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Charity and Dialogue Towards Ecumenical and Inter-religious Communion

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ABSTRACT:

How something is said matters as much as what is said. Open dialogue and charity in debate is vital for proper Christian conduct. Vatican II documents are put forward as a standard of conduct. The fallout between Rome and Luther in the early 16th c. is put forward as a cautionary tale showing the stakes of failure to engage in debate with open-mindedness and charity. Writings from Augustine are put forward as a model and exemplar for how to engage in debate.

Charity and Dialogue Towards Ecumenical and Interreligious Communion

by Jason Horstman

"In this way, little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, into the unity of the one and only church, which Christ bestowed on his church from the beginning."¹

Kindness, generosity, and patience are almost universally regarded as virtues, yet it is a common experience in the modern world that discussions of theology, morality, and politics are often reduced to strawman argumentation, *ad hominem* attacks, and polemic dogmatism. The leaders of the Catholic Church viz. Vatican Council II exhorts the Christian community unto dialogue with Christians of disparate traditions and with members of religious traditions other than Christianity in pursuit of truth and common fellowship. It is imperative that the manner in which Christians present the Gospel message be consistent with the content of that message. In learning to listen carefully and speak with charity towards its neighbors,

1 *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*. "Unitatis Redintegratio". Edited by Austin Flannery, OP. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014. Para. 4.

the Church has the opportunity be a leader in the world², a city on a hill, the hands and feet of Christ consistent with the head of the body of Christ.

Select writings from St. Augustine present examples in content and form of charity in dialogue and of appreciation for diverse interpretative paths in theological endeavors. These examples from this great former of Christian theology and identity provide a model for the modern Church's behavior in responding to Vatican II's exhortation unto dialogue. A consideration of the manner in which the leadership of the Catholic Church dealt with Martin Luther in the early sixteenth century presents to the modern Church a cautionary tale of what might be at stake in failing to engage in charitable, equitable dialogue.

PRECEDENTS SET BY VATICAN COUNCIL II:

UNITATIS REDINTEGRATIO ET NOSTRA AETATE

Vatican Council II was called in the 1960's with the intent of updating the Catholic Church, its self-understandings, and its relationship to the world in order to finish the unfinished work of Vatican I in the previous century. In its content, its structure, and its language it speaks to the Church's esteem for inclusivity, charity, dialogue, and dialecticism. The council's main goals consist in fostering unity, dialogue, engagement *ad extra*, updating, relevance, and interior conversion.³

With respect to structure, Pope John XXIII in deciding to call the council elected to seek out the opinions and concerns of the world's bishops to determine the topics for discussion, as opposed to pronouncing what would be discussed. He and later Pope Paul VI strained not to take an active role in the Council once it was convened in order not to discourage a democratic spirit in the discourse. The order of the documents of the council were arranged such that St. Mary is one of the last topics to appear in order that the document may begin with areas of common ground with non-Catholics before proceeding to more divisive topics as a sign of good faith and ecumenical respect. Women, non-Catholic Christians, and non-Christians

2 "The church...like a standard lifted on high for the nations to see, ministers the Gospel of peace to all humankind, as it makes its pilgrim way in hope towards its goal, the homeland above," *ibid.* Para. 2.

3 Colberg, K., lectures on 6 Nov. 2019, 13 Nov. 2019

were invited as official representatives, given prominent seating, and their opinions were sought as the documents of the council unfolded.⁴

In terms of style and language, the documents of the council are discursive and pastoral in tone, rather than juridical and authoritative. It accepts, even embraces, dialectical tensions. It is inclusive and represents a regard for horizontality—emphasizing the people of the Church to a greater extent than the hierarchical structure of the Church. In contrast to the expectations throughout history that the role of a council is to clarify and rule juridically on doctrines, Vatican II and its documents were intended to begin conversations and raise questions.⁵

An analysis of two documents in particular from Vatican II is illustrative of the precedents supported and prescribed by the Council with respect to charity and dialogue: *Unitatis Redintegratio* (*U.R.*) and *Nostra Aetate* (*N.A.*). While the documents of Vatican II are not juridically compelling, the weight of the sheer number and proportion of leaders of the Catholic Church who ratified these two documents cannot lightly be dismissed. *U.R.* was signed into effect by 2,137 of 2,148 bishops assembled and *N.A.* was signed into effect by 2,221 of 2,309 bishops assembled.

Unitatis Redintegratio is Vatican II's document on intrafaith communion and dialogue: "The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council."⁶ To the end of fostering Christian unity this document seeks to set out guidelines, helps, and methods for responding to the call for ecumenism.⁷ From scripture, Christians are taught that the corpus of Christianity consists in one body and one spirit, although of many parts⁸ and the unity of that body consists in faith, hope, and charity.⁹ The role of the apostles was to govern in love. The rifts which divide Christian communities are regarded as damnable, but the document hastens to avoid casting polemicizing blame: "often enough, people on both sides were to blame," and the "sin of separation" cannot be held against

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 *Unitatis Redintegratio* (UR) para. 1

7 Ibid.

8 1Cor.12.12ff

9 UR para. 2



FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, KEEP THE FAITH

by Katryna Bertucci

anyone born into these disparate communities¹⁰. *U.R.* affirms the right of non-Catholics to be called Christians by virtue of common justification by faith in baptism incorporating all into Christ, and so must be accepted as sisters¹¹ and brothers.¹² While there are legitimate obstacles to unity, the Church is called to unity in essentials and proper freedom in all else, with the ordering principle that Christians should “in all things let charity prevail.”¹³ Forgiveness should be both sought and freely given.¹⁴

U.R. calls for a hermeneutic of charity which “avoids expressions, judgments and actions which are not truthful and fair in representing” other Christians, their positions and situations, and others should be treated as on equal footing.¹⁵ The result of such dialogue will be that “everyone gains a truer knowledge and more just appreciation of the teaching and religious life of both communions...toward the common good of humanity.”¹⁶ Individuals ought to take an honest self-inventory and approach others with a spirit of humility and a posture of learning, with an understanding that the Catholic Church must be open to interior conversion and continual reformation.¹⁷

Responding to Christ’s prayer “that they may all be one”¹⁸, Vatican Council II exhorts the sisters and brothers of the disparate Christian communities to dialogue and discourse, to learn from and teach one another, to fellowship and pray together. Christians are called also to act together unto justice and truth, especially in the manifest issues of our age—“the afflictions of our times...famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, lack of housing, and the unequal distribution of wealth.” Indeed such collaboration itself will teach Christians all the more effectively “how they can understand each

10 Ibid. para. 3

11 The decision to place the feminine before the masculine here in the document suggests a sensitivity to issues of patriarchy and gender inclusivity.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid. para. 4

14 Ibid. para. 7

15 Ibid. para 4, 9

16 Ibid. para 4

17 Ibid. para 6; the choice of the word “reformation” may be an intentional extension of the olive branch to Protestants, similar to the preferential ordering of “sisters” noted in footnote 7.

18 Jn. 17:20

other better and esteem each other more, and how the road to the unity of Christians may be made smooth.”¹⁹

Nostra Aetate is Vatican II’s document on the Catholic Church’s interreligious relationships. The document begins by affirming the Church’s “duty to foster unity and charity among individuals and even among nations,” and humanity’s common unity; in consideration of these two ordering principles the document considers religion as humanity’s common search for answers to the “unsolved riddles of human existence.”²⁰

N.A honors the advanced civilizations which comprise other religions and the thoughtfulness and thoroughness of their theology and philosophy, and honors the “true and holy” treasures found in other religions and which are also valued in Christianity: in Hinduism, the appreciation of divine mystery, rich myth, meticulous philosophy, asceticism, meditation, and “recourse to God in confidence and love;”; in Buddhism the testimony of the inadequacy of this changing world, a way of life which seeks liberation and enlightenment; in Islam a common Abrahamic heritage and belief in the one God, devotion and submission to God, upright and devout living; with Judaism a common Abrahamic and Mosaic heritage, and Christianity’s debt of origin to Judaism.²¹

N.A pleads for forgiveness of past grievances in the name of “a sincere effort... to achieve mutual understanding...for the benefit of all,” and the promotion of “peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.”²² Christians are reminded of Christianity’s nature as disparate peoples adopted together into one family by the cross of Christ.²³ The Church is to act thusly towards the many religions in the prophetic hope that one day “all peoples will call on God with one voice and ‘serve him shoulder to shoulder.’”²⁴ Indeed any other way of acting *ad extra* is ineffective and inauthentic Christianity: “we cannot truly pray...if we treat any people as other than sisters and brothers, for all are created in God’s image,” it is “foreign to the mind of Christ [that there be] any discrimination

19 Flannery, para. 12

20 *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*. “Nostra Aetate”. Edited by Austin Flannery, OP. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014. Para. 1.

21 *Nostra Aetate* (NA), para. 2-5

22 *Ibid.* para. 3

23 *Ibid.* para. 4

24 *Ibid.*

against people or any harassment of them on the basis of their race, color, condition in life or religion.”²⁵ It is intrinsic to the nature of Christianity that Christians should “conduct themselves well among the Gentiles’...and if possible, as far as depends on them, to be at peace with all people.” This is the way “to be true daughters and sons of the Father who is in heaven.”²⁶

Having thus presented the modern leadership of the Church’s high-univocal proclamation on a hermeneutic of charity in dialogue as a rubric for right Christian interaction with those of disparate views and beliefs, let us consider a case in which that rubric was not followed and the consequent damage incurred to the Church.

EARLY ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN ROME AND LUTHER: A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE²⁷

The familiar story begins in the fall of 1517. The itinerant Dominican preacher Johann Tetzel arrived in the vicinity of Wittenberg, Germany. Tetzel was preaching a plenary indulgence which would help fund the rebuilding of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. He began to preach:

*Do you not hear the voices of your dead relatives and others, crying out to you and saying, ‘Pity us, pity us, for we are in dire punishment and torment from which you can redeem us for a pittance? And you will not? Will you not then for a quarter of a florin receive these letters of indulgence through which you are able to lead a divine and immortal soul safely and securely into the homeland of paradise? Once the coin into the coffer clings, a soul from purgatory heavenward springs!*²⁸

25 Ibid. para. 5

26 Ibid.

27 This author prefaces this section concerning the causal events of the bifurcation of the western Church by emphasizing the intent and effort to avoid the derogation of one or another faith community and its history. While the main argument will cite examples of Roman failures to dialogue openly with Luther, just as many examples exist of Luther failing to dialogue with anything resembling a spirit of graciousness or charity. The intent is not to lay blame at one or another community’s feet, nor to cast a negative bias on some and a positive bias on others. If this effort is not realized, let it be accounted not to intent but to deficiency in expressive skill.

28 Kittelson, James and Hans Wiersma. *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career*. 2nd Edition. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2016. p.64.

Among those concerned with this particular implementation of indulgences was Martin Luther, Augustinian friar, priest, and professor at the university of Wittenburg. Indulgences in general were a largely accepted facet of medieval Christian religiosity, and in various early works Luther does not dispute their legitimacy.²⁹ In contrast however, the nature of this current form of indulgences as plenary presented pastoral concerns for Luther the priest and doctrinal concerns for Luther the doctor of theology who had sworn an oath to “teach the truth and to expose error.”³⁰ While Luther did not dispute the authenticity of indulgences, he believed their were greater pastoral mechanisms at hand, “the present pope, or any pope for that matter, has greater graces [than indulgences] at his disposal, such as the gospel, spiritual powers, gifts of healing...”³¹ and was concerned that “the preaching of indulgences would lead Christians away from true repentance and genuine good works.”³²

To this end Luther responded to Tetzels preaching on October 31, 1517 by nailing the iconic 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenburg Castle Church. The theses were written in Latin, composed for a learned audience.³³ As a preface to the Theses he wrote:

*Out of love and zeal for truth and the desire to bring it to light, the following theses will be publicly discussed at Wittenberg under the chairmanship of the reverend father Martin Luther...He requests that those who cannot be present to debate orally with us will do so by letter.*³⁴

The 95 Theses served as gasoline to the embers of discontent which were already burning in those dissatisfied—or outright angry—with the current plenary indulgence system, whether on a theological or a pastoral basis, or on the basis of a sentiment that the system was merely greedy “Roman bloodsucking,” and a “pious defrauding of the faithful.”³⁵ While Tetzels had

29 “Luther acknowledged that ‘the Pope does very well when he grants remission to souls in purgatory...on account of intercessions made for them...’ ibid. p.68

30 Ibid. p.67

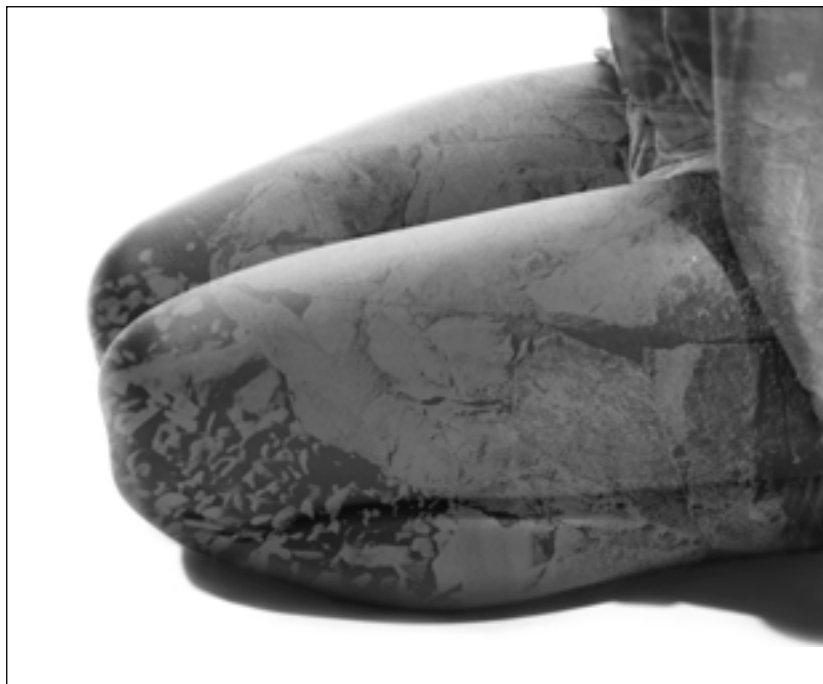
31 Ibid. p.68

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid. p.67

34 Ibid. p.66

35 Ibid. p.65



ROCK BOTTOM

by Katryna Bertucci

previously encountered opposition, Kittelson and Wiersma suggest that Luther was something new for Tetzl. He was a heavyweight scholar and an earnestly concerned pastor, and the murmuring unrest of the laity and clergy fomented upon his contribution and “as a result, the crowds that gathered to hear Tetzl’s sermons soon contained substantial numbers of hecklers. His mission was ruined.”³⁶

The response which came from Pope Leo X upon learning of the unrest in Germany and reading the 95 Theses reads as less interested in lively discourse than in damage control. Commissioning the head of the Augustinians—of whom Luther was a member—in Europe, Gabriel Venetus, “with the task of silencing Luther.”³⁷ Pope Leo wrote “If you [act] quickly, then hopefully it will not be too difficult to dampen the fire that has arisen...however, if you delay, and let your courage fail, then I am concerned that we will not have the resources to put out the blaze even if we wanted to.”³⁸

While history is unclear as to whether the Theses were ever actually publicly debated in Wittenburg in 1517, it is at this point that Luther’s reformed theological views began to be expressed³⁹. At Heidelberg in 1518 Luther presented his views on righteousness and volition and here we note the beginnings of his advocacy of Church-wide reform as a corrective for what he perceived as deviations from true Christian doctrine and practice:

*I am convinced, that it will be impossible to reform the church unless the canon law, the decretals, scholastic theology, philosophy, and logic, as they now exist, are absolutely eradicated and other studies instituted.*⁴⁰

Tetzl was an early opponent responding to Luther and he struck upon an argumentative track with which Luther would continually struggle to overcome—the absolute authority of the pope and the claim that any who challenged a papal pronouncement is a heretic *ipso facto*. Eck and other of

36 Ibid. p.67

37 Ibid. p.68

38 Ibid. p.69

39 Ibid. Luther had already been lecturing based on his developing controversial views on justification, works, and faith, but it is here that the snowball towards schism began its aggregating descent.

40 Ibid. p.73, italics mine.

Luther's opponents would also pick up this refrain.⁴¹ The doctrine of the infallibility of papal doctrines pronounced *ex cathedra* notwithstanding, this line of argumentation seems to fall into the colloquial "Because-I-said-so" category of rhetoric. While this rhetorical category might in certain contexts be juridically authoritative⁴², it hardly addresses the premises upon which one has built rational counterarguments. Luther was one who had skillfully and earnestly developed his arguments and for whom juridical authority would not satisfy his honest concerns and convictions. Here we come to one of the early instances of Luther's perception that his opponents refused to honestly engage his reasoned arguments⁴³: "Eck's response pained Luther for it ignored his appeals to the Scriptures, to the practices of the early church, and to what was spiritually beneficial for the average Christian."⁴⁴ As tensions escalated, Luther was further cemented into his position by the threat of violence against him:

He wrote, 'The more they threaten, the more confident I become...I know that whoever wants to bring the Word of Christ into the world must, like the apostles, leave behind and renounce everything, and expect death at any moment.' He saw such threats as further evidence that he was pursuing the right path...Luther knew well the church's strong traditions regarding its martyrs; here he was clearly beginning to apply the tradition to himself.⁴⁵

Luther was ordered to appear at trial to answer the charges of heresy. Rather than engage Luther in a learned debate, Rome had declared him definitely in error and commanded him to acknowledge and renounce his error.⁴⁶ The trial was held at Augsburg, Germany and while the stated purpose of the trial was to extract a 'revoco' from Luther, the presiding legate of Rome, Cardinal Cajetan, did provide thoughtful responses to Luther's claims—Luther had

41 Ibid. p.78

42 As frequently in parent-child interactions or, indeed, in the case of papal pronouncement.

43 This author is here afforded an opportunity to show evidence for his claim of impartiality in an earlier footnote. In response to Tetzel's refusal to engage, Luther answered with *ad hominem*: he dismissed Tetzel's handling of scripture as akin to "a sow push[ing] about a sack of grain," (Kittelson and Wiersma, p.77). Friends are seldom won, and tensions are frequently exacerbated by name calling.

44 Ibid. p.78

45 Ibid., structure of text slightly reordered for clarity.

46 Ibid. 79

finally gotten the engagement he sought—but when Luther was told he was in error he found himself unconvinced⁴⁷. In response to Luther's rebuttals, Cajetan again impelled him to recant and it was to be the end of the debate. Luther would later insist that he earnestly sought the truth and that he would willingly recant if he could be convinced of his error:

"I will do all this if it should be so"...He was willing to abide with fair and considered judgment. Nonetheless [he believed] the representatives of Rome were not addressing the matter fairly... he was ready to debate[,] but Cajetan would not allow a debate." Luther acknowledged that, "I would be the most accommodating and beloved person if I were to say the simple word 'revoco'...but I will not become a heretic by denying the understanding through which I have been made a Christian."⁴⁸

At this point the mold was essentially cast. Luther would not recant and stop teaching his controversial doctrines and so he was excommunicated. Eventually a faction of clergy, laity, and secular authority would rally around Luther and his teachings. A movement had begun, and it was directly opposed to pertinent papal pronouncements and it was *ipso facto* outside the established structure of the Church. The schism of the Protestant Reformation was in motion.

As a concluding consideration here for modern ecumenical dialogue, it is imperative today for a valid hermeneutic of Luther's works and ideology to consider honestly Luther's own *mens* in the early days before schism seemed inevitable.⁴⁹ A charitable interpretation of the events during Luther's life must acknowledge that his intent was pastoral and in pursuit of teaching truth. Whether one accepts or rejects Luther's theology, there may be no hope for reconciliation in western Christianity without an acknowledgement that

47 Among Luther's most consistent critiques of his opponents, from Tetzel, Eck, Cajetan, and others, in these early years was a demand for arguments from Scripture, in which way he always found his opponents lacking (ibid. 90, et al.).

48 Ibid. 90; 87.

49 As a matter of personal experience, certain individual Catholics misrepresent Luther and various Protestant views and traditions in order to do battle with strawmen. This author hastens to add that the reverse has been true in his experience—and indeed more frequently so. Mischaracterization of an ideological rival is dishonest and in the long run it delegitimizes communities which in the same instance act thusly while simultaneously claiming a moral high ground.

Luther acted, as he maintained, in good faith. While his theology on faith, justification, and authority may have been radical, Luther in his early career understood himself as a reformer, not a revolutionary:

*The church needs a reformation, [but it] is not an affair of one man, namely the pope, or of many men, namely the cardinals, both of which have been demonstrated by the most recent council. On the contrary, it is the business of the entire Christian world, yes, the business of God alone.*⁵⁰

Despite the radicalness of some of Luther's doctrines and proposed changes, he

*planned no upheaval; he had no idea that anything momentous would happen. Even late in life he commented that if the authorities had at once quenched Tetzel's fury, the matter would not have come to so great a tumult.*⁵¹

One who seeks ecumenical dialogue, who desires Christian unity and the healing of schism, may consider the interactions between Luther and Rome in 1517-18 a valuable object lesson and a haunting cautionary tale. The unwillingness of Rome to engage fairly and open-mindedly, perceived or real, prevented Luther and Rome from coming to terms. At the same time, Luther's own uncharitable treatment of his opponents undoubtedly hamstrung any goodwill efforts at reconciliation from his opponents.⁵² That the manner in which theological and ideological differences are expressed had a causal impact on the schism of western Christianity, has here been argued. Vatican Council II speaks aptly to what that division has cost Christianity:

*Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the sacred cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature.*⁵³

50 Ibid. p.75

51 Ibid. p.68

52 To this point, it was said of Luther by Mosellanus, a contemporary, that "...People chide him about only one failing, that in rebuttal he is somewhat more intense and biting than is appropriate for someone who wants to open new paths in theology and be regarded as taught by God..." *ibid.* p.107. Upon reading some of these rebuttals of Luther's, it may be opined that this description as "somewhat more intense and biting than is appropriate" is generous.

53 UR para. 1

AUGUSTINE AS NORMATIVE

The counterargument to the preceding work could be made that to apply Vatican II to the situation in the early sixteenth century in western Christianity is anachronistic. It could also be argued that because Vatican II is pastoral and dialogical rather than juridical, it does not compel Catholics to behave a certain way in the present, and because it is a Catholic document it need not compel non-Catholics. To these I answer that 1. Vatican II teaches frequently from scripture, 2. The documents of the council represent the work of some of the finest theologians and historians alive at the time, 3. Wisdom ought still to be followed even when not compulsory. In order to reinforce these potential weak points in the argument that charity, acceptance of dialectical tension, and charity *in* dialogue are paramount to effective and authentic Christianity let us consider the content of select writings from Augustine. Augustine as an ancient Christian author may speak to the question of anachronism. His renown and fundamental influence on theology and Christian identity speak to concerns of compelling and normative teaching. Catholic and non-Catholics' common claim of descendancy from Augustine address the claim that non-Catholics may disregard Vatican II's exhortations. *Confessions XII.10ff* show Augustine considering various interpretations of the creation account in Genesis. His study commences in humility and acknowledgment of his own limitations:

May the truth, the light of my heart, not my darkness, speak to me. I slipped down into the dark and was plunged into obscurity. Yet from there, even from there I loved you...Speak to me, instruct me, I have put faith in your books. And their words are mysteries indeed (XII.10).

Augustine demonstrates a comfort with the tension of multiple valid interpretations and encourages peaceable behavior and good faith in discourse:

"After hearing and considering all these interpretations, I do not wish to quarrel about words, for that is good for nothing but the subversion of the hearers...What difficulty is it...[that] these words can be interpreted in various ways, provided only that the interpretations are true...In Bible study all of us are trying to find and grasp the meaning of the author..." (XII.27).

Humility, open-mindedness, and right intent are encouraged, as well as brotherly conciliation (XII.35):

[They] love their own opinion, not because it is true, but because it is their own. Otherwise they would equally respect another true interpretation as valid...even if they [are] right, yet their position would be the temerity not of knowledge but of audacity...the product not of insight but of conceit (XII.34).

Augustine speaks positively of dialectical tension:

Each commentator...may draw what is true, one this way, and another that," and so "in this diversity of true views, may truth itself engender concord...why not say both [are true] if both are true (XII.37, 41, 42),

because God reveals different truths to different readers at different times (XII.43). All this is ordered towards charity: "Let us love...our neighbour as ourselves..." so as not "to offend charity itself, which is the principle of everything he said in the texts we are attempting to expound," (XII.35) working all "for the end of the precept, pure love," (XII.41).

Augustine's *Sermon 223* also urges acceptance of the fact of dialectical tension in the Christian community. All Christians, good and bad, faithful and unfaithful are legitimately members of the community by common baptism and partaking in the eucharist. Thus the Church is a *corpus permixtum*. The faithful are encouraged to seek fellowship with those who will be good and truthful influences but leaving the community must not be an option. He encourages his audience that someday the wheat and the chaff will be separated but warns that if wheat leaves the threshing floor before the threshing, such wheat will be burned up. It will not be ground into flour and will not be mixed into the Bread.

CONCLUSION

The call of the Church unto charity and dialogue may be considered intrinsic, and exigent, and efficacious, and an opportunity. It is an essential part of what it means to be beneath the head of Christ, and to be a follower of Christ. It is necessary in preventing and healing schism. It is useful unto fostering

unity and presenting the Gospel in an attractive way. It gives Christians the opportunity to take part in the work Christ is doing to unite the world. The Church has a special opportunity to lead the world today by modelling attentive listening and care-filled speaking. For the sake of the Church's internal wellbeing and growth in wisdom and knowledge⁵⁴, for the sake of the Church's role and reputation in the world, it cannot afford to do otherwise.



54 Outside the scope of this paper, but tremendously influential in its writing are T. Weinandy and A. Dulles' works on the nature of theological pursuits as the exploration of mysteries as opposed to the solving of problems. Not only will the Church never be free from the reality of dialectical tensions, but it will be better for engaging and learning from these tensions.