Are We Divided or Simply Diverse?

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This article examines, with the help of developmental psychology, the tension between identity and inclusivity in religious life today. Giving a brief qualitative background on some of the generational changes that have generated challenges, Goergen argues that both of these values are of essential importance and some synthesis between them must be found for these conflicts to move forward in a productive way.

No century in the history of the Church has lacked its tensions and divisions, including the first century as witnessed in the New Testament itself.[1] We need only mention the disagreements and confrontations among Peter, Paul, and James. After Vatican I, there was the Old Catholic Church that did not accept all the Council's decisions, and after Vatican II, the Society of St. Pius X. As we in religious life and the Church face the challenges which come from increased polarization in the world, my thesis is that we need not let differences which are real necessarily be divisive. We often say, "Diversity, yes; divisiveness, no." St. Paul sees divisiveness as a work of an evil spirit (2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:19–21). Yet it is not always easy to determine the line that separates divisiveness from diversity. The People of God live with anxiety hoping for harmony. It does seem, however, that polarization has maintained its strength and stranglehold. Perhaps the Church itself has too often been infected by the trajectory secular politics has taken with its bitter uncivil rivalries.

Aaron Wessman, GHM, has carefully analyzed what may be an impasse in this regard in *The Church's Mission in a Polarized World* (2023).[2] Disagreement need not be polarizing, however, and can actually be constructive and supportive, as considered by Scott Steinkerchner, OP, in his reflection on interreligious dialogue, *Beyond Agreement, Interreligious Dialogue and*

1. James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977).

2. Aaron Wessman, GHM, *The Church's Mission in a Polarized World* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2023).

Persistent Differences (2011).[3] Larry S. Chapp challenges us as Church to live the radical message of the Gospel and weave a course between traditionalism and progressivism in his *Confession of a Catholic Worker, Our Current Moment of Christian Witness* (2023).[4] Many other works treat of similar themes. Rather than the Church allowing itself to be infected by the secular politics within which it lives, can the Church offer the world and nation states alternative ways to approach conflict? Jean-Luc Marion exemplifies what the Church can offer from within the French context in *A Brief Apology for a Catholic Moment* (2021).[5]

Accompanying our own Provincial Chapter in 1969, following from the desire of the province to integrate the discussions and documents of Vatican II with respect to religious life, a statement was drawn up, "Two Pathways into the Seventies." It was intended to avoid taking sides as to what direction the province ought to take to avoid divisiveness. One door was opened; another not closed. It seemed prudent. At the time, how were we to know which path to take? Or what guidance the Holy Spirt was still to give? The neuralgic issues that existed at that time, however, have not gone away. The question is whether a both/and approach or an either/or approach is the preferred road into the future. The wider Church herself has not resolved what to do, as the papacies of John XXIII and Paul VI flowed into those of John Paul II and Benedict XVI and now into that of Pope Francis. The Church has not been without its stress points since the Council, nor indeed even before the Council. Vatican I itself did not lead to a Church of one mind.[6]

Fast forward from our 1969 Chapter to that of 2019. I was not a delegate at either Chapter but have witnessed the continued ebb and flow within the Church between a more progressive path and a more conservative one. After having been Provincial, as well as later in charge of student formation, there are questions which have stayed with me. Is there divisiveness or only healthy differences of opinion? Strong preferences? The questions have entered several conversations I have had. Is the mapping using terms like liberal/conservative helpful or harmful? Is the tension intergenerational? Is it different appropriations of Vatican II? Are the differences among us only subjective, dependent on opinions we find personally agreeable or not? Are we really divided at all?

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3. Scott Steinkerchner, OP, *Beyond Agreement: Interreligious Dialogue and Persistent Differences* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011).

4. Larry S. Chapp, *Confession of a Catholic Worker, Our Current Moment of Christian Witness* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2023).

5. Jean-Luc Marion, *A Brief Apology for a Catholic Moment* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021).

6. John, W. O'Malley, *Vatican I, The Council and the Making of the Ultramontane Church* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2018).

After giving the questions further thought, I have gathered that there are at least two values at play, both values of undeniable importance. Most of us, however, give more emphasis to one rather than the other. There are other values at play also, but I want to take these two as exemplary of current theological and ecclesiological differences. These two values are identity and inclusivity, the former often embraced among newer members, the latter more often among brothers of an older generation. How compatible are these two? By identity I mean clarity about who we are, both as Catholic and as members of a particular religious community, in terms of having a sense of ourselves as distinct, distinguishable, identifiable, and different from others although not in opposition to them. By inclusivity I mean an openness in looking at what we have in common rather than at what distinguishes or separates us, a willingness to have porous boundaries between us and others, and a desire to widen the space to include those with whom we might also identify or even disagree. These two words can help us understand some of our differences. Both are clearly to be valued. We must know and manifest who we are. Psychologists speak, otherwise, of an identity crisis. At the same time, there needs to be an openness to the other, which both in Church and society we increasingly recognize as well.

For me, growing up Catholic meant having a clear sense of identity. It never was an issue. I went to Catholic grade school, in which I had a Catholic religious sister as my teacher in every grade; to Catholic high school, with religion being taught by two priests while English, Latin, French, History, Government, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics were all taught by Franciscan sisters. I went to a Catholic College in which Catholic theology and philosophy were *de rigeur.* The philosophy was that of St. Thomas. I found being able to think outside the Catholic box was liberating as the Second Vatican Council unfolded. I was Catholic to the core, more Catholic than American, until perhaps we had a Catholic president, something in which we then took great pride. There were Lutherans in my hometown, some of them farmed a neighboring farm. We got along; we did not think deeply about the fact that they might not be saved. I have taken Catholic identity for granted. It was bred into my bones, for which I am grateful. But Catholicism in the fifties and sixties was different from Catholicism in the eighties and nineties and is different again even now.

My Catholic upbringing was a privilege. Such a context was not the case for others. Many newer members in religious life did not grow up Catholic, or left the faith and then returned, or were Catholic but in a much more pluralistic world where Buddhism was as *au courant* as Christianity. Newer members were raised in a world where university education did not value religion at all, where even Catholic colleges and universities did not place high priority on Catholic identity, where one had to choose Catholicism and not take it for

granted. For me, I wanted to reach out and build bridges. The civil rights movement was strong. Exclusion based on race or sex or creed was bad. I did not value making myself distinct from others.

Erik Erikson, who coined the expression identity crisis, wrote about eight stages of psychosocial development and among them were our having to meet the challenges of identity, intimacy, and generativity.[7] One could not bypass one of the stages. One needs to know oneself before one can give oneself. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin had written in *The Divine Milieu* that one had first to be oneself before one could deny, sacrifice, or give oneself.[8] For Teilhard, these two facets of our spiritual well-being would be like breathing in and breathing out. These two values are not psychologically exclusive, yet there can be tension between them. They impact us differently in the concrete and influence decisions we make—whether we consider it more important to solidify a sense of who I am and who we are, or whether it is reaching out to embrace others who are not us. Both identity and intimacy are among life's challenges and growth comes in stages one cannot skip, although no stage is ever fully left behind. Throughout life there are times when we return to a psychological task and work with it again at a more mature or deeper level. This is true of both identity and of intimacy.

Let us take intercommunion as an example. If Roman Catholic identity is important, intercommunion can muddy the water. If inclusivity is what I hold most dear, openness to a Protestant receiving communion on some occasion seems to make sense if they respect what we understand the Eucharist to be. The former is more in accord with Church teaching and practice, the latter with some pastoral sensibilities. This is true of many of our differences over liturgical questions. The style of concelebrating reinforces priestly distinctiveness or separates one from lay participants. The hymns we sing can open wide the gates or focus them with clarity. Is Latin something that distinguishes us or separates us? I do not intend to imply greater significance to one or the other of these two values, but we can see that a core value impacts how one decides what seems to be a better course of action. In the end, I believe that differences can be bridged by looking at something from a both/and perspective and attempting to navigate between extremes which otherwise will dominate us.

Outside liturgical questions, there are others. If inclusivity is highly valued, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, and salvation outside the visible Catholic Church loom high in importance. If identity is at stake, a strong allegiance to magisterial teaching without dissent, hesitancy about a theological

7. Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1950).

8. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*, trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 69–76.

opinion that may be confusing, and an emphasis on tradition seem obvious. Moral clarity about contraception or LGBT topics are a question of who we are as Catholic, while for others these are questions of compassion toward others and should be open to discussion. There is also an impact on how we approach questions of social justice. Pro-life concerns define us as Catholics. There are other social concerns that we share with others but are also Catholic social teachings. I am not saying that any of these are exclusive of each other, although at times they do create conflict.

The same can be found in one's approach to the thought of Thomas Aquinas. My generation threw out a neo-scholastic approach to Aquinas which predominated in favor of a more historical approach and a broad array of other *ressourcement* theologians. For many, Thomas is now a source of Catholic identity, although one can approach Thomas more with "a Thomism of the strict observance" as some have called it, or with an emphasis on the varieties of Thomism that there are, on Thomas only or a Thomas as one among many even if the guiding light.[9]

The religious habit is another issue. It is a mark of identity, witness, and pride if identity is a value we emphasize. Likewise with vocations. Whom do we seek? And whether to emphasize the common life over our ministries or the ministry over who we are together. Inclusive language or language that is perceived as sexist? To the inclusivist, an emphasis on identity can come across as rigidity. To those for whom being Catholic and perceived as Catholic is important, "progressive" members appear ossified or undermining Church teaching and unable to move on and think with the Church today. Each can see the other as not being able to think outside the box, depending on the box into which we put one another.

Both identity and inclusivity are Christian values. Few of us would deny the significance of either. Nor are they mutually exclusive. But can we give equal allegiance to both *at the same time?* At different times in our lives will one stand out as more important, to be given more sustenance? On which value will our deeper convictions be based? Do we slide back and forth between the two? Is it not important that we speak with a common voice? On the other hand, should we not take pride in diversity? To those who emphasize identity (consciously or not), the decisions of others seem shallow, disheartening, confused, and lacking pride or deep understanding of who we are. Lack of conformity can be seen as disloyal, even a betrayal. The boundaries of

9. Many have written of the varieties of Thomism that have surfaced since the Second Vatican Council, in contrast to pre-Vatican II Thomism characterized variously as neo-Scholastic Thomism, Baroque Thomism, Leonine Thomism, or a Thomism of the strict observance, the latter found in the writing of Edward Feser as well as others.

what we can do, or think, are to be more settled. But to those who emphasize inclusivity, to exclude seems narrow, overly restrictive, and insensitive to pastoral reality.

To those who give greater emphasis to inclusivity, it seems as if others are wanting to move backwards. To those who emphasize identity, it seems as if others are unwilling to move forward. If inclusivity is a priority, others are too conservative, hanging on to things that have been left behind. If Catholic identity is emphasized, then others are the real conservatives, unable to change and move on and let go, trying to sustain a quite recent status quo, reading the signs of the times as they were fifty years ago rather than as they are now. To each the other looks as if he is stuck. Does dialogue water down the truth or open the doors to more understanding? Is dialogue unable to grapple with the truth and come to some conclusions or does it shape the kind of preaching and evangelization we need today? Should we be unashamed to acknowledge who we are as Catholics, or should we be embarrassed at times to be Catholic? Is Pope Francis's emphasis on a culture of encounter and social inclusion, on our interconnectedness, the road to be taken?[10] The two values of identity and inclusivity are not, I emphasize, mutually exclusive; but neither are we easily able, in concrete circumstances, to give equal weight to each at the same time.

I think this "divide" is something we must embrace. It will not go away, nor ought it. Two significant values are at stake. But does that mean just giving lip service to one or to the other? Is it truly possible to value each? For Erickson, identity is foundational; it must come before anything else. However, after solidifying that, one moves on if one is to find intimacy. That, however, is not the final value either, which is generativity, or in apostolic religious terms, perhaps a sense of mission. What is our charism? How do we articulate who we are to be in this post-modern, post-Christian, religiously indifferent, secular world? We need to be faithful to who we are, including our history and tradition, and yet recognize that we are who we are called to be in a new and challenging context.

I want to offer a few thoughts about a way forward, not wanting to diminish the importance of either of these two values but respecting them both. As the Book of Ecclesiastes says, there is a time for everything under the sun, thus a time to emphasize our identity and a time to let go of preoccupation with it; a time to be more inclusive and a time to recognize that there are limits to where inclusivity ought to go; a time to ask the respect of my brothers or sisters for what I may need to nurture at this time in my life and a time to challenge my sisters and brothers lest they get stuck on a plateau that pro-

10. Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti (On Fraternity and Social Friendship)*, 2020 encyclical, nos. 30–36.

duces no growth. The energy underlying this force forward whereby we think and value differently but desire to live harmoniously and witness to deep community within our individualistic world is the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who is the principle of both our unity and our diversity, as Pope St. John Paul II acknowledged in his apostolic exhortation *Christifideles laici.*[11]

We need to admit with conviction that what the other thinks and values *is* important *and* a working of the Holy Spirit who at times is not only the source of diversity but also of productive conflict. The Holy Spirit is the glue[12] that holds us together. We all say: "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life." We simply need to go more deeply at times within ourselves to find the space wherein the Spirit holds together what we tend to tear asunder. We need to give witness to St. Paul's appreciation of diversity within the body of Christ (1 Cor 12).[13] As one wisdom figure once said to me, "Move at the pace of guidance," which I have always taken as "Move at the pace of the guidance of the Holy Spirit." What is the Spirit saying to the churches (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)? Would we really want a community in which one of these two values was not deeply embedded among us?

Humanly speaking, we all have fear. Of what am I afraid? What do I fear in a more inclusive approach to our urgent questions? What do I fear in a stronger emphasis on a more focused Catholic identity? We ought to name those fears lest they remain hidden from us or others. Are both values not important even though they may give us different insights? Is the cultivation of a Catholic identity, or a specific religious identity within consecrated life, while respecting a more widened context in our world today a question of either/or? Does not Catholic identity itself include in its catholicity the potential for an inclusive Church that is also a clearly self-identifiable one? Is identity to be perceived as something narrow? Is theological diversity not a good? It need not be that those who emphasize identity require a restrictive Church with uniform thought nor those who emphasize inclusivity see identity as a violation of true catholicity. My generation grew up with a secure sense of Catholic identity, but my religious formation embraced inclusivity. Today's pluralism, however, must

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11. "One and the same Spirit is always the dynamic principle of diversity and unity in the Church." *Christifideles laici"* a post-synodal apostolic exhortation by Pope John Paul II, dated December 30, 1988. See *Origins* 18 (February 9, 1989), 570. Also see Pope John Paul II, "*Dominum et vivificantem* (The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World)," an encyclical letter, 1986.

12. St. Augustine speaks of the Holy Spirit as the glue in human relationships. See *The Trinity (De Trinitate)*, trans. Edmund Hill, OP (New York: New City Press, 1991), 209 (VI, 1, 7).

13. See Donald J. Goergen, OP, *Fire of Love, Encountering the Holy Spirit* (New York: Paulist, 2006), 48–52.

make us pause and think: Are there really no differences that make a difference? What does it require of us to be Church in a secular age?[14]

For those who emphasize inclusivity, Pope John XXIII and Pope Francis are models. For those for whom a strong sense of identity is what the Church now needs, Pope John Paul II was one of the great popes in modern times as was Pope Benedict XVI. But are these not all great popes and what the Holy Spirit saw as necessary at the time? Is there not something inimical in thinking that I am a Benedict man, or I am a Francis man? Each has witnessed and contributes to the life of the *totus Christus.* The Holy Spirit has given us each pope in its own way and its own time. Is not our Catholic intellectual tradition along with the gifts of the Spirit a source for hope? Ernst Cassirer as a philosopher of culture spoke of a fundamental polarity within cultures, a tension between stabilization and evolution, between a tendency that leads to fixed forms and a tendency to break up this rigid scheme, the tendency toward conservation and the tendency toward rejuvenation, both being essential.[15] Karl Rahner, with a take from St. Paul, once phrased it in response to a question put to him following a lecture he had given, "Some in the Church may be given the charism to be an accelerator and others the charism to be a break." St. Paul alerts us to the danger. "I belong to Paul, or I belong to Apollos, or I belong to Cephas" (1 Cor 1:12; 3:4). Do I belong to Rahner, or do I belong to von Balthasar? Would the Church be enriched if we had only one theological perspective on difficult questions? We need each other, but we do not need everyone to be the same as I am, or to value my values in the same way. Identity without inclusivity stagnates. Inclusivity without identity is shallow. At times, the two values may be more like polar opposites; at other times, more easily reconciled. How do we learn to live harmoniously in a world where there are strongly held convictions and disagreements about the best way forward? Is this not the witness we have to offer the world?

In my own thinking, an awareness of these two values as operative among us helps me to see, appreciate, and understand where I come from and where others come from, especially those who make choices other than those that I might prefer. It has helped me to see in a new way. It helps me to appreciate my brother or sister even when I may not be inclined toward a decision he or she makes. It helps me to challenge someone more charitably. Is not the ministry of building bridges among diverse points of view a witness we want to give? Is it not what we have to offer our broken and secular world? In the end, when we come to clashes of opinions, do we not need to

14. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2007).

15. Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1944), 224, 226.

look at what "the other" has to offer? Is not both/and most often the direction that the Spirit takes us?

To seek a way to be in conversation with one another that respects diversity is a perennial challenge. We do not want only to talk to the same people or access the same channels of information. The use of social media can add to the distances created among us.[16] Let us experiment with other ways in which we can discuss our concerns and have something to offer as a means for carrying on what some today call difficult conversations. Let us trust in the good will of everyone, speak respectfully and humbly, and find a medium appropriate to our message, the Christian message.

Let us not downplay things that divide us. But let us not allow them to be divisive. Let us model a way to live together genuinely and harmoniously as brothers and sisters who differ about significant questions and be grateful for differences. We are simply a microcosm of what our country, the world, and the Church experience. Are we able to bridge the gaps among us and thus offer a model of what it means to be a Christian community? To me, this seems to be a worthwhile challenge, for all of us to go more deeply, grounded in our contemplative and intellectual roots, wherein we can find that what divides us can also unite us, namely our desire for truth, the truth that sets us free, the truth that flows forth from the Spirit of Truth, that none of us has in its totality by himself or herself alone. As Ralph Powell, a now deceased Dominican confrere of mine, once insightfully said, "It's hard to see the whole picture if you're inside the frame." In the end, our faith is that God governs the universe providentially with wisdom and love.

We need our roots but also the branches that allow us to blossom. Without roots, without groundedness, without traditions, without the perennial wisdom of the Christian and other faith traditions, we will die or at least hemorrhage. But the roots need to grow, blossom, develop, expand, and mature in order to bear fruit in an ever-changing world. The lives we live, the message we offer, and the witness we give is ever the same and ever new. So it must be. We need to ask ourselves the recurring questions: To what degree have we lost our sense of identity? Our identity as religious, as consecrated men and women? Our sense of consecration? Of the sacred? Or to what degree have we closed in on ourselves? Lost a sense of our communion with other spiritual or wisdom traditions? Desired to go it alone? To build, if not walls, at least stronger boundaries. Have we become self-righteous? Lost a sense of balance? Given in to one extreme or another? Where is the Holy Spirit in all this? Have I put the Spirit in a box of my making?

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16. Jaron Lanier, *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now* (New York: Henry Holt, 2018).

I have quoted Jonathan Sacks on other occasions, an Orthodox Rabbi who served as the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth from 1991 to 2013. In his still highly relevant 2002 book, *The Dignity of Difference, How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations,* he writes: "Conversation, the heartbeat of democratic politics, is dying and with it our chances of civic, let alone global peace."[17] He also wrote, in response to the question of how we can live with different moral perspectives and yet sustain an overarching sense of community:

> The answer . . . is *conversation*—not mere debate but the disciplined act of communicating (making my views intelligible to someone who does not share them) and listening (entering into the inner world of someone whose views are opposed to my own). Each is a genuine form of respect, of paying attention to the other, of conferring value on his or her opinions even though they are not mine. In a debate one side wins, the other loses, but both are the same as before. In a conversation neither side loses and both are changed, because they now know what reality looks like from a different perspective. That is not to say that either gives up its previous convictions. That is not what conversation is about. It does mean, however, that I may now realize that I must make space for another deeply held belief, and if my own case has been compelling, the other side may understand that it too must make space for mine.[18]

The fact that there are differences of opinion on significant questions among men and women of generally good will indicates that we all have something to learn. We enter sincere conversations because we want to learn. Even though the convictions with which I live may be strong and reasonably held, I do not have the whole of truth or all wisdom. We are all learners no matter how learned we may be. What is it that makes the other think differently than I? This is something I can learn without attributing ill will to them, granted that ill will does exist.

How to live harmoniously with different values or values that we value differently, that is our challenge. Wherever there are differences, there are values that are held dearly, and when they are different from my own, I ought to want to know what they are or why they are held so dearly. I do not enter dialogue to change my mind, nor someone else's, but to understand and thus possibly deepen or widen my own vision. If, in the end, neither of us changes his or her mind, so be it. What is important is that each will have more under-

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17. Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference, How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003), 3.

18. Jonathan Sacks, 83. Emphasis in text.

standing, and thus less cause for divisiveness even if differences remain. The witness we offer the world will be helpful and truly the fruit of contemplation. How do we love someone whose take on things seems so different from mine?

It has been said, both with respect to the Church and to the world, that it is sanctity in the end that counts. Jean-Luc Marion wrote, with respect to the Church, that "saints alone reform the Church."[19] Charles Taylor suggests the same with respect to Christian witness in a secular world.[20] In the end, we are to be a communion of saints. We are all called to holiness, as the Second Vatican Council maintained.[21] Sanctity matters. Sanctity transcends the categories of this world. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places, and yet Jesus prays that they all may be one (John 14:2; 17:21). Both unity and diversity, both harmony and plurality, the one and the many, a reflection within creation of the tri-personal One. As Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote, the direction of evolution is that of unification, and yet union itself differentiates.[22] Diversity is a value. It need not be divisive. Given the diversity within creation itself, it seems that God desires diversity.

We can ask ourselves the questions. With what or whom do I identify? What or whom do I exclude? As a religious community, are we so turned inward that we do not consider the needs of the other? As a religious community, are we so turned outward that we individually and communally neglect our commitment to inner work? It may be in religious life today that the divide is not so much between liberal and conservative, old and young, female and male, but between those who are committed to maintaining a balance within themselves between inner work and outer outreach and those who too easily have set growth aside, between building both a spiritual community and an apostolic evangelization rather than one alone, between those who have given up and those who care for the future of religious life and its contributions, between cynics and contemplatives, between those who are committed to growth, continued spiritual formation, and those who absent themselves from the great work to which religious life throughout history has been called. Community does not just happen. It must be worked at. It is not easy work. It requires a lifetime of commitment to an observant life, to the other, to continuous personal transformation, to the brotherhood and sisterhood of all humanity as well as to care for the planet. The question is not whether we are

19. Marion, *Catholic Moment*, 16.

20. Taylor, *Secular Age*, speaks about saints who have inspired him and indicate to him that religion will not disappear in a secular world, 436, 728–772.

21. Vatican II, *Lumen gentium,* chapter 5. John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 310.

22. Donald J. Goergen, *Thomas Aquinas and Teilhard de Chardin, Christian Humanism in an Age of Unbelief* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2022), 75–78, 111–14.

divided but whether we are up to the task God is asking of us. Are we willing to say, "Yes, Lord, here I am"? To say, "Let it be done to me"? To say, "Not my will but Thine be done"? To become instruments of the Holy Spirit, for that is what we have been created to be.

I have spoken about two challenges: identity and inclusivity—a question of establishing boundaries and how porous our boundaries can be. After speaking about identity and intimacy, Erik Erikson spoke about the stage of generativity that follows upon a successful resolution of previous life tasks. Perhaps as we struggle within religious life, and in the Church, as we perennially do, with the stress that comes from wrestling with both our identity, who we ought to be, and the demand for greater inclusivity, whom we ought to serve, we set the stage for generativity. Identity, after all, has something to do with integrity, with who we say we are, what the Church asks of us, and inclusivity with both ministry, friendship, and compassion. Those who value inclusivity ordinarily would not consciously deny the importance of personal, communal, or ecclesial identity; and likewise, those for whom identity has primacy do not intend any form of exclusivism. How to live both values simultaneously with integrity is that toward which we seek the Spirit's guidance. Combined they can give birth. Could this be a generative moment for us?

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