

KATNET APRIL 2015

Talk 1

From Catholicism to Catholicity

The Journey of Church Renewal

This title is one way of describing the journey of renewal in the Catholic Church in modern times.

From a Church largely unaware of a need for renewal (the self-referential church of Pope Francis) to a Church knowing it is constantly in need of deep renewal.

“Christ summons the church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she always has need, insofar as she is a human institution here on earth.” (Decree on Ecumenism, para. 6).

Required: “a permanent renewal of the Church in greater fidelity to her vocation; such renewal is the driving-force of the movement toward unity”

Two books

First: An 8-volume systematic theology by a French-speaking Protestant theologian, Gérard Siegwalt:

**Dogmatique pour la Catholicité
Évangélique**

Second: a book by a well-known Catholic commentator in the USA, George Weigel

Evangelical Catholicism: Deep Reform in

Weigel's book (published before 2013) presents the work of St John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI as a deep renewal of the Catholic Church through a return to the centrality of the Gospel.

He likes the term **Catholicism**, but in his view its future is as an **Evangelical Catholicism**.

Not surprisingly, Weigel hardly mentions ecumenism: the renewal of Catholicism does not need the help or gifts of other Christian

By contrast, Siegwalt sees the term Catholicism defining a pre-renewal Catholic Church. So he has written an article: *Vatican II et l'enjeu de la catholicité* [Vatican II and the issue/challenge of Catholicity].

“The Church is not catholic in itself and of itself, but she is only catholic through her relationship with Christ and as witness to the catholicity of Christ.” (Siegwalt).

THE FOUR MARKS OF THE

The four marks of the Church are confessed in the Nicene Creed:

One

Holy

Catholic

Apostolic

Pre-Vatican Two Understanding of the 4 Marks of the Church

The 4 marks were treated as possessions of the Catholic Church.

They were used in Catholic apologetics to prove that the Catholic Church is the only true Church.

They were used as weapons against other Christian churches, arguing that, for example,

Post-Vatican Two

See Catechism of Catholic Church, 811 – 870.

The four marks are foundational characteristics of the Church as established by Jesus and by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

They are given to be built on, to be

So the Church is one in her creation and gifting from the Lord: the Church has then to preserve the unity, heal the divisions, and prepare for the unity of the coming Kingdom (Eph. 1: 9 – 10).

The Church is catholic by her creation and gifting from the Lord: the Church has then to preserve her catholicity, heal all forms of narrowness that sin against catholicity, and prepare for the catholicity of the coming

The MARK of UNITY

The Church is one because of her source, her founder, and her soul (the Holy Spirit)
para. 813

The bonds of unity:

- * profession of one faith
- * one in divine worship
- * apostolic succession in ministry (par 815)

Unity is damaged

Para. 817 of the Catechism speaks of “The ruptures that wound the unity of Christ’s body”.

“The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit.” (para. 820)

What Pope Francis adds

“If we really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, we can learn so much from one another! It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift to us.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, para. 246).

The gifts of the Orthodox, the Protestants and

The Jewish People & Unity

- “The ‘full inclusion’ of the Jews in the Messiah’s salvation, in the wake of ‘the full number of the Gentiles,’ will enable the people of God to achieve ‘the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,’ in which ‘God may be all in all.’” (CCC, para. 674)

The Gift of Catholicity

Catechism: the Church is Catholic:

1. Because Christ is present in her – and confers a fulness, e.g. of “the means of salvation” (830)
2. Because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race” (831). See Matt. 28: 19 – make disciples of all nations

Catholicity has been damaged

This dimension not treated in the Catechism

Damaged by:

- All denials of legitimate diversity
- Self-referentiality (Francis)
- When Rome-centred replaces Christ-centred

“Church-centredness is a real denial of catholicity, because it cuts the Church off from its double inter-related goal [finality], that is on the one hand the Kingdom of God, and on the other hand the whole inhabited world – the *oikouménè* in its etymological sense – and thus from the whole of humanity at the heart of the cosmos.” (Siegwalt)

Ideologies

Typically – isms reflect **ideologies**.

Communism, Secularism, Humanism,
Ideologies are **idols** of the mind.

Ideologies **absolutize** what is created and good and then turn this good into the only thing that matters, separating from other creaturely goods and do distorting

Being Freed from an Ideological Catholicism

The Renewal of the Church is the Holy Spirit freeing Catholic life and theology from an ideological self-sufficiency and isolation to recover the fulness of her authentic catholicity.

This could be a good summary for the goals of Pope Francis.