holiness therefore has a *pneumatological* character. Molinari states that, ‘The Holy Spirit grants holiness by connecting us with Christ, unifying us with Him ... and offering us participation in His divine life’.<sup>88</sup> From the perspective of spiritual theology, the Holy Spirit could be described as the ‘tuning agent’ between Jesus and the Christian. Such a conjunction is not automatic, and many diverse influences can either disrupt it (adverse circumstances, improper inclinations and indulgences) or support it (God’s help for the Christian to enable them to stand in a given situation, strengthen the good in them, or change their attitude). There are also influences of a different nature which seek to disturb our union with Christ by any means. The Council encourages the Christian towards an authentic living of the Gospel, but also to vigilance: ‘we put on the armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and resist in the evil day’ (LG 48; see Eph 6:11). The Apostle Paul provides a warning about such influences in his letter to the Ephesians: ‘For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age’ (Eph 6:12).<sup>89</sup> The Holy Spirit is the One who protects our union with Christ.

Rahner clarifies that, ‘whatever is said of “grace” necessarily applies to human holiness: it is supernatural, gratuitous’.<sup>90</sup> The Council stresses that, ‘God pours out his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, Who has been given to us; (Cf. Rom 5:5)

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<sup>87</sup> Boublík, *Boží lid*, 57.

<sup>88</sup> De Fiores and Goffi, *Slovník spirituality*, 950.

<sup>89</sup> The disruption element relates to the ghosts and powers in the air.

<sup>90</sup> Rahner, *Dictionary of Theology*, 212. For more on grace, see *ibid.*, 196–200.

thus the first and most necessary gift is love, by which we love God above all things and our neighbour because of God' (LG 42). The task accompanies the gift, and the universal call to holiness derives from Christ's appeal (LG 40): 'You must be perfect – just as your Father in heaven is perfect' (Matt 5:48). The nature of a gift is that it is given freely and out of love. *Lumen Gentium* supports this: 'In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ' (LG 40). This aspect is what John Paul II expresses as the *gratuitous* (Latin *gratuitus*) character, in the sense of its being an unmerited gift (See DM 52).

In order to develop holiness, in other words unity with Christ, the Christian is in need of God's grace (LG 39, 40, 42), but also needs to cooperate with this grace, and therefore also needs 'the very free consent to grace which is the gift of God'.<sup>91</sup> The Council reminds us that it is the Church 'in which we acquire sanctity through the grace of God' (LG 48). From the perspective of spiritual theology, the 'gratuitous' character of holiness is therefore that which relates to God's grace. With respect to the Christian life and the path of holiness, this character of holiness concerns behaviour and thinking that reflects God's mercy and manifests itself in acts of love carried out without reward.

The *Trinitarian* character of holiness comes sharply into focus in Chapter V of *Lumen Gentium*: 'indeed Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is praised as "uniquely holy"' (LG 39). Kohut suggests, however, that it is 'mainly the Christological dimension of Christian holiness [that] is developed here, while the Trinitarian and pneumatological aspects are simply mentioned'.<sup>92</sup>

One further and important character of holiness must be added to those described above, and it concerns the fact that everything is done to glorify God. This is the *doxological* character of holiness. The Council Fathers present the glory of God (*doxa* in Greek) as the goal of the Christian life (LG 39, 41, 47). The whole activity and life of the Church and individual Christians is to be directed to the glory of God. In the Scriptures, the glory of God includes service of God, and the Church glorifies Him by such service.<sup>93</sup> A person 'glorifies God not only by manifesting God's "glory" in themselves but also by proclaiming God and God's love for the world and for human beings'.<sup>94</sup> God's glory is

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<sup>91</sup> Rahner, *Dictionary of Theology*, 212.

<sup>92</sup> Kohut, *Všeobecné povolání ke svatosti*.

<sup>93</sup> Boublík, *Boží lid*, 225–226.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

therefore an essential feature of holiness. The connection between Christian holiness and the glory of God can be found in the New Testament:

[When] he comes on that Day to receive glory from all his people and honour from all who believe. (2 Thess 1:10)

[The] name of our Lord Jesus will receive glory from you, and you from him, by the grace of our God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thess 1:12)

You do not belong to yourselves but to God; he bought you for a price. So use your bodies for God's glory. (1 Cor 6:19–20).

It would be interesting to identify the character of holiness which relates to the cult of the saints. *Lumen Gentium* calls on the Christian community on the earth to turn to the saints (LG 40, 50), because 'our companionship with the saints joins us to Christ' (LG 50). This aspect of holiness could be called the *cultic* character of holiness, which expresses the Christian's attitude in the sense of the cult of the saints leading to the cult of glorifying God. According to Rahner, 'cult in the strict sense is due to God alone and always includes adoration. In the interest of clarity of thought, it is preferable to call the Catholic cultus of the saints the veneration of saints, its ultimate goal, like that of cult in the strict sense, being the glory of God'.<sup>95</sup>

What we have here is a sequence of steps or processes which complement each other, and yet they have the same ultimate goal. From the perspective of spiritual theology, by realising the cult of the saints, the Christian also carries out a cult in the sense of worshipping God, glorifying him. The cultic character of holiness, the object of which is the veneration of the saints, leading to the glory of God, can therefore be considered a key contributor to the overall character of holiness.

## 2.5. Conclusion

This reflection on the nature of holiness in *Lumen Gentium* – holiness which has a Christological, gratuitous, pneumatological, Trinitarian and doxological character – has highlighted the emphasis in Council doctrine on Jesus as the One Mediator, on biblical

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<sup>95</sup> Rahner, *Dictionary of Theology*, 107.

holiness, and on the universal call to holiness as part of the baptismal vocation realised on both the personal and the ecclesial level.

### 3. THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF HOLINESS

This section builds on the previous chapter and develops the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, especially its emphasis on the universal call to holiness. The focus is on an analysis of the Christological interpretation of holiness in the initial encyclical of John Paul II. First, Christ as the One Mediator sheds light on the union of Christ and the human person. An analysis of the sources in the encyclical follows. The Pope's reflection on the union of Christ with every person is developed further, as is his reflection on the fact that an authentic life of holiness, especially in the lives of the saints, is shown by a shift from abstraction to concretisation. Reflection on the Eucharist and penance sheds the light on the matter of Christian maturity, and the final sections deal with aspects of following Christ as the Master Spiritual Model.

#### 3.1. Christ as the One Mediator in *Redemptor Hominis*

‘For there is only one God, and there is only one Mediator between God and humanity, himself a human being, Christ Jesus, who offered himself as a ransom for all. This was the witness given at the appointed time’ (1 Tim 2:5–6 NJB).<sup>96</sup>

The key theme of this chapter is the Christological<sup>97</sup> character of holiness with an emphasis on *Unicus Mediator* and an understanding of holiness as *union with Christ* as outlined by the Second Vatican Council in *Lumen Gentium* (LG 39–51), with its return to biblical holiness (e.g. Christ as Mediator: Heb 8:6; 1 Tim 2:5). The Christological character of holiness is fundamental to a theology of holiness: it is Jesus Christ who sanctifies (see Heb 2:11; 10:10). The chapter therefore aims to point out the elements of holiness interpreted as union with Christ.

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<sup>96</sup> *New Jerusalem Bible*, n.d., accessed 10 October 2020, <https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/new-jerusalem-bible>.

<sup>97</sup> I continue to use the term ‘Christological’, which includes the Christic character, as stated in Chapter 2.

The fundamental nature of the Christological character of holiness in the encyclicals of John Paul II develops from his very first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, an initial appeal by which the Pope sets out the direction of his pontificate, building on his predecessors, especially John XXIII and Paul IV, developing some of the major themes of their pontificates, something we see even in the choice of his papal name (RH 2).<sup>98</sup> Spinello suggests that, ‘the Pope’s principal purpose in this encyclical is to embrace and deepen the Christocentrism of the Second Vatican Council and to explore the truth about the human person revealed by the Son’.<sup>99</sup>

The encyclical is addressed to the whole Church and to ‘all people of goodwill’ (RH intro.). Although it was written more than 40 years ago, the teaching is still relevant. The whole letter is a reflection on the theme of the redemptive role and mission of Jesus Christ and the incorporation of mankind and the Church into the mystery of Christ. The first of its four chapters sets out the work of previous Popes to put into practice the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. The text is partly based on the encyclical of Paul VI *Ecclessiam Suam*, as the Pope mentions several times (see RH 3, 4).

The golden thread of the three chapters that follow is Christ the Redeemer and the ‘mystery of redemption’ (RH 7). The Pope suggests that the most important question facing the Church in the third millennium is: ‘How, in what manner should we continue?’ (RH 7). The question could be rephrased as: ‘How are we to live, and continue living, a life of holiness?’ The Pope continues: ‘our response must be: Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is towards Christ our Redeemer, towards Christ, the Redeemer of man’ (RH 7). The Pope’s focus is clearly Christocentric, with a strong emphasis on personalism:<sup>100</sup> the key relationship between Christ and human beings ‘was a synthesis of the Council and what he brought from his homeland. He brought it to life by connecting service to the Church with service to man’.<sup>101</sup> Spinello states further that in this encyclical, ‘his deeply Christological approach

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<sup>98</sup> The Pope presents a thematic and spiritual connection with his predecessors John XXIII, who died in 1963, and Paul VI, under whose pontificate the Second Vatican Council was held (1962–1965).

<sup>99</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 79.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 66. For more on the roots of John Paul II’s personalism and his concept of the human person, see the highly analytical contribution (analytical in terms of both methodology and content) by František Burda, *Obraz člověka ve filosofickém světě Karola Wojtyły*. The Czech book, with the translated title *The image of a man in the philosophical world of Karol Wojtyła*, contains a constructive summary in English. František Burda, *Obraz člověka ve filosofickém světě Karola Wojtyły* (Ústí nad Orlicí: Oftis, 2011), 305–317.

<sup>101</sup> Dziwisz and Svidercoschi, *Život s Karolem.*, 55.

to humanism becomes manifest ... it is the first papal encyclical devoted exclusively to the theme of Christian anthropology, and sets the stage for what is to follow'.<sup>102</sup>

The context of holiness as the union of Christ and the human person is situated into the mystery of Redemption. Here John Paul II manifests his extraordinary love for and interest in human beings. Spinello and others often highlight the strong anthropocentric focus in John Paul II's writings.<sup>103</sup>

John Paul II interprets the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, especially *Gaudium et Spes* and *Lumen Gentium*, by reflecting on Christ as the Redeemer. Christ is 'the one Mediator between God and man' (LG 49). The Pope reinforces the emphasis of the Council Fathers that 'for by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man' (GS 22), and develops further the concept of communion with God as *union with Christ* in the Church (cf. RH 13). He is also aware, however, that 'this union of Christ with man is in itself a mystery' (RH 18). In this manner, the encyclical accentuates the Christological character of holiness, and this union at the same time constitutes the fulcrum of the universal call to holiness in LG. This character of holiness is essential, thanks to the grace of baptism (cf. RH 20). John Paul II develops further the Christological character as imitating Christ (cf. RH 21). An apparent consistency with the concept of holiness in LG can be seen at all these points.

### **3.2. Analysis of Sources in *Redemptor Hominis***

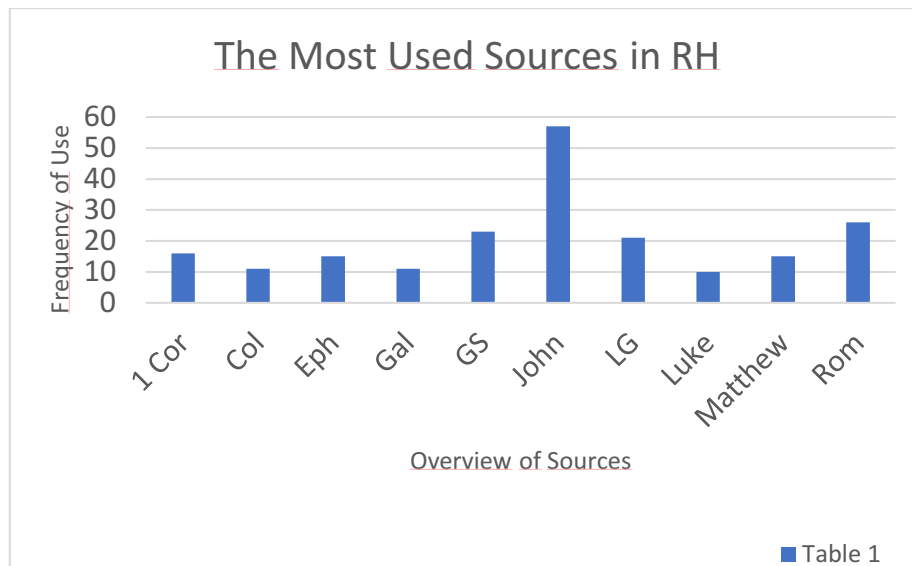
It is interesting to note the ideas and contexts that lie behind John Paul II's reflection in RH. An analysis of the sources with which the Pope works in this encyclical provides a clue in the following chart.

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<sup>102</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 64.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 66, 67.





The chart shows sources used ten or more times in *Redemptor Hominis*. The Gospel of John is the most used with more than 50 references, followed by Romans and the two Council documents *Gaudium et Spes* and *Lumen Gentium*. Why is the Gospel of John the most used source in RH? It may be that it relates to the theme of holiness by supporting ‘its presence eschatology, and its call for a man living without fear of faith in Jesus’ presence realized in the Holy Spirit’.<sup>104</sup> It may also be because ‘the central theme of the Genoese speeches is almost always Jesus himself (as the Envoy of the Father), and the miracles (signs) do not serve the people, but his glorification’.<sup>105</sup> These two aspects, the salvation of every person and the glory of God, seem to be an integral part of holiness.

The most used verses from within the Gospel of John include primarily John 3:16; 16:13 and followed by John 14:24; 16:7. There is a clear focus on Christ and the Holy Spirit: ‘For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life’ (John 3:16). This statement is part of Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus, ‘where baptism is treated as being born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:3–8). It culminates in Jesus’ statement about God’s love’.<sup>106</sup> The verse therefore reflects the Christological character of Jesus as *Unicus Mediator*. The other frequently used parts of John’s Gospel (John 14:24; 16:13; 16:7) relate to the

<sup>104</sup> Felix Porsch, *Stuttgarter Kleiner Kommentar. Neues Testament 4. Johannes-Evangelium* (Stuttgart: Kath. Bibelwerk, 1988), 21.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Petr Pokorný and Ulrich Heckel, *Úvod do Nového zákona. Přehled literatury a teologie* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2013), 573.

coming of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, and belong to passages which form ‘the basis of the Gospel of John’s pneumatology’.<sup>107</sup>

The most frequently used extra-biblical sources in RH are *Lumen Gentium* primarily with LG 1, LG 36 and LG 56; and *Gaudium et Spes* with a key focus on GS 22 and followed by GS 10. The Pope reinforces the Council’s opening statement that ‘the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely-knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race’ (LG 1). The statement in turn relates to the encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* of Paul VI and his call for the ‘self-awareness’<sup>108</sup> of the Church (RH 3), which John Paul II develops further when linking union with Christ in the Church with the role of the Holy Spirit (RH 7, 18).

The focus within GS is paragraph 22, entitled ‘Christ, New Man’, which explains that ‘by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man’ (GS 22), and supports the thesis that the union of Christ and the human person can be used as an interpretation of holiness. The significant interest of John Paul II in *Gaudium et Spes* also reflects the fact that he was ‘one of the architects’<sup>109</sup> of its wording. Karol Wojtyła was a member of ‘the sub-commission, which had the task to study the questions of *the signs of the time*’ and also of the sub-commission no. V *On the role of the Church*<sup>110</sup> for the Second Vatican Council.

### 3.3. The ‘Union of Christ with Every Man’ in *Redemptor Hominis*

‘Jesus Christ is the chief way for the Church. He himself is our way “to the Father's house” (Cf. Jn. 14:1ff.) and is the way to each man. On this way leading from Christ to man, on this way on which Christ unites himself with each man, nobody can halt the Church. This is an exigency of man’s temporal welfare and of his eternal welfare’. (RH 13)

#### 3.3.1. The Concept of Union with Christ

How is the theology of holiness to be viewed in this encyclical? John Paul II draws on the doctrine of the Council Fathers as set out in *Gaudium et Spes* and presents the union of God and mankind through Christ: ‘for, by his Incarnation, he, the son of God, in

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 575.

<sup>108</sup> Paul VI, ‘*Ecclesiam Suam*’, 6 August 1964, para. 10, 18, ff., accessed 10 January 2020, Vatican.va.

<sup>109</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 244.

<sup>110</sup> Karel Skalický, *Radost a naděje. Církev v dnešním světě* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2000), 90, 205.

a certain way united himself with each man' (GS 22, RH 13). The way in which the Pope reflects on the mystery of Christ could be applied to an interpretation of holiness.

Some aspects of union with Christ and the Christological character of holiness in RH can be identified from the perspective of spiritual theology: a life entirely focused on Christ, the authenticity of a life lived according to the Gospel, the Eucharist and penance (RH 20), and the emphasis on human dignity; out of all this grows the necessity to live one's Christian life in the context of the Church.

The relationship between Christ's redemption and New Testament holiness, which is based on him, implies that there is both a divine and a human aspect to holiness (RH 9,10).

John Paul II develops this essential concept, which is part of the legacy of Paul VI and his emphasis on an ecclesial *awareness* of the mission of salvation through all the difficulties of the time (RH 4, 7). It is a matter of God's calling us to communion with him and of how we should respond. Two significant elements related to union with Christ can be identified here: (1) the way to live a human life, (2) awareness at the personal and ecclesial level, which can lead to a distinction between *every* and *all*.

### **3.3.2. From Abstraction to Concretisation**

First, it may be useful to focus on the distinction between the words *all* (people) and *every* (person) and how this relates to the theology of holiness. John Paul II shifts the conversation from the abstract to the concrete with the application to prayer and the Christian life using the examples of the lives of the saints. Council doctrine shows that the matter of prayer and the Christian life relates not only to the relationship between God and the individual, but also to the salvation of the whole world: the theology of holiness and the history of human salvation applies to all people. The term *salvation of all people* occurs, for example, in LG 13 and 16, where it relates to Scriptures that illustrate both the personal and the ecclesial aspects of holiness.

The salvation of 'all people' or 'the whole world' is mentioned many times in LG. The expression *all people* expresses a universal character, but refers to both personal salvation and the salvation of all people as the goal of the human person's life with God. How would it affect prayer, the spiritual and daily life of a Christian, if this concept were viewed and expressed in the sense of 'I pray and work for the salvation of the souls of all people, resp. I pray and work for the salvation of the soul of every human being'? How

does John Paul II approach it? Is it an enhancement or deepening of the ecclesial and personal aspects of holiness?

The expression *all people* can sometimes invoke simply a generality, an abstract concept that the heart in prayer may or may not often address. However, developing the expression in relation to the salvation of *each* or *every* person will contribute to a more profound practice and understanding of the Christian life, prayer and holiness. John Paul II emphasises this shift when he states that ‘we are not dealing with the “abstract” man, but the real, “concrete”, “historical” man. We are dealing with “each” man, for each One is included in the mystery of the Redemption and with each One Christ has united himself for ever through this mystery’ (RH 13).

The path of Christian holiness is not something abstract that carries with it something like a distant feeling of both what concerns me personally as a Christian and perhaps some vague idea of the end of earthly life and eternity. Is this not an essential aspect of the theology of holiness? To convert the abstract into the concrete? Will it help with a more profound and personal perception of the spiritual life and indeed of everyday life, and yet also in relation to the whole Church?

John Paul II repeatedly emphasises the thesis of GS that, ‘the Son of God, in a certain way united himself with each man’ (GS 22, RH 13). He develops this thesis and says that ‘the Church therefore sees its fundamental task in enabling that union to be brought about and renewed continually’ (RH 13). In this way, he highlights concreteness, which also lies in the idea that every individual person acquires a share in the mystery of Christ’s redemption (RH 13). Applying this approach to spiritual theology, it can be said that the more specific a person is in their spiritual life, in prayer, and in helping their fellow human beings, the more they are living an authentic life, one that is lived according to the Gospel. Jesus was also concrete in his whole personality and life; he provided concrete help to particular individuals;<sup>111</sup> he also presented concrete parables to bring people as close as possible to an understanding of the truth. And what about the beatitudes? Amato emphasises that they ‘constitute a code of Christian holiness’.<sup>112</sup> Jesus uses them to translate teachings into concrete realisations. The Gospel and Christian doctrine tell us that Jesus saves all people but there is a visible shift from abstraction to concreteness when Jesus heals a particular person, in a particular life situation, in body and soul.

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<sup>111</sup> Jesus heals a paralysed man (Matt 9:1–8); Jesus heals two blind men (Matt 9:27–31); Jesus heals a boy with an evil spirit (Mark 9:14–29), and other cases.

<sup>112</sup> Amato, ‘Beatifikační a kanonizační procesy’, 49.

John Paul II raises a further dimension of concreteness with *his* saints. The Church is a community of the people of God, a mysterious body whose head is Christ (LG 7, 9). The essence of the Christian life is to continue constantly on the path that leads to ever-deepening unity with God. The saints represent this safest and most reliable path to holiness (LG 50). They depict concrete proof of how union with God in Christ operates: it is ‘in the witness of saints through whom he (the Holy Spirit) manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation’.<sup>113</sup> The saints are personalities who through their concrete lives show what the path to Christian perfection entails, and what challenges and gifts of the Christian life follow, including charisms. Through their lives, the saints confirm that the charisms are primarily for the benefit of others.<sup>114</sup> Through their faith, deeds and heroic virtues, often sacrificing their lives, the true followers of Christ are known: ‘the saints prove to be convincing translators of the Gospel who translate into a concrete language of love that is understandable to all’.<sup>115</sup>

Why *his* saints? John Paul II raised many saints to the altar and so pointed to the concrete reality of holiness. Sławomir Oder, the postulator of his beatification process, states that, ‘during his pontificate, John Paul II proclaimed 1,345 beatified and 483 canonised saints’.<sup>116</sup> In this way, he contributed a reminder in the liturgy, remembering them, thus supporting the need to commemorate their testimony repeatedly, how they carried out and lived their lives. The Pope also showed respect for the saints in his personal spiritual and daily life: ‘in the two large plates that were stored in his bedroom, he had a biography of each. He often returned to the texts and looked for inspiration on how to apply virtue in life’.<sup>117</sup> In such a way, John Paul II stressed the concreteness and specificity of the spiritual life and of daily life as a living realisation of the Gospel.

### 3.3.3. Meeting Christ in the Eucharist

This section will explore, from the perspective of spiritual theology, the question of how the Eucharist relates to holiness interpreted as union with Christ.

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<sup>113</sup> ‘Catechism of the Catholic Church’, 688.

<sup>114</sup> See Aviad Kleinberg, *Histoires de saints. Leur rôle dans la formation de l’Occident* (France: Gallimard, 2005), 17–23.

<sup>115</sup> Amato, ‘Beatifikační a kanonizační procesy’, 58.

<sup>116</sup> Oder and Gaeta, *Proč svatý?*, 144.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

The conciliar document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC), the constitution on sacred liturgy, resolved that the ‘principles concerning the promotion and reform of the liturgy should be called to mind, and that practical norms should be established’ (SC 3). The whole of Chapter II of the constitution is devoted to ‘the most sacred mystery of the Eucharist’ (SC 47–58). In the introduction to the chapter, the Council reminds us that ‘at the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again’ (SC 47). The central theme of ‘the eucharistic sacrifice’ is clear in this text, and it is arguably the essential component of the union of the human person with Christ.

New Testament texts which describe the institution of the celebration of the Lord’s memorial include Matt 26:26–29, Mark 14:22–25, Luke 22:15–20, and 1 Cor 11:23–25. Pokorný and Heckel provide a neat exegesis of the Last Supper, in which they suggest that while ‘for the Synoptics, Jesus’ last supper with the disciples is part of the passion narrative ... Paul quotes the liturgical form of worship of the community, which reminds the Christian congregation of the establishment of the Eucharistic feast’.<sup>118</sup> The authors also describe the etymological history of the term ‘Eucharist’, which ‘derives from the verb *eucharistó* (thank) ... [Soon] the designation of the thanksgiving prayer before the festive meeting (Mark 8:6; Acts 27:35) became another term for the Eucharistic feast (Did 9:1–5; 1 Cor 10:16). In the 2nd century the term “Eucharist” became the prevailing term’.<sup>120</sup>

This study analyses holiness interpreted as the union of Christ with a Christian in the Church, and in a special way, in the Eucharist. The Christian meets Jesus Christ most closely in the Eucharist, which is ‘a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us’ (SC 47; cf. Roman breviary). The Council encourages active engagement in the liturgy with an attentive mind and highlights that Christians ‘should learn also to offer themselves’ (SC 48) as a sacrifice to God. St Paul presents this appeal very clearly in Romans 12:1–2. In this respect, the constitution states that ‘through Christ the Mediator ... [Christians] should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all’ (SC 48).

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<sup>118</sup> Pokorný and Heckel, *Úvod do Nového zákona*, 176–191; here 177–178. See also, Paolo Gigliani, *Svatosti Krista a církve* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 1996), 78–79.

<sup>120</sup> Pokorný and Heckel, *Úvod do Nového zákona*, 177.

The Eucharistic sacrifice is therefore the heart of the liturgical celebration. It is where the most profound meeting between Jesus Christ and a human being takes place. The sacrifice made by one's daily life being laid on the altar enables a person to mature to perfect union with Christ.

In *Redemptor Hominis*, most of the references in the discussion on the Eucharist are to John's Gospel, to the ideas of the Second Vatican Council, and to Pope Paul VI. In 2003, John Paul II wrote a separate encyclical devoted to the Eucharist, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, which, as the title suggests, emphasised the ecclesial dimension.

In RH, the Eucharist is mentioned first in the context of reconciliation: 'indeed, it is by the command of Christ himself, her Master, that the Church unceasingly celebrates the Eucharist, finding in it the "fountain of life and holiness" (cf. Litany of the Sacred Heart), the efficacious sign of grace and reconciliation with God, and the pledge of eternal life' (RH 7). Later, the Pope sheds light on the relationship between the Eucharist and the sacrament of penance (RH 20) and uses both terms, penance and reconciliation.

This sacrament is described in a variety of ways, but 'the one called the sacrament of penance and reconciliation is preferred (as in the Catechism of Catholic Church). Penance combines the elements of conversion and confession, while reconciliation evokes forgiveness and a complete return to a life of grace'.<sup>121</sup>

In John Paul II's reflection in RH, the Church participates in 'the Mystery of Redemption', while being faithful to the Gospel and serving the truth (RH 20); its share in the power of redemption is included in the sacraments, the foremost of which is the Eucharist (RH 20; cf. SC 10). In line with conciliar doctrine, the Pope emphasises the Eucharist as 'the centre and summit of the whole of sacramental life, through which each Christian receives the saving power of the Redemption, beginning with the mystery of Baptism' (RH 20; cf. SC 10). Regarding the relationship between the Eucharist and union with Christ, he comments that, 'the Eucharist is the most perfect Sacrament of this union. By celebrating and also partaking of the Eucharist we unite ourselves with Christ on earth and in heaven ... but we always do so through the redeeming act of his Sacrifice' (RH 20). According to John Paul II, therefore, holiness is at its most substantial in the union with God in the Eucharist. He nonetheless admits that the Eucharist is a mystery which can never be fully recognised and explained – either its meaning or what exactly it achieves (RH 20).

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<sup>121</sup> Giglioni, *Svätosti Krista a cirkve*, 104.

RH also reminds us of the Holy Spirit's role as the gift of new life for the Christian (RH 20). The Holy Spirit 'is communicated to all men who are united with Christ' (RH 20). Union with Christ is realised in the Holy Spirit; therefore, union with Christ is spiritual.

John Paul II's approach covers both the personal and the ecclesial aspect of the Eucharist. He correlates the Eucharist and penance to provide the way to an 'authentic life in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel' (RH 20) and to build the Church as the 'authentic community of the people of God' (RH 20). His attempt to emphasise the importance of the Eucharist is characterised in particular by the words: 'This truly most holy Sacrament, its full magnitude and its essential meaning' is clearly paramount: 'It is at one and the same time a Sacrifice-Sacrament, a Communion-Sacrament, and a Presence-Sacrament' (RH 20).

The Pope further affirms that, 'the essential commitment and, above all, the visible grace and source of supernatural strength for the Church as the People of God is to persevere and advance constantly in Eucharistic life and Eucharistic piety and to develop spiritually in the climate of the Eucharist' (RH 20). And again, 'every member of the Church, especially Bishops and Priests, must be vigilant in seeing that this Sacrament of love [this Eucharist] shall be at the centre of the life of the People of God' (RH 20).

The Eucharist therefore builds a deep union which has a spiritual dimension; it is a relationship of love between the Church and Christ, like the love between a husband and wife. The liturgy is therefore the centre of the life of the Church, and this life will unite and revive the life of every member of 'Christ's Mystical Body'.<sup>122</sup> As in the love between a husband and wife, we will be one body, one soul in Christ (1 Cor 12:12–30). The Scriptures are read during the liturgy. Without the Eucharist, they would be more abstract, but the Eucharist concretises what we read in the worship of the word. It is the integration in our lives of the incarnated word of the Gospel and preaching. Spinello suggests that, 'the Eucharist is also the source of the Church's inner strength and sustenance through trials and tribulations'.<sup>123</sup> Commenting on the close relationship in *Lumen Gentium* between the Gospel and the Eucharist, both of which are considered essential to the Christian life, Boublík states that 'God's word awakens and nourishes the

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<sup>122</sup> Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, 3 September 1965, para. 70, accessed 10 January 2020, Vatican.va. The term is developed earlier by Pope Pius XII in one of his outstanding encyclicals: Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 29 June 1943, accessed 10 January 2020, Vatican.va.

<sup>123</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 79.



faith, the Eucharist is mainly the source of love'.<sup>124</sup> Frývaldský points out another essential aspect of the Eucharist, namely its anthropological character and its role in the formation of humanity.<sup>125</sup>

The whole emphasis on the Eucharist highlights the ecclesial aspect of communion. It points out that unity with God not only concerns the individual, it also represents the Church's mission to the world. John Paul II reminds us that Christians are to seek a unity which is 'apostolic and missionary unity, missionary and apostolic unity', and to help other people to find Christ (RH 12); it is a mission towards those who do not receive Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>126</sup> The Pope clearly depicts here the three dimensions of a Christian life of faith and holiness: the vertical dimension of the relationship between God and an individual Christian; the horizontal dimension of the relationship between God, individual Christians and the Church; and the third dimension that includes all these and the whole of the world.<sup>127</sup>

The Church is holy, and the Christian who receives the sacraments is holy. Before the Second Vatican Council, the emphasis was on the second, horizontal dimension of holiness. The third dimension, which is strong in conciliar and post-conciliar documents, is further developed by John Paul II, and at its core is the Eucharist. This raises the question of whether Christ is united with those who do not receive the Eucharist. John Paul II's view is that 'Christ united himself with each man' (RH 13). Whenever we receive the sacraments, we are united with Christ: 'the Eucharist is the centre and summit of the whole of sacramental life, through which each Christian receives the saving power of the Redemption' (RH 20).

So far, the analysis has noted several elements which link the Eucharist to union with Christ. But why does John Paul II link the Eucharist to penance? As mentioned earlier, penance includes the aspect of conversion, and it is the Pope's emphasis on conversion that proves to be one of the key aspects of holiness expressed as unity with Christ. The

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<sup>124</sup> Boublík, *Boží lid*, 249.

<sup>125</sup> 'Following Christ is a "formation" (Bildung), here one gradually forms according to one's living archetype (Bild). This school of Jesus, in which man finds and expresses his being in truth, is represented above all by the liturgy. In the liturgy, the Christian receives his being from the hands of God time and again'. Pavel Frývaldský, *Cristo come Centro e Mediatore. La lettura della cristologia di Romano Guardini alla luce della teologia di san Bonaventura*, Edizioni Sant'Antonio (Beau Bassin: Edizioni Accademiche Italiane, 2018), 264.

<sup>126</sup> In accordance with the commission given by Jesus: 'Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to the whole human race' (Mark 16:15).

<sup>127</sup> Weismayer reflects on dimensions of the spiritual life and differentiates them as 'life before God and with God', life in the communion of the Church and life with other people, the dimension of 'life in the middle of the world', and completes it with a fourth dimension that deals with life as a pilgrimage with ascetic aspects. Weismayer, *Život v plnosti*, 79–176.

word ‘conversion’ (Greek *metanoia*; Latin *conversio*), a change of mind, means ‘the biblical *metanoia*; primarily any sort of religious or moral transformation, especially the radical venture of entrusting oneself to God and his gracious guidance by a radical and fundamental religious act’.<sup>128</sup> Conversion is an aspect of spiritual life, in both the personal and the ecclesial dimension, to which John Paul II returns repeatedly: he mentions conversion seven times in *Redemptor Hominis*, more than seven times in *Dives in Misericordia*, and in *Dominum Vivificantem*.

In *Redemptor Hominis*, the discussion on conversion is developed especially in the context of the Eucharist. We are reminded in RH of Jesus’ appeal: ‘Repent, and believe the gospel’ (Mark 1:15 NJB), and that ‘the Eucharist and Penance thus become in a sense two closely connected dimensions of authentic life in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel, of truly Christian life. The Christ who calls to the Eucharistic banquet is always the same Christ who exhorts us to penance and repeats his “Repent” (Mark 1:15)’ (RH 20). John Paul II appeals to the necessity of conversion and reminds us of the repeated prompting of Jesus. He believes that ‘without this constant ever renewed endeavour for conversion, partaking of the Eucharist would lack its full redeeming effectiveness and there would be a loss or at least a weakening of the special readiness to offer God the spiritual sacrifice (cf. 1 Pet 2:5) in which our sharing in the priesthood of Christ is expressed in an essential and universal manner’ (RH 20).

Although the Eucharist and penance highlight the ecclesial aspect of ‘Christ’s Mystical Body’, the Pope notes that the conversion of each Christian is spiritual – inner and individual – personal in character (RH 20). If a Christian opens their heart, will, conscience, and everything in their life to Christ, and if they live that life through the sacraments of the Eucharist and penance, they will be enabled to meet Christ. The Pope’s intensive focus on Christian humanism, which is clear throughout his life and in his plentiful writings, appears again here. He indicates his extraordinary sense for human life and human being and underlines the fact that the sacrament of penance defends ‘the human soul’s individual right: man’s right to a more personal encounter with the crucified forgiving Christ’ (RH 20).

John Paul II speaks of ‘[Jesus’] right to meet each one of us in that key moment in the soul’s life constituted by the moment of conversion and forgiveness’ (RH 20), and clearly

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<sup>128</sup> Rahner, *Dictionary of Theology*, 97.

shows that conversion becomes completed in the receiving of the sacrament of penance, which in turn enables reconciliation.

If we accept this view, then conversion is an unceasing, repeated spiritual act that is an inseparable part of holiness interpreted as union with Christ.

### 3.4. Christ as the Master Spiritual Model

This section will consider John Paul II's presentation of Christ as the Master Spiritual Model and how this relates to holiness as union with Christ, all viewed from the perspective of spiritual theology. After exploring a connection with the previous chapter, the practice of following Christ as mentioned in *Lumen Gentium* and the Gospels will be considered. This will be followed by a reflection on Christ as Spiritual Model in *Redemptor Hominis*. Several features appear: following, conforming, and serving.

When expressing repentance and receiving the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist, the Christian is being transformed in Christ: 'unity with Christ is strengthened and enlarged ... [and] participation in the sacrificial feast creates the unity of the mysterious body'.<sup>129</sup> By this intimate act, which also has an ecclesial character, the Christian is therefore transformed and reintegrated into Christ's Body, the Church.

In the context of the Christian's mission, Giglioni suggests that 'the Eucharist draws us into the love of Christ, who has sacrificed himself for us; from the Eucharist, we learn to be missionaries under the sign of love, peace and justice'.<sup>130</sup> This approach indicates the essential task of the Christian, enshrined in the Eucharist and the other sacraments, which is to learn from Jesus and follow him, not as one of the many outstanding teachers and prophets, but as the Only One, the only Master 'par excellence'.

In this study, the theme of the spiritual model is explored in the context of the theology of holiness and through the application of spiritual theology. First, it is worth pointing to the conciliar teaching on the universal call to holiness: 'the Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and everyone [sic] of His disciples of every condition. He Himself stands as the author and consumator of this holiness of life' (LG 40). This statement is fundamentally related to Jesus' call: 'Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt 5:48; LG 40).

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<sup>129</sup> Giglioni, *Svätosti Krista a cirkve*, 86. For a reflection on the relationship between the Eucharist and the mission of the Church, see also Boublik, *Boží lid*, 242–250.

<sup>130</sup> Giglioni, *Svätosti Krista a cirkve*, 93.

Considering this conciliar approach, the question arises, How can a person be transformed into the perfection of the heavenly Father? Jesus answers this question when he says, ‘no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him’ (Matt 11:27), and says to Philip: ‘whoever has seen me has seen the Father’ (John 14:9).<sup>131</sup> Consequently, in order to realise the call to holiness, it is necessary to come to know the Son and seek a more perfect union with Him. It is not a matter of human effort alone, however, as the Council Fathers remind us: ‘the followers of Christ are called by God, not because of their works, but according to His own purpose and grace.... They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbor’ (LG 40). Such a call and the path of holiness are gifts from God (LG 40). This approach submits several features which relate in essence to Jesus as Master Spiritual Model: follow (*sequi*), conform (*conformare*), and serve (*ministrare*).

As stated above, in the context of the universal call to holiness, the Council presents Jesus as ‘the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection’ (Latin: *Omnis perfectionis divinus Magister et Exemplar*; LG 40), in other words, as the Master Model of holiness. How should we understand this concept of Jesus as the ‘spiritual’ Model? The word ‘spiritual’ has a wide range of meanings in both a Christian and a non-Christian understanding. In general, it means ‘relating to people’s deepest thoughts and beliefs’.<sup>132</sup> For the Christian, *spiritualis* refers to what Weismayer would call ‘life with Christ in the Holy Spirit’.<sup>133</sup> In clarifying the term ‘spiritual’, John Paul II suggests that ‘this appeal to the Spirit, intended precisely to obtain the Spirit, is the answer to all the “materialisms” of our age’ (RH 18). (The Holy Spirit is *rūah* in the Hebrew Old Testament and *pneuma* in the Greek New Testament).<sup>134</sup>

Jesus is the Master Spiritual Model in the Holy Spirit, whom he sent ‘upon all men that He might move them inwardly to love God’ (LG 40); ‘giving the body unity through Himself and through His power and inner joining of the members, this same Spirit produces and urges love among the believers’ (LG 7). John Paul II speaks of ‘that Holy

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<sup>131</sup> The Pope begins the encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* with this verse. John Paul II. *Dives in Misericordia*, 30 November 1980, accessed 10 October 2020, Vatican.va.

<sup>132</sup> *Anglicko-český výkladový slovník*, Czech bilingual edition (Praha: LNL, 2003), 954.

<sup>133</sup> Weismayer, *Život v plnosti*, 13.

<sup>134</sup> J. D. Douglas, ‘The Holy Spirit’, *Nový biblický slovník* (Praha: Návrat domů, 2009), 181.

Spirit promised and continually communicated by the Redeemer and whose descent, which was revealed on the day of Pentecost, endures for ever' (RH 18).

Union with Christ therefore has a spiritual character. The dimension of Christian life and following Jesus is therefore spiritual and inner, and it is union with Christ which forms the Christian according to his Model.

To follow a model means to imitate the behaviour of whoever is the example, to copy the way that person speaks and acts. Jesus is the Spiritual Model to be followed if a person is to grow in faith and find their true self. John Paul II emphasises the need for all Christians to answer the 'specific call' to follow Christ as members of 'Christ's Mystical Body' (RH 21). This emphasis with the core focus on Christ is fundamental, and the Pope considers it is central to setting the direction of the Christian's path in life: 'our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is towards Christ our Redeemer' (RH 7).

In the Gospels, Jesus on numerous occasions calls people to follow Him:

'If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget self, carry his cross, and follow me' (Matthew 16:24);

'I am the light of the world' he said. 'Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness' (John 8:12);

'Whoever wants to serve me must follow me, so that my servant will be with me where I am. And my father will honour anyone who serves me' (John 12:26).

The reflection on following Christ includes various aspects which appear throughout *Redemptor Hominis*, but these are all bound up in the concept of union with Christ.<sup>135</sup> The Pope illuminates Christ as the Master Spiritual Model through his Christian humanistic approach, by which he seeks to bring Christ and his humanity closer, and to integrate that humanity into the spirituality and daily life of a Christian in line with the conciliar teaching of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*:

For, by his Incarnation, he, the son of God, in a certain way united himself with each man. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin. (GS 22; see also, RH 8)

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<sup>135</sup> Spinello often mentions the Christological character of the Pope's teaching regarding Christ as the way to conforming to the image of God through likeness to the Son. See Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 74.

The Pope repeatedly stresses that ‘Christ fully reveals man to himself’ (RH 8) and demonstrates the link between the call to follow Jesus and the path to conforming to God’s image. Spinello comments that ‘John Paul II underscores man’s likeness to God, which is his deepest reality, so clearly revealed to us in [the] opening chapters of Genesis. The Hebrew term for image is *selem*, which implies a correspondence between what is made and the original exemplar or form’.<sup>136</sup>

John Paul II makes a strong link between the personal and the ecclesial dimension of holiness in the context of following Christ: to follow Christ is to follow Him as a member of ‘the community of the disciples’ (RH 21). He is nonetheless aware that the community, and each member of it, is subject to human imperfection (RH 21) while it travels the path of holiness and follows Christ.

That the person who follows Christ becomes more fully human is a common refrain in the Pope’s writings:

In Christ and through Christ God has revealed himself fully to mankind and has definitively drawn close to it; at the same time, in Christ and through Christ man has acquired full awareness of his dignity, of the heights to which he is raised, of the surpassing worth of his own humanity, and of the meaning of his existence. All of us who are Christ’s followers must therefore meet and unite around him. (RH 11)

We therefore recognise more fully the nature of human being by following Jesus and thereby finding fulness and dignity. Nietzsche, on the other hand, claims that a person becomes fully human when they reject God, who hinders the full realisation of humanity.<sup>137</sup> Christian humanism responds that humanity finds fulness only in God: ‘the person can only understand herself in light of Christ. The theological anthropology of both the Pope and the Second Vatican Council has Christ and Christ alone as its “fixed center”’.<sup>138</sup> The Pope’s emphasis on unity therefore underlines the essential relationship between the Eucharist and following Jesus. In the Eucharist, Christians are transformed

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Nietzsche states that ‘the need for faith, of something decisive in yes or no, is proof of weakness; all weakness is the weakness of the will. A man of faith, the faithful, is necessarily a small man. It follows that “freedom of the spirit”, i.e. infidelity as an instinct, is a condition of greatness’. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Duševní aristokratismus* (Olomouc: Votobia, 1993), 25. He denies the fulness of man in faith and is of the opinion that ‘the Christian faith from the beginning, is sacrifice: the sacrifice of all freedom, all pride, all self-confidence of spirit; it is at the same time subjection, self-derision, and self-mutilation’. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. L. A. Magnus (New York: Carlton House, n.d.), para. 46, <https://archive.org/stream/beyondgoodevil0000niet?ref=ol#page/n7/mode/2up>.

<sup>138</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 73.

in Him: Christ lives in the Christian, and the Christian lives in Christ. Jesus manifested the fulness of human life, and as such is the model of life ‘par excellence’: ‘authentic humanism is closely connected with Christ’ (RH 10). A person becomes fully human only in Christ and by following Him in unity with the Christian community.

This emphasis on humanism raises the question as to why John Paul II blessed and canonised so many people. Was he seeking to offer the saints as a model of authentic humanity? His anthropological view held that holiness is authentic humanity, and without holiness, a human being is not entirely human. In his canonisation of St Pio of Pietrelcina in 2002, the Pope demonstrated this link between authentic humanity, holiness, and union with Christ:

Throughout his life, [St Pio of Pietrelcina] always sought greater conformity with the Crucified, since he was very conscious of having been called to collaborate in a special way in the work of redemption. His holiness cannot be understood without this constant reference to the Cross ... In God’s plan, the Cross constitutes the true instrument of salvation for the whole of humanity and the way clearly offered by the Lord to those who wish to follow him (cf. Mk 16:24) ... May his example encourage priests to carry out with joy and zeal this ministry which is so important today ... In fact, the ultimate reason for the apostolic effectiveness of Padre Pio, the profound root of so much spiritual fruitfulness can be found in that intimate and constant union with God, attested to by his long hours spent in prayer and in the confessional ... Prayer and charity, this is the most concrete synthesis of Padre Pio’s teaching.<sup>139</sup>

For John Paul II, the principal aspect of following Jesus as the Spiritual Model is loving service (RH 21). To follow Christ is to imitate and conform to Christ’s example through ‘the Christian vocation to service and kingship’ and ‘the threefold mission of Christ’ (RH 21). This is the mission of every Christian, and there is a clear relationship between following Christ and service: ‘it is precisely the principle of the “kingly service” that imposes on each one of us, in imitation of Christ’s example, the duty to demand of himself exactly what we have been called to, what we have personally obliged ourselves to by God’s grace, in order to respond to our vocation’ (RH 21).

Kingly service can be enlightened only by Christ, the Master Spiritual Model, and such service brings to the Christian a ‘special dignity.... This dignity is expressed in readiness to serve, in keeping with the example of Christ who “came not to be served but to serve”

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<sup>139</sup> John Paul II, ‘Canonization of St Pio of Pietrelcina, Capuchin Priest. Homily of John Paul II’, 16 June 2002, accessed 1 October 2020, Vatican.va.

(Matthew 20:28)' (RH 21). Jesus made this statement when the mother of James and John came to him to ask if her sons could sit at his right and left hand in the coming kingdom. The Pope is using the story to highlight the value of service to our neighbours, which alone gives the Christian the right to 'being a king' (RH 21). Such kingly service demands true spiritual maturity (RH 21).

This reflection on the Christian path of holiness may seem paradoxical at first, but it reminds us of how Jesus taught his disciples at the Last Supper, even washing his disciples' feet (John 13:2–17). The evangelist introduces this event by mentioning the coming suffering of which Jesus was aware, and the Father's love for the whole world (John 13:1). The Master is united with his disciples through suffering and love, the two-fold feature of the service to which Jesus leads them: 'charity ... takes concrete form in self-giving and in service' (RH 21). Such service is not slavery but genuine freedom (RH 21). It is also clear that the internal forms the external: following Christ begins in heart fully focused on Christ, and such concentration transforms into action towards the neighbour.

Another fundamental aspect of following Christ is prayer. Jesus again provides the model when he goes into seclusion and prays to the Father (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:15–16; Luke 6:12–13). Unfortunately, the Pope devotes relatively little space to prayer as a fundamental component of Christian life in his encyclical, at least no separate space is devoted to it. It may be that he is presenting prayer as inseparable from the life of the Church: 'the Church never ceases to relive his death on the Cross and his Resurrection, which constitute the content of the Church's daily life' (RH 7). The whole encyclical hints at the idea that contemplation of 'the mystery of the Redemption' *transforms* (DM 14) the Christian more and more into Christ's image. The encyclical ends with devotion to Mary as 'the Mother of the Church' (RH 22; with reference to the Second Vatican Council) and emphasises the role played by her motherly love in the life of the Church: 'its exceptional closeness to man and all that happens to him' (RH 22). The Council calls Mary 'the model of virtues' (LG 65). Spinello noted that the way John Paul II closed the encyclical would 'become customary for his future works, which typically end with some reference to Mary'.<sup>140</sup> The Pope concludes RH with a call to prayer: 'only prayer can prevent all these great succeeding tasks and difficulties from becoming a source of crisis and make them instead the occasion and, as it were, the foundation for ever more mature

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<sup>140</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 79.



achievements on the People of God's march towards the Promised Land' (RH 22). The reflection therefore concludes with an eschatological character as a reminder of the hope of eternal life.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

The Christological character of holiness developed in *Redemptor Hominis* shows a clear emphasis on *Unicus Mediator* and an understanding of holiness as union with Christ. The Pope bases his reflection on the Redemptor on the relationship between Christ and the human person as viewed through the lens of Christian humanism. The analysis of the sources used in his writing of the encyclical demonstrated his focus on the development and theoretical and practical application of the Second Vatican Council, in which he took an active part. The interpretation of holiness as union with Christ has both a personal and an ecclesial character. The distinction between the words 'all' and 'every' helped to show how Christians and the Church convert holiness from the abstract to the concrete; this concretisation is reflected in the lives of the saints. The union between Christ and the human person finds its deepest and most intimate manifestation in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is closely related to penance.

Following Christ is an essential expression of union with Christ as it witnesses to genuine and authentic faith, love and hope, which are of a theological nature. Jesus is the Master Spiritual Model in the Holy Spirit. The Christological character of holiness is developed into a Christoformic character: spiritually conforming to Christ through serving out of love with dignity and freedom, sharing in 'being a king' and following Christ as *Unicus Mediator*. The Christian is encouraged to follow Christ both spiritually and in everyday reality in the Church, supported by the motherly love of the Virgin Mary. According to John Paul II, then, the path of holiness has a strongly ecclesial, Christological, and Christian-humanistic character.

## 4. MERCY AND THE ‘GRATUITOUS’ CHARACTER OF HOLINESS

This chapter will explore how John Paul II relates holiness to the theme of mercy and how this in turn relates to union with Christ. Here, Paolo Molinari, an expert on the saints, will be used as an interlocutor, and the main source from the Pope’s writings will be the encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, through which the chapter will explore how John Paul II uses the concept of mercy to ‘describe in different shades both the fact and nature of our unity with Christ, and in Him with the Holy Trinity’.<sup>141</sup> First, the spiritual background of *Dives in Misericordia* deals with the relation to St Sr Faustina Kowalska. A brief introduction to the encyclical focuses on aspects of union with Christ. The Pope’s perspective on mercy in the Old and New Testaments will help with an understanding of the interpretation of mercy. The important theme of conversion as a path to the recovery of human dignity is followed by a reflection on the meaning of the ‘gratuitous’ character of holiness. The final section explores how the invisible becomes visible in Christ.

### 4.1. The Spiritual Background of *Dives in Misericordia*

When John Paul II introduced *Redemptor Hominis*, its ‘Christ-centered humanism was to be the driving theme of his pontificate’, while the encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (‘Rich in Mercy’) was a ‘reflection on the dignity of the human person redeemed by Christ [which] led naturally ... onto the God who has sent his Son to be the redeemer of the world’.<sup>142</sup> The encyclical was proclaimed on 30 November 1980, the year John Paul II also wrote *Familiaris Consortio*, an apostolic exhortation devoted to the subject of the Christian family.<sup>143</sup> According to Weigel, *Dives in Misericordia* is, ‘the most intensely theological of John Paul’s encyclicals, [and] reflects two spiritual dimensions of his life’.<sup>144</sup> It includes reference to his close spiritual relationship with Sister Faustina

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<sup>141</sup> De Fiores and Goffi, *Slovník spirituality*, 950.

<sup>142</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 386.

<sup>143</sup> John Paul II, ‘*Familiaris Consortio*. Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World’, 22 November 1980, accessed 24 October 2020, Vatican.va.

<sup>144</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 386.

Kowalska, whom he canonised on 30 April 2000,<sup>145</sup> and reflects the dimension of human and spiritual experience with his father and of spiritual paternity with regard to his spiritual father Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha.<sup>146</sup> There is one further spiritual dimension to be identified, however, and that concerns mercy. The theme of mercy is clear throughout the encyclical as John Paul II manifests his extraordinary paternal love for all the suffering and sinners, like a true shepherd to whom the salvation of all people is close to his heart, as it was with the Master Model of Christ.

The encyclical had its origins in the time when ‘Karol Wojtyła was first introduced to the message of divine mercy while he was a seminarian in Krakow’,<sup>147</sup> and was offering retreats at the convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy where Sister Kowalska lived. He never met her personally as she died of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-three,<sup>148</sup> but her ‘life and witness’ had a profound spiritual influence on the future Pope and eventually resulted in the encyclical on divine mercy.<sup>149</sup>

The influence of the Polish mystic and nun Sister Faustina Kowalska (1905–1938) appears to be central to the theme of the encyclical.<sup>150</sup> Her parents refused to allow their daughter to enter the convent, but after saving enough money for the dowry for the convent, she took her eternal vows on 1 May 1933.<sup>151</sup> She is well known for her mystical experiences and the personal revelation from Christ that led her to the task of spreading the message of his divine mercy through prayer,<sup>152</sup> and for a painting of Christ called ‘Jesus, I trust in you’.<sup>153</sup> She recorded her experiences in a diary,<sup>154</sup> and these were checked and verified during the beatification process. She excelled in a life of virtue, diligence and humility, of contemplation of Christ and His mercy, and of extraordinary compassion for the suffering of other people. She was proclaimed Patron of Divine

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<sup>145</sup> She was canonised as the first saint of the new millennium. Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 80.

<sup>146</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 386–387.

<sup>147</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 80.

<sup>148</sup> Oder and Gaeta, *Proč svatý?*, 145.

<sup>149</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 80.

<sup>150</sup> For more on how John Paul II was inspired by Sister Kowalská, see also Christoph Schönborn, *Nalezli jsme milosrdenství* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2010), 9–21.

<sup>151</sup> M. Machejek, ‘Faustyna Kowalská’, *Slovník křesťanských mystiků* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2012), 291.

<sup>152</sup> The spiritual experiences recorded in her diary also contain ‘the special religious service and the description of the vision of Divine Mercy ... She spread the crown of prayers to Divine mercy, reverence for Divine mercy (3 p.m.), the feast of Divine Mercy (1st Sunday after Easter)’. Hynek Rulíšek, ‘Faustyna Kowalská’, *Slovník křesťanské ikonografie. Postavy / Atributy / Symboly* (České Budějovice: Karmášek, 2006).

<sup>153</sup> Machejek, ‘Faustyna Kowalská’, 291.

<sup>154</sup> Faustina Kowalska, ‘Diary. Divine Mercy in My Soul’ (Misericordia Publications, 2020), accessed 10 October 2020, <https://www.saint-faustina.org/diary-full-text/>.

Mercy, and is also known as the ‘Apostle of Divine Mercy’.<sup>155</sup> At her canonisation, John Paul II recalled the richness of divine mercy and his message in *Dives in Misericordia*. He used the occasion to cross over, with the Church and the world, to the new millennium, and gave the call to turn to divine mercy in order to face, through love, whatever difficulties would present themselves:

Divine Mercy reaches human beings through the heart of Christ crucified: ‘My daughter, say that I am love and mercy personified’, Jesus will ask Sr Faustina (*Diary*, p. 374). Christ pours out this mercy on humanity through the sending of the Spirit who, in the Trinity, is the Person-Love. And is not mercy love’s ‘second name’ (cf. *Dives in misericordia* 7), understood in its deepest and most tender aspect, in its ability to take upon itself the burden of any need and, especially, in its immense capacity for forgiveness?<sup>156</sup>

John Paul II therefore sees turning to divine mercy as an essential feature of the Christian life and of a life of holiness. It is worth noting that on the day of the death of John Paul II, on 2 April 2005, ‘the Feast of the Divine Mercy has begun to be celebrated during the liturgy, which he had incorporated into the liturgical calendar on the Sunday after Easter, thus fulfilling the explicit request made by Jesus himself seventy years earlier to Faustina Kowalska’.<sup>157</sup> Here we see the purpose of God: to give the world in His two saints a glimpse into the mystery of mercy born of the contemplation of Christ and of extraordinary zeal and compassion for the suffering.

#### 4.2. A Brief Introduction to the Encyclical

The main thread of the encyclical consists in the idea that John Paul II introduced in *Redemptor Hominis*: ‘the truth about man, a truth that is revealed to us in its fullness and depth in Christ.’ In *Dives in Misericordia*, he sets out his task ‘to draw attention once again in Christ to the countenance of the “Father of mercies and God of all comfort” (2 Cor 1:3)’ (DM 1). He returns to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council throughout the encyclical and repeatedly to *Gaudium et Spes* (GS 22), which serves as a foundation for his reflection that a ‘man and man’s lofty calling are revealed in Christ through the

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>156</sup> John Paul II, ‘Homily of the Holy Father. Mass in St Peter’s Square for the Canonization of Sr Mary Faustina Kowalska’, 30 April 2000, Vatican.va.

<sup>157</sup> Oder and Gaeta, *Proč svatý?*, 146.

revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love' (DM 1). This theme connects the two encyclicals.

In reference to the vital intention of the Council, he stresses the need to unite both 'the anthropocentric' and 'the theocentric' focus of the Church, and 'more it must be confirmed and actualized theocentrically, that is to say, be directed in Jesus Christ to the Father' (DM 1). Spinello believes that in *Dives in Misericordia* the Pope 'makes more explicit the relationship between Trinitarian theology and anthropology. To be made in the Triune God's image in Jesus Christ is to be made for love and self-donation'.<sup>158</sup>

The encyclical begins with a verse from the Gospel of John: 'whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14:9). These words suffuse the whole document, which is devoted to mercy, love and justice, and to conversion as reconciliation with the Father. Weigel believes that the encyclical was based on the Pope's meditations on matters relating to paternity in his personal life, and his relationship with his father and Cardinal Sapieha, which 'had given him a profound experience of both familial and spiritual paternity'.<sup>159</sup> The early part of the encyclical deals with the revelation and the incarnation of mercy: 'Through this "making known" by Christ we know God above all in His relationship of love for man: in His "philanthropy" (Tit 3:4)' (DM 2). There follows a careful analysis of the concept of mercy with its centre in the message of Christ, and an explanation using both Old and New Testaments (DM 3, 4). As in *Redemptor Hominis*, the emphasis is on Christian humanism, on the human person and the fulness of his dignity (particularly in DM 6). Human dignity is a vital aspect associated with divine mercy, and this is the focus in the chapter on the Parable of the Prodigal Son (DM 5): 'the analogy that enables us to understand more fully the very mystery of mercy, as a profound drama played out between the father's love and the prodigality and sin of the son' (DM 5). This biblical parable becomes both the didactic and the spiritual core of the encyclical.

After this, the Pope again emphasises the connection between the two encyclicals (RH and DM), and reflects on 'the Paschal Mystery' and its relation to mercy (DM 7). Regarding the relationship between mercy and redemption, the Pope believes that 'the divine dimension of redemption is put into effect not only by bringing justice to bear upon sin, but also by restoring to love that creative power in man thanks also which he once more has access to the fullness of life and holiness that come from God ... [Justice] is based on love, flows from it and tends towards it' (DM 7).

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<sup>158</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 86.

<sup>159</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 387.

It is therefore essential that as Christians we acknowledge and are aware of the suffering and sacrifice Christ underwent for us and that we transform this awareness into reality in our lives. Building on the words from John's Gospel with which he opens the encyclical, the Pope suggests that 'believing in the crucified Son means "seeing the Father,"' (cf. John 14:9) (DM 7). He underlines the fact that human dignity and the love expressed in the Old and New Testaments are in turn expressed in the cross of Christ (DM 8). Among the beatitudes, those that regard mercy are highlighted (DM 8).

Chapter 9 is devoted to the Virgin Mary, 'the Mother of Mercy'. This is followed, in Chapter 11, by a description of 'sources of uneasiness': despite significant technical and other progress, 'in our world the feeling of being under threat is increasing. There is an increase of that existential fear' (DM 11). John Paul II responds from the position of the moral and social teaching of the Catholic Church, and uses the concept of justice, which he relates to the concept of mercy (DM 11). Chapters 13 and 14 discuss the subject of mercy in the everyday life and spirituality of the Church, again with a dual emphasis on personal and ecclesial matters. Mercy is also related to the theme of conversion: 'the conversion to God always consists in discovering His mercy' (DM 13). Mercy and its realisation are the life programme of the Christian: 'authentic knowledge of the God of mercy, the God of tender love, is a constant and inexhaustible source of conversion' (DM 13).

The Pope also returns to Jesus as the Master Model in relation to mercy (DM 14) and presents mercy as 'the most profound source of justice' (DM 14). He also considers the relationship between mercy and justice, where one person gifts another person through an act of mercy, and differentiates between 'complete' and 'incomplete' mercy (DM 14). The section about reconciliation is not omitted as it is an essential component of holiness (DM 14). Finally, using the examples of the people of God in the Old Testament, Jesus, together with the Virgin Mary, he issues a call to a life of constant prayer (DM 15). Weigel feels that although *Redemptor Hominis* received much more attention from the media, *Dives in Misericordia* 'is the clearest expression of the pastoral soul of John Paul II, and the clearest indication of how that soul was formed by Karol Wojtyla's experience and understanding of fatherhood'.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Weigel suggests that *Redemptor Hominis* received more attention because it was the first encyclical and set the agenda of John Paul II's pontificate. *Ibid.*, 388.

### **4.3. The Concept of Mercy in The Old Testament**

This section briefly focuses on how John Paul II understands mercy in the Old Testament. He develops the idea of mercy first in the context of the revelation and the incarnation of mercy: ‘the invisible nature [of the Father] ... becomes visible in Christ and through Christ, through His actions and His words, and finally through His death on the cross and His resurrection.... In Christ and through Christ, God also becomes especially visible in His mercy.... That is to say, there is emphasized that attribute of the divinity which the Old Testament, using various concepts and terms, already defined as “mercy”’ (DM 2).

It is essential to understand the concept of mercy and its different shades of meaning in the Bible. First, John Paul II recalls the sins and infidelity of the people of God who repeatedly broke the covenant (DM 4). He points out the need for the relationship between God and human beings to be restored: ‘whenever it became aware of its infidelity ... it appealed to mercy’ (DM 4). Through references to the Psalms and the Prophets, the Pope shows that if God ‘finds repentance and true conversion’, divine grace comes to the people again... [Mercy] signifies a special power of love, which prevails over the sin and infidelity of the chosen people’ (DM 4). The Pope also reflects on the concept on mercy in connection with the exodus from Egypt (DM 4). There are two outstanding kinds of situation which require the healing of divine mercy: ‘individuals languishing in a state of guilt or enduring every kind of suffering and misfortune. Both physical evil and moral evil, namely sin, cause the sons and daughters of Israel to turn to the Lord and beseech His mercy’ (DM 4). The people of God offer thanks and give glory to God for the mercy they have received, as we see very clearly in the Psalms (DM 4).

The miserable state of the human being is a clear focus of the Old Testament, but ‘the people and each of its members based their certainty of the mercy of God, which can be invoked whenever tragedy strikes’ (DM4). This strongly anthropological approach is the basic line that the Pope will transfer into his reflection on the New Testament, and on the current threats faced by the Church and the world. It can be inferred that mercy is the way to unite with God, and repentance and conversion of inner thinking are an integral part: ‘mercy is the content of intimacy with [the] Lord, the content of [a] dialogue with Him’ (DM 4).

A semantic analysis, clearly processed, can shed more light on the concept of mercy in the Old Testament, which has two basic interpretations. First, viewed from the

perspective of relationships between people, is the word *hesed*, ‘which indicates a profound attitude of “goodness” ... [They] are also faithful to each other by virtue of an interior commitment, and therefore also by virtue of a faithfulness to themselves’ (DM 4). Such a commitment can include moral and juridical aspects (DM 4). Mercy expressed as *hesed* in relation to God, ‘always occurs in connection with the Covenant that God established with Israel. This Covenant was, on God’s part, a gift and a grace for Israel’ (DM 4). The juridical character of mercy (*hesed*) as goodness stands out significantly when the chosen people turn away from the covenant: ‘[It] showed itself as what it was at the beginning, that is, as love that gives, love more powerful than betrayal, grace stronger than sin’ (DM 4). Love prevails over all sin, ultimately because God acts to maintain fidelity to Himself: ‘It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name’ (Ezek 36:22) (see DM 4).

The second distinct expression for mercy in the Old Testament is *rahamim*, which ‘has a different nuance from that of *hesed*. While *hesed* highlights the marks of fidelity to self and of “responsibility for one’s own love” (which are in a certain sense masculine characteristics), *rahamim*, in its very root, denotes the love of a mother’ (DM 4). Here the Pope again uses an example from human life: ‘[From] the unity that links a mother to her child there springs a particular relationship to the child, a particular love. Of this love one can say that it is completely gratuitous, not merited’ (DM 4). Such mercy (*rahamim*) expressed as a particular kind of love ‘generates a whole range of feelings, including goodness and tenderness, patience and understanding, that is, readiness to forgive’ (DM 4).

#### **4.4. The Concept of Mercy in The New Testament**

This section will explore how John Paul II interprets the concept of mercy in the New Testament, with a focus on union with God. The aim is to research the topic from the perspective of spiritual theology, which examines the union of a person with God in Christ.

John Paul II also reflects on the concept of God’s justice: ‘although justice is an authentic virtue in man, and in God signifies transcendent perfection, nevertheless love is “greater” than justice ... love, so to speak, conditions justice and, in the final analysis, justice serves love’ (DM 4). The Pope distinguishes between mercy and justice and explains how to understand the message of the New Testament through the expression of



love, stating that ‘the primacy and superiority of love vis-a-vis justice - this is a mark of the whole of revelation - are revealed precisely through mercy’ (DM 4). Mercy therefore manifests God’s character, which is constant and rich in all its aspects. Although not directly pointed out here, there are two common and related emphases of John Paul II which may be inspired by or linked in some way to Sr Faustina’s *Diary*. Jesus instructed her to worship His mercy, particularly:

My daughter, I remind you, every time you hear the clock strike three, immerse yourself completely in My mercy, praising and glorifying it; beg the omnipotence of My mercy on the whole world, and especially on poor sinners, for at that moment mercy was flung wide open for each and every soul. Whatever you ask for at that hour, for yourself and for others, will be granted to you; at that hour grace came upon the whole world – mercy superseded justice.<sup>161</sup>

John Paul II emphasises both aspects: first, the fact that justice ultimately prevails through love, of which divine mercy is the source; secondly, God’s commitment to caring for people in need and in sin and desiring the salvation of every person. Both aspects are integral to divine holiness, which leads to the restoration and development of a person’s union with God. Christ is the *Unicus Mediator*, who in his life and teaching demonstrates the authenticity of mercy and, furthermore, ‘makes it incarnate and personifies it. He Himself, in a certain sense, is mercy’ (DM 2). John Paul II’s emphasis that *Christ Himself is mercy* could also have been inspired by Sr Faustina. In her diary entry for 4 April 1937, Jesus calls Himself mercy:

Tell them, O My daughter, that I am love and mercy itself. Whenever a soul comes up to Me full of trust, I fill it with such a huge amount of grace that it cannot contain all the grace within itself, but radiates out to other souls.<sup>162</sup>

How does John Paul II interpret union with Christ in the context of mercy? The Pope states that: ‘in fact, revelation and faith teach us not only to meditate in the abstract upon the mystery of God as “Father of mercies,” but also to have recourse to that mercy in the name of Christ and in union with Him’ (DM 2). Here the Pope views Jesus as ‘Mercy Himself’, thus helping to transform the abstract concept of mercy into something concrete, and enabling a deeper understanding. The more a person unites with Jesus, the

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<sup>161</sup> Kowalska, ‘Diary’, 701.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 515.

more mercy penetrates their being by grace and helps to fulfil mercy in other people. This emphasis on the shift from the abstract to the concrete, which was also shown in the exploration of the Christological character of holiness in the previous chapter, shows the exploration of the path from mystery to the daily experience of a Christian life.

Such concretisation is taken further through an analysis of the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32, DM 5), which the Pope aims to make a deeper study of, and to spend time with Christ and his mystery of holiness. He encourages people to discover God the Father through Christ as Mercy and vice-versa. John Paul II often uses analogy in a similar way to Jesus. In his reflection on this parable, he stresses that ‘although the word “mercy” does not appear, it nevertheless expresses the essence of the divine mercy in a particularly clear way’ (DM 5). In his analysis of the concept of mercy-*rahamim* in the New Testament, he uses the analogy of love between a mother and her child (DM 5). In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, mercy ‘has the interior form of the love that in the New Testament is called *agape*. This love is able to reach down to every prodigal son, to every human misery, and above all to every form of moral misery, to sin’ (DM 6). Jesus’ story introduces a father and a son, (Luke 15:11–32) who took his inheritance from his father, left home, and spent all he had in a wasteful life. Later he realised that he had lost everything, acknowledged his misconduct, and determined to return home to ask his father for forgiveness. The father rewarded him with the wealth of his love.

From all that can be said about this well-known story about a father and his son(s), John Paul II emphasises the aspects of human dignity, the need for conversion, and immeasurable love, especially a (re)discovery of the love of God the Father: ‘Did not Christ say that our Father, who “sees in secret,” (Mathew 6:14.18) is always waiting for us to have recourse to Him in every need and always waiting for us to study His mystery: the mystery of the Father and His love? (Ephesians 3:18; Luke 11:5–13)’ (DM 2).

The central thesis of this study is evident here – ‘[having] recourse to that mercy in the name of Christ and in union with Him’ (DM 2) – as is the Pope’s usual emphasis on the dynamic character of Christian holiness. The Catholic concept of holiness includes an awareness that the faithful are already inwardly holy, but there is still a need to actively transform oneself internally and externally with the help of God’s grace. Here, Catholic teaching differs from the (reformed) Protestant emphasis on grace alone, where the sinner is covered by the grace of divine mercy, and the active character of conversion and the active transformation of the sinner is missing. St Paul, however, uses an indicative statement – ‘you are the people of God; he loved you and chose you or his own’ (Col 3:12)

– followed by an imperative – ‘So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience ... everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you given thanks through him to God the Father’ (Col 3:13-17). The apostle urges Christians to live in accordance with the faith the faithful have received; to sin is to deny what they have received.

#### **4.5. Conversion as a Path to the Recovery of Human Dignity**

The Pope’s commentary on the Parable of the Prodigal Son includes the observation that ‘the figure of the father reveals to us God as Father’ (DM 6), and that regarding human beings weakened by attachment to sin, ‘the parable indirectly touches upon every breach of the covenant of love, every loss of grace, every sin’ (DM 5). Two substantial and interconnected aspects appear repeatedly in the teaching of John Paul II: human dignity and conversion. The son reached his state of grave emergency through no fault but his own. He lost material goods, ‘but more important than these goods, was his dignity as a son in his father’s house’ (DM 5). Indeed, still today, a person’s preoccupation with material things often far exceeds their concern for things of the spirit (DM 11). A crucial moment in the parable comes with the son’s next step:

It is at this point that he makes the decision: ‘I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants”.’ (Luke 15:18 ff.) These are words that reveal more deeply the essential problem. (DM5)

The son’s awareness of his state is followed by the firm ‘decision’ to acknowledge his guilt and lay himself open to dishonour (DM 5): ‘at the center of the prodigal son’s consciousness, the sense of lost dignity is emerging, the sense of that dignity that springs from the relationship of the son with the father’ (DM 5). The father could have behaved differently, but love overcame all: ‘the relationship between justice and love ... is manifested as mercy ... [Love] is transformed into mercy when it is necessary to go beyond the precise norm of justice – precise and often too narrow’ (DM 5). The father’s welcoming of the son who has returned, his outpouring of love (Luke 15:20), also represents ‘the father’s fidelity to himself – a trait already known by the Old Testament term *hesed*.... [The] father is aware that a fundamental good has been saved: the good of

his son's humanity' (DM 6). The father and the son are connected through mercy, and although they manifest 'a relationship of inequality between the one offering it and the one receiving it', they share a 'common experience' (DM 6). Because of the father's love, the son experiences mercy and full acceptance.

The Pope clarifies: 'The parable of the prodigal son expresses in a simple but profound way the reality of conversion. Conversion is the most concrete expression of the working of love and of the presence of mercy in the human world' (DM 6). Mercy therefore shows a dynamic internal and external character: 'mercy is manifested in its true and proper aspect when it restores to value, promotes and draws good from all the forms of evil existing in the world and in man. In this way, mercy constitutes the fundamental content of the messianic message of Christ and the constitutive power of His mission' (DM 6).

Pope Francis has written on the theme of conversion in relation to holiness, by which he provides an update of the theme: 'At times, life presents great challenges. Through them, the Lord calls us anew to a conversion that can make his grace more evident in our lives, "in order that we may share his holiness" (Heb 12:10). At other times, we need only find a more perfect way of doing what we are already doing'.<sup>163</sup> Drawing on the lives of the saints, Francis speaks of living the everyday in an 'extraordinary way'.<sup>164</sup>

Mercy, then, recovers union with Christ. Real conversion, that is, conversion accompanied by good deeds and a desire to correct one's mistakes and restore one's relationship with God, attracts other divine graces and the fulness of God's love. Understood in this way, through conversion mercy recovers holiness in a Christian and thereby recovers the person's dignity.<sup>165</sup>

John Paul II also speaks of forgiveness as part of the mystery of mercy: 'Jesus Christ taught that man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God but that he is also called "to practise mercy" towards others: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7)' (DM 14). Forgiving other people is part of the Church's practice of mercy and 'forgiveness is also the fundamental condition for reconciliation, not only in the relationship of God with man, but also in relationships between people.... [Christ

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<sup>163</sup> Francis, 'Gaudete et Exsultate', 17.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>165</sup> 'Each person must exhibit merciful love to others as part of the call to holiness. Such love is a sign of and safeguard to each human person's dignity' Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 86. The Catholic Catechism lists acts of mercy: 'instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead'. 'Catechism of the Catholic Church', 2447 .

insists that we] must be able to forgive everyone every time' (DM 14). Mercy becomes the source of forgiveness: 'Society can become "ever more human" only when we introduce into all the mutual relationships which form its moral aspect the moment of forgiveness' (DM 14). The Pope's interpretation of forgiveness again shows his strong emphasis on personalism, especially the matter of human dignity: 'He who forgives and he who is forgiven encounter one another at an essential point, namely the dignity or essential value of the person, a point which cannot be lost and the affirmation of which, or its rediscovery, is a source of the greatest joy' (DM 14).

Forgiveness is essential for a spiritual connection with Christ. It is also therefore an essential feature of a life of holiness. If we do not truly forgive, we continue to bear the spiritual, mental and physical burden. The person who has experienced mercy, however, for example through the sacrament of penance, is more open to practising mercy in their own life.

#### **4.6. The 'Gratuitous' Character of Holiness in *Dives in Misericordia***

The overall aim of this study is to explore, from the perspective of spiritual theology, the concept of holiness as union with Christ. One possible starting point of this exploration is the gift of being with which God the Father blessed creation, and the gift for every person to become a child of God through Christ, the Redeemer. John Paul II introduced these fundamentals in *Redemptor Hominis* and developed them in *Dives in Misericordia*.

Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him. Because of his love God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his sons and daughters – this was his pleasure and purpose. (Eph 1:4-5; cf. John 1:12)

This study will use the term 'gratuitous' (Latin *gratuitus*), in the sense of unmerited, an unmerited gift, like a mother's love, or the love of God: 'From the deep and original bond – indeed the unity – that links a mother to her child there springs a particular relationship to the child, a particular love. Of this love one can say that it is completely gratuitous, not merited' (DM 4). In Christian spirituality, the gratuitous character of holiness includes acts of mercy, self-giving, loving self-sharing, grace, 'good done for

others' (DM 14), forgiveness. Holiness is a gift by which God encourages Christians to respond by following Christ, as described in the previous chapter. However, Christians do not always respond adequately as the attachment to sin is ever present (DM 13). This can also be viewed from the perspective of how a Christian receives Christ in baptism. Subjectively, the gift of holiness will be received in a certain way; objectively, holiness is simply a gift. This approach can also be applied to the ecclesial dimension. The holy and sinful church is a widely discussed topic. Castellucci, for example, reflects on such a paradox in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, mainly from the perspective of the Swiss theologian Charles Journet.<sup>166</sup> Pope Francis has expressed it as follows: 'In the Church, holy yet made up of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness. The Lord has bestowed on the Church the gifts of scripture, the sacraments, holy places, living communities, the witness of the saints and a multifaceted beauty that proceeds from God's love'.<sup>167</sup>

Mercy as a 'gratuitous' gift leads to the development of union with Christ and therefore to the development of holiness. John Paul II first explores the subject using the Parable of the Prodigal Son, especially the behaviour and character of the father: 'The father's fidelity to himself is totally concentrated upon the humanity of the lost son, upon his dignity. This explains above all his joyous emotion at the moment of the son's return home' (DM 6). Out of mercy, the father embraces the son. The Pope develops his exploration of the gratuitous character of holiness through a discussion of the cross of Christ and the 'Paschal Mystery' (DM 7–9). Meditating on Christ<sup>168</sup> and the fulness of his suffering opens the door to mercy:

The cross of Christ on Calvary stands beside the path of that admirable commercium, of that wonderful self-communication of God to man, which also includes the call to man to share in the divine life by giving himself, and with himself the whole visible world, to God, and like an adopted son to become a sharer in the truth and love which is in God and proceeds from God.  
(DM 7)

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<sup>166</sup> Castellucci concludes that: 'the Council fluctuates in its expressions between different theological positions and does not always express itself clearly and unambiguously. On the one hand, it avoids the formal designation of the church as "sinful", on the other hand, it is not limited to a statement that would highlight the holiness of the church and attribute sinfulness to her "sons": sin really touches the church, enters its "interior", and therefore requires its reform, constant purification and renewal'. According to Castellucci, the Swiss theologian went further 'in the "division" between the ideal church and the people living in the world, between mystery and history, for which Journet was criticised and not for no reason'. Castellucci, 'Zjevím na nich svou svatost před očima všech národů', 33.

<sup>167</sup> Francis, 'Gaudete et Exsultate', 15.

<sup>168</sup> Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 82.

Meditation on the suffering of Christ is essential for an understanding of mercy. When a person's eyes are fixed on Christ on the cross, mercy appears as a response in the devoted follower, especially as a response to the suffering in the world: 'In the whole revelation of mercy through the cross, could man's dignity be more highly respected and ennobled, for, in obtaining mercy, he is in a sense the one who at the same time "shows mercy"?' (DM 8). The application of mercy in the life of every Christian and in the Church, according to the Model of Christ, is to live out mercy in everyday life, especially in these times of global challenges (DM 11, 12). Mary, 'the Mother of Mercy', helps us to understand, receive and apply mercy more fully. She is 'the one who obtained mercy in a particular and exceptional way, as no other person has ... [and] was called in a special way to bring close to people that love which He had come to reveal: the love that finds its most concrete expression vis-a-vis the suffering, the poor, those deprived of their own freedom, the blind, the oppressed and sinners' (DM 9).

One vital aspect of the gratuitous character of holiness as it relates to mercy is 'good done to others', but this demands an equilibrium wherein the donor is also the recipient. In this context, the Pope reflects on the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' (Matt 5:7). Furthermore:

In reality the One who gives is always also a beneficiary.... In this sense Christ crucified is for us the loftiest model, inspiration and encouragement. When we base ourselves on this disquieting model, we are able with all humility to show mercy to others, knowing that Christ accepts it as if it were shown to Himself (Matt 25:34-40). (DM 14)

John Paul II interprets the practice of mercy as a gift and task for every Christian and for the Church: 'The Church professes the mercy of God and proclaims it' as its mission (DM 13): 'On the basis of [the model of Christ crucified] we must also continually purify all our actions and all our intentions in which mercy is understood and practiced in a unilateral way, as a good done to others' (DM 14). Achieving the necessary equilibrium is possible only when we see the countenance of the Father in the countenance of Christ (DM 1), which is immeasurable love and mercy:

At the same time, ‘equality’ of people through ‘patient and kind’ love (1 Cor 13:4) does not take away differences: the person who gives becomes more generous when he feels at the same time benefitted by the person accepting his gift; and vice versa, the person who accepts the gift with the awareness that, in accepting it, he too is doing good is in his own way serving the great cause of the dignity of the person; and this contributes to uniting people in a more profound manner. (DM 15)

In his analysis of mercy, the Pope is encouraging people not to be passive in their attitude to suffering, but to seek dynamic ways to realise mercy and so develop holiness in their daily lives. Every Christian has their own gifts (charisms) for others.<sup>169</sup> Redemption restores ‘the creative power in man thanks also to which he once more has access to the fullness of life and holiness that come from God. In this way, redemption involves the revelation of mercy in its fullness’ (DM 7).

#### **4.7. The Invisible Becomes Visible in Christ**

This section will go deeper into the verse with which the Pope opens the encyclical: ‘He who sees Me sees the Father’ (John 14:9). This will help to identify the spiritual aspect of holiness as union with Christ and enable an understanding of how the ‘invisible’ becomes ‘visible’ (DM 2) in Christ in the Pope’s interpretation, and how to apply that understanding:

It is precisely here that ‘His invisible nature’ becomes in a special way ‘visible,’ incomparably more visible than through all the other ‘things that have been made’: it becomes visible in Christ and through Christ, through His actions and His words, and finally through His death on the cross and His resurrection. (DM 2)

The Pope takes a Christological approach, which becomes the centre of every Christian spirituality, whether priestly, religious, lay, conjugal, or other. The Christological character of mercy means that ‘He Himself, in a certain sense, is mercy. To the person who sees it in Him – and finds it in Him – God becomes “visible” in a particular way as the Father who is rich in mercy (Cf. Eph 2:4)’ (DM 2). Holiness is a paradox: it is a mystery within ‘the divine dimension of the redemption’ (RH 9), but it also becomes visible through the person of Jesus.

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<sup>169</sup> Kleinberg, *Histoires de saints*, 17–23. See also 1 Cor 12.



The Pope is clearly drawing on the theology of the Second Vatican Council, especially *Lumen Gentium* and its stated aim, ‘to bring the light of Christ to all men, a light brightly visible on the countenance of the Church’ (LG 1). Boublík suggests that the ‘invisible’ character of the Church ‘can be recognised only by the eyes of faith (for example the unity of the faithful with Christ realised in the Holy Spirit is not recognised by the intellect, but by the eyes of faith)’.<sup>170</sup> Alongside its invisible character, he also distinguishes, ‘the visible manifestations of the “marks” of the Church (for example, the mysterious unity of the faithful with Christ is manifested “visibly” in worship, where all the faithful realise a visible communion around the altar)’.<sup>171</sup>

The Church and all Christians witness to the holiness in Christ. To realise holiness means to make the Gospel visible and in so doing to make visible ‘the countenance’ of Christ and God the Father in the Holy Spirit. This applies equally to the ecclesial and the personal dimension. Christ ‘transforms’ (DM 14) the Christian and the Church invisibly on the inner, spiritual level, and this enables people to recognise Christ’s mercy and his countenance. Being transformed by Christ also leads the faithful to an external testimony to him and to the Gospel through the spreading abroad of peace, love, mercy, compassion for a suffering world, and the courage to stand up for justice, and thus to make known to the world the face of Christ and of the Father. This requires Christians to remain in Christ and make him the centre of their lives. In his exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis nonetheless warns against over-prioritising human effort:

The same power that the gnostics attributed to the intellect, others now began to attribute to the human will, to personal effort. This was the case with the pelagians and semi-pelagians. Now it was not intelligence that took the place of mystery and grace, but our human will. It was forgotten that everything ‘depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy’ (Rom 9:16) and that ‘he first loved us’ (cf. 1 Jn 4:19).<sup>172</sup>

Francis goes on to warn against saying to those in need, even in good faith, that ‘all things can be accomplished with God’s grace, [when] deep down they [are giving] the

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<sup>170</sup> Boublík, *Boží lid*, 167.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 167–168.

<sup>172</sup> Francis, ‘*Gaudete et Exsultate*’, 48.

idea that all things are possible by the human will, as if it were something pure, perfect, all-powerful, to which grace is then added'.<sup>173</sup> He calls this 'a will lacking humility'.<sup>174</sup>

#### 4.8. Conclusion

The spiritual background of the encyclical is to be found in the spirituality of St Sr Faustina Kowalska. A reflection on the concept of mercy from a biblical perspective assisted with an understanding of mercy in relation to fidelity and love: love becomes visible through acts of mercy. Following Christ 'is not just [about] a spiritual transformation realized once and for all: it is a whole lifestyle, an essential and continuous characteristic of the Christian vocation' (DM 14). In the spiritual life of a Christian, it is inner conversion which sets a person on the path towards the recovery of human dignity and *transforms* the Christian into being able, and disposed, to follow Christ and make mercy visible through acts of love: 'a merciful love which, by its essence, is a creative love' (DM 14). Although divine grace is paramount for an authentic life of holiness, following such a path also demands willingness for 'a heartfelt and prayerful acknowledgment of our limitations'.<sup>175</sup> Finally, the idea that what is invisible becomes visible in Christ sheds further light on the Pope's interpretation of union with Christ: 'He is linked to man, whom He called to existence in the visible world, by a bond still more intimate than that of creation. It is love which not only creates the good but also grants participation in the very life of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit' (DM 7).

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 49. Pope Francis also emphasises that 'only on the basis of God's gift, freely accepted and humbly received, can we cooperate by our own efforts in our progressive transformation'. Ibid., 56.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 50.

## 5. LOVE AND THE PNEUMATOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF HOLINESS

Beginning with a brief introduction to the encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* (DV), this final chapter will focus on aspects related to holiness as union with Christ ‘in the Holy Spirit’, and will offer a unifying element to the whole study. The section on the context of the encyclical provides a background of the sources with which John Paul II works. The perspective on the Holy Spirit and the Messiah provides a link with the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament. The reflection then moves on to a focus on spiritual conversion in the context of sin and love. The Holy Spirit is analysed as a life-giving force. The chapter goes on to explore the concept of love through the identified triple aspect of the path of holiness and concludes with a consideration of the Virgin Mary as an exemplary witness.

### 5.1. A Brief Introduction to *Dominum et Vivificantem*

The following brief outline will not present the entire content of the encyclical but will focus on aspects related to this study, especially union with Christ in the Holy Spirit.<sup>176</sup>

#### 5.1.1. The Context of the Encyclical

John Paul II published *Dominum et Vivificantem* (‘The Lord and Giver of Life’) on 18 March 1986. This document ‘on the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World’,<sup>177</sup> to give it its full title, completed the Trinitarian group of encyclicals, written over a period of seven years. Weigel notes, however, that ‘when he began writing *Redemptor Hominis* shortly after his election, John Paul II did not think of his inaugural encyclical as the first panel of a Trinitarian triptych, a three-part reflection on the mystery of God as Holy Trinity’,<sup>178</sup> but the teaching in *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in*

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<sup>176</sup> Spinello, for example, has provided a comprehensive analysis of the document. See Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 86–94.

<sup>177</sup> John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, 18 May 1986, accessed 10 October 2020, Vatican.va.

<sup>178</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 386.

*Misericordia* naturally ‘led to a reflection on the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son to continue the risen Christ’s redeeming and sanctifying work’.<sup>179</sup> The encyclical on the Holy Spirit can therefore be considered the peak of his reflections on the Holy Trinity, although it is still ‘a mystery – a reality that the human mind cannot ever fully comprehend’.<sup>180</sup> Weigel repeatedly emphasises the fact that John Paul II develops his encyclical as a meditation,<sup>181</sup> but adds that it ‘is the longest, most complex meditation on the Holy Spirit in the history of the papal teaching office’.<sup>182</sup> Regarding its content, the Pope ‘does not discuss the infinitely complex issue of how the Persons of the Trinity are related’. Rather, it is better to say that the encyclical ‘is written by a theologically informed pastor looking to rekindle devotion to the Holy Spirit in his people, not by a professor seeking to win a debate’.<sup>183</sup>

It is again clear that the Pope is knowingly building on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. While setting out his primary task, he quotes directly from paragraph 17 of *Lumen Gentium*: ‘to develop in the Church the awareness that “she is compelled by the Holy Spirit to do her part towards the full realization of the will of God, who has established Christ as the source of salvation for the whole world”’ (DM 2). The Pope underlines the fact that ‘the teaching of this Council is essentially “pneumatological”: it is permeated by the truth about the Holy Spirit, as the soul of the Church’ (DV 26). The ‘pneumatological character’<sup>184</sup> that John Paul II expresses several times in the encyclical is also highlighted by his efforts to get the Church ready for the year 2000 and beyond: ‘The great Jubilee ... has a directly Christological aspect: for it is a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. At the same time, it has a pneumatological aspect, since the mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished “by the power of the Holy Spirit”’ (DV 50). In the context of following Christ, the Pope suggests that ‘grace, therefore, bears within itself both a Christological aspect and a pneumatological one, which becomes evident above all in those who expressly accept Christ’ (DV 53). He also considers the pneumatological character in the context of St Paul’s teaching, which in addition to ethical and ontological

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 516.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 517. Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 94.

<sup>182</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 517.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 516. Weigel also points out that it ‘is less a theological argument than an exhortation to the Church to take more seriously the Third Person of the Trinity, The Holy Spirit, in preparing for the Great Jubilee of 2000’. Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> The term refers to the Greek ‘*pneuma*’. According to Müller, ‘the theological concept of “the Holy Spirit” returns to the biblical usage: *ruach* in Hebrew; *pneuma* in Greek; *spiritus sanctus* in Latin’. Gerhard Ludwig Müller, *Dogmatika pro studium i pastoraci* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2010), 395.

dimensions has a dimension that is ‘pneumatological (the action of the Holy Spirit in the order of grace)’ (DV 55).<sup>185</sup>

The Pope refers to *Gaudium et Spes* – repeatedly turning to God’s saving love for people and the commandment to love (GS 24) – and *Lumen Gentium*, particularly regarding the Holy Spirit sent by Christ ‘on the day of Pentecost in order that He might continually sanctify the Church, and thus, all those who believe would have access through Christ in one Spirit to the Father’ (LG 4; cf. DV 1, 3, 25). The core of the Pope’s reflection is the ‘completing’ work of the Holy Spirit, or rather his ‘new mission’ (DV 22) in the world.

The encyclical includes a short introduction (DV 1–3) and three main chapters. It opens with the words of the Creed and recalls that: ‘The Church professes her faith in the Holy Spirit as “the Lord, the giver of life.” She professes this in the Creed which is called Nicene-Constantinopolitan from the name of the two Councils – of Nicaea (A.D. 325) and Constantinople (A.D. 381) – at which it was formulated or promulgated. It also contains the statement that the Holy Spirit ‘has spoken through the Prophets’ (DV 1).<sup>186</sup>

The Pope refers to Jesus’ description of the Holy Spirit as ‘water’: ‘the inexhaustible source of the “water welling up to eternal life,” (John 4:14) as truth and saving grace’ (DV 2); and as ‘living water’ (John 7:37–39), and emphasises the Church’s faith in the Holy Spirit ‘as the giver of life, the one in whom the inscrutable Triune God communicates himself to human beings, constituting in them the source of eternal life’ (DV 1), a faith based on the event of Pentecost and the apostolic history (DV 1). He also draws on the encyclical *Divinum Illud Munus* of Leo XIII on the Holy Spirit<sup>187</sup> (DV 2), and, inspired by the Second Vatican Council, aims to ‘penetrate ever deeper into the Trinitarian mystery of God himself, through the Gospels, the Fathers and the liturgy: to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit’ (DV 2).

Most of the references in Chapter 1 are from the Gospel of John. He refers first to Jesus’ ‘promise and Revelation at the Last Supper’:

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<sup>185</sup> Pospíšil deals with Trinitarian theology and in terms of the pneumatology of St Paul Lists, also states that ‘the experience with the work of the Holy Spirit is very clear in them, as evidenced by the fact that we encounter in them a total of 146 occurrences of the word “pneuma”. The characteristics of this pneumatology include indications of the divine status and personality of this Spirit’. Ctirad Václav Pospíšil, *Jako v nebi, tak i na zemi. Náčrt trinitární teologie* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2007), 205.

<sup>186</sup> On the confession of faith in the Holy Spirit, see also ‘Catechism of the Catholic Church’, 683–747.

<sup>187</sup> Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus*, 9 May 1897, accessed 10 October 2020, Vatican.va.

Jesus addressed the Apostles with these words: ‘Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.... I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.’ (John 14:13.16.17) ... It is precisely this Spirit of truth whom Jesus calls the Paraclete – and *parakletos* means ‘counselor,’ and also ‘intercessor,’ or ‘advocate.’ And he says that the Paraclete is ‘another’ Counselor, the second one, since he, Jesus himself, is the first Counselor’ (cf. 1 John 2:1) ... [He will] continue in the world, through the Church, the work of the Good News of salvation. (DV 3)

The Pope explains his generous use of the Gospel of John as follows: ‘the mystery of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit ... perhaps in no passage of Sacred Scripture finds so emphatic an expression as here’. (DV 3)

### 5.1.2. The Holy Spirit and the Messiah

Chapter 1 (DV 4–26) draws titles for the Holy Spirit from the Gospel of John and presents the Holy Spirit chiefly as the ‘Spirit of truth’ (*Spiritus veritatis*) (DV 3, 5), the Spirit-Counselor (*Spiritus-Consolator*) (DV 4, 8), and the Spirit-Paraclete (*Spiritus-Paracletus*) (DV 4, 7). Reflecting on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church, the Pope again quotes the words of Jesus:

‘But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you’ (John 14:26). (DV 4)

‘When the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning’ (John 15:26–27). (DV 5)

These two statements are fundamental for John Paul II as he repeatedly returns to them and develops both their personal and their ecclesial character. It can be inferred that he draws three basic aspects of the Holy Spirit which build the path of holiness: the Holy Spirit ‘will teach’, ‘will bring to your remembrance’ and ‘will bear witness’ (DV 4, 7). An analysis of these three aspects will be carried out in the next section on the concept of love.

The Pope notes the distinction between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are ‘clearly called Persons, the first distinct from the second and the third, and each of them from one another’ (DV 8). With reference to John 16:7, he emphasises ‘the

relationship of interdependence which could be called causal between the manifestation of each: “If I go, I will send him to you.” The Holy Spirit will come insofar as Christ will depart through the Cross’ (DV 8). The coming of the Holy Spirit is conditional upon the cross (DV 11).

Connecting his commentary with a theme from the Old Testament, the Pope further establishes the interpretation of Jesus as the Messiah: ‘the One who has received the fullness of the Holy Spirit for the Chosen People of God and for the whole of humanity’ (DV 15). The Pope suggests that the passage in Isaiah 11:1–3<sup>188</sup> is key to ‘the pneumatology of the Old Testament because it constitutes a kind of bridge between the ancient biblical concept of “spirit,” understood primarily as a “charismatic breath of wind,” and the “Spirit” as a person and as a gift, a gift for the person’ (DV 15). The Pope carefully analyses the link to the New Testament and notes that Jesus’ messianic mission in the Holy Spirit was revealed by John the Baptist at the River Jordan and by the words from heaven, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’ (Matt 3:17), which was ‘a Trinitarian theophany which bears witness to the exaltation of Christ’ (DV 19).<sup>189</sup> From within the ‘Paschal Mystery’ John Paul II explains that:

The Holy Spirit is first sent as a gift for the Son who was made man, in order to fulfil the messianic prophecies ... The Holy Spirit ‘will come’ directly (it is his new mission), to complete the work of the Son. Thus, it will be he who brings to fulfilment the new era of the history of salvation. (DV 22)

On the Council’s contribution to the spiritual life of the Church, the Pope states that ‘the Council has made the Spirit newly “present” in our difficult age’ (DV 26).

### **5.1.3. Conversion in the Context of Sin and Love**

The treatise on sin comes mainly in Chapter 2 of the encyclical (DV 27–48) and is built on Jesus’ words concerning the role of the Holy Spirit: ‘I will send him to you, and

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<sup>188</sup> See DV 15: ‘Alluding to the coming of a mysterious personage, which the New Testament revelation will identify with Jesus, Isaiah connects his person and mission with a particular action of the Spirit of God – the Spirit of the Lord. These are the words of the Prophet: “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be the fear of the Lord.” (Isaiah 11:1–3)’.

<sup>189</sup> Spinello notes that ‘this moment represents the first full revelation of the Trinitarian mystery’. Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 88.

when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment' (John 16:7–8) (DV 27). The Pope takes great care to ensure that this doctrine is properly understood in the context of Jesus' words: 'sin' is regarded in the context of people's behaviour towards Jesus: 'sin means the rejection of his mission, a rejection that will cause people to condemn him to death'; 'righteousness' is defined as: 'definitive justice, which the Father will restore to him when he grants him the glory of the Resurrection and Ascension into heaven' (DV 27); 'judgment' relates to the Evil one (DV 27), 'the one who is a liar and "the father of all lies"' (John 8:44; DV 27). The primary focus of the chapter is the 'mission of the Holy Spirit, which is "to convince the world concerning sin," but at the same time respecting the general context of Jesus' words in the Upper Room' (DV 28). The ultimate goal of the mission of the Holy Spirit is 'to continue in the world the salvific work of Christ' (DV 27).

The Pope speaks of 'the universality of the Redemption' and believes that 'every sin wherever and whenever committed has a reference to the Cross of Christ' (DV 29, 32). Here is one of several references to his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Reconciliatio et paenitentia* (Reconciliation and Penance. On Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church Today).<sup>190</sup> The Pope's interest in exploring and bringing closer a right understanding of sin in 'the new era of the Church' (DV 22) through the Holy Spirit is also demonstrated by the fact that the keyword 'sin' is used here more than 190 times. The teaching on the Holy Spirit and his witness is based on 'the Testimony of the Day of Pentecost' (DV 30–32).

A favourite theme of John Paul II that excels again here is conversion, which 'requires convincing of sin; it includes the interior judgment of the conscience, and this, being a proof of the action of the Spirit of truth in man's inmost being' (DV 31). The Pope identifies two levels of a comprehensive process at work in the human conscience: its exploration or mediation as 'the intimate mystery of man', but also as 'the inner mystery of God, those "depths of God" that are summarized thus: to the Father – in the Son – through the Holy Spirit' (DV 32). The role of the Holy Spirit in conversion is emphasised, and conversion is described as 'an indispensable condition for the forgiveness of sins [which] is brought about by the influence of the Counselor' (DV 42). The carefully developed study of the conscience is partly drawn from the conciliar teaching of *Gaudium et Spes*: 'conscience is "the most secret core and sanctuary of a man,

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<sup>190</sup> John Paul II, 'Reconciliatio et Paenitentia. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church Today', 2 December 1984, accessed 10 October 2020, Vatican.va.



where he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths” (GS 16)’ (DV 43). The commentary on the conscience also includes an interpretation of ‘the sin against the Holy Spirit’ (DV 46).

The section on sin also includes references to the book of Genesis and describes the Spirit of the Old and New Testaments as the same Spirit of love: ‘He himself, as love, is the eternal uncreated gift’ (DV 34). Here again is the emphasis in the theology of John Paul II on ‘gift’: ‘against a background of [the gift of] the “image and likeness” of God,<sup>191</sup> “the gift of the Spirit” ultimately means a call to friendship’ (DV 34). The Pope is referring here to the conciliar teaching in *Dei Verbum* on Jesus’ addressing his disciples as ‘friends’, such as in John 15:14–15<sup>192</sup> (DV 34). This aspect of ‘intimate’ (DV 59) friendship with God appears in the spirituality of the saints. St Theresa of Jesus, for example, is known by this form of the relationship with God<sup>193</sup> and speaks of friendship in the context of mercy and prayer:

If one perseveres (in prayer) I trust then in the mercy of God, who never fails to repay anyone who has taken the mercy of God, who has taken Him for a friend ... for mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us. In order that love be true and the friendship endure, the wills of the friends must be in accord.<sup>194</sup>

It can be concluded that the ‘call to friendship’ is also essential for unity with Christ (DV 34). Furthermore, people are called ‘to participate in truth and love. This participation means a life in union with God’ (DV 37).

The Pope considers the impact of evil and sin on ‘human freedom’ (DV 37) and relates the teaching to ‘the atheistic ideologies [that] seek to root out religion on the grounds that religion causes the radical “alienation” of man’ (DV 38). The Pope repeatedly returns to his thesis that ‘love is stronger than sin’, as he did in *Dives in Misericordia*, and shows that ‘love can reveal itself in the history of man as stronger than sin. So that the “gift”

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<sup>191</sup> Commenting on the Trinitarian group of encyclicals, Spinello suggests that ‘all three encyclicals affirm that man images God not just as a free, rational subject but as a being in relation, made for interpersonal communion with God and others’. Spinello, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 90.

<sup>192</sup> Vatican Council II, *Dei Verbum*, 18 November 1965, para. 2, accessed 10 October 2020, Vatican.va.

<sup>193</sup> Pope Francis also refers to St Theresa’s description of prayer as a matter of friendship and intimacy, and adds that ‘trust-filled prayer is a response of a heart open to encountering God face to face, where all is peaceful and the quiet voice of the Lord can be heard in the midst of silence’. Francis, ‘Gaudete et Exsultate’, 149.

<sup>194</sup> Kieran Kavanaugh OCD and Otilio Rodriguez OCD, trans., *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila. The Book of Her Life.*, vol. 1 (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1987), 96.

may prevail!’ (DV 39; cf. DM 8). The path of holiness is therefore realised through acceptance of God’s call. It is accompanied by conversion, and ‘those who are converted, therefore, are led by the Holy Spirit out of the range of the “judgment,” and introduced into that righteousness which is in Christ Jesus, and is in him precisely because he receives it from the Father, (John 16:15) as a reflection of the holiness of the Trinity’ (DV 48).

#### **5.1.4. The Holy Spirit as a Life-Giving Force**

Chapter 3 of the encyclical addresses the theme of ‘the Holy Spirit who gives life’ (DV 49–67). Reflecting first on ‘Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit’ (DV 49), the Pope analyses the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, whose ‘narrative[s] of the birth and infancy of Jesus of Nazareth express themselves on this matter in an identical way’ (DV 49).<sup>195</sup> The Pope recalls that ‘from the beginning the Church confesses the mystery of the Incarnation, this key-mystery of the faith, by making reference to the Holy Spirit’ (DV 49), and uses this reflection to introduce the subject of ‘the Great Jubilee’:

[which] has a directly Christological aspect: for it is a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. At the same time, it has a pneumatological aspect, since the mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished “by the power of the Holy Spirit.” It was “brought about” by that Spirit – consubstantial with the Father and the Son – who, in the absolute mystery of the Triune God, is the Person-love, the uncreated gift. (DV 50)

The Pope reflects on the expression ‘fullness of time’, which is ‘matched by a particular fullness of the self-communication of the Triune God in the Holy Spirit’ (DV 50). Based on the perspective of the Incarnation, the Pope leads the Church to prepare for the third millennium: ‘The Church cannot prepare for the Jubilee in any other way than in the Holy Spirit. What was accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit “in the fullness of time” can only through the Spirit’s power now emerge from the memory of the Church’ (DV 51). On the subject of the Holy Spirit as the One who gives life (DV 51), the Pope first uses the example of Mary in whom the Holy Spirit brought about ‘the beginning of her divine Motherhood’ (DV 50), and goes on to reflect on St Paul’s teachings: ‘the filiation of divine adoption is born in man on the basis of the mystery of

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<sup>195</sup> The Pope refers to Luke 1:34–38 and Matthew 1:18, 20–21.

the Incarnation, therefore through Christ the eternal Son.... [The] divine filiation planted in the human soul through sanctifying grace is the work of the Holy Spirit' (DV 52).

John Paul II also encourages meditation on the transcendence of the Holy Spirit, but also an awareness that He is 'close to this world but present in it, and in a sense immanent, penetrating it and giving it life from within' (DV 54). The Pope repeatedly returns to the idea of the invisible and the visible which we find in *Dives in Misericordia*: 'in Jesus Christ the divine presence in the world and in man has been made manifest in a new way and in visible form' (DV 54; cf. DM 2).<sup>196</sup>

Drawing on the teaching of St Paul in Galatians 5 and Romans 8, the section DV 55–57, which has a distinct anthropological perspective, explores 'the tension and struggle' of mankind.<sup>197</sup> This depiction of the human spiritual and moral struggle relates to the Pope's initial perspective that 'God's coming close and making himself present to man and the world, that marvelous "condescension" of the Spirit, meets with resistance and opposition in our human reality' (DV 55). Such resistance to the Holy Spirit is what St Paul emphasises 'in the interior and subjective dimension as tension, struggle and rebellion ... [It] reaches its clearest expression in materialism ... [which] radically excludes the presence and action of God' (DV 56).

Also based on the teaching of St Paul, the Pope mentions those 'morally good or bad works, or better the permanent dispositions – virtues and vices – which are the fruit of submission to (in the first case) or of resistance to (in the second case) the saving action of the Holy Spirit' (DV 55). For the path of holiness, it is therefore essential to develop virtues as permanent elements of unifying with Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Pope also remains faithful to his strong emphasis on humanism: 'the Holy Spirit strengthens the "inner man"' (DV 58); 'man's intimate relationship with God in the Holy Spirit also enables him to understand himself, his own humanity, in a new way' (DV 59). With a view to entering the third millennium, he underlines the necessity that 'there be accomplished in our world a process of true growth in humanity, in both individual and community life' which is realised through the Holy Spirit (DV 59). He wants to inspire

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<sup>196</sup> In this context, the Catechism underlines that 'it is Christ who is seen, the visible image of the invisible God, but it is the Spirit who reveals him'. 'Catechism of the Catholic Church', 689.

<sup>197</sup> See DV 55: 'In the texts of St. Paul there is a superimposing – and a mutual penetration – of the ontological dimension (the flesh and the spirit), the ethical (moral good and evil), and the pneumatological (the action of the Holy Spirit in the order of grace). His words (especially in the Letters to the Romans and Galatians) enable us to know and feel vividly the strength of the tension and struggle going on in man between openness to the action of the Holy Spirit and resistance and opposition to him, to his saving gift'.

Christians to become ‘witnesses to man’s authentic dignity, by their obedience to the Holy Spirit’ (DV 60).

As he does in *Dives in Misericordia*, the Pope presents a strong ecclesial dimension, which he addresses in the section ‘The Church as the sacrament of intimate union with God’ (DV 61–67). He emphasises the fundamental role of the Eucharist on both the personal and the ecclesial level: ‘individuals and communities, by the action of the Paraclete-Counselor, learn to discover the divine sense of human life’ (DV 62). Christian holiness consists in ‘following the example of the Apostles [and] fervently [striving] to conform their thinking and action to the will of the Holy Spirit’ (DV 62), always remembering that ‘together with the Spirit, Christ Jesus is present and acting’ (DV 64).

## **5.2. The Concept of Love in *Dominum et Vivificantem***

Spiritual theology is interested in exploring how a person unifies with Christ in the Holy Spirit, and this is also the aim of this study. As stated in the previous section, there are three aspects of the activity of the Holy Spirit, identified repeatedly by John Paul II, which manifest the path of holiness: He will teach; He will bring to your remembrance; He will bear witness (DV 4, 7). This view, which can be described here as a *triple aspect*, enables research of both the human and the divine dimension of holiness,<sup>199</sup> which is of both a personal and a spiritual character. The word ‘love’ is used more than 80 times in the encyclical. The Holy Spirit is described as ‘love’ in DV 21, 34, 37, 39, 41, and here in DV 10: ‘the Holy Spirit, being consubstantial with the Father and the Son in divinity, is love and uncreated gift ... the gift of grace to human beings through the whole economy of salvation’. The triple aspect mentioned above is therefore intimately bound up with the concept of love.

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<sup>199</sup> There is an allusion here to the Council Fathers, who encouraged Christians to ‘hold on to and complete in their lives this holiness they have received’ (LG 40). The Pope’s emphasis on the Holy Spirit first teaching then reminding and bearing witness in the Christian life suggests an ascending line of holiness, but at the same time a process whose layers intertwine and penetrate from one to another.

### 5.2.1. The Holy Spirit Will Teach You

John Paul II reflects on the role of the Holy Spirit as ‘teacher’ (DV 4)<sup>200</sup> in both the personal and the ecclesial dimension. First comes a reference to the words of Jesus: ‘But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.’ (John 14:26). All three encyclicals are linked in this Trinitarian statement, which the Pope repeatedly returns to and develops as fundamental to an understanding of the path of holiness: the Father sends the Holy Spirit after Jesus departs (DV 11); the Holy Spirit comes and teaches in the name of Jesus Christ (DV 11) and represents ‘the new beginning of God’s self-communication to man in the Holy Spirit’ (DV 14).

Further, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (DV 22), who ‘will be the Counselor of the Apostles and the Church, always present in their midst – even though invisible – as the teacher of the same Good News that Christ proclaimed ... [and] will ensure that in the Church there will always continue the same truth which the Apostles heard from their Master’ (DV 4). Three main aspects of the teaching of the Holy Spirit are mentioned. The Holy Spirit will: ‘inspire the spreading of the Gospel of salvation’, ‘help people to understand the correct meaning of the content of Christ’s message’, and ‘ensure continuity and identity of understanding in the midst of changing conditions and circumstances’ (DV 4). The Pope is therefore emphasising that the Holy Spirit teaches Christians how to live in the here and now, in the conditions in which they find themselves today, all the time holding Christ at the centre of their lives.

Although the Pope does not explicitly mention the Christian practice of regular study of and meditation on the Bible, it follows from these aspects of the teaching of the Holy Spirit that the whole encyclical represents an encouragement, and an expression of the need, to develop a spiritual life through meditation on the Scripture, both as individuals and in the Church. Such practice is encouraged elsewhere: ‘It is especially necessary that listening to the word of God should become a life-giving encounter, in the ancient and ever valid tradition of *lectio divina*, which draws from the biblical text the living word which questions, directs and shapes our lives’.<sup>201</sup> Moreover, ‘there is no doubt that this

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<sup>200</sup> See also Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus*, 1.

<sup>201</sup> John Paul II, ‘Novo Millennio Ineunte. Apostolic Letter at the Close of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000’, 6 January 2001, para. 39, accessed 10 October 2020, Vatican.va.

primacy of holiness and prayer is inconceivable without a renewed listening to the word of God'.<sup>202</sup>

The Pope emphasises the Holy Spirit's place at the centre of Church life – meaning the Eucharist (DV 62) – and demonstrates the strongly ecclesial character of the Holy Spirit's teaching. Christ meets with human beings through the Holy Spirit, who enables the Apostles and all disciples to be disposed to learning from the Model of Jesus. St Paul states: 'no one can confess "Jesus is Lord" without being guided by the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor 12:3). He is 'the Spirit of truth, the Paraclete sent by the Risen Christ to transform us into his own risen image' (DV 85).<sup>203</sup>

The Pope notes St Paul's statement that, 'you are his sons and daughters, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts' (Gal 4:6; cf. DV 14). The transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit is realised in the heart of the Christian. Likewise, 'the Triune God, who "exists" in himself as a transcendent reality of interpersonal gift, giving himself in the Holy Spirit as gift to man, transforms the human world from within, from inside hearts and minds' (DV 59). This internal transformation therefore continues in an external transformation of the person, an outward manifestation in words and deeds, which can be considered a 'joint action of human forces and the Holy Spirit'.<sup>204</sup> The internal and external processes intertwine and interact, and both flow into the maturing union with Christ. The Catechism states that 'Jesus pours out the Holy Spirit abundantly until "the saints" constitute – in their union with the humanity of the Son of God – that perfect man "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13), "the whole Christ," in St. Augustine's expression'.<sup>206</sup> On the transformation which conforms the Christian to Christ, the Pope reminds us that 'man in his own humanity receives as a gift a special "image and likeness" to God' (DV 34). The Christian also learns in the Church, with its centre in the Eucharist, how to 'find himself ... through a ... gift of himself' (DV 62).

The Christian life is a way of life which has a fundamentally spiritual dimension, an integral part of which is prayer. Prayer was always the core of the lives of the saints, as recorded in many of their biographies and works. Prayer therefore represents the personal character of holiness, but it is also an integral part of the celebration of Church life and

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *In Ioannis Evangelium*, Bk. V, Ch. II: PG 73, 755.

<sup>204</sup> Špidlík, *Prameny světla*, 61.

<sup>206</sup> 'Catechism of the Catholic Church', 695.

communion. The place of prayer in the encyclicals of John Paul II would make an interesting piece of research, but one that is beyond the scope of this study.

John Paul II reflects on prayer in the context of the service of the Church and refers to his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (RH 14): ‘united with the Spirit, the Church is supremely aware of the reality of the inner man, of what is deepest and most essential in man, because it is spiritual and incorruptible’ (DV 58). He also notes the relationship between Church communion and ‘the new life’ gifted by the Holy Spirit, which leads a person ‘into the supernatural reality of the divine life itself and becomes a “dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit,” a “living temple of God” (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19)’ (DV 58). In this context, he aims to explore prayer with a repeated emphasis on its strongly ecclesial character.

The personal aspect of prayer is not omitted, however. Rather than offering a guide to ‘how to pray’, the Pope focuses on the connection between prayer and the completion of humanity: ‘prayer through the power of the Holy Spirit becomes the ever more mature expression of the new man, who by means of this prayer participates in the divine life’ (DV 65). Furthermore, ‘man’s intimate relationship with God in the Holy Spirit also enables him to understand himself, his own humanity’ (DV 59). Prayer therefore creates and enables the environment for the formation of such a relationship. The Pope is interested in pointing out the existential character of prayer and again shows the strong anthropological character of his theology of holiness.

Pope Leo XIII on the other hand, in his encyclical on the Holy Spirit, highlights rather the importance of the practice prayer:

We ought to pray to and invoke the Holy Spirit, for each one of us greatly needs His protection and His help. The more a man is deficient in wisdom, weak in strength, borne down with trouble, prone to sin, so ought he the more to fly to Him who is the never-ceasing fount of light, strength, consolation, and holiness.<sup>207</sup>

Pope Francis offers a perspective on prayer in today’s world, especially on the ‘constant character’ of prayer, and emphasises that ‘holiness consists in a habitual openness to the transcendent, expressed in prayer and adoration. The saints are distinguished by a spirit of prayer and a need for communion with God’.<sup>208</sup> Francis

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<sup>207</sup> Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus*, 11.

<sup>208</sup> Francis, ‘Gaudete et Exsultate’, 147.

encourages us to search for answers for today's life situations in prayer and adds that '[in] silence, we can discern, in the light of the Spirit, the paths of holiness to which the Lord is calling us'.<sup>209</sup> One essential aspect of prayer is for Christians to remind themselves of all the good they receive in their lives.<sup>210</sup> Francis's more practical interpretation of prayer in the context of holiness<sup>211</sup> is also a product of being offered in an 'exhortation' rather than in an encyclical.

The Pope's discussion of the Holy Spirit as teacher can be summed up in the simple statement: the Holy Spirit teaches faith. Similarly, the identified triple aspect of the Holy Spirit – 'teaches, brings to remembrance, bears witness' – could also be summed up in the triplet 'faith, hope, love'.

It can be concluded that the Holy Spirit teaches holiness as union with Christ through the truth of the Good News, unification in the Eucharist, and all that is involved in teaching Christians how to follow Christ as the Master Model, including a life of prayer. Holiness as union with Christ therefore has a *pneumatological* character. Because God loves us, the Holy Spirit teaches a Christian and the whole Church how to discover *the countenance of the Father in the countenance of Christ* (DM 1), as described in the previous chapter of this study on the subject of mercy.

### **5.2.2. He Will Bring to Your Remembrance**

This section will explore how the second part of the triple aspect of the path of holiness: the Holy Spirit 'will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you' (DV 4, 7; John 14:26) – is interpreted by the Pope and how it relates to holiness as union with Christ.

The words 'bring to remembrance' can also be expressed as *to recall, to remind*. Christians live their lives in fast-changing circumstances and face an ever-increasing number of challenges which the Pope carefully analyses (DV 38, 55), developing his thoughts on the subject with reference to the teaching of St Paul, who expresses 'man's inner conflict: "for the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>210</sup> Pope Francis emphasises this aspect and advises: 'think of your own history when you pray, and there you will find much mercy. This will also increase your awareness that the Lord is ever mindful of you; he never forgets you. So it makes sense to ask him to shed light on the smallest details of your life, for he sees them all'. Ibid., 153.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 147–157.



Spirit are against the flesh” (Gal 5:17)’ and is ‘concerned with the morally good or bad works, or better the permanent dispositions – virtues and vices’ (DV 55). Because of this ‘inner conflict’, Christians can fall into despair, lose faith and courage, and veer away from a correct orientation to Christ and his love. The Pope also draws attention to the evil which threatens people and their ‘life in union with God’ (DV 37):

Man’s disobedience, nevertheless, always means a turning away from God, and in a certain sense the closing up of human freedom in his regard. It also means a certain opening of this freedom – of the human mind and will – to the one who is the ‘father of lies’. (DV 37)

A number of threats are presented, including those arising from human nature (DV 38), from evil (DV 37, 39), and from the world. Nonetheless, ‘love is stronger than sin’ (DM 8) and the love of God through the Holy Spirit gives the necessary strength to oppose these threats (DV 58). The Pope’s underlining of the fact that the Holy Spirit ‘strengthens’ Christians (DV 58) must mean that the threats can result in a weakening of a person’s unity with Christ and therefore a weakening of holiness.

The Pope’s reflections on the conciliar appeal to make a *more human world* (DV 59, cf. GS 34) shed light on the Christian’s task to accept God’s invitation to love. Here again is an emphasis on both the personal and the ecclesial character of the path of holiness which leads to union with Christ in the Church.

To oppose the threats and continue to mature in holiness and in the process of unification with Christ, Christians must become attached to Christ and his love, and to do this they must work with their conscience. Here, the Holy Spirit acts as guide (DV 6, 27), helping to form Christians spiritually, especially through the conscience, reminding them of Christ’s words, teachings, love, and particularly of the hope of ‘eternal life’ (DV 41). Regarding ‘righteousness’, the Pope does not hesitate to mark the Holy Spirit as he ‘who “convinces the world concerning sin,” reveals himself and makes himself present in man as the Spirit of eternal life’ (DV 48).<sup>212</sup>

The Pope’s teaching on the conscience is in line with the conciliar teaching in *Gaudium et Spes*, which says of the conscience: ‘[it is] the most secret core and sanctuary of a man, where he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths’ (GS 16; cf. GS 43).

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<sup>212</sup> The Pope explains further what he means by ‘righteousness’: ‘this is the righteousness of the Gospel and of the Redemption, the righteousness of the Sermon on the Mount and of the Cross, which effects the purifying of the conscience through the Blood of the Lamb. It is the righteousness which the Father gives to the Son and to all those united with him in truth and in love’ (DV 48).

Working with one's conscience is therefore an integral part of daily life, and one which enables the Christian to hear 'the voice of God' (GS 16; cf. DV 48), and to be disposed to being – or in the Pope's words 'made capable' of being (DV 9) – conformed to Christ. Such spiritual work is linked to a favourite theme of the Pope, that of conversion: 'Those who are converted, therefore, are led by the Holy Spirit' (DV 48). The Pope speaks of initial conversion in the context of baptism,<sup>213</sup> and of continual conversion, expressed as *metanoia*, (DV 45), which he also addressed in *Redemptor Hominis* (RH 20; see section 3.3.3. of this study). He clarifies the relationship between conscience, conversion and love, and states that 'conversion requires convincing of sin; it includes the interior judgment of the conscience, and this, being a proof of the action of the Spirit of truth in man's inmost being, becomes at the same time a new beginning of the bestowal of grace and love' (DV 31).

Pope Francis speaks of conversion and holiness in the context of everyday life: 'At times, life presents great challenges. Through them, the Lord calls us anew to a conversion that can make his grace more evident in our lives, "in order that we may share his holiness" (Heb 12:10). At other times, we need only find a more perfect way of doing what we are already doing'.<sup>214</sup>

The reflection on the conscience and on conversion shows that these are essential features of the path to uniting with Christ and growing in holiness through the Holy Spirit.

### **5.2.3. Bearing Witness in the Holy Spirit**

Reflecting on the Holy Spirit and His mission, a fundamental aspect of which is witness, the Pope refers first to the words of Jesus: 'He will bear witness to me: and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning' (John 15:26; DV 25). This witness continues with the Apostles and Jesus' disciples:

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father, as the words of the farewell discourse in the Upper Room bear witness. At the same time, he is the Spirit of the Son: he is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, as the Apostles and particularly Paul of Tarsus will testify (Gal 4:6; Phil 1:19; Rom 8:11). (DV 14)

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<sup>213</sup> In the context of baptism, the Pope explains that 'through grace, man is called and made "capable" of sharing in the inscrutable life of God' (DV 9).

<sup>214</sup> Francis, 'Gaudete et Exsultate', 17.

In his analysis of the witness of the Holy Spirit and his role in the Church, the Pope speaks of the Spirit as ‘the Spirit-Counselor’ (DV 26) and emphasises the ecclesial character of the Spirit’s work. He also reflects on the witness of the Holy Spirit in the context of sin (DV 30), and presents the Holy Spirit as the One who witnesses the love in the Triune God and who therefore is himself this love (DV 34).

From the perspective of union with Christ, the aspect of witness can therefore be considered the highest point of the triple aspect of the path of holiness realised ‘hand in hand’ with the Holy Spirit.

*He teaches us, brings to our remembrance what Jesus said, and helps to bring a witness.* The Pope suggests that ‘man learns this truth from Jesus Christ and puts it into practice in his own life by the power of the Spirit, whom Jesus himself has given to us’ (DV 59).

It can be reasoned that it is the witness about the Triune God which becomes visible in Jesus Christ, ‘the King of Heaven and Earth’, as the hymn sung on the feast of Christ the King would have it,<sup>215</sup> glorified on the ecclesial level of communion as Pius XI proclaimed.<sup>216</sup> Over the centuries and still today, many saints have witnessed to Jesus ‘the King of hearts’.<sup>217</sup> Pope Francis, who focuses more on the practical side of holiness than does John Paul II in this encyclical, underlines the fact that, ‘we are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves’.<sup>218</sup> Bearing such witness in everyday life includes both the ecclesial and the personal character of holiness, which combine to develop union with Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ, ‘the King of hearts’, gives gifts through the Holy Spirit. In the context of sin and its opposite, the Pope recalls the teaching of St Paul on the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22; DV 55). Christians receive gifts<sup>219</sup> and ‘fruits’ for their spiritual growth but also to become a witness to Christ and his love. Christ’s ‘self-giving’ (DV 40) bore witness to God the Father: ‘Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. He had always loved those in the world who were his own, and he

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<sup>215</sup> *Kancionál. Společný zpěvník českých a moravských diecézí* (Praha: Katolický týdeník, 2004), 424.

<sup>216</sup> Pius XI, *Quas Primas*, 11 December 1925, accessed 5 October 2020, Vatican.va.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. See also ‘Roman Catholic Litanies’, n.d., accessed 31 October 2020, <http://www.liturgies.net/Rogation/LitanyCatholic.htm>.

<sup>218</sup> Francis, ‘Gaudete et Exsultate’, 14.

<sup>219</sup> The Catechism lists the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit as wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. ‘Catechism of the Catholic Church’, 1831.

loved them to the very end' (John 13:1). Jesus gave himself in love, and through the power of the Holy Spirit leads his disciples to follow Him and 'make [them] capable' (DV 9) of their own self-giving and through that of bearing witness to Jesus Christ, 'the King of hearts'.

Witness therefore relates to the sacrifice of self-giving (DV 10, 11, 40), of which the Master Model is Jesus, for whom it was a sacrifice of love. Here we return to the verse from the Bible with which this study opened: 'Because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer' (Rom 12:1). In the willingness to listen to and learn from the Holy Spirit, to stay with Christ in prayer, and to sacrifice one's daily life to God, holiness is realised. This is what it means to bear witness in the Holy Spirit, which down through the centuries beatified and canonised saints have shown the world. A significant feature of this witness has often been joy: 'the joy which is the fruit of love' (DV 60). Bearing witness in the Holy Spirit is a *gift and task* for every Christian on the path of holiness. John Paul II himself became a witness of Jesus as a saint<sup>220</sup> and his extraordinary witness is emphasised by his biographers.<sup>221</sup>

Finally, no reflection on the witness of the Holy Spirit would be complete without reference to the Virgin Mary, and as is his pattern, the Pope brings a Marian perspective to this subject: 'Mary entered the history of the salvation of the world through the obedience of faith. And faith, in its deepest essence, is the openness of the human heart to the gift: to God's self-communication in the Holy Spirit' (DV 51). In her openness and availability to the Holy Spirit, Mary witnesses to and glorifies God in a most exemplary way, as the Holy Spirit 'made her heart perfectly obedient to that self-communication of God which surpassed every human idea and faculty'. As well as becoming close to every Christian on the personal level, everything related to Mary also has an ecclesial dimension: 'the Church perseveres in prayer with Mary. This union of the praying Church with the Mother of Christ has been part of the mystery of the Church from the beginning' (DV 66).

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<sup>220</sup> Francis, 'Holy Mass and Rite of Canonization of Blessed John XXIII and John Paul II. Homily of Pope Francis', 27 April 2014, accessed 5 October 2020, Vatican.va.

<sup>221</sup> Weigel, *Witness to Hope*; Oder and Gaeta, *Proč svaty?*.

### 5.3. Conclusion

This chapter connected the theme of holiness with the two preceding chapters of this study and dealt with both the personal and the ecclesial dimension of union with Christ in the Holy Spirit. After setting the encyclical against a backdrop of the Second Vatican Council, the Pope develops the encyclical's pneumatological character with a focus on the mission of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The aspect of friendship as an intimate dimension of the union with God was also identified. The Pope calls Christians to become witnesses to God in their daily lives. A triple aspect of the path of holiness was identified: the Holy Spirit will teach, will bring to remembrance, and will bear witness. This concept was explored alongside and in the context of the concept of love: God loves the world and wants everyone to be saved. Cooperation with the Holy Spirit leads the Christian to deeper union with Christ. The Holy Spirit strengthens Christians and gives them the hope that *love is stronger than sin*. The Virgin Mary and the saints are exemplary witnesses to holiness for every Christian.

## 6. CONCLUSION

### 6.1. Conclusion

The study explored how Pope John Paul II reflected on the theme of holiness, which aspects and characteristics he emphasised, and which sources he based his ideas on and kept returning to. The basic thesis was that the Pope described Christian holiness as both personal – the union of Jesus Christ with a Christian – and ecclesial – the realisation of this union in the Church.

The methodological aim was to apply the approach of spiritual theology, ‘based on biblical Revelation and qualified by Christian experience’,<sup>222</sup> and to focus on the elements that relate to the union of the human person with God in Christ and the development of the doctrine from and through Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit, and, in parallel, to the development of spiritual life. This approach was a golden thread running through the whole research and writing.

The encyclicals of John Paul II form the core of his writing on the theology of holiness. These documents of the Magisterium constitute a collaborative work, but by signing them, the Pope was expressing his personal perspective. Three encyclicals, which form a “Trinitarian” group of documents and which I considered exemplars, were selected for analysis: *Redemptor Hominis*, *Dives in Misericordia*, and *Dominum et Vivificantem*. The reflection focused on this group of encyclicals, which laid the factual basis for further development in the dissertation.

The study was composed of a series of gradual and systematic steps. Two introductory areas were used for the integrity of the topic and its input components: first, a biblical perspective on holiness; secondly, a perspective on holiness drawn largely from *the universal call to holiness* in the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* of the Second Vatican Council. Developing the teaching of the Second Vatican Council was considered a crucial task of the pontificate of John Paul II. This two-pronged introduction offered an initial perspective on the interpretation of the theology of holiness. The main elements of the theology of holiness as described in *Lumen Gentium* were reflected on as follows: first, through a description of its essence, by which the Council emphasised a return to

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<sup>222</sup> Kohut, *Co je spirituální teologie?*, 34.

biblical holiness. The reflection on the Council's *universal call to holiness* pointed to both the personal and the ecclesial aspects of holiness, which were demonstrated as being complementary to one another; secondly, by an analysis which emphasised Christ as the One Mediator and the interpretation of holiness as the union between Christ and the human person; finally, various characteristics of holiness were distinguished, three of which were the subjects of the applied methodology in the study: the Christological, 'gratuitous', and pneumatological character of holiness. This outline prepared the ground for a reflection on the topic in the selected encyclicals.

Each of the three main characteristics of holiness selected was explored in a separate chapter of the work. The encyclicals of John Paul II were mined for references to these characteristics in order to identify how the Pope developed the theme of holiness in his writings: which ideas he followed, what kind of context for holiness he created, and which elements he emphasised in terms of the realisation of personal holiness in the Church.

John Paul II drew most on John's Gospel and the Pauline Epistles. He strongly developed the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, especially of *Gaudium et Spes*, in the composition of which he played an active role, and further significantly developed the teaching of holiness found in *Lumen Gentium*. John Paul II's "Trinitarian" group of encyclicals very much followed in the line of his predecessors Paul VI and Leo XIII.

The initial basic thesis that John Paul II interpreted Christian holiness as both personal – the union of Jesus Christ with a Christian – and ecclesial – the realisation of this union in the Church – could be completed as follows: it is realised in the Holy Spirit with a prevailing and intensive ecclesial character. God the Father is included in this interpretation as John Paul II presents Him as the one who is invisible but who becomes visible in Christ; that the Holy Spirit teaches us to discover the countenance of the Father in the countenance of Christ is a significant emphasis of this Pope. The three encyclicals in the Trinitarian group certainly integrate the personal character of holiness, but it is the ecclesial character which prevails.

A summary of the conclusions is as follows:

The biblical perspective on holiness aimed to outline those elements that are significant to the theme of holiness defined as the unity of God with the human person, including God's relationship with people. Holiness as described in the Old Testament largely points to the qualities of God. The paradox of separation and closeness was identified: separating from the world enabled the people of Israel to have an intimate relationship with God and a share in his holiness. In the New Testament, with Jesus comes a higher call and

a stronger emphasis on moral character and on love: people's separation *from* the world but *to* God in the imitation of Christ paradoxically opens Christians to others and for the proclamation of the kingdom of God. It was shown that holiness acquires a more existential accent in which love, moral character, and the imitation of Christ are united and constitute a Christian mission to bear such a witness in everyday life. In line with St Paul's teaching on holiness and the appeal to become a 'living sacrifice to God' (Rom 12:1) it was concluded that Christians realise this sacrifice within the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, which underlined the ecclesial nature of holiness, yet of which personal holiness is an integral component. Ultimately, therefore, biblical holiness was seen as being primarily ecclesial in character. The Communion of Saints was introduced as a significant component of holiness. Revealing the mystery of holiness was seen as a process which requires God's grace and human cooperation and humility, and that holiness integrates Christians into the Church. All these aspects combined to reveal an interpretation of holiness as unity between God and people. Human beings are ontologically united with Jesus through baptism, gifted with a share in God's holiness, and live their lives in response to God's love, which is realised in the Church with the call to relationships in the *communio sanctorum*.

The reflection on holiness in *Lumen Gentium* provided an initial perspective and demonstrated that this document ushered in a return to biblical holiness. It was concluded that the Council focused more on the portrayal of the nature of holiness, which was shown to reflect a complementarity between the personal and the ecclesial nature of holiness. Union with Christ appears to be a core component of the Council's interpretation of holiness. In conciliar teaching, it was demonstrated that holiness is not only a gift from God to human beings; it also represents a task for the faithful to move forwards along the path of holiness and develop a life of holiness. Part of this process involves maturing in union with Christ, ultimately to achieve 'perfect union with Him'. This union of Christ with a human being forms the foundation of the Christological character of holiness. Holiness involves learning about Jesus' life and imitating him, which is not possible without connection to or union with Christ. It was shown that the Christological character of holiness comprises not only the visible manifestation in a Christian's life but also their inner transformation in Christ, from which the visible manifestation proceeds. Holiness was found to be not only a quality but also a process, in the sense of *becoming* a saint, *attaining* holiness. Various characters of holiness were identified in the universal call to holiness, including the Christological character, the pneumatological character in relation



to the establishment of union with Christ by the Holy Spirit, the 'gratuitous' character of holiness in the sense of its being an unmerited gift, the Trinitarian character, and the doxological character, in relation to which it was pointed out that God's glory is also an essential feature of holiness. From the perspective of spiritual theology, it was demonstrated that by realising the cult of the saints, the Christian also carries out a cult in the sense of worshipping God, glorifying him. The cultic character of holiness, the object of which is the veneration of the saints, leading to the glory of God, was therefore considered a key contributor to the overall character of holiness.

The Christological character of holiness developed in *Redemptor Hominis* revealed an interpretation of holiness by John Paul II with an emphasis on *Unicus Mediator* and an understanding of holiness as union with Christ. In the reflection on the Redemptor, based mainly on the relationship between Christ and a Christian, the Pope developed a context for holiness focused on the approach of Christian humanism. An analysis of the sources of the encyclical suggested a focus on developing, and applying in theoretical and practical ways, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, in which he took an active part. The most frequently used biblical source was found to be the Gospel of John, which fits with the Pope's Christological approach to holiness based on Jesus as *Unicus Mediator* and founded on pneumatology. John Paul II developed an interpretation of holiness as union with Christ which manifests both a personal and an ecclesial character. The analysis of the encyclical showed a useful distinction between the words *all* people and *every* person, which helped to transform the concept of holiness in Christians and in the Church from something abstract to something concrete. The concretisation, or practical application, of holiness was also identified in the lives of the saints. The reflection showed the depth of union in the Eucharist, where Christ and the Christian meet in the most intimate way. John Paul II emphasised the close relationship between the Eucharist and penance, and that following Christ is an essential feature of union with Christ as it leads to the expression of authentic faith, love and hope. Jesus was reflected on as being the Master Spiritual Model. The Pope developed the Christological character of holiness into the Christoformic, that is, into conforming to Christ by serving in love with dignity and freedom, sharing in Christ's kingship, and following him as *Unicus Mediator*. The Pope encouraged people to follow Christ spiritually and in everyday reality in the Church, with the support of, and through the example of, the Virgin Mary. Thus, the Pope's interpretation of holiness was identified as having a strongly ecclesial, Christological and Christian-humanistic character.

Based on an exploration of the encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, the chapter on mercy and what was identified as the ‘gratuitous’ (Latin *gratuitus*) character of holiness – ‘gratuitous’ in the sense of an unmerited gift – developed the core theme of the study and explored how John Paul II related mercy to holiness and its relation to union with Christ. The spiritual background of the encyclical was found in the spirituality of St Sr Faustina Kowalska, the ‘Apostle of Divine Mercy’. A biblical perspective on the concept of mercy as discussed in the encyclical showed it to be based on the fundamental aspect of love. The Pope’s strongly anthropological emphasis took the discussion back to the miserable state of humanity as described in the Old Testament. Such an approach was identified as offering a fundamental line to the New Testament. The Parable of the Prodigal Son was found to form the didactic and spiritual core of the encyclical. The Pope emphasises the essentially dynamic character of Christian holiness: love becomes visible through acts of mercy. Two substantial and interconnected aspects appear repeatedly in his teaching: human dignity and conversion. For the spiritual life of the Christian, true inner conversion was shown to be the path to the recovery of human dignity, whereby a person is transformed into having both the ability and the disposition to follow Christ, and mercy is made visible through acts of love. The idea that the invisible becomes visible in Christ facilitated an exploration of John Paul II’s interpretation of union with Christ. The ‘gratuitous’ character of holiness was described in terms of its being a gift that expresses the love of God. It was concluded that John Paul II’s turn to divine mercy is an essential part of the Christian life and the manifestation of holiness.

The final chapter, on love and the pneumatological character of holiness, explored the encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*, and connected the notion of holiness with the previous chapters with regard to dealing with both the personal and the ecclesial dimension of union with Christ. The introduction to the encyclical proposed a background mostly in the Second Vatican Council and the Gospel of John together with a focus on significant aspects related to union with Christ. The pneumatological character was identified alongside a strong ecclesial character, which the Pope emphasised through a discussion regarding the mission of the Holy Spirit. As in the other encyclicals, a favourite and much-repeated theme of John Paul II is seen to be conversion. Here, he accentuates the role of the Holy Spirit. The aspect of friendship as an intimate dimension of the unity of, and union with, God was also identified. The Pope urgently appealed to Christians to become witnesses to God in their daily lives. He also repeatedly emphasised the triple aspect of the path of holiness as seen in Jesus’ words: The Holy Spirit ‘will

teach ... will bring to your remembrance ... will bear witness' (John 14:26). This concept was identified as being grounded in the concept of love: God loves the whole world and wants everyone to be saved (John 3:16–17). When the Christian cooperates with the Holy Spirit in the Spirit's mission, the Spirit will lead the Christian into deeper union with Christ. The Pope repeatedly emphasises the Spirit's strengthening of the Christian and builds on the hope of 'love stronger than sin'. The Virgin Mary represents an exemplary witness, followed by the saints, as a way to holiness for every Christian. As in *Dives in Misericordia*, there is a strongly ecclesial dimension to holiness.

In conclusion, it can be stated that this study has provided a comprehensive view of holiness. John Paul II puts the most significant emphasis on the ecclesial and anthropological dimensions: In the relationship between Christ and a Christian based on Christ as *Unicus Mediator*, the Pope developed a context for holiness focused on the approach of Christian humanism. For the spiritual life of the Christian, true inner conversion was shown to be the path to the recovery of human dignity, whereby a person is transformed into having both the ability and the disposition to follow Christ, and mercy is made visible through acts of love. John Paul II highlighted that to follow Christ is to follow Him as a member of 'the community of the disciples.' A person becomes fully human only in Christ and by following Him in unity with the Christian community. The Pope also emphasised the close relationship between the Eucharist and penance, and that following Christ is an essential feature of union with Christ as it leads to the expression of authentic faith, love and hope under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The concretisation, or practical application, of holiness was also identified in the lives of the saints. John Paul II showed the depth of union in the Eucharist, where Christ and the Christian meet in the most intimate way. Because God loves us, the Holy Spirit teaches a Christian and the whole Church how to discover 'the countenance of the Father' in the countenance of Christ.

This study of the theology of holiness has helped me to a deeper awareness of the integration of the path of holiness in the church family. I also now have a deeper awareness of the importance, for union with Christ, of constant conversion bounded by the love of God. I feel that the analysed encyclicals lack a stronger emphasis on personal prayer and its necessary development in the Christian life and its relation to holiness as union with Jesus Christ. I would also welcome greater use of the term *holiness* itself, which would help to more clearly incorporate the term into the theory and practice of everyday Christian life.

I would be interested to conduct further research into verification of the key emphases of this study in some other encyclicals and in the life of St John Paul II.

...

Reflecting on the theology of holiness according to St John Paul II was a great challenge for me, and represented an attempt to capture a faint glimmer of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. It proved to be a source of both spiritual and academic enrichment, for which I am grateful to God and the intercession of the Virgin Mary, St John Paul II, and St Judas Thaddaeus.

## List of Abbreviations

The encyclicals of John Paul II

CA	<i>Centesimus Annus</i> (1 May 1991)
DM	<i>Dives in Misericordia</i> (30 November 1980)
DV	<i>Dominum et Vivificantem</i> (18 May 1986)
EE	<i>Ecclesia de Eucharistia</i> (17 April 2003)
EV	<i>Evangelium Vitae</i> (25 March 1995)
FR	<i>Fides et Ratio</i> (14 September 1998)
LE	<i>Laborem Exercens</i> (30 September 1981)
RH	<i>Redemptor Hominis</i> (4 March 1979)
RMat	<i>Redemptoris Mater</i> (25 March 1987)
RMis	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i> (7 December 1990)
SA	<i>Slavorum Apostoli</i> (2 June 1985)
SRS	<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i> (30 December 1987)
UUS	<i>Ut Unum Sint</i> (25 May 1995)
VS	<i>Veritatis Splendor</i> (6 August 1993)

The official text of the encyclicals in Latin and English translation is taken from the Vatican website at <http://www.vatican.va>.

Other writings of John Paul II

CL	<i>Christifidelis Laici</i>
DPM	<i>Divinus Perfectionis Magister</i>
RP	<i>Reconciliatio et Paenitentia</i>

The official text of the documents in Latin and English translation is taken from the Vatican website at <http://www.vatican.va>.

Documents of the Second Vatican Council

DVB	<i>Dei Verbum</i>
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>

OT *Optatam Totius*

SC *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

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