

offices in the Church that need basic overhaul if the Church is to move forward.

Bishop William Morris, a victim of the Vatican's unaccountable system of administration, looks at why we can and should put the rubbish behind us.

This is a hopeful book that suggests a chart we can follow for the renewal and reform of Catholicism in the twenty-first century.

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## Mission and Governance of a Global Catholic Church: Revival and Completion of Vatican II

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### Introduction: Church Governance and Francis' Synodal Process 2014–2015

The Catholic Church needs to be governed. We are past the delusions of a purely communitarian, self-governing Catholicism where the pure spiritual quality of the Church members is a safeguard strong enough against the corruption of the institutional level. The beginning of the twenty-first century has been a particularly important learning moment for the Church: the sex abuse crisis has shown the corruption of the system but also the urgent need for an effective Church government. The election of Pope Francis in March 2013 is also part of a change in the perception of the importance of Church government, after the twenty-seven year of charismatic pontificate of John Paul II.<sup>1</sup>

From the point of view of the relationship between ecclesiology and governance of the Church, the pontificate of pope Francis is a complex mix. The conciliar Catholicism of Jorge Mario Bergoglio is partly a recovery of Vatican II and partly the reckoning with the shortcomings of Vatican II. Francis' view of the Church is one that has received the ecclesiological shift of Vatican II and makes a creative synthesis between what Vatican II settled, what the Council talked about but did not settle, and what Vatican II did not even talk about.<sup>2</sup> Francis has recovered in particular one of the intuitions of Vatican

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1. See Andrea Riccardi, *Governo carismatico. 25 anni di pontificato* (Milano: Mondadori, 2003).

2. About this see Massimo Faggioli, *Pope Francis: Tradition in Transition* (New York: Paulist, 2015).

II in terms of theological method: the idea of communal process over bureaucratic decision, of spiritual discernment over magisterial authoritarianism, and of open-ended thinking over the obsession about continuity as opposed to discontinuity.<sup>3</sup>

This shift embodied by Francis has become visible especially with the two-year synodal process celebrated in October 2014 and October 2015 with the gathering of bishops in Rome and with a long synodal intersession between the end of the first synod and the beginning of the second. Both the synods of 2014–2015 and synodal intersessions have been an absolute first since the creation of the Bishops' Synod by Paul VI on September 15 1965, at the beginning of the fourth and last session of Vatican II. Pope Francis' synodal process has shown a few features of the present state of the Catholic Church—the difficulty to lift the veil on the shallow consensus the bishops were supposed to have and to finally address the call to reality that challenges many assumptions about the life of Catholics.

But the synodal process has also highlighted the emergencies for the governance of the global Catholic Church. This is something that pope Francis himself acknowledged with the speech of October 17 2015—the most important speech of a pope on synodality to date.<sup>4</sup> The acknowledgment of the theological and institutional emergencies and the need for a new phase in the governance of the global Catholic Church requires also a new phase in the reflection of theologians in this moment of new open spaces in the life of the Church.

This is the reason for a new appraisal of the relationship between the potential of Vatican II and the needs of the governance of today's Church. At the same time, we need to keep in mind the necessity for the Church to be an agent of evangelization and not of preservation of the institutional self. This essay tries to capture four essential tensions for a new ecclesiological appraisal of the issue of Church governance: collegiality and synodality; institution and community; ministry and people of God; center and periphery.

3. See Antonio Spadaro SJ, 'Intervista a Papa Francesco', *La Civiltà Cattolica* 3918 (19 September 2013), 449–77. English version: 'A Big Heart Open to God', in *America*, 19 September 2013.

4. Francis, Address at the ceremony commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, October 17, 2015 [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20151017\\_50-anniversario-sinodo.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html).

## Collegiality and Synodality

Collegiality is one of the most important fruits of the Second Vatican Council, but to a large extent it has remained a symbolic fruit. The way it was phrased at Vatican II (in the third chapter of the constitution *Lumen Gentium*) and the way it was received and institutionally implemented after Vatican II require now substantial updates in light of a key theological dimension of the Church, 'synodality', that was not debated at Vatican II.

It is true that Vatican II was instrumental in the decision of Paul VI to create the Bishops' Synod in 1965. But the Bishops' Synod was created as an instrument of papal primacy and of episcopal collegiality, and not an instrument of the Church's fundamental 'synodality'—the particular communal way of the Church to prepare, formulate, receive, and understand decisions in and for the Church. It is not surprising that at Vatican II there was no talk of synodality in the sense the word means today. The ecclesiological shift of Vatican II was dominated by episcopal collegiality, which remains limited at the level of the episcopate. But with his speech of 17 October 2015, but also with his leadership of the Bishops' Synods of 2014 and 2015, Francis showed us a remarkable example of a reception of Vatican II that expands on the basis of the *intentio legis*. He brings the eyes of those who read Vatican II in their actual existential and cultural situation and of the needs of the Church.

The first dimension to be considered is therefore the relationship between collegiality and synodality. 'Episcopal collegiality' at Vatican II means that the papacy and the college of bishops work collegially in order to develop reflections necessary for the government of the Church. On the one hand, at Vatican II collegiality is technically a *modus operandi* that the pope chooses, not the bishops.<sup>5</sup> On the other

5. 'But the college or body of bishops has no authority unless it is understood together with the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter as its head. The pope's power of primacy over all, both pastors and faithful, remains whole and intact. In virtue of his office, that is as Vicar of Christ and pastor of the whole Church, the Roman Pontiff has full, supreme and universal power over the Church. And he is always free to exercise this power. The order of bishops, which succeeds to the college of apostles and gives this apostolic body continued existence, is also the subject of supreme and full power over the universal Church, provided we understand this body together with its head the Roman Pontiff and never without this head. This power can be exercised only with the consent of the Roman

hand, collegiality is typical of a 'guild', of a separate group—only the bishops.

Vatican II did not articulate properly the relationship between *collegio episcoporum* and *communio ecclesiarum*,<sup>6</sup> and already at the end of the twentieth century it became clear that collegiality must be integrated with synodality.<sup>7</sup> The incompleteness of Vatican II about collegiality and synodality was made worse by the practices of the post-conciliar popes. The college of bishops has been largely seen as the rubber stamp of papal primacy. Episcopal collegiality has meant (until Francis) something 'affective' without being 'effective'.<sup>8</sup> There is here a direct link between collegiality and governance that affects the position and power of the central government of the Church in the Vatican.

The Roman Curia was created to strengthen the power of the pope, and in recent times the Curia in its actual state has in fact damaged the authority of the pope in the global Church. The Roman Curia has proven to be a liability for the authority of papal primacy because of the link between the primacy and the identification of the Curia as part of the primacy. In a culture of government that left collegiality only the demonstration of the bishops' affection for the pope, there was no room for synodal expressions of the whole Church's participation to the decision-making process.

Pontiff': Vatican II, constitution *Lumen Gentium*, par. 22 (21 November 1964) ([http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html)).

6. See Hervé Legrand, 'Les évêques, les Églises locales et l'Église entière. Evolutions institutionnelles depuis Vatican II et chantiers actuels de recherche', in *Revue de Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*, 85 (2001): 461–509.

7. About this, see *Synod and Synodality: Theology, History, Canon Law and Ecumenism in New Contact. International Colloquium Bruges 2003*, edited by Alberto Melloni and Silvia Scatena (Münster: LIT, 2005).

8. About this distinction, see Joseph A Komonchak, 'The Roman Working Paper on Episcopal Conferences', in *Episcopal Conferences: Historical, Canonical and Theological Studies*, edited by Thomas J Reese (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1989), 177–204. On 1 April 2014, in a message to Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, secretary general of the Synod of Bishops, Pope Francis spoke of the synod as an institution in terms of 'affective and effective collegiality', adding a significant 'effective' to the more typical (in the post-Vatican II period) 'affective'. See *Bollettino: Sala stampa della Santa Sede*, 8 April 2014, <http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2014/04/08/0251/00559.html>.

There is little doubt that one of the long-term ecclesiological trajectories for the Catholic Church is towards a *synodal Church*: in the Church there are some issues that deserve to be matter of a larger process of reflection and discernment, not just limited to the pope and the bishops, but involving the clergy and the laity (meaning also women). The non-episcopal component of the Catholic Church (priests, monks and brothers/sisters in religious orders, laity) have received fewer and fewer opportunities to express themselves on some pressing issues that are thought out and decided in the Vatican. The Roman Catholic Church today is expected to be less clerical with more lay faithful and women in leadership positions. However, the disconnect between some magisterial pronouncements and large portions of the world Church is also a fruit of a lack of synodality in the Church.

### Institution and Communion

The shift in ecclesiology from an institutionalist and juridical view of the Church to a more biblical, spiritual, and 'communional' understanding of the Church is undeniable. But we cannot forget that the Second Vatican Council took place in a moment in time when the Church as an institution felt still very sure of itself. The debates and the final documents approved at Vatican II framed the life of the Church largely in institutional terms, that is, a Church whose leadership was *clerical*, whose articulation was more *territorial* than personal, and whose *public standing* was as both partner and counterpart of the nation state which between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries had replaced the empires. It is therefore an institution that was changing at Vatican II. But in reality, the role of the institution was not entirely different from the role it had for the members of the Church over previous centuries.

Fifty years after Vatican II it is clear that the Church in the world of today lives in profoundly changed conditions. To name a few, secularization and the neutrality of the state towards religion, the end of the 'Constantinian age', and the growing religious pluralism in most states around the globe are all part of these changed circumstances. And these changes challenge the institutional framework described by the bishops for the Church in the first half of the 1960s.

This institutional configuration of the Catholic Church has been changing during the post-Vatican II period even if the institution has resisted adapting to the new conditions and pretended that Church structures that were created for European Christendom can still serve the global Catholic Church today.

One of the typical products of the pre-Vatican II era was the concordates, bilateral juridical agreements between the Holy See and a nation state that guarantees the Catholic Church some privileges (that other churches and religions do not enjoy) and guarantees the state the loyal cooperation of the Church. The future of this juridical tool, typical of the Catholic tradition, was not part of the debate at Vatican II; concordates between the Holy See and important states (Italy in 1929 and Germany in 1933, just to name two) are not going to be abrogated soon. But this does not mean that the Catholic Church can ignore the deeply changed conditions of co-existence between Church and state.

It is clear that global Catholicism is going to remain a greatly diverse community of communions, all living in different juridical and political situations around the world. What is important to emphasize here is that the changes affecting the Church have affected its partner, the nation state, in an even more profound way. The 1960s were, with decolonization, the age of the final collapse of the colonial empires and the rise of new states. Fifty years later, the idea of the nation state is in a deep crisis and the Church needs to understand that its role changes now that the other member of the couple, that is, the nation state, is in this serious crisis.

Historically, Church and state/empire have coexisted for centuries and we need to think about what kind of Catholic Church there can be in states that are failed, semi-failed, members of strong international communities or isolated from the international community, and so on with the all possible variations that political scientists can provide us with. This is to say that we need to rediscover the complex mix of institutional and communal aspects of the Catholic Church. The institutional side of the Church is the one that is supposed to be vigilant on the abuses. A purely communal Church is something that is not adequate to the concrete, historical experience of the members of the Roman Catholic Church.

This is not a call to keep the status quo or to over-institutionalize the life of the Church. There are recent experiences within Catholicism that are perfect examples of the need for the Church to let the Spirit work. The phenomenon of the 'new ecclesial movements' corresponds to the need for the Church to see itself not only organized with a territorial system but also with a personal criterion, in communities not necessarily defined by a territory but that are made of people. The new movements also bring in a new kind of leadership in the Church that is not clerical. The Roman Catholic Church today is less based on the structures of Church government (dioceses), less institutional and territorial, and it relies more on movements, groups, and associations. These have a varied relationship with the institution and its local and central government, something is also down to an increased mobility of the faithful.

The sympathy of the post-Vatican II papacy towards the new forms of Christian life in 'movements' and associations has been translated only in a limited way in the central government of the Church, limiting also the transparency and accountability of some of these new ecclesial bodies (for example, Legionaries of Christ). But the relationship between the Church as an institution and these new movements is complex: they need each other and the charisms of these new movements flourished originally within the institutional Church.<sup>9</sup>

### Leadership/Ministry and People of God

The modern emphasis on leadership has become pervasive in our political discourse, but also in the vocabulary of our education system. In this sense, there is a tension between the old idea of membership and citizenship on one side and the urge (that sometimes becomes an obsession in the age of neo-authoritarianism and crisis of democracy) on the other side to identify and rely on leadership. The ideas of leadership and membership/citizenship both apply to the Catholic Church: *citizenship* in the sense of responsible, individual and collective subjectivity in the communion of the faithful, and

9. See Massimo Faggioli, *Sorting Out Catholicism: Brief History of the New Ecclesial Movements* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014) and *The Rising Laity: Ecclesial Movements since Vatican II* (Mahwah NJ-New York: Paulist Press, 2016).

*leadership* in the sense of visible and accountable roles of guidance in the Church that discern the signs of the times and are attentive to the Holy Spirit and to the leadership of the whole people of God.

This relationship between leadership and citizenship is at the same time old and new in Church history. What is certainly new is the emphasis in our culture about leadership. The first few years of the post-Vatican II period were marked by a stress on the popular, collective leadership in the Church of the whole people of God, also in reaction to centuries of clericalism. In the second phase of the post-Vatican II period, one of the counter-balancing contributions of John Paul II was certainly the assertion of an old-style clerical leadership of the Church that was not contradicted by the approval of a new style of a leader or principal person in a movement, cause, etc in lay movements in the Church.

The pontificate of Francis is casting a new light on the relationship between leadership and people in the Church. It is clear on the one hand that the Church needs leadership. On the other hand, the ecclesiological debate since Vatican II and the tragedy of the sex abuse crisis has shown the kind of leadership the Church needs. Francis has renewed the Church's confidence in the idea of leadership because he embodies a sense of leadership that is not loyal to the institutional status quo but is a prophetic leader. He has spoken repeatedly about the kind of leader the Church needs, focusing especially on clerical leadership speaking in unforgiving terms about the counter-witness given by many in the hierarchy.<sup>10</sup>

The issue becomes more complicated when we have to figure out the other part of the picture. The fact is that it has become difficult to identify 'the people' in the Church as well as in our political discourse. The twentieth century was the age of the mobilisation of the masses in the nation state as well as in the Church. That age has been replaced by a much more fragmented social and ecclesial body. It used to be easy to identify the Catholic elite with the clergy, Catholic intellectuals, and Catholic political leaders. Now the leadership role of the clergy is in deep trouble, and there are Catholic lay leaders whose voices matter more than many bishops and cardinals together. On the other

10. See for example Francis' speech to the bishops during his visit to Mexico, on 13 February 2016 [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco\\_20160213\\_messico-vescovi.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco_20160213_messico-vescovi.html).

hand, 'the people' for the Church is still important but much more as a theological idea (the people of God) than as a homogeneous, socially tangible reality. Fragmented ideologically, socially and ethnically, the globalisation of Catholicism has to deal with the need to redefine who its people are.

One of the unexpected consequences of Vatican II was the beginning of a very profound change of elites in contemporary Catholicism. Understanding the consequences of this is a huge task that runs below the surface of Francis' pontificate. The pope is aware of the change in the elites of the Catholic Church that occurred in the last fifty years more or less. It is interesting to look at the way he addresses two key players in the arena where the battle for Church leadership takes place: the bishops and the new ecclesial movements. Francis addresses bishops in a way that reveals the pope's take on the shortcomings of the "episcopal" ecclesiology of Vatican II. But the bishops are not the only ones being told about the illusions of their eternal leadership in the Church. Francis' addresses to the Catholic movements (Communion and Liberation, Neocatechumenal Way, etc) always contain the idea that the Church does not need elites that are isolated from the rest of the ecclesial community.

All this tells us that if the theology of the priesthood has not changed in these last fifty years, the very meaning of Church leadership and of the people of the Church have changed significantly. It will suffice here to note the deep and probably irrecoverable crisis of the identification between clergy and Church leadership. The second millennium saw this identification being created beginning with the 'Gregorian revolution' of the eleventh century. The third millennium is probably going to get rid of this identification—partly acknowledging the lived theology of our communities, partly discussing theologically and ecclesologically the need for a redefinition of Church leadership and ministry.

### Centre and Periphery

Vatican II represents a clear step towards a less centralised and an ecclesologically balanced relationship between the center and the local Churches. The council does so not only in *Lumen Gentium*, but also from the very first document it approved, the liturgical

constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.<sup>11</sup> The liturgical constitution stresses the importance of the local Church through the biblical and patristic renewal, which points to the roots of early Christianity as a communion of local communities; through the rediscovery of the Eucharist as the very heart of the Church; through the empowerment of the local bishop as first celebrant within the local Church.

But Vatican II was a first step. This new role of the bishops in the life of local Churches was supported by the final outcome of the liturgical debate, and not by the quite active (later during Vatican II) bishops' lobbying in favor of an institutional *decentralisation* in the global Catholic Church (that is, more autonomy from Rome for the bishops) and *centralisation* in the local church (abolition of the immovability for parish priests, and more control of the religious orders active in the diocese). The same caution is visible in the constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, where chapter III on episcopal collegiality is only an opening towards a different modality of the use of papal primacy, and where collegiality of the bishops is founded on their belonging to the universal collegium, and not on their being bishops of a local Church. The Bishops' Synod as it is described in *Christus Dominus* par 5 (following Paul VI's motu proprio *Apostolica Sollicitudo* of September 15, 1965), finally, is not an instrument of decentralization but of important but limited coopting of the bishops by papal power.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, the same decree *Christus Dominus* provided the Church with the first groundbreaking text on the episcopal conferences, which Vatican II wanted to become operative in every country.<sup>13</sup> This is where the trajectory towards decentralisation was,

11. See Massimo Faggioli, *True Reform: Liturgy and Ecclesiology in Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press 2012).

12. 'Bishops chosen from various parts of the world, in ways and manners established or to be established by the Roman pontiff, render more effective assistance to the supreme pastor of the Church in a deliberative body which will be called by the proper name of Synod of Bishops. Since it shall be acting in the name of the entire Catholic episcopate, it will at the same time show that all the bishops in hierarchical communion partake of the solicitude for the universal Church'. Vatican II, decree *Christus Dominus*, par 5 (28 October 1965), [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651028\\_christus-dominus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_christus-dominus_en.html).

13. 'In these days especially bishops frequently are unable to fulfill their office effectively and fruitfully unless they develop a common effort involving

after a promising start during the 1970s, interrupted under John Paul II and Benedict XVI, and where it probably has to resume for the future of the governance of the Church—together with a renewed encouragement from the pope in the contemporary Church that today is difficult to imagine as being temporary.<sup>14</sup>

There is no one key word for the new articulation of the relationship between center and periphery. Collegiality was the buzzword of Vatican II, but the post-Vatican II period learned that it has to be tempered and completed with synodality. The post-Vatican II reforms worked also because they were mandated from a strong universal level. Localism is not necessarily the panacea for what does not work in the governance of the Catholic Church. On the other hand, it is true that in the last three decades the local level has been almost constantly and unnecessarily killed. The manifest humiliation of the prerogatives of the Bishops' conferences (such as in the recent case of the new English translation of the Missal) must be a thing of the past. The excesses of centralisation are clearly part of Francis' experiences with the institutional Church.<sup>15</sup>

### Governance for Mission: A Few Proposals

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been the golden age for a development of the theology and practice of the papal office and of episcopal ministry. The petrine ministry has changed profoundly between Vatican I and Vatican II, and this change is accelerating with pope Francis. But there are other changes that need to take place in order to re-energise the Catholic Church for the mission of evangelisation: spiritual renewal is necessary, but it cannot be an excuse to delay or to avoid institutional change. This is a time of

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constant growth in harmony and closeness of ties with other bishops. Episcopal conferences already established in many nations have furnished outstanding proofs of a more fruitful apostolate. Therefore, this sacred synod considers it to be supremely fitting that everywhere bishops belonging to the same nation or region form an association which would meet at fixed times.' Vatican II, decree *Christus Dominus*, par 37.

14. About the evolution of papal power see Klaus Schatz, *Papal Primacy: From Its Origin to the Present* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996).

15. See Francis, exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), par 16 and 32.

change for the Catholic Church, also at the institutional level that must correspond to the momentuous changes in the very body of the Church. The global nature of the Church is made more visible by the fact that membership in the Roman Catholic Church today is much more global, less European and less clerical. Therefore it is time to rethink some of the institutions for the government of the Church. The short list of proposals that follows is not complete and is provisional. But it provides a starting point.

The role of *Vatican diplomacy and the nuncios* in their work at the service of the local Churches is just as much in need of a new appraisal in light of the ecclesiology of Vatican II. In particular, the procedures for the bishops' appointments must be changed—at least initially from a symbolic point of view, in the sense of more participation of the local Churches (clergy, lay, and women) who receive a new bishop. This would be in line both with the ancient tradition, with some of the proposals drafted at Vatican II, and with a correct ecclesiology of the local Church. The role of Vatican diplomacy should be maintained, being one of the distinctive elements of the activity of the Catholic Church as a service to the world and to the world Church, in an age where there is a clear need for an authoritative voice speaking on behalf of those who do not have a voice.

The relations between the Roman Curia and *the Bishops' conferences* must change in the sense of a renewed ecclesiology of the local Church. The issues are related to their relationship to the Roman Curia in terms of the representation of the voices of the bishops. It is important to give the Bishops' Conferences power to interact with the Roman Curia collegially as a conference (national or continental). Paradoxically, under Francis it seems that the only call for more activity of the bishops' conferences is coming from the pope and the bishops' conferences are reluctant to take up this invitation.

The Roman Curia must find a balance in the voice of *the Consistory* of cardinals. The issues are the role of the Consistory vis-à-vis the papacy, its composition (who are the members), and the frequency of its meetings. In the midterm it seems possible to leave the Consistory as a tool of the papacy to gauge reactions from the cardinals (many of them being the electoral college of the pope) about particular issues of his choosing, but also on issues brought up by the cardinals. It is important that the Consistory gathers *at least once a year*.

At the local level, *diocesan synods and particular councils* must find a new voice. Diocesan synods and particular councils must be part of a new consideration of the relationship between center and periphery for a reform of the Roman Curia. It is advisable to jump-start the synodal life of the local Churches with some provision requiring the celebration of diocesan synods and particular councils at least every ten years (see Code of Canon Law 1917).