The Origin and Development of the Doctrine of the *communion of saints*

Submitted by

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DEDICATION

The thesis is dedicated to
My Grandson Christian Conor Walsh;
For his poignant words of love and on life he brings to our family.

In the end, life is not about accumulation. It is much more than success. To be truly alive is to be transformed from within, open to the energy of God's love. In accepting the power of the Holy Spirit you can transform your families, communities and nations. Set free the gifts! Let wisdom, courage, awe and reverence be the works of greatness.
(Pope Benedict XVI, WYD08 Vigil)

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The priority of this study is to unearth the true meaning and goal of *communion of saints*. It is the last addition to the Apostles' Creed at the close of the eighth century as an extension to the Creed's Article (IX): *the holy Catholic Church*.[1] But as *regulae fidei* the doctrine of *communion of saints* continues to be ambivalent for many believers. It would seem paradoxical for a Church which gathers its community in saintly communion but without a clear position on how to explain the relevance or efficacy of this article of faith in relation to a one's spirituality or salvation. This thesis therefore endeavours to remove any ambiguity by restoring its authentic meaning and scope.

In spite of its late arrival, this study will affirm that the doctrine expresses a truth comparable to other articles of the Apostles' Creed and that it has existed from the beginning of Christianity. It is, however, not a precise doctrine and this study will establish that it is a conceptualisation of certain attributes of early Christianity. It is a complex reconstruction of a set of beliefs. This thesis identifies no less than four distinct yet closely linked elements that constitute its formulation. As such, how the doctrine contributes to anyone's spirituality is dependent on the level of significance a worshipper attaches to each of these in isolation or as a conglomeration of a set of beliefs at a given time and place. *Communion of saints* has therefore fluctuated in meaning and significance since it first surfaced as an expression of faith in Latin Christianity before the close of the fourth century.

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[1] Richard P. McBrien, *Encyclopedia of Catholicism,* New York: HarperCollins, 1995, p.75.

This investigation intends to show that *communion of saints* is more than a symbol, mark or just another descriptor of the Church itself. Neither is it a mere reflection of the essence of a universal Church nor should it be perceived, as is commonly understood, as a communion with the departed Saints in heaven. This study will articulate that it is a sublime crystallisation of the theology of the Church as a chosen People of God wherein God reveals himself of his love as the body of Christ. It is a commitment of the Church to communicate to the world at large as a model of divine love. This study attempts to recapture the message inherent in the *communion of saints* as a biphasic doctrine with vertical and horizontal dimensions. It is a missionary undertaking that actuates simultaneously these two arms of Christianity that are fundamentally Trinitarian. This understanding has serious implications for the contemporary Church in how it expresses God's self-revelation and self-communication to the world at large.

This study researches into the historical, literary and theological developments of the doctrine in order to uncover its authentic intent and scope. It purports to show that when properly understood, it is in the *communion of saints* that one identifies the Church's being and its *modus operandi* at which the departed Saints of the Church have been the experts. They have been prudent in the

service of the truth and are exemplary as models to imitate the love of God in the Trinity. It intends to show that as the People of God it is what Thomas Aquinas (1225-74), using Aristotle's reflections on humanity, states the aim of Christianity which is to serve "the common good of all on earth and a common life in God for all eternity".[2] This study believes this as the ultimate goal of the doctrine. It recognises that in a rapidly growing secular and changing world the real essence of the doctrine needs to be captured and restated in order to shape the consciousness of worshippers. In so doing the thesis responds to the specific question: how relevant is the *communion of saints* to the contemporary Church?

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[2] Francis Cardinal George, *The Difference God Makes: A Catholic Vision of Faith, Communion, and Culture,* New York: Crossroad Pub., 2009, p.9.

METHODOLOGY

The study will trace the development of the notion of *communion of saints* from the beginning of Christianity as understood and applied by the early Church Fathers before it received recognition as a universal belief in the Apostles' Creed at the close of the eighth century.[3]

The approach of this study is to examine critically its historical, philological and theological background in order to identify and extract the authentic message it embodies that can be scripturally verified. It will firstly explore the Greek cultural term *koinŏnia* and its adaptation in the New Testament of the Greek speaking Church as the precursor of the doctrine of *sanctorum communionem* of the Latin Church.

The study will present the information gathered from the relevant works of the patristic fathers as the first witnesses to their experiences of the communion in primitive Christianity. The investigation will use both primary and secondary sources from the second century to the fifth century when the concept of *communion of saints* attained a firmer footing as a doctrine in the local creeds. The study will also critically review contemporary published data on the topic from all sources emanating from main stream Christian denominations that can contribute in unearthing the original meaning and towards a fuller knowledge of this doctrine.

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[3] Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, The History of Creeds,* v.1, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1990, p.22.

INTRODUCTION

The *communion of saints* has never been a precise doctrine. It is the culmination of the Church's self-understanding at various levels in the life of the Church. This has favoured a variety of emphases, dimensions and interpretations.[4] It has therefore come under several criticisms from leading contemporary works. William Barclay in his exploration of the Apostles' Creed finds *communion of saints* for worshippers most vague because of the inherent literal, interpretational and doctrinal difficulties that make it an esoteric technical church term.[5] The work of the notable church historian Charles Heurtley's on the creeds also notes that different views had been expressed on the meaning of this article as it did not come with the certitude of the other articles of faith of the Apostles' Creed.[6] He is supported by J.N.D. Kelly who in his leading work on the early Christian creeds notes that the doctrine has fluctuated in meaning from time to time in the life of the Church.[7] Criticisms have also been readily forthcoming in more recent works on systematic theology. Karl Rahner, one of the most influential systematic theologians in the Vatican II era, writing before the Second Vatican Council, was reported to have remarked that as a doctrine it has been "little analysed, interpreted or explained". More forthright has been Elizabeth Johnson, the

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[4]Thomas Carson and Joann Cerrito, Joann (eds.), *New Catholic Encyclopaedia,* v.4, Second Edition, USA: Gale, 2003, p.34.

[5] William Barclay, *The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed,* Great Britain: William Collins & Sons, 1967, p.291.

[6] Charles A. Heurtley, *Harmonia Symbolica: A Collection of Creeds Belonging to the Ancient Western Church,* Oxford: University Press, 1858, p.146.

[7] J.N.D.Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, Essex, UK: Longman House, 1981, pp.389-397.

foremost feminist theologian of the last century, who regards communion of saints as "one of the least developed symbols in the history of theological explanation".[8] With similar vein is the comment from another writer who finds that *sanctorum communio* has been so neglected in theology as to merit description of it as a "sleeping symbol".[9] One likely cause of its ambiguity could have been its late arrival into the Apostles' Creed. It would be close to eight centuries from the beginning of Christianity to become an article in the creed of the universal Church. [10]   It is therefore reasonable to postulate on its intent, scope and relevance in terms of one's salvation.

Historically, since the Pentecost occurrence, the Church had yet to become a homogenous institution and was hardly representative of *Mat 16:18* which was the commission given to Peter whereby all the churches are to be united as one. Particularly in response to heretics, extensions of a creed had been necessary to reveal, unmask or reinstate a truth which otherwise would not have been adequately emphasised.[11] It may therefore be asked if the *communion of saints* was introduced to reinforce the *communio fidelium*, that is, the composite picture of the Church as a community of believers.[12] Was its insertion into the Church's Creed a defining moment in ecclesiology as it explicably, and for the first time, attempts to refine the Christian faith as a calling upon all the faithful to a

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[8] Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets: A Feminist Theological Reading of the Communion of Saints,* New York: Continuum, 1998, p.9.
[9] Robert P. Imbelli, "Friends of God and prophets: a feminist theological reading of the communion of saints," *Commonwealth,* v.125, no.18, Oct.1998, pp.24-26.
[10] Schaff, v.1, p.19.
[11] Franics Young, *The Making of Creeds*, London: SCM Press, 1991.
[12] Hans Kung, *Credo, The Apostles' Creed Explained for Today,* London: SCM Press, 1993, p.141.

commitment to sainthood?   Even though this precise phrase *communion of saints* is not used in the Eastern Church, in reality from the Eastern perspective, does it represent in the West the intimate sharing of Christians in the good things of salvation, especially the baptismal gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:16) and the eucharistic gift of the Lord's Body and Blood *(1 Cor 10:16-17).*[13] Is not then the *communion of saints* the West's exhortation of this sacramental communion with the Triune God and one another of the Lord's body in the Church?

Gregory of Nyssa (*c.*335-*c.*395) has written that Christians are united by the one same Holy Spirit bestowed at baptism. He uses the term 'cleave together' to describe the togetherness of the one good given in Christ, forming one body, one Spirit (Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary of Canticle of Canticles, Homily* 15).[14] Is the doctrine about Church unity caused by sharing in the persons of the Holy Spirit and in the Eucharist? Cyril of Alexandria (*c.*380-444) too speaks of the one same Spirit of the Father and the Son within Christians that commingles with God and one another *(Commentary of John,* Book 11). This intimate commingling is meant to be experienced in their marriages, family life, friendships, and care for others. In these ways there is communion with the Holy Spirit and the Eucharistic Lord they share intimately in the Trinity and thus enter into a bond that immeasurably deepens natural ties: "May you have communion with us, for our communion is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ" *(1 John 1:3).* Is the

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[13] Michael Glazier and Monica K. Hellwig (eds.), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia,*   Collegeville, Minnesota: The Order of St. Benedict, Inc., 1994, p.186.
[14] Glazier and Hellwig, p.187.

purpose of *communion of saints* to echo and emphasises in uncertain terms this love that binds Christians to one another that undergirds and strengthens all other reasons for loving one another?

Believers may also ask if *communion of saints* is a solemn undertaking on how Christians ought to live out their baptism both as an individual and as a Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Does *communion of saints* mean that all the good of Christians in some way belongs to and is shared with all, since charity makes each one's good common to all (John Chrysostom, c.347-407 in *On the Perfection of Charity; Rom 12:5*)? The Spirit's charity – as indicated by Ignatius of Antioch's (*c.*35-*c.*107) *Letter to the Ephesians,* No.5 and Paulinus of Nola's (353-431) *Letter Three to Alypius* – is about "the bond they experienced with other Christians whom they knew only through their letters or the words of others".[15] Is the intent of *communion of saints* to show this unconditional love for other Christians precisely or to all of humanity? Aquinas follows the Eastern writers like Cyril of Alexandria who would choose to preserve all the inseparable dimensions of the reality signified by the two terms *sanctorum* and *communio.*[16] Was it designed to keep this union together in our relations with others by sharing the Eucharist?

In the West, from the sixth century onwards, *sanctorum communio* continued to focus on the communion of Christians with the faithful who have died. Those who

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[15] Glazier and Hellwig, p.187.
[16] Glazier and Hellwig, p.187.

have died do not leave their dead ones but are more intimately with them, giving them the uninterrupted enjoyment of their presence which they could not give them before (Cyprian's *c.*200-258 *Sermon in Death* and Ambrose *c.*334-397 *Funeral Oration on His Brother Satyrus).*[17]   Closely related to this is the understanding of Bernard Clairvaux (d.1090) and Peter Lombard (*c.*1100-1160) that *sanctorum communio* is the Church's response to personalise the emphasis of sharing of 'good things' so as to mean the sharing of the communion or union with the holy ones who have died. Does *communion of saints* then represent an eschatological truth whereby the bonding uniting persons in God continues and immeasurably deepens after death through the communication of spiritual good?[18] Of special emphasis had been the mutual help Christians on earth and in purgatory give to one another by their prayer as proposed by Josef Jungmann and others at the beginning of the twentieth century. Was this the culmination of the *communion of saints* as a mystical reality? It is highly probable that these various interpretations, by no means exhaustive, of *communion of saints* have been part of the Church's focus at one time or another. But this study is satisfied that most of these probabilities are much later renderings that have made it a multifaceted doctrine, fluctuating in conjecture and meaning.[19]   This study purports to narrow its significance by restoring its original meaning at the beginning of Christianity.

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[17] *Communio: International Catholic Review,* USA, v. 15, 1988, p.175.
[18] "Lumen Gentium, Dogmatic Constitution of the Church" in Austin Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Washington DC: Scholarly Resources, 1975, pp.409-410.

[19] Kelly, J.N.D., pp.389-397.

This study proposes that the linchpin for uncovering its original meaning and scope is in the doctrine of the Trinity itself as defined in the Apostles' Creed. This study will insist it has been incorporated into the Creed to give expression on how the Trinity brings meaning to the lives of Christians. The doctrinal authenticity and integrity of the doctrine can thus be ascertained as a primordial concept of the early pilgrim Church. In this regard this study takes the view and establishes – which has not been brought to bear sufficiently upon worshippers – that the doctrine of *communion of saints* is the template of authenticity as any other article of Christian faith because:

> *(It is) necessary for salvation, in the form of facts, in simple Scripture language, and in the most natural order – the order of revelation – from God and the creation down to the resurrection and life everlasting. It is Trinitarian…expressing faith (in) God the Father, the Maker of heaven and earth, in his only Son, Our Lord and Saviour, and in the Holy Spirit.*[20]

In similar vein Peter Kreeft highlights the significance of the articles that constitute the Apostles' Creed. He states that each and collectively, they represent the Primal Truth about God and it is for this reason the words of the Creed are sacred words just as "God's material houses are sacred and so are his verbal houses".[21]   Philip Schaff refers to the Creed as man's answer to God's word.[22] In the *communion of saints* as all other articles of the Creed, a confessor

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[20] Schaff, v.1, p.14-15.
[21] Peter Kreft, "What's the Point of Creeds?" in Fundamentals of the Faith, Ignatious Insight, http://www.ignatius insight.com/features2009/plcreeft-creedsfotf-jun09/asp 7/7/2009, p.1.
[22] Schaff, v.1, p.7.

offers his/her intimate association with the liturgy and teaching of the Church which Aquinas asserts represent a solemn undertaking given under pain of sin or heresy *(Summa Theologica,* II-II:1:9*)* [23].

This study will therefore articulate that the underlying doctrinal basis of *communion of saints* can be defined and explained in the context of the Trinitarian faith which is the primitive *kerygma* of the apostolic age.[24] It will assert that *communion of saints* is a sublime doctrine as it is a concrete expression of the authentic theological reflection of the two great mysteries of Christianity: the Trinity and the Incarnation. It is a dogma where Christians are called to live and express the Trinitarian life in the likeness of the One-in-Three. To be a Christian therefore means being called to an interpersonal communion of the love identified in the Trinity. This study therefore takes the view that in the communion of saints the believer transforms human nature and individuality to a relationship, which is a communion that opens to others and   welcomes them into a life-style that is communitarian. [25] This study will propose that it is a declaration of faith in a concrete form as suggested by this doctrine which is essentially how the Church up to the fourth century understood the *missio Dei,* lived and handed it on as a movement before it became the object of theological reflection. Once, however, the reflection did begin, "the very amplitude of the doctrine favoured a

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[23] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Part II-II (Secunda Secundae),* Fathers of the English Dominican Province (trans.), http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/18755, 10/7/ 2009.
[24] Kelly, J.N.D., pp.165-166
[25] Fabio Ciardi, *Koinonia, Spiritual and Theological Growth of the Religious Community,* NY: New City Press, 2001, p.306.

variety of emphases".[26] This work then seeks to identify the content and character of this movement.

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[26] Carson and Cerrito , p.34.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF *COMMUNION OF SAINTS*

In a creedal form *communion of saints* first appeared in the fourth century in the Creed of Niceta (*c.*370-*c.*414) in Remesiana, present-day Bela Palanka in the Port District of modern Serbia [27] which is on the main highway between Western Europe and Constantinople, the then new Rome.[28] It is also present in the Creed of Jerome (*c.*342-*c.*420). The doctrine became an affirmation of faith in the Gallician Creed in the sixth century [29] before it received universal status from Rome in the Apostles' Creed towards the close of the eighth century.[30]

The *New Testament Greek Lexicon* notes that *koinŏnia* appears no less than 19 times and it translates Paul's usage of the term as 'fellowship' twelve times, 'sharing' three times, 'participation' and 'contribution' twice each.[31] It is possible to draw a close relationship between Paul's adaptation of the Greek term *koinŏnia* and its cognates for his house churches and its Latin derivative *sanctorum communio* (originally *sanctorum communionem* in classical Latin)*.* As Christianity became more distinct from Judaism, it became "more and more Gentile, more and more Greek, more and more attuned to the religious philosophical debates of the Greco-Roman world".[32] The Roman Church itself

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[27] A.E. Burn, *Niceta of Remesiana, His Life and Works,* Cambridge: University Press, 1905, p.lxxx.
[28] Burn, p.xix.
[29] Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church,* Oxford University Press, 1977, p.24.
[30] Schaff, v.1, pp.21-23.
[31] Thayer and Smith, "Greek Lexicon entry for Koinonia" in *The New Testament Greek Lexicon*, http://www.studylight.org/lex/grk/view.cg?number=2842, 01/05/1020.
[32] James D. G. Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*, (v.2)*: Beginning from Jerusalem,* Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmanns Publishing, 2009, p.31.

had been Greek before becoming Latinised in the fourth century and until remaining one and undivided, the Eastern Church had profound influence in the development of Christianity in the West. [33] Thus:

> *(The) East remained not only the cradle but also the womb from which proceeded the thought and spirituality that fecundated the West.* [34]

The flow of the strong influence from East to South Gaul can be ascertained from the ideas and language identifiable in the original liturgies of the Gallic church. It should be noted that the Western Church was not irrevocably destined to become a Latin church because it had a rich Greek past.[35] This was unavoidable as the South of Gaul was colonised originally from the Eastern shores of the Aegean. Its Christianity thus came from the same region as its colonization.[36] The Gallic Church therefore had a special contribution to make in the development of Christian doctrines which include the *communion of saints* because:

> *(In) the fifth century Christian Gaul displayed the most creative literary activity among the ancient provinces, producing works in the area of theology and scriptural commentary, homilies, liturgy and hagiography, poetry, and history. This flowering of literature extended beyond the Council of Chalcedon.* [37]

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[33] Angelo Di Berardino (ed.), *Patrology,* v.4, Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, Inc., 1988, p.4.
[34] Di Berardino, p.6.
[35] Maura K. Lafferty, "Translating Faith from Greek to Latin, Romanitas and Christianitas in Late Fourth-Century Rome and Milan", *Journal of Early Christian Studies,* 11.1, 2003, pp.21-62.
[36] *See Maps 1* and *2.*
[37] Di Berardino, p.4.

This blending of Christianity of the East and West was profound in South of Gaul before the Great Schism caused the division.[38] Until then and up to the eleventh century the churches of the East and West (the liturgy was also Greek in the West until the fourth century) had much in common. Together they functioned as the universal Church.[39] In this regard even though the notion of *communion of saints* could be seen as an entirely novel concept of the Latin West, it will be shown it owes its origin to the philosophical approach to life that had been embedded in the Eastern cultural setting of the *koinǒnia.*

[38] Kelly, J.N.D., pp.389-90.
[39] C.H.Dawson, *The Dividing of Christendom* , New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965

SOURCE OF DOCTRINE: *KOINŎNIA*

Paul's missionary journeys to Asia Minor cover parts of the Mediterranean, modern Turkey and Greece.[40] In his epistles Paul uses the Greek term *koinŏnia* on several occasions to evangelise the Christian *kerygma.* In Greek *communion of saints* is *koinŏnia bagiŏn* [41] or *koinŏnia tŏn hagion* to mean the communion of *holy people* in the masculine or the communion of *holy things* in the neuter.[42] By the free use of *koinŏnia* Paul has been able to familiarise the new religion he brings to the Greek communities when he visited Corinth around 50 CE. In simple terms Paul has been able to equate Christ with his community, the Church. It is a *koinŏnia* of a community of men and women who have been brought together into one Body and dwelt in by the Spirit of Christ.[43] He has been able to impress upon his community that the life of God does not belong to God alone. The Christian God is Trinitarian and this makes the difference for Christianity as "God's life is with us and our life with each other".[44] The significance of being in Christ for his communities has been that it removes much of the philosophical mysteries and any unreality which may have seemed to attach to it. An analysis of this profane and cultural term as the vehicle of evangelisation of the Good News of Christianity to the Gentiles should therefore

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[40] Paul's conversion at Damascus (Turkey) was in *c.*34 CE. His missionary journeys covered the main cities of Asia Minor and his first letter to his converts in Thessalonica was in AD 50. His martyrdom occurred in AD 50. (*The New Jerusalem Bible,* London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985, pp.1849-1850.).

[41] Barclay, p.291.

[42] Thomas, P. Rausch, *I believe in God: a reflection of the Apostles Creed,* Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008, p.142.

[43] Charles A. Anderson Scott, *Christianity According to St. Paul,* Cambridge: University Press, 1927, p.137.

[44] Catherine Mowry LaCunga, *God for us; The Trinity and Christian Life,* USA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, p.228.

assist in extracting the true and original meaning, that is, the Latin adaptation of the oriental understanding of the *koinǒnia.* Importantly it offers an insight on how Paul transfers the communities from being secular to Christianity. From a theological perspective, the Christian *koinǒnia* can be described as the self-experience of Paul's house-churches. As such, they have been witnesses of God's love which would eventually be crystallised and recognized as a doctrine in the West.

Greek Philosophy

Paul's converts lived at a time line when the Greco-Roman culture offered "a plethora of organisations, associations, and ways of making commitments".[45] Paul, who was conversant in Greek, would have been aware of the extensive use of the term *koinǒnia* by Greek writers to describe all forms of relationships which brought people together. According to J. Sampley, Paul would have recognised that:

> *(The) secular world offered the raw materials of community and commitment out of which Paul creatively fashioned his understanding of the way Christians should live together and comprehend their obligations to one another and to the world. When Paul received the gospel and recognized it as the power of God for salvation to those who believed, he did not receive with it a pristine set of categories by which the new life could be conceptualized. Refracted in the light of the gospel, the culture's*

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[45] J.Paul Sampley, *Pauline Partnership in Christ,* Philadelphia, USA: Fortress Press, 1980, p.ix.

associations and senses of obligation were transformed by Paul so
that Christians could understand their new situation in Christ. [46]

Koinŏnia did not at anytime signify anything specifically religious until Christianity adapted its virtuous contribution to society as its own.[47] The secular expression *koinŏnia bagiŏn* or its cognates was extensively used by Greek writers to describe various forms of relationships. It was regarded as one of the most beautiful words used in the Greek language.[48] It is beyond doubt that *koinŏnia* comes into Christian vocabulary with a rich cultural background. It has been a common word regularly used in all sorts of dealings between people. By tapping into the experiences of the catechumenate for their understanding of the term, Paul has been able to transform it into a religious phenomenon and in so doing he successfully indigenises his message of a new life in Christ with higher spiritual ideals. [49] As Stephen Chester points out a measure of indigenisation was inevitable and Paul and the Corinthians are no exception to such an enculturation process.[50]

The term carries with it a variety of relationships and commitments in Greek philosophy. The special ways *koinŏnia* has been applied in the daily life of the Greek's secular world need special consideration because of the Corinthian

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[46] Sampley, p.ix.
[47] Schuyler Brown, "Koinonia as the Basis of New Testament Ecclesiology?" *One in Christ,* 12 (1976), p.159.
[48] Barclay, pp. 291-299.
[49] Barclay, pp.291-293.
[50] Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth; Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church,* London: T & T Clark, 2003, p.213.

communities' exposure and their cultural consciousness to these considerations. The *koinŏnia* culture had contributed to a civilization recognised for its virtuous lifestyle before the advent of Christianity. In hindsight, with their life experiences, the Corinthian communities were in an advantageous position to make direct connexion to the *kerygma* that Paul has been introducing and to the ultimate transformation of these communities into house-churches.

Aristotle's (384-322 BCE) appeal to philosophy has been the cradle in a large measure for Paul's successful mission. For Aristotle wealth and health would have no value if people's souls have not been good because the soul is superior to the body. He advocates that the only way for us to realize our human nature is to realize our own divine nature, and that the mind is the divine element in us. By virtue of possessing reason we are capable of approaching the happy state of the gods.[51] In ethics, Aristotle also exhorts that the highest objective for men is to live their lives successfully. Further in *Politics* he develops the thesis of the realization of the activity of the soul in accordance with excellence whereby there is excellent realization of those capacities which are distinctive of human life.[52] It is in the height of such philosophical and cultural endearment of the Athenians that the virtuous applications of *koinŏnia* in their daily lives receive recognition for its vital role.

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[51] D.S.Hutchinson, "Ethics" in Jonathan Barnes (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle,* Cambridge: University Press, 1995, p.196.
[52] C.C.W. Taylor, "Politics" in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle,* Jonathan Barnes (ed.), Cambridge, U.K.: University Press, 1995, p.234.

Koinŏn words express various forms of relationships.[53] This has been to Paul's advantage to build upon this commonly accepted *koinŏnia* the Christian *kerygma.* More specifically are the social circumstances where this *koinŏnia* would serve as template to launch the Christian mission. These are categorised as follows:

Marriage relationship

Aristotle calls marriage a *konini* so as to mean a fellowship or partnership *(Politics 1334 b 33).*[54]   *Koinŏnia* occurs when two people take each other *pros biou koinŏnian* and commit themselves in papyri to share all life together *(BGU 4.1051.9).*[55]

Business relationship:

The term is regularly used in business relationships.[56] The inference is that when two people are in *koinŏnia* they are in a relationship and they are expected to pool their resources to work together for their common profit and common good.[57] Equally, when a man denies in the papyri that he no longer has any *koinŏnia* with his brother he declares that he has ceased his business partnership with him (*P.Ryl.2.117.16*).

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[53] Edmund J Hartman, "Koinonia-Communio in Orthodox Christian Literature from AD 200 to 325: A Theological-Philological Study", *Proquest Dissertations and Theses,* 1968, Wisconsin: Marquette University, 1968. pp.9-18.

[54] H. Rackham (trans.), *Aristotle: Politics,* v.21, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1977, p.617.

[55] Barclay, p.291.

[56] Christopher Shields, *Aristotle,* USA: Routledge, 2007, p.334.

[57] Barclay, p.291.

Education:

In the ancient world the women were entirely uneducated and lived in seclusion. In *Republic (Book 5, 466 c)* Plato (429-347 BCE) calls for a *koinǒnia* to be established which is a partnership in education for men and women that disallows any discrimination. Plato argues for a remarkable degree of gender equality. He is conscious of women's' potential and the contribution they can make by participating in the government of his city. Plato's vision and expectation are that this *koinǒnia* will deliver a common way of life with the same activities and opportunities where men and women will share equally the privileges and the responsibilities of the state.[58]

Social life of the Community:

Plato legislates for the occurrences of community life. In his *Laws* (*861-862*) he sets out how the 'dealings' (*koinǒnia)* and 'intercourse' (*homilia*) between citizens should be understood and applied including the handling of failings or injuries that inevitably are likely to occur.[59] He uses the term *koinǒnia* here to describe the relationship that results in a communal lifestyle by which people are bound to live together and attend to each other needs.[60] A good

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[58] Barclay, pp.291-292.
[59] Benjamin Jowett (trans.), *The Dialogues of Plato,* London: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952, pp.746-747.
[60] Barclay, p.292.

human life, he believes, is to have a communal life because sharing of a life with like-minded friends is intrinsically good in that such a life becomes more enjoyable and worthwhile than a life without friends.[61] Plato's view is based on the Stoic emphasis on humans as communal beings.[62]   Aristotle builds upon this most basic element of the fundamental concepts of ancient Greek society.[63]

Politics:

Aristotle's favourite expression in politics had been *koinŏnia* (*Politics 1252 a 7),* which he understands as a fellowship of people living and acting together in common unity. Aristotle is firmly rooted in the philosophy of nature by his famous pronouncement that "Man is by nature a political animal" which carries with it salient virtues of a political community.[64]   A state is therefore a partnership, i.e., a *koinŏnia* of clans and villages in a full independent life.[65]   Aristotle had also developed the concept of perfect friendship which is based on *goodness* where two people equal in virtue care for one another.This is the foundational basis of a community.[66]   In summary *koinŏnia* recognizes the natural capacity and tendency of

[61] Taylor, "Politics," p.234.
[62] John Reumann, "Koinonia in Scripture: Survey of Biblical Texts" in Thomas F. Best and Gunther Gassmann (eds.), *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia,* Geneva 2, Switzerland: WCC Publications, 1994, p.41.
[63] Taylor, "Politics," p.236.
[64] Taylor, "Politics,"p.238.
[65] John M. Cooper, "Political Animals and Civic Friendship" in Richard Kraut and Steven Skultety (eds.), *Aristotle Politics, Critical Essays,* USA: Rowmann & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005, p.69.
[66] Shields, p.334.

human beings to form a community in which the life of all is pursued for the common good. *Koinǒnia* reflects a virtuous single life wherein they all live jointly by merging their daily activities with one another's.[67]

International relationship:

The description of political communities as friends goes back to Thucydides' (455-395 BCE) Peloponnesian War. This Greek general and historian set out three understandings of international friendship: friendship as alliance, as economic partnership, and as a practice.[68] Thucydides (*3.10*) lays it down that friendship *(koinǒnia)* between men, leagues and between states depends on honesty of purpose and likeness of outlook. *Koinǒnia* here was seen as an alliance of people who share a common goal and a common mind and which are made for a common purpose.[69]

Friendship

Friendship as *koinǒnia* is also used to express the very essence and foundation of fellowship. According to the humanistic philosopher Gorgias (483-375 BCE) there is no *koinǒnia* if there

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[67] Cooper, John, M., pp.79-80; David Cohen, Law, "Autonomy and Political Community" in *Plato's Law, Classical Philology*, v.88, no.4, 1993, pp.301-307.
[68] Peter Digeser, "Friendship Among States: Obligations and Liberties. http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p39958_index.html 23/12/2009.
[69] Barclay, p.292.

can be no fellowship or no friendship. For the Greeks *koinǒnia* therefore implies a relationship of the temperate person with other men. The basis of this friendship is that each person should learn to share with one another and in so doing each receives more by giving to each other. [70]

Religion

Koinǒnia also has had a religious meaning to express fellowship with God. Epictetus lays it down "that even in the body, even in the world of space and time, the good man has his heart set on *koinǒnia* with Zeus".[71] *Koinǒnia* therefore means fellowship with God (*Discourses 2.19.27).* In the *Discourses* there is also a strikingly theistic conception of god that is different from the one familiar in Stoicism. It is god viewed as a *person* who sees us, speaks to us, helps us and to whom prayers can be meaningfully addressed.[72]

Foremost of the early Christian Greek writers was Origen of Alexander (*c.*185-254) who used the term widely in the profane sphere. He used the term *koinǒnos* to mean a companionship and partnership with other persons including that of sexual partnership.

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[70] Barclay, p.292.
[71] Barclay, pp.292-293.
[72] Keimpe Algra, "Epictetus and Stoic Theology" in Theodore Scaltsas and Andrew S. Mason (eds.), *The Philosophy of Epitectetus,* Oxford: University Press, 2007, pp.32-33.

By the term *koinǒnein* Origen also meant to share or participate "in a plot, accusations, injustices, persecution of another, works of darkness, and others' distress".[73] At the same time Origen used the term to mean to have communion or involvement with an object that stimulates ones' senses; the act of sharing a part of what one possess with another and to signify various forms of associations. Finally, and not the least, to have *koinǒnein* could also mean sexual intercourse both within and outside legal marriage. In this regard Origen regards the scriptural doctrine of marriage as a union or communication is a *konini*, that is, a mutual bond established between the "sort of wisdom where one consorts with it or takes a wife".[74]

It is clear in Greek culture the expression *koinǒnia* affected virtually every aspect of the daily lives of its people. In short, as Barclay therefore justifiably claims, it is a word of *togetherness.* Togetherness is the essential word as it always conveys the idea of *koinǒnia* which is fellowship for the mutual benefit and good in the widest sense of the term. [75]

Pauline koinónia

The leading Lutheran theologian John Reumann summarises the rich cultural

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[73] Hartman, 18.
[74] Hartmann, p.17.
[75] Barclay, p.293.

setting of *koinǒnia* by its extensive role in every sphere of the Greco-Roman society that would facilitate the Christian mission. His work shows that culturally it embodies 'common life' and 'common good' in relation to a complex of factors such as justice *(dikaiosyne)* and order *(kosmos).* He sees these as mutually fitting and beneficial *(sympheron)* for the development of friendship *(philia)* that is significant. A communal economy was often involved in contrast to private greed. Furthermore its supernatural alliance can also be identified in the Pythagorean communes (539 BCE) where their order comes from a higher cosmic authority. This too had a widespread Stoic emphasis on humans as communal beings. There were also the Cynics of the fourth century BCE who gave up their entire private possessions for a life as wandering teachers. In brief Reumann's investigation shows that the dynamics of *koinǒnia* refers to all forms of relationships and this is underlined by the Greek philosophy of *koina gar pasi panta* from Pythagoras (c.570-495 BCE) which is summed up below:

> *By the philosophers, notions were held aloft of a community where goods and possessions were shared in an ideal society or brotherhood, a community where all things (are) common to all (Pythagoras; Iamblichus, Vit.Pyth. 30, 168).*[76]

The blending of this *koinǒnia* culture – which is orientated towards a rich and idealistic Hellenistic view of life – with primitive Christianity that was traditionally Jewish, did not come automatically. No one talked about communion with Yahweh in the Old Testament. The theme was God's lordship and the people's

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[76] Reumann, p.41.

servant-hood to God. Every righteousness was an attribute of God and this worked for Israel's salvation *(Isa 46:13, 51:5, 6, and 8)*.[77] There was no apparent Greek-like concept of friendship in Israel. *Koinŏnia* was not used for Israel's communion with Yahweh but rather to describe the fellowship with pagan deities *(Hos 4:17)* or fellowship with an idol *(Isa 44:11)*.[78] Old Testament theologies do not mention the term or introduce other themes under it as a heading.[79] The closest equivalent in Hebrew is *chăbar* which means join together, bind or unite but even then this refers to an event rather than to being.[80] *Koinŏnia* words, however, increase in the Greek Bible of the Old Testament in the books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs and also in deutero-canonical works which came under Hellenistic influence in such passages as "share married life" *(Maccabees 4:6)* or "envy does not associate with wisdom" *(Wisdom of Solomon, 6:23)* or there is "renown in sharing wisdom's words" *(8:18)*. Hellenistically orientated Jewish writers like Philo (20 BCE-50 CE) and Josephus (37-*c.*100 CE) use the term *koinŏnia* in their works to describe the Essenes way of life for their Greek audience as the Qumran community understood themselves not in friendship terms but as a priestly covenantal community called by God. Because an ordered life and shared possessions mark their existence Jewish authors used the term for such groups as the Essenes and Therapeutae selectively in relation to

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[77] In contrast New Testament writers did not see this in such terms alone. The Christian has communion, fellowship, *koinŏnia*, with God the Father. Thus, Abraham is called the friend of God *(James 2:23*; we are the children of God *(1 John 3:1)* and we are partakers of the divine nature *(2 Peter 1:4)*. If Christ is the vine and we are the branches the Father is the vine-dresser *(John 15:1)* (Barclay, pp. 295-296).

[78] Reumann, p.42.

[79] Reumann, p.62.

[80] Reumann, p.42.

marriage, in describing Moses as friend of God [81] and in Israel where God the benefactor makes those in need as sharers *(koinǒnon)* in a company with the priests who offer sacrifices.[82]

As far as Palestinian Judaism was concerned, the term *koinǒnia* was not indigenous or widely adopted. Jesus himself did not use the term and hence it played no part in Jesus' teachings and the life of the early Palestinian church. Theologies of the New Testament mention the word only occasionally, then descriptively in connection with the sharing of goods and property in the early Jerusalem church.[83] The term was used once only in *Acts (2:42)*. In this context Paul can therefore be seen as indigenising the Christian mission by taking advantage of the Greek concept of *koinǒnia* that had infiltrated Hellenistic Judaism at points. Paul who spoke and wrote in Greek would have known its popular usage and he uses this most effectively directly or indirectly in his missionary journeys**.**

There is in fact a paradigmatic change in the approach being adopted by Paul in transmitting Jesus' mission and Christology from that of Peter who had been administering chiefly to the Jewish Christians. Paul uses *koinǒnia* as a concept of communal life rather than patriarchialism. This facilitates him in "crossing the boundaries from Palestine to the Graeco-Roman world, from Semitic to

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[81] Jewish sect of ascetics, closely resembling the Essene, settled on the shores of Lake Mareotis in the vicinity of Alexandria, Egypt, during the 1st century CE *(Micropaedia, The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, v. 9, Fifteenth Edition, 1978, p.943).
[82] Reumann, p.42.
[83] Reumann, p.62.

Hellenistic thought, from agrarian Gentiles to the urban centre".[84]   Paul's evangelisation of his communities was certainly not by way of command on how to live their lives but by *paraenesis* or admonitions consistent with a contemporary Hellenistic mindset. He motivates the growth of their virtues through fellowship *(koinǒnia)* but with Christ by his saving death; and participation in the Spirit by sharing in the gospel *(Phil 2:1).* There was therefore no sense of loss in the transformation but a sense of appreciation of existing values at a higher level. The converts saw their transformation spiritually more meaningful to their being.

Paul had certainly been instrumental in bringing the Greek term into the service of the gospel. In effect, as indicated by John Gager, the success of Christianity was neither a totally religious nor social phenomena. The key to its success was the combination of the two. Gager is able to establish that the sense of community that had pervaded early Christians fitted closely with the social status of most early converts. [85] Furthermore till the late fourth century Christianity was still found primarily in urban setting. The movement was singularly characteristic by the fact Paul strengthened the sense of community by the type of conversion he brought to Judaism which in his time was the only exclusivist cult in the ancient world. Anthropologically Paul's approach was focussed in bringing cohesion and stability to domestic life. It is probable that Paul was also aware that his evangelisation and its consequences could be advantageously and

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[84] Reumann, p.64.
[85] John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community, The Social World of Early Christianity,* New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1975, p.151.

significantly shaped by aspects of voluntary associations and the mystery cults that were already prevalent in his Greco-Roman world.[86] Having broadly discussed the role of *koinŏnia* from a secular perspective before the advent of Christianity the next stage is equally important to assess how Paul transformed a secular way of life into a religious phenomenon. This is possible by establishing the close correlation between the use of this term in Paul's epistles and the New Testament in the context of its contemporary Greco-Roman cultural usage in the same period.

The importance of *koinŏnia* in Christian terminology and theology can be gauged by comparing the frequency it appears in the Old and New Testaments. *Koinŏnia* occurs 4 times in the Septuagint: *(Lev: 6:2; Wisd 6:23; 8:18; 3 Macc 4:6).*[87]. By contrast in the New Testament *koinŏnia* and its cognates occur 19 times primarily in Paul (13 times all in his unquestioned letters, four times in *John;* and once in *Acts* and *Hebrews*). If related terms are included, there are 36 occurrences. When stretched to its ultimate limits by including passages where *koinŏs,* meaning 'in common' and the verb *koinŏun (*as in *Mat 15:11, 18.20)* are taken into account, a total of 64 occurrences are possible.[88] This totals to 38 occurrences, 22 in Paul's letters alone. At the same time not all the 36 involving *koinŏn-*terms are theologically significant as some of these place *koinŏnia* between righteousness, justification and reconciliation. Overall the term appears

[86] Chester, pp.213-220.
[87] Stephen Benko, *The Meaning of Sanctorum Communio,* London: SCM Press, 1964, p.79.
[88] Reumann, pp.38-39.

not less than 73 for the NT and 46 for the OT.[89]   Also worthy of note is the paradigmatic change in the understanding of God's Word for his people as construed from the Old and New Testaments in this regard. While the New Testament expresses fellowship or *koinŏnia* with God the Father, in the Old Testament and as previously alluded to, it is one of patriarchal authority. It was a command of God over his people.

The work of Reumann is particularly useful in this regard. He is supported by the renowned Roman Catholic priest and exegete Raymond E. Brown at the Montreal conference (1963) where a particular attempt was made to examine *koinŏnia* as defined biblically and as basic and informative for all Christians. They advocated that it should cut across many traditional lines so as to avoid an oversimplified picture of continuity and uniformity of the New Testament ecclesiology. Reumann's independent exegesis identifies the main Christian themes in the New Testament which are underpinned by *koinŏn*-words. His format is therefore adopted in the present study without, however, prejudicing the contribution of other major works wherever necessary that assist in uncovering the original meaning of *koinŏnia* and the bearing these could have had in the

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[89] *Koinŏnia* is used as noun 19 times (13 times in Pauline corpus and all in acknowledged letters and 3 in OT). As a verb (*koinoein),* 8 times (5 in Pauline corpus, 4 in acknowledged letters and 4 in OT);   as adjective (*koinŏnos*) 10 times (5 in Pauline corpus, all in acknowledged letters and 8 in OT); *koinŏnikos* as adjective: 1 (*1Tim. 6:18*, to mean generous) and none in OT. This totals to 38 occurrences, 22 in Paul's letters.

In addition there are also compound forms: as verb (*sygkoinŏnein)* 2 times in Pauline corpus and none in OT, as adjective (*sygkoinŏnos*) 4 times, 3 in Pauline corpus, all in acknowledged letters and none in OT. This gives a grand total of (38 + 7) 45 occurrences.

When the adjective *koinŏs* (or 'common') is added, there are 14 more examples (4 in Paul, all in acknowledged letter, 20 in OT) and if the verb *koinŏn* ('make common, declare profane') is added, 14 more examples but none in Paul and 1 in OT. The overall grand total would therefore be 73 for the NT and 46 for the OT (Reumann, pp. 38-39).

development of *communion of saints.* The main themes expressed in *koinǒnia* terms in the New Testament are reviewed below.

Eucharistic koinǒnia.

Paul restates the Eucharistic formula in *1 Cor (10:16)* in *koinǒnia* terms to which the people are most familiar. He employs the formula in Hellenistic terms to characterise sensible people *(10:15)* on the problem of eating food sacrificed for idols *(8:1, 4, 7-8, 10:14, 19, 25-30).*[90]   According to George Panikulam it is in the Lord's Supper where one experiences the true *koinǒnia* with the person of Christ.[91] The verses in *1 Cor 11:23-25* are embedded in verses *17-34* where Paul re-enacts the Last Supper as recorded in *Mt 26:26-29.* Paul proceeds to a new interpretation of the Eucharist in how this participation in the Body and Blood of Christ results in a new fellowship among the participants in Christ.[92]

Paul's adaptation of *koinǒnia* as 'participation' or 'sharing' in the Lord's Supper is central to the theology of *communion of saints.* Paul assures his community that when they break the bread they are in *koinǒnia* (participating or sharing) in the body of Christ. *Koinǒnia* means that by this sharing the community should be seen as proclaiming the Lord's death until the Parousia and as partaking

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[90] Reumann, p.43.
[91] George Panikulam, *Koinonia in the New Testament: A Dynamic Expression of Life,* Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979, p.20.
[92] Panikulam, p.29.

of its benefits and blessings.[93] Kevin Quast too mentions that the observance of the Lord's Supper should be seen as an ongoing proclamation of the death of Christ.[94] Like Quast, Panikulam too claims that the purpose is to emphasize the *koinǒnia* with the Son *(10:16)* and Paul wanted to set the concrete mode of attaining this fellowship with the Son. Thus the apostle wanted to interpret the Eucharist in a new way so as to impress on his converts in Corinth that this *koinǒnia* in the body of Christ is not exclusively Jesus' body sacrificed on the cross *(16b)* but is inclusive of the community in Corinth as it is also the body of Christ (*17b, 12:12-27).*

Panikulam is convinced that *koinǒnia* is essentially a participation in the vertical or spiritual sense. He draws this conclusion from the interpretations of the Church Fathers, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine (354-430) and John Damascene (*c.*675-*c.*749). Panikulam in *(10: 16-*17*)* states that the sublime goal of the community was *koinǒnia* with the Son in the Eucharist which has far reaching consequences on the horizontal plane resulting in a new fellowship and a new community.[95] Panikulam therefore summarises the Lord's Supper as the double *koinǒnia.* It is both the

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[93] Reumann, p.43.
[94] Kevin Quast, *Reading the Corinthian Correspondence, An Introduction,* New York: Paulist Press, 1994, p.74.
[95] Panikulam, pp.29-30.

participation in the expiatory death of Christ and the fellowship among the saved. That, he claims, is exactly what the Eucharist is in the mind of Paul. [96]

Finally, the Eucharistic *koinǒnia* is also of ecclesiological significance. Reumann identifies in *10:16-17* that Paul is moving his *koinǒnian* relationship from soteriology and sacrament to ecclesiology because Paul also emphasizes that there is only one bread. The emphasis is undoubtedly on church unity thereby encouraging togetherness among Corinthians with one another in the face of divisions between or within their house churches *(11:17-22). Koinǒnia* becomes the operative word with unity as the major theme.[97] In the context of ecclesiology *koinǒnia* can also be interpreted as one of exclusivity as *1Corinthians10* carries with it, as in the OT, the notion that one cannot participate *(koinǒnia)* in the table of idols or demons and that of Christ. As such in these passages the community of Jesus alone constitute the church and this occurs when the community celebrates the Lord's Supper. [98] He is supported by Raymond Brown who states that the sacred meal is eaten only by those who believed in Jesus. This was a major manifestation of *koinǒnia* and eventually it helped to make Christians feel distinct from other Jews.[99]

[96] Panikulam, p.20.
[97] Reumann, pp.42-43.
[98] Reumann, pp.42-43.
[99] Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament,* New York: Doubleday, 1997, p.289.

Raymond Brown translates this fellowship literally as communion, that is, the spirit that binds people together, or community which is the grouping caused by the spirit.[100] Importantly, for Paul this work of the spirit is the motif of his mission, so that for the sake of the gospel he and others can share *(sugkopinŏnos)* in its blessings *(1 Cor 9:23).* In spite of the emphasis on church unity, Reumann is ambiguous if the term church ought to mean only when the community celebrates the Lord's Supper or only because it celebrates Lord's Supper.[101]

Koinŏnia as fellowship in Prayer.

In four ways Paul uses *koinŏnia* to express his theology. Firstly, in the Eucharist, Paul symbolically achieves the fellowship by common participation of the divided Corinthian community. Paul is much influenced by the Stoic philosophy of the converts who see themselves as communal beings. He is therefore able to display the theological basis of the common participation in Christ in the Eucharist. The implication is that this *koinŏnia* also judges adversely any contempt against the poor *(1 Cor 11:22)* and equally any failure to live with sensitivity in Christian love and freedom *(1 Cor 10:25-32).* The fellowship (*koinŏnia*) should be the wholesome

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[100] Brown, R.E., p.287.
[101] Reumann, p.48.

mark of the faith, life and witness of the believing Corinthian community.[102] In *First Corinthians* Paul is calling his community to become saints which is that they become holy (*1:2),* a status Paul understands as being sanctified in Christ through baptism *(6:11).* This is a reality as having been washed or sanctified and justified the community comes to a state of *koinǒnia* or communion with God. Holiness is the response to God's call to fidelity, Christology and the continuing effects of soteriology.[103] The Standard English translation of the NT prefers fellowship for *koinǒnia* at *(1:9)* or as sharing *(KJV, RSV, NRSV)* or to share in the life of the Son *(NEB, REB*); some others prefer communion here.

Secondly, the *koinǒnia* in Paul's thanksgiving prayers to God for the saints can also mean sharing the gospel or faith. In *Phill 1:5*, Panikulam identifies the *koinǒn*-words six times where Paul expresses the depth of joy and certainty of hope in following Christ.[104] Ralph P.Martin too emphasizes that the entire epistle is constructed on this catch-word *koinǒnia*. The term expresses the object of Paul's thanksgiving to God which is more than mere practical help. He understands the term to mean the co-operation that comes towards the aid of the Gospel by the Philippians from

[102] Reumann, p.44.
[103] Reumann, p.45
[104] Panikulam, p.80.

the first day.[105] This co-operation or sharing on one hand is also implied in the message about Christ and *koinŏnia* here means a local fellowship in the gospel *(KJV)* or community of the house churches.

Thirdly, in Philem *(v.6)* Paul gives thanks for Philemon's love and faith towards God and all the saints *(v.5).* Panikulam interprets this *koinŏnia* as the 'active co-operation' or 'sharing' of the community.[106] It is not referring to fellowship but participation in faith*.* The concepts of hospitality and benevolence are the main themes of this *koinŏnia* with a wide range of interpretations caused by faith as a community: (a) contributions that spring from faith such as the Philippians shared with Paul; (b) communication of the faith to others *(KIV);* (c) the fellowship with other Christians and (d) communion with Christ. *Koinŏnia* here signifies a new realization of quality and mutual respect for one another that arises from a common sharing of faith. [107]

Fourthly, the *koinŏnia* in Paul's exhortations also signifies participation or sharing in each other's sufferings as well as in others hopes. In *2 Cor 1:7 koinŏnia* is a differently shaped thanksgiving prayer *(1:3-11).* When it states that we know you

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[105] R.P. Martin, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians,* Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, p.48.
[106] Panikulam, p.86.
[107] Panikulam, p.90.

share *(koinǒnoi este)* in our sufferings, you also share in our consolation. Here Paul's theme is one of consolation and tribulation which is also extended into future hope. Paul's intention is to call the community to a Christocentric life. To this he introduces his own personal experience of peril and rescue *(1:8-10)* and states that by belonging to Christ, the labours for the gospel may well bring afflictions. But he also assures them in *Phil 3:9,18* that through this sharing *(koinǒnia)* of sufferings and thus by becoming like him to his death they too will attain the resurrection from the dead *(Phil 3:10-11). Koinǒnia* here is for the baptized believer *(Rom 6:4)* and being a witness involves suffering as well as future hope.[108] This interpretation of *koinǒnia* is also shared by M. Suggs [109] and Reumann. [110]

Koinǒnia Pneumatos, Benediction in the Spirit.

Paul's letters regularly close with a benediction usually such as in *2 Cor 13:13* and *Phil 4:23: "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (be) with you (all)". Behind this grace he assures them the love of God and the *koinǒnia* of the Holy Spirit. The *koinǒn* blessing is Trinitarian. Reumann mentions the multiplicity of meanings to these exhortations that relate to participation in God's Spirit and gifts. Panikulam sees that these basic forms of blessings for life are

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[108] Panikulam, p.91
[109] M. Jack Suggs, ''Koinonia in New Testament'', *Mid-Stream,* v.XXIII, no.4, 1984. p.360.
[110] Reumann, p.46.

dependent on the interpretation given in *2 Cor1:21-22* because it is God who confirms us in Christ, has anointed us, has put his seal upon us and has given his Spirit into our hearts as a fulfilment of his promise.[111]

The message perhaps becomes clearer in Philippians *(2:1)* where Christ, love and Spirit all appears together: Paul says that if there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love this sharing in the Spirit *(koinŏnia pneumatos)*, makes his joy complete: because, as he stresses, they are of the same mind, having the same love. It is in the Spirit that we become partakers of Christ and become a fellowship among ourselves.[112] This common experience of *koinŏnia pneumatos* as the source of unity is also advanced by James Dunn.[113] Equally relevant is that this *koinŏnia* as the presence of the Spirit in the Christian community, makes it a living temple (*2 Cor 6:11-18).*[114] It is therefore an exhortation to purity in faith and holiness within the living Church. Equally, it also implies the opposite or *koinŏnia* of darkness which arises when mixing with unbelievers. In other words, while the presence of the Spirit in the community makes it a temple of God, it also safeguards it from the false *koinŏnia* to which Christians may fall back.[115] Thomas P.

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[111] Panikulam, p.59.
[112] Panikulam, p.74.
[113] James D.G.Dunn, "Instruments of koinŏnia in the Early Church", *One in Christ,* v.25, no.3, 1989, pp.206-7.
[114] Panikulam, pp.70-71.
[115] Panikulam, pp.70-71.

Rauch interprets *2 Cor 13:13* as the sharing in his Spirit which has a profoundly Trinitranian dimension.[116]

Koinǒnia in Congregational life.

Reumann claims that the *koinǒnia* principle in *Galatians 6.6* refers to four forms of relationships: (a) association or community through common participation *(Phil 1:5, 3:10; 2 Cor 1:7)*; (b) *koinǒnoi* as people who stand in a relationship to one another by common participation *(1 Cor 10:18,20; 2 Cor 8:23;Phil 6, 17)*; (c) *koinǒnein* as a verb meaning reciprocal giving and receiving (*5 Rom 15:27; Phil 4:15, Rom 12:13)* and (d) the compounds *sygkoinǒnos* and *sygkoinǒnein* as relationships or conduct on the basis of common participation in something such as the apostle's distress *(Phil 4:14),* grace (*Phil 1:7)* or the promises of the gospel *(I Cor 9.23; Rom 11:17).*[117] Ciardi's contribution on the growth of religious communities describes the experience of such communal participation as attaining the fullness of the *koinǒnia* of communion in congregational life.[118]

Reumann indicates that the ethical components for life together can be traced to the *koinǒnia* concepts in the Greek culture which

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[116] Thomas P. Rausch, *Towards a Truly Catholic Church,* Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2005, p.71.
[117] Reumann, pp.47-8.
[118] Ciardi, pp.305-315.

means to agree to share something in common or to have a positive value-judgement as well as obligations of guest-friendship. Later this was expanded to include peace, harmony, equality, and care for others as part of humanity and even the care for animals. Clubs and associations also had philanthropic goals in that they included honours and proper burials for members.[119]

Koinŏnia in Financial Support.

Paul seeks financial support for his mission in Jerusalem. Paul refers to the collection as *koinŏnia* thrice *(Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:13).* The clearest example of such support comes in *Phil 4:10-20. Koinŏnia* in the classical world can refer to business relationship or even financial support. It is thus not surprising to find *koinŏn* words used for support for the Pauline mission through money and personnel. The Philippians are in *koinŏnia* with Paul (*v.14*) in that they express their solidarity in pecuniary support. Pierre-Yves Emery states that to share in the needs of the saints in Jerusalem who are in poverty is their duty as they are partakers of the spiritual things.[120] John M.McDermott notes that for the first time the spiritual union among Christians is extended as the basis of sharing of material goods.[121]

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[119] Reumann, p.47.
[120] Pierre-Yves Emery, *The Communion of Saints,* London: The Faith Press, 1966, pp.10-11.
[121] John M. McDermott, "The Biblical Doctrine of Koinonia", *Biblische Zeitschrift*, v.19 (1975), p.222.

It is also ecumenical as an expression of unity of the body of Christ between the Jewish-Christian and the Hellenistic-Christian communities. This idea is corroborated in *Rom 15:22-33.* Panikulam interprets the indebtedness to material sharing is the result of sharing the spiritual possessions which in the context means sharing the Gospel of Christ. [122] Such cooperation is a *koinŏnia* for the saints in Jerusalem as it becomes the basis for responding to the call to *koinŏnia* with the Son in *1 Cor 1:9.* [123]

(f) Koinŏnia in Ecclesiology.

Except in *1 Cor 10-16, koinŏnia* by itself in Paul is insufficient to establish directly that it is synonymous for 'church' *(ekklĕsia)* unless it is considered together with *2 Cor 13:13* which identifies the community as created by the Holy Spirit.[124] When *koinŏnia* is *(ekklĕsia)* (i.e. it is characterised by the fellowship with Christ and the Spirit, participating in the blessings of Jesus death and being part of Christ's body through faith) it also entails responsibilities for mission, care of the saints locally and in Jerusalem, and hospitality and benevolence.

McDermott explains that Paul's foundation for his plea for order and love is based in the *koinŏnia* with Christ which the Corinthians were

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[122] Panikulam, p.57.
[123] Panikulam, p.57.
[124] Reumann, p.51.

called into by baptism *(1:13-17)*. This is not just for the present but also for the future. It is this certitude of sacramental union with Christ that enables Paul to express words of thanksgiving in the face of the disastrously split Corinthian community.[125] Hence there are hints of leaders in the congregations, e.g., leadership in temperament, sharing and doing good things *(Gal 6:1-6)* ; for shepherding the collection to Jerusalem in impeccable fashion; congregational delegates and the congregation itself electing its representative for the task in Greek democratic style appointed by the churches *(1 Cor 16:3; 2 Cor 8:19*) literally by raising the hand.[126]

In *Galatians 2:9* a different picture emerges on the application of *koinonia.* McDermott mentions that the term has the meaning of a legal contract in profane Greek where the handshake was widely recognized as the sign for the conclusion of a contract. He also quotes Munoz Iglesias who sees in this passage the juridical structure of an ecclesiastical, hierarchical communion.[127] *Galatians* 2:9 therefore offers a useful piece of evidence of the early Christian understanding of the churches in Judea *(1:22)* and Jerusalem *(2:1)* and Galatian *(1:2)* as sharing gospel-unity and mission strategy. Paul who is battling against interlopers and the rot in Jerusalem

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[125] McDermott, p.219.
[126] Reumann, p.51.
[127] McDermott, p.224.

(2:4, 12, 13; 1:6-9, 4:21, 5.2-4, 7-12) defends his law-free gospel of justification *(2:15-21, 3:5-29)* and his own apostleship and authority *(1:1, 15-2:14)*. Paul accounts how he went to Jerusalem, in accord with the revelation *(2:2)* to set before leaders there the gospel he proclaimed to the Gentiles *(2:3. 3:3, 5:2-6)*.[128].

Reumann is an ecumenist whose notion of church is based on unity of the truth of the gospel and not on juridical categories of the law or those of friendship.[129] In setting *kerygma* and *koinǒnia* side by side in the theological description of the church of the New Testament, Reumann therefore sees the church in such terms as a common faith experience under the word of God. But his exegesis of the church comes with profound criticism by another leading exegete Rudolf Schnackenburg whose alternative view is far more precise about Paul's exhortations in *1Cor 1:10-13; 3:4f; 12:4-6, 12f; Rom 12:4f; 15:5f; Phil 2:1; Eph 4:1- 6; Col 3:14f.* He asserts that they represent both unity and universality of the Church for it is the:

> *(One) God who has called all, the one Lord Jesus Christ to whom all belong, the one Spirit who fills all and unites them in the one Body of Christ, the one baptism in which all become one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:27f; 1 Cor 12:13), the one bread of the Eucharist in which all share.* [130]

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[128] Reumann, p.52.
[129] Reumann, p.52.
[130] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament,* UK: Burns and Oates, 1974, pp.129-132

In *1 Cor 10:17* Schnackenburg compares the common confession of the Jewish Lord and Messiah expressed in the Septuagint as the formula now transferred to Jesus Christ. It is that all those who can call on the name of the Lord is the sign of the seal given in baptism. Schnackenburg therefore stresses that it would be a mistake to think of the primitive Church merely as an ecumenical alliance of various denominational churches because Jesus intended only one Church and which is his own *(Mk 16:18).* Furthermore, the heavenly Christ possesses only one body, his ecclesia. Its unity therefore must become visible in every respect: in doctrine, profession of faith, worship and rule.[131]

Philip Rousseau, the eminent church historian, takes the matter a step further when he says that after barely a century and a half, some of its leaders were beginning to think in terms of a word-wide Christian movement, a single household as Irenaeus saw it. In spite of persistent regional tones, it is recognizably Christian everywhere and it ought to exhibit homogeneity of belief and expression that older cults were unable to achieve.[132] This is true also for the Gentiles and Israel is viewed as a branch and olive tree respectively *(Romans 11:17).* Although much of Israel is regarded as broken off some branches and the roots of the patriarch

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[131] Schnackenburg, 1974, pp.129-132

[132] Philip Rousseau, *The Early Christian Centuries,* London: Longman, 2002, p.86.

Abraham remain onto which Gentiles are now grafted. This history is seen as an act of grace whereby a *koinŏnia* of relationship of participation is possible in "the root and life of God's planting".[133]

In addition to the Pauline corpus, there are other New Testament usages of *koinŏnia* or related terms.   In the (Deutero) Pauline writings which are attributed to his pupils and not the apostle himself these rarely employ *koinŏn*-terms.   In his pastoral epistle Timothy *(6:18)* advises the rich to be generous and ready to share *(koinŏnikous).* In *(Ephesians 5:11),* like *Timothy* in (*5:22),* there is a warning *(mĕ sygkoinŏneite)* in the unfruitful works of darkness.[134]. More informative are verses from *1 John, Hebrews, 1* and *2 Peter* and the *Acts of the Apostles* which are discussed below:

Johannine School.

The book presents its narrative theology without the use of *koinŏn*-terms although there is some friendship language eg. *(15:13-15).* In *Revelation (1:9)* John describes himself as your brother who share *(sygkoinŏnos)* with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance.[135] In *John (1:2-3, 6-7)* the vertical and horizontal dimensions of *koinŏnia* presented by Paul and *Acts* find a fitting synthesis according to Panikulam. It is also a further

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[133] Reumann, p.53.
[134] Reumann, p.53
[135] Reumann, pp.54-55.

prologue to *1 Jn (1:3)* in that it sets Christ at the centre of a *koinǒnia* between man and God. Like Reumann, Panikulam notes this two-dimensional relationship calls for a response of witnesses, declaration, or proclamation by the recipients. To be in *koinǒnia* in the person of Christ is to be in relationship between man and God which translates into the relationship between man and man *(Ac 10:14,15).*[136]

Hebrews.

In this book, although *koinǒnia* is not central as in Paul, the writing mirrors Paul's theology in advancing the fellowship with regard to God or Christ and the fellowship with reference to our fellow human beings, otherwise put, vertically and horizontally. The author of Hebrews in presenting Jesus as the Son of God subjected to suffering and death to bring about salvation; he is emphasizing the real incarnation, i.e., that Jesus shared our human existence in order fully and effectively to work salvation. Equally important *Hebrews 2* along with *1John* show the close connection between the *koinǒnia* passages and anthropology. The closing passage in *Hebrews (13:16)* is itself self-explanatory this is not to neglect to do good and to share *(koinǒnias)* what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. [137].

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[136] Panikulam, pp.140-141.
[137] Reumann, pp. 54-55.

1 and 2 Peter:

In these letters, the *koinǒnia* is implied in Peter's reflection on a range of issues. First is his defence against misrepresentations at Paul *(3:15b-17)*. Peter defends his faith *(1:1)* against false teachers of the day *(2:1).* His thought is akin to that of *Philippians (3:10)* and *(*2 Cor*1:5-7)* on suffering where this *koinǒnia* with Christ also entails the sufferings of Christ. The *koinǒnia* has eschatological significance for the present and in the future and this is the basis of this exhortation *(4:15-19), 5:1b-9).* [138]

Acts of the Apostles.

There is only a single reference to *koinǒnia (Acts 2:42)* and is often taken as the starting point for New Testament usage with a variety of interpretations. Reumann notes Luke's use of *koinǒnia* as the springboard for the spread of the word and the growth of the churches. [139] The Church as *koinǒnia* comes from the Church Fathers and accordingly Reumann sees the traditional interpretation of *2:42* relates to four aspects of Church. life: teaching, *koinǒnia,* the breaking of bread (identified as the *agape* meal or the Eucharist or both) and prayers. Luke seeks to build communal unity across the levels of social rank and wealth.[140]

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[138] Reumann, pp. 55-60.
[139] Reumann, p.59
[140] Reumann, pp.59-60

Likewise for McDrermott the *koinŏnia in Acts (2:42, 46-47)* implies a unity of heart and spirit among the early Christians, a theme which recurs in *Acts (1:14; 2:46; 4:32).*[141]

Panikulam offers four lines of understanding of this *koinŏnia* in the Acts as: (a) the fellowship or fraternal communion with one another; (b) communion of the faithful with the apostles; (c) table fellowship or communitarian agape and (d) the communication of material goods which is a concrete external realization of fellowship based on faith. [142] Dunn relates the *koinŏnia* here to the instruments of catholicity such as the sacraments and creeds as the sources of unity in the common experience of the Spirit based on the setting of Pentecost *(Acts 2:1-4,17,33,38),* along with Peter's preaching of the word *(2:14-36, 38-40).*[143]

Overall the *koinŏn-*terms are little used as direct commands (imperatives) on how to live.[144] Paul is conscious of the Hellenistic virtuous lifestyle of the philosophers inherited by his converts. Phythagores, for instance, fashioned a communal order for the narrower circle of his apostles. They parted from their relatives and renounced personal possessions by putting them under the control of the

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[141] McDermott, pp.230-231.
[142] Panikulam, p.123.
[143] Dunn, pp.204-216.
[144] Reumann, p.47.

fellowship *(ousias koinas).*[145]   Panikulam's discernment of the three main

differences between the Hellenistic fellowship and Paul's communities in the Acts

exposes the undercurrents at play in the process. He explains that the theme of

friendship *(philos)* is rarely used in the *Acts* as compared to the semitic concept

of brotherhood *(adelphos)* which is frequently used. Secondly, friendship in

Hellenistic culture means the coming together of men but there is a difference in

motivation. In Christian *koinŏnia* the underlying motif has always been the

bringing together of God and humanity. [146] Finally, *koinonia* in *Acts* is something

more than the mere sharing of material goods. It has a spiritual foundation and

even if there is a literary contact with Hellenism, the *koinonia* of the first Christian

community surpasses every Hellenistic practice.[147] *Koinŏnia* is therefore used in

the context of the spread of the gospel, mission, hospitality and benevolence

towards the suffering and of hope. Paul's *koinŏnia* also makes reference to

financial sharing. There is also some use of the term for 'partners' in various

aspects of Christian mission e.g., in *(Philm 17)* or Titus with Paul *(koinŏnos*

emos) in *(2 Cor 8:23))* as 'my partner and co-worker' in your service in *(1:4),* and

Titus as 'co-worker and partner' *(koinĕn pistin")*.in (*1:4). Koinŏnia* therefore

serves to motivate and reinforce already existing *(Phil 2:1)* relationships. Paul is

clearly involved in an enculturation process where the task of *koinŏnia* is based

on faith as the reply to God's call. Thus, if one compares this to Jesus' disciples

who followed him and formed with him, *koinŏnia* could be seen as a family of

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[145] Frederich Hauck, , "Koinos" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, v.3, Grand Rapids, Michigan : Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing,1981, p.792; Panikulam , p.114.
[146] Panikulam, p.127.
[147] Panikulam, pp.114-115.

God in eschatological terms that supersedes natural cultural family ties *(Mark 3:21-35).*

Since J.Y. Campbell's original work, which is an extensive study of the evidence of the concept of *koinŏnia* in non-biblical Greek, in the Old Testament and the meaning derived in the New Testament many publications have appeared which cover a wide variety of approaches and interpretations of the term.[148] Campbell has suggested that *koinŏnia* in the New Testament conveys a uniform meaning of participation along with others in something.[149] H. Seesemann does not associate the term to social, juridical, economic or other profane senses but only as a particularly religious term with religious implications.[150] G. V. Jourdan interprets the term as granting or having a share and this extends from Christian unity of association to the entire field of the believer's relation to Jesus Christ.[151] A. R. George is profound in his conclusions about the term by his special reference to the primitive Church in the *Acts* and the Pauline corpus He is confident that *koinŏnia* signifies communion with God which is the heart of the Christian faith. For him the entire New Testament implies a strictly vertical relationship with Christ and thus the communion with God can appropriately be expressed only in metaphors such as *koinŏnia.*[152] In contrast Stuart Currie who is

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[148] Gŏtz L. Hăuser, *Communion with Christ and Christian Community in 1 Corinthians; A Study of Paul's Concept of KOINONIA,* Thesis, University of Durham, 1992.p.1.

[149] J.Y.Campbell, "Koinonia and Its Cognates in the New Testament", *Journal of Biblical Literature,* v..51, 1932, p.380.

[150] H.Seesemann, *Der Begriff KOINONIA im Newen Testament,* BZNW v.14, GieBen 1933. .

[151] G.V.Jourdan, "KOINONIA in 1 Corinthian 10:16", *Journal of Biblical Literature,* v..67, 1948, pp.119-120.

[152] A.R.George, *Communion with God in the New Testament,* Lonson: Epsworth Press, 1953, pp.257, 243 and 262.

critical of Seesemann's thesis reads it to mean as "a standing fellowship of interdependence or common concern, a social nexus".[153] Currie renders the term as participation and thus attaches a horizontal meaning, i.e., an 'alliance' of the brothers in Christ. McDermott approaches the topic from a historical linguistic perspective as presented in the Old Testament. On the basis of Greek thought and Early Judaism he sees Paul's adaptation of *koinŏnia* as the central theme of the Christian mystery. Again, the emphasis is vertical in that it is the union in love of God and man through Jesus Christ.[154] Schuyler Brown in exploring the patristic understanding of the term is satisfied that it is not possible to identify directly *koinonia* with *ekklesia.* For Brown, *koinŏnia* is used by Paul in an exclusively vertical sense" in such passages as Gal 2:9 and others.[155] Again In sharp response to Seesemann, Panikulam's philological approach leads him to assert that *koinonia* has both vertical as well as communitarian dimensions. [156] On the other hand Gŏtz Hauser's study of Schnackenburg's survey in this area indicates that *koinonia* has both theological and ecclesiological dimensions.[157]

There is sufficient corroboration from this wide range of sources in the examination of *koinŏnia* to draw some useful conclusions in order to characterise the basis of Christian living during the first century Greco-Roman world. From these can be derived the basic meaning and concept of *koinonia* as applied in

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[153] Stuart D.Currie, "Koinonia in Christian Literature to 200 AD" Thesis, Emroy University, 1962.
[154] McDermott, pp.219-233.
[155] Schuyler Brown, "Koinonia as the Basis of New Testament Ecclesiology?" *One in Christ*, v.12 1976, p.165.
[156] Panikulam, pp.20 and 140-142.
[157] Hăuser, p.13.

the Pauline corpus and in the New Testament before they were carried into patristic literature. These can be reasonably assumed as the genesis for the subsequent development of the concept of *communion of saints.* The dominant characteristics of the transformation of the *koinonia* from profane to sacral as a communion and which hold good to this time for the contemporary Church are identified below:

Koinŏnia is a life experience of unity.

As a community of faith and witness. It has a spiritual basis and a concrete expression of it in the *diakonia* which itself is a witnessing testimony for the salvation of all.[158] *Koinŏnia* therefore is about bringing life from God and of God. The witnessing of this *koinŏnia* is contained in the proclamation and love for one another. It has therefore been a reflection of life here and now, with each other, in community *(1 John 1:3; 7; 1Cor 10:17)* including solidarity in suffering *(Phil 4:14, 3:10; 1 Pet 4:13, 5:1)* as well as sharing of money and self for the needy *(Gal 6:6; Rom 15:27; Phil 4:15; 2 Cor 8:5, 9).* [159]

Koinŏnia is love.

This love is incarnational of a Triune God. Paul alone in the New

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[158] The term *diakonia* is used by Paul in *2 Corinthians* as service to the poor in Jerusalem. In general use d*iakonia* is understood as an essential element of *koinŏnia*, i.e., a fellowship fulfilled in the service of the Lord (Panikulam, pp.42-43).
[159] Reumann, p.61.

Testament opens his addresses with the threefold Trinitarian formula of the greetings of fellowship of the grace of Jesus Christ, God's love and Holy Spirit with the Corinthians.[160] It resembles the divine agape, ineffable communion of Persons in the Trinity that is to be "mirrored, shared and lived".[161] *Koinǒnia* grants the believer the life and love of the Trinity and uniting the believer to all fellow Christians in the same bond of divine love.[162] This love becomes the template for the Christian mission.

Koinǒnia is Christocentric.[163]

The Pauline *koinǒnia* is Christocentric as it introduces us right into the person of Christ. It is life in which Christ is involved *(1 Cor 1:9, 10:16, Heb 2:14)* in a Trinitarian relationship with the Spirit *(2 Cor 13:13)* and the Father *(1 John 1:3b).* It is not looking from the vantage point of God's plan for salvation and divine administration *(oikonomia)* but from the human point with God sharing the Spirit and by partnership with one another in the Church.[164]

Koinǒnia is the new covenant.

It is a new community originating from the death and resurrection of

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[160] Saviour Menachery, *Remembering the Poor (Gal 2:10), Pauline Preaching of an Internal Gospel,* Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009, pp.91-2. .
[161] Ciardi, p.217.
[162] McDermott, p.233.
[163] Panikulam, p.108.
[164] Reumann, p.61-62.

Jesus Christ, the synthesis of which is *koinǒnia.*[165]

Koinǒnia is communitarian.

In both the Pauline corpus and supported by the New Testament, the focus on the centrality of Christ by Paul was never used in relation to individual participation in Christ. All the Pauline references to *koinǒnia* are communitarian in content. [166]

Koinǒnia is sacramental.

The koinǒnia in Christ is not anything abstract. The Pauline explanation of the blessing and the bread as *koinǒnia* in the blood and the one body of Christ *(1 Cor 10: 16-7)* embodies a meaning with concrete and comprehensive dimensions.[167]

Koinǒnia is ecclesiological.

The early and important aspect of the Church is that it is united in faith and witness of life underpinned by baptism and the Lord's Supper. Believers share in the results of Christ's death as they all share in one bread and are one body, because they are 'in Christ' by baptism. It is a communion created by the Holy Spirit.[168] Such a sharing of life humanly and spiritually can be appreciated as an

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[165] Panikulam, p.129.
[166] Menachery, p.88.
[167] Menachery, p.89.
[168] Reumann, p.61

adaptation of Plato's propagation of community and social life in Greek culture.

Koinǒnia is ecumenical.

Koinǒnia implies intercommunion between communities in that Pauline, Johnannine, Petrine and other Christians found broad agreement in Christology (incarnation, death and resurrection); the Spirit (gifts of the Spirit in baptism); access to the Father and at the end the life God intends for those who have believed in the bible; agreements on the necessity of faith, mission, sharing with each other and doing the good for those in need. All these constitute a shared fellowship. The Christian *koinǒnia* therefore crosses all cultural and social boundaries with "new emphases on solidarity with suffering, the poor and human needs".[169]

Koinǒnia is a theological vision.

It is a calling through God the Father into the *koinǒnia* of his Son (*1 Cor 1:9*). God is the agent of the Christian call. The purpose of the call is to be in communion with the Son.[170] The vision deals with God, Christology, the Spirit, salvation, the life in Christ, in community around the word of God, especially encountered around baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is also a human response

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[169] Reumann, p.63
[170] Menachery, p.89.

particularly with material possessions for those who teach and those in need which is in keeping with the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus and Thucydides.

Rausch thus sees the Church as *koinǒnia* which is an essential element of its nature. He arrives at this conclusion from its usage in the New Testament. His exegesis of *koinǒnia* notes its use in a soteriological sense to mean the communion of the redeemed with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.[171] Rausch describes the sharing or participation in the life of Christ comes from God as a gift. He asserts that God is faithful, and by him all are called to fellowship *(koinǒnia)* with his Son, Jesus Christ their Lord *(1 Cor 1:9)*. For him this communion in Christ takes place through sharing *(koinǒnia)* in the gospel *(Phil 1:5),* in faith *(Phlm 6),* in the sufferings of Christ *(Phil 3:10; 2 Cor 1:7)*, and his Spirit *(2 Cor 13:13). Koinǒnia* has therefore a profoundly Trinitarian dimension. Thus, at the end of 2 Corinthians Paul greets the community with a threefold benediction so that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his love of God and the fellowship *(koinǒnia)* of the holy Spirit be with all his followers *(2 Cor 13:13; cf. Phil 2:1).* Similarly the author of 2 Peter, using particularly strong language, says that through God's promises Christians come to share *(koinǒnia)* in the divine nature*. (2 Pet 1:4:4).*[172] Rausch's conclusion is clear. *Koinǒnia* is more than mere fellowship. It is participation in the divine life which itself is a communion of Father, Son, and Spirit. Rausch therefore understands the

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[171] Rausch, *Towards a Truly Catholic Church*, p.70.
[172] Rausch, *Towards a Truly Catholic Church,* p.71.

koinŏnia with a sacramental dimension. It is communion symbolised and effected by the rituals of baptism and Eucharist. [173] Accordingly, Saviour Menachery is able to conclude that in Paul, *koinŏnia* is a unique, multi-dimensional actualisation of a relationship between believers and Jesus Christ and the believers themselves.[174] It is from this Hellenistic *koinŏnia* of community, commitment and obligation Paul had been able to translate culturally his *kerygma* Christ.

Sub-apostolic koinŏnia

For the sub-apostolic Fathers who inherited Paul's house-churches it would seem unnecessary for them to develop a new doctrine such as the *communion of saints* in order for the Church to seek and emphasize community awareness which was already being lived out as part and parcel of the daily life of the newly baptized. The immediacy of their mission had been to instil and encourage the new spirituality in Christ for the kingdom of God is near (*Mk 1:15).* The mission was essentially eschatological and based on the mistaken belief that the end time was imminent.[175] In fact the Acts of the Apostles shows that it took the Apostolic Church a long time to realize that there was to be a time of mission, a period of the Church between ascension and parousia [176] Thus the emphasis on *koinŏnia* was to bring to bear the sacramental efficacy that causes the holiness of

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[173] Rausch, *Towards a Truly Catholic Church,* p.7.
[174] Menachery, p.90.
[175] Gager, pp.39-56.
[176] Robert F. Taft, "Toward a Theology of the Christian Feast" in Thomas J. Fisch (ed.), *Primary Readings on the Eucharist,* Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2004, p.31.

Christians.[177] Even as late as the fourth century, Gregory of Nyssa (c.335-394) expressed the understanding of *koinŏnia* of the Church Fathers as the connection of man with God-head (Deity) in the Eucharist so that by the communion *(koinŏnia)* with the Deity humanity may be deified (*Oratio Catechetica 37).*[178] In the partitive or descriptive sense he was following Peter:

> *Thus he has given us these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants in the divine nature (2 Pet 1: 4).*

The subapostolic writers also used this *koinŏnia* in a narrow sense to distinguish Christians from others based on their behaviour conducive to their faith in God. Ignatius of Antioch used the term three times as an adverb to refer to common or public action of Christians in the Church including ministering and administering of a common Church fund. In the second century in his Epistle to Diognetus he referred to the things in common as Christians and nothing more.[179] Justin Martyr (d. c.165) in his Dialogue with Trypho identified the commonality of Christians in their liberality as a contrast to the Jewish exclusiveness. Also, in his description of the Eucharist, he desired that Christians exercise a common understanding when they refrain from certain kinds of food. [180] In Asia Minor, it is probable

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[177] Benko, p.72.

[178] John R. Willis (ed.), *The Teaching of the Church Fathers*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1966, p.453.

[179] "The Letter to Diognetus", Handbook of Patrology, Section 2:The Apologists of the Second Century, http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/tixeront/section1-2.html#diognetus, 21/12/2009..

[180] MPG (J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, Paris, 1857-66), 6, 472

Irenaeus (Against Heresies, 1.i.18) used it in a creedal form which is parallel to (2 Pet 1:4) how Christians come to share in common the divine nature of Jesus. [181]

From a faith perspective, especially in the course of the first three centuries, *koinŏnia* would focus on the vertical relationship with God. In broad terms, arising from the patristic writings, *koinŏnia* was understood as a relationship that would take five forms:

(a) It was relationship of oneness or communion of God the Father and the Son Jesus (*Athenagoras*, a second century Christian apologist, in *Legatio pro Christianis 12).* [182] Gregory of Nysa too spoke in terms of a *koinŏnia* which was a communion of man with the Godhead or Diety in the Eucharist whereby humanity may be deified *(Oratio Catechetica 37).*[183]

(b) As a marital relationship a man sinned if he married a second time even though his wife was dead. The reasoning was that *koinŏnia* in a strictest sense was a union of flesh with flesh that cannot be dissolved *(Athenagors, pro Christianis 33).* [184]

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[181] MPG 7.
[182] Willis, pp.325- 326.
[183] Willis, p.453.
[184] Willis, p.488.

(c) *Koinǒnia* of the Church as Eucharistic fellowship. Citing from Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl. V 16.10*) an anonymous writer against the Montanists stated that they were expelled from the Church and barred from communion *(koinǒnia).* [185] Thus the fellowship of the Church would therefore come through the Eucharist. Likewise Origen *(In Jer.Hom.XII 5)* writes that after sin one should ask for communion *(koinǒnia).* [186] Thus, as Athanasius states, it is necessary to walk by the standard of the saints and the fathers and imitate them because he is certain that any departure from them would make them "aliens from their communion *(koinǒnia)" (Ep. Ad Dracontium 4).*[187]

(d) *Koinǒnia* is participation in the Eucharist. Thus Basil stated that all those who live alone in the desert, where there is no priest, should take the communion *(koinǒnia)* at home by themselves *(Ep.93),* Cyril of Jerusalem declared: "Do not sever yourselves from the communion *(koinǒnia)* of the holy mysteries".[188] *Koinǒnia* therefore meant to communicate (receive the sacraments). For example, after you have communicated *(koinǒnia)* of the body of Christ, proceed also to the cup of his blood *(Catech.5)* [189] Likewise, Palladius stated that one should never give up the Church, that is,

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[185] MPG 20.
[186] MPG 13, 256.
[187] Benko, p.81
[188] Benko, p.81.
[189] Edward Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem,* London: Routledge, 2000, p.187.

never stay away from the communion *(koinŏnia)* of Christ. *(Lausiaca 19-20).* [190]

(e) Based on Palladius *(Hist. Laus. 20)* [191] *koinŏnia* could also refer to the act *(koinŏnia)* of giving and receiving the Eucharist.Suffice to mention at this juncture, from historical and theological perspectives there would have been several salient challenges for a fuller development to express the implication of a Christian *koinŏnia* as comprising both the vertical and horizontal relationships. Until post Nicea (325 CE) and Chalcedon (451 CE) when the issue of two natures of Christ was settled it would have been improbable to postulate such a doctrine. In spite of the theological ambivalence, in practice no doubt there was a close fellowship or brotherhood amongst the early Christian faithful. As Henry Swete, church historian at the turn of the last century, points out that even though *sanctorum communion* is scarcely found before the fourth century nonetheless the idea expressed by it is one of the most primitive and universal of Christian conceptions.[192] This absence of expression in literature should therefore not be seen as an absence of brotherhood or fellowship. Swete is certain that from the beginning the Church was inspired with the consciousness of possessing a common faith and life, common

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[190] MPG 34, 1009.
[191] MPG 34, 1009.
[192] Henry Barclay Swete, *The Holy Church: The Communion of Saints*, London: Macmilan, 1919, p.154.

interests, and brotherly love. He remarks:

The mother church at Jerusalem practiced at first something which approached to a community of goods; and although this experiment was not altogether successful, and does not seem to have been extended to other Christian societies, the thought of the Church as a brotherhood, involving new relationships and obligations, was general wherever the faith made its way. The Christians of the sub-apostolic age had their limitations and imperfections, but the spirit of fellowship was as strong among them as it had been in apostolic days. [193]

Such a fellowship or *koinŏnia* is demonstrated in the letter of Clement of Rome who begins with a tribute to the church of Corinth by enlarging on its magnificent hospitality to all brother Christians who visited as well as their "insatiable yearning to do good, their unceasing intercessions for the brotherhood (and their) tender sympathy with weak or fallen brethren".[194] Likewise Tertullian (c.160-225) makes note of the distinguishing feature of the Christian community:

There are those who look upon the work of love as a brand which marks Christians with a distinctive character: see, they say, how they love one another – and how ready they are to die for one another – for the heathen are more ready to kill others than to die for themselves (Apol. 39). [195]

Another apologist, Minucius Felix (160-250 CE) makes this remark of the early Christians as follows:

[193] Swete, p.154.
[194] Clement, Letter to the Corinthians, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1010.htm, 3/17/2009.
[195] Swete, p.155.

(They) know one another …by certain marks and sign, and they love one another almost before they become known (Minucius Felix, 9). [196]

Lucian of Antioch (c.240) from Asia Minor during the second century offers a comprehensive picture of how the Christians of Alexandria cared for their brethren in time of pestilence:

Most of the brethren, of their exceeding love and brotherly kindness, did not spare themselves, but visited the sick, regardless of the risk; diligently visiting upon them, and tending them for Christ's sake, they gladly shared their death… In this manner the best of our brethren left us, and a death of this kind, encountered because of great pity and strong faith, was felt not to fall short of martyrdom. The heathen, on the other hand, drove the sick from the moment the symptoms appeared, and fled from their dearest, casting them down in the streets when already half-dead; as for the dead, they threw them out like refuse, without burial, in their endeavour to escape from the contagion (Eus.H.E vii/22) [197]

It is apparent the Church had distinguished itself from the beginning by this spirit of fellowship. Paul certainly helped Christians to conceptualize their relation to one another and their goals. It was not a perfectly bonded community. Even though it was fragile and precarious, the conditions necessary to its foundations, namely good faith and singleness of purpose, fundamental to its continuation of unity and equality were religiously fostered [198] These became the Christian

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[196] Swete, p.155.
[197] Swete, p.157.
[198] Sampley, p.106.

mode of life and, given the time, this koinŏnia would mature into a doctrine that would underwrite the two great commandments of Jesus: to love your God and your neighbour as yourself (Mat 22:38-39).
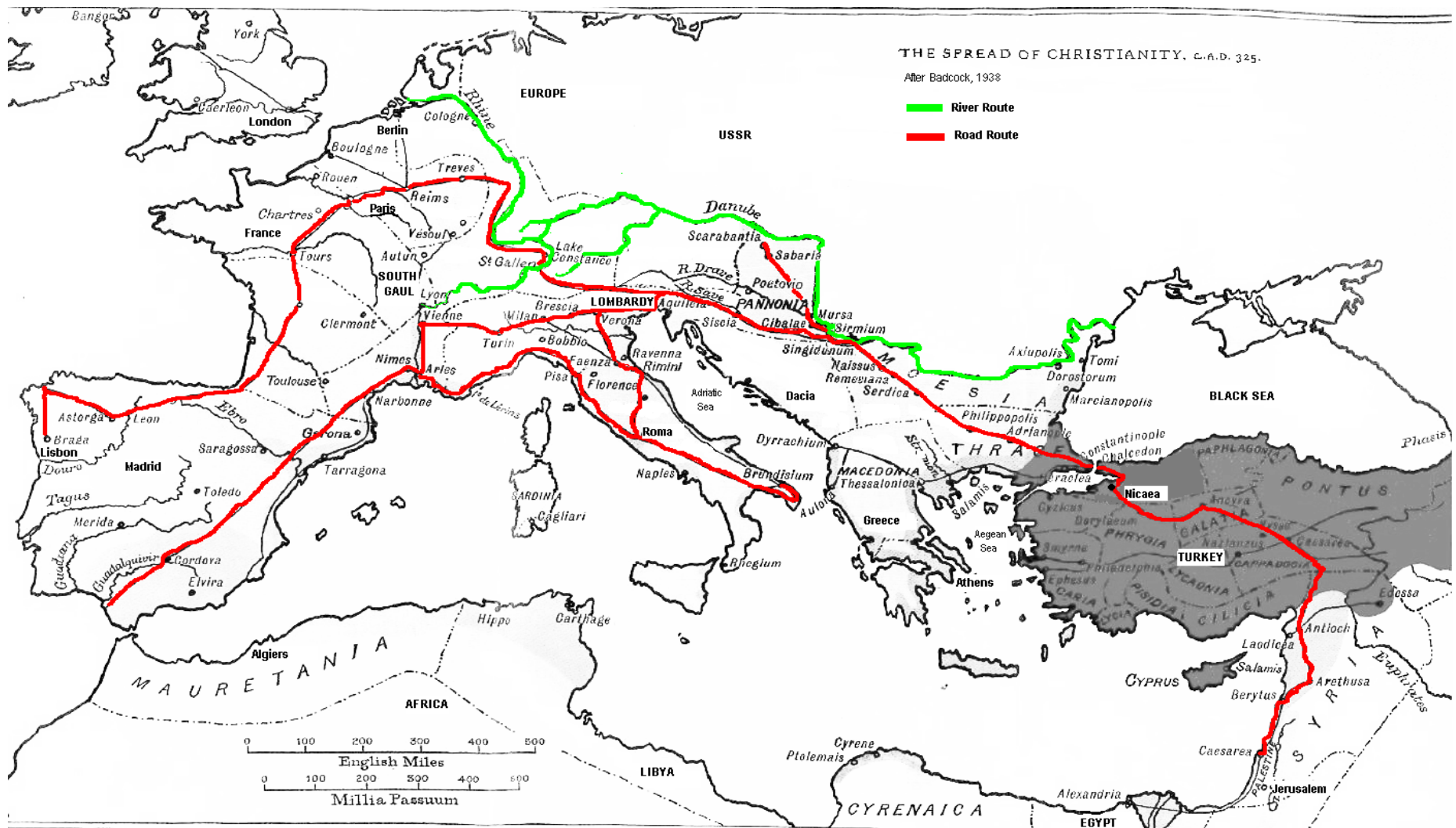
FROM *KOINÕNIA* TO *SANCTORUM COMMUNIO*

In broad terms several studies have previously suggested, especially Henry
Barclay Swete (1919), F.J.Badcock (1938); Stephen Benko (1964); Pierrre-Yves
Emery (1966); William Barclay (1967); J.N.D Kelly (1981) and Nicholas Ayo
(1989) that *communion of saints* owes its root to the Greek term *koinŏnia* in the
first centuries of Eastern Christianity. It has also been suggested that the idea of
the *communion of saints* although may be Eastern the form itself is more likely
Western.[199] A fuller picture is only possible when its historical beginning is
considered in the light of the corroboration available in the Pauline corpus. This
has special significance in the development and understanding of the doctrine as
secular philosophy is used as the launching pad of Christianity. *Maps 1-2*
illustrates the route by which Christianity made its way from Asia Minor either by
way of the Black Sea, up the Danube or by road.[200]

It has already been shown that in ecclesiastic Greek *koinŏnia* had been primarily
sacramental. It was fundamental to Christian practice and worships that from the
beginning of Christianity and has continued to date, but the Eastern tradition did
not see the necessity to define or proclaim the scope of sacrament in a creedal
form. In the West, *sanctorum communionem* (Latin) or *communion of saints* in
the vernacular would be seen as a move to capture, share and extend beyond a
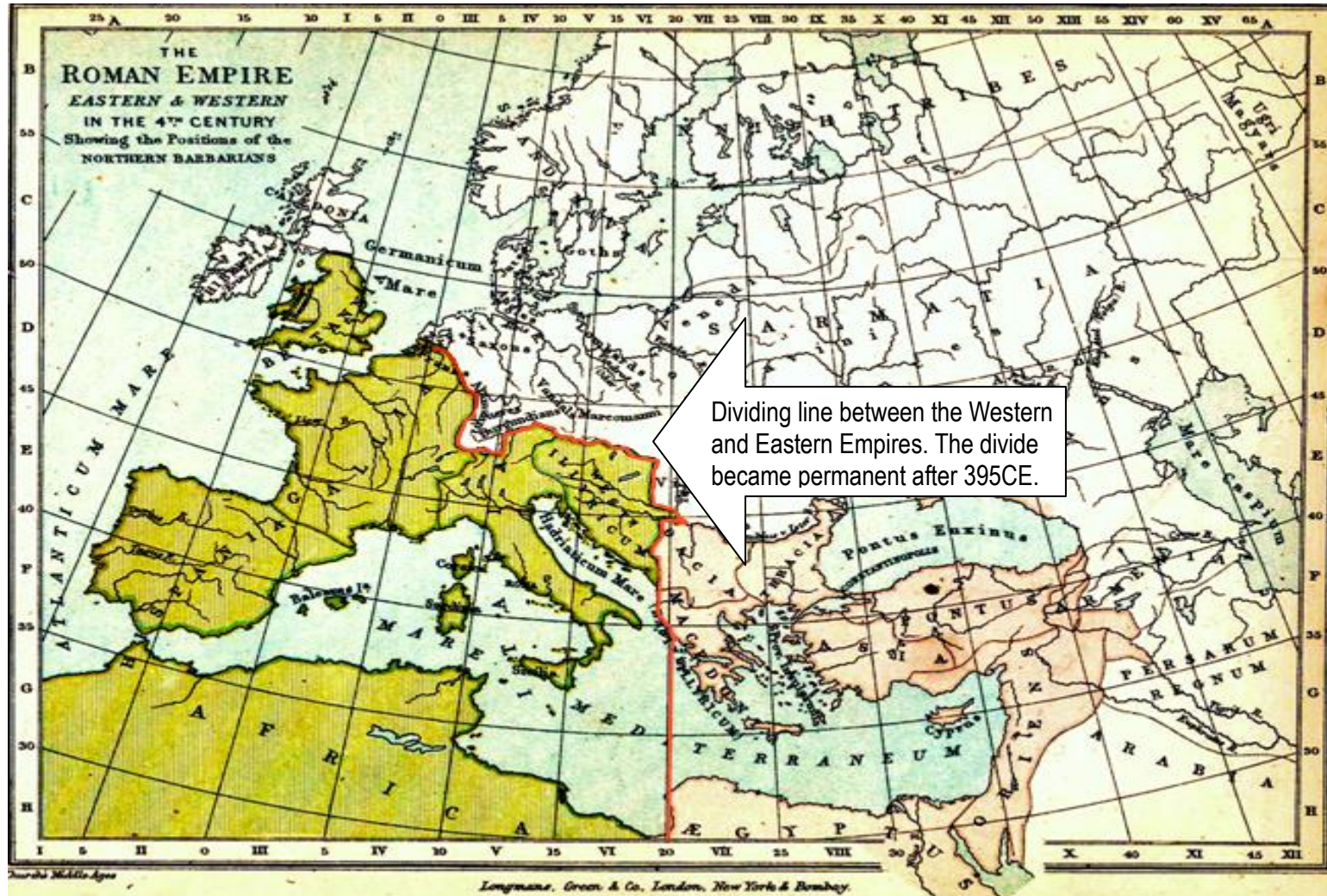
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[199] Benko, p.64.
[200] F.J.Badcock, *The History of the Creeds,* New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938, p.74..

Map 1: *The Route of the spread of Christianity*, adapted after Badcock, 1938

Map 2: *The Eastern and Western sectors of 4ᵗʰ Century Roman Empire* (Longmans, Green & Co. London).

Dividing line between the Western and Eastern Empires. The divide became permanent after 395CE.

theology that was already well entrenched in the East. Its origin can be traced to the Pauline church in scope and content. The writings of the Fathers of the Church from Ignatius (c.35-c.107) to Augustine (354-430) support this hypothesis.

This investigation identifies no less than four distinct elements constituted the *communion of saints* at one time or another. Three of these have had direct correspondence with the Greek *koinŏnia: sancta* (sacrament); *sancti* (saints) and *communio (koinŏnia).* There is also a fourth element, the *Saints* (who carry the prefix *St.* before their names) of the Church who had departed from this world. This gained popular devotion in the medieval Church. This study will propose that the Saints were not directly related to the original development of the doctrine.

Sancta

The Latin term *sancta* or *sanctum* is derived from *sanctus* to mean "hallowed, holy, sacred, and inviolable".[201] Its root can be traced to the Hebrew term *qadosh* in the Old Testament which is 'holy' in English and denotes God's total separateness and his mysterious otherness. The eminent German Lutheran theologian and scholar of comparative *religion* Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) in theories of religion defines holiness as 'numinous power' which means 'Wholly Other' and this is the fundamental characteristic of what is religious. It

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[201] *Cassel's Latin Dictionary,* New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1968.

distinguishes the sacred from the profane.[202] Gail Ramshaw affirms that in referring to God as 'the Holy One' the Hebrew tradition uses the adjective as a circumlocution for the name of God. [203] *Sanctus* is therefore essentially anything made sacred by religious consecration. In the New Testament the concept of holiness or *sanctus* becomes profound when examined in terms of the Old Testament readings especially *Isaiah 6:1-13* and *Psalm 118:2.* Primitive Christianity which begins with Jewish converts understood that holiness belongs to God; thus the word not only expresses absolute purity but also power and energy. Everything connected with him and his cult is called holy. No person or thing is holy in itself but through a relationship with God. This holiness is conferred by God alone which transforms believers into holy ones *(hagios)* usually translated as saints.[204] The theological dilemma with the notion of holiness is that the holy God also seeks fellowship with his human creation living in a fallen world and this has implications for humanity:

> *The root idea of holiness is that of "separation" or "withdrawal". It is*
> *a divine quality, part of the intrinsic nature of God, but absent from*
> *a fallen world, perhaps best described as "alieness" in a religious or*
> *divine sense. The basic theological problem is that the holy God*
> *desires to have fellowship with sinful humans living in a fallen*
> *world. Since God cannot become less holy in order to fellowship*

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[202] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of Holy,* Australia: Penguin Books, 1959, pp.19-22.
[203] Gail Ramshaw, "Wording the Sanctus, A Case Study in Liturgical Language", *Worship,* v.77, no. 4, 2003, pp.325-340;
www.naal-liturgy.org/seminars/language/ramshaw.pdf.p.4-5, 22/7/2009.
[204] Walter Elwell (ed.), *The Concise Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, London: Marshall Pickering, 1991, pp.225-226.

with humans, they must become more holy ("sanctified"); once gained, holiness may be lessened or contaminated by contact with various proscribed substances ("uncleanliness") and by feeling, thinking, or acting in ways that God has forbidden ("sinfulness").[205]

The holiness of sacraments had been emphasized by a significant number of patristic writers.[206] The sacraments alone have been the *sancta.* Ignatius of Antioch (c.35-c.107) developed the sacramental character of the holiness of Christians in the fellowship of the Church as they are inseparably bound to Jesus Christ by virtue of their purity conferred by the sacraments. Justin Martyr (c.165) in his First Apology speaks directly or implicitly of the spiritual regeneration of the baptismal confession.[207] According to Irenaeus (*c.*130-*c.*202) in his *Adversus Haereses (1, 9.4)* he states that sacraments purifies body and soul and restores the original nature of man. [208] Likewise, the first Latin writer, Tertullian (*c.*160-*c.*225) in *De Baptismo (6* and *15)* stresses that without baptism of faith in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit the candidate cannot become part of the holy Church. Without baptism there can be no reception of the Spirit, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the body and sainthood. [209] Tertullian also writes how by baptism we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction. [210] Thus:

All waters, therefore, in virtue of the privilege of their origin, do,

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[205] David Noel Freedman (ed.), *Dictionary of the Bible*, Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000, p.598.
[206] Benko, p.72.
[207] MPG 6.
[208] MPG 7
[209] MPL. (J.P. Migne, *Patrologica Latina*, Paris, 1844-55). 1, 1198.
[210] Willis, 800, p.411.

after invocation of God, attain the sacramental power of sanctification; for the Spirit immediately supervenes from the heaven; and rests over the waters, sanctifying them, from Himself; and being thus sanctified, they inedible at the same time the powers of sanctifying. [211].

Tertullian also insists that sins after baptism can be forgiven only by an act of God but this is no longer free and it must be deserved (*Epistola ad Magnum, 69.7).* He further states that the sinner can be reconciled only by prayer, good works, and especially almsgiving. By these Christians imitate the likeness of baptism. The sacraments are the *sancta* because they are the gifts of Christs work for the forgiveness of sins whereby people are transformed into a state of holiness that confers eternal life. The Fathers regard baptism as holy and sacred because they "imprint on the soul a spiritual and inedible character that can never be repeated".[212] The fifth century philosopher Pseudo-Dioniysius the Aeropagite states of how he was being called after baptism to the most sacred Eucharist and was granted communion in the mysteries which will perfect him.[213] He therefore describes the Eucharist as the sacrament of sacraments. Based on the *Catechetical Homilies* of Theodore of Mopsuestia (*c.*392), Everett Ferguson is able to show that the process of initiation involves both the sacramental birth through baptism and the eating of the Eucharist, the "immortal food, consonant with your birth, with which you will be nourished".[214] The food maintains the

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[211] Willis, 789, p.407.
[212] Willis, p.401.
[213] Ferguson, Everett, *Baptism in the Early Church, History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries,* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009, pp.239-722.
[214] Ferguson, p.526.

existence given in baptism, the sacramental food of immortality which is the body

and blood of Jesus.[215] Therefore only those who had been baptized could

partake of the Eucharist.[216]

Historically the early Church did not see baptism and the Eucharist as two

separate sacraments. The baptismal ceremony proper was followed immediately

by the Eucharist with the congregation. Origen (*c.*185-*c.*254), the most prolific

Christian writer of his time, in commenting upon *Exodus 19:10-11,* refers to *Mat*

12:12 speaks of the sequence of washing signifying anointing before eating:

"After we have been anointed, that is, after having believed in Christ, we are then

ordered to move on to the eating of Christ".[217] He insists baptism is mandatory

before the reception of the Eucharist. Using Origen's metaphor, the Eucharistic

celebration is a symphony where "the elements of a unique ecclesial proceeding

together make catechumens Christians". [218] Cyprian (c.200-258) (Ep.70.2), who

is Tertullian's disciple, responds to the Novatian heretics by insisting that they

need to be rebaptised as they do not possess the Church.[219] Like his

predecessors baptism and forgiveness of sins are the underlying instruments that

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[215] Ferguson, p.526.

[216] Ferguson, p.526

[217] Ferguson, pp.427-428.

[218] J.M.R.Tillard, R.C.DePeaux (trans.), *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion,*
Collegeville, Minnesota: Glazier Liturgical Press, 1992, pp.172 -173.

[219] MPL 3, 1143; *"Novatianism"* from Novatian (*c.*200-*c.*258) was a scholar and antipope.He was a noted theologian and writer who adopted a rigorous position than the Pope on Christians who had lapsed and wished to return, and on the issue of penance (Carson and Cerrito, pp.464-465).

cause the spiritual communion.[220] Cyprian further writes that it is in the sacraments of salvation God bestows his mercy and that the divine methods confer the whole benefit to believers.[221] In *Catechesis (21:3)* he states:

> *Which ointment is symbolically applied to your forehead and your other senses; and while your body is anointed with the visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the Holy and life-giving Spirit.* [222]

Cyprian (*Epp.57, 63, 65)* also refers to the Eucharist as the *sancta* when he declares that forgiveness can also be attained in the Eucharist and it is efficacious because it is the body and blood of Christ. [223] There had been some who used the occasion of Cyprian's absence to force the presbyters to receive them back into the Church and to admit them to the Eucharist. In this regard several confessors supported Cyprian's condemnation of the practice by expressing themselves in these words:

> *We take notice that you have reprimanded, with a fitting censure and worthily, those who, forgetful of their sins, extorted peace from the presbyters with hasty and eager desire in your absence and those who, without respect for the Gospel, and with profane ease, give the holy of the Lord (sanctum Domini) to the dogs, and the pearls to the swine (Ep.31 6).* [224]

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[220] MPL 3, 1040.
[221] Willis, 790, p.408
[222] Willis, 860, p. 439.
[223] MPL 4, 193 and MPL 3.
[224] MPL 4.195.

Here Cyprian is following the Didache, also known as the Teaching of the Twelve, on the Eucharistic elements. The Eucharist is holy of the Lord and in so doing the Didache instructs that it was applying Matt 7.6. It declares that no one should eat and drink of the Eucharist but those baptized in the name of the Lord; to this, too, the saying of the Lord is applicable: "Do not give to dogs what is sacred" *(Mat 7:6)*.[225]

For Athanasius (*c.*296-373) too, the bishop and doctor of the Church at Alexandria, the Eucharist is the *sancta.* This becomes evident in the investigation of a church by a commission which declared that the cup and table are the holy things and express of its concern over a cup that belongs to the mysteries (*Apol.c.Arianos 14)*.[226] Ambrose, one of the four great Latin doctors of the Church, in *De Mysteriis (I 2, 5)* thus designates baptism as *sancta sanctorum.*[227] He also speaks of the two characteristics of sacraments as both a bath of regeneration and spiritual food. In the ritual, in order to constitute a sacrament, it must have an earthly element and a divine act. The reaction of Eusebius of Caesarea (*c.*370), to the letter of Dionysius regarding a person baptised with the baptism of the heretics, reveals the efficacy of the *sancta,* that is, the role of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist towards one's conversion. This

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[225] ʿThe Didacheʾ meaning ʿTeachingʾ is a brief on early Christianity dated by most scholars to the late first/early second century. It contains instructions for Christian communities. The text, parts of which may have constituted the first written catechism has three main sections dealing with Christian lessons, rituals such as baptism and Eucharist, and Church organization (James A. Kleist, "The Didache" in Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe (eds.), *Ancient Christian Writers, No.6*, New York: The Newman Press, 1948, p.20, 9.5).

[226] MPG 25, 248.

[227] MPL 16, 389.

person he states stood by the table and stretched out his hands to receive the blessed food, and for a long time participated in the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. But then his conscience accused him of his heretical baptism, Ambrose concludes that he was encouraged to come to the holy things with firm faith and good hope *(Hist.Eccl. VII 9.).* [228] Especially instructive with regard to *sancta* too has been Cyril of Jerusalem (*c.*315-386) who comments on the *sancta* – the Eucharist – by this liturgical language:

> *Holy things for the holy. The offerings are holy, because they have received the descent of the Holy Spirit, and you are holy too because you have been granted the Holy Spirit, thus holy things are appropriate for holy people. Then you say: 'One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ'. For there is one who is holy, holy by nature; for though we are holy, we are not so by nature, but by participation and discipline and prayer. (Mystagogic Catechesis 5.19).* [229]

In Cyril's mind, it is not possible to discern the *sancta* (*holy things* or sacraments in the neuter sense) and the recipients (the *persons* made holy in the gender sense). So too has been Basil the Great of Caesarea (*c.*330-379) who identifies the Eucharist and the recipients as one entity in the *sancta* when he writes as follows:

> *It is good and beneficial to communicate every day, and to partake of the holy body and blood of Christ. For he distinctly says, he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life (Jn 6:55).* [230]

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[228] MPG 20.

[229] Yarnold, p.186.

[230] MPG 52, 484, Willis, p.445.

A final support of this understanding of the *sancta* comes from Augustine (354-430) who in his *City of God* explains a visible sacrament is the sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice.[231] In *Johannis Evangelium Tractutus,* he identifies the sacrament with the recipient when he warns that baptism, which is profitable, can also be hurtful. [232] Augustine explores the symbol of the sacraments mainly in the context of their efficacy. There can be no forgiveness of sins in the Church and there would be no hope of a future life and eternal liberation but for the sacraments:

> *Here you are; you are going to come to the holy font, you will be washed in saving baptism, you will be renewed in the bath of rebirth (Ti 3:5), you will be without any sin at all as you come up from that bath.*[233]

In response to the Donatists, and following the lead of Cyprian, Hilary and Ambrose, Augustine states:

> *But the baptism of Christ, consecrated by the words of the gospel, is necessarily holy, however polluted and unclean its ministers may be; because, its inherent sanctity cannot be polluted, and the divine excellence abides in its sacrament, whether to the salvation of those who uses it aright, or to the destruction of those who use it wrong.*

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[231] Willis, 795. p.409.

[232] MPL 35, 1379; Benko, p.143.

[233] "Sermo 213 Augustine" in John E. Rotelle (ed.), *The Works of Saint Augustine, Sermons,* Augustinian Heritage Institute, New City Press, Second Release, Electronic edition, Charlottesville, Virginia, InteLex Corporation, 2001.

But Augustine is also aware that man cannot live without sin even after baptism and daily sins would require daily forgiveness.[234] Besides, fasting and alms giving, Augustine states that forgiveness can be attained in the Eucharist which is the Body and Blood of Christ which is shed for us for the forgiveness of sins and this is communicated to us by the bread and wine. The Eucharist, therefore, is the "daily medicine of the Lord's body" (*Epistola 54:3*) [235] and becomes the means of salvation by its efficacy to blot out sins.[236]

From the beginning the early Church had already developed a deep reverence of sanctity or holiness for the sacraments. The sacraments are the *sancta* and it is out of this spiritual, transcendental or vertical relationship conferred by baptism and the Eucharist that Christians are by the grace made holy or hallowed. A new communal entity emerged that separated them from the profane. This study will insist that it is the recognition of this reality that would become the cornerstone in the development of the concept of *communion of saints* in the fourth century. The liturgical expression in Greek: *koinŏnia tŏn agiŏn* meaning 'holy things for the holy people' conveys that *koinŏnia* is a partaking or communion of holy things.[237] The term *sanctorum* to mean for the holy things transforms the people of God into a state of holiness by the forgiveness of sins. Thus Alexander Schmemann in quoting Tertullian from De Unico Baptisma (14, 24) reports: "Christians are not

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[234] Benko, p.49.
[235] MPL 33.
[236] Benko, p.50.
[237] Berard Marthaler, *The Creed, The Apostolic Faith in Contemporary Theology,* Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Pub., 1993, pp.330-332.

born but they become as such by baptism and the Eucharist". [238]

Like Augustine who used the expression *communio sacramentorum* to mean participation in the sacraments, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (950)* explains how the *communion of saints* as an expression or article of faith is derived by participation in the sacraments.[239] In other words, *communion of saints* is the consequence of communion of sacraments:

> *The fruit of the sacraments belongs to all the faithful. All the sacraments are sacred links uniting the faithful with one another and binding them, to Jesus Christ, and above all Baptism, the gate by which we enter into the Church. The communion of saints must be understood as the communion of sacraments…The name 'communion' can be applied to all of them, for they unite us to God…But this name is better suited to the Eucharist than to any other, because it is primarily the Eucharist that brings this communion about. [240]*

In his review of what Nicholas Ayo comes to the conclusion that it is in the Eucharist that:

> *(The) communion of saints and the communion of sacraments becomes the holy communion of the people of God gathered around a common table of the Lord in anticipation and in foretaste of the eternal banquet in the kingdom that has to come.[241]*

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[238] Alexander Schmemann, *The Historical Road to Eastern Orthodoxy,* London: Harvill Press, 1963, pp. 29.30.
[239] MPL 43, 915.
[240] *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* Homebush, NSW: St. Paul, 1994, p.248.
[241] Nicholas Ayo, *The Creed as Symbol,* Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1989, p.134.

The *sancta* – the sacraments – from the beginning were seen by the Church as sensible signs instituted by Christ which signify and at the same time confer grace. [242] But this fellowship in Christ that makes for the fellowship with each other is *gesta Dei* (deeds of God) and to be distinguished from the mutual goodness for one another which are not the true cause of salvation.[243] It had therefore been the mission of the Church from the start that the faithful grow in the holiness of the saints in heaven. The sacraments help penitents to be humble, to recognize their own frailty and at the same time, to achieve an awareness of the need for God's forgiveness and the belief that divine grace can transform life. Thus, sacraments cause forgiveness of sins and reconciliation of people. The *communion of saints* can therefore be understood as representative of the reconciliation of "those perennial divisions and antagonisms among human beings that are the result of sin and its manifestations".[244]

The Christians of the early Church were clear in not promoting a form of individualistic or isolationist piety in their relationship with God. Much to the contrary, and as reminded by Tillard, the early Christian communities did exhibit a real, even though fragile, fellowship founded on a common faith by being one in Christ and his Spirit as a member of the body.[245] .[246] Tillard describes these

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[242] Willis, p.401.
[243] Ayo, p.134.
[244] Ayo, p.134.
[245] J.M.R. Tillard, Madeline Beaumont (trans.), *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ, At the Source of the Ecclesiology of Communion,* Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001, p.33.
[246] Tillard, *Flesh of the Church,* p.33.

communities as a branch of the vine, a living stone of the priestly house and a believer in the charity of works whereby all are in solidarity with others. [247] Such was the consciousness of the early communities "woven on the bonds of *agape* with God and others" and by the bonds created by the Spirit in the sacraments.[248] In fact from the examination of Cyprian's argumentative work on the episcopate, *De Unitate Ecclesiae,* these early centuries evidenced a comprehensive lived ecclesiology. [249] It was here, as Ludwig Hardling notes, what it meant to belong to the church of Jesus Christ. It is the experience of professing the faith, worshipping together as well as striving to live out the demands of Christianity in ancient society.[250] For the early Church there can be no equivocation that the *sancta* of the doctrine refers to the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. More specifically, in *sanctorum communio,* as a translation of the Greek expression *koinǒnia ton agion,* it is therefore a direct reference to the Eucharist.[251] For Paul the intimate communion in the divine life and with one another is accomplished through Christ's salvific actions made sacramentally present in the community. The *sancta* of the *communion of saints* is also realised in the common sharing of the goods of salvation which are the holy things especially the Eucharist because it is the source of the invisible communion among the sharers the saints.[252] It is no coincidence that when *sanctorum communionem* first emerged as an

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[247] Tillard, *Flesh of the Church,* p.33.
[248] Tillard, *Flesh of the Church,* p.33.
[249] Ludwig I. Hertling, Jared Wicks (trans.), *Communio, Church and Papacy in Early Christianity,* Chicago: Lyola University Press, 1962, p.1-2.
[250] Hertling, p.2.
[251] Kelly, J.N.D.,pp.388-391.
[252] Marthaler, pp.329-347.

expression during Augustine's era he had been able to explain its concept in terms of *communio sacramentorum* or participation in the sacraments. It provided the link between *sanctum ecclesiam* (the Church) and *remessionem peccatorem* (forgiveness of sins). Thus *communio sacramentorum* can be seen as synonymous with *sanctorum communionem* in the Creed.[253]

The contribution of today's renowned theologian Avery Dulles in this regard is especially significant. Based on his exegesis of *koinŏnia,* he is convinced that the term as used in the New Testament and expressed in the original form as *sanctorum communionem* in the Apostles' Creed means participation in holy things, that is, the sacraments, the root of sanctity rather than the consequence – the personalization, that is, the saints – in the *communion of saints.*[254]

Sancti

The Latin term *sancti* for saints refers to the living members of the Church who are striving on earth to be sinless. As Han Kung explains, the saints are anything but exalted figures:

> *What is meant are believers who still have their failings and sins yet who through God's call in Christ have forsworn the sinful world and are attempting in everyday life, for better or worse, to follow the way of Christ's disciples.* [255]

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[253] Benko, pp.53-5.
[254] Avery Dulles, "The Church as Communion" in Bradley Nassif (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Theology: Essays in Memory of John Meyendorff,* Grand Rapids, Minnesota: William B. Eerdmans, 1996, p.126; also, Rausch, *Towards a Truly Catholic Church*, p.71.
[255] Kung, p.141.

There are therefore no self-made saints, but all are called to be saints *(1 Cor1:2)*, as saints in Christ Jesus *(1 Phil 1:1)* who are the holy and beloved elect *(Col 3:12).* Together the saints are sometimes referred to as the Church Militant because of its militancy directed against sin and evil. The reference to saints goes back to the biblical times.[256] Scripturally the term is not restricted specifically to anyone holy but is used for all believers of God (*Ps. 31:23; Eph 1:1; 15; 2 Thess 1:10; Rev 5:9; 18:20).*They are called God's "holy ones" or *qĕdŏšĭm* in Hebrew *(Ps 16:3; 34:9)* or "faithful ones" *Hăsidic Judaism (Ps 30:4; 85:8; 145:10).* They rejoice in God's goodness and trust in his care *(2 Chr 6:4; Prov 2:8).* Their death is precious "because (it is) in the sight of the Lord (*Ps 116:15).* The New Testament frequently speaks of saints (Gk *hăgioi,).* Matthew notes that after Christ's resurrection many bodies of the saints who died were raised (*Matt 27:52).* Ananias protests against helping Paul for he has heard of his persecution of the saints, i.e. Christians, in Jerusalem *(Acts 9:13; cf.26:10);* there is also mentions of saints living in Lydda and Joppa who are believers *(Acts 9:32, 41).* Similarly, Paul refers to Christians *(1Cor 6:1-2; Phil 4:21-22; Phlm:5,7),* who are "called to be saints" *(Rom 1:7)* and he addresses Christian communities as "all the saints" (*2 Cor 1:1, 1 Thess 3:13; Phil 1:1; cf. Col 1:4, Eph 3:8, 18).* Sometimes "the saints" need help *(Rom 8:27; 16:2; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:1, 12)* and sometimes they offer help *(Rom 12:13; 15:25-31; 1 Cor 16:1, 15; cf. Heb 6:10).* Saints are those who prepare for Christ's coming *(1 Thess 3:13; 2 Thess 1:10).*

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[256] Freedman , pp.1151-1152.

In Colossians, Paul states that Christians share the inheritance of the saints in light and that the Christocentric mystery is something that is revealed to his holy ones, the saints *(1 Col 1:12, 26-27; Eph 1:18).* In Ephesians Paul highlights equipping the saints for the work of ministry and calls for vigilance in Christian living and intercessory prayer *(Eph 4:12; 5:3; 6:18).* In the Pastorals the church-supported widows are expected to wash the feet of the saints (*1 Tim 5:10).* It has also been said that Christianity was "once for all entrusted to the saints"*(Jude 3).* In Revelation the saints are persecuted Christians *(Rev 13:7, 10; 14:12; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24)* who pray to remain faithful. It also speaks of "the prayers of the saints" *(Rev* 5:8*; 8:3, 4).* This book closes with a benediction for all the saints (*Rev 22:21).*

From this biblical overview, the term saints is identifiable with the Christians because of their faith in the crucified and risen Christ. For the early Church, saints are the Christians who had been transformed to holiness by their communion with God through the sacraments. This communion is so strong that not even death can break it.[257] Such faith in the *sancta* or sacraments as evidenced in patristic literature is specifically exemplified in the Eastern liturgy. This is in accordance with the catechesis of Cyril of Jerusalem (*Mystagogic Catechesis 5)* which has already been alluded to earlier.[258] The priest lifts up the consecrated gifts, exclaiming them as the holy things for the holy people. To this

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[257] "Communion of Saints: Key to the Eucharist", *Catholic Update*, http://www.americancatholic.org/Newsletters/CU/ac0505.asp, 05/15//2007.
[258] Cf. p.76.

congregation which responds by acknowledging Jesus Christ as the one, holy Lord and who is the glory of God the Father, they as the people of God attain a new life of Christian holiness and life everlasting.[259]

Communio

The third element in *sanctorum communio* is the Greek equivalent of *koinŏnia* which in Latin corresponds to *communio.* It is the integral link of the *sancta* and *sancti* that brings about the relationship of the sacraments and saints together in the *communion of saints.* A major difficulty with the Latin derivative is that it does not necessarily convey the exact meaning of *koinŏnia. Communio* is much more broadly based than *koinŏnia* and as noted by Bernard Cooke it has more than one meaning.[260] *Communio* can refer to whatever aspects of communication one is describing in contrast to the ways the Greek Fathers applied *koinŏnia* to convey Paul's *kerygma.* Noteworthy is the fact that the Eastern Church did not have such a doctrine as the *communion of saints* in any of its creeds and several writers have therefore come to the view that the expression is a Western formulation even though its essence is Greek. This rationalization can be justified in that the Latin Fathers of the fourth century onwards had been able to conceptualise the effects of *koinŏnia* into *communio* by placing new emphasis on the social and demographic changes of the time. Culturally the Church found

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[259] Frank L. Ross (ed.), *St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Christian Sacraments: The Procatechesis and the Five Mystagogical Catechesis,* USA: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986, pp.26-39;
Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1945, pp.134-135.
[260] Bernard Cooke, *Sacraments and Sacramentality,* Mystic, Connectiut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1994, p124.

itself in a different world from the Pauline communal house-churches of the first few centuries where the *koinŏnia* had a profound influence in the daily life of the faithful and their communities. J.P. Kirsch's work on Christian dogmatics notes that the underlying anxiety present in the early Church was the expectations of the near approach of the end of the world.[261] They believed the end of the world would occur during the lifetime of the apostles themselves or in the sub-apostolic period. Kirsch states that the teaching of the Fathers was therefore focussed on the near return of Christ to complete his kingdom on earth and this had been the object of the earliest desire/.[262] By the fourth century there were signs indicative of a paradigmatic change in the role of the Church. While the Church would take cognizance that the end-time was no longer imminent a more pastoral approach should be adopted in order to proclaim its Christian values. This would underwrite the development of the doctrine of the *communion of saints.*

The nature of *communio* as a bonding of people and communities is complex enough to cause many people to have only a vague understanding what the doctrine *sanctorum communion* means.[263] *Communio-onis* in Latin comes from *commun,* the original meaning derived from its usage being "general, usual, public, common, and mutual".[264] It may also include "shared by, joint, association".[265] As Benko explains, the verb derived from it is *communico* which

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[261] J.P. Kirsch, *The Doctrine of the Communion of Saints in the Ancient Church*, London: Sand & Co., 1910, p.9.
[262] Kirsch, p.9.
[263] Barclay, p.291.
[264] Benko, p.83.
[265] *Pocket Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Second Edition, Oxford: University Press, 1993.

corresponds in meaning with *koinǒnia,* that is, to participate in something with someone or to mutually communicate something. Closely related to this is *communio* which is more than mere fellowship or an external bond. It goes beyond *koinǒnia.* It designates the similarity of being which in reality means *communio* cannot exist between two elements of opposite nature. *Communio* therefore presupposes the same nature or inner harmony as proposed by Irenaeus (*c.*105-*c.*202) in *Adv. Haer.* IV *9.2* who states that when two are in *communio* they are of the same substance and "differ only in number and size, just as water from water and light from light and grace from grace".[266] In short *communio* is the possession of likeness of substance and nature of the same constitution and essence.[267] This is important in assessing the purpose and effect of baptism which, suffice to state at this stage, transforms the baptised into the *personhood* in Christ. The significance and implications of this will be examined closely in considering the theology of the doctrine.

The difficulty with *communio* is that had been used in more than one precise manner by theologians themselves. Early Christians' writers in Latin especially Tertullian,*(De Unico Baptisma),* Irenaeus *(Adv. Haer.* IV 20, 12); Hilary *(Op. Hist. fr. 2.3;* Jerome *(Ep.* 82.2*),* Ambrose *(Esp. Ev. Luc.* VI 68) Augustine *(Sermo 52.6)* and Niceta *(De symbola)* have applied *communio* to relate to different combinations or relationships between persons. This would mean that the most intimate bond that *communio* refers to is selective and applies when two or more

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[266] MPG 7; Benko, p..84.
[267] Benko, p.84.

persons come into union through the Eucharist. The combination of *communio* in a genitive sense has thus been most frequently used in the Latin church to convey this sacramental union. It would appear that from the later part of the fourth century the term no longer referred exclusively to the Eucharist in the West. This was in sharp contrast the way *koinŏnia* was being understood more selectively in the East during the same period.[268] In broad terms, it is possible to discern five forms of fellowships in the *communion.* These are:

(a) The *communio* between God the Father and Christ the Son (Hilary, *Comm. in Mat* 12.18).[269]

(b) The *communio* between believers and God, Christ and the Spirit (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* III, 18.7) [270] (Tertullian,*De Pudictia,* 1). [271]

(c) The *communio* in marriage *(*Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV 20.12). [272]

(d) The *communio* of the Church such as the communion of all Gallician churches and bishops (Hilary in *De Syn.* 4 [273], *Ad. Const.* 112 [274] and *Comm. in Matt 1.2:24* [275]; Ambrose in *Expos.Ev.Luc.* VI, 68;[276]); Augustine in *Ep.* 35-.4 *Ep.43.,*[277] *C.Cresc* 111 35 [278] and *De Civ. Dei* XX1 25.4 [279]; and Jerome in *Ep. 15-2.*[280].

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[268] Benko, p.87.
[269] MPL 9, 917.
[270] MPG 7.
[271] MPL 2, 979.
[272] MPG 7.
[273] MPL 10, 479.
[274] MPL 9, 557.
[275] MPL 9, 917.
[276] MPL 15, 1607.
[277] MPL 33.
[278] MPL 43, 445.

(e) C*ommunio* in the Eucharist (Hilary in *De Sym.4, Ad. Const.*II 2, *Comm.in Matt. 30.2* and *Tract.in Ps. LXIV,* 14; Augustine in *Ep.* 78.4, *C.Cresc. III 35* and De Civ. Dei *1 350).*

For the Latin Fathers *communio* is a genitive combination which gives rise to the fellowship of the Church and this fellowship is caused through the common participation in the sacraments. Exclusion from the Church therefore means exclusion from the Eucharist. The contribution of Ferdinand Kattenbusch at the turn of the last century is especially useful in this context. [281] Kattenbusch himself relies on the cannons of the *Synod of Elvira* (306 CE) to establish *communio* as a relationship that should be restricted to the Eucharist. In other words the Latin equivalent is synonymous with *koinŏnia.*[282] Kattenbuschidentifies *communio* only in the sense of *communion corporis et sanguinis Christi* (communion of the body and blood of Christ) in such expressions as *dominica communion* (the gathering of the community on a Sunday), *communionem dare* (to give communion presumably to give the sacred species to someone), *ad communionem admittere* (to join a community or to

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[279] MPL 41.

[280] MPL 22, 326.

[281] Ferdinand Kattenbusch, the German theologian and academic published in 1894 *Des aposlolische Symbol.* He traced the origin of the Apostolic Creed and its historical significance of the theology of the Church and its contribution to the symnbolism and histoy of dogma. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger in commenting on his work regards him as "the great student of the Apostles' Creed" (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, J.R. Foster (trans.), *Introduction to Christianity,* San Francisco: Communion Books, 2004, p. 202).

[282] F. Kattenbusch, *Des aposlolische Symbol II,* p.934ff. Similar illustrations are also found in the *Acts of the Council of Arles* (314 CE).

Communio means 'communion' in the common sense of the word used in the Church today (L.F. Stelton, *Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Latin,* Peaboy, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 8th Ed., 2008). In classical Latin e.g. as used by Cicero it means a 'communion, mutual participation' Up to 4th century *communion* was used as a verb *"communire"* to mean 'fortify strongly', 'to strengthen', 'to make sure'. In ecclesiastical Latin it means 'Church communion', 'the Sacrament of Eucharist', the 'consecrated bread or bread and wine' (C.T. Lewis & C.A. Short, *A Latin Dictionary,* Oxford: University Press, 1879).

allow a person to receive the sacred species), *communionem impertire* (to share communion with another person, to give communion to another person or persons and the communion may mean the sacred species or a community), *communionem praestare* (to remain in communion with or to maintain a community as *praestare* commonly refers to denoting excellence or in support of someone) and *a communion earcere* (which means to reject from the community the reception of the sacred species as imposed by the *Council of Arles*. In summary *communio* generally designates the Eucharist. Badcock, however, does not see the difference between *communio* and *koinŏnia.* Grammatically he sees the Greek theological writers use the term in the same way as the New Testament, namely, in a genitive sense, that it is, possessive, partitive or descriptive by the use of a preposition as communion with. He is convinced that the Latin writers maintained this rule.[283]

The nuance in *koinŏnia* of the New Testament as applied by the Greek patristic writers from the *communio* of the Latin Fathers is one of emphasis in one aspect or part of its content. In all cases the Eucharist had been central to their understanding of *koinŏnia* as it has been for *communio.* In the New Testament and especially in Paul's epistles true *koinŏnia* alludes to Christian fellowship and this can comprehensively be described as the relationship that we ought to have with one another *(Rom 12:10);* honour one another *(Rom 12:10);* live in harmony with one another *(Rom 12:16; 1 Peter 3:8);* accept one another *(Rom 12:7);*

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[283] Badcock, pp.254-255.

serve one another in love *(Gal 5:123);* be kind and compassionate to one another *(Eph 4:32);* admonish one another *(Col 3:16);* encourage one another *(1 Thes 5:11*); *Heb 3:13*); spur one another on toward love and good deeds *(Heb10:24);* offer hospitality *(1 Peter 4:9);* and love one another *(1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11; 3:23; 4:7; 4:11-12).* But the Pauline *koinónia* is also a *communio* when he calls upon Christians to be imitators of God (Eph. 4:3) which, as pointed out by Cooke and others, is to be oneness with Jesus. This distinguishes Christian fellowship from other human societies. The acts of charity are to be understood as the acts of the Holy Spirit conveyed by *communio.* Being in Christ is mediated through being in the *communio.* It is the Spirit's "character, initiative, purposive action, ethical qualities which together represent what we mean by personality".[284] Believers are to come together in love, faith and encouragement. Thus Paul declares:

> *If you have any encouragement from being united in Christ, if any*
> *from his love, if any fellowship with his Spirit, if any tenderness and*
> *compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded,*
> *having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose (Phil 2:1-2).*

Like *koinŏnia* the meaning of *communio* can therefore be summarised as solidarity, participation and being at one with another as the imitator of Christ. Cooke, however, is convinced that *communio* is more encompassing than *koinŏnia.* He sees it as a movement in which people share their faith and life.

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[284] Charles A. Anderson Scott, *Christianity According to St. Paul,*, Cambridge: University Press, 1927.p.141-142.

Christian *communio* is therefore a very distinctive type of sharing which sets it apart from other human groups. [285] It is the sharing of a value system that underpins Christian living in that it exemplifies the life, death and the resurrection of Jesus and the lives of his disciples.[286] The participants portray a Christian identity by sharing the community's Spirit. For reasons already stated this study is in agreement with others that Christian *communio* is a very distinctive kind of sharing in which the very special concept is of the bond between Christians and Jesus Christ, i.e., God or the Holy Spirit, or of a bond joining Christians to each other. [287] Suffice to say it is a Trinitarian concept of the communion of love which this study will presuppose as the theological basis of the doctrine. It will claim that *communio* ought to reflect in the life of the people the communion of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

During the first four centuries very few of the Fathers were able to conceptualise and transpose this intimate sacramental relationship into a human doctrine even though the essence of an ecclesiology are implied in the patristic writings especially of Tertullian, Cyprian, Hippolytus and Origen. Thus in *De Baptisma 18* Tertullian declares that heretical baptism is invalid [288] and Cyprian who was influenced by Tertullian also declares that Baptism outside the Church is impossible. [289] Cyprian extends this understanding by asserting that remission of

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[285] Cooke, p.124.
[286] Cooke, p.129
[287] Benko, p.79.
[288] MPL 1, 1198.
[289] MPL 3, 1040.

sins can only be granted in the Church, and that the heretics do not have a Church. Hippolytus of Rome too is certain on the construction of his creed in this regard. He has his focus on the Holy Spirit as the *sancta* in his baptismal creed which consists of *Credo in Spiritu (m) Sanctu (m), sanctum ecclesiam,* and *carnis resurrectionem.* He stresses that the Spirit is found only in the Church which is the *locus* here. The Spirit rises as the sun and unfolds its strength and power through the Church.[290] Hippolytus also emphasizes that the Spirit is part of the Trinity and where God the Three-in-One is there is the Church.[291] In his *Commentary on Daniel 1(17.70)* he defines the Church itself is construed as the *sancta* which is the holy assembly of those living in righteousness.[292] His baptismal creed is similar to Tertullian's in that the *sancta ecclesia* corresponds to the relationship of the Spirit to baptism and the Church. This exclusivity to the members of the Church, which is the *locus* of the Spirit, is viewed constantly as the temporal manifestations of the Spirit or as the assembly of those created anew in the Spirit.[293] Among the Church Fathers, Origen is exceptional for he brings greater precision between the relation of symbolic efficacy between the individual body of Christ, the Eucharist, and his real Body which is the Church. [294] He arrives at this conclusion with the final result that the truth of sacramental

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[290] Benko, p.29.
[291] Benko, p.29.
[292] MPG 10, 637.
[293] Benko, p.29.
[294] Henri De Lubac, Lancelot C. Sheppard (trans.), *Catholicism, Christ and the Common Destiny of Man,* London: Universe Books, 1950, p.43.

communion is in the "union with the Church within whose heart the Word resounds, for she is indeed the real presence of the Logos". [295]

In his comprehensive work on the richness of the notion of *communio* Ludwig Hertling has been able to advance a theological vision of the Church with Rome as the focal point. He is convinced of the early recognition of its primacy which was clearly attested in the second-century texts of Ignatius and Irenaeus.[296] This ecclesiology, even though seminal, was implicit in the *communio* of the ancient Church in order to deal with the great issues of Christian unity, ministry, authority and collegiality which can be set in proper light only when they can be related to the fundamental reality of the Church. In this context Hertling defines the Church as a network of sacramentally focussed local churches which are bound together ultimately by the mutual openness of their Eucharistic celebrations. [297]

The Latin Fathers since the fourth century have thus been able to formulate more clearly a *communio* that embraces both the vertical and horizontal dimensions. They were able to join into one Body the Eucharistic Body and the Ecclesial Body.[298] Tillard asserts that from the beginning the bond between the Eucharist

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[295] In his Homily 7 on Leviticus, Origen states: "He (Lord) is loath to receive his perfect happiness without you, that is, without his people who constitute his body and his members. His wish, then, is to make up his dwelling as the soul of that body his Church and of those members his people, so that he may rule all their actions and works in accordance with his will, whereby that saying of the Prophet may be realized: I shall dwell in them and walk among them. But while we are not yet perfect and are still in our sins, he is only in us in part and so we know in part and we prophesy in part until each of us merits to arrive at that measure of which the Apostle speaks, It is no longer I that live but Christ liveth in me. In part , then, as the Apostle says, we are Christ's members and in part we are his bones".(Henri De Lubac, p.257)

[296] Hertling, p.3.

[297] Hertling, p.4.

[298] Tillard, *Flesh of the Church,* p.33.

and the love for brothers and sisters was recognised by everybody because it was rooted in the bible and in particular the Last Supper. He therefore sees the Church as a *communio* or communion and for this he relies on the contributions especially of Augustine and his contemporaries Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandra. Augustine, for instance, in his *Sermon 272* states:

> *So if you want to understand the body of Christ, listen to the Apostle telling the faithful, 'Now you are the body of Christ and immediately members of it' (1 Cor 12:27). So if you are the body of Christ and its members, it's the mystery meaning you that has been placed on the Lord's table, what you receive is the mystery that amends you. It is to what you are that you reply Amen and by so replying you express your assent.* [299]

Chrysostom likewise shows the intrinsic link between Eucharist and the Church in the communal participation in the bread of Christ. He says believers become "the same thing" in Christ. He describes this blending of the union that comes complete as follows:

> *It is not enough that I have Thy First fruits above? Does not this satisfy thy attention? I descended below: I am not only mingled with thee, I am entwined in thee. I am masticated, broken into minute particles, that the interspersion, and own limits, but I am interwoven*

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[299] "Sermon 111/7 (230-272B)" in Edmund Hill (ed.), *The Works of St. Augustine, A Translation for the 21st century,* New Rochelle: New York City Press, 1993, pp. 300-301.

with thee. I would have no more any division between us. I will that
we both are one.[300]

Cyril of Alexandra too lays the emphasis on the undivided "Church's common treasury of tradition" *(Against Nestorius 4).* Tillard notes that Augustine, Chrysostom and Cyril lived in three different regions and their traditions were not identical. Yet, the Eucharist which each of these churches celebrated was united in the communion with Christ and the Spirit. The Eucharist therefore makes the community the body of Christ in which "the wound of every human community is healed in the communion of grace and holiness which the Spirit creates".[301] The churches of Hippo, Antioch, Alexandria, as well as these in Gaul and Rome thus knew themselves "to be of one over the entire world in the communion of one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one Eucharist, one life".[302] The Eucharist joins the local churches together. The Fathers therefore understood the *communio* as a representation of the most profound vision of ecclesiology in the West before the emergence of the Great Schism. The communal basis of the Eucharist is what brings the saints of the Church together. Thus true Eucharistic piety is not devout individualism; that would be unmindful of anything that concerns the goodness of the Church.[303] In De Luback highlights how with "one sweeping and all-embracing gesture and in one fervent intention" the Eucharist gathers together

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[300] John Chrysostom, "Homily XVI, 1 Timothy v.2-23" in Philip Schaff (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1979, v.13, p.464.
[301] Tillard, *Flesh of the Church,* p.81.
[302] Tillard, *Flesh of the Church,* p.82.
[303] De Lubac, *Catholicism,* p.49.

the whole world.[304] In this regard, he recalls the commentary in John's Gospel where Jesus himself instituted the sacrament of love:

> *(The) allegory of the vine, the 'new commandment', the prayer of unity and the approach of the 'supreme token of love'. It is on these things that the Eucharistic piety bases thoughts and resolutions; it cannot conceive of the action of the breaking of the bread without fraternal communion: in communicatione fractionis panis.*[305]

Consistent with Paul's teaching is the present Pope Joseph Ratzinger who asserts that any ambiguity or reservations that challenge the theological conceptualisation of the Church arising from the sacraments should be dismissed. By *communion of saints* Ratzinger declares that it "refers first of all, to the Eucharistic community, which through the Body of the Lord binds the Christians scattered all over the world into one Church". [306]

The Saints

Sancti in Latin can also refer to the Saints who have departed from this world and who by their title (*St.* for 'Saints') are recognized by the Church as enjoying God's presence in heaven. It is an alternative interpretation of *communion of saints* in the Catholic Church's teaching of the supernatural or spiritual union of all members of God's kingdom whether still alive on earth or already departed. [307]   It

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[304] De Lubac, *Catholicism, Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, p.49.
[305] De Lubac, *Catholicism, Christ and the Common Destiny of Man,* p.49.
[306] Ratzinger, 334.
[307] McBrien, p.1070.

is the affirmation of the eschatological truth "that the souls of departed Christians of the earth continue their existence after death".[308]

This study proposes that this truth, however, was not the cause or the basis of the doctrine of *communion of saints.* Primitive Christianity knew nothing of these special Saints as all, living and dead, were regarded as "holy and all were regarded saints".[309] This view is also supported by Peter Brown's investigation which shows that Christianity was born without the cult of the Saints.[310] This medieval Christian practice started with the honouring of some outstanding persons with the title of Saint *(St.)* such as the Old Testament prophets. Ignatius extended this to presbyters. Martyrs were specially included because martyrdom could substitute for baptism as they were believed to have been baptized in their own blood and as such they were honoured as *sanctus* or *sanctissimus* which is equated with blamelessness. [311] As Peter Dorfler warns it had no festive or cultic implication; 'holy' is simply an expression of praise which highlights the "moral perseverance of the witness unto blood". [312] It is worth noting that to idealize the heroic dead some form of worship was common before the advent of Christianity in Hellenistic and Roman cultures.[313] This prior understanding, however, differed from that of the Jews and Christians who saw Sainthood in terms of a barrier of

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[308] Kirsch, p.1.
[309] Benko, p.71.
[310] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints, Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity,* Chicago: University Press, 1981.
[311] Benko, p.71.
[312] P. Dorfler, *Die Antange der Heiligenverehrung den romischen Inschriften und Bilderwerken,* Munich, 1943, p.103.
[313] Brown, Peter, p.5.

the universe, that is, the barrier between earth and the stars that had been broken by both Elijah and Christ in the resurrection of the dead.[314]   Accordingly the rock tombs of the patriarchs in the Holy Land, the graves of Saints and of martyrs and fragments of bodies or even physical objects that had made contact with these bodies were considered as privileged places where the contrasted places of Heaven and Earth met. [315] Martyrs were regarded as God's special elect and they were therefore looked upon as intermediaries by the living. [316] The great men of the third century had visions that made plain that they enjoyed an exceptional degree of closeness to their invisible guardians.[317] Origen's pupil, Gregory Thaumatgurgus (c.234) also expresses the benevolent presences of the guardian angels amongst Christians. In his autobiographical work he mentions of the day to day search for protection and inspiration among Christians which took the form of an intense dialogue with invisible companions.[318]   Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Paulinus of Nola and John Chrysostom had been foremost amongst the churchmen of the fourth century who give credence to this notion of intimacy between the living and the heavenly Saints.[319] In the Roman catacombs archaeological evidence is available that indicates the belief in intercessory prayers to and for the dead. [320]

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[314] Brown, Peter, p.2.
[315] Brown, Peter, p.3.
[316] Benko, p.71.
[317] Brown, Peter, p.52-3.
[318] Brown, Peter, p.52-53.
[319] Brown, Peter, p.24-49.
[320] H.P.V. Nunn, *Christian Inscriptions,* New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920.

The earliest indication of praying to and for the dead can be traced to the second century *Abercius* inscription of a Christian bishop.[321]   In the Catacomb of St. Sebastiano is exhibited the third *century* graffiti with invocations to the apostles Peter and Paul.[322]   The first mention of the *Solemnity of All Saints* comes from the East in *c.*369 where a commemoration of all the martyrs at Edesa is mentioned *(Carmen 6; Corpus scriptorium Christianorum orientalium).*In the West the origin of the festival of *All Saints* dates to 609 or 610, when Pope Boniface IV consecrated the Pantheon at Rome to the Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs; the feast of the *dedicatio Sanctae Mariae ad Martyres* has been celebrated at Rome ever since. [323]

Peter Brown's scholarship is supported by Wendy Meyer and Bronwen Neil who offer further insights into this emerging popularity of Saints up to the sixth century. [324]   There had also been the practices of seeking burial next to a martyr (*deposition ad sanctos*) and of celebrating a Funeral meal (Latin, *refrigerium* to mean refreshment) which is held near the tomb or mausoleum on the day of burial of martyrs and other prominent Saints on the anniversary of their deaths. The Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist, not without some difficulty, had replaced the pagan custom of holding a funeral banquet to honour the dead. It had been at the fourth century after the fall of a fresh flood of martyrs that the cult of the Saints

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[321] The Abercius tombstone shows the earliest inscription to a Christian Bishop that can be dated 170 CE. (Nunn, pp.23-26).
[322] Fabrizio Mancinelli, *The Catacombs of Rome and the Origins of Christianity* Scala, Firenze, 2005, p.18.
[323] Carson and Cerrito, pp.288-289.
[324] Wendy Mayer and Brownen *Neil*, *The Cult of the Saints: St John Chrysostom,* New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006, pp.11-12.

developed into a mature and distinct phenomenon and by the fifth and sixth centuries it had rapidly spread throughout the Mediterranean into Christian-hagio tourism or pilgrimage. By this stage, a rich and varied literature had grown up around the individual Saints and the notion that their relics channelled supernatural powers had become a fully established phenomenon of Christian belief. In this respect Chrysostom has played a crucial role in spreading the devotion to the Saints in Antioch and Syria, Constantinople, and in Armenia. It is not altogether a new form of devotion as it can be traced to the Jewish apocalyptic literature of the inter-testamental period (*c.*200-100 BCE) as represented at Qumran and by the pro-Maccabean and pro-Hasmonean war narratives.[325] In the New Testament the communion with the Saints in heaven is also implied in the Christian belief of eternal life *(Mat 19:16, 29; 25-46, Mak 19:17, 30; Luk 10:25; 18:18, 30; Jhn 3:15, 16, 36; Rom 2:7). .*

By the close of the fifth century this deep and populous devotion to the Saints had already become a well-entrenched tradition in the Eastern churches. Contrary to general belief this study is satisfied that as a doctrine, *communion of saints* was not formulated to affirm or propagate this form of spirituality which by the close of the fourth century had been well entrenched as a tradition of the early Church. In addition, there had been no credible opposition that would have called for such an article in the Nicene Creed or other subsequent Eastern creeds to assert its theological significance. Interestingly between 720 CE and

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[325] Bio Reicke, "Official and Piestic Elements of Jewish Apocalypticism", *Journal of Biblical Literature,* v.79, no.2, 1960, pp. 137-150.

730 CE when the Eastern Church experienced the outbreak of the iconoclasm controversy[326], the veneration of the Saints had already become part of the fabric of Christian devotion both in Byzantium and in the West.[327]   The Seventh Ecumenical Synod of Nicea (787) therefore required that all consecrated churches should contain Saints' relics enforcing what was already a widespread practice in the East.[328]   This triumph of orthodoxy in the Byzantium Empire also meant there was now an official enunciated theory about the significance of the icons. These were viewed as no mere illustrations. These serve as:

> *windows on heaven, mediating between the earthly worshippers and the saints in glory; venerating the icon meant venerating the saint, and through the icon the saint could manifest his presence and power.* [329]

The development of this devotion to the Saints in the Western half of Christendom was more circumspective but certain clear threads can be established. The devotion to Saints received immense popularity in the Gallic Church whose Christianity itself was derived from the East.[330]   Importantly, from a historical perspective it would be inconsistent to link up the devotion to Saints with this Church's Greek liturgical expression of 'holy things for holy people', the

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[326] Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church, From Apostolic Times until the Council of Florence,* Oxford: University Press, 2003.
The Second Council of Nicaea (754) called by Constantine V condemned idolatorous worship of icons as pagan but nothing was said against the veneration of relics or the intercession of saints (Chadwick, p.79).
[327] Andrew Louth, *Greek East and Latin West; The Church Ad 681-1071, The Church in History,* v.3, Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007, pp.45-46.
[328] Louth, p.90.
[329] Louth, p.198.
[330] *Maps 1 and 2.*

true precursor to the *communion of saints.* It is conceivable that the presbyters and deacons who had been the predecessors of the Gallic church doubtless spoke Greek and would have brought the phrase *communion of saints* in such a liturgical theme and language as 'holy things for holy people' with them.[331] Before the close of the sixth century, the Gallician Church had incorporated the expression *communion of saints* in its Creed as an appendix to 'the holy catholic Church'. [332] But this does not necessarily suggest that the Gallician Church was shifting its understanding of the *sancta* from the sacraments to the Saints. Neither is there any indication whatsoever to suggest that these Greek fathers at any stage intended to transpose the liturgy from the Eucharist to the departed Saints. It is probable that the local church was adopting a more inclusive meaning of *sancta* that would include the heavenly Saints with the living. However, it is far more likely that the Church, which had been essentially sacramental in all facets of its life from the beginning, would have desired a creed that affirms the efficacy of the sacraments as an affirmation of a truth. This rationalization can be construed from the *Antiphonary of Bangor,* a liturgy that could be dated to the 680-691, that is, more than one hundred years after the Gallician Creed where the reference to *sancti* as the Eucharist finds a powerful expression in the West:

> *Come. You saints, and receive the body of Christ,*
> *Drinking the sacred blood by which you are redeemed...*[333]

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[331] Badcock, p.251.
[332] Burn, p1xxxii.
[333] Henri De Lubac , Gemma Simmons and Richard Price (trans.), *Corpus Mysticism, The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages,* Cornwall, UK: SCM Press, 2006, p.15.

This study is convinced that *communion of saints* in a creedal form was directed almost entirely towards the Eucharist. The extension of its interpretation to the Saints had perhaps been unavoidable but even then it did not come without some difficulties. As observed by Kelly, by the fourth century:

> *(The) consciousness of communion with the redeemed in heaven, who had already tasted the fullness of glory of Christ, was as real and as rich in hope to the theologians as to circles of ordinary Christians. With the devotional and doctrinal atmosphere charged with such ideas, it calls for but a slight effort of the imagination to understand how easy it must have been for formal testimony to their influence to finds its way into the creed.* [334]

Badcock like others is critical of extending the meaning of the doctrine to the Saints. He forthrightly states that the purpose of a creed is to emphasize a statement of truth which states an objective ground which is a necessary condition of salvation.[335] It has to be a true ground or condition that is unalterable. The Creed contains things that are to be believed which is the faith that had been the same ever since Pentecost.[336]. Clearly, therefore:

> *the communion of saints could not mean the intercourse of living and dead Christians as such; temporal life and death have no relevance; at Pentecost there were no dead Christians. This, of course, does not exclude the meaning the mutual intercourse of*

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[334] Kelly, J.N.D., p.397.
[335] Badcock, p.247.
[336] Badcock, pp.246-247.

Christians to which death makes no difference; it merely insists that communion of saints could not at its first insertion into the Creed have meant the mutual intercourse of two distinct classes of Christians, the living and the dead.[337]

He rightly suggests that as an article of the Creed it ought to express some divine act or gift:

Nor could the phrase intend to assert any spiritual activity on the part of believers whether living or dead….The Church held, no doubt, a high opinion of the duty and value of intercession, but neglect of this duty, while it may imperil the salvation of the man himself, did not threaten the salvation of those for whom he failed to intercede; it was the intercession of Christ, and not of Christians, that possessed saving efficacy. [338]

The issue of heavenly Saints is certainly not soteriological. Trent (1543) declared that veneration of Saints is not mandatory for Catholics. The holy Saints as the genesis of this creedal article is therefore highly improbable. On the other hand there are sufficient historical and theological justifications for such a doctrine as the *communion of saints* improvised to affirm and engender the sacramentality of the Church, which to this day certain Christian communities have lacked the scriptural certitude much desired. The only other plausible interpretation that can be construed is the affirmation of the mystical unity the term Church embodies. Theologically and spiritually the holy Saints convey this message of continuity of

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[337] Badcock, pp.246-247.
[338] Badcock, p.247.

afterlife in the doctrine of *communion of saints.* But it would be misnomer to conclude that this avowed truth of the unity or communion of the living and the dead is genesis of the doctrine.

Alfons Kemmer is not hesitant in pointing out that one of the difficulties confronting the doctrine is that it has never been clearly determined or understood fully because of its over simplification. He is convinced that it is not simply an extension about the holy Church, that is, "whoever belongs to the holy Church is in communion with all the members of the Church, those living and those who have died".[339] He is convinced that although this explanation is not wrong in principle and has the support of many outstanding Christians through many centuries, others in all probability lost its original meaning.[340] The *communion of saints* is not equivalent to the Church because at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the believing community and empowered the Church to proclaim the good news of God's activity to the world *(Acts 2)*, there were no dead Christians. Badcock therefore rightly and earnestly submits that this mutual intercourse of Christians to which death makes no difference has never been a contentious issue in the life of the early Church and neither was the doctrine of *communion of saints* designed to exclude this truth. Thus it could not, in the first instance, have been inserted into the Creed to affirm this mutual communion of two distinct classes of Christians, the living and the dead. On its

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[339] Alfons Kemmer, *The Creed in the Gospels,* New York: Paulist Press, 1986, pp.108.
[340] Kemmer, pp.108-109

own, this creedal phrase is equally ambiguous about the sort of spirituality it is designed to promote. It was therefore left entirely open to believers as to the direction they wished to pursue, that is, as a 'communion' with the living or the faithful departed or both in a manner they feel comfortable and addresses their hope and aspirations. [341] The popular support for the Saints should therefore be seen as a diversion from the true meaning of the doctrine. It is reasonable to assume that such devotion was read into the *communion of saints* at a much later date. It would have been only a matter of time before the Church became concerned over the imbalance which had drastically altered the pattern of worship in the Roman Catholic Church. Louth illustrates how this impacted the regular pattern of praying:

> *(It) overshadow(ed) the nature of Christian worship, no longer focussed almost exclusively on the celebration of the Paschal mystery, but concerned with tapping the resources of power represented by the relics of the saints.* [342]

From the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) the *Lumen Gentium (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)* was promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1964. In this the Church itself seems to have sensed this imbalance in the spiritual devotions of the Church.[343] While acknowledging the supernatural communion of the Saints it endeavours to correct this inappropriateness as well

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[341] Badcock, p.247.
[342] Louth, p.194.
[343].''Lumen Gentium, The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church'', pp.410-413.

as abuses associated with the Saints by this announcement:

> *Nevertheless, their number should be moderate and their relative location should reflect right order. Otherwise they may create confusion among the Christian people and promote a faulty sense of devotion" (Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy (125/175).[344]* I

In conjunction with this, the Apostolic encyclical of 1969 further notes that over the years more feasts of the Saints were introduced than necessary and these may overshadow the feasts which recall the mysteries of redemption. It therefore instructs that only feasts that commemorate (S)aints of universal significance should be kept by the universal Church and others confined to local churches.[345] By these announcements, and as previously at Trent, it is clear that devotion to the Saints cannot be of soterological significance for it to be interpreted as a mandatory affirmation of faith in the doctrine of *communion of saints.*

Synthesis

In the vernacular *sanctorum communio* corresponds to communion of saints. From the analysis undertaken there is a nuance in the way the ante-Nicene Greek Fathers of the first few centuries and the post-Nicene Latin Fathers appropriate the implications of the Eucharist. The initial focus of evangelisation for up to the fourth century was on the imminent Christian expectation of the End-

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[344] Bonaventure Kloppenburg, M.J. O'Connell (trans.), *The Ecclesiology of Vatican II*, Illinois, Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974, p.346.
[345] Michael Perham, *The Communion of Saints,* London: SPCK, 1980, p.142.

time. The thrust of the missionary zeal was devoted to creation of the eschatological consciousness of the Church's faithful.[346] F. Hahn too locates the initial impetus in Jesus' command is to proclaim the message of the kingdom *(Mk 6:7-15), (Lk 9:1-6).*

The events of Jesus' death and resurrection "awoke in the whole of primitive Church a white-hot expectation of its (the kingdom's) imminence and how it had to be known afresh to men".[347] Thus the initial impetus had been the enthusiastic anticipation of the End that was not to be.[348] One contributory factor was a process of re-adjustment by a zealous social proselytism that would be capable of reducing the 'cognitive dissonance', that is, the disappointment and despair from the disconfirmation in this important Christian belief in the delay of the kingdom.

The abandonment of this eschatology can be compared to the failures of the Jewish wars. The earliest Christian communities had continued to stand in the mainstream of Jewish apocalyptic thinking.[349] Cognitive dissonance thus became the occasion for the intense missionary activity that ensured the ultimate survival of Christianity itself. As this initial impetus for the formation of community began to fade, the early enthusiasm was redirected towards the community itself. By the later part of the fourth century there was a paradigm change in the

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[346] Gager, p.39.
[347] F. Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament,* Naperville, Illinois: A. R. Allenson, 1965, p.51; Gager, p.38.
[348] Gager, p.45
[349] Gager, p.43.

Church's mission when it no longer regarded the *parousia* as imminent. The turning point was for a more balanced appropriation of the Eucharist and this occurs sometime between the latter half of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century. [350]

This study is convinced that the notion of the *communion of saints,* which first surfaced as a doctrine in Remesiana in the fourth century, takes cognizance of this trend. This paradigm change also coincides in the selection of the particular books of the Canon and their number, which Athanasius, as the Bishop of Alexandria (*c.*296-373) in his *39th Festal Letter* where he defines the divine books which are accepted by the Church.[351]

The development of the theology of the Eucharist in the social context of the Christian *koinŏnia* of the early Church and the communal lifestyle it engendered requires special attention. At the outset it needs to be recognized that there had already been as interplay of religious and social factors independent of Christian spirituality. These did lend support to the development of Christian communities

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[350] Gager reports of the redirection of the early Christians – "the initial disappointment among the earliest believers who had expected the end in the immediate future, a disappointment that evoked consolation in the form of sayings (*Mark 9:1*); and a subsequent disappointment among those who had expected the end within the first generation of the faithful that produced consolatory sayings (e.g. *Mark 13:10*) – and the gospel must first be preached to all nations as well as systematic efforts to de-eschatologize the Christian message". The success of these efforts may be seen in the fact that by the year 130 CE. Not only was Christianity no longer an eschatiological community, but, as the reaction to the apocalypotic fervor of Montanism clearly reveals, that it had come to regard eschatological movements as a serious threat. Toward the end of the first century Christians could pray: "Thy kingdom come" (*Matt 6:19*). But at the end of the second century, Tertullian tells us that Christians prayed "for the emperors, for their deputies and all in authority, for the welfare of the world, and for the delay of the final consummation" (*Apol. 39.2; cf. 32.1*) (Gager, pp.47-48).
[351] Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament, Its Origin, Development and Significance,* Clarendon Press. Oxford. 1987, p.112.

to such an extent that it would have been superfluous to contemplate the need for a social doctrine as the Christian manifesto of the early Church. However, as the social values that had been conducive and consistent with Christian evangelisation more or less dissipated by the fourth century when Christianity progressed from a community-based house churches to a world religion especially in the West, a new strategty had to be considered. Thus a case can be made for a social doctrine. The primeval Christian *koinŏnia* needed to be revisited and restated in the form of *communion of saints* in the context of a new social framework.

There is the common view that the pre-Christian world was being prepared to find its meaning and fulfilment in the coming of the Christ and his Church.[352] As pointed out previously, for the post apostolic fathers the Pauline *koinŏnia* was essentially one of unity with God. The union of Christ and the believer with the Deity was attained in the Eucharist. The emphasis of *koinŏnia* was about the personal Eucharistic relationship with God and they were less concerned about the external *societas* or fellowships which, founded on their indigenous culture, had been taken for granted. Metaphorically the closeness of this Eucharistic *koinŏnia* resembled the oneness in being as in marriage. This sense of the Christian *koinŏnia* was also generally understood as essentially liturgical although the Fathers would have been aware that the common participation in the body of Christ resulted in the supernatural union of the faithful.[353] The Greek

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[352] Gager , p.117.
[353] Benko, p.82.

Fathers were not prepared to formalise a theology that extended beyond this vertical or transcendental dimension. As will be shown later in extracting the underlying theology of the concept of *communion of saints,* the Byzantine theology which affirms the absolute transcendence of God at the same time would also reject the view that the human mind can reach the very essence of God and therefore would exclude any possibility of identifying him with any human concept..[354]

For the West, the Incarnation has been the basis of the Christian *koinǒni,* the forerunner to the *communion of saints*. To an extent the elimination of the different perspectives of the Trinity by orthodox theologians itself compromised theological sophistication and debate. The early Church was beset by internal tensions that precluded consensus. While the debates raged on during the fourth century it would take Athanasius to offer a complete understanding of the Trinity. His teaching would argue against the wrong path of implicitly giving superiority to God the Father over Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. [355] It is in the Athanassian Creed probably composed in the first half of the fifth century in Gaul, close to the time of Augustine's death in 439, which would clearly and finally define the doctrine.[356]

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[354] John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology, Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, London: Mowbrays, 1974, p.11.
[355] Charles Freeman, *AD 381, Heretics, Pagans and the Christian State*, London: Pimlico, 2008. pp.197-198.
[356] Freeman, pp.206-207.

The social consciousness of Christianity was a dominant characteristic of its faith even in the absence of a doctrinal assertion. At the same time it should not be overlooked that the social consistency of these religious communities had always been under constant pressure. In this respect O. Cullmann has argued that with the abandonment in the belief of the imminence of the Christian eschatology, rather than paralysing the communities, the Church should turn its attention outwards towards the world.[357] But, as the Church became increasingly diversified, "the social world of the movement" moved towards greater complexity.[358] As indicated by Gager, it would be only a matter of time before the factors that had contributed to the growth and sustenance of the church communities would cease to continue to play a dominant role in the ensuing years. As the Church moved from the East to West the opportunity arose for a fuller theological reflection on *koinǒnia* in terms of a *communio* to meet the changing circumstances of the time. By the close of the fourth century Christianity was being exposed to a transition towards a new world and culture that was different from its foundational centuries. The Church had to adapt itself to this change in order to carry out its mission effectively. It could not afford to remain oblivious to the world outside.

The trajectory from *koinǒnia* to a *communio* was necessitated by events that would justify a doctrine in order to capture and revitalise the social obligations of

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[357] O.Cullmann, "Eschatology in the New Testament" in W.D.Davies and D. Danube (eds.), *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology,* Cambridge: University Press, 1956, pp.409-421.
[358] Gager, p.96.

Christianity. This would portray a consciousness given by Jesus himself in his great sermon on the Beatitudes *(Matt 5:3-12, Lk 6:6:20-23).* From a theological perspective the *koinǒnia* which served well in the first three centuries would have to be revamped and remodelled if it was to continue to be relevant in sustaining the Christian mission. Theologically and spiritually the Church had to apply itself to the doctrine of Incarnation, i.e., what it means "that God is with us" *(Mat 1:23).* The Church as the body of Christ was created not to exist in a state of inactive introspection immersed entirely in essentialism but as a living organism. Christianity was therefore expected to portray itself primarily as communitarian in building up the body of Christ *(Eph 4:12)* by service to the world. The *communion of saints* in the Latin West did not negate but gives legitamacy to the underlying principles of Eastern Christian *konini.* By this doctrine the Church was coming into grips with the changing political, social and economic breakdown of an Empire that was already in decline. The Church was being called to be a living organism that is sensitive to its surrounding.

The social condition of an Empire already in disarray was conducive in Western Europe for intellectualism to take place. [359] The Church had to be conscious of the classical culture in order to carry out its mission. To many of the early Church Fathers, classical philosophy was erroneous for the simple reason that it did not emanate from divine revelation. It was secular and pagan. The early Church Fathers were convinced that whereas Greek philosophers may have argued over

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[359] Freeman, p.172.

words, Christianity possessed the Word which was true wisdom as revealed by God. By the 4th century Christian literature had developed around the interpretation, reinterpretation and commentary of the Old and New Testament. Christianity had the effect of making a synthesis between the Hebrew and Greco-Roman intellectual traditions. Christianity absorbed Hebrew monotheism and retained the Old Testament as the Word of God. As Christianity evolved, it also absorbed various elements of Greek thought which helped to explain why Christianity succeeded in converting more people of the world of Late Antiquity. This would necessitate the Church to review its theology and liturgy. At the height of these changes was the understanding of the scope of an ecclesiology arising from the intimate *communio* of *sancta-sanctis,* i.e., the relationship of the entire *sancti* (Christian community) and the *sancta* (the sacraments) as the means to covey its message of evangelisation *(Mt 28:19).* This had yet to be fully developed in the early Church as deduced from the writing of Ignatius of Antioch (c.d.107).   His ecclesiology was limited to maintaining the unity of the Eucharistic community locally. For him each Eucharistic community saw itself in full unity with the rest *not* by an external superimposed or juridical structure but of the whole Christ represented in each of them. For the first few centuries, the local Church, starting with Paul, was called the whole Church and the term catholicity meant the fullness and the universality of salvation revealed in Christ within the Church. Its original meaning did not refer to geography and catholicity was a sign

of the universal presence of Christ in His Word and in the mystery of the Eucharist.[360] According to Ignatius the faithful have been part of the true Church because in it they receive the Eucharist. The Church is thus defined in terms of the Eucharist, and therefore, it is eschatological though not necessarily juridical. As John Meyendorff notes:

> *Gathered for the Eucharist, the local community becomes the Catholic Church – not a part or segment, but the plenitude. Indeed, where Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.* [361]

This study proposes that a wholesome consciousness of the Eucharist could not be articulated thoroughly before the close of the fourth century. It is more accurate to state that this task would have to be left to the later Fathers, particularly Augustine, Chrysostom and Cyril. They more than others would bring to the forefront and make clear irrefutable assertions that the Eastern and Western representatives of the undivided Church of the fifth century had already declared that the sacrificial quality of the Eucharist is expressed in the sacrificial quality of the community's life and vice versa.[362] The notion of a communion of the people around the Eucharist was already in motion even though it lacked precise definition.

Conclusion

From the earliest New Testament usage and its adaptation by the patristic

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[360] John Myendorff, *Catholicity and The Church,* Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983.
[361] Meyendorff, *Catholicity and The Church,* p.90.
[362] Tillard, *Flesh of the Church*, p.83.

Fathers the term *koinŏnia* had meant genuine communal fellowship of their church-house communities. This form of life can be traced to the Essenes in Judaism. The Fathers too would approximate this *koinŏnia* relationship of their communities both internally and externally by an intimacy that was spiritual. Metaphorically the closeness of such a *koinŏnia* was identifiable with the husband-wife togetherness. They saw the Church as the bride of Christ (*Eph 5:23)* as portrayed by Paul to emphasize oneness in body and spirit. This very nature of its unique communal and religious oneness also implied a sense of exclusivity from the outside world. In this context *koinŏnia* is the Church's self-expression as a community long before it was being envisaged as a doctrine of Christianity.

First century Christians were mainly Jews who were under Hellenistic influence both in Palestine and in the Diaspora.[363] The Church between the second and fourth century was endowed with notable schools of theology at Alexandria and Antioch with "amazing fertility and development". [364] Besides these there were also others of lesser repute scattered through Asia Minor and these Christian writers were also able to offer their views on the doctrinal, expository, devotional, and historical aspects of Christianity. There was rapid and widespread growth of

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[363] The Jews had adjusted to life in the diaspora in ways that made them very marginal vis-à-vis the Judaism of Jerusalem. As early as the third century BCE their Hebrew had decayed to the point that the Torah had to be translated into Greek. In the process of translation not only Greek words, but Hellenistic viewpoints, crept into the Septuagint as a gesture toward accommodation with pagans. "In any event, the Jews outside Palestine read, wrote, spoke, thought, and worshipped in Greek". . (Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity, A Sociologist Considers History,* New Jersey, USA: Princeton University, 1996, pp.57-8).
[364] Badcock, p.137.

new ideas and new expressions in matters of faith and experience. [365] By the time of the Council of Nicaea, non-Roman Christianity had taken possession of the northern fringe of the Mediterranean and in pushing inland, it had penetrated Britain. Southern Gaul too had become largely Christian and this new religion had also found root in Southern Spain. Christianity was also preached and practised over the greater part of the Liberian Peninsula. In Northern Italy as Badcock puts it, Christianity was to be found as a wedge of eastern Christianity situated on a Western soil. [366]

The evidence is compelling enough to acknowledge that the essence of *sanctorum communion* is sourced to the West from Asia Minor which is modern Greece. As illustrated in *Maps 1 and 2* Christianity made its way up the Danube by the great imperial road which ran from the East to South Gaul through the Balkan.[367] The influence of Greek theology, liturgical practices and language continued to be felt in Western Christendom including Rome. [368] It is only in the third century that Latin became the liturgical language in the West but this it did only by adopting many Greek terms and symbols. In the fourth century, the balance between the two languages, Greek and Latin, shifted perceptibly. Greek continued to be the major language of learning, particularly in the realm of

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[365] Badcock, p.138.
[366] Badcock, pp.137-138.
[367] Kelly, J.N.D., p.389.
[368] *Maps 1* and 2: Christianity made its way from Constantinople through Adrianople, Phillipopolis, Serdica, Remesiana, Naissus, Singidunum, Sirmium, Mursa, and Siscia, Christianity had spread to Aquileia, and across the plains of Lombardy to Vienne and Lyons. Before the Council of Nicaea was called, each Christian community was presided over by its bishop near the western edge of Pannonia, Scarabantia, Sabaria, Poetovoio, Siscia, and Stridon. These were deriving their Christianity from Asia Minor, either by way of the Black Sea and up the Danube or by road (Badcock, p.74).

philosophical and theological debate. While the study of Greek in the West continued, at least among the elite classes, it certainly did not disappear and the demand and the number of translations into Latin of major Greek religious, theological, and philosophical works in Greek grew rapidly.[369] Jerome did not complete his translation of the Bible from Greek to Latin until the close of the fifth century.[370]

The Modern Catholic Encyclopaedia defines *koinǒnia* as an intimate participation based on the way Paul uses the term in referring to *two* profound and inseparable realities in the lives of Christians. This involves the faithful in their sharing in or union with the Holy Spirit attained through baptism *(2 Cor 13:14)* and their sharing or union of the Blood of Christ through the Eucharist *(1 Cor 10:16)."* [371] In Latin *koinǒnia* is *communionem* or *communio* from which *communion* is derived in English. It is underpinned by the participation in the sacraments which had been used mainly in the liturgies of the evangelist Mark [372], Chrysostom (c.347-407) [373] and Basil the Great of Caesarea (329-379)[374]. Basil in particular, *inter alia,* as the father of communal monasticism, had been able to draw the guidelines that focussed and brought together both community life and liturgical prayer.[375] The *communio* was *communion* in the holy things.

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[369] Lafferty, pp.2-3.
[370] Donald Attwater, *Dictionary of Saints*, London: Penguin Books, 1983, p.182.
[371] Glazier and Hellwig, p.186.
[372] "Church Fathers: Divine Liturgy of St. Mark", http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0718.htm 14/10/2008.
[373] "The Divine Liturgy", http://www.ocf.org/OrthodoxPage/liturgy/liturgy.html 30/12/2009; Chrysostom, p.464.
[374] Badcock, p.250.
[375] Attwater, pp.56-57.

While *koinǒnia* or such related expressions such as *konia ton hagion,* [376]
koinonia bagion [377] or *koinonia to hagion* [378] floated firmly in the East to relate to
the sacraments, the Latin equivalent *sanctorum communionem* fluctuated in
meaning in the West.[379]

The time when the terms *communio* and *sanctorum* in the West came together
as an expression is not precisely clear. Neither is there such a term in the
scripture.[380] There is consensus that it was in Augustine's era (354-430) that the
expression *communio sanctorum* probably germinated.[381] Augustine himself
used the expression only once in his *Sermo (52:6)* against the Patripassian
heretics and it relates to participation in the sacraments which was the major
concern of his age. [382] But this faith in the sacraments which began as appositive
to the concept of Church underwent significant transformation. By the close of
fourth century there was already a tendency for the common affirmation of faith in
the sacraments of the Church to be extended to a personalised level as the
communion of fellowship among saints.[383]

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[376] Rausch, *I believe in God,* p.142.
[377] Barclay, p.291.
[378] Marthaler, p.330.
[379] Kelly, J.N.D., pp. 390-391.
[380] Glazier and Hellwig, p.186.
[381] Benko, p.54.
[382] Sermo 52.6: Augustine: "And these hath the Church Catholic separated from the communion of saints, that they might not deceive any, but dispute in separation from her.*"* (John E. Rotelle (ed.), *The Works of Saint Augustine, Sermons,* Augustinian Heritage Institute, New City Press, Second Release, Electronic edition, Charlottesville, Va.: InteLex Corporation, 2001). (The underlining is author's own).
Patripassianism also called Sabellianism or Monarchianism is a Christian heretical doctrine of the 3rd century that is opposed to the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Patripassianism takes the view that the Father suffers in contrast to the orthodox teaching that the divine nature is incapable of suffering. (Elwell, pp.319-320.
[383] Benko*,* p.139.

Thus Augustine uses the expression *communion of saints* to mean both the sacraments and Church fellowship. Firstly Augustine speaks of the Catholic Church as removing Patripassian heretics from the communion. In *Serm.117.6* Augustine speaks of heretics as not attaining a share in the fellowship of saints. [384] Here he appears to use the expression to mean a social group or *societas* and not as *communio*. The meaning seems to verge towards the abstract sense. In a more specific way and in contrast to *societas,* elsewhere he uses the phrase *communio sacramentorum* to mean participation in the holy things, which implies that the Church's congregation as the *sancti* is in communion with the *sancta* or the sacraments. A.E. Burn therefore warns that one should not get the idea that c*ommunion of sacraments* is an antithesis to *communion of saints* as one complements the other. [385] It also means that this mutual membership of Christians that form the Christian body or society also excludes others not in fellowship. The implication of such exclusion is best evidenced during the Donatist controversy when Augustine uses the expression to describe the congregation as the Church of saints. [386] The meaning is further clarified by the Donatists themselves. They, because of their rigorism, claimed that they alone are entitled to be known as *communio sanctorum* in contrast to the more flexible approach of the Church. [387] From his leading work on the history of the Apostles' Creed, Peter King's submits that it is probably in opposition to these proud

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[384] Rotelle, *The* Works *of Saint Augustine, Sermons*. (The underlining is author's own).
[385] Burn, p.lxxxii; *Sermo* 117.6: Augustine: "This the faith rejects, Catholic ears reject it, it is anathematized, belongs not to the fellowship and <u>society of the saints</u>" (The underlining is author's own).
[386] Benko pp 52-54
[387] Benko, p.94.

opinions and schismatical practices that *communion of saints* was added as an explanatory clause to the holy Catholic church to reject the claims of the Donatists. Accordingly, it is likely that the *communion of saints* was introduced into the Creed to "signify unto us…that against these schismatic's that the Christian unity, is not divided, because the world is divided into several kingdoms, seeing in every place where there are Christians, the Catholic Church is found".[388]

Like Cyprian who excluded the Novatians, Augustine insists that sacraments are efficacious only in the Church and he stresses this message to the Donatists. This link between *sanctam ecclesiam* and *remissionem peccatorem* is integral to the confession because eternal salvation can be imparted only through the sacraments of the Church. As these were being denied, the Donaists could no longer claim to be saints. For Augustine *communio sacramentorum* is therefore synonymous with *sanctorum communionem.* About the time of Augustine there also appears in *Codex Theodosianus* (XV1 5.14) an Imperial Rescript dated 388 which bans the Apollinarian heretics from the *sanctorum communio* in these words:

> *sectarians of the different heresies should be kept back from all places, from the walls of the cities, from the society of the people of distinction, from the communio sanctorum.* [389]

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[388] Peter King, *The History of the Apostles' Creed, with Critical Observation on its Articles,* New Jersey: John Woods, 1804, pp.291-292.

[389] *Apollinarianism* is a Christological heresy: Christ had a human body and a human sensitive soul, but no human rational mind, the Divine *Logos* taking the place of this. . In short, Jesus was divine but not human. The author of this theory was Apollinaris (*Apolinarios*) and it flourished in the latter half of the fourth century. It was condemned by the First Council of Constantine 381 CE (McBrien, p.72).

The Rescript further bans these heretics from ordaining clergy and from other public activities involving the congregation. From the standpoint of grammatical construction, it is possible to conclude that this ban from *communio sanctorum* does not refer to fellowship with the Church community as there were already alternative terms in the *Codex* to describe the Church as *congregatio* and *ecclesia (*e.g., *congregatio sanctorum* or *ecclesia sancta).Communio sanctorum* in the *Codex* would therefore more likely refer entirely to the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist. This interpretation is also consistent with previous decrees issued against the Apollinarians which as early as 383 instituted *inhiberi a communione sanctorum (*XV1 5.12), that is, 'to be kept back from the sacraments' or more loosely an excommunication.[390] The imposition of such a ban deprived them of their leaders and denied the Christian worship and participation in the sacraments. It therefore requires the force of law by way of an imperial decree to ensure that their participation in the sacraments is illegal.[391]

The expression is also featured at the *Council of Nimes* (394 or 396) in Southern Gaul or France. The synod issued a canon (*C.C.L.* 148, 50) arising from the information brought to the Gallican bishops who met to deal with the Manichean heretics from the East. They had pretended to be Catholic priests and deacons with forged letters of commendation. The bishops noted that these had seized the allowance and other contributions. This behaviour caused the bishops to

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[390] Benko, p.95.
[391] R. MacMullen, *Christianising the Roman Empire 100-400*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 86-101.

announce that by the *sanctorum communio* these pretenders had given the appearance of themselves as a "simulated religion". [392] The synod could therefore be understood as attempting to exclude these pretenders from being "admitted to the service of the altars".[393] Used in this sense it is clear that the expression *sanctorum communio* implies participation in the sacraments particularly in the Eucharist by the false clergies who had not been in communion with the saints of the Church.

By the close of the fourth century, in his *Epistulae* (*92.3*) Jerome mentions that Bishop Isidore was separated from the *communio sanctorum* by many bishops for a variety of reasons. But Theophilus the bishop of Alexandria had already written to the bishops of Palestine and Cyprus in 401 against Isidorus with a *Saparari a communione sanctorum* which is his exclusion from the Church or excommunication from the fellowship of the holy ones. Since this letter was written before the disciplinary process which was still in progress, excommunication from the Church had been completed. The expression *communionen sanctorum* here could therefore be interpreted to mean a suspension of Isidorus' priestly duty of communion of the holy mysteries, that is, the sacraments which was a privilege several Bishops had already denied him earlier.[394]

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[392] Burn, p.xlvii.
[393] Burn, p.xlvii.
[394] Werner Elert, "Die Herkunft der Formel "Sanctorum Communion", *Theologische Literaturzeitung,,* Leipzig, 74, 1949, cols. 577.

From the foregoing the expression *communion of saints* from the time of Augustine onwards and approximately towards the fifth century, had been used to mean both the participation in the sacraments especially the Eucharist as well as the fellowship with the Church which is underpinned by the sacraments. This inter-changeability of its definition conforms to Paul's exhortations (*Romans 12:4* and *Ephesians 4:4-6)* that both the Eucharist and the Church constitute the body of Christ. In a sense the translations of *sanctorum communionem* in the vernacular to a personalised sense as *communion of saints* does not do full justice to its originality and basis which is essentially sacramental. Notwithstanding this limitation, socially and legally the expression *communion of saints* was already fulfilling conventional understandings that had been fairly specific and consistent relating to the Eucharist and Church fellowship. At the same time this communion was denied under certain circumstances. It was inevitable that it would be only a matter of time before the notion of communion was given recognition in a creed of the Church. Such a step would underwrite a religious belief and praxis of the Church to give authenticity and certainty.

COMMUNION OF SAINTS AS A CREED

To date scholarship has been unable to pinpoint the exact cause of upgrading the expression *communion of saints* into a creed of the Church. Its contribution to Christianity has thereby remained speculative. Kelly recommends that the most profitable method of approaching the problem is to study them as they are found in the creeds even if it is an insoluble one. [395] This study is, however, convinced that there are certain identifiable leads that can assist in presenting a coherent picture that could have justify its doctrinal endorsement. Generally a creed aims to declare the truth of salvation in the face of heretical opposition. Also, it ought to represent the bare minimum of dogmatic requirement that is inalterable after the Church had fully and finally made up its mind.[396] In addition a creed may be formulated to bring clarity. Cyril of Jerusalem (*c.*315-*c.*386 CE) in his *Catechetical Lecture (V.12*) states that in his time a creed would have been formulated since not everyone was able to read the scriptures for lack of education or for want of time.[397] The creeds – understood as a condensed version of the whole doctrine of faith – have been designed to be committed to memory, treasured and safeguarded because, to quote Cyril "it is not some human compilation, but consists of the most important points collected out of scripture".[398]The fundamental nature of a creed can therefore be interpreted as

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[395] Kelly, J.N.D., p.391.
[396] Badcock, p.245.
[397] Young, p.5.
[398] Young, p.5.

summaries or digests of the scriptures.[399]

The fourth century was the age of creed-drafting.[400] By determining the social and cultural mood and expectations of the time with a critical structural analysis of the prevailing creeds, a basis can be established for upgrading the notion of the *communion of saints* to creedal level. In the examination of the emergence of the notion of *communion of saints* dealt with previously, it is apparent there was already a level of certainty that it is directly associated with the Eucharist. This study will establish that this understanding prevailed when the local churches took upon themselves to affirm this sacramental phenomenon of their faith as a creed in the West.

The underlying motif of *communion of saints* can be attributed to a paradigm change in how Christians come to realize their spirituality and the meaning it brings to life. The fourth century, after Nicaea, was a turning point in the life of the Church. The Church saw the need to become socially involved to be relevant. A more personalised interpretation of its sacraments was a natural outcome and this was in keeping with the teaching of the historical Jesus who himself had initiated a social revolution by attending to both the spiritual and social expectations of his followers (*Matt 4-5).* Even Constantine in calling for the Council to achieving unity of Christians was motivated by his deeply embedded

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[399] Young, p.5.
[400] Rausch, *I believe in God,* p.13.

personal attitude that religion had a social function.[401] This study identifies that between 380 and 450 the Church undertook self-reflection on its place in society. As observed by Rousseau, by that time "the Church had reached a level of theological sophistication where it was capable of debating in new terms the relation of religion to public life".[402] He asserts there has been the need for the Church to sort out what type of religious leadership it needs to evangelise the Church's social manifesto implied in the sacraments.[403]

It is acknowledged that the New Testament makes no mention of institutional sanctity. It does not speak of the many Church institutions, places, times and implements in which the Church invests the attribute of 'holy'. The only kind of holiness at issue here is a completely *personal* sanctity where the believers who have been set apart from the sinful world by God's saving act in Christ have entered a new Christian existence. [404] This study gives credence to the view expressed by Jeffrey VanderWilt that they alone make up the original *sanctorum communio* or the *communion of saints.* Others too have expressed this attribute of holiness in such terms as the bond of life of the Christians to imply that they are in relation to the vision and mission which makes the Church holy. [405]

This change in direction is best illustrated in the formidable contribution of two

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[401] Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy, An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology,* Oxford: University Press, 2004, pp.86-88.
[402] Rousseau, p.237
[403] Rousseau, p.237.
[404] Jeffrey VanderWilt, *A Church Without Borders*, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1998, p.325.
[405] Morris Pelzel and Thomas, P Walters,. (eds.) *Ecclesiology. The Church as Communion and Mission* Chicago, Illinois: Lyola Press, 2001, pp.1-2.

great fourth century Saints of the Church, Hilary of Poitiers (*c.*315-*c.*367) and Basil the Great (*c.*330-*c.*379). Hilary is perhaps the first to extrapolate the *sancta* (sacraments) to a personalized meaning of *sancti* (saints*).* This is reflected in Hilary's commentary on the Eucharist, *in Tract. Ps L1V 14,* when he revives the significance of the Eucharist. He declares that the ultimate objectivity of baptism is to establish a relationship which has both vertical and horizontal dimensions.[406] In so doing Hilary could be seen as reviving the Christian-Platonist spiritual brotherhood. In this he is followed by his contemporary the Cappadocian, Basil the Great of Caesarea. For Basil the praxis of his spirituality is in transforming his Eastern Church from communal monasticism to social engagement by active participation or *koinóna* in the life of the people of Caesarea. For him, "familial-like ties and service to one another dominates Basil's *Rules* and treatises on the monastic life" because human beings are social and not solitary beings and that the fundamental aim of any who sought perfection must therefore be the common life.[407] Basil thus brings a new dimension to monastic life. He confirms that religious life does not imply flight from the world but the overthrow of evil within it. Thus Christianity aims at changing society and transforming organised religion into a social as well as an individual creed.[408] Based on these works can be traced the genesis of what modern theologians – the likes of Dietrich Bonheoffer (1906-1945) – would describe as socialization of the Church. [409]

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[406] MPL 9, 231.
[407] W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984, p.631.
[408] Frend, p.631.
[409] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio, A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church,* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

Several factors had contributed the trend for a shift towards the personification of the sacraments. These are now considered.

Creeds of East and West

From philological and structural perspectives, it is possible to establish that the Eucharist was the centrepiece of faith in the first centuries of Christianity. This rationale is supported by these factors:

(a) Commonality of the creeds of East and West.

Until the fourth century, the liturgies and the creeds were in Greek for all the local churches of both East and West. There were several baptismal creeds in the fourth and fifth centuries and these are interrelated to the Nicene Creed. [410] As shown in *Table 1* below the individual Greek creeds generally share a common terminology, style and thought-structure in the various sectors of Christendom. They all confess to *one* baptism*.*

In addition, the creed of *Second Synod of Antioch* (341 CE) contains the baptismal clause which brings greater clarity on the efficacy of baptism: "And in the Holy Spirit, who is given to those who believe for comfort, sanctification and perfection, as also our

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[410] Kelly, J.N.D., p.181.

Lord Jesus Christ commanded his disciples…"[411]   This is also evident in the reconstruction of the earliest local Eastern *Creed of Jerusalem* which is derived from the catechetical lectures of Cyril. The relevant article reiterates that "in one baptism of repentance to the remission of sins" is followed the declaration of belief in one holy Catholic church, the resurrection of the flesh and in life everlasting. [412] Eternal life has been the objective of the sanctification attained by baptism and ultimately the Eucharist. Epiphanius I *(c.374)* used a shorter form in Palestine: "We confess one baptism to the forgiveness of sins, resurrection and in the life of age to come".[413]

An example of a Syrian baptismal creed found in the *Apostolic Constitutions* compiled in Syria or Palestine towards the end of the fourth century explains unambiguously the link between baptism, sainthood, forgiveness of sins and life everlasting. Thus:

> *I am baptized also in the Holy Spirit…who worked in*
> <u>*all the saints*</u> *from the beginning, and afterwards was*
> *sent to the apostles also from the Father…and after*
> *the apostles to all believers within the holy Catholic*
> *and apostolic church; in the resurrection of the flesh*

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[411] Ludwig G. Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole and Glaubensregeln der alten Kirsche*, Third Edition, Breslau, 1897, pp.153-156; Benko, p.59; Kelly, J.N.D., 263 -274.
[412] Kelly, J.N.D., p.184.
[413] Hahn, L.G., pp.153-156; Benko, p.58.

and in the remission of sins and in the kingdom of heaven and in the life of the age to come.[414]

Towards the end of the fourth century the *Armeniacum Creed* appears also with a similar article: "We believe …in one baptism, in repentance and forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the dead and in the life eternal".[415]

The original *Nicene Creed* itself, however, makes no direct reference whatsoever to baptism as it was not intended as a baptismal creed. Its main purpose was to address the controversies surrounding the Trinity. The Council of Nicaea was more concerned with the theological controversies of the time and it therefore sought agreements on matters of faith. Kelly, relying on A.C.H.Turner, therefore drives home the point that the old local creeds were for the catechumens and the Nicene Creed was for the bishops.[416] Throughout the first forty years following Nicaea the council of bishops have therefore continued to formulate a number of creeds in words different from those used at Nicaea for their local church but with this clear assumption that one might on an ad hoc basis, produce a creed

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[414] Kelly, J.N.D., pp..186-187.
[415] Hahn, L.G., p.139. (The underlining is author's own).
[416] Kelly, J.N.D., p.205.

with the same faith more clearly.[417] The idea of Nicaea as a universal standard of faith remained fluid but evolving until the end of the century. But as a uniform baptismal creed it was unacceptable to all the churches until a significant modification was made to the original Creed. It would be almost five decades later when it would make reference to the role of the sacraments. Thus the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381 CE) would replace the original Nicene Creed so as to make baptism a *universal* edict in Christianity. It declares that catechumens assert that they confess one baptism before proceeding to utter their belief in the forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come. [418] It is only reasonable to assume that this model of the baptismal creed of the East would have had corresponding influence on its Latin counterpart which until the fourth century was also liturgically Greek.

(b) The contribution of Hilary of Poiters.

The Church's sacraments from the beginning have been accepted seen as an unseen unifying grace appointed by Christ.[419] From the start too it was universally accepted that baptism is the rite of admission to the Church and only those who have been baptized in

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[417] Ayres, p.86.
[418] Kelly, J.N.D., p.296; Schaff, v..2, pp.57.
[419] Kelly, J.N.D., p.193.

the Lord's name may partake the Eucharist.[420] Hilary recognizes

that the orthodox of the West had kept aloof from the orthodox of

the East, firstly from ignorance of events, secondly from a

misunderstanding of the word *homousios* (ὁμοούσιος),[421] and

thirdly from the feelings of distrust which were prevalent. His aim

throughout has been to frustrate the heretic and assist the Catholic.

The Greek confessions in the Western sector had already been

translated into Latin, but Hilary considered it necessary to give his

own independent translations, the previous versions he felt as

having been half-unintelligible on account of their slavish

adherence to the original. [422] By his works and travels he was

crucial in bringing together the common understanding of the

baptismal creeds between the two sectors of Christianity as well as

in the West itself. He toiled for the churches of the East and West

so that each could have more influence on each other in their

creeds, rule, and practice.[423]

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[420] Kleist , "The Didache", p.20.

[421] .*Homousios* literally means same *(homo)* in substance *(ousia)* or is sometimes translated 'consubstantial'. The term was employed by the Council of Nicaea to describe the relationship between the Son of God and the Father. Later it was used to describe the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son and thus was instrumental in the developing doctrine of Trinity (Elwell, p.232).

[422]"Hilary of Poitiers" in *Fathers of the Church,* www.newadvent.org › 28/01/2010

[423]Saint Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, Doctor of the Church distinguished himself as a supporter of Athanasius against Arianism. He toiled arduously to bring some unity of the churches in the East and West.("Hilary_of_Poitiers" in *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hilary_of _Poitiers, 28/01/2010).

(c) The collaboration of the creeds of the East and West.

The term *sanctorum communionem* first made its appearance in *c.*350 in the midst of intense theological debates about the Trinity. The influence of Hilary in bringing consensus to the theological importance, purpose and effects of baptism has already been mentioned. It is therefore difficult to envisage a baptismal creed in the West without any reference to this sacrament. While the usual baptismal creed in the Latin speaking church – *Symbolum Apostolorum* or the Apostles' Creed – makes no reference to baptism, others such as the *Confession of the Spanish Church* in Priscillian which adopts a language in Latin similar to the East in how baptism affects external salvation.[424] Also following the Eastern creeds is an extract of a similar creedal formula which according to J.L.Jacobi was handed down in Latin before the close of the fourth century (*c.*381). It reads: *"…Credo illud solum baptisma esse in remissionem peccatorum…, Credo futuram resurrectionem omnium homininum…, Vitam aeternam.*[425] This establishes the sacramental essence that was the core belief of the baptismal formula. Furthermore, as late as the six century, in the *Third Formula of Sacramentorum Gallicanum* there is almost an identical liturgical expression that unequivocally affirms the same

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[424] Kelly, J.N.D., p.177.

[425] J.L.Jacobi, *Zeitschrift fur Kirchengeschishte,* Gotha, 4, 1884; Benko, p.62.

affirmation of intent on the efficacy of baptism. It reads: *Per baptismum sanctum, Remissionem peccatorum, Carnis resurrectionemm, In vitam aeternam.* [426] When compared *(Table 1),* the wording and structure of the Greek and the Latin creeds are virtually similar but with *one* difference: the substitution of *per baptisma sanctum* by *sanctorum communionem.*[427] Otherwise, all these baptismal creeds overwhelmingly display a common thought-process. Sequentially the articles themselves share a common structure, syntax and essence. A common meaning can thus be reasonably arrived by juxtapositioning of *one baptism* with *communion of saints* between these creeds. These creeds show remarkable similarities as baptismal creeds which make it possible for the following assumptions to take place.

Firstly, the two phrases *one baptism* and *communion of saints* are interchangeable between the Eastern and Western creeds. Secondly, the two terms are interchangeable within the Western creeds and finally, the *communion of saints* is a Western derivation implying the significance and scope of *one baptism* of the East.

Liturgically the *sanctum* of the sacrament of baptism would seem synonymous

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[426] Hahn, L.G., p.66; Benko, p.63.
[427.]Extracted from a sermon of bishop Arles (503-543 CE) of Caesarius (Bettenson, p.24).

with the *sancta* in *sanctorum communionem.* Until late eighth century, the Apostles' Creed which continued as the baptismal creed in the West since *c.*350 was deficient in the sense that it alone makes no specific reference to the sacrament. It is probable that the effects of baptism in the Eastern creeds had already received a different form in the West so that the demand for reform did not arise. It will be shown that by the fourth and certainly by the fifth century, the doctrines of forgiveness of sins and role of the sacraments could have been so developed in the West that a single mention of *one baptism* in the Apostles' Creed would have seemed no longer to be serving its purpose adequately. Theologically by this time the West would have already moved beyond this point.

On the other hand, it could be said that already a more explicit undertaking that visualises the Church as a social movement rooted in the baptism was already being envisaged. It is committed to realizing the unity of the people of God. [428] By incorporating the *communion of saints* in place of *one baptism* it would appear that the Eastern thought was being overtaken and expanded to give fuller meaning of the Eucharist. The *communion of saints* would have been able to convey the significance of the participation in the holy sacraments and much more than just *one baptism.* It is also probable that before the origin of *baptismum salutare* or *baptismum in remissionem peccatorum* which have had their origin in the East, it was already being supplemented by *sanctorum*

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[428] Chadwick, p.10.

communionem in the West before it finally found its place in the Apostles'
Creed.[429]

Badcock in his study of the early Eastern creeds has been able to trace the
communion of saints firstly in the Creed of Marcosians by structural
reconstruction of a creed from the gnostic writer Marcion. [430] Marcion was a
slightly older contemporary of Irenaeus who lived somewhere in Asia Minor and
Irenaeus makes reference to him in his *Adv.Haer* (1.xiv.2). This Marcosian Creed
can therefore be dated to the second century. According to Badcock, this
reconstruction contains in essence the concept of *communion of saints* from the
translation of the initial expression it has used. It is the *communion of powers*
which he is satisfied most likely refers to the *communion of powers.*[431] Badcock
assumes that the *communion of powers* is equivalent to *communion of saints* as
such an understanding was certainly prevalent in Asia Minor at that time.

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[429] Benko, p.63.
[430] Badcock, p.251.
[431] Badcock, p.251.

Table 1: Relationship between *one baptism* and *communion of saints*.

Eastern Creeds				Latin Creeds				
Apostolic Constitutions	Epiphanus I	Nestorian Creed	Nicaea-Constantinopolitan Creed	Niceta's Creed	Jerome's Symbol	Spanish Confession	Gallician Creed	Apostles Creed *
312CE	374CE	Before 381CE	364CE	335- 414CE	342 - 420CE	385CE	503 - 543CE	8th Century
Syria	Palestine	Syria						
(Benko, pp.57-58)	(Hahn, p.125)	(Caspari, I, p.116)	(Schaff, p.52)	(Badcock, p.72)	(Badcock, p.76)	(Kelly, p.177)	(Bettenson, p.24)	(Schaff, p.45)
I am also baptised…	We confess…	We confess…	We confess…	We believe… in	We believe… in	We believe… in	We believe… in	I believe in the …
in the holy spirit	one baptism	one baptism	one baptism	communion of saints;	communion of saints;	one baptism	communion of saints;	communion of sins;
in the resurrection of the flesh;	forgiveness of sins;	forgiveness of sins;	forgiveness of sins;	forgiveness of sins;	forgiveness of sins;	forgiveness of sins;	the remission of sins;	forgiveness of sins;
in the remission of sins;	the resurrection of the dead;	the resurrection of the dead;	the resurrection of the dead;	resurrection of the flesh;	resurrection of the flesh;	resurrection of the flesh;	resurrection of the flesh;	resurrection of the body;
and in the life of age to come.	life of the age to come.	eternal life.	life of the age to come.	life everlasting.	life everlasting.	life everlasting.	life eternal.	life everlasting.

*There is a close relationship between the Greek and Latin baptismal creeds in terms of structural placement and intent. Bishop Rufinus of Aquileia (345-410) preferred the *Aquilien Creed* (Aquileia is today's Northern Italy) only because it is virtually identical to the *Old Roman Creed* (the predecessor of to-day's Apostles' Creed) and it had undergone no alteration from the age of the Apostles. About the same time bishop Marcellus of Ancyra (*c.* 374) in modern day Ankara, the capital of Turkey and the seat of Roman administration of Galatia in 314 was acquainted with a practically identical formulary in Greek, which is all probability was officially in use at Rome about 340. The Greek text bears no signs of translation; consequently scholars have inferred that it represents either the original text of the Roman creed or at any rate as an alternative Greek text designed for Greek-speaking catechumens (Rufinus, "A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed" in J.N.D.Kelly (trans.), *Ancient Christian Writers*, *No.20,* New York: Newman Press, 1954, pp.12-17.

He comes to this assumption because of the way *communion of saints* was used in the creed of Niceta and in an Armenian creed. [432] But Badcock's translation has not been corroborated by other investigators.

In the fourth century's Eastern *Apostolic Constitutions* there is an article which attests a belief in the sanctification of the converts to a state of sainthood. [433] It reads as follows:

> *And I believe…I am baptized also in the Holy Spirit, that is the Paraclete, Who worked in <u>all the saints</u> from the beginning, and afterwards was sent to the apostles also from the Father according to the promise of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, and after the apostles to all believers within the holy catholic and apostolic church; in the resurrection of the flesh and in the remission of sins and in the kingdom of heaven and in the life of the age to come.* [434]

This mention of 'all the saints' in this document arises from the sacrament of baptism whereby believers are transformed into saints of the holy catholic and apostolic church. This trend towards sainthood attained by baptism and completed in the Eucharist is also confirmed by Cyril who in his *Catechesis (Mystagogic Catechesis 5.19)* instructs in liturgical language that the 'holy things relate to the holy persons. In a special reference to the Eucharist he insists that

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[432] An Armenian creed of uncertain date and origin which is similar to the *Antiphony of Bangor* that can be dated to 680-691This Antiphony reads: "We believe in the forgiveness of sins in the holy Church, and in he communion of saints" (Badcock, p.249).

[433] Hahn, L.G., dates it to 4th century in Syria, p.129; Kattenbusch fixes it prior to 312, (*Das apostolische 1,* p.266); Kelly, J.N.D., dates this to the end of fourth century p.186 and Schaff to c.350 (v.2, p.39).

[434] Kelly, J.N.D., pp.186-187. (The underlining is author's own.).

we are made holy not by nature but by participation, discipline and prayer. By 'holy things for holy people' Cyril is alluding to the transformation of his converts to saints made possible by the sacraments. The saints then make up the Church on earth as the Church is the beholder and deliverer of the sacraments. Cyril's *Catechesis* is a clear indication of the concept of the Church itself in that the Church is God's dwelling place and, the saints or the disciples who make up the Church are a special people who have been elected with a mission of salvation for all the people of God. The *communion of saints* is the communion of the sacraments because the sacraments which sanctifiy the people also draws them together to form the Church. The Church as such is a special community elected from all the people of God.

Creeds of Jerome and Niceta

This study has already traced the genesis of the concept of the Church from its sacramentality derived from the Eastern tradition. From *Maps 1* and *2* the route of the geographical spread of Christianity from the East can be safely established. The essence of the *communion of saints* is more likely developed in the East before it matures into a creedal form in the West. In *Fides Hieronymi* (1904) the Benedictine Dom G. Morin identifies the *Symbol of Jerome* which is a baptismal creed in the desert Chalcis formulated by Jerome (*c.*342-420) around 377 and 378.[435] *Jerome's Symbol* is of special interest because of its Eastern

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[435] Dom Morin, "Sermons of St. Jerome", *Anecdota Maredsolana,* III, 3, Oxford, 1897, pp.199-200; Badcock, pp.75-76.

traits.[436] Jerome draws his creed from his native place Stridon in Pannonia which itself derived its Christianity from the East.[437] By comparative examination it is possible to conclude that Jerome's creed was based on the Nicene Creed because as a Catholic he wants to dissociate himself from nearly all the bishops of Pannonia who are Arians. Of special significance is the section of *Jerome's Symbol* which states:

> *I believe…in the remission of sins, in the holy church, the* *communion of saints, the resurrection and life everlasting.* [438]

If this *Symbol* is considered with his earlier *'saparari'* in his *Epistulae* on Bishop Isidore, which he wrote about two decades earlier, a couple of useful conclusions can safely be drawn.[439] Firstly, the *sanctorum* is the Eucharist and secondly, in the *Symbol,* he emphasizes in concrete terms the ecclesiological implications arising from the Eucharistic communion. He introduces into his creed the phrase *sanctorum communionem* to highlight the communal significance of the Eucharist to his community. Like Paul who refers to his house-churches as the body of Christ *(1 Cor 12:13),* Jerome also uses his creed to exclude from *communio* or fellowship the likes of Isidore and the Arian bishops who are not in communion with the main stream Christians loyal to the Nicene Creed. For Jerome the

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[436] Kelly, J.N.D., p.389.
[437] Pannonia is an ancient priovince of the Roman Empire north and east by the Danube. It is located mostly over the territory of the present-day western-half of Hungary with small parts in Austria, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina *(Map 1).*
[438] Badcock, pp.76-77. (The underlining is author's own.)
[439] Cf. p.124.

communion of saints implies a close sanctified community and an ecclesiology that is exclusive.

Bishop Niceta of Remesiana (*c.*335-414) was the first to offer a full catechesis of the doctrine. Hermeneutically, from his *De Symbola,* Niceta alone offers a thorough understanding of the scope of *communion of saints* and his reason for introducing this article into his creed.[440] For the first time in the Church's history, sufficient information is made available about the doctrine of *communion of saints* as a creed.[441] But Niceta should not be seen in isolation. Perhaps not critically studied adequately is that Jerome, Niceta, Paulinus of Nola and Augustine are contemporaries. They certainly were no strangers to each other's goal or works. They in fact share common cause against the heretics of their time. Jerome and Niceta were influenced by the catecheses of another contemporary Cyril of Jerusalem. Also, Jerome comes from an orthodox Christian parentage even though he was baptized in Rome (c.363-366).[442] At Rome Jerome was also influenced by his Eastern patrons. [443] On the death of Pope Damasus (d.384) who had directed him to revise the Latin version of the New Testament, he returns to the East. Finally, in 386 he settles in Bethlehem where he has taught Greek and Latin.[444]

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[440] Burn, p.lxxiv, Full text of Niceta's Creed.
[441] Burn, p.lxxiv. There is consensus among most commentators (Caspari, Humpel, Hahn and Kattenbusch) on Burn's reconstruction of Niceta's creed especially Article (1X).
[442] Di Berardino, p.5
[443] Di Berardino.215.
[444] Attwater, p.182.

Niceta, as his name suggests, was apparently Greek.[445] His list of canticles is Eastern rather than Western.[446] He makes many references to Paul's epistles in Greek and makes known his knowledge of such a work as the *Catechesis of Cyril of Jerusalem*.[447] His introduction of antiphonal singing can be dated back to Basil of Caesarea (*c.*330-379). [448] Also, all his Old Testament quotes are translations from the Septuagint.[449] Both Jerome and Niceta also have had a friend in common. He is the influential bishop and poet Paulinus of Nola. All three including Augustine have condemned Arianism. It is no strange coincidence that both Niceta and Jerome structure their creeds to show remarkable similarities in content and arrangement. *Jerome's Symbol* has been slightly re-arranged here for the purpose of this comparison:

Niceta's Creed (*c.*335-*c.*414) [450]	Jerome's Symbol (*c.*342-420) [451]
Caeli et terrae Creatorem	*Creatorem caeli et terrae*
Sanctam ecclesiam catholicicam	*in sancta ecclesia catholica*
Communionem sanctorum	*Sanctorum communionem*
Remessionam peccatorum	*remissionam peccatorum*
Carnis resurrectionem;	*Carnis ressurectionem*
Et vitam aeternam.	*ad vitam aeternam*

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[445] Badcock, p.147.
[446] Burn, p.114.
[447] Niceta, Gerald G. Walsh (trans.), "Niceta of Remsiana Writings" in *The Fathers of the Church*, New York: Fathers of the Church Inc., 1949, p.lxix.
[448] Burn, p.xc.
[449] Badcock, p.75
[450] Badcock, p.72.
[451] Badcock, p.76.

A close correlation is evident between both these Latin creeds in relation to their formulations and content. Especially apparent is the placement of *communionem sanctorum or sanctorum communionem (communion of saints)* towards the end and before *Carnis ressurectionem* (the resurrection of the flesh/body) and *ad vitam aeternam* (life everlasting). Also both creeds show their Eastern traits by the presence of the articles 'Creator of heaven and earth' *(Creatorem caeli et terrae* or *creatorem caeli et terrae)* and 'life everlasting' which can be traced back to the fourth century.[452] At the same time, Jerome, Niceta and Paulinus share a common concern for the second century creed of Hippolytus of Rome (*c.*170-*c.*236) who headed a schismatic group as a rival bishop of Rome against the popes of his time and has been named as the first Antipope [453] and their interest in the Eastern Apostolic Constitution that was particularly directed against heresies of the Nicene Creed. [454] Paulinus also admires Niceta for his learning and described him as a true scholar.[455] The rift between the East and West was such a concern for Paulinus that it caused him to beg Niceta to remember that God meant him to be a link between East and West and lead more than one people than one people. [456]

Hermeneutically in his six works and especially in his *De symbolo* – or the

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[452] Kelly, J.N.D., pp.181-190.

[453] F.L.Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford: University Press, 2005.

[454] Kelly, J.N.D., pp.88-99.

[455] As the missionary bishop of the distant Dacia, Niceta himself was no stranger to the works of Ambrose and Augustine so much so Burn places Niceta "on equal terms to the society" of Ambrose and Augustine because their friendship is based on "something more than affinity of cultural tastes": They enjoyed the glowing words Niceta wrote in his Sermon on the Creed on *communion of saints* (Burn, p.lvii)..

[456] Niceta, p.5.

explanation to his creed – Niceta encapsulates several fundamental principles about the *communion of saints* that can be retrieved from fourth century Christianity. These were only vaguely touched upon in the Nicene Creed. In *De symbolo.* Niceta extols his understanding of the Church and what it should mean when as Christians they affirm their belief in the *communion of saints.*[457]

Niceta is also exemplary in explaining how the essential ingredients of the doctrine are adopted and applied by his followers. For Niceta and his community to believe in the *communion of saints* is to live by these principles:

(a) *That the communion of saints is theologically Trinitarian.*

In *De symbolo* Niceta begins his catechesis of the doctrine by stating: that after the confession of the Blessed Trinity, you profess faith in the Holy Catholic Church and this is followed immediately by this declaration: "The Church is simply the community of saints".[458] Here Niceta is highlighting the concept of *communion of saints* as a special people of God. The Trinity is the foundational basis of the *communion of saints* in that it is where the Triune God is mirrored, shared and lived as a communion of love. The Incarnation is proof of the strict identity between God in the economy of salvation and

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[457] Niceta, pp.43-64.
[458] Niceta, p.49.

God as such.[459]

(b) The communion of saints is the communion of sacraments.

Niceta explains that the Church is simply the *communion of saints* because it represents a specially elected people of God who have been sanctified by the sacrament of baptism and the Eucharist. Following his *De spiritus sancti potentio* (the power of the Holy Spirit) where Niceta illustrates at length the role of the Holy Spirit [460] before he begins his catechises on the *communion of saints.*[461] He initiates this step at the outset to establish the necessity of being sanctified by the sacraments to attain sainthood.[462] He then goes on to explain how saints come into being. He instructs his converts that:

> *At the time of baptism He (God) makes holy the souls and bodies of those who believe. Without his (Holy Spirit) co-operation, no creature can come to eternal life, and upon His glory 'angels desire to look' (1 Cor 12:11).* [463] *So you believe that in this Church you can attain (fellowship) to the communion of saints.*[464]

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[459] Rahner explains the triune manner of God's self-communication: the Father gives the Father's self through Christ in the Spirit. It "*is* not merely a copy or an analogy of the inner Trinity, but this Trinity itself, albeit as freely and gratuitously communicated. That which is communicated is precisely the triune personal God, and likewise the communication bestowed upon the creature is gratuitoius grace can, if occurring in freedom, occur only in the intra-divine manner of the two communications of the divine essence by the Father to the Son and the Spirit" (Karl Rahner, *The Trinity,* New York: Herder & Herder, 1970, pp.35-36).
[460] Niceta, pp.23-41.
[461] Niceta, pp.47-48.
[462] Niceta, pp.23-41.
[463] Niceta, p.48.
[464] Kelly, J.N.D., p.391.

In following the footsteps of Paul, Niceta also explains how he himself had experienced this sanctification by baptism. He writes:

> *I have been washed, I have been sanctified, I have been justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of my God" (1 Cor 6:11). I shall not risk my salvation nor weaken my faith by giving up a single word of this profession of the Trinity.* [465]

There can therefore be no sanctification without the sacraments.Niceta reiterates the efficaciousness of the sacraments which is so fundamental to the Church even though no mention is made of them as a matter of faith in the original Nicene Creed. Niceta can therefore been seen as obliged to introduce into his creed the *communion of saints* as the basis of sanctification. This rationale is also supported by his catechesis on the 'forgiveness of sins' which follows immediately and in continuity with his discussion on *communion of saints*. He writes:

> *This is the grace by which those who believe in and confess God and Christ receive in baptism the remission of all your sins. We call it a rebirth, because it makes a man more innocent and pure than which he is born from his mother's womb.*[466] .

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[465] Niceta, p.49.
[466] Niceta, p.50.

Like Jerome, Niceta is reiterating the catechesis of the patristic Fathers who have had as their main focus the theological vision of developing a vertical *koinŏnia* between God and mankind. The primitive Church functioned on the basis of the efficacy of the *sancta,* the sacraments. Niceta who comes from a strong Eastern influence is supportive of this spiritual endeavour of the early Fathers. Both Jerome and Niceta can be seen as collaborators in building upon the sacramental theology already firmly grounded by their Eastern predecessors.

(c) That communion of saints is the oneness of the Church.

For Niceta and his community the doctrine of *communion of saints* constitutes the unity of the Church in heaven and earth. The salvation of the world is God's plan (*oikonomia)* in the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth *(Eph.1:10).* Niceta describes his church community as *sanctam ecclesiam catholicam* or holy catholic church. Niceta explains why the Patriarchs, martyrs and his community on earth together make up one Church. Niceta insists:

> *The Church is simply the <u>community of all the saints</u>. All who from the beginning of the world were or are will be justified – whether Patriarchs, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or prophets, whether Apostles or*

martyrs, or any others – make up one Church, because they are made holy by one faith and way of life, stamped with one Spirit, made into one body, as we are told, is Christ.... I go further. The angels and virtues and powers in heaven are co-members in this one Church, for as the Apostle teaches us, in Christ 'all things whether on the earth or in the heavens, have been reconciled." You must believe, therefore, that in this one Church, you are gathered into the <u>Communion of Saints.</u> You must know that it is the one Catholic Church established throughout the world, and with it you must remain in unshaken communion.[467]

This treatise also introduces an important corollary to the understanding of being a member of this one universal catholic Church. To be true to such an undertaking Niceta exhorts his followers that they have to endeavour to be in communion with one another as members of the one Church if they believe in the spiritual bond with the holy Saints. He affirms that by this oneness in heaven and earth there can be only one true Church on earth. For Niceta and his community the doctrine of *communion of saints* therefore constitutes the unity of the churches in the world. He is unequivocal that by *communion of saints* there can be only one universal Church and that a *communio* cannot exist between two elements of opposite nature. Niceta draws his community's

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[467] Niceta, pp.49-50. (The underlining is author's own)

attention to *1 Cor 6:11* and *Col 1:18, 20.* [468]

Niceta's time was plagued by several heresies that prevailed up to the beginning of the fifth century.[469] These included the heresies of Sabellianism,[470] Patripassianism, Photinus [471] and above all Arianism.[472] It also needs to be recognised that the latter part of the fourth century was also marked by rival factions for and against the Nicene Creed. It would be a gradual process before unity could be achieved within Western Christendom around the fifth century largely through the efforts of Ambrose.[473] Niceta distinguishes the

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[468] In *1 Cor 6:11* Paul is drawing a distinction between his followers and those outside his household of faith. "The behavior of the Corinthians Christians up to this point denied the difference between life inside the church and that outside. Now, Paul says, they have a new life in Christ. But you were 'washed', you were 'sanctified', and you were 'justified' in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of the Lord. "These three verbs are passive: the Corinthians did not change themselves but God through his Son and his Spirit cleansed them, set them apart as his holy people, and acquitted them". (Quast, pp. 47).

In *Col 1: 18, 20* Paul here is speaking of the Church as the body of Christ *(1 Cor 12, 12-17; Rom 12: 4-5).* Some think that the author of Colossians has inserted the reference to the church here so as to define 'head of the body' in Paul's customary way. Preeminent was "when Christ was raised by God as firstborn from the dead *(Acts 26, 23; Rev 1: 51);* he was placed over the community, the church, that he had brought into being and had also indicated as crown of the whole new creation, over all things. His further role is to reconcile all things for God or possibly to himself" (*The Catholic Study Bible*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p.320.)

[469] Niceta, pp.13-16.

[470] Named after Sabellius (2nd.century) and some times referred to as modalistic monarchianism, that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three modes, roles or faces of a single person, God.(Elwell, p.319)

[471] Photinus (d. 376) was the Christian bishop of Sirmium in Pannonia, a residence of the Emperor Constantius II. He was deposed on charges of heresy . Photinus believed that Jesus was not divine and the Logos did not exist before Jesus' conception (R.P.C.Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381,* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988, pp.235-238).

[472] *Arianism*, a fourth century movement was declared heretical by the Church at the Council of Nicaea for denying the divinity of Christ. (McBrien, p.92).

[473] Chadwick describes how Ambrose succeeded in getting the anti-Nicene bishops marginalised in north Italy and Illyricum by his insistence that, "without any adopting of Roman liturgical customs the other churches would not be in communion of Peter's see which was the hallmark of catholicity." In a Sermon on *Ps 40,* Ambrose followed the text of *Mat 16:18* with the words "Where Peter is, there is the Church" (Chadwick, p.18).

saints of the one Church from the heretics by these words:

> *(Must) believe, therefore, that in this one Church (they) are gathered into the Communion of Saints…. There are, indeed, other so-called 'churches'… These 'churches' ceased to be holy, because they were deceived by the doctrines of the Devil to believe and behave differently from what Christ commanded and from the tradition of the Apostles.* [474]

Here Niceta is also unequivocal on the sort of unity embodied in the Church. The *communion of saints* entails a sense of exclusivity. He specifically calls upon his parishioners to have no communion with heretics and schismatics because they contradict Christ and his Apostles. Like Jerome and Augustine he too is clear in his own mind who should be excluded from his *communion of saints* even though they may profess themselves to be Christians.

(d) By communion of saints the Church is made holy.

Niceta also goes on to explain his theology of the holiness of the Church. In the New Testament all Christians are made holy by an act of divine consecration. According to Niceta the Church derives its holiness from the holiness of its members.[475] Niceta is able to

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[474] Niceta, p.50.
[475] Niceta, pp.49-51.

personify the human mark of the Church that is intimately linked to its flock who have been sanctified by the Church. This holiness is caused "by virtue of their creaturely correspondence with grace" that can be traced from the second century onwards and that this holiness should be understood as "almost a standing epithet of the Church as successor to the privileges of the holy people".[476] Niceta is able to demonstrate that the *communion of saints* is necessarily the consequence of this common participation in the sacraments. He, in fact, goes into some detail in his homilies as to how this holiness is attained and manifested: He claims:

> *The Church is…. made holy by one faith and way of life, stamped with one Spirit, made into one body whose head, as we are told, is Christ. I go further. The angels and virtues and powers in heaven are co-members in this one Church, for, as the Apostle teaches us, in Christ 'all things whether on the earth or in the heavens, have been reconciled' (Col 1:18-20).*[477]

(e) That communion of saints is eschatological.

The underlying motif of Niceta in introducing the *communion of saints* is represented in this dominant message to his church. It is that his followers strive to attain the holiness of the Saints already

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[476] Badcock, p.264.
[477] Niceta, p.49.

in heaven which can be accomplished only through the Church: In this sense the *communion of saints* is eschatological. But Niceta underpins this eschatology by offering an alternative to worldly life which is already in dire straits. He assures his faithful that they too can attain the sainthood of the "Patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or Prophets, whether Apostles or martyrs, or any others." [478] These Saints who have died are exemplary in their faith and should motivate their followers as "members of the community of hope". [479] Niceta makes himself clearer in another text *De vigilis servorum Dei* or *The Vigils of the Saints.* [480] Here Niceta states how the sacred vigils promote such spiritual fruit which are "filled with prayers, hymns and holy reading".[481] Niceta here is attempting to show how this communion with the Saints can serve as a calling to imitate their holiness:

> *Let us then be moved by the example of the saints to love vigils to the utmost of our power. …..These and many other such thoughts the saints have left us in song and other writings … their heirs may be moved by such examples to celebrate as night the vigils of our salvation.* [482]

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[478] Niceta, p.49.
[479] From the Gallician Sermon quoted by Caspari, *Alte und neus Quellen,* p.273; Badcock, p.265.
[480] Niceta,.pp.55-64.
[481] Niceta, p.56.
[482] Niceta, p.59.

(f) The communion of saints is ecumenical.

Niceta notes the contradiction in the theology of the Church in the face of the prevailing schism between the East and the West and the heresies surrounding the Church. Niceta appeals to his community that after the confession of the Blessed Trinity, they should profess their faith in the holy Catholic Church. Niceta is conscious of the rift between the East and West and of his mentor Paulinus who begs Niceta to remember to bring unity of the Church between East and West. [483]

(g) The communion of saints is a communion in charity.

Niceta is also prepared to take his sacramental theology a step beyond personal piety and in this he is far more forward looking than his predecessors. He asserts that a Christian is a steward of the Lord's gifts (*Lk 16:13*). Thus he leads his community to this communion of charity by personal example. In his *Instruction on Faith (De ratione fidei)* he reminds his community of what Paul himself foresaw of the men who would neglect good works. He therefore directs his mission to all who are impoverished and are living at a time of miserable social conditions exasperated further by the Gothic invasion. He preaches of his offering as the "the ideal of an unworldly life". The thrust of his message lies simply and

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[483] Niceta, p,59.

forthrightly in the ultimate objectivity of his church to attain the fellowship of the *communion of saints* by praxis on earth.[484]

By his communion of charity Niceta is also demonstrating that no one lives by himself and when one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together because all belong to the one body of Christ and individually members of it (*(1 Cor 12: 26-27). Thus everything a true Christian owns should be shared as a good possessed in common with everyone else so that one should be ready and eager to come to the help of the needy (Acts 4:32).*

Niceta could no longer depend entirely on an abstract speculative theology of the End-time to sustain his missionary zeal. He is far more conscious than the Greek Fathers that eschatology alone as the motif for conversion will fall short of experiencing the fullness of the Church's teaching of salvation. A more thorough approach to Christianity is in the praxis or the ways Christians live out their baptism to attain sainthood. Niceta therefore portrays *communion of saints* as a precise calling upon his community privileged to serve all people of God. In introducing the doctrine as a creed Niceta can therefore be understood as instilling a belief that encourages a level of spirituality and human behaviour, that is, a *communio* which can be compared to the lives of the deceased triumphant

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[484] Kelly, J.N.D., p.391.

Saints of the Church. Niceta is introducing a social dimension to Christianity which is scriptural *(Mat 5-7).* In this regard he is in step with Augustine by taking a step beyond the *koinŏnia* of the Greek Fathers and asserting that in *communio* Christians commit themselves to the inner oneness of their conversion to become a special people of God caused by baptism of the Church. As a community his church is being called to show what difference its members can make as saints in a secular world.

In the course of the life of the Church and up to the second Vatican Council, Niceta's Creed has received only selective attention in regard to one or other aspects of his doctrine. This selective approach is perhaps the main cause of the distortions to the original and true meaning of the doctrine. In broad terms Niceta's *communion of saints* should be described as a bi-phasic doctrine. The sacrament which integrates transcendentally with the holy also entails the dynamics of a horizontal relationship between members of the earthly Church. The two elements present from the beginning in baptism and the Eucharist are inseparable from one another; the vertical necessarily entails the horizontal dimension. Niceta can therefore be seen as elaborating on the virtue of the ultimate fellowship with the holy persons of all ages which has always been the mission of the Church.

Gallican Sermons

The next significant development of the doctrine comes from southern Gaul

which is modern France. Nimes in southern France was trilingual, speaking Greek, Latin and Celtic. As the Roman Church becomes more Latinized in the course of the fourth century it would incorporate the formula already available in the Gallician Creed. This view has been derived from the sermon of the Bishop of Arles (503-643) who had incorporated *sanctorum communionem* into this Creed. [485] The next stage would be its mention in a creedal form in the Gallican Church in the *Eusebius Gallus* (*c.* 550 CE).

This is followed by its liturgical use in the *Sacramentarium Gallicanum* (650 CE). [486] The Gallican Church was already well advanced in its liturgical formulas. As early as the fifth century the Christian Gaul displayed the most creative literary activity among the ancient provinces and has produced works in the areas of theology and scriptural commentary, homiletics, liturgy and hagiography, poetry, and history.[487] These included the distinguished writings of Prosper, John Cassin, Salvin, and Vincent of Lerins. Among the wealth of poets was Niceta's friend Paulinus.[488] It would take another five centuries before a sense of liturgical uniformity is reached among of all the churches in Western Christendom. But the *Textus Receptus* of the Roman Symbol (that is, the Apostles' Creed) would itself incorporate the *communion of saints* as a creed of the Church in the West not earlier than the eighth century. This revised Roman Symbol would in time

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[485] Bettenson, p.24.
[486] Schaff, v.2, p.54
[487] Di Berardino, p.4.
[488] Di Berardino, p.4

replace all the local creeds as the baptismal creed in Latin Christianity. The liturgical practices would also be brought into one. [489]

It has already been shown in *Map 1* that Gaul itself derived its Christianity solely from places which lie on the great road from Asia Minor[490] As Badcock points out that it is to Asia Minor and the Greek language that the Gallican Church owes its origin and this is relevant to the subsequent interpretational history of the *communion of saints* in its creed. Between the fourth and fifth centuries there was a strong current of influence from the East to South Gaul where the Greek equivalent and related phases had already been firmly established. These bore the clear-cut sense of participation in the holy things", that is, the Eucharistic elements.[491]

It is therefore highly probable that the idea and the language expressing *communion of saints* had its beginning in the East.[492] The presbyters and deacons doubtless spoke Greek and it has been suggested that they may have brought the phrase *communion of saints* with them.[493] Initially the expression was most likely used liturgically to mean the sacraments. It has already been shown in the catechesis of Niceta the trend towards personalisation of the sacraments by his converts who, sanctified by the sacraments , should persevere

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[489] Badcock, p.250.
[490] *Maps 1*and *2.*
[491] Kelly, J.N.D., p.390.
[492] Kelly, J.N.D., p.389-390.
[493] Badcock, p.251.

to be saints. But this understanding would undergo radical change so as to distort the original meaning and liturgical practice in South Gaul by the close of the fifth century.[494]

There were circumstances at play that would have caused this diversion. The *communion of saints* was not entirely a novel concept and became an article of faith in southern Gaul in the sixth century.[495] The reason for this affirmation in a creed is not entirely clear. One likely source that would have encouraged the urge for such article of faith could be traced to the anonymous sermons known as the *Eusebius Collection* by which the preachers in the fifth century Gaul tried to build urban Christian communities. [496] In the course of the fifth century the influence and importance of the Roman Empire as an administrative and psychological infrastructure seems to have suffered. One cause for this was that the Roman emperors had focussed their interest elsewhere than in Gaul resulting with an increasing level of Gallic self-reliance.[497] The most important of the local pressures were the various barbarian groupings which moved through Gaul in the course of the century. The cities of Gaul often became sites of negotiation and conflict between the Roman administration and the barbarians which could be both allies and enemies. Cities were ceded in return for support; they were besieged to force settlements and cities were occasionally ravaged to prove a

[494] Kelly, J.N.D., pp.389-390.
[495] Bettenson, p.24.
[496] Lisa Bailey, "Building urban Christian communities: sermons on local saints in the Eusebius Gallicanus collection", *Early Medieval Europe,* v.12, no.1, 2004, pp.1-24.
[497] Bailey, p.21.

point.   Although Rome and Bethlehem were important, but as points of comparison, they were distant and abstracted. In these sermons the commemoration of the local Saints was thus being offered as a basis for local self-reliance. For the Eusebius Gallicanus preachers, local articulations of urban community would prove more important than the universal sense of Christianity. The Roman model of local city Saints became a means for the bishops of Lyons, Arles and Riez to assert a Christian identity independent of Rome. Lisa Bailey summarises the overall picture as a "force of the civic imagery which is felt here and now" in these words:

> *In these sermons, preachers choose to make local (S)aints serve as the focus for the consensus of the Christian community on earth. They are local kids made good. There is no sense that one type of citizenship is "right" and one "wrong". Citizenship on heaven and earth is a continuation of the same ideal, and participation in the Christian community of the saeculum becomes an implied prerequisite for participation in the Christian community in the world to come.*[498]

According to Bailey this local patriotism was more than a mere responsive act. The threat to Gaul in the fifth century had been real and the focus on the local Saints served as a proactive measure to sustain the church's growth and influence. Several scholars have also been able to connect the growth in the cult

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[498] Bailey, p.20.

of local Saints during the fifth century to an increasingly localized patriotism in Gaul.[499] It is therefore possible that this populous faith movement usurped and undermined the original interpretation of the Gallican creed in the sixth century.

The role of the holy Saints had also been fostered by Bishop Faustus of Reiz (*c.*400-490). In Southern France as reflected in the *Pseudo-Augustinian Sermons* the sacramental notion of *communion of saints* would be almost lost. Faustus narrowed the meaning of saints by focussing almost entirely on one aspect of Niceta's catechesis on the solidarity of the living and the dead.[500] As pointed out by Bailey the prevailing circumstances in southern Gaul had already distracted the focus from the sacramentality of the doctrine to the intercession of the Saints. As a result, the growing cult of martyrs which has always been a feature of the Gallician religion would take precedence over the sacramental importance of the living church.[501] The solidarity with the holy martyrs would become the "co-guarantors of the future participation in salvation of all Christians".[502]

This directional change in worship did not come without controversy. According to the church historian, Adolf Harnack, the extension to Article (1X) of the *Roman Symbol* which incorporates the *communion of saints* had risen as the consequence of the extravagant opposition by the heretical priest Vigilantinus

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[499] Bailey, p.21.
[500] Theodor Zahn, *Apostles' Creed: a sketch of is history and an examination of its contents,* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899.
[501] Kelly, J.N.D., p.391-2.
[502] Marthaler, p.345.

(401-430). [503] Vigilantinus had condemned the veneration of images and relics including the invocation of the Saints and stated that it was useless to pray for the dead. [504] But Harnack's hypothesis of Vigilatinus' involvement as the cause of formulation of *communion of saints* in southern Gaul has itself come in for severe criticism. There is no record of what Vigilantius actually said except for Jerome's accusation of Vigilantius' rejection of veneration at relics and tombs. [505] To add to the confusion is also the creed of Faustuis (450-490). [506] It too has its eastern traits. [507] It is therefore difficult to assume how Faustus understanding of sancta would have been markedly different from that of Jerome and Niceta.

It has also been suggested that the *communion of saints* in the Gallican creed in the sixth century was to enable the local church a convenient opportunity for teaching on the subject. [508] In his sermons Faustus criticises those who do not revere the glorious memory of the blessed martyrs. In so doing Faustus seeks to develop the fear and love of God through the Saints (*Haem.2, ed. Caspari, Aneed.* 1.238). [509] It would seem that he incorporated the *communion of saints* in his creed in order to counter any opposition to the reverence to Saints and relics. In one sense in his *Homilia 11 de Symbolo* Faustus seems to advance a

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[503] Kelly, J.N.D., p.396..

[504] David G.Hunter, "Vigilantius of Calagurris and Victrricus of Rouen; Ascetics, Relics, and Clerics in Late Roman Gaul", *Journal of Early Christian Studies,* 7.3, 1999, pp.401-30.

[505] Perham,p.23.

[506] Faustus was chosen in 432 to be head of the monastery, in succession to Maximus who had become Bishop of Riez. He attained a high reputation for his wonderful gifts as an extempore preacher and for his stern asceticism (Carson and Cerrito, p.651)

[507] Burn, p.1xxxiii

[508] Burn, p.1xxxiii.

[509] Kelly, J.N.D., p.391

meaning to *communion of saints* that varies in meaning as used by the earlier creeds of Jerome and Niceta. In this respect Faustus is controversial because in another sense, his reference to the role of heavenly Saints could be seen as no different but in fact complimentary to Niceta's catechesis. Thus, Faustus states:

> *Let us believe in the <u>communion of saints</u> but not because they are with God but in order to give honour to God. Let us develop fear and love of God through the saints.*[510]

This message is central to his mission and Faustus exhorts his faithful to strive to acquire grace not through their own gifts but through the merits the heavenly saints had acquired while on earth. They have been exemplars of the faith given to the Church. Again, in his Gallican sermon, Faustus confronts those who blaspheme by denying that the relics of those people who were blessed and loved God. He held that they had deceived others about these very symbols and lied about the source of Christ's grace.[511] Faustus, who comes from Britain is unfamiliar with the Greek tradition and seems to have confused *sanctorum* automatically with the Saints.[512] But at the same time he redirected his attention as to how the community should acquire grace. He stresses in his *Homilia 1 de Symbolo* that according to the truth of the heavenly promises, God without doubt gives forgiveness of sins in this life through baptism and the faith of the universal

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[510] Caspari's *Anecdota,* 1.p.338; also Badcock, p.265; Benko, pp.102-3. (The underlining is author's own).
[511] Swete,, p.85.
[512] Benko, p.103.

Church. [513] Also in *Tractatus* he clarifies himself that the idea of forgiveness of sins cannot be separated from baptism.[514] The conflicting nature of Faustus sermons has come under severe scrutiny by H.B.Swete who in his major work on this area shows it was a narrow and much later misinterpretation of saints as given by Faustus and his successors. [515] Their interpretation is severely erroneous because the expression *communion of saints* was never meant to exclude the living by including the departed. Faustus erred "by excluding the living by including the departed".[516] Swete dismisses Faustus' catechesis as unreliable as the source of *communion of saints* and as of lesser significance to that of Niceta.[517]

More light is made available by the *Pseudo-Augustine Sermo 242.4* of the Gallician Church which identifies *sancta communio* with *sacramentum baptisma*. In one part it mentions *sancti* and *communio* in a sense of fellowship. This is followed by the sacramental interpretation of the fellowship that arises out of the forgiveness of sins in Church. In *Sermo 241,* we are returned to the Eastern meaning of the Gallician Church which collates faith and sacraments:

> *And so because one believes in the holy catholic Church, there is*
> *also the <u>communion of saints</u> because where there is faith there is*
> *also the community of the blessed and it is appropriate to believe in*

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[513] Caspari's *Quellen 11,* p.191; also Benko, p.102.
[514] Benko, p.103. .
[515] Zahn, p.192; Swete, pp.82-88.
[516] Swete, p.87.
[517] Benko, p.103.

the resurrection of the body and the remission of sins. The sacrament of baptism includes in its meaning the belief that God has himself given to us the promise of the resurrection of the body and the remission of sins.[518]

According to Katenbusch this Gallican assertion, which is probably of Irish origin, relates *communion of saints* directly to the efficacy of the sacraments. This interpretation is corroborated by *Sermo 240* which states that the doctrine refers to "the gifts of the Holy Spirit".

Thus:

> <u>*The communion of saints*</u>*: the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given in different ways to different people, nevertheless in eternity such gifts shall be common to all in their entirety and as a result whatever aspect of the (gifts of the holy Spirit) an individual may have (in this life), and the (in eternity) one will possess every grace.*[519]

Synthesis

Undoubtedly in the life of the Church there have been confusing interpretations of the doctrine. In a comparative study undertaken on the variety of interpretations given to the doctrine Theodor Zahn is convinced that the doctrine refers to communion in holy things as has been the case in the creeds of Jerome and Niceta.[520] He states:

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[518] Badcock, p.265. (The underlining is author's own).
[519] Badcock, p.265. (The underlining is author's own).
[520] Badcock, p.266.

This could scarcely have been anything else than, according to the language of the Greek Church, could only be interpreted as "Participation in the holy things". The belief was thus expressed that in the Sacraments and through the same, especially in the Holy Communion, the gifts offered therein were really received.[521]

Zahn also takes into account that Augustine speaks of *communio sacramentorum* in one of his sermons, placing it just where Niceta and others speak of *sanctorum communionem.*[522] Zahn also draws out attention to the Oriental creeds in which baptism is similarly placed. He therefore concludes:

Besides (who) can deny that the mention of the Sacraments in the Creed, and especially after the Church, is quite in place? If this was the original meaning of sanctorum communio, it is plain that it did not mean: I believe that Sacraments exist, but I believe that the Sacraments partake of the holy things of the other world the Consecrated Bread which I eat with the community that keeps the feast and the Consecrated Cup which I drink with them are truly "the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ". I believe that the water of Baptism is not mere water but a bath of the New Birth.[523]

For these reasons, Zahn submits that *communion of saints* was originally intended to witness the belief in the efficacy of the sacraments.[524]

In 812, in response to Emperor Charlemagne Archbishop Magnus of Sens writes

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[521] Zahn, p.196-197
[522] Frend, p.714.
[523] Zahn, pp.199-200.
[524] Zahn, p.200.

an explanation of the baptismal creed in *Libellus de Mysterio Baptismatis* in which he says:

> *And they also confess one universal Church and the communion of all Saints, that is the congregation of all the faithful in Christ.* [525]

In this is a more personal interpretation than the sacraments per se were given. A similar understanding of unity can be construed by the statement of Amalarius, the Bishop of Treves (d.816) who in his *Epistola ad Carolum Magnum Imperatorem de Caeremoniis Baptismi* states:

> *I believe that sanctorum communio keeps the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It can then be seen as the same as the Church of which he says: ...we believe that it is the universal congregation of the just and the unity of faith (sancta ecclesia).* [526]

The erroneous tendencies of the doctrine is partly caused by it's over simplification.[527] One source of the problem is the definition offered by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that the *communion of saints* is simply a further explanation of the expression holy catholic Church. [528] This would imply that it is synonymous with the common meaning of the term Church or just another way of describing the Church. A much later rendering after Trent has been that it is a tripartite communion of all the faithful of Christ in this world and

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[525] Benko, p.109.
[526] Benko, pp.109-110.
[527] Miguel M. Garijo-Guembe, *Communion of the Saints, Foundation, Nature and Structure of the Church,* Collegeville, Minnesota: The Order of St. Benedict, 1994, pp.78-9.
[528] Kung , Credo, p.141

the next.[529]   Alfons Kemmer is, however, convinced that it is not simply an extension about the holy Church, that is, whoever belongs to the holy Church is in communion with all the members of the Church, those living and those who have died.[530] He is of the view that although this explanation is not wrong in principle and has the support of many outstanding Christians through many centuries, in all probability it has lost its original meaning.[531]   Badcock too comes to similar view. Based on his major exploration on the history of the creeds he is prepared to declare unequivocally that *communion of saints* is not equivalent to the Church.[532]

Unwittingly expropriated has been the Christian belief of afterlife, that is, the Christian affirmation of triumph of life over bodily death that makes life continuous and everlasting. Alcuin (d.804) in *Disputatio Puerorum per Interrogationes et Responsiones 10* says: *Sanctorum communionem,* which follows, means that we believe we have fellowship and the communion of faith with those saints who have departed to God from the present life in this faith which was received. [533]   Similarly, Bernard of Clairvaux (d.1153) links this part of the Creed as the unity of the Church rooted in love which enables the faithful on earth to share in the merits of the heavenly saints as *communio sanctorum (Tranctatus De Charitate 33, 101).*[534] The doctrine has therefore been seen as

[529] *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* Homebush, NSW: St. Paul, 1994, p.250.
[530] Kemmer, pp.108.
[531] Kemmer, pp.108-109
[532] Badcock, p.248
[533] MPL 101, 439.
[534] P. Bernard, 'Communion des Saints: Aspect dogmatique et historique', *Dictiononnaire de Theologie Catholique III*, Paris, 1923, cols. 429ff.; Benko, p.112.

an endorsement of the popularisation of invoking of the intercessory powers of the holy Saints in heaven on behalf of the living. Daily prayers offered for the departed souls were pursued zealously.[535] The feasts of *All Saints Day* and *All Souls Day* are direct recognitions of this trend. But Bernard also clearly brings meaning to the term by expressing the essential nature and efficacy of the sacraments when he states our insufficiency and our imperfections have been made up that by *communionem sanctorum* (*Tractatus De Charitate 33, 101).*[536]

Badcock takes exception to the extension of this understanding to the Saints. He rightly articulates that the expression did not emerge out of the practice of the invocation of the saints or the continuous relationship between the living and the dead. At Pentecost, he stresses, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the believing community and empowered the Church to proclaim the good news of God's activity to the world *(Acts 2)*, there were no dead Christians. He further earnestly submits that this mutual intercourse of Christians to which death makes no difference has never been a contentious issue in the life of the early Church and neither was the doctrine of *communion of saints* designed to exclude this truth. Thus it could not, in the first instance, have been inserted into the Creed to affirm this mutual communion of two distinct classes of Christians, the living and the dead. Over time the true fullness of the doctrine lost its original meaning and direction when it was overwhelmed by spiritual ideals based from the increasing emphasis and devotions placed on the Saints of the Church in heaven. Before

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[535] *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* p.250
[536] Benko, p.112.

the close of the eighth century the *communion of saints* was incorporated into the Apostles' Creed. Even then, as late as the ninth century Jacobi who edited the *Symbol of 381* in the ninth century replaced *sanctorum communionem* with the Eastern expression *baptisma in remissionem peccatorum.*[537] This adaptation suggests an understanding of his time that the expression *communion of saints* had a sacramental connotation. A direct relationship can be conceived between *sanctorum communionem* and *baptisma* as already shown in *Table 1.* Likewise Ivo, the bishop of Charters (d.1116) in his *Sermon 23, de Symbolo Apostolorum* sees *sanctorum communionem* as participating in the sacraments. The bishop goes on to state that *sanctorum communionem* is about the truth of the sacraments of the forgiveness of sins of the Church which the saints cherished as the unity of faith.[538] In similar vein the Bishop of Soissons (d.1152) in his *Exposiitio symboli of Josselin* writes of *sanctorum communionem.* According to his instructions should someone question or seek an opinion about baptism, the body and blood of the Lord, and the other sacraments, he proposed that one should not hesitate to answer briefly as follows:

> *I believe in the sanctorum communio, that is, the truth of the sacraments of the Church which the saints partook who departed this life in the unity faith…I believe the same thing concerning this and the other sacraments which the saints truly believed….sanctorum communio, that is, that the saints commonly possess all heavenly gifts.* [539]

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[537] Cf. p.135.
[538] MPL, 162, 303.
[539] MPL 186, 1488.

Abelard too gives a neuter meaning to *communionem sanctorum.* In his *Expositio Symboli quod DIctur Apostolorum* he writes that *sanctorum communionem* is the communion by which the saints are established and confirmed by participation in the divine sacraments.[540] Perhaps a more detailed and authoritative interpretation of the doctrine comes from Aquinas. By his usage, in one sense, the expression *sanctorum communionem* is meant to convey the existing oneness of holy Christians in the body of Christ realized through the mutual sharing of spiritual goods, which are the sacraments.[541]   Here Aquinas is relating *sanctorum communionem* not to *sancta ecclesia* but to *remissio peccatorem* that sanctifies the Christians. Here Aquinas is highlighting that *sanctorum communionem* should be thought of as participation in the sacraments and that forgiveness of sins is dependent upon *sanctorum communionem.*[542]   But Thomas does not limit himself to a neutral understanding of the expression. In *Opusulum XV (*Rom Ed. *Opusc.* V) *De Articulis Fidei Et Sacramentis Ecclesiae* he also appropriates a personal meaning to its understanding in explaining this Article the *communion of saints* and the *forgiveness of sins* by reference to the sacraments:

> *Wherefore among the points of faith handed down by the Apostles, is that there is a community of goods in the Church, and this is expressed in the words <u>Communion of saints'</u>. Now of all the*

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[540] MPL 178, 629.
[541] MPL 178, 629.
[542] Benko, p.114.

members of the Church Christ is the principal, for He is the head…: 'He…hath made him head over all the Church which is his body' (Ep 1:22). This communication is effected by the sacraments of the Church...[543]

Finally Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), the Jesuit theologian and Doctor of the Church who does not call the Church communion but either congregation or convocation. He explains *sanctorum communionem* as the sacraments for the common good of the Church in addition to offerings, prayers of indulgence and others. Those who separated themselves from the apostolic Church, he claims, cannot share in these goods.[544]

It has already been shown that in ecclesiastical Greek *koinǒnia* means the consecrated bread and wine in the Eucharist. From its sacramental nature there have been extrapolations of its original meaning to a personal one. In terms of external salvation of all Christians this takes in the forms of the Church *(sanctam ecclesiam)* or, a universal congregation of the righteous *(remissio peccatorum),* or unity of faith *(congregation fidelium). Communio sacramentorium* or *sanctorum communio* bring the People of God together into one communion as a Church. Nicholas Ayo attempts to set straight the authentic meaning by defining *communion of saints* as a new life the creed brings to the catechumen. It is a belief that represents the two elements of the doctrine, it is holy things for holy

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[543] Thomas Aquinas, Laurence Shapcote (trans.), *The Three Greatest Prayers; Commentaries on the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Apostles' Creed,* London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1937, pp.80-81.(The underlining is author's own.)
[544] Benko, p.115-116.

people where the Church itself is "the great sacrament in which we all together commune".[545] This view is also shared by De Lubac who insists that the doctrine should be understood on the basis of the original Greek understanding derived from Asia Minor:

> *It would seem that its primary meaning is a communication or sharing in the 'sacraments', understanding by that word all the sacred goods by which one obtains 'teleiosis', the completion and final perfection; the most important of these goods being the Eucharist.*[546]

In this way, as the consequence of sanctification, the Christian becomes a new being: "When, therefore, He made us new by the remission of sins, He made us men of a different stamp…" *(The Epistle of Barnabas, 6:11, 8:3, 11:1 16:8)* [547]

The secondary meaning of the doctrine as the union of the faithful among themselves in the Medieval Ages as emphasized by Abelard, Yves of Charters, Aquinas and others has remained alongside the primary sacramental meaning and this parallel or dual meaning in Roman Catholic Church.[548] Consistent with this is the Protestant reformer John Calvin (1509-64) and others who prefer to join both together and define *sanctorum communionem* as consisting of the

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[545] Ayo, p.133.
[546] Henri De Lubac, Richard Arnandez (trans.), *The Christian Faith, An Essay on the Structure of the Apostles Creed*, San Francisco, USA: Ignatius Press, 1986, p.218.
[547] James A. Kleist (trans.), "The Epistle of Barnabas" in Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe (eds.), *Ancient Christian Writers, No.6,* New York: The Newman Press, 1948, pp.37-65.
[548] De Lubac, *The Christian Faith,* p.219.

mutual sharing of all in all the salvific goods of the Church. [549] He sees the signs of the visible church as God's lasting communion as "confessions of faith, example of life, and participation in the sacraments, after the fashion of God's own children".[550] Thus Bonhoeffer would explain *sanctorum communio* in terms of a social philosophy of the Church. He sees it as an expression of a mission acting through the church-community which is "moved by the Holy Spirit, and is itself a will for community, precisely because it subjects itself to God's will to rule".[551]

Conclusion

As a theological and historical reconstruction, this study reveals that *communion of saints* is essentially a doctrine about God's self-communication. By its very sacramental orientation it indicates that the doctrine is specifically addressed to the Church as a privileged or elected People of God with a function to serve as a vehicle of communication to the entire world. From the time of the Old through the New Testament the purpose of *communion of saints* has been to reveal the story of God by gathering a people to share in the divine holiness which Paul, as shown earlier, expresses some sixty-times in *koinŏnia* terms. But only in more recent times has this horizontal sharing by all members in the varied life of the Church become the focus of the Church's teaching in the context of the

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[549] Ray C. Petry, Calvin's Conception of the "Communio Sanctorum" in Church *History*, v..5, no.3, pp.227-238.
[550] Petry, p.229.
[551] Bonhoeffer, p.266.

Eucharist. Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on the Eucharist, *Mirae caritate,* shows a revival of the Church's teaching of the doctrine in these words:

As everyone knows, the communion of saints is nothing else but a mutual sharing in help, satisfaction, prayer and other good works, a mutual communication among all the faithful, whether those who have reached heaven, or who are in the cleansing fire, or who are still pilgrims on the way in this world. For all these are come together to form one living city whose Head is Christ, and whose law is love. [552]

It is clear that the cause and effect of the *communion of saints* has to be realised in the sacraments within which is embedded ecclesiological implications. Thus VanderWilt claims:

The Church is created not only because it celebrates the Eucharist…but because in some measure, it is synonymous with the communion Christ creates by the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist. The communion effected at the Eucharist is the communion of the body and blood of Christ and these mystical relationships exist between the head and all his members. "In brief slogan, the church makes the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the Church". [553]

This then is the basis of the doctrine. The Pauline term saints itself had lost the original meaning to such an extent that the translation of Article (IX) of the

[552] Carson and Cerrito, p.41.
[553] VanderWilt, p.35.

Apostles'Creed *sanctorum communionem* to *communion of saints* has continued

to convey an incorrect or incomplete message. The authentic meaning is the faith

in the sacraments, the baptism and the Eucharist, of the Church. A more precise

translation into English of *sanctorum communionem* should rightly therefore have

been the communion of sacraments.

The German Working Group of the National Bishops' Conference of Lutheran

and Catholic traditions therefore refers to the *communion of saints* as a calling

upon all who have been justified and sanctified by grace through word and

sacrament. This applies to the community as a whole as well as to each

individual member. It declares:

> *Through Holy Baptism, individuals are made members of the*
> *people of God, gifted with the gifts of the Spirit and called to love*
> *God and the neighbour. Baptism incorporates each believer into the*
> *people of God's new covenant and makes of them a universal*
> *priesthood – an instrument of his purpose for the whole of*
> *creation.*[554]

In practical terms the confession of the *communion of saints* in the Apostles'

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[554] *Communio Sanctorum, The Church as the Communion of Saints*, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000, p.42. Even though the scope of the understanding of 'common' or ' universal' priesthood had some interpretative differences between Lutheran and Catholic representatives, the Dialogue of the German bishops acknowledge that *communion of saints* characterizes three-fold office of Christ: priestly, prophetic, and kingly and that the 'kingly priesthood' had not been clearly taught in all periods of Church history (p.43).

Creed is an undertaking which the last century's prominent Catholic mystique Thomas Merton in his *Living Bread* describes as a fully Eucharistic apostolate.[555] By this he regards that we as Christians exist as the human place which God has chosen for his presence, his manifestation and his epiphany. In other words, as Christians we are anointed into the kingly priesthood. Elsewhere he writes that we are therefore called to echo him, signify him and contain him. Merton's insight into the Eucharist or the Holy Communion certainly discerns the kernel in the *communion of saints.* It is essentially sacramental:

> *Our life in Christ…calls for a fully Eucharistic apostolate – a far-seeing and energetic action, based on prayer and interior union with God, which is able to transcend the limitations of class and nation and culture, and continue to build a new world upon the ruins of what is always falling into decay.*

And he continues to what is the ultimate objective and how it is accomplished. It is:

> *(The) visible union close to the whole world in Christ. This fulfilment, far from being foreign to Eucharistic spirituality, is of its very essence. Mass and Communion do not make sense unless we remember that the Eucharist is the great means which God has devised for gathering together and unifying mankind, dispersed by original and actual sins. The Eucharist is the sacrament of unity, and the Eucharistic life by its very nature is orientated towards an apostolate of charity which will effect a visible union of all mankind.*[556]

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[555] Thomas Merton, *The Living Bread,* London: Burns and Oates, 1955, p.123.
[556] Merton, p.123.

In other words, the Eucharist is essential for the *communion of saints* and the implication of how Christians live out their sanctified lives. The Eucharist is the core principle that directs the Christian approach to life and overrides the limits and brings greater spiritual sophistication to the original Greek's philosophical system for a better community. Pope Paul VI sums up the praxis implied in the doctrine in these words: "modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses".[557] In short to do good is to do God.

The challenge for the Church today is how to proselytize the truth of this Christian *konini,* available in the sacraments, in which Paul promises a new life in the eternal covenant where the righteous will be made perfect and the believer is assured of completeness in everything good that is pleasing to Jesus Christ. This is the mission of the Church to attain this glory through Jesus Christ, "to whom be the glory for ever and ever, Amen" *(Heb 13:20-21).* The greatest threat to Paul's vision and hope for mankind is Modernism in a form of secular humanism which continues to undermine and displace the Church. As noted by one of today's foremost American historians Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe, the world is on the threshold of a new age with an increasing trend towards secularism and individualism.

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[557] Pope Paul V1, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (41),
http://vatican.va/holy_father/paul_exhortations/documents/hf_-p-vi_exh_19 11/3/2010,

Secularism and individualism are the antithesis to the *communion of saints*. The modernist rejects such matters of dogma, worship, the sacredness of scripture and even faith itself. Modernism also proposes that the Church as a whole should be the subject to evolution. It should now adopt itself to prevailing historical conditions and harmonise itself with existing society. Witcombe reports that Modernism as a universal norm proposes the ideals of freedom, equality, rights and the pursuit of happiness by reason as the alternative to Christianity which Martin Luther very early recognised intellectualism as the great enemy that faith has to encounter. This, Luther states "never comes to the aid of spiritual things, but – more frequently than not – struggles against the Divine Word, treating with contempt all that emanates from God" (*Colloquia Mensalia,* 'On Baptism" paragraph CCCLIII). Already in 1864, Pope Pius IX has condemned the Modernist proposition because it fosters individualism. Modernism regards Devine revelation as imperfect and should therefore be subjected to continual and indefinite progress which corresponds with the advancement of human reason (*Syllabus,* pro.5). In his encyclical *Qui pluribus* the same year he declares modernists as enemies of divine revelation who have dared to introduced it into the Catholic religion.[558] This was taken up by Pius X in his encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* where he described it as a synthesis of all heresies that leads to atheism and to the annihilation of all religion. The current pope Benedict XVI too has expressed the desire to return to pre-modern times.

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[558] Pope Pius IX, *Encyclical Letter Qui Pluribus (On Faith and Religion),* www.4shared.com/...07_30/04/2011.

It needs to be recognised that the ideology of Modernism has been the means by which the values and world view of the West are being promoted and imposed around the world especially through economic globalization. The objective has been "unfettered capitalistic and consumerist manifestations" according to Witcombe. This has been self-serving for the West. As noted by Witcombe and others this is unsustainable and threatens the very survival of human life on the planet. On the other hand constructive postmodernism as an alternative to Modernism has been deliberately elusive as a concept and remains uncertain and ambiguous. This study, however, considers the approach to counter this process of dehumanisation of society is for the Church itself to become even more engaged in all aspects of society and human endeavour. It proposes that the age old Christian *koinǒnia* as a social philosophy has much more to offer than the ideology of the Modernist worldview. It should be the template for proselytizing the ideals of the truth, self, meaning and purpose of life. But its success would depend on a theology of the Christian *konini.* In this regard the Church needs to recapture, redefine and restate the doctrine of the *communion of saints* as the founding stone of society. The task is compelling.

THEOLOGY OF THE *COMMUNION OF SAINTS*

This research has already indentified that *communion of saints* is scripturally derived from the Christian *koinŏnia* of the early Church. In the New Testament *koinŏnia* appears no less than 19 times to focus upon the forms of relationships distinctive of Christianity: 'fellowship' twelve times, 'sharing' three times, and 'participation' and 'contribution' twice each.[559] It is 73 times when its cognates are taken into account.[560] Pivotal to the concept of the *communion of saints* has been the Christian *koinŏnia* of the Eucharist, the sacrament of all sacraments which engenders communion with one another in the one body of Christ. It had been the sacrament of unity of the early Church.[561] When the end time no longer seemed imminent, a communitarian life style exemplified by a bonding – that builds trust, communion, participation, sharing and intimacy with one another as a chosen the People of God – became the hallmark of Christianity. This paper will argue that the theology of the *communion of saints* which is scripturally derived is a calling to the Church as the chosen People of God to imitate the love of God embodied in the Trinity.

The Apostles Creed is essentially a doctrine of the Trinity and the *communion of saints* is an integral constituent of it. The Creed has been the template for doctrinal and confessional preaching. It contains the basic theological

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[559] NAS Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible with Hebrew-Aramic and Greek Dictionaries, 1998. http:www.lockman.org/ 01/05/2010.
[560] Cf. p31..
[561] Hertling, 1972.

formulations derived from the life experiences of the first decades of the Church.[562] In this regard, the intent of the Creed itself needs to be recognised for its contribution to one's faith. It is dictated by:

> *(The) Lord's threefold baptismal command and their content was limited to those fundamental truths about God the Father, Christ Jesus His Son, and the Holy Spirit which the Church had either inherited from Judaism or herself received in the Gospel. …some of its clauses have received a sharper definition and others a heightened emphasis …they one and all hark back to the primitive kerygma of the apostolic age.*[563]

The *communion of saints* – the most recent arrival to the Apostles' Creed and not earlier than the eighth century – is the case in point. It proposes a world view of Christian understanding of the Trinity. Apart from its first article on God the Creator, the Creed is entirely concerned with what has allegedly been revealed through God's special acts, namely the incarnation of his Son, and the sending of his Spirit.[564] The incorporation of the *communion of saints* brings relevance to the contemporary Church in how the faithful apply the theology embodied in the Creed of God which Anthony Kelly appropriately condenses it as the Trinity of Love.[565] It is important then that in search of its original and true meaning, this doctrine should be interpreted not in isolation but in the context of the Apostles'

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[562] McBrien, p.75.
[563] Kelly, J.N.D., pp.165-166.
[564] Brian Hebblethwaite, *Philosophical Theology and Christian Doctrine,* Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, pp.18-19.
[565] Anthony Kelly, *The Trinity of Love; A theology of the Christian God,* Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989.

Creed. The linchpin of the doctrine is the body of Christ himself in the Eucharist which conveys the love and *missio Dei* of the Trinity. More precisely, the theology of *communion of saints* reconciles two scriptural and foundational principles of the Christian faith: that is, humanity as *imago Dei* whereby the human person is created in "the image of God" *(Gen 1:26-27)* and that of God as *theanthrophic* (God-Man) person whom the people "shall name him Emmanuel, which means God is with us" *(Mat 1:23).*The *communion of saints* manifests the correspondence of humanity with God's love for creation.

Trinity is the communion of love of God's personhood between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.[566] The Japanese theologian Yoshinobu Kumazawa is especially helpful in expounding this quintessential relationship which identifies the Christian world. In expounding the world view of the Trinity he captures and develops the very essence of the *communion of saints.* Kumazawa explains that God's 'being' is 'relation' at which the essence is *koinǒnia.* In the work of creation the Father created us so that we may join in his *koinǒnia.* In other words, the work of creation is an invitation to his *koinǒnia,* which is the essence of the triune God. Kumazawa meaningfully captures wholly the significance of the Trinitarian God of the Apostles Creed in these words:

> *Man, however, as the crown of creation did not accept this*
> *invitation, but tried to stay outside God's fellowship by falling into*
> *sin. God the Son did not give up his will of inviting man into his*

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[566] LaCunga, pp.292-293.

fellowship and he expressed it in the most radical way by his redeeming work. Moreover, through God the Holy Spirit he expressed his will to accomplish this invitation. The end of his whole work of salvation, namely the fulfilment of the kingdom of God, is simply the fulfilment of this invitation to the fellowship, which is the very essence of the triune God. The whole work of God can therefore be described as a circle which starts from God and ends at God. This whole work of God, which starts from and is orientated to God, is the missio Dei, and is accomplished by the other half of the circle, the promissio Dei.[567]

This study identifies five areas in contemporary scholarship that offer useful insights for advancing a greater appreciation of the significance and scope of the doctrine of the *communion of saints.* These are the Christological concepts of the *Incarnation, Trinity of Love, Personhood, People of God* and the *Mission of the Church.* Directly if not implicitly they conjointly bring together a fuller meaning to the doctrine. These are expounded below.

Incarnation

The main section of the Apostles' Creed, the second and longest, is devoted to Jesus Christ. It affirms his identity: as the incarnate Son of God, the purpose of his coming, the salvation and judgment of the human race. This is doctrine of the Incarnation, from the heart of traditional Christianity. With it, has emerged the

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[567] Yoshinobu Kumazawa, "Salvation Today: A Theological Approach" in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (eds.), *Mission Trends No.1; Crucial Issues in Mission Today,* New York: Paulist Press, 1974, p.97.

doctrine of the Trinity; since belief in the divinity of Christ was held to entail a revised understanding of the God of Jewish faith.[568]   The scope of the Incarnation when explored illustrates a much wider picture of Christianity. It has a direct bearing on the doctrinal relevance of the *communion of saints.* It was Anslem, the eleventh century Bishop of Canterbury who posed the question which is pertinent to this discourse: *Cur Deus Homo?* Why did God become man? [569]   The eminent theologian and philosopher Richard Swinburne responds by stating that over and above the soterological ones, God might well have become man for six other reasons. Bearing in mind that man was created in God's image, God might still want to incarnate:

> *(To) manifest the divine solidarity with God's creatures; to demonstrate the dignity of human nature; to reveal the nature and extent of God's love for his personal creatures; to exemplify an ideal human life; and to provide uniquely authoritative teaching. A sixth reason is God's willingness to subject himself to suffering and evil that spells out the themes of solidarity and love.* [570]

In fact without Incarnational Christology, as another philosophical theologian Brian Hebblethwaite notes, the following elements would have been lost:

> *(The) experience of God's presence and love in person; revelation of the Trinitarian implications of the divine love as it is in itself in the*

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[568] Hebblethwaite, p.57.

[569] Anslem of Canterbury: "Cur Deus Homo?" in Sidney Norton Deane (trans.), *St. Anslem: Basic Writings,* La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1961.

[570] Richard Swinburne, *The Christian God,* Oxford: Clarendon Pres, 1995, p.220; Hebblethwaite, pp.70-71.

inner life of God; experience in prayer and sacrament of Christ as living Lord; recognition of Christ's cross as God's cross in our world and the eschatological hope of Christ as the human face of God with whom we are to be united for all eternity. [571]

These very attributes and expectations of God are represented in the *communion of saints.* Incarnation sums up the mainstream Christian belief of the first century. As a result of the post Easter experiences – not only the Resurrection appearances but also of their experiences as a living presence in their hearts and in their worship – the early Christians came to think of Jesus as having come to them from the side of God, indeed as God made man. They came to see the history and faith of Israel as culminating in God's personal presence here on earth in and as the man Jesus, bringing salvation, in the sense of both forgiveness, and eventually, eternal union with God for all humankind. Centuries of debate and controversy led to the classical formulations of the creeds, whereby Jesus Christ was held to be both God and human:

> *Without ceasing to be God he ever was and is, God as Persons of his eternal being, had taken our nature upon him, lived out a human life and died a human death, and by his Resurrection, taken humanity into God forever.*[572]

The risen Christ, they have held, therefore remains "the human face of God for all eternity, and remains the focus and the fulcrum of our eternal destiny".[573]

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[571] Hebblethwaite, p.71.
[572] Hebblethwaite, p.71
[573] Hebblethwaite, p.71

The foundational link of the Incarnation and *communion of saints* cannot be overstated. In God made Man a true relationship and correspondence is established between the infinite and the finite and the Church is the continuing witness of the incarnate God's love for humanity. Thus:

> *Without the incarnational mission of the Church to the world to activate in human history the holy ferment of the gospel – principles of brotherhood, reconciliation, and justice –the efficacy of her missions would be in grave jeopardy. For better or for worse, the moral tone of man's life is directly affected by and through his social life.*[574]

To be in *koinǒnia* in the person of Christ is to be in relationship between mankind and God which translates into the relationship between one human being to another. The relationship is Trinitarian. The fact that God became man has therefore brought to an end the dichotomy between the holy and the profane *(Ac 10:14, 15),* the sacred and the secular. [575]

Aristotle Papanikolaou in his study of the Greek theology of conceiving God compares the contributions of two prominent Greek Orthodox theologians. Their insights have important bearing on the Christian approach to life in the contemporary world. [576] Suffice to say at this junction that in their search to conceive of God as both immanent and transcendent, they persevere to revive

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[574] Peter J. Riga, *The Church made Relevant,* Indiana, USA: Fides Publishers, 1967.p..4.
[575] Panikulam, pp.140-141.
[576] Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Divine Energies or Divine Personhood: Vladimir Lossky and John Ziziouls on Conceiving the Transcedent and Immanent God", *Modern Theology,* 19:3, 2003, pp.357-385.

the Trinitarian theology as a revelation of God. Revelation is the Incarnation in Jesus Christ where God reveals:

> *who God is, i.e., God as Trinity and as such forms the basis of Christian theology; it is indeed, theology itself, in the sense in which the word was understood by the Greek Fathers, for whom theology most commonly stood for the mystery of the Trinity revealed to the Church. The Incarnation reveals God as Trinity as "a primordial fact", i.e., a word or proclamation about God's being.*
>
> *The Incarnation, however, does more than simply communicate a particular "fact" or piece of information about God. As the event of divine-human communion, it makes possible the human ascent toward union with the living God.*[577]

This divine-human communion enabling human ascent to union with God is more than simply a primordial fact. It is both transcendent and immanent in created existence such that human nature is deified through participation in God's *energies.*[578] *Communion of saints* takes cognizance of the fact that this deification is accomplished in the Eucharist by its transformation of human beings into the personhood of Christ.

"Trinity of Love". [579]

Traditionally, most Christian theists seem to have held that creation is not necessary to God.[580] But certainly it is undeniable that both the ability to create

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[577] Papanikolaou, pp.357-385.
[578] Papanikolaou, p.362.
[579] Kelly, A.

and creativity as such are part of God's nature. While philosophical theologian Keith Ward accommodates the belief that creation is a free act on God's part, he now admits that it is God's essential nature as love which compels God to create an object for his love, namely a world of finite persons. The reasoning behind this move calls for much reflection. This view is also shared by Norman Kretzmann who believes that God is bound by his own nature to create some world or other.[581] Ward too has come to a similar view that God's perfection – his maximal greatness – can only take place in the form of love if there are created persons to be loved. Thus:

> *And since maximal greatness must include love, it must include some creation or other, provided that creation comes up with creatures capable of entering into loving relations with God. In other words, there would be a major great-making property lacking in God were he not to create.* [582]

But this reasoning is premised on the analogy between God and an isolated individual and a distinction has to be drawn from the Trinity of love. Contemporary Trinitarian theology therefore attempts to articulate "a differentiated, relational concept of God in which love is given, love is received and love is shared".[583] This is the very essence of maximal greatness of God. From this it follows that a theist can hold that creation is not necessary for God if

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[580] Hebblethwaite, p.73.

[581] Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism; Aquinas Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

[582] Keith Ward, *Rational Theology and the Creativity of God,* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982; Hebblethwaite , p.42.

[583] Hebblethwaite, p.42

God is love. But on the other hand God's own nature as love can be simply expressed and reflected only in the free creation of yet more centres of love and communion.[584] Hebblethwaite therefore responds to Anslem with the traditional answer in these words:

> *sheer goodness of free creativity, as the perfection of God's inner Trinitarian love finds further expression in the gratuitous creation of finite realm of personal and interpersonal being , <u>where God's creatures can come to know and love each other and their maker in perfected communities which reflect God's glory and God's love</u>.*[585]

God's agenda for creation, in other words, confers a much wider meaning to our role as *imago Dei.* In the Trinity, the *locus* as God's special revelation is the series of events in history which culminated in Christ's life, death and resurrection. In its strongest form, this is to claim that God reveals himself most specifically to humankind through coming amongst us by incarnation, and acting out of divine love and forgiveness in person.[586] In the Eucharist, we believe that the sacrament of Christ continues as the living Lord of love. But how does this sacrament as the Incarnation and the Trinity brings a comprehensive effective meaning to the world? [587] The dynamics of the Eucharist cannot be overstated. Kelly poses these questions as a prelude to his major work on the Trinity of love. We may rightly ask, he writes, what is God's agenda and how "does the Trinity

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[584] Hebblethwaite, p.42.
[585] Hebblethwaite, 42. (The underlining is author's own.)
[586] Hebblethwaite, p.27.
[587] Kelly, A., pp.140-141.

inspire, challenge, command, and call to transforming activity in the social, political, and global arenas?"[588] For him, the answer is to be found in the form of Christian existence where one experiences the full knowledge of faith and the witnessing of the Spirit. He states that the Christian loving flows from the primordial self-giving of God in the sending of the Son; "in this way, the mystery of the invincible God is enacted in sending the Son and in the self-sacrifice of the Son for the loveless world *(1 Jn 2:2; 4:10)*".[589] He proposes that Christians must compete against all other ways of being in the world and all other versions of the human future. It is in the Trinity that he finds the ultimate form of existence which "Christians can celebrate as participating in the divine being Being-in-Love". [590] It is in the mystery of God's self-sacrificing and transforming Love that inspires Christians to self-sacrificing commitment to our neighbour and our world. This he claims is always the "point of new beginning as the problems of evil don't go away but the mystery of Love keeps itself, to enable the transformation of our human defeats into a deeper faith, love, and hope".[591]

Kelly also illustrates that it is through the Trinity that the Christian identity is formed as it expresses our being as "sons and daughters of the Father, members of Christ, and temples of the Spirit".[592] As such, the human person is divinely meant and valued in the Father's self-expression in the World, and consequently

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[588] Kelly, A., pp.140-141.
[589] Kelly, A., p.146.
[590] Kelly, A., pp.140-141.
[591] Kelly, A., p.171.
[592] Kelly, A., p.170

loved in the creative, outgoing Spirit of that Love. To be a human person is to be drawn progressively into the Love-life that is God's being:[593] This has serious implications for the believer. Thus:

> *It is to be personal as God is personal, in self-transcending relationships, leading to a self-fulfilment in an other-directed existence….To understand Trinitarian meaning as the foundation of universe…is to sense oneself as 'someone' within it, to dwell in the mystery and to be indwelt by it, to be intimately related to the whole, and drawn into its fundamental dynamism. To affirm the mystery of the Trinity in these terms means to celebrate an identity within the universe, to belong to it, and to participate in it with the energies of a transcendent love, faith, and hope.* [594]

The agenda of the *communion of saints* is how we accomplish our intimacy with God. We are called to demonstrate that the gift of all graces to individuals *(Col 5:22)* causes a social transcendence *(1 Col 12:4-13)* so that the Spirit could be seen as leading us forward to the things that are to come. This is his new commandment *(Jhn 15: 6-13).* It is a calling to unity which is the ultimate agenda of the Trinity. This entails involvement and engagement singly and as a Church in the affairs of the world. Trinity is about relationships, the *koinǒnia* or the *communion of the saints.* Trinitarian meaning is therefore communicative. Explicitly, it is in the Church as the People of God. As a community the unity is first sensed in the unity of the Father, Son and Spirit.[595]

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[593] Kelly, A., p.170
[594] Kelly, A., p.170.
[595] Kelly, A., p.170-171

Personhood

Christian personhood is the aim of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist but the concept of sacraments themselves needs to be adequately explained as the core principle of *communion of saints.* To begin, as a declaration of truth the meaning and scope of the Eucharist itself has not remained static in the history of the Church even though it has played a significant part in the shaping of Catholic sacramental theology. Joseph Martos brings to the forefront contemporary understandings of baptism and ultimately Eucharist in his popular work *The Catholic Sacraments.* He describes it as the process where Christians consciously enter into what these sacraments symbolize. In these the faithful allow themselves their consciousness and behaviour to be transformed into the reality they signify. "We make it real" he stresses because "(we) incarnate it in our very being" and in so in so doing we ourselves become sacraments signifying what God has done in us and what our surrender to the spirit of Christ can do for others. He continues:

> *On a social level, the sacraments are the means to the end of community building and social transformation. They make us aware of the interpersonal dimensions of our conversion and of our commitment to the task of self-transcendence.*
> *The sacrament of the Eucharist, as the central and traditional act of Christian worship…unites us with all ecclesiastical communities. And in so doing, the Church (as the People of God) becomes identifiable sign of Christ's presence in the world, a united message of Christian message and divine grace.*[596]

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[596] Joseph Martos, *The Catholic Sacraments,* Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1983, pp.225-226.

Anamnesis is accomplished in the sacraments, most particularly in the Eucharist because they contain the necessary characteristics of such an event.[597] Through its sacramentality, the term *communion of saints* becomes a relational concept communicating God's love to the world at large. The doctrine of *communion of saints* as a *regula fidei* is in effect underpinned by this sacramental transformation, that is, the *ontology of personhood* as explained by George Weigel as the ontological personhood of Christ.[598] Quoting from the Baltimore Catechism he explains the significance of this ontology as a technical vocabulary of philosophy that re-captures an image once familiar to generations of Catholics as an indelible mark imprinted on the soul by sacraments.[599] The image of this indelible mark is intended to convey a basic truth of Catholic faith that "the reception of certain sacraments changed the recipient forever, by conferring on him or her new identity — not in the psychological sense of that overused term – but substantively".[600] In particular baptism is a sacrament with an ontological heft. When one becomes a Christian through baptism and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, one is changed in a fundamental way, as Paul taught the Corinthians, to a 'new creation' *(2 Cor 5.17).* The attainment of personhood in Christ is affirmed unequivocally in the words of Jesus himself:

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[597] *Anamnesis* is the recollection of past events. For Christians, it is the primary event of recollection of Christ's life, death, and Resurrection. Here human find "immediate contact" with the Incarnation in the Sacraments where the "past" salvific event is recollected in a way which makes it present even while it simultaneously anticipates the future. (Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, "Anamnesis", in Cornelius Ernst (ed.), Richard Strachan (trans.) , *Theological Dictionary*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1965, pp.19-20).

[598] George Weigel, *Denver Catholic Register*, 19 September 2007.

[599] *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* p.324, *(1272)*: "Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark…" *(1274): "*Baptism is the seal of eternal life"*;* also Augustine (*Ep*.98, 5; *PL* 33. 361*; Eph*.4:30); Irenaeus (*Dem.ap*.3*; SCH* 62, 32*).*

[600] Weigel.

For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now (Acts 1:5). So you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses…to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

It is the transformation to the personhood of Christ that *communion of saints* as a doctrine manifests itself as a communion or relationality *par excellence.* It becomes the means to continue Christ's mission to the world. This is dependent on two closely linked assumptions. First is a clear understanding of the theological significance of the change to personhood whereby every individual who has been sanctified by the sacraments become Christian and second, how this plays out in a collective or ecclesiological sense. This transformation has an enduring effect on the role of the Church in relation to the world at large. In other words, the *communion of saints* is the *process* by which the Church's mission is accomplished in this world. The ontological consequence acquired in the Eucharist was conceived early by the patristic thinkers and this development is important for a theological interpretation of *communion of saints.* The early Christian consciousness, i.e., the understanding of the Eucharist as an event of communion in the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, however, was not been fully developed. This will become decisive in the later patristics under the caption ontological revolution, that is, the development of an ontological theology.

The earliest recognition of sacramental ontology can be traced to the writings of Ignatius of Antioch (*c.*50-*c*107) and Irenaeus of Lyons (*c.*130-*c.*202*)* who identify 'truth' with 'life'. What prompted Ignatius and Irenaeus to take this step was not

any intellectual movement but their shared experience in the Eucharistic community. [601] For both these second century theologians and bishops, the Eucharist was central to their thought process and there is no doubt that it is this ontological implication that influenced their conception of incorruptibility and righteousness. [602] The next significant development occurs during the latter part of the fourth century when patristic thinkers especially Athanasius of Alexandria and the Cappadocian Fathers identify the truth of the Eucharist with life itself. They were able to see Eucharist in terms of a God-world relation and God's special contribution to Christian theology by Athanasius in developing the idea that communion belongs not to the level of will and actions but to that of substance. It thus establishes itself as an ontological category.[603] This realization is critical for one's transformation to the personhood in God's being. It is the *hypostasis* (ὑπόστᾰσις meaning *substance*) that comes from God's being. The Cappadocians, especially Basil of Caesarea brought further insight to the significance of their ontological revolution by identifying *being* with *personhood* or *communion* but with this important caveat that it is not to be understood as additions to being.[604] In other words it is the important realization that this being of God or *ousia* (οὐσία meaning *essence* or *nature*) is not something added on to the being of God as something transitory, but it is the being of God himself and

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[601] John Zizioulas, *Being in Communion*, *Studies in Personhood and the Church,* USA: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004, pp.78-83.
[602] Zizioulas, *Being in Communion*, p.81.
[603] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p.86.
[604] Papanikolaou, p. 366.

as such it is an eternal being or reality.[605]   After Nicaea, the real revolution was the identification of *prosopon (*πρόσωπα meaning *person* or *mask)* with *hypostasis* [606] which is distinct from one divine *ousia* and *homosouia (*ομός, *homós* or the *same*) meaning the same *ousía*, essence or being. Gregory of Nazianzus (*c.*329-390) thus writes that the three *hypostases* represented the three states of God's being: the *unbegotten* (God the Father)*,* the *begotten* (God the Son) and the *proceeding* (God the Holy Spirit) so that the *intrinsic* Holy Trinity exists is three *hypostases* in one *ousia.* The unity of God is in the one *ousia* in three *hypostasis* or persons. This reveals Basil's insight into the *ousia* or *homousios* of the Trinity which influences his preference for *koinŏnia* over *ousia.*[607]

But within catholic Christianity there is a nuance in the way Christians has come to understand this claim to personhood in Christ. This in turn has had the capacity to one's fuller understanding and capacity to accommodate *communion of saints* as an integral component of their faith. The methodologies used by the two outspoken Greek theologians alluded to earlier, viz., Vladimir Lossky and John Zizoulas brings to the forefront the complexity inherent in personhood even though their goal is common. Each attempts to define adequately the divine-human communion, communication or relationship between the created and the

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[605] John Damascene defined *ousia* as a thing that exists by itself, and which has need of nothing for its consistency. "It is not its being in another and has no need of another, but is in itself".
(http: //sarumtheologian.wordpress.com/tag/ousia 26/08/2010); Zizioulas, *Being in Communion,* p.86.
[606] Zizioulas, *Being in Communion,* pp.85-6.
[607] Papanikolaou, , pp.357-85.

uncreated. Their contrasting views assist in illustrating the scope of personhood and theological significance of the *communion of saints.*

Vladimir N. Lossky (1903-1915), the influential Eastern Orthodox theologian in exile from Russia is best remembered for his book *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church.*[608] Lossky advances an understanding of apophaticism that may not have been familiar to the Greek patristic tradition.[609] He is certain that there *is* a distinction between "the essence of God which is inaccessible, unknowable and incommunicable" and "the energies or divine operation in which God goes forth from himself, manifests, communicates, and gives himself".[610] For almost every Greek Orthodox theologian, as indicated in Papanicoloau's study, it has been necessary for the immanence of God to be expressed in the form of energies to protect the *antinomic* character of the Incarnation.[611] This has been necessary in order to "prevent human spirit from being led astray" and "falling from the contemplation of divine mysteries into the platitude of (reductive) rationalism" and "replacing living experience with concepts".[612] For the Eastern Orthodoxy the energies distinction is the only way to affirm the reality of a personal communication with the living God in freedom and love and not

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[608] Lossky's main theological concern was exegesis on mysticism in the Orthodox tradition. He maintained that the Orhodox maintained their mystical tenets while the West lost them after the East-West Schism by drawing on Damascene's definition of the Greek terms *ousia, hypostasis* and *theosis*. (Vladimir N. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976).

[609] Papanikolaou, p.371.

[610] Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church,* p.70.

[611] The theology of the *antinomic* character of Incarnation is that God must be affirmed as both a knowable and unknowable God. According to Gregory Palamas, the Incarnation demands an 'antinomic theology' which proceeds by oppositions of contrary but equally true propositions (Lossky, Vladimir N, (eds.) John H. Erickson and Thomas F. Bird, "The Theology of Light in the Thought of Gregory Palamas" in *In the Image and Likeness of God*, Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974., p.51).

[612] Papanikoloau, p.363.

necessity. For the Greek Church the notion of energies engenders a communion between the divine and the human that avoids "complacency and serves to elevate toward personal ecstatic union with God." [613]

By this approach, Lossky maintains that there is no possibility of a real communion between God and humanity. Thus man cannot participate in God's essence *(ousia)* or being because the universe is not created from God's essence or *ousia* but by his energy and his will. In contrast the substance ontology is only an idea of God. The immanence and transcendence of God is an *antinomic* truth grasped by faith in a way reason cannot. [614] God is related to the world by his energy not his essence. These energies are uncreated as they are God's eternal powers. God only comes into contact with the world and humanity via his uncreated energies. Hence, Lossky is forthright in criticising Aquinas' scholastic theology for its fundamental mistake. In his estimation of others, he finds Aquinas too is guilty of a rational approach to God. He claims that such a rationalistic approach to theology attempts to know God "through concepts derived through the method of abstraction".[615] Lossky associates this approach to the knowledge of God to the created *nous*: "(if) mind or *nous* is created, then its sphere of activity is linked to the created realm or the realm of being".[616] The end result is not an encounter with the "personal, living God, but a limited,

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[613] Papanikolaou, p.363.
[614] Vladimir N. Lossky, Ian and Ihita Kesarcodi-Watson (trans.), *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction* Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978, pp.38-39.
[615] Papanikolaou, p.360
[616] Papanikolaou, p.360

conceptual knowledge of God's being". [617] For Lossky "the fatal existential consequence" of this is that it precludes full personal communion with the divine. He therefore accuses Western thinkers of isolating the locus for union with God in the *nous, and* ultimately continuing the mistakes of patristic thinkers such as Clement, Origen and Evagrius.[618] Lossky interprets Western theology as "not an encounter with the personal, living God, but limited, conceptual knowledge of God's being".[619] Lossky stresses:

> *Even though we share the same human nature as Christ and receive in Him the nature of Sons of God, we do not ourselves become the divine hypostasis of the Son by the fact of the Incarnation. We are unable, therefore to participate in either the essence or the hypostasis of the Holy Trinity.* [620]

In general this contemporary Orthodox Christian theology identifies the sotereological and mystical notion of 'deification' or *theosis* as representing *energies* of God, that is, God's energies are truly God [621] As Papanikolaou points out the Greek Fathers had affirmed from the beginning the distinction between God's unknowable essence and God's energies through which a real communion with God is possible. The energies form the bridge between the "unfathomable gap between the uncreated God and God's creation".[622] As a

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[617] Papanikolaou, p.360.
[618] Vladimir N. Lossky, Asheleigh Moorhouse (trans.), *The Vision of God*, Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983.
[619] Papanikolaou, p.360.
[620] Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church,* p.69
[621] Papanikolaou, pp.357-85.
[622] Papanikolaou, p.359.

creature human being cannot know the uncreated God: "Man's attempt to know God through his created mind ends in idolatry".[623]   This Orthodox theology presents difficulties for the doctrine of the *communion of saints.* As such it is reasonable to postulate the one reason for the absence of such a doctrine to this day in the Eastern tradition because that would be contrary to its concept of personhood in contrast to the West which is *cataphatic.*[624]

In sharp contrast to Lossky has been his counterpart John Zizoulas, the notable theologian and Chairman of the Academy of Athens, who recognizes the danger of knowing God through this monistic approach, that is, participation and union with God's *energies.* He claims it threatens personhood, the independence of the Holy Spirit and ultimately the possibilities of deification. For Zizioulas *theosis* is not about participating in the *energies* of God but in the *hypostasis* of Christ.[625] The correct methodology is to return to the Greek Fathers on their understanding of *koinŏnia.* It was founded in the centrality of the Eucharist in the early church's Christian spirituality.[626]   Zizioulas thus appropriates the divine-human communication of the Incarnation to the Eucharistic consciousness of the early Christians in the way they came to understand the God of Jesus Christ. In the early Church, the Eucharistic event was the fullness of the presence of God in

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[623] John S. Romanides, Ioannes S. Romanides and George Dion Dragas (eds.), *An Outline of Orthodox Patristic Dogmatics,* USA: Orthodox Research Institute, 2004, p.5.

[624] *Cataphatism* - the religious belief that God has given enough clues to be known to humans positively and affirmatively, e.g., God created Adam `in his own image.

[625] Papanikolaou, p.367.

[626] Bernard McGinn, Jean Lecleq and John Meyendorff, (eds.), "The Early Christian Community" in *Christian Spirituality . Origins to the Twelfth Century* New York: NY: Crossroad, 1985, pp.23-43.

history. Thus Zizoulas has been most effective in explaining what happens in baptism when the transformation of *hypostasis* takes place. "What Christ offers for salvation for human existence, then, is not so much the divine energies as his own *hypostasis*"*:*

> *If biological birth gives us hypostasis dependent ontologically on nature, this indicates that a "new birth" is needed in order to experience ontology of personhood. This "new birth," which is the essence of baptism, is nothing but the acquisition of an identity not dependent on the qualities of nature but freely raising nature to a hypostatic existence identical with that which emerges from the Father-Son relationship.* [627]

One therefore receives a *deified human nature* by being baptized in Christ. In being united to the Body of Christ in the Eucharist, the Church as a sanctified people participates in the work of Christ. Reception of this deified human nature, however, is only one part of the equation in a person of salvation which must involve both nature and person. Upon being unified to the Body of Christ, one should see oneself as being then able and having the capacity to grow towards perfection. This perfection is thus a process of growth toward the personhood in God. *Personhood is the goal.* According to Chalcedonian Christology this personal existence is made possible by the *oikonomia* which in the end mirrors that of Christ as one person who possesses a divine and human nature. This deified human nature is then offered to humanity within the Church.

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[627] Papanikolaou, p.369.

The basis of early Christian spirituality is dependent on the Eucharistic event and eschatologically this event is the eschaton. In the Eucharist one knows the truth, i.e., God, and one acquires God's mode of being. From the very beginning of Christian existence this Eucharistic spirituality that identifies the Eucharist with the eschaton is evident not only by virtue of the gathering together in Christ's name of all who work together in unity as the various parts of the body but the Church is the Body of Christ in an ontological sense. It is the real, eschatological body of the Risen Christ which forms the basis for the identification of the Eucharist with the eschaton, but this link between the Body of Christ and the Eucharist is possible, however, only through the Holy Spirit. Such a Christology "entails an inherent unity between ecclesiology, Christology and pneumatology".[628] In this pneumatologically conditioned Christology Zizoulas identifies *two* types of pneumatologies in the early Church. The first is *missionary-historical type* where the Church is defined in terms of mission and the other is the *eucharistic-eschatological type* which has useful implications for understanding the *communion of saints.* As an ecclesiological entity this aspect of faith has often been neglected by exegetes of the early Christians texts.

The Zizoulas methodology is significant. In so far as the Spirit realizes the event of Christ in history, then the community formed by the communion of the Holy Spirit "iconically realizes the presence of Christ" so that "Christ is always present

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[628] Papanikolaou, p.364.

in the world." [629] It is the activity of the Spirit which guarantees the identity of the Church is Christ. In so far as the Eucharistic gathering is the Body of Christ, the eschatological role of the Holy Spirit must therefore always be interpreted as an event of *communion.* The two fundamental aspects of pneumatology, then, are *eschatology* and *communion.* Since the Spirit is not related to history in the same way as the Son, the Spirit brings the kingdom into history, and in this sense does not become history but fulfils it.

The differences in theological method and the *filioque* is the most evident example of how a faulty theological method can lead to a doctrine which threatens personhood, the independence of the Holy Spirit, and, ultimately, the possibilities of deification. [630] The difference in divine-human communication by *energies* of the Eastern Tradition and *personhood* favoured in the West is significant for the interpretation of the *communion of saints.* In fact a proper understanding of the implications of Chalcedon is possible only in the personhood which is attained by baptism and the Eucharist. In this regard the contribution of Luther cannot be overstated. In the Chalcedon's *communicatio idiomatum* Luther explains the point at length which is summarised in his *The Word was made Flesh* (1539): [631]

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[629] Papanikolaou, p.365.
[630] Papanikolaou, p.360.
[631] In Christian theology *communicatio idiomatum* ("sharing of attributes") is a term from the theology of the Incarnation, attempting to explain the relationship between two natures (divine and human) in one person (Jesus Christ). The theory is that both the properties of God the Son and the properties of the human nature can be ascribed to the person Jesus- a "Communication of Idioms" or attributes (Piotr Malysz, "Communicatio idiomatum as the Ontological Foundation of Luther's Christology" in *Religion and Theology,* v.16:4 (September 2009), pp.618-622.

For by this fact (communicatio idomatum) the proper attributes of each nature are attributed to the person of God. For even if he is identical with the Father, nevertheless, because he became incarnate, suffered, and was crucified, all things were made subject to him by the Father. In the person (of Christ) is God and man, in as much as God is God, he did not suffer, because God is not capable of suffering, but in much he is man, he suffers. Nevertheless, because God and man in one person cannot be separated, we are compelled to say that Christ as true God and true man suffered for us and the whole person is said to have died for us.[632]

Today's theologians Barth, Jungel and Moltmann too identify themselves with Luther in this regard. Both Zwingli and Calvin say that the communication is purely verbal but Calvin adds this qualification, and not without reason, seeing this communication is not a mere manner of speaking:

In the communication of properties an attribute of one nature is affirmed of a subject or a person, indicated by the other nature. A human attribute such as blood or a human event such as dying cannot be applied to the divine nature in the abstract; rather they can be predicated of divinity in the concrete, of a divine being, if the subject, who is divine, is also human, and therefore has blood and is mortal.[633]

Luther is also able to show how the Chalcedonian's doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum* goes beyond God's very being. His theology adds support the

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[632] "Luther's Works", 38, 254 (English translation cited in Marc Linehard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ,* Minneapolis: Ausburg Publishing House, 1982).

[633] Dennis Nigen, "Chalcedonian Christology and Beyond: Luther's Understanding of the Communicatio Idiomatum, *Hethrop Journal,* v.XLV, 2004, p.58.

communion of saints as an ontological doctrine which is communicative because when human nature suffers God's divine nature also suffers with his human nature via *communicatio idiomatum.* The same reasoning applies when, to quote Zizoulas:

> *(Anyone) attains the personhood of Christ. When one participates in the "holy things for holy people," i.e. the sacraments, it involves a personal reception of the deified human nature from the Holy Spirit in the same way the historical Jesus was sanctified by the Holy Spirit in his baptism on the river Jordan.*
>
> *This "new birth," which is the essence of Baptism, is nothing but the acquisition of an identity not dependent on the qualities of nature but freely raising nature to a hypostatic existence identical with that which emerges from the Father-Son relationship.* [634]

The Incarnation therefore reveals the distinction between the uncreated, unknowable essence of God that lies beyond being, and created essence whose existence is identified with being. God therefore can rightly be assumed as both transcendent and immanent in created existence. The personhood of human beings or the sainthood attained by the sacraments forms the conduit of the divine-human communion and communication between created humanity and the uncreated transcendent God. The communion is ontological in the sanctified being and this distinguishes between baptized from the unbaptized. By being

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[634] John Zizoulas, **"On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood"** in Christoph Schwobel and Colin E. Gunton (eds.), *Persons, Divine and Human,* Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1991, p.43;

united in the body of Christ one therefore participates in the work of Christ in receiving a deified human nature.[635] *Personhood is therefore the goal* which is the *mission Dei* of the *communion of saints.* God's incarnation and even Christ's resurrection will otherwise remain inaccessible mysteries for us without Pentecost. We would be only mere spectators of God's power and wonders unless that power works within us. For Christians our God is not only the God of above of the Old Testament but is also the God with us. Foremost it is the God within us of the Pentecost. By baptism and nourished by the Eucharist the gift of the Holy Spirit is expressed in the hearts of Christians with a new kind of life that comes from God. Importantly too is the understanding of the Holy Spirit which is to be distinguished from human understanding. One is about human matters by its own, the other is about understanding God guided by the Holy Spirit.

The consequence of personhood is this. It causes filial piety that helps to build a relationship with parents; the gift of piety helps us to live as children of God. Thus, life is not just a human life but maturing into a divine dimension of the human life of relationships. It is about growing up to partake in the business of God. The power of the God of the Old Testament is not anymore something to witness from a distance, but something to experience within. It is not an overpowering strength, but certainly, it enables those who experience it to "achieve whatever they presume to do" (*Gen 11:6*). Speaking and understanding God's matters means we have truly grown up. Through the sacramental

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[635] Papanikolaou, p.370.

practices of baptism and the Eucharist, the patristic fathers indicate that this community of the living, which is collectively referred to by Paul as 'the saints' become participants in God's holy life. It can also be construed that the notion of 'saints' here decidedly refers not to individuals but rather "communal, corporate, relational, sacramental, theocentric, and ethical." [636] In short, these aspects are inscribed in the Christian *koinŏnia* which as already previously shown to consist of both vertical and horizontal dimensions. It would be inconsistent therefore to assume that one can love God without loving one's neighbours. This is because of the God-Man, *theanthropic* principle:

> *What enables Man in Christ to arrive at a personal identity in ontological terms is that in Christ the natures are, only because they are particularized in one person.*[637]

Papanikoloau sums the significance of the union in Christ which directly has a bearing how we should treasure and apply our sanctification to the personhood of Christ. He states that it is not about the communications of divine energies, but becoming a 'son' of God by transforming one's hypostasis through a relationship with that of the Son. The consequence is:

> *Christ is the "one" and "many" in whom our hypostasis is not merged or absorbed, but transfigured, or rather constituted in the relationship which Christ has with the Father. It is within this*

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[636] M. Therese Lysaught, "A Feminist Theological Reading of the Communion of Saints" in *Modern Theology*, v.15, no.4 (1999). pp.513-15.

[637] John Zizoulas, On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood, p.43.

relationship that the human person becomes, or exists eternally as
a unique and unrepeatable being.[638]

From the evidence gathered the doctrine of *communion of saints* is sustainable as a profession of faith only when considered in the light of this transfiguration. Only then it be said that as a truth it arises within the economy of the Triune God. Only then is it also possible to assert that the doctrine is sotereological.

People of God

History has it that the historical Jesus did not give the New Testament but, before his resurrection, he gave the apostles and the world the Church and the sacraments. He assured them his "rule and authority, and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come" (*Eph1:21*) and that the Church would be guided by the Holy Spirit and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it *(Mt 16:18).* The Church is the corporate term for the People of God and it denotes a sense of unity and exclusivity of a community of believers from the rest of society. The position of Christians in relation to others is analogous to the Jewish nation as the chosen people of God. The passages from the Old Testament such as the instruction to Moses that they would be to God 'a royal priesthood and a holy nation' *(Ex 19, 6)* and other similar texts *(1 Macc 10, 39 and 44; Wis 18, 19)* were seized upon by Christians and transferred to themselves.[639] A familiar line comes from Peter to

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[638] Papanikokaou, p.369.
[639] Kelly, J.N.D., p.158.

his correspondents: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" *(1 Pet 2, 9).* In the second century, Justin characterises the members of his church:

> *We are not only a people, but we are a holy people, as we have already showed – "And they shall call them the holy people, redeemed by the Lord. Therefore we are not a people to be despised, nor a barbarous race…but God has even chosen us, and he has become manifest to those who asked not after Him…For this is that nation which God of old promised to Abraham, when He declared that He would make him the father of a mighty nation.(Dial.119 (E.J.G.237)* [640]

Paul used the term saints to refer to his congregation. The term was not used loosely. Through the traditions of the covenanted people of Israel, the vision of God's holiness, glory and relationality is subsequently transformed and reflected within the context of the Christian *koinŏnia.* In the New Testament this is achieved by the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist and only those who have been sanctified are identified within the Church as saints. Biblically, their exclusivity has been identified by such words, expressions and images that points to its reality at one time or another in the life of the early Church: the people of God *(1 Pet 2: 9-10*); flock *(Jhn 10:14; Acts 20:28-29; 1 Pet 5:3-4);* vine *(Jhn 15:5);* temple *(1 Cor 3:16-17);* bride *(Rev 21:2)* and body of Christ *(1 Cor 12:27; 1 Cor 10:16-17; Rom 12:4-5; Eph 1:22-23)* each conveying its own

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[640] Kelly, J.N.D., p.159.

emphasis in the manner the church community was perceived internally or by outsiders.

Contemporary scholarship too has been at pains to find an appropriate name or designation that will aptly connote the aim and objective of the Church's followers and as an alternative to the outmoded Pauline term 'saints'. Such an exercise should offer in depth an insight into nature of the Christian community. This has to include 'the Church' as the epitome of unity and communion of the present believers with the past and the Apostolic Church but this approach will also limit its meaning largely to an external attribute of the Church.[641] Equally deficient is the understanding of the traditional Lutheran and mainline Protestant exegetes that the Church is *sola scriptura* because the Bible itself is the product of Church's tradition. The New Testament therefore needs to be interpreted in the context of the tradition.[642] Robert Bellarmine defines the Church as a specific form of human community (*coetus hominum*). His celebrated passage "The one and true Church" was to mean "the community of men brought together by the profession of the same sacraments, under the government of the legitimate pastors and especially the one vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman pontiff". [643] Although his view is comprehensive to include the most important aspects of the

[641] James H. Provost, *The Church as Communion, Permanent Seminaries No.1,* Washington, D.C.: Canon Law Society of America, 1984, p.138

[642] Gerhard Ebeling, S.H.Hooke (trans.), *The Word of God and Tradition*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968, p.154.

[643] Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church, A Critical Assessment of the Church in all its Aspects,* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1976, p.14.

Church and as an historical communion, it tends to disregard *communio* in so far as it is theandric. As noted, all these are inadequate and seem to emphasize selective constituents in response to specific concerns from certain sources. Avery Dulles' work lists other models that include the Church as Institution, Sacrament, Herald and Servant. In the end he finds none of these offers a wholesome picture of the Church. He also observes that many of the Church Fathers from Irenaeus to Augustine thought of the Church as a mystical union. He states: "They saw the Church as wider than any given institution, and as present wherever the Holy Spirit is at work bringing men together into a fellowship of faith and love". [644]

Dulles is convinced that the Church as a *communion* is consistent with the ecclesiologies of the great medieval doctors, including William of Auvergne, Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas and that only after a period of oblivion; this point of view was revived by the Tubigen theologians of the nineteenth century. This became the basis subsequently and has prospered in many twentieth-century presentations of "the Church as the Body of Christ and as People of God". [645] It is precisely for this reason, that Pope Paul VI by reference to *Acts 2:11* asserts that Peter called Christians "a people set apart to sing the praises of God" because of "those marvellous things and each one was able to hear in his own language" *(Evangelii Nuntiandi, 3.).* Walter Kasper too sees the Church as a

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[644] Dulles, *Models of the Church,* p.14.
[645] Dulles, *Models of the Church,* p.135.

mystical union because of the profound meaning meaning it brings. He writes how God has turned to the world once and for all in Jesus Christ:

> *This divine commitment does not reach its end with Christ. On the contrary, in and through him it is an enduring presence in the world. If it were not accepted and confessed in faith, the truth of God would not have come into the world once and for all, but would have been evaporated, as it were. The witnesses of faith in the community of believers – that is, in the church – is therefore an essential element in revelation itself. Only in and through the church does the revelation in Christ arrive at its goal. Only in and through the church does it attain persistence and efficacy in the world. Without the church and its testimony we should know nothing of Jesus Christ. Without the church there would be no Scripture.*
>
> *Scripture came into being in the church and for the church….So the truth of Jesus Christ is made present and communicated in a human and historical way, not merely through the church's ministry of proclamation, but through its whole life and activity.*[646]

Paul's understanding of saints is illustrated below (see footnote). [647] The saints comprise the Church. Thus, the theology of the doctrine is essentially

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[646] Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church*, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1992.p.139.

[647] In the New Testament, the Greek word "hagios" is translated holy or saint. "It means holy or most holy thing. It is applied to Christians throughout the New Testament. (e.g. *Act 9:13, 32, 41, 26:10, Rom. 1:7, 8:27, 12:13, 15:25, 26, 31, 16:2, 15, 1 Cor. 1:2, 1 Cor. 6:1, 2, 14:33, 16:1, 15, 2 Cor. 1:1, 2 Cor. 8:4, 9:1, 13, 13:13, Eph. 1:1, 15, 18, 2:19, 3:8, 18, 4:12, 5:3, 6:18, Phil. 1:1, 4:22, Col. 1:2, 4, 12, 26, 1 Thes. 3:13, 2 Thes. 1:10, 1 Tim 5:10, Phm. 1:5, 7, Heb. 6:10, Heb. 13:24, Jud. 1:3, 14, Rev. 5:8, 8:3, 4, 11:18, 13:7, 13:7, 10, 14:12, 15:3, 16:6, 17:6, 18:24, 19:8, 20:9).* When we become Christians we are sanctified (Greek *hagioazo*, the verb form of *hagios*). Sanctification is a process which continues throughout our lives as Christians here on earth. Paul tells the Christians at Corinth and Rome that they *"are sanctified in Jesus Christ, called to be saints"* (*1 Cor. 1:2, Rom 1:7).* The saints on earth are saints in the making, while

ecclesiological as it is underpinned by the Church's consciousness and commitment to continue the work of Jesus himself as a liberator of humanity from everything that oppresses man but which is above all liberation from sin and the Evil One.

Roger Haight points out that Paul was the first to provide a theological account of the members of the Church and the nature of the Church as a special People of God from the rest of society whom he referred to them as saints. By his several accounts of his conversion of Gentiles and Jews, Paul characterises his own conversion in terms of revelation: "God called me through grace" and "was pleased to reveal his Son to me" (*Gal 1:15-16).*[648]. Gifts and grace provide the premise and theme of revelation and according to Haight it is this revelation that communicates a sense of being chosen. Thus:

> *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called (Rom 8:29-30).* [649]

Haight is therefore prepared to conclude that Paul inculcated in the members of his church a sense of being singled out by God. Paul referred to community as saints because having been sanctified; they could regard themselves as the

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the saints in heaven are perfect, no longer struggling with sin, since they are in the presence of God". http://www.biblicaltruth.org/saints.htm, 13/03/2010)

[648] Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History, Historical Ecclesiology,* v.1, New York: Continuum, 2004, p.116.

[649] Haight, p.116.

People of God separate from the rest of society. They alone constitute the Church. Other Catholic theologians such as Edward Schillebeck (1914-2009) and Johannes Metz (1928 -) who strongly influenced by the feminist theology of Pannenberg and Moltmann also see the Church as an exodus community pioneering the future of the world.[650] But often overlooked is the truth that the Church itself is not the creation of mankind: "The Church is not primarily our Church, made and formed by us"; rather it is "the Church of Jesus Christ manifested in our ecclesiastical community".[651] In other words and as noted by James H. Provost the Church is a theandric communion which by definition transcends all merely human categories and concepts.[652] The fathers also decidedly understood the notion of saints does not refer to individuals but rather communal although it is firstly in the individual orientation of people to the personhood in Christ that the initia for a Christian *koinŏnia* takes root, i.e., where God's presence, individual and as a community, is manifested vertically and horizontally. The dead too remain within this *koinŏniaas:* "God's blessing inscribes each person inalienably into deep relationship to the Holy One and each other".[653] This study finds that the descriptors used so far does not adequately express the nature or objective of the Pauline term. An overview of the primordial Christian communities is helpful in characterising the *modus operandi* of these house churches.

[650] Dulles, *Models of the Church,* p.11.
[651] Michael Figura, "Meeting Christ in the Church" in *Communio,* v.24, 1997, *p.244.*
[652] Provost, p.131.
[653] Lysaught, p.514..

The early Christians earned the designation of saints for a precise reason. They become the children of God through faith – the *pístis* (Gk) – by which they have clothed themselves with Christ *(Gal 3: 26-27).* The *pístis* assured their salvation.[654] This is the fundamental basis of Christian faith which Paul inherits and exhibits. From much of his early Christian understanding, Paul teaches that the personal faith comes from hearing the word and Jesus' lordship which includes obedience of faith or commitment *(Rom 5, cf. 16:26*). Hence faith relates to ethics and this is in close relationship to its expression toward the future as *hope* and toward others as *love (1 Thess 1:3; Rom 12:1-2, 13:8-10).*

Paul's saints were also involved in attaining righteousness and justification (*cf. Gal.3:6-14;Rom 4)* as matters of faith. He connects faith with gospel for salvation *(Rom 1:16);* peace and access to God *(5:1-2)*; the Spirit *(Gal 3:2, 5, 14);* in Christ *(Gal 3:25-26)*. For Paul, Reconciliation parallels justification by faith *(Rom 5:9-11)* and redemption *(3:24-25).* Fellowship' *(konini)* is connected with God's being faithful *(1 Cor 1:9)* and our participation in Christ *(Phil 3:9-10),* and grace is frequently linked with faith. For Paul faith becomes the criterion not 'works of the law' such as circumcision and regulations involving clean and unclean, which

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[654] "*Pistis* (Gk) is acceptance of the *kěrygyma* or apostolic proclamation about crucified and risen Jesus *(Gal 3:2, 5)*. *Pístis* is a technical term for reaction to gospel preaching, an act of faith with regard to the story about Jesus coupled with the promise of future salvation *(Acts 4:4*, with *3:19-26; 13;48*, with *vv.38-39, 46-47; Rom 10:9-14)*. This future hope was part of the kěrygyma (1 Thess 1:9-10). Christians are "believers" *(Acts 2:44, Rom 16; 3:22),* "members of the household of faith" *(Gal 6:10)"* (Freedman, p.453).
Luke in Acts stresses coming to faith as conversion to "hear the word, believe, and be saved" *(Lk 8:12-13; Acts 10-43; 13:19; 16:31; 20:21 24:24).* "The apostles" can ask "the Lord, Increase our faith" *(Lk 17:5).* Mary is the model of faith in the beatitude (Lk 1:45). Questions appear as to the existence of faith on the part of the disciples *(Lk 8:25; 18:8).* Jesus prays that Peter's faith not fail *(Lk 22:32).* In Acts "the faith" becomes a term for Christianity *(Acts 6:7; 13:8; cf. Lk 18:8)*

marked Jews off from others and so precluded a universal mission. Hebrews has 32 instances of *pistis* and it relates to what people in Israel did by faith. God is the subject of faith *(6:1; cf.11:6)*. Those addressed have come to faith in the gospel message *(4:2-3; 6:12)*. Faith thus means full assurance *(10:22)* but there is grave danger of those addressed falling away into unbelief (3:12; cf. v.19). In *11:3-12:2* , *pístis* can be trust in God's promise *(11:11),* accepting what God said *(v.8),* or denoting what motivated Abraham to sacrifice Isaac *(vv. 17-18)* or moved Moses *(vv. 24-25)* or how we understand the world's creation *(v.3; cf.1:2)*.The early church communities were thus seen as a special category which had been consecrated or set apart. Thus:

> *That the Christian vocation involved an 'election' on God's part is a datum that formed part of the daily life of the primitive Church. The early Christians knew they were "chosen" or "elected" (cf. 1 Cor 1:27-28; Rom 8;33; 1 Pt 1:2; James 2:5). Using the term in a way that is somewhat different from our usage today,*
> *they called themselves "saints". For them, as for the Old Testament in general, it meant "consecrated" or "united in a special way to God". In this union with God they saw a proof of God's love and a reason for giving thanks.*[655]

For the salvation of the human person, within the ecclesial context, one receives a divine human nature or personhood; by being baptized into Christ. The term saint itself does not necessarily connote high moral quality when applied to a person: "Holiness as sacredness is a state of dedication to God's service as

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[655] Juan Luis Segundo, *The Community Called Church,* New York: Maryknoll, 1973, p.40.

illustrated by the early Christians use of the noun saints".[656] The term saint applies to anyone belonging to the community of believers as the People of God. Therefore saints are synonymous with the People of God. From a corporate or communal perspective the Church comprises the *communion of saints* as it too is a wholesome representation of everyone who had or has been sanctified by the sacraments. From an individual perspective, a saint is a person who has been transformed ontologically into the personhood in Christ by the sacraments.

The fundamental attributes of the Church as the People of God after Vatican II compares with what Paul had already alluded to in his usage of the term saints for his community or what Niceta refers to as the *communion of saints* in his creed. The patristic fathers have shown that it is the community of the living that collectively participates in God's holy life. In this regard Paul no less than seven times entreats the early Christian communities to imitate him as he imitates Christ or approves of them having done so**:**

> *For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have not have many fathers. Indeed in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me (1 Cor 4:15-16).*
> *Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ (1 Cor 11:1).*

As a community of God's people, the Pauline corpus is also unequivocal of its unique identity and missionary undertaking as evidenced particularly in *1 Cor 4:16, Gal 4:12, Phil 3:17, 4:9; 1Thess 1:6; 2:14:*

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[656] Attwater, p.7.

Christ is the ideal of humanity toward which all believers strive, but since they cannot see him, Paul's comportment must mirror 'the life of Jesus' (2 Cor 4:10). This is the only authentic hermeneutic. The theme appears with reference to every community that knew Paul personally.[657]

In Jesus, God's revelation becomes part of our history for a new beginning after the fall of Adam. Faith is God's work in his people which changes human beings and gives new birth from God. (John 1:13). For each person it ultimately comes down to imitating the example of God, who gave his life for us *(1 John 3:16-18).* The scriptures call upon Christians to be God's ambassadors *(2 Cor 20)* and the saints, as the People of God, each according to the gift of the Holy Spirit, have shown by their virtues and deeds what is God all about. Through the chosen holy people humanity becomes conscious of God's presence in the world. The Holy Spirit makes this happen through faith which enables Christians freely, willingly and joyfully to do good to everyone, serve everyone, make sacrifices, suffer all kinds of things and finally love and praise the God who has shown such grace. Thus, it has been said , it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light.

For the first time, and unique to Christianity alone, humanity is able to have an insight and sense who and what God is through its community as the imitators of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of *communion of saints* is thus a profound statement

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[657] Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Roland E. Murphy (eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990, p.808.

of belief that serves as a conduit or messenger of the Creator's intent. From a daily mundane perspective this is how the poet and historian John Samuel Tieman expresses the nature of his local parish community. He writes:

> I realised that what I was seeing was love. Not the concept of love, not some intellectualism, but the stuff itself, the love itself. What I was seeing was church – not the concept, not the institution, but a woman leading a blind man to the altar, to the priest, a blind man trusting his lover and both trusting their God.[658]

At Vatican II, Yves Congar introduced the expression *De Popula Dei,* that is, People of God in relation to the Church but he himself encountered difficulties to explain what exactly this would mean because of the depth of meaning it carries. Everyone, including the members of the Church, is created by God. However, José Comblin has been able to extract the scope and significance of the term People of God below from Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* which in substance corresponds favourably with the churches of early Christianity.

> Christ instituted this new covenant, the new covenant in his blood (see 1 Cor 11:25); he called a people together made up of Jews and Gentiles which would be one, not according to the flesh, but by the Spirit, and it would be the new people of God. That messianic people has as its head Christ…These people possess the dignity and freedom of the daughters and sons of God…Its law is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us (see Jn 13:34). Its destiny

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[658] John Samuel Tieman, "All I Will Ever Need", *America,* v.181, no. 2, 07/17/99-07/24/99, http://web.ebchost.com.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au 29/04/2009.

is the kingdom of God…on earth.

Consequently, this messianic people, although it does not, in fact include everybody, and at times may seem to be a little flock is, however, a most certain seed of unity, hope and salvation…Christ the Lord, high priest taken from the midst of humankind (see Heb 5:1-5), made the new people "a kingdom of priests to his God and Father" (Rev 1:6, see 5:9-10).The holy people of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office: it spreads abroad a living witness of him…

All women and men are called to belong to the new people of God. The people themselves, whilst remaining one and unique, is to be spread throughout the whole world and to all ages in order that the design of God's will may be fulfilled. All are called to this catholic unity of the people of God, which prefigures and promotes universal peace. [659]

These attributes of the People of God are consistent with Pauline house churches and that of the Latin Fathers of Jerome, Niceta and Augustine. In all respects the expression People of God and *communion of saints* are interchangeable to designate the members of the Church. The theological development of the understanding of the Church in the Apostles' Creed by the qualification *communion of saints* is a theological progression in the medieval Church from the creed of the Nicaea-Constantinople. The original creed of Nicaea itself did not have an article relating to the Church. As indicated earlier,

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[659] José Comblin, *People of God*, New York: Orbis Books, 2004. pp.2-3.
As explained in *Lumen Gentium* the concept of People of God does not mean exclusivity. "The council could overcome the difficulty with the concept of People of God so as include all people in the world only by opting for the word *"subsistit"* to mean that the People of God subsists, i, e, *is present*, in the Catholic Church so that it does not rule out the possibility that the People of God might subsist elsewhere – in other Christian communities or possibly other religions" (Comblin, p.10).

the present Nicene Creed (Nicea-Constantinople Creed) is the result of an ongoing process of reflection and adaptation of the local baptism creeds in the Eastern tradition which necessitated an expanded version on the Church beginning from such expressions as 'one baptism' to as 'one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic' Church.[660]

In subscribing to the notion of *communion of saints* believers therefore give a clear undertaking that they live by faith not sight *(2 Cor 8:7)* which is given through faith in Christ *(Gal 3:22).* For the salvation of the human person, within the ecclesial context, one receives a divine human nature or personhood; by being baptized into Christ. By sanctification Christians become the People of God. Ontologically, as a result of the transformation, a Christian acknowledges the reality that beyond the things that can be seen, tasted touched and heard: there is a God. In subscribing to the doctrine of *communion of saints,* the confessor ontologically enriches his interest in God and his relation to the world. In the context of the Church, the theology of *communion of saints* specifically brings to focus the basis of ecclesiology. Thus it is not a general statement about saints. As previously asserted, the Apostles Creed is Trinitarian and from a theological perspective the Article the holy Catholic Church would fall short of illustrating to a believer the true nature of the Church unless it is qualified by the phrase *the communion of saints.* Only then does the term Church becomes more meaningful as a communion of the People of God.

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[660] Betterson, pp.24-26.

The theology of the *communion of saints* is the sacramentality of the Church veiled in the preceding phrase 'the holy Catholic Church'.[661] In creedal form it is a commitment to the faith given to catechumens at baptism. As a special or chosen People of God this study therefore claims that it is a selective undertaking by the newly baptized to live up to their sacraments which assures forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.[662] It is a profound statement on of the Church as a sacrament of communion. Fashioned by the Holy Spirit it relativises the limitations of our earthly existence and opens to eternity. It embodies the loving and living communion of the Trinitarian God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the implications it has for our relationship as a New Being with God and between us as the chosen People of God.

The doctrine of communion of saints acknowledges that God is a communion of love that exists not only among persons of God but between God, humanity, and all creation. Through baptism we share in the mystery of the risen Jesus, which draws us into the life of the Trinity. The life of the Trinity is what Jesus came to share with us and it is for this that he died. Those who share in his death and resurrection share in the life of the Trinity. This most basic truth is referred to in terms of a *communion* in the Apostles' Creed. The communion we have as Christians, through baptism and the Eucharist is a relationship we have with each

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[661] McBrien, p.75.
The term 'catholic' as applied to the Church first appeared in the Epistle of Ignatius *(Ad Symraneous ,* cap.8) and in the *Martyium Polycarpi (*inscription, and cap 8). . In the Nicene Creed, it is 'one holy catholic and apostolic Church' (McBrien, p.927). In accordance with the Nicene Creed and older Oriental forms, it was received into the Latin creed before the close of the fourth century (Augustine: *De Fide et Symbolo,* c.10) to mean the universality of the Church (Schaff, v.1, p.22).
[662] McBrien, p.75.

other because of our common relationship, in Jesus and with the Trinity. The word 'communion' is the keyword that captures the whole fundamental Christian reality in praxis.

The Mission

In the Trinity then this study finds the basis and aim of Christ with us is unequivocally and concisely expressed in the *communion of saints.* To borrow Kumazawa's language again, "it is the co-temporal truth of Jesus Christ who is the *mission* and *promissio Dei* where one can find the point of integration of the existential, social and eschatological understandings of salvation".[663] Kumazawa's understanding of salvation is consistent with how one should interpret the *communion of saints.* He writes:

> *Christ will be seen as the promissio Dei as soon as one becomes aware that he is the missio Dei for him. He is sent to me as his salvation, but he is also sent to the whole world as the salvation of all, and here the existential understanding of salvation is not to be separated from the social understanding. Christ, who is the missio Dei of the world, is at the same time the promissio Dei which we are expected to follow in the work of loving our neighbours. Salvation as love is gift and Christ is at the same time the basis of our being and the "aim" of history. Existential understanding and social understanding are quite inseparable here. The former deals with the "basis", which the later deals with the "aim" and the tension between these two motivates the work of love.[664]*

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[663] Kumazawa, p.99
[664] Kumazawa, p.98.

The hope of the Church as God's people is enshrined in the *communion of saints.* It is the way out for so many persons and groups from all forms of distress of our time. It is the signs of deliverance that are to be seen in the lives of Christian men and women who, in their personal, community, national and international relationships, have shown that in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit they can determine in constructive ways the direction of their individual group life, and that the inspiration they have found has transformed their lives. This is what they desire to share with others, not that they want others to be like them, but that all who are willing to give themselves to be transformed in such a way that they will please God, Father and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Doctrine Defined

In conclusion, the *communion of saints* can be defined as the affirmation of believers to be in communion with the Triune God. Pivotal to this calling to communion is the divine revelation of God himself as a *theanthropic* person by his incarnation.

Perfection of God's inner trinitarian love finds expression in the gratuitous creation of finite realms of personal and interpersonal being where God's creatures come to know and love each other and their maker in perfected communities. This is God's glory and God's love. In the *communion of saints* the People of God therefore seeks unity with the whole human race. This

communion is mediated by word and sacrament concretely by the Church. As a community of believers we profess to relate fundamentally the sacramental sign to ourselves and to the world of God's grace at work in human history. The *communion of saints* is the vehicle of God's love for the world. The believer transcends human nature and individuality to a relationship, which is a communion that opens to others and welcomes them into a life-style that is communitarian and Trinitarian. In short, it is a theology of communicating the Word as the People of God.

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