

**Walter Kasper's Theology of the Spirit
and its Implications for the Reception of
Lay Ecclesial Ministry
in the Catholic Church**

Submitted by

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Statement of Authorship and Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

Julie Trinidad

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Mario, Katrina, William and Hannah

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Abstract

This thesis explores Walter Kasper's theology of the Spirit in his three major works on Christology, God the Trinity and the Church. It then takes up implications of his pneumatology for the reception of a new phenomenon in the life of the Catholic Church: lay ecclesial ministry. The originality of the thesis lies in its unique contribution to theological reflection on the Spirit at work in the life of the Church in the emergence of lay ecclesial ministries. Kasper's pneumatology has been put to the service of deepening the identity and mission of ordained ministry, to strengthening the theology and practice of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue and to other major theological questions and pastoral concerns. However, its potential for contributing to systematic reflection on the identity and mission of lay ministers in the Church and to the emerging shape of Catholic Church identity and mission has not been fully explored. Kasper's pneumatology is a rich, and until now, untapped, theological resource for the reception of new models and practices of lay ministry. In the light of Kasper's pneumatology, lay ecclesial ministries can be understood as leading the Church into deeper reception of conciliar renewal.

Part A critically examines Kasper's Spirit-christology, his pneumatologically conditioned Trinitarian theology and his *communio*-ecclesiology. Part B explores implications of Kasper's pneumatology for lay ecclesial ministry. This section begins by analysing Kasper's explicit treatment of lay ministry and leadership in selected largely untranslated works. It then brings his pneumatology and pastoral reflections into dialogue with the work of key English language theologians writing about lay ecclesial ministry. The thesis explores how Kasper's theology of the Spirit functions in addressing theological questions which lay ecclesial ministry raises for the Church. The thesis concludes with a number of implications of Kasper's pneumatology for future development and deeper reception of lay ecclesial ministries as an open-ended, unfinished contemporary work of the Spirit.

Abbreviations

AA:	<i>Apostolicam actuositatem</i> , Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity
AGD:	<i>Ad gentes divinitus</i> , Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity
CD:	<i>Christus Dominus</i> , Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church
CDF:	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
CIC:	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CL:	<i>Christifideles laici</i> , On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World
DV:	<i>Dei verbum</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation
EN:	<i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i> , Evangelisation in the Modern World
GS:	<i>Gaudium et spes</i> , Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World
LEM:	Lay Ecclesial Ministry / Lay Ecclesial Minister
LG:	<i>Lumen gentium</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on the Church
NA:	<i>Nostra aetate</i> , Declaration on the Church's Relations with non-Christian Religions
PCPCU:	Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
PO:	<i>Presbyterum ordinis</i> , Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests
UR:	<i>Unitatis redintegratio</i> , Decree on Ecumenism
USCCB:	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
WKGS:	<i>Walter Kasper Gesammelte Schriften</i> (Walter Kasper's Collected Writings)

Chapter 1: Theology that Makes Space for the New

*God's Spirit
calls individuals,
inspires them
and enables them
to do extraordinary things.¹*

*The Spirit is the tempest and the breath of life.
The Spirit is the One who creates, bears, and safeguards everything.
The Spirit is, above all, the One who is effective in history
and who creates new realities.²*

*The best theology is a theology rooted in reality.
It is a theology that starts with the world – one that begins with experience ...
the task of the theologian is to be on the lookout for the hidden God,
to watch for where God might be at work,
and to find the words to describe what God is doing.³*

Introduction

Hope for the future of the Catholic Church in Australia was ignited in August 2016 with the announcement of plans for a plenary council to be held in the Great Southern Land in 2020. The last plenary council in Australia was held in 1937. The upcoming council aims to deepen at the local level Pope Francis' vision for a synodal church. Pope Francis spoke of this vision with great eloquence in Rome on October 17, 2015:

As a Church which 'journeys together' with men and women, sharing the travails of history, let us cherish the dream that a rediscovery of the inviolable dignity of peoples and of the function of authority as service will also be able to help civil society to be built up in justice and fraternity, and thus bring about a more beautiful and humane world for coming generations.⁴

¹Walter Kasper, "Der Geist Macht Lebendig": Theologische Meditation über den Heiligen Geist," in *Antwort des Glaubens 26* (Freiburg: Informationszentrum Berufe der Kirche, 1982), 5. (Original text: *Gottes Geist einzelne Männer herausruft, sie inspiriert und zu Außerordentlichem befähigt.*)

² Walter Kasper, *Katholischer Erwachsenen Katechismus: Das Glaubensbekenntnis der Kirche* (Bonn: Deutsche Bishopskonferenz, 1985), 80. Translation from Walter Kasper, *Cardinal Walter Kasper Spiritual Writings, Modern Spiritual Masters* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016), 25. (Original text: *Ursprünglich meint Geist im biblischen Sprachgebrauch Wind, Luft, Sturm, dann Atem als Zeichen des Lebens. Gottes Geist ist darum der Sturm und der Atem des Lebens; er ist es, der alles schafft, trägt und erhält. Er ist es vor allem, der in der Geschichte wirkt und Neues schafft.*)

³ Edward P. Hahnenberg, "From Communion to Mission: The Theology of Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord," in *Reflections on Renewal: Lay Ecclesial Ministry and the Church*, ed. Donna M. Eschenauer and Harold Daly Horell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), 19.

⁴ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html#32 accessed October 22, 2017.

This thesis takes up the challenge of contributing to the fulfilment of this vision. To assist with the work of recognising the Spirit's impulses for renewal, these pages examine the pneumatology of a theologian whose life and publications have been shaped far from the ecclesial culture of the Australian Church - German born theologian and cardinal of the Church, Walter Kasper. Kasper's work is not widely known in Australia. I hope this thesis contributes to appreciation of the value of his work for the future of the Australian Church. I believe that his theology of the Spirit is an invaluable resource for the work of ongoing renewal, to which the Catholic Church is always called. I hope that this study of Kasper's theology of the Spirit can contribute to discernments about the future of the Australian Church post 2020.

The origins of this thesis lie in my involvement in the joys and challenges of the formation of lay ecclesial ministers for the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide. My hope for undertaking this study was to contribute to the unfolding theological understanding of lay ecclesial ministry as a work of the Spirit. In view of this, I chose to understand Kasper's pneumatology and explore its implications for the reception of lay ecclesial ministries for the life and mission of the Catholic Church today.

Walter Kasper's theological work spans almost 60 years. His long career has included teaching, writing and exercising significant ecclesial leadership. Before embarking on an examination of the features and implications of his pneumatology, this chapter introduces the reader to Kasper's background, influences and achievements. Though the foundations of Kasper's life and work lie within 20th century German social, political and ecclesial history, the impact of his writing and Church leadership has been broad and deep for the whole Catholic Church into this millennium. The choice of Kasper's theology of the Spirit as the focus of study for this thesis was affirmed soon after the election of Pope Francis in 2013. During the conclave, Kasper offered the then Cardinal Bergoglio a copy of his most recent

work *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*.⁵ The book evidently made a deep impact on Francis:

In these days, I have been able to read a book by a cardinal - Cardinal Kasper, a talented theologian, a good theologian - on mercy. And it did me such good, that book, but don't think that I'm publicizing the books of my cardinals. That is not the case! But it did me such good, so much good ... Cardinal Kasper said that hearing the word mercy changes everything. It is the best thing that we can hear: it changes the world. A bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just.⁶

The influence of Kasper on the current pontiff has been so significant that he has been described as 'the Pope's theologian.'⁷

After an introduction to Walter Kasper's life and achievements, I will discuss his theological approach and will survey appraisals of the potential of his work for new questions emerging for the life of the Church. This introductory chapter lays the basis for the chapters in Part A on Kasper's pneumatology and Part B on implications of his pneumatology for the reception of lay ecclesial ministry for the mission of the Catholic Church today. This chapter illustrates a key dimension of Kasper's own approach to theology - God cannot be known outside of history.

⁵ Walter Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2014).

⁶ Catherine Harmon, "Pope Francis' First Angelus Address." *Catholic World Report*, March 17, 2013, accessed October 12, 2013. http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/2091/full_text_pope_franis_first_angelus_address.aspx.

⁷ See for example: David Gibson, "Cardinal Kasper Is the 'Pope's Theologian'." *National Catholic Reporter* June 3, 2014, accessed June 7, 2015. <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/cardinal-kasper-popes-theologian>. David Gibson, "Cardinal Walter Kasper Reveals the Brains Behind Pope Francis' Heart." *U.S. Catholic*, April 4, 2015, accessed June 7, 2015. <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/walter-kasper-popes-theologian-reveals-brains-behind-francis-heart>. See also "Text of Pope's Interview with Italian Jubilee Publication 'Credere,'" *Zenit*, December 3, 2015, accessed January 8, 2016. <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/text-of-pope-s-interview-with-italian-jubilee-publication-credere>. This interview provides an example of Kasper's influence on Pope Francis. Francis is quoted: "My first *Angelus* as Pope was on God's mercy and, on that occasion, I also spoke of a book on mercy which was given to me by Cardinal Walter Kasper during the conclave; also, in my first homily as Pope, on Sunday, March 17, I spoke of mercy in the parish of Saint Anne. It wasn't a strategy; it came to me from within: the Holy Spirit wills something. It's obvious that today's world is in need of mercy, it is in need of compassion'.... We are used to bad news, to cruel news and to the greatest atrocities that offend the name and life of God. The world is in need of discovering that God is Father, that there is mercy, that cruelty isn't the way, that condemnation isn't the way, because the Church herself sometimes follows a hard line, she falls into the temptation of following a hard line, into the temptation of stressing only the moral rules, many people are excluded."

Overview of Kasper's Life and Theological Contribution

Walter Kasper, the only son of Franz Josef Kasper and Theresia Bacher, was born on March 5, 1933 in Heidenheim an der Brenz, southern Germany. This city is located in the state of Baden-Württemberg in the Swabian forest, near the Bavarian border.⁸ Kasper describes the impact of this background:

I belong to a German tribe called the Swabians, and we are known to be sober and hard-headed people. Visions are not so much our affair ... but even so, standing with both feet on the ground, we are able to distinguish between authentic Christian hope, which always is hope under the cross and therefore a crucified hope, and human dreams and utopian visionary expectations.⁹

Kasper's theological story finds its meaning within the story of 20th century Germany.¹⁰ Kasper's birth date coincided precisely with the day Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party won the notoriously conducted Reichstag elections which launched Hitler into power as Chancellor of Germany. The so-called 'free' election held on the day of Kasper's birth was the result of coercion and led to one of the most horrific chapters in world history.¹¹ Thus, Kasper's earliest years were deeply influenced by the impact of Nazism and the Second World War. Kasper writes of his formative years:

[I]t was a very bad time – it was during the Nazi period in Germany, the Second World War with all its horrors, and then the aftermath of the war, during which we sometimes suffered from hunger. When the American army came in, this was certainly liberation from Hitler

⁸ See Kasper, *Mercy*, 153. Here Kasper provides further detail about his roots and spirituality: “[I]n my home town of Wangen in the Allgäu, veneration of the imprisoned savior was popular. This devotional practice traces back to older medieval forms of piety ... who wouldn't be able to identify with the various forms of imprisonment; inmates and prisoners of war, those interned in concentration camps, political prisoners, those who are confined to bed or to a wheelchair, those entangled in sin, those forced into dire straits and hopelessness because of financial problems or other forms of confinement.”

⁹ Walter Kasper, “May They All Be One? But How? A Vision of Christian Unity for the Next Generation,” Paper presented at the Conference of the Society for Ecumenical Studies, St Albans Christian Study Centre and the Hertfordshire Newman Association at St Alban's Abbey (Hertfordshire, England, 17 May, 2003), accessed August 30, 2016. <http://paulcouturier.faithweb.com/0503stalbanksasper.html>.

¹⁰ Tiina Huhtanen, “Event of the Radically New: Revelation in the Theology of Walter Kasper” (PhD unpublished Doctoral Thesis; Dept., of Theology, University of Helsinki, 2016), 3, accessed March 5, 2017. <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:%20ISBN%20978-951-51-2046-5>. Huhtanen describes the impact of Kasper's early history on his theology: “Kasper's theological orientation has been greatly influenced by the primordial confrontation between the deeply religious atmosphere of his childhood upbringing and the false utopian prosperity claim of the thousand-year-reign of the National Socialist Party from the 1930s to 1945 Germany. For him it is not only a question of giving account of the faith that he professes, but also a question of a profound understanding of the value and meaning of being a human in a secular age.”

¹¹ Marc von Lüpke-Schwarz, “Voting in the Midst of Nazi Terror,” *Deutsche Welle*, 5 March 2013, accessed August 11, 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/voting-in-the-midst-of-nazi-terror/a-16646980>.

and Nazism, but the village where we lived was 80 percent destroyed as the result of an Allied air-raid.¹²

Kasper is the older brother of two sisters, Hildegard and Inge. Their father was a school teacher before being conscripted into the German army. One cause of the Kasper family's war-time suffering was their father's disappearance:

We did not know where our father was. As were all young men at the time, he was a soldier; what we did not know was that in the last weeks of the war he was brought to Denmark, near Hamburg, as a prisoner of war. There, on Christmas Eve, he accidentally got information that our village had been destroyed, but he did not know where we were. He came back, half-starved, to find us.¹³

Kasper offers one insight into the impact of these profound experiences on his view of life and the foundations of his theology: "Life then was very modest, but nevertheless I felt at home and secure in our family. This gave me a certain trust in life and helped me to see things – despite all the negative experiences – from their positive aspect and to never lose hope."¹⁴

In spite of the negative experience of his childhood and youth, Kasper insists on describing himself as a person of hope. His theological story reflects deeply held faith in the power of the Spirit to open up the future and offer hope.¹⁵ Many years after the horrors of World War II, Kasper reflected on the power of hope against hope: "Hope is of the very essence of human existence. When there is no hope for the future, life becomes completely meaningless. The question of the future is thus both the focus and the paradigm of the question of human salvation."¹⁶ When Kasper received the *Pax Christi* Award in 2009, the highest honour from St John's University Minnesota, the oration referred to Kasper's early history:

¹² Walter Kasper, "Why I Am a Man of Hope," *New Theology Review* 25, no. 1 (2012): 18.

¹³ Kasper, "Why I am a Man of Hope," 18.

¹⁴ Kasper, "Why I am a Man of Hope," 18.

¹⁵ See for example, Walter Kasper, "Religion and the Future of Humanity," in *Conferral of Honorary Doctorates* (Uppsala Universitet: Kardinal Walter Kasper Stiftung, 2007), accessed February 29, 2016. <http://www.kardinal-kasper-stiftung.de/KardinalWalterKasperStiftung-VortragUppsala.html>. Here Kasper writes: "So the question of the future is the question of a meaningful, successful, authentic life. Either we anticipate a better and happier life in the future, or we dread what may happen to us because we suspect and expect the worst. Thus the future is bound up with our hopes for life and happiness or with our fear of unhappiness or catastrophe. The future is thus a category of salvation or catastrophe."

¹⁶ Walter Kasper, "Individual Salvation and Eschatological Consummation," in *Faith and the Future: Studies in Christian Eschatology*, ed. John Galvin (New York: Paulist, 1994), 9.

In 1933, the year of your birth, fear and religious persecution took hold in your native Germany. Through the terrible years of war and genocide that followed, you witnessed first hand, even as a young boy, the tragic effects that sin, division, falsehood, and prejudice have on our world. As a theologian and a prelate, you have sought reconciliation between Judaism and the Catholic Church by building bridges and facilitating dialogue with honesty and respect.¹⁷

Kasper completed his primary and secondary schooling in an atmosphere which he describes as the pre-conciliar model of *Volkskirche*:

The traditional *Volkskirche* is characterised by a more or less given identity between the church and the respective society or by the fact that the established society is, as it were, duplicated through its own institutions from kindergartens and schools to hospitals. This social form is dissolving today and in many cases it already belongs to the past. In traditional Catholic countries and regions, social and cultural development leads also to the fact that practising and confessing Christians become a minority.¹⁸

Though Kasper recognises that the *Volkskirche* model now belongs to the past, it in fact led him to a deep love for the Catholic Church and a life-long commitment to its mission. The young Kasper came to link the Catholic Church with the experience of belonging, with exercising courage, and with bringing about new things. He writes:

[M]y experiences of the Church at that time were by no means, as some might think, marked by restriction, lack of freedom or even unenlightened darkness.... It was, despite all external constraints, a vibrant church rooted in its people, a church where I felt at home in the rhythm of the church year. The dissociation from National Socialism through both my parents' education and the attitude of those within the Catholic milieu further strengthened my sense of identification with the Church. I was proud to belong to the Church and proud of our diocesan bishop, Johannes Baptista Sproll (+1949) who, from the beginning, courageously opposed the Nazis.¹⁹

Walter Kasper's Theological Career

The fruit of Kasper's early experiences was the decision to enter seminary formation in 1952 in the beautiful medieval city of Tübingen, situated on the banks of the Neckar River and surrounded by the Swabian Alb mountains. At that time Tübingen had a population of about 45,000. The history of Tübingen dates back to at least the 6th or 7th century. The

¹⁷ St John's Abbey and University, "Pax Christi Award to Walter Cardinal Kasper," *Worship* 83, no. 4 (2009): 291.

¹⁸ Walter Kasper, *Walter Kasper, The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission*, trans. Thomas Hoebel (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 278.

¹⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 4. See Robert Krieg, *Catholic Theologians in Nazi Germany* (London: Continuum, 2004), 93. Here Krieg writes: "Spröll opposed the Nazi state from the outset and did not waver in his opposition to Nazism even after the Catholic bishops dropped their bans on membership in the Nazi party.... Arrested by the Gestapo on August 24, 1938, and banished from his diocese, Sproll went into hiding in Bavaria." Krieg points out that by his action Sproll "demonstrated that the church should be a moral advocate, indeed a servant of justice." *Ibid.*, 156. Kasper was 16 years old at the time of Sproll's death in 1949.

Eberhard Karls University, now referred to as Tübingen University, was established in 1477 and later developed a unique co-existence between its Protestant and Catholic theology departments. Kasper writes:

[I]n secondary school in a nearby city, I had Protestant classmates, which was normal in a confessionally divided country such as Germany. I studied at a university where there were two theological faculties: a Catholic theological faculty and a Protestant theological faculty. It was forbidden for seminarians to attend Protestant lectures – and it was exactly this restriction which made us youngsters curious and the lectures interesting. So I got used to living, meeting, and playing with Protestant classmates and friends, and I discovered that they were the same as we were.²⁰

Kasper's theological heart and mind were formed in one of the oldest, most influential and progressive places of learning in Central Europe. However, the city of Tübingen also holds dark memories. Its Jewish population was expelled in 1477 and its Synagogue destroyed by fire on Kristallnacht on November 9, 1938.²¹

Between 1952 and 1956 Kasper was immersed in the theological world of the University of Tübingen. Aside from a semester of study in Munich, the remaining time was spent receiving formal theological education in the spirit of the famous 19th century Tübingen theologians and philosophers. Kasper frequently refers to the influence of Johann Sebastian Drey, Johann Adam Möhler and Johannes Evangelist von Kuhn who expanded his thinking about God's engagement in history.²² Kasper summarises the legacy of Tübingen for his academic formation: "scholarly rigour, ecclesial faithfulness, and critical constructive contemporaneousness."²³

In her study of the impact of the Tübingen School on Kasper's ecumenical commitments, Canadian ecclesologist Catherine Clifford notes the influence of Kasper's

²⁰ Kasper, "Why I Am a Man of Hope," 19.

²¹ For an introduction to Tübingen's dark history see Information Portal to European Sites of Remembrance website: <http://www.memorialmuseums.org/eng/staettens/view/1127/Synagogenplatz-Memorial-T%C3%BCbingen>, accessed March 9, 2016. Also, Jobst Bittner, *Breaking the Veil of Silence*, trans. Tina Pompe (Tübingen: TOS 2013).

²² Grant Kaplan, "Tübingen School," in *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilisation*, ed. George Thomas Kurian (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 2412-14. This entry notes that "the School has been regarded as a forerunner to the program of renewal and reform articulated at the Second Vatican Council, especially regarding ecclesiology, ecumenism, and the theology of revelation."

²³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 6.

doctoral supervisor and mentor, Josef Rupert Geiselmann. Geiselmann was profoundly influenced by the 19th century Tübingen theological ‘heavyweights’ who, Clifford writes, recovered “a dynamic notion of revelation and tradition, one that took account of the sustaining presence and action of the Holy Spirit in guiding the living community of faith.”²⁴

Kasper was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart on April 6, 1957. His ordination marked the beginning of a life of significant public ecclesial leadership. After a brief pastoral experience as parish assistant and chaplain in Stuttgart, Kasper returned to Tübingen to begin post-graduate studies in preparation for an academic career. He was engaged in doctoral studies between 1958 and 1961 at Tübingen while working as an academic assistant to theologians Leo Scheffczyk and Hans Küng. Two years after ordination, when Kasper was 26 years old, Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council:

[T]he evening of January 25, 1959, has remained fixed in my memory. I was a young priest then, and I was listening to the radio news with some friends.... We could not believe our ears when we heard that Pope John XXIII had convoked a Vatican Council that day. It was like lightening from a blue sky.²⁵

In a later reflection Kasper recalls the hope and excitement that accompanied the announcement of the Council:

The real break-through came with Pope John XXIII and the announcement of the Council. I was already a young priest and back at university to prepare a doctoral thesis. I remember how surprised we were when we listened to the evening news on the radio and heard the announcement. For the younger people today, the wave of hopes, expectations, and enthusiasm that emerged is unimaginable. The announcement of the Council was a surprise – nobody expected it – but what then came was prepared in the depth of our hearts and corresponded to deep but unarticulated expectations.²⁶

The doctoral thesis Kasper was working on when the Council was announced was entitled *Die Lehre der Tradition in der Römischen Schule* (The Teaching of Tradition in the Roman School). It was completed, under Geiselmann’s direction, before the Council’s opening session in 1961. The thesis focussed on the influence of the Tübingen School on prominent

²⁴ Catherine E. Clifford, “The Catholic Tübingen School and Ecumenism,” in *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper*, ed. Kristin M. Colberg and Robert A. Krieg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 159.

²⁵ Walter Kasper, “Renewal from the Source: The Interpretation and Reception of the Second Vatican Council,” in *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper*, ed. Kristin M. Colberg and Robert A. Krieg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014) ed. Kristen M. Colberg and Robert A. Krieg (2013), 278.

²⁶ Kasper, *Why I am a Man of Hope*, 19.

theologians of the Roman School during the late nineteenth century, namely Giovanni Perrone, Carlo Passaglia, Clement Schrader and Johann Baptist Franzelin.²⁷ Kasper summarises the findings of his thesis:

I demonstrated that, already in the nineteenth century, there had not only been conflicts between the Tübingen School and Rome, but also a positive influence of Möhler on the Roman theology of the time (Perrone, Passaglia, Schrader, Franzelin). In addition, I argued that Möhler's view of the Church had an astonishing influence on John Henry Newman in England, and, as I discovered later, in Russia on Aleksy Khomyakov and Vladimir Solovyov, who, in turn, had a great influence on the Orthodox theology of the twentieth century.²⁸

The Roman theologians whom Kasper studied refused to reduce the Church's self-understanding (tradition) to the teachings of the magisterium. This refusal was especially influenced by the historical work of 19th century Tübinger, Johann Adam Möhler.²⁹

Kasper explains that his thesis described the Spirit as "Christ's self-tradition in and through the Church."³⁰ He continued to explore the theme of the person and work of the Spirit after his graduation. From 1962-1964, coinciding with the early sessions of the Council, Kasper worked as theological assistant at Tübingen and wrote the required *habilitation* dissertation. The *habilitation* is a second dissertation project that is still a requirement in many European universities before one can teach academic theology. During the Council, theologians from Tübingen were kept up to date with the debates which profoundly influenced their students. Hans Küng, one of Kasper's theological supervisors, was a Council

²⁷ The 'Roman School' of the 19th century refers to the Jesuit run Gregorian University in Rome. Some of the prominent theologians there were in conflict at the time with the progressive Tübingen theologians who opposed the unhistorical neo-scholasticism of the time. However, Perrone and others who had been influenced especially by Möhler, sought to refocus theology on the importance of history, without neglecting its speculative dimension.

²⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 7.

²⁹ Aidan Nichols, "Walter Kasper and His Theological Program," *New Blackfriars* 67 (January 1986): 18.

³⁰ Walter Kasper, personal communication with author of this thesis, October 26, 2013. Kasper also argues this position in Walter Kasper, "Dei Verbum Audiens et Proclamans-Hearing the Word of God with Reverence and Proclaiming It with Faith: The Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*" (paper presented at the Holy Scripture in the Life of the Church Conference, Vatican City, 2005), 8. Here he writes: "God's communication of Himself as constant presence within history takes place, according to the testimony of scripture, in the Holy Spirit. Through Him the word of God has been inscribed in the hearts of mankind (2 Cor 3,2f); God's Spirit constantly reminds us anew of the word of God which has been imparted once and for all, but at the same time leads us deeper and deeper into all truth (John 16,13). Tradition is thus the perpetual and constantly new presence of God's word in the church through the Holy Spirit."

peritus. Kasper's formation as priest-theologian was deeply shaped by the excitement, visions and hopes of Vatican II, with its dual strategies of *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*.³¹

Journalist John Allen reflects on the effect on Kasper of those *habilitation* years of study:

Kasper's career has been a study in contradictions, perhaps accounting for his legendary ability to see all sides of a problem. Incredibly Kasper was an assistant in the 1960s for both Leo Scheffczyk ... and Hans Kung. Two men farther apart theologically would be difficult to identify. Scheffczyk is deeply conservative: in 1995, he publically lamented that John Paul had not formally declared the ban on women's ordination infallible. Kung, meanwhile, was liberal, who lost his license to teach Catholic theology precisely for his doubts that popes can say anything infallibly.³²

The topic of Kasper's *habilitation* thesis was selected after an influential conversation with Yves Congar. *Das Absolute in der Geschichte* (The Absolute in History) explored the late philosophy of Lutheran theologian Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854). Kasper examined Schelling's idealistic thought and the theological turn he made in the light of discovering philosophy's limits in addressing the God question.³³ In his study of Schelling, Kasper considers the problem of the historicity of revelation as well as the question of the relationship between faith and history. Schelling's fundamental thesis is that history

³¹ Conciliar dual strategies and hermeneutics: *Ressourcement* involved a return to sources of Christian faith; *Aggiornamento* addressed the questions of contemporary contextualization of the Christian message in order to more effectively communicate the enduring truth of the Gospel. See Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 6. Here Kasper points out that Johann Adam Möhler, along with John Henry Newman, were two key 19th century thinkers who "prepared the way for the ecclesiology of the twentieth century which found its universal recognition through the Second Vatican Council." The methods of both theologians epitomised the dual strategies.

³² John L. Allen Jr., "Cardinal Kasper Balances Values with Reality," *National Catholic Reporter* 37, no. 28 (2001): 13, accessed June 27, 2015. http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2001b/051101/051101j.htm.

³³ Walter Kasper, *Das Absolute in Der Geschichte*, Walter Kasper-Gesammelte Schriften (Freiberg: Herder, 2010). Originally published as *Das Absolute in der Geschichte. Philosophie und Theologie der Geschichte in der Spätphilosophie Schellings* (Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, Mainz, 1965). For a brief introduction to German Idealism see Andrew Bowie, *German Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 32-50. According to Bowie, German Idealism includes broad and diverse responses to the claim of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) that "self-determination [is sustained] by locating freedom in a domain which [is] not subject to the laws of nature." Ibid., 32. Bowie writes that because Idealism sees that "changes in nature are determined by laws, [and] the very fact that nature is structured at all, and is dynamic rather than static" points to a freedom that is a central feature of human existence. Ibid., 34. Furthermore, Bowie points out that German Idealism "tries to resolve contradictions which result from the erosion of the order exemplified by the idea that the king's authority derives from God. The beheading of the king in both English and the French revolutions epitomizes changes in the nature of legitimacy characteristic of modernity. Order now has to be freely established by human beings, without appeals to a higher authority.... Understanding the interdependence of opposed terms, like that between the 'general will' of the state and the will of the individual, lies at the heart of German Idealist thinking, which seeks to overcome the contradictions, both social and philosophical, that arise from the end of feudalism." Ibid., 36.

represents a continual fulfilment of the Absolute. In Christ, the Absolute appears in history in a special way.³⁴ Kasper's study developed his understanding of the importance of time and history for theology, christology and ecclesiology. It also led him to think deeply about the interface between theology and philosophy. In his study of Kasper's *habilitation*, Joseph Bracken writes:

Kasper concludes that the Ariadne thread of unity in Schelling's writings lies in the insight that human history is grounded in the creative activity of God as its "Absolute," and that contrarily the Absolute, God Himself, is revealed only gradually in the course of history.³⁵

Kasper provides his own summary: "[O]nly God as absolute freedom can fulfil our human freedom."³⁶ In dialogue with the work of Schelling, who also studied and taught at Tübingen, and who influenced generations of theologians and philosophers after him, Kasper was able to discover a fundamental theological insight: God's Spirit is source and expression of unconditioned freedom and love. Kasper stands on the shoulders of other Tübingers such as its so-called 'father,' Johann Sebastian Drey, and his own teacher and first thesis supervisor, Josef Geiselmann. These theologians stressed that it is in the Church that "handed-down faith must be passed on alive, it must be translated into new questions and handed down with a future in mind."³⁷

³⁴ Rüdiger With, *Pneuma und Amt: Ökumenische Reflexionen im Anschluss an Walter Kasper*, eds. Ulrich Becker et al. *Ökumenische Studien* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2015), 27. (Original text: *In einer Reflexion über die Spätphilosophie Schellings bedenkt Kasper das Problem der Geschichtlichkeit der Offenbarung ebenso wie die Frage des Verhältnisses von Glaube und Geschichte. Schellings Grundthese ist, dass die Geschichte eine fortwährende Erfüllung des Absoluten darstellt. Die Schöpfung ist ein Bekanntwerden des geschichtlichen Handelns Gottes. In der Christologie tritt das Absolute in der Geschichte in besonderer Weise in Erscheinung.*)

³⁵ See Joseph A Bracken, "Review of *Das Absolute in der Geschichte: Philosophie und Theologie der Geschichte in der Spätphilosophie Schellings*, by Walter Kasper," *Theological Studies* 27, no. 2 (1966): 325. Bracken thinks that the pneumatological 'golden thread' of Kasper's corpus of work originates in Schelling's late philosophy: the Spirit is the creative activity of God, revealed gradually in the course of humankind's religious history and tradition. Thus, for Schelling, Christianity is not a doctrine but a history. See also Walter Kasper, *Accepting the Mystery: Scriptural Reflections for Advent and Christmas*, trans. William McDonough (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2016), 55. Here Kasper returns to the image of the Ariadne thread, more than forty-eight years later: "An instructive story from Greek mythology tells of the princess Ariadne, who gave Theseus a ball of thread to help him find his way through a maze and, then, with its help, find his way back to the entrance of the maze. And so we speak proverbially about an Ariadne's thread ... we too need such a thread to keep from becoming lost in the maze of our own lives and instead find our way. Jesus Christ is that thread."

³⁶ Walter Kasper, "How to Do Theology Today" in *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper*, 252.

³⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 7.

In 1964, when Vatican II was well under way, Kasper moved to Münster to take up the appointment of Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the Westphalian University. In 1969 he was promoted to the position of Faculty Dean. In 1970 he returned from Münster to Tübingen as Professor and Faculty Dean. He remained in this role until 1989, with a brief stint during 1983-84 as visiting professor at the Catholic University of America (Washington D.C.). These years of academia produced an enormous volume of published work including, *Jesus the Christ* (1974) and *The God of Jesus Christ* (1982). In 1985 the German Bishops' Conference published the *Katholischer Erwachsenen-Katechismus* (Catholic Catechism for Adults). Kasper was the primary writer and editor of this work.³⁸ In the same year he served as theological secretary of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in Rome. Kasper refers to his involvement in this important moment for the Church's reception of post-Vatican II theology and ecclesiology in his third major work *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission*:

Pope John Paul II made me theological secretary of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985. Taking place twenty years after the Council, the Synod was to take stock of the developments since the Council. While studying the council documents in preparation for my work, I came to the conclusion that *communio*-ecclesiology was the central concern and the main motif of the conciliar ecclesiology. Together with the relator of the Synod, Cardinal Godfried Daneels von Meechel, I was able to contribute this aspect to the Synod. It has become fundamental for me ever since.³⁹

During the *Festschrift* celebrations for Kasper's 80th birthday, Kristin Colberg and Robert Krieg highlighted Kasper's major contribution to the 1985 Synod: "[Kasper] proposed to the assembly of bishops that the Second Vatican Council's unifying theology of the church is *communio* ecclesiology. This proposal received an enthusiastic, positive response at the synod and subsequently among theologians around the world."⁴⁰

³⁸ German Bishops' Conference, *The Church's Confession of Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, Communio (San Francisco: St Ignatius Press, 1987). In the introduction David L. Schindler, General Editor of *Communio Books*, writes: "The book we have chosen to publish first [in English] is a catechism for adults, authored mainly by Walter Kasper under the aegis of the German Bishops' Conference."

³⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 21.

⁴⁰ Kristin M. Colberg and Robert A. Krieg, eds., *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper: Speaking the Truth in Love*, A Michael Glazier Book (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), xvii.

Kasper's Ecclesial Leadership

In recognition of his significant intellectual and ecclesial leadership qualities and contributions, Kasper was appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Rottenburg and Stuttgart, at the time one of Germany's largest dioceses, with about 2 million Catholics.⁴¹ This appointment, made on April 17, 1989, marked Kasper's permanent exit from the full-time world of academia. However, it did not signal an exit from the work of writing and publishing at the service of the implementation and reception of Vatican II theology. New ecclesial leadership roles became contexts for Kasper's ongoing theological reflection and writing.⁴² Nevertheless, it was not until after his retirement in 2010 that the publication of *The Catholic Church*, the third and final piece of his major theological trilogy, became possible.

As early as 1979, Kasper was appointed to the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission. His long and profound commitment to ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue broadened onto the international stage when he became Bishop in 1989. From 1991 to 1999 Kasper held the position of Catholic co-chair of the International Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity. In 1999 this Commission issued a Joint Declaration on Justification which sought to bridge centuries of ecclesial division between Catholics and Lutherans. Kasper describes the work and promise of this document as "an epoch-making turning point" in ecumenical progress.⁴³ In that same year he was appointed Secretary to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU).

⁴¹ <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/drott.html> accessed 9 September, 2016.

⁴² See Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 108. Here Kasper reflects: "I was fascinated very early on by the idea of the Church as the house of Wisdom. It was so important for me that I based my episcopal coat of arms on it. The crest depicts the Church as a house resting on seven pillars which Wisdom has built for itself (Prov. 9.1). This expresses the bishop's task of proclamation. He is to witness God's Wisdom to the world which is in danger of forgetting it because of daily worries and the flood of information and which is thus in danger of losing sight of the eternally valid standards. The bishop is to build up the Church as a house in which all can live and find their spiritual home, in which there are no strangers but where all in the one faith speak the same language and so are able to understand anew each other and the world."

⁴³ Walter Kasper, "Farewell Greeting to His Eminence Edward Idris Cassidy by His Eminence Walter Cardinal Kasper, President, PCPCU," *The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity Information Service* 107, no. II-III (2001): 52.

Kasper was created and proclaimed a Cardinal of the Catholic Church on February 21, 2001 by Pope John Paul II.⁴⁴ Ten days later he was named president of the PCPCU. With this appointment his commitment to ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue work was transformed into a major ecclesial priority for the Catholic Church. In his leadership role Kasper contributed to and synthesised the results of international dialogues between the Catholic Church and a range of other Christian denominations.⁴⁵ The role of president of the PCPCU also carries with it leadership of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Kasper's outstanding dedication to this dimension of his work has been recognised in many citations. For example, the 2004 Memorial Mural Award was presented to Kasper by the Latin-American Rabbinical Seminary of Buenos Aires in conjunction with the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation and the Angelo Roncalli Committee. Kasper also received the Isaiah Inter-Religious Award from the American Jewish Committee in 2010. In a speech delivered at Liverpool Hope University in 2010, Kasper noted the personal significance of his work as president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews:

It was not an easy decision for me as a German to accept this duty when the late Pope John Paul II called me to take over this office. I was 12 years old when the Second World War ended and Germany and the whole of mankind was confronted with and ashamed by the unprecedented and unimaginable crime of the Holocaust; as Germans we stood not only physically but also morally in ruins.⁴⁶

March 3, 2010 marked Kasper's retirement from his official ecclesial duties. On this day he was named President Emeritus of the PCPCU. The timing of his 80th birthday on March 5,

⁴⁴ Kasper was consecrated a Cardinal in the same liturgical celebration as Archbishop Jose Mario Bergoglio, later Pope Francis.

⁴⁵ Alan Falconer, "Mercy as the Essence of the Gospel: Key Themes in Walter Kasper and in the Ministry of Pope Francis," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 15, no. 3 (2015): 245.

⁴⁶ Walter Kasper, "Recent Developments in Jewish-Christian Relations," Speech delivered at Liverpool Hope University, UK, (May 24, 2010), accessed May 5, 2016. <http://www.ccsr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/kasper/814-kasper2010may24> In accepting the Isaiah Award in 2010 in recognition of his 'extraordinary' achievements in inter-religious affairs Kasper stated: "I am deeply grateful that I have been able to contribute to making a difference in relations between our two communities and to a healing process of the deep wounds inherited from the past." Catholics and Jews together "have embarked on a vision of a world without anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism ... we strive together to make a difference in the world, working for the good of our children and the children of our children so that atrocities such as the Holocaust can never happen again." See: <http://www.kardinal-kasper-stiftung.de/IsaiahAward.html> accessed May 5, 2016.

2013 enabled him to participate in the conclave that elected Jorge Bergoglio as Pope. As noted earlier, Kasper has continued to exercise significant influence on the unfolding of Francis' papacy.⁴⁷

Kasper has received at least 20 honorary doctorates from around the world.⁴⁸ In the speech given at the occasion of receiving an honorary doctorate from Durham University on January 12, 2006, David Fuller, on behalf of the University, remarked that when one reads Kasper:

one feels the spirit of a man whose deepest disposition is to imagine, understand, and appreciate points of view that arise from histories, experiences, and traditions different from his own. He is also able to articulate in the precise language of theology what those differences mean, to overcome old misunderstandings and hostilities, to generate convergence, and, wherever possible – acknowledging that no one church has already found all the right answers – guide that convergence towards consensus.... In its broadest sense ecumenism – how different religions and cultures are to live in harmony with one another; how we are to recognise the validity of other traditions and learn from them without diluting our own – is one of the great problems of the modern world. The qualities of imaginative sympathy and intellectual acuteness, and the trust and respect these generate, which are modelled in Cardinal Kasper's work, show how this central problem of the twenty-first century can be addressed in any sphere.... For the bread he has cast on the waters as a theologian, and for his achievements in ecclesiology and ecumenism, the world seems clearly a better place for what he has done and is doing.⁴⁹

These comments offer an inspiring insight into both the achievement and potential of Kasper's theology. In the same oration, Fuller draws attention to a twin city relationship between Durham and Tübingen and pays tribute to Kasper as a modern theologian who creatively appropriates his highly valued Tübingen legacies.

Theological Evaluations of Kasper's Pneumatology

This section surveys evaluations of Kasper's pneumatology by a range of theologians. Firstly, Aidan Nichols describes Kasper's theological work as “a pure product of the Catholic

⁴⁷ See, for example: Walter Kasper, *The Gospel of the Family* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2014). The text is a lecture Kasper delivered at the request of Pope Francis before the extraordinary Consistory of Cardinals on February 20 and 21, 2014 in Rome. This gathering was to prepare for Synod of Bishop processes of late 2014 and 2015 entitled “Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelisation.”

⁴⁸ <http://kardinal-kasper-stiftung.de/en/awards.html>. accessed July 11, 2017.

⁴⁹ David Fuller, “Cardinal Walter Kasper Doctor of Divinity” (Durham Cathedral, 2006), accessed February 5, 2017. <https://www.dur.ac.uk/theology.religion/ccs/projects/receptiveecumenism/projects/catholiclearning/2006/kasper/>

Tübingen school [and] a re-statement of the historic aims of that school.”⁵⁰ Nichols points to the broad and bold vision of the Tübingen school:

The two fundamental concerns of the school were fundamental theology and ecclesiology. In *fundamental theology* – and here the principal names are Johann Sebastian von Drey (1777-1853) and Franz Anton Staudenmaier (1800-1856) – it confronted head-on the critique of revealed religion found in the German Enlightenment, and especially in Lessing and Kant. Drey and Staudenmaier argued that reason finds its absolute foundation not in its own intellectual quality but in its acceptance of a revelation mediated in a history which is itself a transcendent fulfilment of nature.⁵¹

In relation to ecclesiology, Nichols argues that the Tübingen school understands Christianity as a divine reality which therefore “necessarily transcends any particular statement of its own content. But as time goes on, and the church ‘develops,’ we can glimpse different aspects of this transcendent revelation which the various historical phases of its carrier-organism show us.”⁵²

By way of summary of what constitutes the significance of the Tübingen legacy to which Kasper lays claim, Nichols states:

[T]he nineteenth century Tübingen doctors bequeathed to their twentieth century successors two precious possessions: firstly, a wholehearted commitment to the Catholic tradition in its historical fulness and integrity, and, secondly, a generous yet critically alert philosophical and cultural openness.... In Kasper’s case, the two-fold Tübingen concern for tradition and philosophical originality is neatly conveyed in his first two big books. Their subjects were the concept of tradition in the surprisingly creative Roman school of the nineteenth century, and an exploration of what the non-Catholic philosopher F.W.J. von Schelling (1775-1854) has to offer a contemporary conceptualisation of God as ‘the Absolute in history’.⁵³

In Kilian McDonnell’s survey of the work of a range of theologians who are repositioning the role and function of pneumatology in relation to christology, he notes the significance of Kasper’s insistence that “the essential biblical framework in which Christ is presented is pneumatological and at the same time ‘trinitarian.’”⁵⁴ McDonnell emphasises Kasper’s thesis: “[T]he rediscovery of the pneumatological dimension is the most important

⁵⁰ Nichols, “Walter Kasper and his Theological Program,” 16.

⁵¹ Nichols, “Walter Kasper and his Theological Program,” 17.

⁵² Nichols, “Walter Kasper and his Theological Program,” 17.

⁵³ Nichols, “Walter Kasper and his Theological Program,” 18. Nichols refers to (1) Walter Kasper, *Die Lehre von der Tradition in der Römischen Schule*, ed. George Augustin and Klaus Krämer, vol. 1, Walter Kasper Gesammelte Schriften (Freiberg: Herder, 2011). This work was first published in 1962; and (2) Walter Kasper *Das Absolute in der Geschichte*. Ibid., vol 2. This work was published in 1965.

⁵⁴ Kilian P. McDonnell, “The Determinative Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” *Theology Today* 39, no. 142 (1982): 156.

and far-reaching reorientation in christology.”⁵⁵ In his study on the Trinity in relation to the natural world, Denis Edwards notes that Kasper's pneumatology contributes to a contemporary understanding of the Creator Spirit as bringing about the new: “In a particular way [Kasper] understands the Spirit as source of the new in both the evolutionary unfolding of the universe of creatures and in human culture and life. In Kasper's thought, the Holy Spirit who enables creatures to participate in God's being thus also constantly enables them to become something new.”⁵⁶

Commenting specifically on Kasper's pneumatological trinitarian theology in *The God of Jesus Christ*, Catherine Mowry LaCugna affirms the importance of history in Kasper's work:

[I]n my judgement Kasper's is the single best survey of the complex trinitarian tradition. He writes in his foreword that he regards his work as merely a “contribution” to the discussion of the God-question, conducted in the Tübingen spirit of ecclesial-mindedness, scientific thoroughness, and openness to the signs of the times. It is surely that and more. Kasper has made the task of historical recovery easier for systematic theologians and has identified several speculative, pastoral, and liturgical questions that need to be addressed. Other theologians will be challenged to pursue creative lines of thought opened up by Kasper's solid study.⁵⁷

LaCugna's positive assessment of the potential for Kasper's work provides both an invitation and encouragement for the development of this thesis.

Bernard Cooke, in his survey of recent paradigm shifts in pneumatology, notes Kasper's contribution to understanding the explicit role of the empowering presence of the Spirit, God's love, in Jesus' life.⁵⁸ Anthony Ekpo, in his study of the Holy Spirit as source of the *sensus fidelium* of the whole people of God, attributes to Kasper an understanding of the Spirit who empowers believers in Christ “to remember clearly and distinctly the whole Christ

⁵⁵ McDonnell, *The Determinative Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 156, quoting and translating Walter Kasper, “Aufgaben der Christologie Heute,” in *Christologie in Präsens: Kritische Sichtung Neuer Entwürfe*, ed. Arno Schillson and Walter Kasper (Freiburg: Herder, Verlag, 1974), 146.

⁵⁶ Denis Edwards, *Partaking of God: Trinity, Evolution and Ecology*, A Michael Glazier Book (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 80.

⁵⁷ Catherine Mowry LaCugna, “Current Trends in Trinitarian Theology,” *Religious Studies Review* 13, no. 2 (1987): 144.

⁵⁸ Bernard Cooke, *Power and the Spirit of God: Toward an Experience-Based Pneumatology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 176.

event and to be able to make sense of it in every generation.”⁵⁹ David Badcock’s survey of the function of the Holy Spirit in Christian theology praises Kasper’s profound insight that the Spirit plays a pre-eminent role in God’s generous outreach to the world. Badcock’s analysis concludes that in Kasper’s thought the Spirit is mediator of divine and human love:

[T]he Spirit is the personal agent within the Trinity itself to whom the Father, through the Son, reaches outward, in love, to the world. It is the Spirit who is the transcendental possibility of the divine self-communication to the creation ... the Spirit thus serves as a mediating role between God the Father and his self-communication in history in Jesus Christ.⁶⁰

Badcock finds in Kasper’s work a creative retrieval of the theology of grace, the bountiful giftedness of God’s love in creation and history. Krystof Struys sees Kasper’s pneumatology opening “an enormous pastoral-theological and ecumenical space”⁶¹ for freshly considering the relationship between christology and ecclesiology and in so doing addressing the theological dangers of christomonism and ecclesiocentrism. Duncan Reid notes Kasper’s recognition that the Church is in urgent need of a theology of the Holy Spirit and finds in Kasper’s work a resource to address the narrowing of ecclesiology to institutionalism.⁶²

In his study of Kasper’s Spirit-christology, Philip Rosato favourably assesses its terminology and relevance as: “a paradigm which might well allow Christian theologians to present Jesus Christ in a way more understandable to contemporary secular culture and also more appropriate to the current spiritual and pastoral needs in the Christian community.”⁶³ Rosato concludes that today, in new contexts, and especially in its dialogue with modern understandings of freedom, Kasper demonstrates the theological meaning and importance of history:

⁵⁹ Anthony Ekpo, *The Breath of the Spirit in the Church: The Sensus Fidelium and Canon Law* (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications, 2014), 87.

⁶⁰ Gary Badcock, *Light of Truth and Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 15.

⁶¹ Kristof Struys, “De Ongelijkijdige Gelijktijdigheid van God in Mens in de ‘Theologische Theologie’ van Walter Kasper” (unpublished Doctoral Thesis; Dept. of Theology, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2003), 325. (Original text: *biedt zijn pneumatologie meteen een enorme pastoral-theologische en oecumenische ruimte.*)

⁶² Duncan Reid, “What Is the Spirit Saying? Trends in Pneumatology,” *St Mark’s Review* (Spring 1997): 16.

⁶³ Philip J. Rosato, “Spirit Christology: Ambiguity and Promise,” *Theological Studies* 38 (1977): 423.

Human history does not happen out of blind necessity or pure chance. It arises from human freedom and the historical choices made by human beings. Really 'incarnate' human freedom is the power, in the midst of manifold historical conditions, ultimately to make unconditional decisions, that is to say, decisions that are independent of historical conditions, and so to bring about something historically new. Thus human freedom contains a spark of the absolute in the original meaning of the word, that is to say, *released* from historical conditions. So history is not just the world of the relative. Human beings bring the absolute into history.⁶⁴

With Rosato, I value Kasper's deeply spiritual and relational Christology. It encourages and prizes human agency in partnering with the constant, concrete and ever-new outpourings of God's Spirit in history.⁶⁵

Yves Congar offers another critical voice that praises Kasper's contribution to the development of a pneumatological christology. Referring to specific christological studies which include Kasper's *Jesus the Christ*, Congar affirms that "a beginning has been made in formulating a Christology based on the intervention of the Holy Spirit in the mystery of Christ ... [and these developments] establish a firm connection between the mystery of the Church and, not the incarnation as such, but the baptism of Jesus, as anointed by the Holy Spirit in order to carry out his messianic ministry."⁶⁶ Congar praises Kasper's contribution to the growth of broad understandings and practices of ministry in the Spirit.

⁶⁴ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, xiv. This concept is explored further in Kasper's Farewell Lecture from Tübingen University. Walter Kasper, "Zustimmung zum Denken: Von der Unerläßlichkeit der Metaphysik für die Sache der Theologie," (Assent to Thinking: On the Indispensability of Metaphysics for the Work of Theology.) *Theologische Quartalschrift* 169, no. 4 (1989): 268. Here Kasper writes: "Freedom can only achieve fulfilment through unconditional, total freedom which accepts and affirms a person in love. Only the revelation of such freedom can do justice to the paradox and the inherent dialectic of human existence. Only the God of revelation can meet the greatness of human dignity and the yearning of the human heart without trivializing or denying the misery of people's need. Only belief in God acknowledges human misery, without us having to despair of our greatness because of it." (Original text: *Freiheit kann nur durch Freiheit erfüllt werden, genauer: sie kann nur durch unbedingte, vollkommene Freiheit, die den Menschen in Liebe annimmt und bejaht, zur Erfüllung gelangen. Allein die Offenbarung solcher Freiheit wird der Paradoxie und der inneren Dialektik der menschlichen Existenz gerecht. Allein der Gott der Offenbarung kann die Größe menschlicher Würde und die Sehnsucht des menschlichen Herzens erfüllen, ohne das Elend des Menschen verharmlosen oder leugnen zu müssen. So kann der Gottesglaube das menschliche Elend anerkennen, ohne daß wir darüber an unserer Größe verzweifeln müßten.*)

⁶⁵ As will be seen in chapter 3 of this thesis, I part company with Rosato by contesting his assessment that "one would be hard pressed to find in *The God of Jesus Christ* much evidence of a Spirit christology." Rosato, "Spirit Christology," 5.

⁶⁶ Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, vol. 3 (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 165. See also p 171, n. 1. Congar places Kasper among the following theologians he sees as important for the development of pneumatological Christology: H. Mühlén, J.D.J Dunn, E. Schillebeeckx, P.J. Rosato, P.J.A.M. Schoonenberg. Kasper's work contributes to the re-establishment of the link, lost through the scholastic theological method, between christology and soteriology.

Brian McDermott's analysis of Kasper's contribution to the development of contemporary christology sees the personal and relational history of the earthly Jesus not ending with his death.⁶⁷ The Resurrection marks a clear transition from Jesus' history into Christ's history. In the Spirit, Jesus as the Christ, the anointed one of God, is experienced as creative power, a 'surplus of being and life' released into history.⁶⁸

William Loewe recognises the contribution of Kasper's christology to a dynamic understanding of ecclesial tradition. Loewe writes that for Kasper, "the Holy Spirit ... that is, God's love poured out, is active in generating the Christian tradition, in providing illumination that guides the process of discernment by which the tradition develops, and in equipping [us] with the criteria with which to read the signs of the times."⁶⁹

Randy Stice makes the assessment that Kasper's christology "understands the Spirit as the personal expression of [God's] free and gracious self-communication."⁷⁰ He thinks that Kasper's emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in interpreting Jesus as the Christ is one of his strengths. In Kasper's thought, the Spirit leads the person and work of Christ forward to incessantly offer salvation. The Spirit creates conditions for God's freedom and love to be known in history in ever-new ways. Michael Slusser's study of Kasper's Spirit-christology reinforces Stice's assessment of Kasper's work. Kasper's understanding of Jesus as creation and bearer of the Spirit, Slusser argues, "connects him vividly with our experience of

⁶⁷ Brian O. McDermott, "Roman Catholic Christology: Two Recurring Themes," *Theological Studies* 41, no. 2 (1980): 341.

⁶⁸ See Galvin, "From the Humanity of Christ," 252-72. Here Galvin also positions Kasper's work in relation to other twentieth century theologians who illustrate a paradigm shift in Christology. Kasper's work, he argues, emphasises the theological, and in particular, the soteriological meaning of Jesus' humanity. Central to understanding Jesus' identity and work is his understanding of the role history plays in shaping faith.

⁶⁹ William P. Loewe, "Jesus the Christ in Retrospect and Prospect," in *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper*, ed. Kristin M. Colberg and Robert A. Krieg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 90. Loewe positively evaluates Kasper's achievement in *Jesus the Christ*: "At the centre of Kasper's theological work is his effort to shed light on the singular event in which God's freedom entered history in order to liberate human freedom and bring it to fulfilment." *Ibid.*, 83.

⁷⁰ Randy L. Stice, "Jesus Christ: The Christology of Walter Kasper," *The Heythrop Journal* 49, no. 2 (2008): 247.

salvation.”⁷¹ Personal experience of faith becomes the spiritual context for understanding and appropriating christological doctrine.

Jojoy Palamattath's doctoral study of Kasper's pneumatology, in dialogue with that of Vladimir Lossky, praises Kasper's understanding of the Spirit as the agent of “incessant actualisation and historical consummation” of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Palamattath recognises that, in Kasper's work, the Spirit is the concrete actualiser of God's will in Jesus' person and mission. In the Spirit, God's reign came in its fullness in and through his free and loving participation in history.⁷²

Myk Habets notes Kasper's fidelity to Nicene-Chalcedonian christology. He sees this fidelity involving rethinking christology more relationally, such that the work of the Spirit is clearly seen in its personal shaping of Jesus' as the *Logos* of God.⁷³ Habets is drawn to the capacity of Kasper's christology to redress the lack of attention paid to the experience of God in history, lost through extreme emphasis on metaphysical thought about God's essence.

Thomas Petriano, whose doctoral work focused on the development of Kasper's Spirit Christology, believes that “the pneumatological orientation of Walter Kasper's theology is a helpful resource for theologians seeking to be both faithful to tradition, and at the same time open to the very richness of that tradition to unfold into the future under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”⁷⁴ Petriano makes this evaluation with particular reference to the capacity of

⁷¹ Michael Slusser, “Seminar on Christology,” *Catholic Theological Society of America Conference* 48 (1993): 143, accessed January 27, 2015. <https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/3860/3427>

⁷² Jojoy Paul Palamattath, “The Grace of the Holy Spirit Active in the Progress of Humankind Towards Historical Fulfillment: An Ecumenical Approach to the Pneumatology of Vladimir Lossky and Walter Kasper” (unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Dept. of Theology, Pontifical Gregorian University, 2003), 116. See also Glenn Morrison, “Walter Kasper's Religious Quest for Jesus Christ,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 72 (2007): 4. Though Morrison does not specifically identify Kasper's pneumatology as key to Kasper's “Religious Quest,” he does recognise a foundation for that theological direction: “Kasper reflects upon the quest for Jesus the Christ with a contemporary, historical and personal urgency that underscores a salvific and kerygmatic concern for our present human condition.” Kasper's point of departure and dialogue partner for the development of his christology is the reality of a secularised, demythologised and post-enlightenment world in search of meaning, truth and freedom within history, not beyond it.

⁷³ Myk Habets, “Spirit Christology: Seeing in Stereo,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11, no. 2 (2003): 214.

⁷⁴ Thomas Petriano, “The Pneumatology of Walter Kasper,” *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 9, no. 2 Sum-Fall (2002): 309.

Kasper's pneumatology to positively and effectively contribute to much needed interreligious dialogue and understanding.⁷⁵

Elizabeth Johnson serves as a final representative of wide, critical appreciation for Kasper's theology of the Spirit. In her study of Kasper's work in honour of his 80th birthday *Festschrift*, Johnson argues the claim of this thesis: "[T]heological consideration of the Holy Spirit runs like a golden thread through all of Cardinal Kasper's work."⁷⁶ Johnson explores three areas where Kasper has made fruitful use of pneumatology: "the problem of God and modern atheism, the historical Jesus of the gospels, and the church-dividing, Trinitarian question of how the Spirit proceeds."⁷⁷ Johnson calls upon Kasper to turn his attention to a new pneumatological issue that would benefit from his attention: the ecological crisis. She is confident of the fruitfulness of his thought and method. With Johnson, this thesis recognises that new questions arising in the history of the Church's developing self-understanding and engagement with the modern world can benefit greatly from being in dialogue with Kasper's thought.

God and History

What is distinctive about Kasper's theology of the Spirit? According to Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, the key lies in his "dialogical and communicative historical approach to understanding God."⁷⁸ Kasper understands history eschatologically, as ever-unfolding fulfilment. History is a dialogue between the deeds of God and the responses of human

⁷⁵ Thomas Petriano, "The Pneumatology of Walter Kasper," 297.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Pneumatology and Beyond: 'Wherever,'" in *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper*, ed. Kristen M. Colberg and Robert A. Krieg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 2014), 98. The Conference *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper: A Celebration of his Life and Work* (hosted by the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, April 25-27, 2013) provided an opportunity for 27 speakers and moderators to reflect on the profound and far-reaching significance of Walter Kasper's contribution to Catholic theology on the occasion of his 80th birthday. The conference proceedings, *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper*, published 18 of the papers presented at the conference by prominent contemporary theologians.

⁷⁷ Johnson, "Pneumatology," 99-100.

⁷⁸ Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "A Distinctive Theological Approach," in *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper: Speaking the Truth in Love*, ed. Kristin M. Colberg and Robert A. Krieg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 35.

beings. This dialogue takes place in its 'fullness' in the God-human Jesus Christ, who unites both movements. This dialogical approach to history is characterised by a profound understanding of the relations between revelation, freedom and commitment. These categories are not understood in static, universal, and all-encompassing terms. They are dynamic realities that reveal truth in concrete contexts and open-ended, unfinished ways. Kasper's theological method engages with concrete specific historical situations.⁷⁹ As early as 1969, in his monograph *The Methods of Dogmatic Theology*, Kasper wrote:

Vatican II has provided us with a view of the Church and ecclesiality that is essentially more open, more dynamic and more catholic. This new view must necessarily have profound consequences for the methodology of dogmatic theology. Our understanding of dogma and dogmatic theology must be affected by our newly-won realization that the Church is an eschatological entity, a reality in the making, a promise as yet unfulfilled, an instrument of service, not an end in itself. Seen in this light, dogma can only be regarded as a relative, historical reality of purely functional significance. Dogma is relative *insofar* as it is tied up with the questioning process of a given era, contributing to the proper understanding of the Gospel in wholly concrete situations.⁸⁰

In his 2005 article "The Renewal of Pneumatology in Contemporary Life and Theology" Kasper links attention to the historical context to discernment of the Spirit's work. He writes that "the renewal of Church life since the Second Vatican Council has ultimately been a spiritual renewal based on a renewed pneumatology."⁸¹ He sees the Spirit as the source and sustainer of bold and concrete historical commitments and ministries at the service of the Gospel:

⁷⁹ See Kasper, *Cardinal Walter Kasper Spiritual Writings*, 13-14. In the Introduction, editors Bellm and Krieg note that, as Bishop of the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, Kasper was deeply concerned about historical realities that cause suffering. For example, they write, "Kasper became acutely aware of the canonical impasse for divorced Catholics who had remarried without receiving an annulment for their first marriages. He began to look for a path forward for these people.... Twenty years later, Pope Francis requested that Kasper present a proposal for a "penitential path" for divorced and remarried Catholics to the Synod of Bishops in 2014." See also Gerard O'Connell, "Listen to the Spirit," *America Magazine* October 8, 2014, 22. accessed July 7, 2015. <https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/listen-spirit> Here Kasper explains that "mercy is a hermeneutical key for interpreting the commandments."

⁸⁰ Walter Kasper, *The Methods of Dogmatic Theology*, trans. John Drury (Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1967), 24-5. See also German Bishops' Conference, *The Church's Confession of Faith*, 50. This Catechism, authored mainly by Walter Kasper, explains 'dogma' this way: "the definitiveness with which dogmas are presented does not deny that they speak in the language of their time. Their meaning depends on the expressiveness of the language employed at a particular time and under particular circumstances. We must distinguish then between the truths of faith and their manner of expression (GS 62). This *historical character of dogmas* also explains why dogmas sometimes express the truth, not falsely, but in the limited historical or linguistic perspective according to which the question was formulated."

⁸¹ Walter Kasper, "The Renewal of Pneumatology in Contemporary Life and Theology: Towards a Rapprochement between East and West," in *The Holy Spirit, the Church and Christian Unity*, ed. D. Donnelly, A. Denaux, and J. Femeree (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 9.

[I]n this sense the Council knows that the Spirit leads to the unexpected and new spiritual awakenings. It knows from the Acts of the Apostles (10, 44-47; 11,15; 15,8), for example, that the Spirit on occasions precedes the work of the Apostles (*ad gentes* [AG] 4). It attributes to the momentum of the Holy Spirit the *aggiornamento* of the Church.”⁸²

Kasper understands history as both the context and the process within which human persons and ecclesial communities participate in living out the newness of the Gospel. Responding to questions about the future, in dialogue with the wisdom and experience of the past and the present, brings about change. Ecclesial language and tradition have the power to connect persons to one another. They also have the capacity to connect communities of the past to those imagined in the future.

In a 1961 article “Are the Church and Theology Subject to Historical Law?” Kasper laid a foundation for his historical, pneumatological understanding of ecclesiology. This foundation is based on the premise that all the baptised are called to cooperate with the Spirit in bringing about the Reign of God:

[T]he venture within history belongs then as much to the Christian’s approach to the world as it does to his (*sic*) faith.⁸³ The Christian is always concerned with the unfamiliar; he should commit himself to the untried and unpredictable, and not cling to the *status quo* or to the past, in attempts to preserve or even restore them. He should be open to the Word of God, which makes history and again and again intervenes in history - selecting, rejecting, interpreting, revolutionizing. In this fearful and security-hungry world, the Christian should be a token of hope in the face of any inflexibility through weakness of faith. If it is true that God is the youngest among us, then the Christian should remain “young” and flexible enough to recognize the “signs of the times” and match them in his faith.⁸⁴

For Kasper, faith and faith traditions arise from the experience of the dynamic communication of God’s Word and its interpretation and fulfilment in human response. Kasper’s theology of the Spirit affirms that historical change is a necessary feature of the church’s developing identity as mission. Kasper understands tradition, including what can be described as ‘traditional roles,’ to be part of a living story that holds within it the dynamism of

⁸² Kasper, “The Renewal of Pneumatology,” 16.

⁸³ I recognise the limitations of Kasper’s (or translators’) consistent use of exclusive language when referring to ‘humankind.’ From this point forward, I will not reference this limitation with (*sic*).

⁸⁴ Kasper, “Are Church and Theology Subject to Historical Law?” 16. The theme of this article is reworked and reinforced in Walter Kasper, *An Introduction to Christian Faith*, trans. V. Green (Ramsey, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1980), 165. Here Kasper writes: “Christian behaviour in the world should therefore be marked by a boldness towards history. A Christian should be involved in whatever is new; his task is to venture into the untried and unforeseeable and not to cling conservatively to the *status quo* or instinctively long for what is in the past. In the face of all fainthearted immobility the Christian should be a sign of hope in this timid world so preoccupied with security.”

the Spirit who continually and in often surprising ways works to create a new future.⁸⁵ Kasper's foundational work on the theology of history, and the pneumatology he later develops more fully, come together in his fundamental insight that in the Spirit, God communicates God's self as freedom-in-love. God's power in history reveals God to 'be' freedom. He writes: "If God's acting within history cannot be easily demonstrated, that is not a sign of God's impotence, but his omnipotence and his boundless freedom."⁸⁶ This freedom is the freedom-in-love of God's eternal self-giving in history. In the Spirit, the history of creation is taken into the life of God and given an eternal future.⁸⁷

The Spirit is the Lord and giver of life, known in history to be at the heart of transformation and fulfilment. This understanding of the Spirit, legacy of Kasper's early Tübingen formation, is developed in the chapters that follow.

Thesis Overview

This thesis now proceeds in two steps. Part A pursues a systematic and critical analysis of Kasper's theology of the Spirit found in his three major works on Christology, God the Trinity and the Church. Part B then considers implications of Kasper's pneumatology for understanding a specific ecclesial issue, that of reception of a new reality in the life of the post-Vatican II Church: lay ecclesial ministry.

More specifically, Chapter Two will focus on Kasper's theology of the Spirit in his major christological work, *Jesus the Christ*. Chapter Three will examine his understanding of

⁸⁵ Walter Kasper, "Renewal from the Source: The Interpretation and Reception of the Second Vatican Council," 288. Here Kasper affirms that "the tradition is indeed in the end a work of the Holy Spirit who leads the church into all truth (John 16;13)."

⁸⁶ Walter Kasper, "Gott in Der Geschichte," in *Gott Heute: 15 Beiträge Zur Gottesfrage*, ed. Norbert Kutschki (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1967), 144. (Original text: *Wenn sein innergeschichtliches Wirken nicht einfach festgestellt werden kann, so ist das nicht ein Zeichen seiner Ohnmacht, sondern seiner Allmacht and seiner grenzenlosen Freiheit.*)

⁸⁷ See Walter Kasper, "Theology of History: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi," in *Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. Karl Rahner (London: Burns & Oates, 1975), 632. Here Kasper develops his theology of history: "Revelation does not merely throw light on history, it also gives rise to it.... As an event which can neither be foreseen nor influenced, revelation sets up new historical reality and gives the promise of a future."

the person and work of the Spirit within the development of his trinitarian theology in *The God of Jesus Christ*. Chapter Four turns to Kasper's theology of the Spirit in his more recent publication on ecclesiology *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission*. Kasper describes these works as the central trilogy of his theology.⁸⁸ While other works will also be referred to, these texts provide the building blocks of Part A.⁸⁹ Part B consists of Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Five explores Kasper's writings on the theme of lay ministry and leadership, from mainly untranslated German publications on church ministry compiled in *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter: Schriften zur Ekklesiologie* (The Church and its Ministries: Writings on Ecclesiology).⁹⁰ Chapter Six begins by bringing Kasper's reflections on lay ministry and leadership into dialogue with selected writers on the phenomenon of 'lay ecclesial ministry' in the US context. Then it proposes some implications of Kasper's pneumatology for deeper understanding and reception of this new ministry as an expression of the Church's Spirit-led identity.

Kasper's pneumatology has been put to the service, for example, of deepening the identity and mission of ordained ministry as well as strengthening the theology and practice of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. Its potential for contributing to systematic reflection on the identity and mission of lay ministry in the Church and to the emerging shape of Catholic Church identity and mission has not been fully tapped, even by Kasper himself.⁹¹

⁸⁸ See Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 3. Here Kasper writes that this book fulfils a long-standing desire: "Towards the end of my time in academia, after the publication of the books *Jesus the Christ* and *The God of Jesus Christ* I intended to write a book about *The Church of Jesus Christ*."

⁸⁹ A perusal of the large number of publications by Walter Kasper, spanning from 1960 to 2015 and held by the *Kardinal Walter Kasper Stiftung (für Theologie, Ökumene und Spiritualität)* in Vallendar, Germany, attests to the fact that the majority of Kasper's works have not yet been translated into English. <http://www.pthv.de/institute/kardinal-walter-kasper-institut/> accessed August 4, 2017. This thesis is limited to consideration of published English translations of his major works, unless indicated differently. See also Kasper, *Cardinal Walter Kasper Spiritual Writings*, 35. Here the editors, Patricia C. Bellm and Robert A. Krieg write: "As of December 31, 2015 [Kasper] had written a total of 928 publications."

⁹⁰ *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter: Schriften zur Ekklesiologie 2*, ed. George Augustin und Klaus Krämer, vol. 12, Walter Kasper Gesammelte Schriften (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 2009).

⁹¹ See, for example, Kasper, *Leadership in the Church: How Traditional Roles Can Serve the Christian Community Today*. Four of seven chapters of this book deal with: 'The Diaconate', 'Priestly Office', 'Episcopal Office' and 'The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem.' The book does not mention lay ministry as a leadership role in the Church.

Kasper's pneumatology encourages the Church's participation in the transformation history as an expression of its spiritual identity and mission. His work enables the Catholic Church to understand, encourage and refine its life and ministries to be at the service of history's "bold emergence into tomorrow."⁹²

Conclusion

Walter Kasper's theology of the Spirit finds its foundation and framework in the Tübingen legacy that reappropriates and values history as dialogue partner with theology. This chapter has introduced Walter Kasper's theological story. It has shown how his early life, especially his experience in Germany during the Second World War, has influenced his theological commitments. The enormous impact of the Tübingen School on Kasper's academic formation has been acknowledged and the influence of his significant leadership roles in the Catholic Church on his theology and ecclesiology has been described. Voices from the theological academy have been tapped to affirm the potential of Kasper's work for this doctoral project. I will propose that Kasper's work provides a contemporary understanding of how pneumatology serves the ongoing renewal of the Church's identity and mission for the 21st century and I will seek to explore the implications of his pneumatology for the reception of lay ecclesial ministries.

⁹² Kasper, *Pope Francis' Revolution of Tenderness and Love* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2015), 27.

Part A: The Pneumatology of Walter Kasper

Chapter 2: The Holy Spirit in Kasper's Christology – *Jesus the Christ*

*All life, all holiness comes from you through your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
by the working of the Holy Spirit.¹*

*The Spirit must adapt Jesus' work to each new situation,
and in such a way that it is liberating Good News.²*

Introduction

This chapter will begin to examine the pneumatological 'golden thread' that weaves through Kasper's work.³ It will focus on Kasper's understanding of the nature and function of the Holy Spirit in *Jesus the Christ*, the first book of his 'theological trilogy.'⁴

In 1974 several important works in christology were published along with *Jesus the Christ*. These include Edward Schillebeeckx's *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* and Hans Küng's *On Being a Christian*.⁵ In his study of Kasper's christology, Thomas Petriano sees such publications representing a major paradigm shift in understanding Jesus as the 'Christ.' He notes that, together with Kasper, these theologians sought fresh hermeneutical engagement with the Chalcedonian formula that expresses belief in Jesus Christ as both fully human and

¹ Third Eucharistic Prayer, Roman Catholic Missal.

² Walter Kasper, "The Spirit Acting in the World to Demolish Frontiers and Create the Future," *Lumen Vitae* 34 (1979): 91. See also Walter Kasper, "Orientations in Current Christology," *Theology Digest* 31, no. 2 (1984): 109. Here Kasper writes: "Christology cannot rest content with merely passing on tradition like unspent money, but must translate what took place once-for-all in Christ in ways ever new for our age."

³ I am grateful to Elizabeth Johnson for the image of the 'golden thread' in Kasper's pneumatology. See Johnson, "Pneumatology," 98.

⁴ Walter Kasper, *Jesus Der Christus* (Freiburg: Herder, 2007). Originally published as Walter Kasper, *Jesus der Christus* (Mainz: Matthias Grunewald-Verlag, 1974). References in this study will come from the new English edition of this original work: Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, new ed. (London: T&T Clark International, 2011).

⁵ Thomas Petriano, "Spirit Christology or Son Christology? An Analysis of the Tension between the Two in the Theology of Walter Kasper" (unpublished Doctoral Thesis: Department of Theology, Fordham University, 1998), 129. See also John P. Galvin, "From the Humanity of Christ to the Jesus of History: A Paradigm Shift in Catholic Christology," *Theological Studies* 55 (1994): 255. Here Galvin adds Karl Rahner's "Foundations of Christian Faith" and Gerald O'Collins' "*Interpreting Jesus*" among others to this list, noting that a common thread in this new wave of Christology was that "in each case the earlier emphasis on Christ's human nature (in the conceptual pairing divinity / humanity) has yielded a new focus on the historical Jesus (in the conceptual pairing historical Jesus / Christ of faith)."

fully divine in one person. Petriano notes that their theologies pay attention to the unique and important role of the Spirit for interpreting this christology.⁶ Focus on the role of the Spirit in the life and destiny of Jesus Christ, known as the *Pneuma* tradition in christology, redresses the effect of the dominant, more speculative and rational neo-scholastic *Logos* tradition. According to Kasper, the *Logos* tradition has virtually silenced the *Pneuma* tradition.

The *Pneuma* tradition attends to the role of the Holy Spirit in forming the humanity of Jesus as the Word of God in history. Kasper's work on interpretation of Jesus Christ seeks to rebalance and complement considerations of his identity that overlook his dynamic Spirit-filled humanity. Kasper affirms that the common goal which he and a number of other post-Vatican II theologians were pursuing was that their christologies faithfully and meaningfully show "how a unique man could also be God and consequently lay claim to universal, absolute and henceforth insurpassable significance."⁷ Kasper's christology responds to the theological and ecclesial impulses for renewal of the Second Vatican Council.⁸ One of his major contributions is his understanding of "the correlation of the historical Jesus and the proclaimed Christ."⁹ He sees this correlation, or mediation, permanently and ceaselessly actualised by the person and work of the Spirit. That is, he understands the correlation between the historical Jesus and the ecclesial proclamation of Jesus as the Christ to be a

⁶ Petriano, "Spirit Christology or Son Christology?" 258. See also Walter Kasper, "'One of the Trinity ...': Re-Establishing a Spiritual Christology in the Perspective of Trinitarian Theology," in *Theology and Church* (New York, NY: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1992), 95. Here Kasper offers a justification for his work of re-engaging with the Chalcedonian tradition: "Even in theology and the church, Chalcedon was a stumbling-block—and still is.... It is often no longer understood, and is pushed aside as being for people an irrelevant and incomprehensible speculation."

⁷ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 5. Kasper identifies his work with other post-Vatican II Catholic and Protestant theologians of the time including Karl Rahner, Bernhard Welte, Felix Malmberg, Piet Schoonenberg, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Eberhard Jüngel. These theologians developed christologies of the Spirit to complement, not replace, the dominant *Logos* Christologies.

⁸ See Claus Arnold, "Turbulent Priests: 'Solidarity Groups', 'Councils' and Theology in Post-Vatican II Germany," *Histoire@Politique*, no. 30 (2016): 6. Arnold situates Kasper's contribution to early reception of conciliar reforms prior to the publication of *Jesus the Christ*: "From 1967-1971 ... Rahner, Metz and Kasper were involved ... in the formation of the circle of critical priests in the diocese of Münster, the 'Freckenhorster Kreis,' perhaps the most important group of reform-oriented priests in Germany."

⁹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 7. See also Kasper, "Orientations in Current Christology," 109. Here Kasper writes that "theology poses its own hermeneutical problem. Faith embraces not just the earthly Jesus but the risen Christ ever present to the church in the Holy Spirit; and we do not directly encounter the exalted Christ, but only in chosen witnesses."

dynamic, Spirit-filled reciprocity. Rather than dissolving or obscuring the relationship between the personal identity of the particular Jesus of Nazareth and the universal, eternal, saving mystery of God experienced as the Christ of faith, Kasper sees the activity of the Holy Spirit as mediating them.¹⁰ Furthermore, for Kasper, the mediating role of the Holy Spirit is key to understanding the dynamic relationship between the particular experience of Jesus' life, death and resurrection and its universal significance.¹¹ The Spirit's identity and role is also central for the Christian tradition's creative engagement with the questions and concerns of the contemporary world.¹²

Kasper divides *Jesus the Christ* into three major sections. First, he analyses issues, tasks and contexts for theology that influence understanding the person and work of Jesus Christ today. These include issues pertaining to the internal life and structures of the Church, the Church's relationship with the world and broader questions about Christian identity and relevance in a secular, de-traditionalised and pluralist world. In the second section, Kasper concentrates his attention on biblical evidence for the earthly Jesus, including his teachings, miracles, claims and death. He then engages with testimonies and interpretations of Jesus'

¹⁰ The original German word Kasper uses for 'mediator' is *Mittler*. Alternative translations include: communicator, conciliator, go-between, negotiator, intercessor. These concepts do not imply that the correlation between the particular Jesus and the universal Christ is one only of an 'equality of essence.' They imply a dynamic reciprocal relationship.

¹¹ See Avery Dulles, "Review of 'Jesus the Christ'," *Theology Today* 35, no. 2 (1978): 212. Dulles assesses *Jesus the Christ* as: "no mere reproduction of the earlier manuals, it opens up exciting new approaches to the ancient faith in the light of modern philosophical anthropology."

¹² See Walter Kasper, "Das Verhältnis von Schrift und Tradition: Eine Pneumatologische Perspektive," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, no. 170 (1990): 72. Here Kasper writes: "The renewal of the patristic sacramental understanding of the Church and tradition has a number of implications for a deeper pneumatological understanding of tradition. The most important consequence is that tradition does not only play a horizontal role; nor does it imply faith and life as a second hand experience. Rather, it [tradition] is the symbolic form through which the once handed down Word of God in the Holy Spirit becomes present 'vertically' over and over again. [Understood pneumatologically, tradition] is the actual presence of the Gospel." (Original text: *Die Erneuerung des altkirchlichen sakramentalen Verständnisses der Kirche und der Tradition hat eine Reihe von Konsequenzen für ein vertieftes pneumatologisches Verständnis der Tradition. Die wichtigste Konsequenz besteht darin, daß sich Tradition nicht nur in der horizontalen abspielt; sie besagt kein Glauben und Leben aus zweiter Hand. Sie ist vielmehr die zeichenhafte Gestalt, durch die das einmal ergangene Wort Gottes im Heiligen Geist 'vertikal' immer wieder neu Gegenwart wird. Sie ist die Aktualpräsenz des Evangeliums.*) Further, Kasper holds that "Tradition and interpretation form a continual indissoluble unity in the process of revelation." *Ibid.*, 79. (Original text: *Tradition und Interpretation bilden schon im Prozeß der Offenbarung eine nicht auflösbare Einheit.*)

resurrection. Kasper understands Christian traditions as vehicles that communicate the ongoing experience of Christ's resurrection in history.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will restrict myself to close analysis of the third and final section of *Jesus the Christ*, along with the introduction to the 2011 edition. Here we see the reciprocity between Kasper's pneumatological understanding of Jesus as the Christ and his christological understanding of the person and work of the Spirit. My analysis will proceed in six steps. First, I will examine Kasper's understanding of the work of the Spirit in revealing and effecting the eschatological newness of God in history. Second, I will trace Kasper's understanding of Jesus of Nazareth as a human person who, in the Spirit, is the revelation of the *Logos* of God. In a third step, I will consider the central role of the Spirit in the Incarnation of God in Jesus. The fourth section will introduce Kasper's understanding of the Spirit's role in history as pointing to the relationship between the *pneuma* and the life of the Trinity. Fifth, the chapter will explore the Spirit's role in inviting human participation in the universal salvation that is at the heart of Christ's mission. Finally, the chapter will offer an overview of the key features of Kasper's Spirit Christology and its relevance for the Church's mission and ministry.

The Eschatological Newness of God in History

In an article entitled "The Church as Sacrament of the Spirit," published soon after the original 1974 German publication of *Jesus the Christ*, Kasper provides a summary of his book: in and through the activity unique to the Holy Spirit, Jesus is the mediator of the unceasing newness of God. The article invites readers to consider how the Spirit can be understood: "[T]hrough Jesus Christ something new has arrived, ultimate and unsurpassable: the Spirit continually makes this new thing available to us in its newness; [the Spirit] is the

open space of the always new, opening out from God towards us, the ever new power of new being.”¹³

Kasper grounds his understanding of God's constant gift of the newness of Jesus the Christ in the Spirit. In Jesus' life, but above all in his death and resurrection, the surprising and new emerges in history:

The centre and content of a Christology which claims to be an interpretation of the confession of faith that 'Jesus is the Christ' is the cross and resurrection of Jesus. This is where the transition takes place from the Jesus of history to the exalted Christ of Faith. The identity between the earthly Jesus and the exalted Christ includes a difference, or rather, something totally new - a *novum*.¹⁴

Something new in history, and for history, emerges in the story of Jesus' cross and resurrection. Kasper notes that among the legacies of the Enlightenment and various 'Historical Jesus' projects of the 19th century was a break in the link between the concrete, particular life experience and history of Jesus of Nazareth and christological dogmas about his ontological identity. This break served to thwart theological reflection on the nature of God's newness revealed by Jesus and the Jesus tradition. Kasper proposes his own 'new quest for the historical Jesus,' one which challenges the belief that "the future can only be understood in terms of the past."¹⁵ If that were the case, Kasper argues, there would be no room for the 'newness of God' to continue to reveal itself in history.

Kasper posits a 'christology of reciprocity' (*Christologie der gegenseitigen Entsprechung*) between the historical earthly Jesus who was radically open to God's self-communication in the Spirit, and the transcendental exalted Christ who eternally mediates the

¹³ Walter Kasper, "Die Kirche als Sakrament des Geistes," in *Kirche: Ort des Geistes*, ed. Walter Kasper and Gerhard Sauter (Freiburg: Herder, 1976), 33. (Original text: *Durch Jesus Christus ist das endgültig und unüberbietbar Neue angekommen; der Geist stellt uns dieses Neue immer wieder in seiner Neuheit zur Verfügung; er ist der von Gott her offene Raum des je Neuen, die stets neue Macht des neuen Seins.*)

¹⁴ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 25. See also Kasper, "One of the Trinity," 101. Here Kasper explains the idea of the newness that the Spirit brings in more detail: "[The Chalcedonian formulations] offer an answer, from the standpoint of Christian faith, to the fundamental philosophical problem *per se*: the relation between unity and diversity, or between identity and difference. Consequently it is perfectly correct to maintain that the doctrine of the *enhypostasia* does not mean any deficiency in Jesus' humanity, but rather its final perfecting. The highest possible unity with God does not amputate and reduce humanity. It brings that humanity to its true and complete fulfilment. The result is not a dualism or parallelism of the two natures, but an unconfused unity which starts from God, but which at the same time frees what is human to be itself."

¹⁵ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 23.

self-communication of God (the Spirit).¹⁶ The dynamic of this ongoing reciprocity, which Kasper sees as the work of the Spirit in Jesus' life and ministry, as well as in his death and resurrection, continually makes space for the emergence of the newness of God. Importantly, unlike Karl Rahner, Kasper does not see christology as the fulfilment of anthropology. He thinks that Rahner's approach to christology can result in a linear, closed model instead of "a new definition of the relationship between anthropology and christology ... in the tradition of J.E Kühn."¹⁷ Kasper explains the essence of this 'new definition':

In the sense of the classical notion of analogy, we have to say that however great the similarity between anthropology and Christology, the dissimilarity is still greater. Anthropology is so to speak the grammar which God uses to express himself. But the grammar as such is still available for a greater number of pronouncements. It is concretely decided only through the actual human life of Jesus. If this distinction is not maintained, then fundamentally not very much that is new can happen in salvation history in contradistinction to the human transcendental consciousness beyond the mere fact that the idea of the absolute Redeemer is made actual in Jesus of Nazareth, and nowhere else.¹⁸

Kasper's approach to christology accentuates the difference, as well as the continuity between God and humanity in Jesus Christ. Certainly, something new in history emerged in the life and ministry of Jesus. However, witnesses to the resurrection experienced Christ's salvific power in ways that did not mean the continuation or sameness of the history they had known in Jesus' human story. In the resurrection, the witnesses to Jesus' life and death experienced Jesus' newness in a different way. Furthermore, in relationship with God's Spirit, something new was revealed to them not only about God, but also about themselves. Where promise and possibility appeared to have come to an end in relation to Jesus, something new in relation to God and humanity emerged. Concrete, unexpected, unimagined and totally new experiences of freedom, life and hope were unleashed. Thus, for Kasper, the resurrection experience is not "the legitimation of the earthly Jesus ... [nor] the continuation of his 'cause'... [but is]

¹⁶ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 23. The original German term has been translated as reciprocity. It also has the meaning of 'mutual correspondence' or 'mutual agreement.'

¹⁷ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 39. Here Kasper describes Kühn as "the most impressive speculative theologian of the Catholic Tübingen School of the nineteenth century." Kasper draws on Kühn's dialectic or reciprocal theology in Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 72. Here he writes that "the undefined open mystery of humanity, the world and history becomes concretely defined in Jesus Christ." Kasper describes Kühn's approach as 'dialectic.' *Ibid.*, 368 n54.

¹⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 39.

something wholly new and never-before-present, which not only confirms the earthly Jesus, but simultaneously continues his 'cause' in a *new way*."¹⁹ The resurrection event has its own 'content' for salvation which is not independent from the witnesses who experienced it. Thus, the newness of Christ's resurrection is constantly made available in and through human participation in the active power of the Spirit.²⁰ While the meeting between God's freedom and love and the response of human freedom and love was known in its fullness in the history of Jesus in the Spirit, this love and freedom continues to be known in the ongoing experience of the risen Christ mediated by the Church. Kasper explains:

Church belief ... has in the earthly Jesus, as he is accessible to us through historical research, a relatively autonomous criterion, a once-and-for-all yardstick by which it must continually measure itself. Nevertheless it is impossible to make the historical Jesus the entire and only valid content of faith in Christ. For Revelation occurs not only in the earthly Jesus, but just as much, more indeed, in the Resurrection and the imparting of the Spirit. Jesus today is living 'in the Spirit'. Hence we are granted not only an historically mediated but a direct mode of access to Jesus Christ 'in the Spirit'.²¹

In the Spirit, the life of Jesus Christ continues to confront and transform history in and through human action. Thus, Kasper sees pneumatological christology paying attention not only to the historical work of the Spirit in the Incarnation, but, as importantly, in the bestowal of the Spirit at the Resurrection and at Pentecost, the grounding experiences of the Church. Kasper shows that the Incarnation is not only an assertion of Jesus' divine and eternal identity as *Logos* but is God entering and fulfilling human history as *Pneuma*:

If the divine-human person Jesus is constituted through the Incarnation once and for all, the history and activity of Jesus, and above all the cross and the Resurrection, no longer have any constitutive meaning whatsoever. Then the death of Jesus would only be the completion of the Incarnation. The Resurrection would be no more than the confirmation of his divine nature. That would mean a diminution of the whole biblical testimony.

¹⁹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 23 (Italics original) See also Walter Kasper, "Cristologia e Pneumatologia," in *L'attuale Controversia sull'universalità di Gesù Cristo*, ed. Massimo Serretti (Roma: Lateran University Press, 2003), 131. Here Kasper writes: "The new element that the Spirit brings us is to continually represent Jesus Christ in his eschatological newness. The work of the Spirit is that of renewal of the newness of Jesus Christ." (Original text: *L'elemento nuovo che lo Spirito ci apporta sta nel ripresentare continuamente Gesù Cristo nella sua novità eschatologica. La sua opera è quella di un rinnovamento nella novità di Gesù Cristo.*)

²⁰ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 23.

²¹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 23. See also Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 69. Kasper's thought finds resonance in the work of Chauvet who draws upon Kasper's christology for his reinterpretation of sacramental Christian existence. Chauvet writes: "In its role as hermeneutics, theology has the job, not of retrieving an original meaning but, on the contrary, of *producing*, starting especially from the text of Scriptures, *new texts*, that is, new practices which *foster* the emergence of a new world. Its truth is always to be made; it resides in a future constantly happening." (Italics original)

According to Scripture, Christology has its centre in the cross and the Resurrection. From that midpoint it extends forward to the *Parousia* and back to the Pre-existence and the Incarnation. That does not imply an abandonment of faith in the Incarnation, but instead its transformation into a total interpretation of the history and activity of Jesus, so that it states that God assumed not only a human nature but a human history, and in that way introduced the fulfilment of history as a whole.²²

Thus, Kasper sees the fulfilment of history revealed in Jesus Christ pointing to the future, not only the past. The identity of the future-oriented power of the Spirit has its anchor and vision in the revelation of God in the resurrection of Jesus and the transformation and missioning of the community of Jesus' disciples at Pentecost.

In 1988 Kasper delivered the Père Marquette Lecture in Theology, entitled "The Christian Understanding of Freedom and the History of Freedom in the Modern Era: The Meeting and Confrontation between Christianity and the Modern Era in a Postmodern Situation." This lecture develops the insight, described in *Jesus the Christ*, that the Spirit communicates the ongoing freedom-in-love of the God-human unity known in its fullness in the person of Jesus Christ. Kasper describes the essence of the human person as being capable of free response to divine self-communication:

In the Bible man is the one called by God; through the power of his decision he must answer to the Word of God that has confronted him. The Bible knows that what is properly human consists of man's free stance before God and in being God's partner and the 'other' for God.²³

The ground of the human person's nature is her or his 'original freedom' for responding to love.²⁴ Kasper points out that in the meeting between human freedom and God's freedom, in the Spirit, history is released from remaining "in a hundred different ways trapped or bound in knots."²⁵ A prototype of this release happened in the personal history of Jesus. A new experience and understanding of divine-human communication took place and consequently reshaped history. After reflecting on the history of the Spirit in the life of Jesus, Kasper

²² Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 25.

²³ Walter Kasper, *The Christian Understanding of Freedom and the History of Freedom in the Modern Era: The Meeting and Confrontation between Christianity and the Modern Era in a Postmodern Situation* (Milwaukee WI: Marquette University Press, 1988), 7.

²⁴ Kasper, *Christian Understanding of Freedom*, 8.

²⁵ Kasper, *Christian Understanding of Freedom*, 9.

concludes that “Christian freedom presupposes human freedom, gives it its final determination and provides it with its final fulfilment.”²⁶ This insight is key to Kasper’s understanding of the ongoing work of the Spirit in continuing to reveal the ‘ever-new and once for all time’ identity and relevance of Jesus Christ. In the Spirit, Jesus continues to breathe the freedom of God into history.

Kasper’s article “Spirit, Christ, Church” was published in the same year as *Jesus the Christ*. Here he points again to the identity and role of the Spirit in the ongoing revelation of Jesus Christ as God:

[T]he Spirit not only reminds us of Christ. He also reveals what is to come (Jn.1 6, 13) and teaches us to even do greater works than those Christ did (Jn. 14,12) ... through Christ the definitive and unsurpassable new thing has come, the Spirit puts at our disposal this new thing ever again in all its newness; He is the open space of the ever new.²⁷

For Kasper, the meaning of Christ’s earthly and risen history emerges ‘in and through the Spirit.’ In Jesus Christ, through the Spirit, God brings about the new in history. In the Spirit, God is intent on communicating God’s self in ever-new ways that foster freedom.

The Spirit’s Role in Revealing Jesus of Nazareth as the *Logos* of God

After examining the meaning of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection from the point of view of the divine-human reciprocity of freely offered love in earlier chapters of *Jesus the Christ*, Kasper proceeds to deal with his central theme: the relation between the one divine *Logos* of God and the human person Jesus of Nazareth, who was both gift and giver of the Spirit. The reciprocal and personal relations of divine and human freedom-in-love, communicated through the person of Jesus, are eternally actualised and sustained in history by the Spirit.

²⁶ Kasper, *Christian Understanding of Freedom*, 37.

²⁷ Walter Kasper, “Geest-Christus-Kerk,” in *Leven uit de Geest: Theologische Peilingen Aangeboden aan Edward Schillebeeckx*, ed. B. Brand (Hilversum: Gooi en Sticht, 1974), 55. (Original text: *De Geest herinnert niet alleen aan Christus, Hij maakt ook het toekomstige bekend (Joh. 16, 13) en leert ons zo nog grotere werken te doen dan Christus gedaan heeft (Joh. 14, 12) ... door Christus is het definitief en onovertreffbaar nieuwe gekomen, de Geest stelt ons dit nieuwe steeds weer opnieuw in zijn nieuwheid ter beschikking; Hij is de open ruimte van het altijd nieuwe.*)

In the Spirit, Kasper writes, Jesus' life incarnated the encounter between divine and human freedom-in-love: "God's reign and God's self-communicating love in person [came] in a humanly historical way, not eliminating man's freedom but involving it."²⁸ Kasper describes Jesus as "in person ... both God's gift to man and man's response."²⁹ In his reflections on the mutual relations of divine and human freedom in Jesus Christ, Kasper sees the action of the Spirit as including creaturely participation in historical actions on behalf of freedom and love. Thus, in the Spirit, Jesus' life and destiny demonstrate both the unreserved self-giving of God and its free response by a human person. The human dimension of Christ's life included his capacity to discern and freely choose his actions. Jesus' history with God is recognised as God's history in Jesus in a personal, unique, free Spirit-filled way.

Kasper shows that in Jesus, God assumed not only a human nature but also a human history of relational commitments. In the Spirit, God's assumption of history revealed its goal of relationship transformation. Since Kasper does not understand christology to be the culmination or universalisation of anthropology, but its unique and never-to-be-repeated particularisation,³⁰ he places value on the uniqueness of each person's relationship with God. He emphasises that the *Logos* of God and the humanity of Jesus Christ were fully united in the uniqueness and concreteness of Jesus' relational identity and life.³¹

Chalcedonian tradition teaches that the divine and human are united in the one person, Jesus of Nazareth, who is the image of the eternal *Logos*. This has led to the denial or neglect of the existence of the human person in Jesus. However, Kasper's work clarifies that as the

²⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 218.

²⁹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 218.

³⁰ See also Kasper, "Orientations in Current Christology," 108. Here Kasper refers to Jesus' capacity, in his personal uniqueness, to open up new understandings about how God is present in and through what is unique and personal in our human histories. He writes: "Christology reshuffles the alphabet of our humanity."

³¹ See also Walter Kasper, "The Unicity and Universality of Jesus Christ," in *Cristologie e Missione Oggi*, ed. S. Karotempel, P. Giglioli, G Colzani (Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 2001), 35. In the English translation of this article, the German word *Einzigkeit* is rendered as 'unicity' rather than 'uniqueness' or 'particularity.' The translator's footnote explains that "uniqueness has the connotation of having different characteristics than the others, while the Church's teaching is that Jesus Christ is the 'one and only' Messiah." Kasper argues in this article that the uniqueness or unicity of Jesus is that in him "the Spirit of God has been promised us in order to lead us ever anew and ever more deeply into [Christ's] mystery." *Ibid.*, 44.

Logos, Jesus is truly a human person. Kasper's conception of Jesus' divine-human unity incorporates and fulfils the uniqueness of his humanity, consciousness and exercise of freedom. Jesus' identity as fully human and fully divine rests in his relation to the Spirit. In the Spirit, Jesus receives and offers the fullness of God's self-communicating love in a free, personal and human way. Kasper writes:

The assumption of Jesus' humanity, the act of highest possible union, at the same time posits this in its own creaturely reality. Jesus' humanity is therefore hypostatically united with the *Logos* in a human way, and this means in a way which includes human freedom and human self-consciousness. Precisely because Jesus is no other than the *Logos*, in the *Logos* and through him, he is also a human person.³²

In the Spirit, the humanity of Jesus mediates, and makes available 'for our salvation,' the eternal unity-in-diversity of the Father and the Son in history. The foundation of the unity of human and divine, communicated through Jesus Christ, is free and loving human participation in the work of the Spirit. This mediation occurs in history and is capable of transforming history. Furthermore, for Kasper, the Spirit is the creator of the unity, and also sustainer of the distinction, between the human consciousness of the person of Jesus and the divinity of the Father:

Precisely because (and not despite the fact that) Jesus knew himself wholly one with the Father, he had at the same time a completely human consciousness, asked human questions, grew in age and wisdom (cf Lk 2.52). His consciousness of being one with the Father was therefore not a representational conceptual knowledge, but a sort of fundamental disposition and basic attitude which found concrete realization in the surprising situations in which Jesus became aware in the concrete of what God's will is.³³

Kasper's pneumatological christology seeks to rebalance the Christian tradition's attention to the ontological relationship between Jesus and the *Logos* (sameness) by emphasising the personal relationship of freedom-in-love between the Father and Son (distinctiveness) mediated through Jesus' life 'in the Spirit.'³⁴ Kasper sees the work of the

³² Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 236.

³³ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 236. See also Kasper, "One of the Trinity," 103. Here Kasper writes: "It was a great achievement of the patristic church's doctrine, and especially the Chalcedonian dogma, that in spite of all Hellenistic trends towards divinization, it clung to the scandal of the *logos sarx egeneto* – the Word made flesh – thus preserving Jesus' true humanity and historicity. Our task today is a diametrically opposite one to the task of the earlier time.... Our danger is not a false deification, but a one-sided humanization, a picture of Christ reduced more or less to the measure of what is purely human."

³⁴ See also Kasper, "One of the Trinity," 105. Here Kasper writes: "Jesus is on the one hand confronted with the Father in obedience and love, and hence is different from him; but on the other hand he is also God's image, the

Spirit as holding together the dynamic nature of Jesus' unity as well as his personal distinctiveness in relation to his 'Father.'³⁵ He points out that for the writer of John's Gospel, "it is significant that [the evangelist] is concerned not so much with the unity between Jesus and the *Logos*, but more so with the unity between Jesus and the Father: 'I and the Father are one (10.30).'"³⁶ Kasper understands the relation between Jesus and the *Logos*, the Word of God's self-expression in human history, only in relation to the communion of unity-in-difference between Jesus and the Father: "the unity of the man Jesus with the *Logos* is expressed in the New Testament only indirectly as the inner ground of the unity between Jesus and the Father."³⁷ He uses the term 'community of essence' to describe the active, personal and relational dynamic between the Father and Jesus.³⁸ According to Kasper, the reality of inter-relationship between the Father and the Son, concretised in the Spirit-filled history of Jesus of Nazareth, is the foundation for recognising him as the *Logos* of God.³⁹

Kasper's pneumatological christology allows for what he claims to be a "correct understanding of Jesus' human nature" in relation to both the *Pneuma* and *Logos*. This

picture which makes God present, his icon ... in this unity in difference, and difference in unity, he is the eschatological fulfilment of human beings. In him is manifested, in eschatological finality in the midst of time, what from all eternity God is: relation, self-giving love between Father and Son, into which human beings through the Spirit are destined from eternity to be accepted."

³⁵ See also Walter Kasper, "Cristologia e Pneumatologia," 132. Here Kasper writes that "the development of a well-articulated doctrine on the Holy Spirit ... has its *Sitz im Leben* in an experience, that is, in the experience of absolute freedom of the action of the Spirit." (Original text: [*L*]o sviluppo di una dottrina ben articolato sullo Spirito Santo trova ... il suo *Sitz im Leben* in un'esperienza, cioè, nell'esperienza della libertà assoluta dell'azione dello Spirito.) He continues: "Pneumatology is done by opening our eyes and ears to detect the traces, the expectations and futilities of life, seeking to read the signs of the times that present themselves wherever life is manifested, wherever a ferment of life is found, wherever there is hope of life or where life is destroyed, suffocated, gagged." (Original text: *Si può far pneumatologia solo aprendo gli occhi e gli orecchi per individuare le tracce, le aspettative e le vanità della vita, cercando di cogliere i segni del tempo che si pongono ovunque la vita si manifesti, ovunque si trovi un fermento di vita, ovunque vi sia speranza di vita o dove la vita viene distrutta, soffocata, imbavagliato.*) Kasper sees that the Spirit "has the task of actualising, universalising and realizing, in the single individual, the person and work of Jesus Christ." *Ibid.*, 131. (Original text: [*L*]o Spirito] ha il compito di attualizzare, universalizzare e realizzando, nel singolo individuo, la persona e l'opera di Gesù Cristo.)

³⁶ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 221.

³⁷ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 221.

³⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 221.

³⁹ See Kasper, "Orientations in Current Christology," 111. Here Kasper writes that "to understand God's essence in the light of Jesus' relation to the Father is to ponder the God-of-history ... in Jesus' relation to the Father we find the paradigm whereby love is revealed as the meaning of being."

understanding does not by-pass the uniqueness of Jesus' historicity.⁴⁰ The Chalcedonian debates sought to articulate the nature of the inner divine and human constitution of the person of Jesus by using conceptual tools of Greek philosophy such as the idea of 'substance.' However, Kasper maintains that the meaning of Jesus' identity must address the total relational context of his history and destiny. Otherwise, he argues, "we miss the total eschatological perspective of biblical theology."⁴¹ In the Spirit, God meets us in and through the human person of Jesus in time and context. History matters to God and thus has ultimate meaning and purpose for humanity. For this reason, Jesus' 'personhood' is not constituted as a set of static and timeless characteristics. It was particularised through a dynamic complex of contextual, historical interrelations that ultimately found eschatological fulfilment and, in the Spirit, were made universally accessible.

Kasper assesses that "the Chalcedon-Constantinople formula was detached from its original theological context; instead of understanding [Jesus' human nature] as an ontological interpretation of the relation between Jesus and the Father, they singled out the question of Jesus' inner constitution and drew out from it by purely logical deduction increasingly fine-spun conclusions."⁴² One such conclusion was that Jesus, fully human and fully divine, possessed two wills and two operations.⁴³ However deeper reflection on the concept of

⁴⁰ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ* 227. See also Kasper, "One of the Trinity," 105. Here Kasper reaffirms this idea: the starting point for understanding Jesus Christ is not his 'nature' but his relationships, especially with God. He writes: "in trying to arrive at a new interpretation of Chalcedon many contemporary theologians no longer take as their starting point the question about the relationship of Christ's two natures: they now start instead with what was the centre of Jesus' life and person, according to the testimony of the Gospels: his personal communication with the Father."

⁴¹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 226. See also Walter Kasper, "Hope in the Final Coming of Jesus Christ in Glory," *Communio* 12, Winter (1985): 381. Here Kasper writes: "In the freedom of his self-giving love, God calls historic, finite creatures into existence; they in turn, in free, historic self-determination, find their fulfillment in the God-given participation in his own being. In the final analysis, God's making room for history and his giving to his creatures a share in his life has a trinitarian basis. It means being encompassed in the eternal event of the Father's providing place for the Son in his Divine Being while becoming one with him again in the Holy Spirit. Because God in Himself is eternally Event, he can emancipate history, then call it home to himself again in that he fulfills it *as* history. In this way the fundamental rule regarding the fulfillment of time in eternity is validated, that is, when the greater union with God is attained, the independence of the creature is not abolished, but perfected." Further on in the article, he explains that "since the love of God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit is *the* eschatological reality, everything done in love and for love also has final permanency." *Ibid.*, 383.

⁴² Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 227.

⁴³ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 227.

‘person’ contributed to understanding the unity of Jesus with the Father in a dynamic, Spirit-filled way.⁴⁴ Kasper shows how use of the Greek word *hypostasis* for ‘person’ enabled communication of deeper understandings about how Jesus possesses two natures, human and divine:

[H]*ypostasis* meant not a state but an act, not being static in itself, but being as ‘happening.’ The term corresponded to the relational concept of person, and it was not long before the divine hypostases could be thought of as relations, as happened with Basil in the East and Augustine in the West. The divine person is not essence and substance but rather pure mutual regard, pure actuality in reciprocal giving and receiving.⁴⁵

Adoption of the term *hypostasis* enabled a shift in thought away from emphasis on the static attributes of a person, to insight about the personal identity that develops in the midst of dynamic inter-relationships. The Cappadocian understanding of ‘person’ enabled christological declarations of the unity of Christ’s humanity and divinity to be understood with deeper insight and soteriological relevance.⁴⁶ Pressing further, the particular and unique identity of Jesus as a relational person does not subsume or erase his individual uniqueness or identity as *Logos* of God. On the contrary, this identity is more easily recognised and understood.

The Greek term *hypostasis*, Chalcedon’s description for the identity of Jesus Christ, came to replace the static understanding of the word *prosōpon*. *Prosōpon* originally denoted the idea of a mask wearer, such as an actor with a fixed role and story. This ‘idea’ of a person,

⁴⁴ See also Kasper, “One of the Trinity,” 107. Here Kasper reinforces this idea by evaluating the use of the concept of person in christology: “[this concept] tells us that the unity in Jesus Christ is not a symbiosis of different natures. It is the qualitatively unique and greatest possible personal unity between God and human persons. This makes it the prototype and profoundest source of our fellowship with God.” Kasper names this approach to understanding Jesus the Christ as a ‘spiritual Christology.’ This understanding of christology cannot evade the questions of Christian existence.

⁴⁵ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 229.

⁴⁶ For an overview of the contributions of Athanasius of Alexandria and the Cappadocian theologians Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa see Patricia A. Fox, *God as Communion: John Zizoulas, Elizabeth Johnson, and the Retrieval of the Symbol of the Triune God*, A Michael Glazier Book (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 38. Here Fox explains: “At the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E., the words *hypostasis* and *ousia* had been used synonymously in language for God. What the Cappadocian leaders did was to take the word *hypostasis*, which meant *concrete* and *full being* and identified it with “person.” God as Trinity was therefore to be understood as three *hypostases*, *three full beings*. Then, to avoid introducing tritheism into God, they suggested that *ousia* should be taken to mean “substance” in a generic sense, and therefore applicable to more than one being. Basil of Caesaria was the first to make the clear distinction between *hypostasis* and *ousia*. Soon after, Gregory of Nazianzen identified *hypostasis* with the word *prosōpon*, and Basil’s brother, Gregory of Nyssa, reinforced the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* and coined the Trinitarian formula *mia ousia-treis hypostaseis*. The concept of person as an ontological category was thus born.”

when applied to definitions of Jesus' identity, had the potential to reinforce modalism. If Jesus was merely a mask of God, but not really God, in and through his humanity, then his humanity could be considered irrelevant for our salvation. According to Kasper, a more dynamic understanding of *prosōpon*, in the direction of *hypostasis*, eventually pointed to the importance of the unique personal story that undergirds the masks and roles of actors. This in turn led to development of a fuller understanding of Jesus as a person who is "an event unfolding in dialogue and relations."⁴⁷ The Chalcedonian choice (451 C.E.) to eventually employ the word *hypostasis* in the definition of Jesus' identity in relation to the *Logos* was motivated by the desire to express a dynamic inter-relational understanding of 'person.' The term *hypostasis* also provided language to express the faith experience of the early church that in Jesus Christ, God continues to meet humanity concretely, relationally and in surprisingly new ways.

Kasper points out that many centuries after the inter-personal christological work of the Cappadocians, John Locke (1632-1704 C.E.) ushered in a new era of subjectivity. Locke defined a person as someone who independently exercises self-consciousness and self-knowledge.⁴⁸ This definition stands in sharp contrast to the Cappadocian understanding of the human person of the fourth century, and to the contributions of such medieval theologians as Richard of St Victor and Duns Scotus who believed that a "person is irreplaceably unique, incommunicable, but ... not so by being shut up in the self, but as *ex-sistentia*, as being from another and in relation to that other."⁴⁹ The Enlightenment that followed Locke, on the other hand, came to define the human person as solitary and self-contained, without reference to their particular context and history. This understanding paid greater attention to the inner

⁴⁷ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 229.

⁴⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 231. Kasper draws from J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk II, ch. xxvii.

⁴⁹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 230.

experience of ‘persons-in-themselves’ and dismissed the importance of relationships for the event of inter-subjective ‘personhood.’

According to Kasper, the Chalcedonian dogma affirms that “the identity of subject of the eternal Son of God and the man Jesus ... [is] an interpretation of Jesus’ historical reality and of his relation to the Father.”⁵⁰ This interpretation is affirmed in the biblical accounts of Jesus’ unfolding understanding of his identity and mission. The Gospels do not describe Jesus as an individualised self-possessed subject. The Spirit is identified with Jesus in and through his many relationships. In the Spirit, Jesus grew in personhood, wisdom, understanding and commitment to his mission. Thus, Kasper affirms the importance of history and relational context for a person’s identity.⁵¹

In summary, Kasper’s reflections on the identity of the person of Jesus, fully human and fully divine, two natures co-existing in one subject, without mixture and without separation, do not begin with consideration of ‘substance.’ They begin with “the way in which God and man have been known to us in Jesus’ obedience to ‘his Father’ and in his service ‘for us.’”⁵² Relational ontology, not substance ontology, becomes the starting point for consideration of Jesus’ saving identity. His ‘personhood’ is known in the tension-in-balance between his absolute mysteriousness and uniqueness as *Logos* as well as in his human sense of mission and responsiveness to his context, through which he was shaped in the Spirit. In affirming that Jesus’ personhood was “constituted by the tension between the general and

⁵⁰ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 232-3.

⁵¹ See Walter Kasper, “Christian Humanism” (paper presented at the 27th Annual Convention, Catholic Theological Society of America, Los Angeles, California, 1972), 13. Here Kasper writes that “in the [human] person the infinity which is freedom finds its home. This is the reason why the person possesses infinite value, why an absolutely inviolable dignity belongs to him which is independent of the usefulness which the person has for the advancement of society, for a party, a state, or even the Church. By reason of his personhood man is an end in himself and may never be a means to an end.” See also Kasper, “One of the Trinity,” 107. Here Kasper writes: “In defending the true humanity of Jesus, Leo the Great [at the Council of Chalcedon] reverted to the ancient principle according to which that which is not assumed by Jesus Christ cannot be redeemed.... Leo wished to preserve the independence of Jesus’ true human nature, in the interests of the full humanity of salvation.”

⁵² Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 233.

particular, definite and indefinite, facticity and transcendence, infinite and finite,”⁵³ Kasper shows that Jesus' identity as *Logos* of the Father, in the Spirit, emerged in and through concrete relationships, context and history.

Since Jesus' personality and uniqueness were undergirded and sustained by total and unconditional love and acceptance by God's Spirit, Kasper claims that personhood can only be achieved in relation to God. For Kasper, God “has to be included in the definition of the human person.”⁵⁴ The human person, including Jesus of Nazareth, is one who, by grace, has the potential and spiritual capacity to participate in a relationship with God. Kasper understands Jesus as the “deepest fulfilment”⁵⁵ of what human persons have been constituted to be: persons-in-relation. In the Spirit, Jesus mediates creaturely uniqueness and individuality, unbounded openness to life, the capacity for questioning and a desire for the ‘more’ of existence. At the deepest level, he mediates loving commitment to God and neighbour. In Jesus we find that to be human includes participation in the transcendent reality of God. Kasper therefore posits that Jesus' “personal being is essentially mediation”⁵⁶ of divine-human mutuality or communion.

In his review of *Jesus the Christ*, Avery Dulles points out that the uniqueness of Kasper's pneumatological understanding of the person of Christ who is the *Logos* of God, lies in its personalist philosophical foundation. Dulles writes that “on the basis of a modern, relational concept of personality, Kasper holds that Jesus is both a human and a divine person, that is, a human person whose transcendental openness is definitively determined by his oneness with the person of the divine *Logos*.”⁵⁷ In the Spirit, God gives God's self personally to us through Jesus' humanity. Jesus' humanity, fruit of his personal and freely offered obedience or loving service to his *Abba*/Father, is expressed in and through his unique

⁵³ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 233.

⁵⁴ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 234.

⁵⁵ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 235.

⁵⁶ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 234.

⁵⁷ Dulles, “Review of *Jesus the Christ*,” 212.

historical and relational context. Furthermore, Kasper insists that Jesus' obedience was not blind. It freely responded to the context of his relationships, realities and commitments. Jesus' obedience to the Father, and his identity as the *Logos*, do not in any way compromise or cancel out the uniqueness of his human story. Instead, this history revealed Jesus' identity as *Logos* of God.

In the Spirit, Kasper writes, "Jesus' humanity shares in the personal being of the *Logos*, inasmuch as in him and through him it forms a human person and thus subsists in him and through him and not through itself."⁵⁸ Through unity with the *Logos*, which Jesus lived and which was confirmed at the Easter event, he, as a human person with a human story, reached his absolutely unique and underivable fulfilment. Kasper reinforces this idea in his 1984 article "Orientations in Current Christology":

Jesus is pure relatedness-from the Father to the Father. This relatedness, however, is not a closed one: in his whole person, Jesus is the presence of God's love for others, God's solidarity with the poor and oppressed. In his words and actions he anticipates God's kingdom of justice, mercy and love. His being grounds his mission and his import for salvation. Being and function are inseparable, mutually condition each other.⁵⁹

In the history of Jesus Christ, the Spirit confirms both the unity and the distinctiveness of the Father and the Son. The unity-in-difference is essential to understanding the dynamic and ever-new identity and mission of Jesus, in the Spirit.⁶⁰ In and through Jesus' humanity, "God has manifested himself in Jesus Christ as love ... Jesus and God's loving self-communication in him belong to God's eternal being."⁶¹ The Spirit created the dynamic humanity of Jesus in such a way that he is revealed as the *Logos* of God. Reciprocally, Jesus as *Logos*, continues to breathe the Spirit over creation and into history.

⁵⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 236.

⁵⁹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 236.

⁶⁰ See also Kasper, "Orientations in Current Christology," 110.

⁶¹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 237.

The Spirit's Role in the Incarnation: Kasper's Spirit Christology

Kasper's central thesis of *Jesus the Christ* is that in the Spirit, "God has definitively and unreservedly expressed and communicated himself in the history of Jesus."⁶² In and through Jesus' history and destiny, the Spirit makes God's full self-revelation as *Logos* possible. Jesus' history and destiny reveal the identity of the Holy Spirit who opens up the future and provides hope. Furthermore, Jesus Christ, in and through his Spirit-filled humanity, reveals a new understanding of how closely God desires and promises a future full of hope for creation.⁶³

In the Spirit, Jesus Christ externalises what is most hidden and interior in God: relations of freely offered, other-centred, self-communicating love. Jesus Christ also reveals a new understanding of the nature of the human person: the 'essence' of personhood is not static characteristics but dynamic inter-relationality. Kasper uses the term 'analogy of being' to describe the relationship between the human person of Jesus who is Spirit-creation as well as Spirit-bearer in history, and the inter-relationality of the divine persons of the Trinity. He sees the person and work of the Spirit as the transcendental cause of the ongoing self-actualisation of Jesus Christ as God's *Logos* of freedom-in-love in history.⁶⁴ The unity of Jesus with the *Logos* of God, made historically available through the Spirit-filled 'event' of the Incarnation, presupposes the relational life of the Trinity.⁶⁵

Kasper also uses the term 'analogy of love' to link the unity of human and divine relationship in the human person of Jesus of Nazareth with the life of the Trinity. He writes

⁶² Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 157. See also Walter Kasper, "Orientations in Current Christology," 110. Here Kasper writes that "only if we confess that, in Jesus, God himself has truly entered finite history, can we be saved in our historicity. We must transform meta-physics into meta-history."

⁶³ This idea is echoed in Kasper, *Mercy*, 95. Here Kasper writes "from all eternity God wants to bestow on us his nearness and his fellowship. He wants to have us close to him." He also uses the powerful image of God's boundless love, in the Spirit, crashing into the hard realities of history. *Ibid.*, 121.

⁶⁴ See also Walter Kasper, "The Unicity and Universality of Jesus Christ," 43. Here Kasper writes: "Since from all eternity God is the self-giving and self-actualising love between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, he can totally communicate himself in Jesus Christ without diminishing or losing something of himself in the process."

⁶⁵ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 237.

that the Incarnation is “the mystery of an unfathomable love, the very essence of which is to unite what is distinct while respecting the distinction; for love is, in an almost paradoxical way, the unity of two, who, while remaining distinct and essentially free, nevertheless cannot exist the one without the other.”⁶⁶ The Holy Spirit effects the communication of God’s freeing love through the history of Jesus Christ. Using the analogy of love, Kasper shows that the Incarnation of God, mediated through Jesus Christ and actualised by the Spirit, “not only renders present what always was in God; he is also its radically new, historical realisation.”⁶⁷ Self-giving human actions that incarnate freedom and love, communicate the ‘essence’ of God’s trinitarian life in ever new ways in history.

Kasper understands the Spirit as the excess of God’s divine love that takes the mutual love of Father and Son beyond itself to actively embrace history. Thus Kasper describes the Spirit as “the theological transcendental condition of the very possibility of a free self-communication in history.”⁶⁸ The work of the Spirit in Christ’s life shows how God can, as Kasper describes it, “carry into effect his freedom-in-love in an historical manner.”⁶⁹ Not only does the Spirit mediate the love between Father and Son through Jesus, but also mediates this love into history ‘for us’ and for our salvation. The Spirit shows that God desires active human participation in the final goal of his divine love. For this reason, in the Spirit, God is kenotically ‘freeing God’s self’ to make space for Jesus’ fully human participation in God’s trinitarian life.⁷⁰ Jesus Christ’s historically mediated, humanly expressed freedom-in-love is united with and assumed by the *Logos* of God to become part of God’s relational life of love.

It is worth noting Kasper’s language for the Spirit’s action in the Incarnation: the Spirit is the power within God which *impels* God freely and out of love to go beyond God’s

⁶⁶ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 237.

⁶⁷ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 238.

⁶⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 238.

⁶⁹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 238.

⁷⁰ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 238.

self to be united with what is other than God.⁷¹ In that movement outwards, God draws or attracts creation into divine love while respecting creaturely freedom to respond. The event of the Incarnation is impelled by the Spirit, the effusive overflow of divine love, who seeks to bring creation into the 'communion of essence' of the Father and Son's overflowing mutual love. This love incorporates the historical expressions of love of Jesus and constitutes his ecclesial body, the Church.

Kasper's christology rejects the type of scholastic theology that cannot make space for pneumatological interpretations of the Incarnation as God's impelled love, and the distinct roles of each of the divine persons of the Trinity in this salvific event in history. For Kasper, the Incarnation is an act of divine freedom-in-love, involving each of the divine persons who are experienced in history according to their creative, redeeming and sanctifying roles. He considers the metaphysical starting point of scholasticism and the Latin tradition it came to represent, as privileging the unity or sameness of the divine essence, and thus each 'person' of the Trinity, more than the unique, yet inter-dependent Trinitarian persons. This latter understanding is attributed more often to Eastern theology. Scholasticism came to privilege the action of the *Logos*, rather than the Spirit, in the union of the human and divine in Jesus. In continuity with the traditions of early patristic theology, Kasper seeks to redress this imbalance.

Patristic theology spoke of the 'unction' or anointing of Jesus Christ by the Spirit, and scholastic theology spoke of the *gratia unionis* which involved bestowal of the gifts of the Spirit on Jesus at the Incarnation as a consequence of his *Logos* identity. In scholastic theology the grace of union was thus attributed to the *Logos* not the *Pneuma*. To assist in understanding the scholastic approach, Kasper writes:

[T]he *Logos* who, through his hypostatic union with human nature, endows this in the substantial order and, as it were, interpenetrates it like an ointment with its perfume

⁷¹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 238. (Italics mine) Kasper uses the German verb *drängen* which can be translated as impel, urge, push, press, thrust, forge. These verbs express a powerful and dynamic, not static and lifeless, understanding of God as Spirit.

(*perichoresis*). Through this interpenetration, Jesus' humanity is, in the words of many of the Fathers, actually divinized, without detriment to its own intrinsic reality.⁷²

In this traditional theology, the hypostatic union of the *Logos* with humanity is the cause of Jesus' life being gifted by the Spirit. However, Kasper contests this theology, arguing that it must be "freed from its one-sidedness."⁷³ Instead, he sees the Spirit as the pre-condition for the hypostatic union. In other words, if the *Logos* is the cause of the divinisation of Jesus' humanity through the Spirit, little room can be found for conceptualising the inclusion of Jesus' relationality and his consciousness of his personal mission in the inner life of the Trinity. A consequence of this scholastic theology is that God's incarnation in Jesus elevates his divinity and devalues his unique humanity in the work of God's salvation. This one-sided christology, Kasper argues, is inconsistent with the claim of Chalcedon that the fullness of Jesus' divinity and humanity *together* mediate God's salvation.

Kasper shows that a pneumatologically interpreted christology, on the other hand, has its foundations in the Gospels. He writes: "Scripture sees the Spirit at work at all stages of Jesus' life."⁷⁴ This includes his conception, baptism, ministry, self-offering on the Cross and his resurrection. Kasper states: "[T]he Spirit is ... the medium in which God graciously acts in and through Jesus Christ and in which Jesus Christ by willing obedience is the response in personal form."⁷⁵ Because Jesus is anointed by the Spirit, he is the Son of God, not vice versa. Kasper says explicitly that Jesus is "the Son of God because he is a Spirit-creation."⁷⁶

Kasper's work expands on, but also challenges, the work of Tübinger Matthias Joseph Scheeben (1835-1888). Scheeben studied at the Gregorian University in Rome under Carlo Passaglia and Giovanni Perrone from 1852 to 1859. Piet Schoonenberg points out that despite Scheeben's desire to renew pneumatology for nineteenth century theology he still insisted that

⁷² Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 238.

⁷³ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 239. The original German word Kasper uses for 'freed' is *befreien* which can also be translated as 'loosened' or 'unknotted.'

⁷⁴ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 239.

⁷⁵ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 239.

⁷⁶ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 239.

“the anointing which totally penetrates in Jesus’ humanity and sanctifies it substantially, is not that of the Spirit but that of the Logos.”⁷⁷ Kasper reverses this understanding.

By way of summary, three points can now be made. First, Kasper insists that the Incarnation is not in the first place the consequence of Jesus’ unity with the *Logos* through the hypostatic union but, instead, presupposes the Spirit’s operation on Jesus’ humanity. This operation of the Spirit, Kasper writes, “sanctified [or anointed] the man Jesus in such a way as to enable him, by free obedience and dedication, to be the incarnate response to God’s self-communication.”⁷⁸ A pneumatological understanding of the Incarnation reveals the different and unique functions of the Trinitarian persons and shows the Spirit’s role in sanctifying or divinising Jesus’ humanity.

Second, Kasper sees the Spirit’s action in Jesus’ life in the space it creates for loving encounters, both with God and others. This Spirit-filled humanity is the ‘mould and receptacle’ for God’s self-communication that enables the human Jesus to respond to this divine self-communication in loving freedom:

By wholly filling Jesus’ humanity, the Spirit endows it with the openness by which it can freely and wholly constitute a mould and receptacle for God’s self-communication. The sanctification of Jesus by the Spirit and his gifts is, therefore, in the second place, not merely an adventitious consequence of the sanctification of the *Logos* through the hypostatic union, but its presupposition. The Spirit is thus in person God’s love as freedom, and the creative principle which sanctifies the man Jesus in such a way as to enable him, by free obedience and dedication, to be the incarnate response to God’s self-communication.⁷⁹

The Spirit enables the possibility for creative human partnership with God. This understanding of the role of the Spirit gives christology a more historically grounded and universally accessible foundation. As noted, this foundation was lost in the speculative work of scholasticism. Scholasticism understood the Spirit’s action in Jesus’ life to be a result, not the pre-supposition, of the work of the *Logos*. The *Logos* embraced Jesus’ humanity, freeing the Spirit’s gifts into history. According to Kasper, scholasticism depreciates the integrity of

⁷⁷ See Piet Schoonenberg, “Spirit Christology and Logos Christology,” *Bijdragen, International Journal in Philosophy and Theology*, no. 38 (1977): 357.

⁷⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 239.

⁷⁹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 239.

Christ's humanity in its absolute uniqueness, freedom and unfathomableness. Kasper's pneumatological christology understands the Trinity as mission: God actively, in the Spirit, goes beyond the mutual love of Father and Son to include and redeem all of creation through human partnership. The self-communication of God, that is, the *Logos* of God, is fully known in the Spirit-filled free response of love communicated in and through the humanity of Jesus. Thus, Jesus' humanity can never be divorced from his divinity. In the humanity of Christ resides the fullness of the Spirit. In the Spirit, Jesus is the Christ. In the Spirit, the human Jesus is the Son of God. In the Spirit, Jesus is the *Logos* of God.

A third point can also be made. The pneumatological foundation for Kasper's christology is God's self-communication in the Spirit, as well as through the Son. Kasper understands the Spirit as God's desire for creaturely participation in the mediation of God's self-communication as freedom-in-love in history. He writes:

The Father communicates himself in love to the Son, in the Spirit this love is aware of its freedom; hence, in the Spirit, this love has the possibility of communicating itself outside the Trinity. In the Spirit, of course, an inverse movement also occurs. The creature filled with God's Spirit becomes in freedom an historical figure through which the Son gives himself to the Father. In this all-consuming dedication to the point of death, the Spirit as it were becomes free; he is released from his particular historical figure, and consequently Jesus' death and resurrection mediate the coming of the Spirit (cf Jn 16,7;20.22). And thus Jesus Christ, who in the Spirit is in person the mediator between God and man, becomes in the Spirit the universal mediator of salvation.⁸⁰

In and through the Spirit, the Incarnation of the Word communicates the effusive relationship of freedom-in-love between the Father and Son into history.⁸¹ This love is oriented to include all creation in its embrace without detriment to the freedom and unique identity of each creature.

Kasper's pneumatological christology confirms that Jesus' humanity is the foundation for our salvation. For Kasper, this understanding is made possible "by interpreting [Jesus' humanity] as God's love made man for us and permanently present for us in the Spirit."⁸²

⁸⁰ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 240.

⁸¹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 240.

⁸² Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 241.

Such a christology envisages Jesus as the source of our true humanity – gift of God's Spirit – and does not reduce Jesus to an example of a good person. Kasper writes: "Jesus is not merely an exemplar of man filled with the Spirit, but the principle of our endowment with grace."⁸³

Kasper understands the work of the *Logos* and the *Pneuma* in the Incarnation as reciprocal. They do not overshadow each other in their work of salvation. Jesus' particular Spirit-filled human mission was also his divine mission of revealing the *Logos* of God. The Spirit breathed love on Jesus. The Spirit continued to breathe on the fledgling church at Pentecost. Today it continues to breathe love on the Church. Thus, the Spirit furthers the ongoing actualisation of God's Reign. The experience of the fullness of the power of the Spirit at Pentecost continues to inspire courageous, whole-hearted, life-long decisions and commitments. Importantly, according to Kasper, the radical life decisions and commitments of Jesus' followers are not private matters. They had, and continue to have, "universal and public claim" on the lives of disciples.⁸⁴ In short, Jesus' post-Easter followers experienced themselves as 'sent' by the Spirit of Jesus 'on mission' for the Reign of God's freedom-in-love.

Thus, according to Kasper, the universal, creative and re-creative operation of the Spirit is not only revealed in its fullness in a unique, unsurpassable way in the life and destiny of Jesus Christ. The Spirit's creative work continues. The Spirit is "the power of the future who guides everything for good ... [and who] directs and impels the creation in travail and with sighs towards its eschatological goal."⁸⁵ The creative and redemptive power of the Spirit, attested to in both the Old and New Testaments, continues to thrust history into a future of

⁸³ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 241.

⁸⁴ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 241.

⁸⁵ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 244. Kasper echoes this understanding in "Cristologia e Pneumatologia," 127. Here he writes that "in the totality of Jesus' public life, in his living, dying and rising, in his person and his work, it is always the Spirit who leads to the eschatological fulfillment." (Original text: *[I]n tutta la vita pubblica di Gesù, nel suo vivere, morire e risorgere, nella sua persona ed opera, è sempre lo Spirito che conduce al compimento escatologico.*)

hope and promise. The creative, concrete, and relational vision of Kasper's theology of the Spirit is eloquently expressed:

The Spirit is in principle at work everywhere there is life and where life comes into existence. He is operative in the first place in the creation. It is the Spirit who according to the interpretation of the Fathers 'was moving over the face of the waters' (Gen 1.2) and makes a cosmos out of chaos.... The Spirit of God is not only at work in nature, however, but also in civilisation, in agriculture, architecture, jurisprudence and politics; all human wisdom is a gift of God's Spirit. He 'comes upon' particular human beings and makes them instruments of God's plan. The Spirit is, as it were, the sphere in which such persons moved by him are placed.⁸⁶

For Kasper, the identity of God's 'newness' breathed by Jesus Christ in the Spirit is linked to the creative, life-giving mission of the Spirit in the Incarnation. Kasper writes that Jesus is "the goal and culmination of the presence and operation of the Spirit [and] the starting point for the sending, the mission, of the Spirit."⁸⁷ The Spirit, and thus the Church at the service of the Spirit's mission, beckons creation toward its final fulfilment, the Reign of God, which is, in person, Jesus the Christ. The Spirit as 'Lord and giver of Life,' reveals the truth of history, includes history and transforms history with human cooperation. Thus, Kasper can conclude: "[H]ardly any other term or any other reality could express the universality of God's action equally well as the word *pneuma*."⁸⁸

The Spirit in the Life of the Trinity

Kasper connects the Christian tradition's developing understanding of the saving nature of the Spirit in the life and destiny of Jesus Christ with the history of theological reflection on the nature of the immanent Trinity. He notes that Western theology typically begins with consideration of the one divine essence that all persons of the Trinity share and which the Spirit externalises in history. Eastern theology, on the other hand, begins with consideration of the Father as source of divinity, from whom both Son and Spirit proceed. This theology emphasises the uniqueness and saving role of each of the Trinitarian persons. In

⁸⁶ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 243.

⁸⁷ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 243.

⁸⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 244.

the West, the Spirit came to be understood as the more inactive divine third person who brings to completion the mutual love between Father and Son, but often does not seem to have its own personal identity. The Spirit closes the circle of love, so to speak, with the result, Kasper writes, that Trinitarian “operation *ad extra* is in this view common to all three divine persons.”⁸⁹ In the East, on the other hand, theology generally emphasises the more active personhood of the Spirit who, Kasper explains, is understood as “the excess, the overflow of the love manifest in the Son ... the revelation of the very being of the Son, just as the Son reveals the very being of the Father ... the Spirit is, as it were, God’s outermost and uttermost.”⁹⁰ Kasper notes that the extreme of the Eastern emphasis could result in the Spirit being understood as what is innermost and inward-turned in God and therefore, at the extreme of speculative thought, the most unnecessary and irrelevant of the Trinitarian persons in the history of creation and salvation. However, at its best, the Eastern emphasis enables understanding of each of the Trinitarian persons to be developed from the perspective of their distinct, but essentially inter-connected, *ad extra* identities and functions. Kasper summarises the dialectic between the two theological approaches: the Western emphasis safeguards the unity and essential intimacy of the three divine persons; the Eastern emphasis preserves the importance of their diversity and distinctiveness.

Kasper seeks mutual re-reception of both Eastern and Western positions for the benefit of the whole Christian tradition. He argues that both emphases are needed for enrichment of the Church’s ongoing story of the Spirit’s creative and saving work. His pneumatological christology highlights the danger of extreme positions in both Eastern and Western trinitarian thought and the implications for ecclesiology. One danger of the Eastern extreme is separation of the work of the Spirit from the Son. Such separation leads to an ecclesiology that detaches the identity and role of the church from the realities of the world. On the other hand, a

⁸⁹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 245.

⁹⁰ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 246.

Western extreme can too closely tie the work of the Spirit with the Son such that the church and its mission become rooted in worldly powers and institutions. For Kasper, these extremes represent unbalanced trinitarianism, either as pneumatocentrism or christocentrism.⁹¹ His Spirit-christology proposes a theological rebalancing that enables the mission and ministry of the Church greater freedom in response to the creative and saving work of the Spirit in the Son. It enables the development of a theology of the Spirit that prevents the ongoing mission and ministry of Christ through the Church from being divorced from, or uncritically tied to, the concerns and power dynamics of the world.

Participation in the Mission of Christ in and through the Spirit

Kasper's emphasis on the centrality of the identity and function of the Spirit in mediating both the particular and universal saving power of Christ leads him to describe the so-called three 'offices' or public ministries of Christ as ways through which the Spirit brings about the "abiding presence and significance of Jesus Christ in history."⁹² The Spirit works to bring about creaturely participation in Christ's ever-new prophetic truth, sacrificial self-offering and diaconal service in history.⁹³ These modes of Spirit-filled participation in Christ are classically referred to as Jesus' prophetic, priestly and kingly ministries or 'offices.'

⁹¹ See Philip J Rosato, "Between Christocentrism and Pneumatocentrism: An Interpretation of Johann Adam Möhler's Ecclesiology," *The Heythrop Journal* 19, no. 1 (1978): 47-8. In his study of the ecclesiology of Möhler and its influence on theologians such as Kasper, Rosato explains: "[T]he danger of a christocentric ecclesiology is that it tends for the sake of Christian continuity and visibility to 'incorporate' Christ in the Church's social structures, traditions and institutions. Christocentrism leads easily to institutional centralization. Pneumatocentrism reacts against this one-sided stress on conformity and rigidity by emphasising the Spirit's similar yet unique direction of individuals in the community. The presence of the Spirit insures the historical development of the Church by challenging it to go beyond itself, reform its structures and head towards an as yet uncharted future. An enthusiasm without form, however, can lead to individualism. This is precisely the dilemma which faces the Catholic Church today as traditionalists lament the disappearance of previously distinctive Catholic formulations and customs while progressives press on towards more non-judicial, ecumenical and charismatic expressions of Catholicism. Möhler once expressed the difficulty with the two extremes when he commented that both are in the end egoistic. In the case of individualism the harmonious continuity of the Church is impaired; in that of centralization, its radical freedom."

⁹² Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 247. See also Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church* (London: SCM Press, 1989), 85-91. Here Kasper expands on the pneumatological and soteriological meaning of participation in the three offices of Christ.

⁹³ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 247.

First, Kasper addresses the Spirit's role in the prophetic mission of Christ. He points out that the Gospels recognise Jesus as source of hope. He is the light of the world in person, and opponent of all that is false and inhumane: "[I]n him the truth about God, man and the world has definitively become manifest ... through him the meaning of existence has been definitively disclosed."⁹⁴ The Spirit's prophetic role, Kasper writes, is "to recall Christ's words and works and, by bringing them to remembrance, to keep them present [and at the same time] to declare the new things that are to come."⁹⁵ In the Spirit, the truth of Christ unfolds, and cannot be summed up, contained or aligned with any particular human work or agenda. Christ's truth, in the Spirit, can only be experienced in a "living and prophetic way."⁹⁶ The mission of the Spirit is to mediate Jesus Christ, the truth and hope of God's freedom-in-love, concretely in history. This is the Spirit-inspired prophetic 'office' of Christ.

Second, Kasper shows the Spirit's role in the priestly mission of Christ. The mission of God's Spirit is to protect, nurture and advocate for life. Scripture attests to the experience of God as source and fountain of life. The ultimate example is the experience of Jesus' death and resurrection. The Spirit enables loving self-sacrifice that brings life and hope to the world and enables our creaturely communion with God. "So it is in the Spirit," writes Kasper, "that the realisation of the new humanity becomes possible."⁹⁷ God's love, in the Spirit, is known in Jesus Christ's self-emptying or kenotic love that freely and lovingly affirms and brings about the flourishing of life. This is the Spirit-inspired priestly 'office' of Christ.

Third, Kasper considers the Spirit's role in the kingly mission of Christ. He points out that "life and salvation are not purely private matters, but have a public and to that extent, political dimension."⁹⁸ Good leadership and governance enable life to flourish, justice to flow and peace to prevail. In the Old Testament, God is imaged as both king and shepherd,

⁹⁴ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 248.

⁹⁵ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 248.

⁹⁶ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 248.

⁹⁷ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 251.

⁹⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 251.

protector of his people and the one who leads them toward life in abundance. The Gospels present Jesus' style of leadership as incarnated mercy. His style is contrasted with that of the religious and political leadership of his time which oppressed and marginalised the weakest and most vulnerable. Kasper writes: "Christ's rule is ultimately at the service of God ... Christ's royal rule is marked by the two basic motives which characterise his whole being and work: dedication to God and service of human beings."⁹⁹ The Way of Christ, in the Spirit, is the way of diaconal or servant leadership. It is not the way of sovereign rule, or of human or worldly power. Instead, the Spirit works through the power of relational 'persons' who go out of themselves, stand in solidarity with those who suffer, are dedicated to God and desire to be of service to creation. Jesus' mission was directed to the victims of life and to the conversion of those who deny or destroy life. For Kasper, the saints "are the practical interpretation of Christ's will for any particular period."¹⁰⁰ They demonstrate the Spirit-inspired kingly 'office' of Christ.

Living the Truth (prophetic), the Life (priestly) and the Way (kingly) of Christ are concrete paths for Christian mission and ministry in the Spirit. According to Kasper, these 'offices' have given rise, and will continue to give rise, to new historical ecclesial traditions. He holds that this is possible because of the free activity of the Spirit. Salvation, in the Spirit, comes from living the way, the truth, the life of Christ. The universal power of the Spirit of God in creation and history is discerned especially wherever human beings "take upon themselves the risk of their existence, recognise the obligation to seek for truth and with evident seriousness accept responsibility, especially ... where they abandon self and open themselves in love to God and their neighbour."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 252.

¹⁰⁰ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 254.

¹⁰¹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 255. Kasper deepens this idea in Kasper, *Mercy*, 155. Here he writes of leadership in terms of a spirituality of "standing up for others and taking their place" to alleviate their suffering and thus transform the conditions that cause it.

Kasper summarises the pneumatological foundation of the relationship between the 'content' for salvation (the resurrected Jesus), the unique personal mission of Jesus of Nazareth, and the universal saving power of his work as Spirit-filled 'Christ,' priest, prophet and king, for the life of the Church:

There is only one instance in history where the Spirit [of truth, life and service] found acceptance in a unique way, totally, undistorted and untarnished – in Jesus Christ. In the power of the Spirit he was wholly a mould and receptacle for God's self-communication through the Logos. He is this in an utterly unique way, so that he is God's love, the meaning of all reality, in person. The universal historical activity of the Spirit therefore reached its goal in him in a way that is ultimate. Light falls from Jesus Christ on the rest of history; Jesus Christ is for the Christian the measure and criterion for the discernment of spirits. Only through him and in him is it possible to share in the complete fullness of the Spirit.¹⁰²

The Spirit continues to seek acceptance in history through human engagement in the priestly, prophetic and kingly offices of Christ. Wherever and whenever human partners participate in these offices by nurturing the conditions for the emergence of truth, life and service, the power of the Spirit is made manifest in history.

The Potential and Promise of Spirit Christology

In the new introduction to the 2011 edition of *Jesus the Christ* Kasper states that in re-appropriating christological tradition for contemporary theology, his goal is not "a repetition of old and sterile material ... [but] an unrelentingly profound and systematic reflection on the principal themes of tradition and of novel contemporary approaches."¹⁰³ The culmination of this project is Kasper's pneumatological understanding of Jesus Christ who, in the Spirit, is mediator between God and humanity.

¹⁰² Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 255.

¹⁰³ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, xxiv. As early as 1967, Kasper was already engaged in the task of assisting the Church's ongoing reception of a dynamic and historically oriented interpretation of Scripture and Tradition. See Walter Kasper, "The Relationship between Gospel and Dogma: An Historical Approach," *Concilium* 1, no. 3 (1967): 73. Here Kasper writes: "[T]he word 'gospel' has always worked in the Church's history as dynamite ... it is an historical concept that points to the future, a prophetic power which, instead of closing the future, opens it up. It is always a living Gospel." In relation to a dogma or a formula of faith Kasper notes that such an expression of tradition "must be understood in the light of its age, chronologically, intellectually and theologically." *Ibid.*, 75.

Thirty years after the original publication of his work Kasper says that he not only remains convinced of the value of pneumatological christology, he also intentionally proposes the term ‘Spirit-christology’ to describe his work. His decision to fully embrace the term ‘Spirit-christology’ in the new introduction to *Jesus the Christ* comes after thorough engagement with the history of both the ambiguity and promise of the term in the history of Christianity.¹⁰⁴ Kasper says that he is convinced that the term points to a broad and inclusive appreciation of both the particularity and universality of God’s creative and saving love in history:

A Christology in a pneumatological perspective is ... what best enables us to combine both the uniqueness and the universality of Jesus Christ. It can show how the Spirit, operative in Christ in his fulness, is at work in varying degrees everywhere in the history of mankind, and also shows how Jesus Christ is the goal and the head of all humanity. The Body of Christ, the Church, is greater and wider than the institutional boundaries of the Church; it has existed since the beginning of the world and to it belong all who allow themselves to be led by Christ’s Spirit in faith, hope and love.¹⁰⁵

The Spirit accomplishes Christ’s work of bringing all things to their eschatological fulfilment. Since the Spirit brings to humankind the possibility of direct encounter with the truth, life and service of Jesus Christ, christology understood pneumatologically recognises the Spirit at work in the space opened up by divine-human encounter. The Church, as the Body of Christ, lives by the power of the Spirit when it opens space for human encounter with Jesus Christ.

Spirit-christology’s potential lies in its capacity to hold in creative tension both the uniqueness of the Christ event and its universal saving significance within and, as importantly, beyond ecclesial borders. Thus, Kasper’s Spirit-christology opens up creative possibilities for inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue. Dialogue partners are an analogy of

¹⁰⁴ Rosato, “Spirit Christology: Ambiguity and Promise,” 423-49. I have drawn on the title of Rosato’s article which refers to his analysis of the history of Spirit-christology within the Christian tradition, especially with regard to the dangers of adoptionism. Rosato argues that Kasper is very aware of the influence of the Ebionite tendency to devalue the identity of the Son in the trinitarian relationship to understand Jesus as a human creature who becomes divinised by the Spirit. Rosato points out that Kasper draws the best from this movement: its affirmation of the biblical, eschatological and soteriological promise of the *pneuma-sarx* Christology of the early Church is combined with the centrality of the resurrection of Jesus in the Spirit as the lens through which Jesus’ eternal divine identity manifests itself.

¹⁰⁵ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 256.

the distinctive yet united relations of the trinitarian persons. Furthermore, Kasper claims that Spirit-christology leads to a renewed Catholic ecclesiology that can “create room for the multiplicity and freedom of charismata [spiritual gifts] in the Church and for the charismatic dimension of the Church in general.”¹⁰⁶ The Spirit creates unity without eradicating differences. Kasper’s work affirms that the Church must allow itself to be led by the Spirit.¹⁰⁷ It is not a closed system. The Church’s mission is to mediate the saving work of Jesus Christ through ecclesial practices and traditions that promote truth, life and service to the world, and which are also open to engagement with difference.

Kasper’s Spirit-christology contributes to renewal of trinitarian theology. Such renewal begins from reflection on the meaning of Christ’s ongoing resurrection in the Spirit. “The meaning of Spirit-christology,” Kasper writes, “appears above all in the way it fits christology into the trinitarian mystery of one God in three persons and three persons in one God.”¹⁰⁸ Kasper’s Spirit-christology creatively interprets the unity-in-difference between humanity and God that Jesus Christ mediates. This mediation invites creaturely participation in actions of love and mercy. For Kasper, the ongoing life and destiny of Jesus Christ in the mission of the Church is the incessant work of the Spirit. The Spirit is the communication, in person, of both inner-trinitarian relations and the human-divine communication of freedom and love of Jesus Christ.

Kasper affirms the importance of Spirit christology: “[It] can very easily maintain the relationship between creation and salvation, and hence the universal meaning of Christ.”¹⁰⁹ In his 2003 publication, *Christology and Pneumatology*, Kasper demonstrates that he continues to unlock the potential of Spirit-christology:

¹⁰⁶ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, xvii.

¹⁰⁷ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, xvi.

¹⁰⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, xvii.

¹⁰⁹ Walter Kasper, “Geest-Christus-Kerk,” 54. (Original text: *[P]neuma-christologie kan heel gemakkelijk het verband tussen schepping en verlossing en daarmee de universele betekenis van Christus bewaren.*)

It is no longer a matter only of the relationship between Christ and Spirit in the third verse of the Creed, that is, the application of the work of salvation effected by Christ on the cross and through the resurrection, but of the role of the Spirit in the economy proper of Christ, of which the second verse of the Creed talks, and the role of the Spirit in the reality of creation and in God's economy in general, spoken of in the first verse of the Creed. We must ask ourselves about the fundamental relationship of christology and pneumatology.¹¹⁰

Understanding this relationship means that christology is not simply the source of pneumatology, but as we have seen, its fruit.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that, for Kasper, understanding Chalcedon's foundational christological formula is dependent on pneumatology. His work shows the inter-connection between the mission of the Holy Spirit and the identity of the *Logos* in and through the life and destiny of Jesus Christ. In the human Jesus, the Spirit mediates the relationality of love that is God. The Spirit, working in and through creaturely freedom and works of love, enables the ongoing revelation of God in history. Kasper concludes that the exercise of Jesus' personal freedom and consciousness is the ground of the hypostatic union and not its consequence.

Kasper's pneumatological christology deeply values history, inter-personal relationship and personal agency as expressions and contexts for human flourishing and participation in the life of God. For Kasper, the Spirit's creative and saving work in Jesus Christ is never-ending. In the Spirit, the God-human unity that releases God's future into history is concretely known in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, in affirming history and relationality as contexts for active participation in bringing about God's dynamic and unpredictable future, his Spirit-christology is firmly future-oriented.

¹¹⁰ Kasper, "Cristologia e Pneumatologia," 125. (Original text: *Non si tratta più soltanto del rapporto fra Cristo e Spirito nel terzo capitolo del Credo, cioè nell' applicazione della salvezza operata da Cristo sulla croce e tramite la risurrezione, ma si tratta e del ruolo dello Spirito nell'economia stessa d Cristo, di cui parla il secondo capitolo del Credo, e del ruolo dello Spirito nella realtà della creazione e nell'economia di Dio in generale, di cui parla il primo capitolo del Credo. Dobbiamo interrogarci sul rapporto fondamentale fra cristologia e pneumatologia.*)

Kasper's Spirit-christology describes the Spirit at work in human actions of freedom and love which constantly bring about the newness of Jesus Christ in history. In this way the Spirit 'directs' history. The Spirit's work of creation and historical transformation eternally culminates and is concretely actualised in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The life and destiny of Jesus Christ are central to understanding the person and work of the Spirit in its fullness.

In the Spirit, Jesus communicates God's self as *Logos* in and through his own unique human history. Importantly, Kasper's understanding of Christ's unity with God does not dissolve human-divine difference, but profoundly affirms it. In Kasper's Spirit-christology Jesus' humanity is united with his divinity through his dialogical relationship with the Father. Jesus' identity is not reduced to the sameness of his 'substance' with the Father, but to the uniqueness of his dynamic relationship 'in the Spirit' lived out through personal and total commitment to God's 'mission.' In the Spirit, the communion of love between the Father and the Son, revealed in Jesus Christ, opens to include all and bring all things to their eschatological fulfilment.

Kasper's pneumatological foundations for understanding Christ's saving mission as priest, prophet and king have been identified. The Spirit continues to invite human participation in Christ's three-fold priestly, prophetic and kingly ministry to the world. Through the sacrament of baptism, the Spirit's anointing of Christ to these saving 'offices' is permanently available. The life and destiny of Jesus shows the Spirit as source of spiritual gifts that enable the coming of God's kingdom in its fullness. The Spirit provides the Church with the gifts needed to incarnate Jesus' mission of mediating the self-communicating freedom-in-love of God. The Spirit goes ahead of Christ, and ahead of the Church, creating conditions for his person and work to become concrete in history.

Kasper's Spirit-christology is profoundly incarnational. The Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and Son propelled into history. The Spirit brings about the incarnation of the

Logos of God through the humanity of Jesus. Jesus' humanity, and our own, is fruit of the work of the Spirit. This humanity, and our own, is embraced by the *Logos* of God and participates in the eternal life of the Trinity. Kasper shows that, in the Spirit, the Incarnation is not only a past event, but one that continually draws us into the future. In the Spirit, we continue to meet Jesus Christ, the human person who mediates the *Logos* in ever-new ways in history.

The Spirit provides the Church with all that is needed to discern and respond to God's ongoing revelation in history. Experience of the creative, sustaining and unitive power of the Spirit points to the nature of the life of God, of which the Church is called to be a sacrament. In short, Kasper's pneumatology, developed in *Jesus the Christ*, highlights the identity and role of the Spirit as the 'transcendental possibility' for what is innermost in God to be experienced 'for us' through the priestly, prophetic and kingly offices of Jesus Christ. This fundamental insight is deepened in his second major theological work: *The God of Jesus Christ*. It is to this work we now turn.

Chapter 3: The Holy Spirit in Kasper's Trinitarian theology – *The God of Jesus Christ*

*According to Christian thought,
the ultimate reality is conceivable not in terms
of a self-subsistent substance
but of a person who is fulfilled
only in a selfless relationality
of giving and receiving.
It could also be said that the meaning of being,
from the Christian point of view,
is love.¹*

*Hope ... gives us wings and encourages us
to take responsibility
for our own
and our common
historical future.²*

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to deepen understanding of Kasper's pneumatology by analysing the second work in his major trilogy: *The God of Jesus Christ*, first published in German in 1982.³ The German edition was republished in 2008 with an extensive new introduction in which Kasper expresses the hope that a re-reading of the original work will be valuable "in the light of the enormous way the [God] question has been formulated over the last 25 years."⁴ Kasper notes that "*The God of Jesus Christ* builds on that which was set out in more detail in *Jesus the Christ*, that the core of Jesus' ministry and preaching was God and the Kingdom of God."⁵ *The God of Jesus Christ* expands on Kasper's christology: the God of Jesus Christ is historically and definitively revealed in the spirit-filled life and destiny of

¹ Walter Kasper, *Transcending All Understanding: The Meaning of Christian Faith Today* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 98.

² Walter Kasper, "Religion und die Zukunft des Menschen," *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 36, no. Mai-Juni (2007): 312. (Original text: *So ermutigt und beflügelt die Hoffnung (auf die absolute Zukunft) dazu, Verantwortung für die eigene wie für die gemeinsame geschichtliche Zukunft zu übernehmen.*)

³ *Der Gott Jesu Christi* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1982).

⁴ Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, new ed. (London: T&T Clark International, 2012), ix. All references are from this edition. The new introduction is structured in four sections: (1) 'The place and relevance of the doctrine of God' (2) 'On the relationship between faith and reason' (3) 'Encounter with the world of religions' (4) 'The doctrine of the Trinity as grammar and sum of theology.'

⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, x.

Jesus. Jesus is the fulfilment of God's self-revelation and of God's promise of fidelity to Moses, central to the prophetic tradition of the Bible. Kasper reaffirms his christological foundation in *The God of Jesus Christ*: "[I]n his person [Jesus] is the definitive interpretation of the will and being of God. In him God has entered history once and for all."⁶

This chapter begins by examining Kasper's Spirit, or *kenosis*, christology as a development of *logos* christology, and as foundation for his pneumatological trinitarian theology. In *The God of Jesus Christ*, Kasper introduces the term 'kenosis' to develop his Spirit-christology. Second, I will then explore Kasper's biblical theology of the Holy Spirit. Third, the chapter will follow Kasper's foundations for understanding the Spirit as "person" and personal. Fourth, I will examine the connection Kasper makes between the Spirit and Trinitarian relations more generally. Finally, the chapter will explore the link Kasper makes between the Spirit and incorporation of creatures into the trinitarian life of God's communion.

The God of Jesus Christ is structured in three parts: (1) The God Question Today, (2) The Message about the God of Jesus Christ and (3) The Trinitarian Mystery of God. I will focus on the second and third sections, as well as the introduction to the new edition. In these sections we find Kasper's understanding of the person and work of the Spirit in the context of *kenosis* christology, a deepening of the Spirit-christology developed in *Jesus the Christ*. *Kenosis* christology is foundational for Kasper's trinitarian theology. The Spirit is God's self-revelation as freedom-in-love overflowing into history.

In his 1967 article "Gott in der Geschichte" (God in History), Kasper lays out the foundations of the pneumatology expanded on in *The God of Jesus Christ*. In this article he

⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 171. For a recent example of Kasper returning specifically to this theme see Walter Kasper, "The Timeliness of Speaking of God," in *Address delivered at the Harvard Catholic Chaplaincy Convention* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University, 2009), 8, accessed March 19, 2014. <http://www.stpaulparish.org/St%20John%2BHarvard%2BYale-Lecture.pdf>. Here Kasper sees the will and being of God, love, enfleshed in the person of Jesus Christ: "In Jesus Christ [God] entered into our history, becoming frail flesh (John 1:14) ... he can feel with us (Heb 4: 15) and can even suffer the experience of being forsaken by God (Mk 5:34). He has shone as a benevolent and merciful God upon the countenance of Christ ... [Jesus] proclaims the God who steps down, who is for and with the sinners, who goes out to seek the lost sheep and takes it upon his shoulder (Mt 18: 12-14), the God who goes on the cross to a new beginning and the hope for new life."

writes of the active, hope-creating power of the Spirit in history: “Throughout history God is at work in the critical moments, so humans can put their trust for the future in him.”⁷ This idea is echoed in *Faith and the Future*, published in German in 1982, four years before *The God of Jesus Christ*. Here Kasper devotes a full chapter to bringing the concepts of ‘faith’ and ‘future’ together. He argues that “in love present and future are interconnected, for love provides what it promises.” Kasper concludes that “this presence of God’s future and his love the Bible calls the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit.”⁸

The Spirit and *Kenosis* Christology

The God of Jesus Christ presents an extended reflection on the role of the Spirit in incorporating the present into God’s future.⁹ The link Kasper develops between pneumatology and hope in this work is illustrated in a later 2007 article, “Religion and the Future of Humanity.” Here Kasper writes that the new in the Bible is a category pregnant with hope.¹⁰ He shows that the Bible breaks out of hopeless cyclical understandings of reality. Meaningless and senseless historical events, interpreted through the eyes of biblical faith, carry within them ‘hope potential’ (*Hoffnungspotentiale*). This ‘hope potential’ is the source of new beginnings and opens space for healing and future fulfilment. Thus, Kasper writes: “[T]he future belongs ... to truth, justice, love and life.”¹¹

⁷ Walter Kasper, “Gott in der Geschichte,” 139. (Original text: *[I]n der ganzen ... Geschichte ist Gott in den entscheidenden Augenblicken auf dem Plan, so daß man ihn auch für die Zukunft vertrauen kann.*)

⁸ Walter Kasper, *Faith and the Future* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 16.

⁹ See Reimund Bieringer and Mary Elsbernd, *Normativity of the Future: Reading Biblical and Other Authoritative Texts in an Eschatological Perspective* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 312. This text explores an approach for contemporary theology that holds in dynamic tension the relationship between past, present and future. It argues that a future-oriented hermeneutic is necessary to complement the emphasis the Christian tradition has placed on approaches that give pre-eminence to the normativity of the past and present in theological interpretation. An emphasis on the role of the future “in-breaking into history” is linked to the role of the Spirit who announces and concretises hope. Though the text does not explicitly cite Kasper’s theology as an example of this approach, it is clearly recognisable.

¹⁰ Kasper, “Religion und die Zukunft des Menschen,” 303. (Original text: *[D]as Neue ist in der Bibel vielmehr eine hoffnungsschwangere Kategorie.*)

¹¹ Kasper, “Religion und die Zukunft des Menschen,” 312. (Original text: *[W]ird die Zukunft (in einer geschichtlich nicht verrechenbaren Weise) der Wahrheit, der Gerechtigkeit, der Liebe, und dem Leben gehören.*)

Kasper insists that theology must have something meaningful and hope-filled to offer to a suffering world.¹² His work seeks to be in dialogue with the spiritual questions that arise from everyday experience, above all from the experience of suffering. He writes: “whereas modern theology’s partner in dialogue used to be the unenlightened believer, the partner in dialogue of any contemporary theology is suffering man who has concrete experience of the persisting situation of disaster and is therefore conscious of the weakness and finiteness of human existence.”¹³ For Kasper, theological reflection and the question of suffering go together: “[A] theology that takes the human experience of suffering as its starting point starts, therefore, not with a borderline phenomenon but with the centre and depths of human existence.”¹⁴ Perhaps Kasper’s experience of war in his formative years contributes to the

¹² Kasper deals with the theological importance of hope in many works. For example: Kasper, “Individual Salvation and Eschatological Consummation,” 21. Here Kasper provides an eloquent meditation on hope that deepens understanding of the theological work he undertakes in *The God of Jesus Christ*: “[W]hen scripture says that love lasts forever (1 Cor 13:8), this means that the works of love will also last forever, that nothing done in love can ever be lost or be done in vain. Moreover, even those acts of love which remain unacknowledged by others are ultimately and irrevocably rooted in eternal reality. The church is the sacrament, that is, the sign and instrument of salvation. The church is the instrument of hope for the world. But do people still perceive the church as a symbol of hope? Does the widespread despair people have about the future of society not apply equally to the future of the church? The church can be a sacrament of hope only if it succeeds in voicing its hope clearly and unequivocally for all to hear, if it avoids succumbing to dread of the future, and if it does not fall victim to a pale and paltry form of popular humanism lacking the decisive salt of Christian faith. The world does not need a duplication of its hope; still less does it need a duplication of its despair. The church can be a convincing symbol of hope only if it truly lives the beatitudes of the sermon on the mount and if it hopes with and for those who are poor, who mourn, who renounce violence and who hunger and thirst for justice. In short, the church must stand by and stand up for those who, humanly speaking, have no reason left for hope, but who, like Abraham, may still hope against all hope (see Rom 4:18). Thus the option for the poor is essential for the eschatological testimony of the church.”

¹³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 160. See also Gustavo Gutierrez, “Two Theological Perspectives: Liberation Theology and Progressivist Theology,” in *The Emergent Gospel: Theology from the Underside of History*, edited by Sergio Torres and Virginia Fabella (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1976), 241. Though Kasper is not a liberation theologian, he echoes the intuition of Gustavo Gutierrez who writes: “[L]iberation theology’s first question cannot be ... how are we to talk about God in a world come of age, but how are we to tell people who are scarcely human that God is love and that love makes us one family. The interlocutors of liberation theology are the non-persons, the humans who are not considered human by the dominant social order.... Note the contrast between the interlocutors of progressivist and of liberation theology: the interlocutors of progressivist theology question faith; the interlocutors of liberation theology ‘share’ the same faith as their oppressors, but they do not share the same economic, social or political life.” For the *Festschrift* to celebrate Kasper’s 80th birthday, Gutierrez praised and thanked Kasper for his contribution to contemporary theology. See Gutierrez, “Tributes to Cardinal Kasper,” in *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper: Speaking the Truth in Love*, ed. Kristen M. Colberg and Robert A. Krieg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), xi. Here he pays tribute to Kasper: “At a more personal level I thank you for one of your earlier works about pluralism in theology, which inspired many of us in the beginnings of our theological efforts in Latin America.... You teach us the mercy of God that is manifest in the daily actions of Jesus and that is directed to all people and in the first instance to the poor and the socially insignificant.”

¹⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 160

power of his claim that in the light of suffering, the human person clings to hope. In the light of hope, the category of 'future' becomes meaningful. Not only do questions of God and suffering go together, but in fact, Kasper argues "the question of suffering alters the question of God."¹⁵ The theological ground of hope for those who suffer is that God identifies with their condition and redeems it. Thus, Kasper emphasises that the promise of hope is central to Christianity.

The fulfilment of God's promise to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3:6-14) that 'I am there with you' was experienced concretely through the life and destiny of Jesus Christ and continued in the breathing of the Spirit at Pentecost. For Kasper, Jesus reveals the new and specifically Christian understanding that God has entered history in a way that transcends Old Testament messianic hopes.¹⁶ God has been definitively revealed in Jesus Christ. Christ, in the Spirit, is 'God there' in person.

In the Spirit-filled life and destiny of Jesus, God's presence is revealed through his compassion and vulnerability. Thus, Kasper understands God to have completely identified with the human condition in the divine-human unity of Jesus Christ.¹⁷ In Kasper's thought, the cross of Jesus reveals the vulnerability of divine love. He writes: "God's omnipotence is completely absorbed into outward weakness; here God takes the human condition, the human destiny, upon himself, with all its consequences."¹⁸ On the cross, Kasper argues, God's being

¹⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 160.

¹⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 160.

¹⁷ Kasper expands on this idea in *Faith and the Future*, 9. Here he writes: "How then is hope possible? In other words, how does being human make sense in view of our finite nature? The conviction of the entire classical tradition is that this is only possible when there is an absolute freedom which embraces everything and affects everything, which within and beyond this finiteness keeps a "space" open for humanity, and which embraces both life and death. It is only when God is the reality that determines and embraces everything that our restless striving and searching does not issue in emptiness or in nothing; it is only then that we are not camping like a gypsy on the edge of a world ruled by pure chance, a world indifferent to our suffering."

¹⁸ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 172. See also Walter Kasper, "Das Kreuz als Offenbarung der Liebe Gottes," *Catholica* 1, no. 61 (2007): 13. Here Kasper reinforces his commitment to the centrality of *kenosis* christology for understanding the nature of relations that 'make space' for inner-trinitarian self-sacrifice, revealing God's self as being there for the other especially in the midst of weakness and suffering. Kasper writes: "The merciful God as He is revealed on the cross, is the answer to the question of theodicy. This response states: God is not remote from the suffering and the dying, the millions of tortured, martyred. God is with them and by them; he suffers with them. This statement would be misunderstood if one would understand it as glorification or

is revealed as self-giving love that identifies itself with and embraces the sufferer. Thus, he affirms that the cross of Jesus was not only the consequence of his ministry but its goal.¹⁹ In the human experience of the death and resurrection of Jesus, a new understanding of God was born. However, there was a theological shift in the early Church from a christology that highlighted the role of the Spirit in Christ's life to one that prioritised the identity of Christ as God's Son.

Kasper points out that the Son-christology that developed in the canon of the New Testament recognised the self-emptying love of God through both the incarnation and the death of Jesus. The theme of the 'pre-existence' of Jesus in the eternal life of God, and a new understanding of God who 'sends God's self' into history, emerged through reflection on Jesus' consciousness of having been sent from his Father.²⁰ Son-christology also recognised something scandalous and new: in Jesus Christ "God was revealing himself definitively and eschatologically" in a concrete and relational way.²¹ In line with Pauline christology, Kasper describes the new experience of God that Jesus Christ reveals and mediates: "God reveals his power in weakness, his omnipotence is at the same time an omnipatience or omni-suffering; his eternity is not a rigid immutability but movement, life and love that communicates itself to that which is distinct to it."²² However, for Kasper, the Son-christology of the New Testament

deification of suffering. God does not deify suffering, he redeems it by transforming it from within. He does not abolish suffering, but he transforms it in the direction of hope. The cross is indeed the way to resurrection and transfiguration. Suffering and death are not the last word. *Kenosis* christology points to the Easter christology of exaltation and transfiguration. We are, as Scripture says, redeemed towards hope (Rom 8, 20.24; 1 Peter 1.3)." (Original text: *Der sympathische Gott, wie er am Kreuz offenbar wird, ist die Antwort auf die Theodizeefrage. Diese Antwort besagt: Gott ist den Leidenden und Sterbenden, den Millionen von Gequälten, Gemarterten, Erschlagenen nicht fern. Gott ist mit ihnen und bei ihnen; er leidet mit ihnen. Diese Aussage wäre falsch verstanden, würde man sie als Verherrlichung oder Vergöttlichung des Leidens verstehen. Gott vergöttlicht das Leiden nicht, er erlöst es, indem er es von innen verwandelt. Er schafft das Leiden nicht ab, aber es verwandelt es auf Hoffnung hin. Das Kreuz ist ja der Weg zur Auferstehung und Verklärung. Leiden und Sterben sind nicht das letzte Wort. Die Kenosischristologie weist über sich hinaus zur österlichen Erhöhungs- und Verklärungs christologie. Wir sind, so sagt es die Schrift, auf Hoffnung hin erlöst (Röm 8,20.24; 1 Petr 1,3).*)

¹⁹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 172.

²⁰ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 175.

²¹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 174.

²² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 178.

finds its full meaning as *Kenosis*-christology. In the Spirit, the self-giving love of God is known as the Son whose love for the Father does not by-pass the reality of human suffering.

According to Kasper, understanding Jesus' 'oneness of being' with the Father, interpreted as Son-christology and later as *Logos* christology, needs further refinement. He asserts that these christologies correctly emphasise the inner dynamic of the relation between Father and Son revealed through Jesus' life and ministry. However, he thinks that they seem inadequate to communicate the meaning of the experience of God's *kenosis* in Jesus' death and resurrection. They neglect God's freedom and the self-emptying love experienced in the whole 'event' of the incarnation:

Does the classical *Logos*-christology adequately express the intentions of biblical theology of the Word, as these are shown to us in the Prologue of John? Can it explain why the culmination of the Prologue of John is the statement: 'The Word became flesh'? 'Flesh' designates the human person in its frailty and subjection to death. The Incarnation thus already suggests a christology of the cross and of *kenosis*, according to which in Jesus Christ God empties himself and, as it were, reveals himself in his opposite, so that God's revelation of himself is at the same time a revelation of his hiddenness. This element of self-emptying is neglected in the classical *Logos*-christology. This fact constrains us not indeed to renounce the classical solution but rather to take it a step further and deeper in the idea of self-emptying.²³

Kasper takes the classical description of Jesus Christ as 'the Word become flesh' further and deeper by showing that the idea of a God who chooses to suffer with and for creatures, can only be sustained through reflection on the nature of *kenosis*, or the self-giving love, of a trinitarian God.

In line with Origen's work of holding reflection on the nature of God's being together with God's saving relationship with history, Kasper affirms that in the life and destiny of Jesus, the 'humanness' of God made its appearance:

Origen moves beyond the idea of free acceptance [of God's suffering with the implication of God's finiteness] to that of love. If the Son had not from eternity felt compassion for our wretchedness, he would not have become man and would not have allowed himself to be crucified: 'First he suffered, then he came down. What was the suffering he accepted for us? The suffering of love.' Not only the Son but the Father as well is not simply 'impassible': he too 'suffers something of the suffering of love'. Here a solution is insinuated which has its basis in the innermost being of God himself, in his freedom in love.²⁴

²³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 188.

²⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 191. Note 124: Kasper is quoting: Origen, *Homiliae in Ezechielem* 6, 6.

Origen shows that in Jesus, both the Father and the Son freely choose suffering out of love. This does not imply the de-divinisation of God. On the contrary, the nature of God's divinity is manifested in the humanness of Jesus' freely embraced suffering on behalf of others, and in fidelity to his 'cause.' Jesus' suffering was not willed, but assumed, by God. For Kasper, God's divinity, revealed in Jesus Christ, is freedom-in-love. Jesus' death and resurrection revealed something new and dynamic about the inner life of God: God's 'being' is love and for love. Kasper describes God's nature as other-centred, vulnerable and self-limiting using the analogy of love:

Love entails a unity that does not absorb the other person but rather accepts and affirms the other precisely in his otherness and only thus establishes him in his true freedom. Love, which gives to the other not something but its very self, involves, in this very self-communication, a self-differentiation and self-limitation. The lover must take himself back because his concern is not with himself but with the other. More than this, the lover allows the other to affect him; he becomes vulnerable precisely in this love. Thus love and suffering go together. The suffering of love is not, however, a passive being-affected, but an active allowing others to affect one. Because, then, God is love he can suffer and by that very fact reveal his divinity. The self-emptying of the cross is therefore not de-divinisation of God but his eschatological glorification. The eternal intra-divine distinction of Father and Son is the theological transcendental condition for the possibility of God's self-emptying in the incarnation and on the cross. This statement is not simply a more or less interesting piece of speculation; it signifies that from eternity there is place in God for man, place for a genuine sympathy with the suffering of human beings. The Christian God, that is the God who is thought of in terms of Jesus Christ, is therefore not a God of *a-pathia*, but in the real sense of the term a God of sympathy, a God who suffers with man.²⁵

In Jesus, God is revealed as self-giving love. God freely chooses to suffer with creation out of love. For Kasper, *Kenosis*-christology deepens and elevates *Logos*-christology. *Kenosis*-christology provides the theological framework for connecting the experience of the economic trinity as God's love 'in person,' known in Jesus the Christ, with knowledge of the mystery of the relational immanent trinity. If God, in Jesus, is experienced as self-surrendering freedom-in-love in history, especially on the cross, then this experience invites theological reflection on the eternal nature of God's self as eternal freedom-in-love. Furthermore, Kasper shows the importance of pneumatology in conceptualising the nature of 'persons' and inter-subjectivity within God that *Kenosis*-christology assumes. He writes:

[K]enosis-christology points beyond itself to a christology of Easter exaltation and transfiguration, and is very closely connected to pneumatology. For according to scripture

²⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 196.

the eschatological transformation and transfiguration of the world is the work of the Spirit of God. Because according to the theological tradition the Spirit unites lover and beloved, Father and Son, in their very distinction, he is also the power that brings the world to its eschatological transfiguration and reconciliation.²⁶

The Spirit's 'personal' role in the life of God is to create space for the kind of human-divine unity that does not absorb or eliminate personal identity or freedom. The Spirit sets freedom 'free,' and in so doing, shows that God "does not act by passing over or going beyond man, but always through man and by means of his freedom."²⁷ Experience of the Spirit reveals the essence of God's nature. For Kasper, God is not a substance or 'thing' but personal freedom-in-love that creates, sustains and brings all things to their fulfilment.

Kasper's Biblical Theology of the Spirit

The pneumatological centrepiece of *The God of Jesus Christ* is the section entitled 'The Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life.' Here Kasper's foundation for a systematic theology of the Spirit, central to his christology, trinitarian theology and ecclesiology, is laid out. According to Kasper, the Spirit is God's freedom-in-love, known in creation and in history. The Spirit makes human participation in the eternal nature of God's freedom-in-love possible. While Christians may regularly profess that they believe in the Holy Spirit in creeds, Kasper is convinced that most do not recognise the Holy Spirit as central to their faith. He refers to a "forgetfulness of the Spirit" in Christian history.²⁸ He argues that theological reflection on the Spirit, compared with reflection on the Father and the Son, has been overlooked, forgotten or simply not known in the Christian tradition. Thus, he laments, the practical implications of belief in the Holy Spirit have not been generally appreciated.²⁹ Furthermore, language for the

²⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 197.

²⁷ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 197.

²⁸ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 198.

²⁹ Important practical implications of Kasper's theology of the Spirit are found in his writing on ecumenism. For example, see Walter Kasper, "The Current Situation in Ecumenical Theology," in *Biennial Conference of Catholic Ecumenical and Interfaith Commissions* (Melbourne, Australia: Published online, 2003), accessed March 3, 2015. www.cam.org.au/eic/images/stories/.../CurrentSituationinEcumenicalTheology.doc. Here Kasper writes: "The prayer 'Veni Creator Spiritus' is the ultimate answer to how to fulfil the insistence of the one Spirit to overcome the scandal of division. Only in Him are we able to implement our Lord's prayer on the eve of his death 'that all may be one' (Jn 17:22)."

experience of God as Spirit lacks precision due to the difficulty of imaging the Spirit's mystery, freedom and independence.³⁰

The intellectual context of modernity came to devalue, deny or silence meaningful theological discussion about God as Spirit. In sharp contrast, Kasper argues that the spiritual dimension of reality is not simply one among many realities of life; it is the foundation that gives meaning and direction to everything else. Contemporary thought differs from the thought of the ancient Greeks which, though dualistic, understood the world of the spirit as that which grounds existence and provides ultimate meaning. Nineteenth century German idealists, such as Goethe, Hegel and Schleiermacher, did re-discover reality as the manifestation of 'spirit.' However, the sciences and philosophies of the Enlightenment critiqued Idealism and renounced the idea of 'spirit' because it cannot be measured or quantified.³¹ After an analysis of the impact of these realities, Kasper argues that while human progress is certainly laudable, the price should not be a less hopeful world. For him, pneumatology can address the absence of a meaningful philosophical and theological framework that grounds and supports the flourishing of life.³²

As a foundation for the work of renewing of the role of pneumatology for theology and ecclesiology, Kasper points out that the ancient Hebrew and Greek languages embedded profound understandings of human experience and life meaning in the language of 'spirit.' The feminine Hebrew term *ruach*, found in the Old Testament, and the neuter Greek word *pneuma* found in the New Testament, both convey the root understanding of God breathing or God's breath - that is, the source of life itself. Aristotle and other early Greek philosophers understood the *pneuma* as the principle that animates and directs life. In the Hebrew story of creation, God's Spirit is the dynamic and creative force that brings about the extraordinary

³⁰ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 198.

³¹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 199.

³² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 200.

and the new.³³ For the Hebrew people, the Spirit of God brings forth and sustains life. Kasper shows that the Old Testament also describes the Spirit as source of wisdom and creativity in the human person. Furthermore, the Spirit was understood not merely as a vital principle of creation or the spirit of a human being, but as Yahweh's Spirit. Thus, Kasper describes the Spirit as "the creative life-giving power of God, the power that produces, sustains, rules and directs all things. The Spirit is the *Spiritus creator* that is at work throughout the whole created reality."³⁴ The Spirit is both giver and gift of life. This giver and gift of God's very self is described in Scripture as mysterious, transcendent, creative and free.

Kasper notes that biblical images of the Spirit did not emerge from special esoteric knowledge, but from reflection on human experience. The Spirit can be discerned when the new emerges and life breathes again, even in seemingly hopeless situations:

Pneumatology is therefore only possible through looking for and listening to traces, expectation and futilities of life, through 'attention to the signs of the times' which are to be found everywhere that life breaks forth and comes into being, everywhere that new life as it were seethes and bubbles, and even, in the form of hope, everywhere that life is violently devastated, throttled, gagged and slain. Wherever true life exists, there the Spirit of God is at work. 'He is the gravitational pull of love, the attraction upward, that resists the gravitational pull downward and brings all things to their completion in God.'³⁵

Kasper shows that images of the Spirit, including the title 'Lord and Giver of Life,' seek to express the human experience of God as the kenotic power of freedom-in-love that brings about new beginnings and offers hope, especially in the midst of hopelessness and suffering. The Spirit offers hope for the flourishing of life even when a sense of future is threatened by the effects of sin.

According to Kasper, the Spirit is God's power that brings about the transformation and fulfilment of history through the re-creation of the human heart. He notes biblical understandings of the Spirit who "will change the wilderness into a paradise and make it a place of justice and righteousness (Isa. 32.16f.). [The Spirit] will raise the expiring people to

³³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 200.

³⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 201.

³⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 202. Here Kasper quotes Augustine, *Confessiones XIII* 7,8.

new life (Ezek. 37.1-14) and create a new heart in them (Ezek.11.9; 18.31; 36.27; cf. Ps 51.12). Finally, in the last time there will be a universal outpouring of the Spirit ‘on all flesh’ (Joel 3.1f.).”³⁶ After tracing the prophetic tradition from the Scriptures, including Moses, the prophets of the Book of Judges, David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah and finally, Jesus, Kasper concludes:

In all these texts the Spirit is conceived of as the power that produces a new creation. The entire creation that now impatiently waits amid groans will be led by the Spirit to its goal, which is the kingdom of the free children of God (Rom. 8.19f) ... the Spirit has for its purpose the eschatological transformation and fulfilment.³⁷

The transformation and fulfilment of the world comes about because of the action of the Spirit in history. According to Kasper the Spirit transforms the human heart first, and in this way, transforms history.³⁸

God’s promise to bring about a new creation was fulfilled in and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, “the messianic bearer of the Spirit of God.”³⁹ Kasper makes a key point concerning the relationship between the Spirit and Jesus’ life and destiny: all four Gospels point to the history of Jesus’ baptism as the source of revelation of the work of the Spirit of God in Jesus’ history. The tradition of Jesus’ baptism recognises and confirms Jesus’ share in God’s power which brings history to its fulfilment in and through the Spirit. Jesus’ life and destiny super-abundantly fulfilled the promises of God, prophesied in the Old Testament, to be in deep, personal relationship with creation.

The story of Jesus’ baptism reveals the Spirit’s role in bringing about a new creation: a people who come to birth in the love and freedom of the Spirit. The Spirit creates a new community centred on Jesus Christ. In this community, the Spirit sustains unity, inspires and directs mission, provides charisms and thereby creates a living history of apostolic service. The work of the Spirit has the future for its goal and the present for its activity. Kasper

³⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 202.

³⁷ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 203.

³⁸ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 203.

³⁹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 203.

highlights the link between Jesus' baptism and the baptism of Christians through history: "the pericope on the baptism of Jesus makes it clear that what takes place in Jesus the exemplar at the baptism takes place ever anew in the baptism of Christians, as images of Jesus: the Spirit of God lays hold of the baptized person and gives him a share in the eschatological divine sonship."⁴⁰

The Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, himself fruit of the Spirit's outpouring of divine freedom-in-love in history. Echoing the foundation already laid in *Jesus the Christ*, Kasper affirms that "the new thing which the Spirit brings is that he constantly makes Jesus Christ present anew in his eschatological newness. The Spirit's work is renewal in the newness of Jesus Christ."⁴¹ The story of the Spirit in history is continued in a new way at Pentecost. Here we learn of the experience of a divided and estranged community who "can once again understand one another by the power of the one Spirit."⁴² The Spirit 're-members' the risen Christ who reconciles and animates the community. At Pentecost the gifts of the Spirit facilitated communication, built up community life and motivated loving service. Charisms, or gifts of the Spirit, were unleashed and expressed through a variety of community functions. In short, the Spirit, in freedom and love, became the norm and source of power for Christian life. Kasper affirms that the role of the Spirit not only animates the charisms given at the service of Christ's mission, but also guides their co-ordination:

The Spirit works, therefore, not through opposition of his gifts to each other, but through their combination and mutual support. He is inseparably linked to baptism (1 Cor. 12.13) and the preaching of the gospel (1Thess. 1.5f.; 1Cor. 2.4f., 13; etc). Above all, however, the charisms are not to be understood as external activities in the church but as varied expressions of the one grace of God (Rom. 12.6; cf. the identification of charism and

⁴⁰ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 204. Original German text: *[M]acht die Perikope von der Taufe Jesu deutlich, das bei Jesu Taufe urbildlich das geschehen ist, was sich ab-bildlich in der Taufe der Christen immer wieder neu ereignet: Der Täufling wird vom Gottesgeist ergriffen und in die eschatologische Gotteskindschaft hineingestellt.* In comparison with the official English translation above, my translation reads: "[T]he pericope of the baptism of Jesus makes clear that what took place archetypally at Jesus' baptism, is mirrored again and again in the baptism of Christians: the person being baptized is grasped by the Spirit of God and given a share in the eschatological filial relationship of God." I think this translation offers a more gender inclusive understanding of the identity of the baptised person in relation to the future-oriented work of the Spirit and the filial relationship of the Son to the Father.

⁴¹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 209.

⁴² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 204.

eternal life in Rom. 6.23). The various gifts of grace, thus understood, bring with them a diversity of functions. The greatest of these gifts of the Spirit is love (1 Cor. 13.13). In love, the Spirit becomes the norm and the source of power for Christian life.⁴³

The Spirit never ceases to provide the gifts needed to bring about the transformation and fulfilment of history. The Spirit, who cannot be contained, is known in the abundant ways God brings about the eschatological fulfilment of history. Kasper writes that “the selflessness of love is true Christian freedom, and it is this that provides the context for the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5.22f). Through all these fruits the Spirit is bringing into existence the kingdom of the freedom of God’s children (Rom. 8.8-10).”⁴⁴ The fruits of the Spirit reveal the source of life that freely overflows into history as love. For Kasper, experience of God’s freedom and love unties knots of self-absorption:

Love of God and of neighbor is true Christian freedom in the Spirit (Gal. 5.13). For the free person is not the one who does whatever he wants; one who acts in that manner is very much unfree because he is the slave of himself, his moods, and his changing circumstances. The free person is rather one who is free from himself and thus able to be there for God and for others.⁴⁵

Kasper affirms the tradition’s understanding of the Church as “the place and even the sacrament of the Spirit, and the Spirit as the vital principle or soul of the church.”⁴⁶ Thus, he insists that the Spirit’s activity cannot be limited to, nor be absorbed by, specific roles or responsibilities in the community. Nor should the Spirit’s presence be repressed by the Church. Kasper points out three examples of the Church’s reaction to enthusiast movements that “led unintentionally to a repression of the charismatic element and a certain institutionalisation of the Spirit.”⁴⁷ First, the Montanist movement (2nd century C.E.) critiqued the bourgeois tendencies of the institution by advocating excessive ethical rigorism and encouraging the enthusiasm of personal faith. Second, in his reaction to this, Tertullian (born

⁴³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 206.

⁴⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 206.

⁴⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 206.

⁴⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 208.

⁴⁷ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 207.

170 C.E.) set up a theology of the church of the Spirit in opposition to a theology of the church of bishops. Third, a movement led by Joachim de Fiore (1135-1202 C.E.) predicted a developing, historized and utopian-inspired Spirit-led Church. This Church of the Spirit, according to Fiore, would eventually supersede a Church characterised by the 'ages' of the Father [Old Testament] and the Son [the clerical church]. Though negative ecclesial reaction to such enthusiast movements led to suppression of their "striking charisms,"⁴⁸ Kasper notes that the charismatic dimension of the church has persisted especially in the traditions of the martyrs, the spirituality of monasticism and the lives of the saints.

Nevertheless, despite the history of martyrs and the spiritual legacies of the saints, Kasper critiques what has been a feature of Western Christianity: "a certain absorption of the Spirit by the [institutional] church."⁴⁹ Kasper believes that the histories of martyrs, religious, prophets and saints express a pneumatology that is faithful to biblical and patristic witness: the Spirit is to be found in ever-new, unexpected and universal ways that reveal the way, truth and life of Jesus Christ. The Spirit works to give "universal presence to the person and work of Jesus Christ ... [and makes this] real in the individual human being."⁵⁰ He points out that the Spirit's work has been frustrated by ecclesial traditions which privilege the close tie between Spirit and Church, and especially its office bearers. The Church does not equal the Spirit, and its office bearers are not custodians of the Spirit: [A]n identification of the Spirit with the church or, more accurately, with office in the church ... [meant] the freedom and universality of the Spirit no longer received their full due.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 208.

⁴⁹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 208.

⁵⁰ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 211.

⁵¹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 209. (Original text: *Dennoch ergaben sich in der Tradition durch die Auseinandersetzung mit den verschiedenen Schwärmer-bewegungen Verengungen: eine Verkirchlichung, besser: Veramtlichung des Geistes einerseits und eine Verinnerlichung andererseits.*) An alternative translation: "At the same time, through the struggle with the various 'enthusiast' movements, a narrowing of the vision of the church resulted - an intensification of the role of office or more accurately, a process of institutionalisation of the Spirit on the one hand and a privatisation of the Spirit on the other."

Kasper's pneumatology calls for ecclesial renewal that pays close attention to "the new thing"⁵² which the Spirit is constantly bringing into history in surprising ways: Jesus Christ. The freedom and universality of the Spirit's work can be safeguarded if the vision of the Spirit's leadership of the Church is not narrowed to ecclesial bureaucracy or reduced to a private 'possession.'

The Spirit as 'Person'

Kasper shows that both Old and New Testaments witness to the Spirit's public identity and agency. In the Old Testament the Spirit can "speak, cry out, admonish, grieve, weep, rejoice and console; he is even represented as speaking to God. He appears as a witness against human beings, or is presented as their advocate."⁵³ The Spirit is not an impersonal or static, life-less principle or concept. The New Testament deepens the personal and active understanding of the Spirit found in the Old Testament. Paul, for example, attests to the Spirit distributing gifts (1Cor. 12.11). The book of Revelation testifies to the Spirit instructing the community (Rev. 2.7). John describes the Spirit as the Church's helper and supporter (John 15.26) and the 'other helper' along with Jesus (John 14.16).⁵⁴

However, Kasper also notes that the history of theology is marked by major disputes about the identity of the Spirit. Some theologies understood the Spirit as a creature or servant of God, but not as God. Subordinationism persisted, even in the face of strong defence of the Spirit's divinity by Athanasius, Basil of Caesaria, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. These theologians boldly, and in fidelity to biblical witness, developed a pneumatology that affirmed the Spirit's equality with the Father and the Son. Athanasius argued that only if the Spirit is divine can the Spirit give us a share in the divine nature.⁵⁵ This

⁵² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 209.

⁵³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 210.

⁵⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 210.

⁵⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 212.

theology led to recognition that the Spirit is more than the giver of spiritual gifts. The Spirit is the *personal* giver and gift of God's very self. The doxology, articulated by Basil in 374 C.E., expressed soteriological truth: "Glory be to the Father with the Son and the Holy Spirit." According to Kasper, the meaning of salvation encapsulated in this confession is that "equal honor and dignity and eternal dominion [is given] ... to a single divinity, power and substance (*ousia*) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."⁵⁶ At the Council of Constantinople (381 C.E.) the Holy Spirit is named Lord and Giver of Life. As Lord of Life, the Spirit is not only the gift of life but its source or origin.⁵⁷ In line with early patristic theology, Kasper understands that together with the Son, the Spirit 'proceeds' or 'is breathed forth' from the Father:

This freedom of the Spirit is incompatible with the Spirit being simply an impersonal principle, medium or dimension; rather, the freedom of the Spirit presupposes the relative independence of the Spirit. The explicit acknowledgement of the independent personality of the Spirit is therefore anything but speculative indulgence; at issue in it is the reality of Christian salvation: the Christian freedom that is based on the freedom of God's gift and grace. The development of the full doctrine of the Holy Spirit thus has for its vital context (its *Sitz im Leben*) an experience, namely, the experience of the irreducible freedom that characterizes the activity of the Spirit.⁵⁸

Kasper affirms that the personal identity of the Spirit has been safeguarded and transmitted through the Christian Creeds: God's Spirit is present in creation and history as Lord and Giver of Life.

In addition to the challenges of overcoming subordinationism, Kasper also acknowledges that theologies of the Spirit as God's freedom 'in person' have been burdened by limitations of language. It is not possible to speak of the mystery of God without recognising the limitations of human language. For this reason, Kasper emphasises that it is important to draw on multiple images to describe the Spirit, including "breath, air, wind, water of life, fire or tongues of fire, ointment and anointing, seal, peace, gift, love." He notes that "each of these images attempts to describe the one action and being of the one Spirit of

⁵⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 212. Kasper refers to a letter received at the Western Synod in Rome in 382 C.E. providing evidence that such theology had been affirmed at the Eastern Council in Constantinople the previous year. This anathematised any theological position that held that the Spirit was subordinate to the Father and the Son.

⁵⁷ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 213.

⁵⁸ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 211.

God from a different angle.”⁵⁹ Diverse images of the Spirit leave room for new efforts to express the personal and ‘uncapturable’ human experience of the freedom and uncontrollability of the Spirit.

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed originally described the Spirit as one who ‘proceeds from the Father.’ Western churches gradually understood this to mean that the Spirit proceeds from the Father ‘and from the Son (*filioque*).’ Kasper shows how Latin pneumatology, following Augustine, used the analogy of the human soul with its dual capacities to know and to will for understanding the Holy Spirit as the reciprocal love between the Father and the Son.⁶⁰ The Father (lover) knows and loves the Son (beloved), and the Holy Spirit is the fruit of this union. Kasper explains that this Latin theology can be symbolised by a symmetrical model. The movement of love between Father and Son in trinitarian life is rounded off in the Holy Spirit in a kind of circular movement.⁶¹ An image of completion and containment is suggested. The Spirit externalises what is internal to the life of the Trinity: self-giving love that brings all things to their completion.

According to the Eastern critique, Latin theology of the Spirit as the abundance or overflow of love between the Father and the Son in the internal life of God threatens the central theological tenet of the personal freedom and autonomy of the Spirit, whose source is the Father. The pneumatology of the East holds tight to the original wording of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed – that the Father is the source of personal divine identity, not an inner-trinitarian relationship ‘of essence’ based on reciprocal self-knowledge and will. Eastern theology stresses the freedom of the person of the Spirit who eternally proceeds from the Father and is breathed freely and lovingly from the Father, sole origin of the Trinity. The Western model emphasises mutual relations that imply that one ‘person’ completes another.⁶²

⁵⁹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 214.

⁶⁰ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 215.

⁶¹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 215.

⁶² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 218.

Kasper's work argues that both Eastern and Western understandings of the origin of the Spirit and the relationship of the Spirit to the Father and Son are important:

For according to the scripture, in terms of the economy of salvation the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (John 15.26), but he is also communicated by the Son (John 14.16,26). But if the economy of salvation and the theology of the inner life of the Trinity should not diverge but rather correspond, and if the Son has a share in the sending of the Spirit in the history of salvation, then he cannot fail to have a share in to the intra-trinitarian procession of the Spirit.⁶³

It is a source of amazement and scandal that theological disagreements about the relationship of the Spirit to the Father and Son in the life of the immanent and economic Trinity have caused divisions among Christians. The Latin insertion of the *filioque* phrase into the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed was important in the official split between the Eastern and Western churches in 1054 C.E.⁶⁴ Kasper traces a brief history of tensions that prepared the way for the split: the Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.) that left open the precise relation of the Spirit to the Son; the provincial Councils of Toledo from the fifth to the seventh centuries; the Second Council of Nicea in 787 C.E.; the Council of Frankfurt in 794 C.E. and the Council of Aachen in 809 C.E. which officially added the *filioque* to the Creed. The action at Aachen was followed by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 C.E. and the Council of Lyon in 1274 C.E. which confirmed the Latin doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son and thus decisively sealed the East – West divide.

Despite this tragic division, Kasper insists that there remains a common heritage on which renewed unity between the Churches can be built. His work seeks to contribute to the future contours of renewed unity by developing a theology of the Spirit that embeds the valued insights of both traditions: the independent freedom-in-love of the Spirit in the

⁶³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 218. See Ralph Del Colle, "Reflections on the Filioque," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 34, no. 2 (1997): 212. Del Colle draws on Kasper's mediating work in affirming and elevating both Eastern and Western sensitivities. With Kasper, he seeks to express an understanding of the intra-trinitarian relations without compromising the absolute monarchy of the Father nor subordinating the person of the Spirit in relation to the Father and the Son. Echoing Kasper, Del Colle offer this solution: "The ecstasy of God's flowing forth (Spirit) from God as unoriginate source (Father) in relation to Godself (Son) and to the world of creatures (divine economy) presupposes in the inner life of God the expression of love bestowed and exchanged. The outpouring of that divine ecstasy toward the world in kenosis and plenitude is already the fruit of that which is a life-giving and neverending love."

⁶⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 219.

immanent and economic Trinity (East) and the unity of the Spirit's relation to the mutual and reciprocal love between the Father and Son (West). Kasper holds that varied conceptions of the Spirit in the life of the Trinity and in the economy of salvation should be considered complementary and rich expressions of the one mystery of God. He recognises that differences continue to keep the two traditions apart today, but he insists: "both theologies were trying to say objectively the same thing. They bore witness to the one and the same faith in the Spirit but in different conceptual forms."⁶⁵ For the first eight centuries of Christianity both theologies of the Spirit represented an acceptable plurality of faith witness.⁶⁶ For the work of restoring lost unity, Kasper argues that the goal should be a new reception of both theologies by the whole Church. He believes that this will lead to mutual valuing, to a "unity in multiplicity" and "a dialogue ... conducted with openness to the future in order to bring clarification to the still unresolved problems on both sides."⁶⁷ In her analysis of *The God of Jesus Christ*, Elizabeth Johnson points out that Kasper makes an important contribution to the realisation of this goal. Johnson concludes that Kasper assists the whole Christian tradition to

⁶⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 219.

⁶⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 221. As a normative example of attempts to acknowledge the complementary understandings of the Spirit in the life of God in the second millennium, Kasper cites the example of Pope Benedict XIV who in 1755 allowed the unaltered creed of 381 C.E. to be used by the Uniate Eastern Churches. See also Avery Dulles, "The Filioque: What Is at Stake?," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 59, no. 1-2 (1995): 31-47. This article provides a succinct overview of the history and theological issues at stake in the debate about the origin of the Spirit and the implications of the controversy for the development of doctrine. The Creeds seek to use language that clarifies the eternal truths of revelation. Dulles praises Kasper's work in *The God of Jesus Christ* in offering "wise observations" about the implications of understanding how the *filioque* can be tolerated from an Eastern point of view as a "legitimate theological opinion" in relation to the 'from the Father alone' formula that continues to divide the ecclesial traditions. See also Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "The Greek and Latin Traditions Regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit," *L'Osservatore Romano* (1995), accessed June 3, 2016. <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/pccufilq.htm>. In line with Kasper's pneumatology this document concludes: "The original character of the person of the Spirit as eternal Gift of the Father's love for his beloved Son shows that the Spirit, while coming from the Son in his mission, is the one who brings human beings into Christ's filial relationship to his Father, for this relationship finds only in him its Trinitarian character: God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba! Father! (Gal 4:6). In the mystery of salvation and in the life of the Church, the Spirit therefore does much more than prolong the work of the Son. In fact, whatever Christ has instituted – Revelation, the Church, the sacraments, the apostolic ministry and its Magisterium – calls for constant invocation (επικλησις) of the Holy Spirit and his action (ενεργεια), so that the love that "never ends" (1 Cor 13:8) may be manifest in the communion of the saints with the life of the Trinity."

⁶⁷ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 221.

realise that “the question of how the Spirit proceeds within the Trinity should not be church-dividing.”⁶⁸ The Spirit creates unity, not division.

Kasper stresses that language about the Spirit, bearing in mind its limitations, attempts to express the experience of God's personally mediated freedom. The Holy Spirit is the gratuitous sharing of God's love, mediated in and through the humanity and divinity of Jesus. Any philosophical speculation about the Spirit, or efforts to understand the Holy Spirit solely through reflection on analogies with the human spirit, must be supplementary to this understanding.

Kasper argues that if God as Spirit is experienced ‘for us’ as God's pure self-gift and giftedness, then God must be self-giving in God's very self. The Spirit is God's self-gift in person: God moves beyond God's self to ‘the other’ in freedom. The word ‘Spirit’ is the language symbol that seeks to express the going forth or ‘ecstasy’ of God's self-giving intra-Trinitarian love:

Since the Spirit, in an eschatological and definitive way, reveals God's eschatological giftness and eschatological love in us and for us, he must also be in himself God's graciousness. For if he were not God's love and giftness in himself ‘first of all’ but were this only for us, he could not reveal to us the Godness of God, which, as we say earlier, consists in the freedom of his self-communicating love. The Spirit would then not reveal God as he is but only God as and insofar as he shows himself in history. In order that *the Holy Spirit may be the subjective possibility of the eschatological and definitive revelation of the love* and thus the Godness of God, he must himself be this freedom in love, that is he must be God's love in person. *He must be not only God's gift but also the giver of this gift; he must embody in a manner personal to himself that which God is by his nature ... we can say nothing about the inner divine being of the Spirit that is not revealed to us by the Spirit himself and attested to in Scripture.*⁶⁹

Kasper builds on the theology of Augustine and Aquinas who both understood God's Spirit as eternity ‘giveable.’⁷⁰ The Spirit is God's abundant overflow of love and life that addresses and includes creation:

The Holy Spirit reveals, and is, the giftedness of God as gift, love as love. The Spirit thus expresses the innermost nature of God – God as self-communicating love – in such a way that this innermost reality proves at the same time to be the outermost, that is, the possibility and reality of God's being outside of himself. The Spirit is as it were the ecstasy of God; he is God as pure abundance, God as the overflow of love and grace. On the one

⁶⁸ Johnson, “Pneumatology,” 104.

⁶⁹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 225. (Italics mine)

⁷⁰ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 226.

hand, then, the immanent love of God reaches its goal in the Spirit. But at the same time, because in the Holy Spirit the Father and the Son as it were understand and realize themselves as love, the love of God in the Spirit also moves beyond God himself. This loving streaming-out-beyond occurs not in the form of a necessary streaming-out but in the personal manner of voluntary sharing and free, gracious communication. In the Spirit God has as it were the possibility of being himself by emptying or divesting himself.⁷¹

Consistent with his work in *Jesus the Christ*, in *The God of Jesus Christ* Kasper sees the person and work of the Spirit evident in history in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God's desire to become fully at-one with humanity is actualised in Jesus Christ. In a reciprocal process of mutual love, the humanity of Jesus was also deified. In the Spirit, what is most internal in God became external 'for us' in Jesus. In the Spirit, Jesus reveals God from all eternity, as free self-communicating love. This theology grounds the belief that the salvation effected through Christ continues to be communicated in history in and through the Holy Spirit.

By way of summary, Kasper's pneumatology has three foci. First, Kasper sees the Spirit as God's mysterious, free and personal self-communicating love and life that overflows into creation. The Spirit is "the internal (in God) presupposition of [the] communicability of God outside of himself. But the Spirit is also the source of movement and life in the world"⁷² Drawing on the theology of Vatican II, Kasper sees the dynamic work of the self-giving love of the Spirit operating within history, culture and religion:

Wherever something new arises, whenever life is awakened and reality reaches ecstatically beyond itself, in all seeking and striving, in every ferment and birth and even more in the beauty of creation, something of the being of God's Spirit is manifested The Second Vatican Council sees this universal activity of the Spirit not only in the religions of mankind, but also in human culture and human progress. We may even say that because the Spirit is the inner condition for the possibility of creation, the latter is always more than pure nature. Through the presence and action of the Holy Spirit creation already and always has a supernatural finality and character.⁷³

⁷¹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 226.

⁷² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 227.

⁷³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 228. Here Kasper draws on the theology of GS 26, 28, 38, 41, 44 as well as the theology of Karl Rahner. This understanding is reinforced in a slightly different but equally powerful way in the German Bishops' Conference. *The Church's Confession of Faith*, 186. As principal author of this text, Kasper can be attributed with writing: "[T]he Spirit directs all of reality to its definitive completion, his reality and activity show themselves especially where new life is awakened, where reality pushes beyond itself. This is especially clear in men's historical seeking and striving for life, justice, freedom and peace. We may recognise traces of God in a particular way where men break out of the prison of their egoism, where they find their way to one another in love and pardon, where they forgive one another, do good and offer help, without expecting or asking for recompense. Man finds himself and his fulfillment not in egoistic self-seeking, but in giving,

The Spirit communicates the generating and breathing life of God's-freedom-in-love. In the Spirit, the life of God personally dwells in history.

Second, the Spirit enables authentic personal encounters with Jesus Christ and one another. Kasper writes that "through the Spirit we are in God and God is in us." However, this closeness with God or, as Kasper terms it, 'friendship,' never happens through coercion.⁷⁴ It is based on freedom. Kasper insists on the use of relational language for the freeing and transformational power of the Spirit. The Spirit actively invites creation into relationship with the fullness of freedom-in-love: Jesus Christ.

Third, the Spirit leads the Church. In the Spirit, both charismatic and institutional elements of the Church are co-responsible for preparing the world to receive, transmit and effect the transforming mystery of the freedom-in-love of God known concretely in Jesus Christ. Thus, Kasper writes: "[W]hatever is external in the church – scripture and sacraments, offices and certainly the discipline of the church – has for its sole task to prepare men for receiving the gift of the Spirit, to serve in the transmission of this gift, and to enable it to work effectively."⁷⁵

The Spirit's identity and work can never be unconnected to the outreach of love of the Father in Jesus Christ. The Father's love, communicated through the mission of the Son, known in the Incarnation and the Resurrection, sustains and expands the mission of the Church. Kasper lays a solid pneumatological foundation for later development of his ecclesiology:

The Spirit preserves the church in its fidelity to tradition by leading it in a prophetic way into the entire truth and making known to it what is coming (John 16.13). He is not a kind of ideological guarantor of the Church's *status quo*, but rather the Spirit of continual renewal. Above all, he makes known to the church ever new missionary opportunities, and points out ever new ways to go. He urges the church to heed his action in the 'signs of the times', and interpret these, and in their light to gain a deeper understanding of the Christian message.⁷⁶

bestowing and sharing. Wherever there is love something of the world's final completion and transfiguration is anticipated even now."

⁷⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 228.

⁷⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 229.

⁷⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 229.

The mediation of God's freedom-in-love, personally revealed through Jesus Christ and in the Spirit and known in creation, in history and in the life and mission of the Church, reveals the inter-relational nature of the life of the Trinity.

The Spirit and Trinitarian Relations

In Part Three of *The God of Jesus Christ* Kasper situates the role of the Spirit in God's three-fold self-revelation. He describes the doctrine of the Trinity as the "Christian form of speaking about God."⁷⁷ More than this, Kasper contends that with the term 'Trinity' the "entire reality of Christian salvation stands or falls."⁷⁸ He dismisses such mathematical interpretations of the Trinity as $1 = 3$ as theologically and soteriologically meaningless: "[I]n the trinitarian confession of faith the problem is not an arithmetical and logical one, that is, one that is relatively superficial from the existential standpoint. Rather, in the numbering of one and three as well as the reciprocal relation between them, what is being articulated are age-old problems of man's understanding of reality and himself."⁷⁹ While philosophical approaches to the doctrine of the Trinity conceptually express the ways in which unity and diversity can be held in tension, in the end they are inadequate, and even misleading, for making meaning of God's love known in Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, however, Kasper acknowledges that the doctrine of the Trinity is an attempt to express mystery. He writes that "the question of unity of all reality – a unity without which meaningful speech, thought and action and, in the final analysis, meaningful existence are impossible – leads ultimately to a mystery."⁸⁰ Philosophical speculation about the relationship between plurality and unity may be helpful for the development of metaphysical foundations for the doctrine of the Trinity. But in the end, Kasper writes, the

⁷⁷ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 233.

⁷⁸ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 233.

⁷⁹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 234.

⁸⁰ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 236.

basis of the doctrine is found “solely in the history of God’s dealings with human beings and in the historical self-revelation of the Father through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.”⁸¹ Historical experience is the privileged context for exploring the ultimate questions of meaning. The doctrine of the Trinity is not about an impersonal philosophical principle but about the revelation that “the meaning of all reality is personal: one God in three persons.”⁸² For Kasper, the experience and understanding of Christian monotheism is dependent on the way the Spirit is experienced and understood. The living God of the Bible, whose self-revelation is mediated through personal relationship, is a God who invites human beings into relationship.

Kasper argues that trinitarian monotheism enables cohesive thought that can hold the concept of unity together with that of fragmentation and difference. He maintains that “if there were several gods, they would limit each another and God would no longer be God but a finite being.”⁸³ For Christianity to defend its belief in monotheism it must demonstrate that the unity of God includes relations of difference. For Kasper, the unity of God is the precondition not only for speculative developments of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is also the precondition for discerning the uniqueness of the personal saving power of the Spirit’s freedom.

While the Old Testament is silent about the trinitarian life of God, Kasper notes several biblical references that point to the concept of different persons or *hypostases* associated with God.⁸⁴ Among the most important is the figure of the angel of Yahweh (Ex. 14:19):

He accompanies Israel on its journey in the wilderness, helps those in need (Gen. 16.7; 1 Kings 19.5; 1 Kings 1.3), and protects the devout (Ps 34.8). While in these passages the angel of Yahweh is a revelatory figure distinct from God, at other times he is identical with Yahweh (Gen. 31.11, 13; Ex. 3.2, 4f.). The ‘angel of the Lord’ thus represents an effort to

⁸¹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 237.

⁸² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 238.

⁸³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 240.

⁸⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 241.

bridge the gap between the being of God, which to man is incomprehensible and hidden, and God's active and substantial presence in history.⁸⁵

God's *hypostases* are described with various names such as divine Wisdom (Prov 8), divine Word (Ps 119:89; 147:15ff.; Wisdom 16:12) and divine Spirit (Hag: 2.5; Neh 9:30; Isa 63:10; Wisdom 1:7).⁸⁶ These descriptors affirm experiences of the living God as a "pluripersonal fullness of being."⁸⁷

Testimony to the experience of this 'pluripersonal fullness of being' leads Kasper to speak of God as persons-in-relations. His trinitarian theology draws on modern personalist philosophy that affirms "an I without a Thou is unthinkable."⁸⁸ Personalist philosophy understands 'person' as an ongoing event of relationship, rather than simply a static substance. Thus, Kasper asks: if God is relationship, then who can be God's appropriate *vis à vis*?⁸⁹ Who is God's proper relationship partner? Human persons cannot fulfil that role since God would then be understood as dependent on creatures and thus limited and unfree. While the Old Testament remains open to a definitive revelation of God, especially in terms of God's immanent relationality, Kasper argues that the New Testament provides the answer to the nature of God as persons-in-relations. In the Spirit, Jesus of Nazareth is God's relationship partner. Kasper shows that "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the eternal thou of the Father, and ... in the Holy Spirit we human beings are accepted into the communion of love that exists between the Father and the Son."⁹⁰ The Trinitarian structure of God is grounded in Jesus' unique and personal Spirit-created *Abba* relationship with the Father. Jesus' filial relationship with the Father is the ground for understanding both Jesus' identity as Son of the Father and as the mediator of our own participation in the mutual and inclusive relationship of love between the Father and the Son.

⁸⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 242.

⁸⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 243.

⁸⁷ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 243.

⁸⁸ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 243.

⁸⁹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 243.

⁹⁰ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 243.

In the life of the Church, the Spirit continually interprets the Jesus event. The interpretive role of the *Pneuma* in the history and destiny of Jesus Christ emerges clearly in the experience of the post-Easter witnesses:

In the Synoptic Gospels this participation in the power (*dynamis*) of God has as yet no fixed name. Only after Easter are the acceptance of believers into the relation of Jesus to the Father, and their participation in the power of the Father, ascribed to the action of the *Pneuma*. From this point on it is said that we are God's sons and daughters in the *Pneuma*. This pneumatological interpretation, like the christological, is grounded in the revelatory event itself.⁹¹

Jesus was embraced by God and drawn into God's life through the power of the Spirit. In Jesus we encounter the Spirit as the 'ecstatic' and attracting God. Through Jesus Christ the Spirit draws history into the unity of God's pluripersonal nature of self-giving love and in so doing, brings into history concrete realisations of God's completion or 'future.'

Kasper shows how the baptism of Jesus illustrates a pneumatological trinitarian structure. Symbolised as a dove, God reveals the fullness or goal of God's life in Jesus. In and through his humanity, Jesus is not only God's beloved Son, but also the eternal sacrament of the Father. Furthermore, Jesus is the bearer of God's Spirit, who brings all things to their completion. The command given to the Church to 'go therefore and make disciples of all ages, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Matt. 29:19), expresses the heart of Christian faith and reveals that the goal of the Church's mission in the Spirit is to humanise history.⁹²

Kasper also points out that Pauline theology describes the Spirit as provider of the many and varied gifts that effect God's universal, saving work: 'there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.' (1 Cor. 12:4-6). The Spirit is the giver and gift of God's self, enfleshed in gifts for service to Christ's mission to make concrete the freedom-in-love of God. He notes that in addition to the

⁹¹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 244.

⁹² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 245.

synoptic Gospels' descriptions of the Spirit at work in Jesus' life, the Gospel of John illustrates a two-stage pneumatological trinitarian structure:

The first half of the gospel of John (1-12) has basically a single theme: the relation of the Son to the Father. On the other hand, the Johannine farewell discourses of the second half (14-17) are concerned with the sending of another Paraclete (14.16), his procession from the Father (15.26), his sending by Jesus Christ (16.7), and his task of recalling and making present the work of Christ (14.26; 15.26; 16.13f). In John 14.26 the trinitarian unity of the two themes emerges clearly: 'But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you' (cf. 15.26). The high point of this reflection is provided by what is known as the priestly prayer of Jesus.⁹³

In the priestly prayer of Jesus, the role of the Spirit in God's saving plan is central: "[T]he Spirit draws the faithful into the unity which is the mark of the divine being (cf 10.38; 14.10f., 20, 23; 15.4f.; 17.21-26)."⁹⁴ This happens in freedom and love, without coercion or manipulation. Kasper sees the priestly prayer of Jesus as the culmination of Jesus' desire for unity in the world. He recognises that the Holy Spirit in John's theology is both the precondition and the effector of the unifying power of God's freedom-in-love.⁹⁵

As was shown in Chapter Two, trinitarian theology developed in the third and fourth centuries in response to questions of meaning about the three-fold experience of God as Father, Son and Spirit. The experience of new life in the post-Easter communities affirmed the presence of Christ and the Spirit. However, Kasper shows that theological reflection on the ecclesial experience of God's Spirit, and its relevance for understanding the Trinity, has been largely undeveloped in the history of the Christian theology. As noted earlier, this occurred especially when Christianity encountered the Enlightenment and other intellectual movements which subjected the realm of 'spirit' to scientific scrutiny and thus led to its misunderstanding and devaluing.

⁹³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 247. Reference to John 17: 1-26.

⁹⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 248.

⁹⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 247.

Kasper considers pneumatology's central task to be recovery of the identity of the Spirit in Christian theology.⁹⁶ For this, he affirms the need for a meaningful correlation between faith experience and theological language:

God is revealed to us only in the medium of history and in the medium of human words and deeds, or, in other words, in finite forms ... we know the triune God only through his words and actions in history: these are the real symbols of his love that freely communicates itself to us.⁹⁷

Although theological language seeks to communicate how the economic Trinity (known in the life and destiny of Jesus Christ) reveals something of the immanent Trinity, Kasper makes it clear that language itself does not bring about the salvation that God offers. However, language can disclose God's saving power:

The entire Christian economy of salvation is thus a single mystery that can be summed up in one sentence: through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit God is the salvation of man. This triune mystery can be broken down into three mysteries: the triune being of God, the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, and man's salvation in the Holy Spirit, a salvation which finds its eschatological completion in the vision of God face to face. In these three mysteries the one mystery of the self-communicating love of God is seen from various angles: in itself - in Jesus Christ - in all the redeemed.⁹⁸

The *Logos* is the self-communication of the Father's freedom-in-love in God's inner-trinitarian life. As shown in Chapter Two, in the Spirit the humanity of Jesus becomes the symbol of the *Logos*, the self-communication of the Father, in the economy. The Spirit actively participates in the *Logos*, the self-communication of God, through the humanity of Jesus. Kasper rephrases the insights of Karl Rahner to express his understanding of the Spirit's role in the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity:

[I]n the economic self-communication the intra-trinitarian self-communication is present in the world in a new way, namely, under the veil of historical words, signs and actions, and ultimately in the figure of the man Jesus of Nazareth. The need is to maintain not only the kenotic character of the economic Trinity but also its character of graciousness and freedom in relation to the immanent Trinity and thus do justice to the immanent mystery of God in (not: behind!) his self-revelation.⁹⁹

Kasper's understanding of Rahner's axiom that the economic trinity is the immanent trinity (and vice versa) is that the economic Trinity presupposes, as well as reveals, the immanent

⁹⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 262.

⁹⁷ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 268.

⁹⁸ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 270.

⁹⁹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 276.

Trinity. Kasper proposes three arguments to clarify Rahner's unity axiom. First, human salvation is God's very self, not a created gift. God is not acting somewhere in the background of the history of Jesus Christ in the Spirit. This would deprive God of meaning in history. Second, the hypostatic union is *the* moment in history where the unity of the economic and immanent Trinity is concretely recognised: "[I]n Jesus Christ, not God in general but the second divine person, the Logos, became man and this in the sense that he does not simply dwell in the man Jesus, but is the subject (*hypostasis*) in which the humanity of Jesus subsists, so that the humanity of Jesus is not simply an external garment but a real symbol of the Logos."¹⁰⁰ Thus, Kasper concludes that in the Spirit the humanity of Jesus is the *Logos* of God.¹⁰¹ Kasper's third argument for elucidating Rahner's axiom, is that in the Spirit we become the sons and daughters of God. In the Spirit, our humanity also mediates God's grace. Kasper understands grace as "the free self-communication of God in the Holy Spirit."¹⁰² In the outpouring of the grace in believers, the immanent and economic Trinity are united. In the Spirit, the eternal mission of the *Logos* as the freedom of God's self-giving love overflows into history.¹⁰³

Kasper shows that because of the work of the Spirit, the unity between the economic and immanent Trinity is a reciprocal unity. He develops Rahner's axiom, wanting to "highlight the gracious freedom and the kenotic aspect of the economic Trinity [and] at the same time to emphasise the apophatic character of the immanent Trinity."¹⁰⁴ Kasper creates

¹⁰⁰ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 275.

¹⁰¹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 275.

¹⁰² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 275.

¹⁰³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 276.

¹⁰⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 276. See also Cyril J. O'Regan, "The God of Jesus Christ in Continuity and Discontinuity," in *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper: Speaking the Truth in Love*, ed. Kristin M. Colberg and Robert A. Kreig (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 122. O'Regan makes a case for understanding Kasper's trinitarian theology in creative continuity with that of Rahner but with some 'corrections.' Relevant to this study of Kasper's pneumatology, O'Regan asserts that "Kasper has generated a fundamentally different kind of theology in which scripture and history mutually interpret each other." In so doing, O'Regan suggests that Kasper explains how the Spirit 'functions' in the life Trinity: the Spirit is the mutual interpretation, in love and freedom, of the Father and the Son. In Kasper's estimation, according to O'Regan, Rahner's transcendental approach is too focussed on the correlation of subjective experience with God's self-revelation, and not enough

theological space for reflection on the free and gracious work of the Spirit in the life of the Trinity – which has implications for the participation of creatures in the saving love of God. For Kasper, the Spirit mediates both the similarity and difference between the immanent and economic Trinity.

Incorporation of Creatures into the Trinitarian Life of God's Communion

Kasper's trinitarian theology does not begin with the 'being' of God but with the eternal 'sending' of God's self as freedom-in-love in the missions of the Son and the Spirit. These missions in time presuppose and maintain the divine mystery of the eternal processions or relations of the Son from the Father and the Spirit from the Father and the Son. Kasper draws on the theology of Albert the Great who understood the processions in God as "an ecstatic going-beyond-oneself and self-transcending, a being-out-of oneself such as is proper to love."¹⁰⁵ The procession of the Son has been described in the Christian tradition as 'generation' and that of the Spirit as 'spiration.' The latter term expresses the ancient pneumatic analogy of God's breath. Kasper's use of these traditional analogies begins with the experience of God's mission into history, rather than ending with it as a 'conclusion' based on speculative reflection on the inner life of the Trinity. The general divine essence is not Kasper's starting point for Trinitarian reflection, but instead the personal activities of God 'being sent for us' into history.

Classical theological language about God's eternal processions expresses an understanding of distinct relations within God. The two processions of Son and Spirit are

on the mystery of the mutual relationship of freedom in love within God mediated in history by and through the Son and Spirit. *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁰⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 279. For a comprehensive overview of this concept see Helen Bergin, "The Holy Spirit as the 'Ecstatic' God," *Pacifica* 17, no. 3 (2004): 279-80. Bergin refers to the theologies of both Walter Kasper and Elizabeth Johnson which emphasise that "even if unrecognised or unnamed, the Spirit is the divine person reaching out in our regard and connecting with our human experience. The description of the Spirit as 'ecstatic' suggests that God is eternally reaching out, or overflowing, both within the divinity and beyond." Bergin sheds further light on Kasper's understanding of the Spirit: "[I]t is the Holy Spirit who invites creation to encounter with a God whose divine essence is the giving-of-self-in-love. The Holy Spirit thus reveals God as 'ecstatic.'"

analogies of four relations: active generation (fatherhood), passive generation (sonship), active spiration (relation of Father and Son to the Holy Spirit) and passive spiration (relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father and Son).¹⁰⁶ Kasper insists that these relations show that “the final word [about God] belongs not to the static substance, the divine self-containment, but to being-from-another and being-for-another.”¹⁰⁷ Distinction between ‘persons’ in God is based on relation, not substance. More precisely, the ‘being-from-another’ and ‘being-for-another’ relationality of the divine persons *is* God’s substance.¹⁰⁸ For Kasper, God does not ‘have’ relations. God ‘is’ relations. ‘Persons’ in God, for Kasper, means ‘relations’ in God. The three immanent relations of God are known in history: active generation (Father), passive generation (Son) and passive spiration (Spirit). In all these relations, the Father is source of life and love and the Son and Spirit are co-workers, not subordinates, in the mission. They are ‘on mission’ from the Father into history.

Kasper uses the Greek term *perichoresis* to shed further light on the equality and mutuality of the trinitarian relations. According to him, the concept of *perichoresis* has its basis in scripture (John 10:30): ‘I and the Father are one.’ Kasper explains that the term *perichoresis* means “the being-in-one another and the mutual penetration of the divine persons.”¹⁰⁹ He believes that this theological concept is of central importance in understanding the self-giving relations of the trinitarian persons: “[T]he doctrine of the perichoresis is of greatest importance, because it obviates both tritheism and modalism. The three persons are (in the language of christology) without confusion and without separation.”¹¹⁰ The doctrine of God’s *perichoresis* affirms that relations within God, and by distant analogy between persons, can hold unity and distinction together in direct rather than

¹⁰⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 279.

¹⁰⁷ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 280.

¹⁰⁸ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 280.

¹⁰⁹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 283. The term *perichoresis* is related to *choreography* and evokes the image of the ‘persons’ of God dancing or singing with each other.

¹¹⁰ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 284.

inverse proportion. The greater the relation of unity between persons, the greater is the freedom and uniqueness (difference) of each person in the relationship. The uniqueness of persons flourishes in the unity of love. The ultimate example of this kind of flourishing in history was Jesus Christ. In the Spirit, the divine-human unity of Jesus Christ does not absorb nor dissolve the uniqueness of the human person. Distinction and difference in unity are the foundation for the flourishing of identity and freedom.¹¹¹ Metaphysical thought about the trinity of persons in God, understood as a unity in relationship, sheds light on the identity of the human person as a person-in-relation. Reciprocal perichoretic relations of love and freedom in God are the ground of creation's identity as creation-in-relationship and creation-for-relationship.

Kasper's option to use the concept of *perichoresis* for thinking about God as relations, leads to his critique of what he considers are subject-centred theologies of Karl Rahner and Karl Barth. Kasper argues that their theologies replace the scholastic idea of God as absolute substance with the idea of persons in God as absolute subjects or 'modes of being' or subsisting. He questions the capacity of this thought to encourage conceptualisation of God as persons-in-relationship. Rather, by drawing on the insights of philosophers such as Martin Buber, Ferdinand Ebner and Franz Rosenzweig, Kasper affirms a personalist understanding of human identity as an analogy for understanding Trinitarian relations.¹¹² He writes:

[A] person exists only in relation; that in the concrete, personality exists only as interpersonality, subjectivity only as intersubjectivity. The human person exists only in relations of the I-Thou-We kind. Within the horizon of this modern understanding of the person, an isolated unipersonal God is inconceivable.¹¹³

Kasper insists that personalist and relational categories can only be applied analogously to the Trinity. However, he believes that these categories assist in understanding the divine persons not as less relational, interpersonal or dialogical than human persons, but infinitely more:

¹¹¹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 285.

¹¹² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 289.

¹¹³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 289.

The divine persons are not only in dialogue, they *are* dialogue. The Father is pure self-enunciation and address to the Son as his Word; the Son is a pure hearing and heeding of the Father and therefore pure fulfillment of his mission; the Holy Spirit is pure reception, pure gift. These personal relations are reciprocal but they are not interchangeable.¹¹⁴

The inter-personal understanding of God as Trinity has consequences for human self-understanding. The human person, made in the image of the trinitarian God, can no longer be defined as a 'substance' nor a 'subject.' The human person is inter-personal:

Man is neither a self-sufficient in-himself (substance) nor an autonomous individual for-himself (subject) but a being from God and to God, from other human beings and to other human beings; he loves humanly only in I-Thou-We relations. Love proves to be the meaning of his being.¹¹⁵

In his analysis of Kasper's pneumatology, Kristof Struys shows that Kasper's understanding of the relationship of mutual, reciprocal love in the immanent God is the condition of possibility for human salvation.¹¹⁶ Relationship in God is the precondition for creation to find its final fulfilment in history and in communion with God. Salvation means being taken, in the Spirit, into the unity of the Trinity of Love, a unity that does not eliminate distinction or uniqueness but, on the contrary, enables it. Reciprocal, mutual *perichoresis*, the being-in-one-another of persons, without absorption or coercion, is made possible by the Spirit. The Spirit includes human expressions of love in the infinite relations of love and mission that 'are' God.

According to Kasper, trinitarian theology that overlooks or dispenses with a theology of the Spirit threatens access to creaturely knowledge of God's eternal offer of participation in the divine relational life of love. He understands the generating and spirating (breathing) love of the Father as missioned into history and directed to all creatures. Kasper writes that the God of love can only be a trinitarian God:

[God] reconciles unity and multiplicity within himself; [and] that within his very being he is overflowing love and that only because he is love within himself can the overflow of his love upon the world be conceived as not necessary but free and gratuitous. Only because

¹¹⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 289.

¹¹⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 290.

¹¹⁶ Kristof Struys, "Relationship in God and the Salvation of Humankind: Towards a Relational Theology," in *Theology and Conversation*, ed. Jacques Haers and Peter de Mey (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 233.

God is love within himself can he be love for us.... God is love. Love is that which reconciles unity and multiplicity; it is the uniting unity in threeness.¹¹⁷

Kasper's pneumatologically conditioned trinitarian theology of the Trinity clarifies, re-synthesises and elevates classical elements of the Christian doctrine of God. The Spirit reveals the God-ness of God and incorporates the faithful into the communion of love of the Father and the Son. For Kasper, the mutual glorification of the Spirit with the Father and Son (doxology) is intrinsically linked to the saving work of the Spirit. Kasper links doxology and soteriology through reflection on Jesus' high-priestly prayer (John 17).

For Kasper, Jesus' high-priestly prayer offers a summary of the entire doctrine of the Trinity. It points to the eternal doxology between the Father and the Son. The Spirit is the relation in God who "is and effects the concrete presence of the eternal doxology of the Father and the Son in the Church and in the world. He is the eschatological accomplishment of the glory of God; he is its presence within the confines of history."¹¹⁸ The Spirit effects communion with God in history and thus links doxology and soteriology. The glory of God is the fulfilment, liberation and salvation of creation. Kasper's central thesis is summarised thus:

[T]he meaning of humanity and the world, and the life and truth of humanity and the world, consist in the glorification of the triune God, and through this glorification we are incorporated into the intra-trinitarian glorification and we have communion with God.¹¹⁹

Father and Son know and love one another through relations of mutual giving and receiving. In the Spirit, this love includes creation. At the heart of Jesus' high-priestly prayer, the Spirit is given to incorporate the faithful into the unity of the Father and the Son. The nature of the unity between Father and Son is to include 'the other' in his or her freedom and uniqueness:

[It] is not a rigid, monolithic, uniformist and tyrannical unity which excludes, absorbs or suppresses every kind of otherness. A unity of that kind would be an impoverishment. God's unity is fullness and even overflowing fullness of selfless giving and bestowing, of loving self-outpouring; it is a unity that does not exclude but includes; it is a living, loving being with and for one another ... [C]ommunion is thus a union of persons and at the same time maintains the primacy of the always unique person.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 295.

¹¹⁸ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 304.

¹¹⁹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 304.

¹²⁰ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 307.

The Spirit enables the self-bestowal of God's love and giftedness in and through relationship. Kasper writes that "because God in his perfection and simplicity is everything and does not possess anything, he can give only himself. He can only be a pure giving and bestowing of himself. God's oneness must be thought of as love that exists only in the giving of itself."¹²¹ Furthermore, God's unity, in fact God's 'essence' consists solely in self-giving to another. God's unity and God's identity as love presuppose God's relationality. Kasper shows that his theology of God as trinitarian personal relations leads to ever expanding understandings of love:

The Father is purely a giver and sender. He is thus the unoriginated origin of divine love, a pure source, a pure overflowing. The Son receives life, glory and power from the Father; but he does not receive it in order to keep it for himself, to possess it, and to take full enjoyment of it for himself; rather, he receives it in order to empty himself of it (Phil. 2.6f) and to pass it on. Love that terminated in the two-in-oneness of the lovers, and did not selflessly pour out beyond itself, would be another form of egoism. The Son is therefore the mediator; he is even pure mediation, a pure passing on. Finally, in the Spirit the faithful receive the gift of the Father through the Son, so that they may share this gift. The Spirit is nothing by himself; he is pure receiving, pure donation and gift; as such he is pure fulfillment, eternal joy and blessedness, pure endless completion. Since he is the expression of the ecstasy of love in God, God is, in and through him, an eternal movement of pure exuberance reaching beyond himself. As gift within God, the Spirit is God's eschatological gift to the world; he is the world's definitive sanctification and completion.¹²²

The three persons in God are identified by the way one 'being of love' exists: the Father as pure self-giving can only be such with a Son who receives; the Son can only receive himself in relation to the Father and by giving himself back to the Father; this reciprocal love can only be pure self-giving if it passes to a third in whom this love exists as pure receiving.

Kasper shows that the perichoretically understood trinitarian theology of interpersonal relationship is central to Jesus' high-priestly prayer. The role of the Spirit is pivotal:

Only because God is perfect freedom in love within himself can he also be freedom in love in dealing with what is outside of himself. Because in his very being he is one with himself through being one with another, he is able to empty himself out in history and in this very emptying reveal his glory. Because in himself God is pure gift, he is able to give himself in the Holy Spirit; as the innermost being of God, the Spirit is at the same time the outermost, the condition of possibility of creation and redemption ... through the Spirit soteriology ends in doxology; at the end of time all of reality will be incorporated into this doxology when God is 'all in all' (1Cor. 15.28).¹²³

¹²¹ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 306.

¹²² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 308.

¹²³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 311.

The three divine relations of love are inconceivable in isolation. God's dynamism is known in the self-communication of God (Father), the self-emptying of God (Son) and the incorporation of creatures by God into God's communion (Spirit). God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, breathed by the Spirit into history for the salvation of the world, shows that "the meaning of being is the selflessness of love."¹²⁴ Though Kasper affirms a traditionally Eastern approach for theology that begins with attention on the Father as source of love, he shows that his Spirit-centred theology of the Trinity, that conceives of one divine nature that communicates and empties itself in love, preserves the core of Western theology.¹²⁵

The concluding words of *The God of Jesus Christ* affirm the importance of Kasper's commitment to making a theology of the Spirit central for trinitarian theological discourse today:

Precisely because this confession [of the Trinity] takes seriously the Godness of God, his freedom in love, it is able to rescue the freedom in love and for love that has been given us by God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, and thus rescue the humanity of man at a time when it is most threatened.¹²⁶

Conclusion

In the new introduction to *The God of Jesus Christ*¹²⁷ Kasper makes use of the term 'kenosis theology' to describe his pneumatologically-conditioned Trinitarian theology. This is a significant development in the light of the terminology of 'Spirit-christology' that he used in

¹²⁴ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 310.

¹²⁵ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 314.

¹²⁶ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 316.

¹²⁷ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, xxiv. In his doctoral study of the development of Kasper's Spirit Christology, Thomas Petriano concludes that in *The God of Jesus Christ* there is a decisive shift away from the strong foundational argument in *Jesus the Christ* that the life and destiny of Jesus Christ are best understood as fruit of the Spirit's work in the history of salvation in favour of the more classical Logos theology. See Petriano, "The Pneumatology of Walter Kasper," 296-99. As if to refute Petriano's critique, Kasper makes clear in the new introduction to *The God of Jesus Christ* that an understanding of God as Trinity presumes a Spirit-christology. While it is true that Kasper chooses to use the term "kenosis theology" to describe his pneumatologically-conditioned trinitarian theology, it is clear he does so to accentuate that in the Spirit, God's love is known as love that suffers with and for the beloved. God's love ultimately sets the human person free. Kasper draws attention to a kenotic understanding of the Trinity in the new introduction that he acknowledges was 'somewhat underdeveloped' in his original work. However, he insists that the consistent implication of his trinitarian theology is that God's freedom in love is mediated in its fullness through the life and destiny of Jesus Christ, in whom and through whom the Spirit eternally breathes life and love.

Jesus the Christ. The relation between christology and the Trinity remained undeveloped in *Jesus the Christ*. However, in *The God of Jesus Christ* Kasper argues that 'kenosis theology' deepens understanding of God in line with the Augustinian analogy of the nature of self-giving inter-personal love. This understanding is dependent on the role of the Spirit in the trinitarian relations that give, receive and extend love.

The trinitarian theology laid out in *The God of Jesus Christ* reclaims the vital role of the Spirit for interpreting human experience. The Spirit's role is central to God's *kenosis* in history. The self-giving love of God, in the Spirit, brings about creation, offers salvation and promises hope for life's flourishing. Kasper's reflections on Jesus' high-priestly prayer point to the central role of the Spirit in revealing God's identity as eternal, free and unifying self-giving love. Kasper is convinced of the Spirit's importance in Trinitarian theology for incorporating creation into the dynamic of inner-trinitarian *kenotic* love. Creaturely participation in the unity of love between the Father and the Son, effected by the Spirit, grounds and fulfils human life. Life and love originate in the Father, are mediated in the Son and fulfilled in the Spirit. The perichoretic action of the immanent Trinitarian 'persons' is revealed in history as God's free self-emptying love indwelling in persons and communities. The Spirit's gifts of love overflow into history and incorporate that history into the life and love of God.

For Kasper, *kenosis* christology is a necessary development of *logos* christology and an expansion of his Spirit-christology. It is also the starting point for development of his pneumatologically conditioned trinitarian theology. *Kenosis* christology points to the meaning in history of perichoretic self-giving trinitarian relations. God's love is not self-contained. God is pure relations of self-bestowing love. God's love overflows into creation and history. The Spirit is the bond of unity within God and between humanity and divinity. Furthermore, the Spirit is the pre-condition of God's saving action in history. The Spirit invites human participation in the creative and saving power of God. In this way, the Spirit brings about new

life and hope. The newness of the Spirit's work is discerned where space is made for the creative fruits of divine-human unity to emerge. Such unity does not absorb, ignore or minimise difference. In the Spirit, difference is set free and uniqueness fulfilled. The work of the Spirit is known in the self-communication of God in the *Logos*. In the breathing of the Spirit, known in the Resurrection and Pentecost events, the *Logos* is eternally missioned into history in and through Jesus Christ. To assure the success of this mission, the Spirit bestows gifts or charisms on human beings to enable and encourage them to bring about the salvation of history. The Spirit works to fulfil the promises of God to 'be there' with creatures in history. The truth of the experience of the creative and saving work of the Spirit lies in the confession that God is pure relations of freedom-in-love.

Pneumatology is central to the development of Kasper's Trinitarian theology. It grounds his understanding of God as dynamic mutual relations that go beyond God's own pluriform life to incorporate and bring all creation to fulfilment. The Holy Spirit creates and shares the unity-in-love that is the 'essence' of God. Furthermore, the perichoretic nature of the persons of the Trinity reveals the nature of our humanity: we are made in the image of a God of mutual relation and find our fulfilment in the Holy Spirit who leads us into communion with the God of freedom and self-giving love. Kasper summarises his doxological and soteriological trinitarian theology: "the God of history ... has disclosed himself in a concrete way through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."¹²⁸ This disclosure is our source of hope. These pneumatological foundations lead to consideration of Kasper's understanding of the role of the Spirit in sustaining and animating the constant newness of Jesus Christ through the communion and mission of the Church. It is to this theme we now turn.

¹²⁸ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 315.

Chapter 4: The Holy Spirit in Kasper's Ecclesiology – *The Catholic Church*

*Even the churches run the risk of succumbing
to what threatens all institutions:
the danger of institutional rigidity,
of institutional self-interest, of power, manipulation and abuses
for the sake of authority and self-interest of the institutions themselves.
Those dangers have seized the churches often enough in their history.
For that reason a lot of people think that it is no longer possible
to discern any trace
of the original Spirit of Jesus in the churches.¹*

*The doctrine of the Church can only be dealt with
within the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.²*

Introduction

The previous two chapters have shown that Kasper's christology and trinitarian theology are deeply pneumatological. This chapter now explores the identity and role of the Holy Spirit in Kasper's ecclesiology. I will focus on his more recently published book *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission*.³ In the preface to *The Catholic Church* Kasper states that he had always wanted to write this book after his first two monographs, *Jesus the Christ* and *The God of Jesus Christ*, and before the end of his teaching career. However, other responsibilities prevented him from doing so.⁴ Eight years of life in academia separate the publications of *Jesus the Christ* and *The God of Jesus Christ* while twenty nine years of ecclesial leadership separate those of *The God of Jesus Christ* and *The Catholic Church*. Kasper writes that he values his later pastoral and leadership responsibilities as rich sources of

¹ Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, trans. V. Green (Kent: Burns and Oats, 1976), 15.

² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 135.

³ Original publication: Walter Kasper, *Katholische Kirche: Wesen, Wirklichkeit, Sendung* (Freiburg: Herder, 2011).

⁴ Kasper originally wanted to call *The Catholic Church* book "The Church of Jesus Christ" but was prevented from doing so as this title had been previously allocated to one of the Walter Kasper Collected Writings (published only in German) as *Die Kirche Jesu Christi*, ed. George Augustin and Klaus Krämer, vol. 11, Walter Kasper Gesammelte Schriften (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 2008). *Die Kirche Jesu Christi* has the following major sections: *Die Kirche Jesu Christi – auf dem Weg zu einer Communitio – Ekklesiologie* (The Church of Jesus Christ – on the way to a Communitio-ecclesiology); *Der Weg der Kirche nach dem Konzil* (The Way of the Church after the Council); *Die Kirche als universales Sakrament des Heils* (The Church as the Universal Sacrament of Salvation); *Die Communitio - Struktur der Kirche* (The Communitio - Structure of the Church).

growth and maturation for his ecclesiology.⁵ These involvements include theological secretary of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops (1985), Bishop of the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart (1989-1999), Co-chair of the International Commission for Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue (1991-1999), Cardinal of the universal Church (1999-), president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews (2001-2010).

The 2011 publication of the German edition of *The Catholic Church* occurred in the year following Kasper's retirement from official ministry commitments and in time to mark the 50th anniversary celebrations of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. In short, while *The Catholic Church* is the third book in what could be termed a 'pneumatological trilogy,' the questions with which the Church is now grappling differ greatly from those which Kasper was addressing in his first two dogmatic works. Nevertheless, a recurring and deepening pneumatological theme is evident. An examination of the book's index reveals more than 55 references to pneumatology or the Holy Spirit.⁶ These references alert the reader to the central claim of the book: the Church's nature, life and mission are best understood as the work of the Holy Spirit.

This chapter will proceed in seven steps. First, it will explore how Kasper understands ecclesiology as a function of pneumatology. Second, it will show how the Spirit functions in Kasper's theology of Church as the people of God, body of Christ and temple of the Holy Spirit. Third, the chapter will examine Kasper's pneumatological interpretation of the four classical identity marks of the Church: unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. The fourth section will focus on the Holy Spirit in Kasper's ecclesiology of *communio*. Fifth, the chapter will examine how pneumatology shapes Kasper's understanding of 'offices' of the Church. The sixth step will examine Kasper's understanding of the Church's identity as mission and

⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 3.

⁶ This simple survey of references shows an interesting comparison with the number of references for the same categories in the indexes of *Jesus the Christ*: 8 and *The God of Jesus Christ*: 49.

dialogue. Finally, the chapter will outline Kasper's understanding of the Spirit as leading the Church into new forms of ministries.

Ecclesiology as a Function of Pneumatology

Unlike his first two monographs, Kasper begins his ecclesiological work in *The Catholic Church* with a personal reflection. Choosing this approach, he explains, means not writing about the Church in a lifeless, academic or detached way. He writes: “[R]ather, I wanted to write about the very Church in which I have now lived more than three quarters of a century and in which I feel at home; the Church which I still love despite some of its weaknesses and disappointments and for which I have worked and committed my whole life.”⁷ At the outset, Kasper acknowledges that one of the greatest challenges in reflecting on the Catholic Church today is not only the good that is done in its name, but also its failings and mistakes.⁸ However, while Kasper believes that to talk about the church is to talk about one's experience of being part of the Church –“ecclesiology always involves personal testimony”⁹– he also makes clear that ecclesiology does not emerge only out of personal church experiences. It arises out of the common faith experience of the Church, both past and present. For this reason Kasper asserts: “[I]f one wishes not to treat the topic Church only historically or sociologically, then one has to give an account of one's own faith and life *in and with* the Church.”¹⁰ He writes that “if we want to know what the Church is, then we must not describe the reality of the Church from the outside ... we must first let the Church itself say what and who it is and then proceed from that self-conception.”¹¹ To illustrate his methodological commitment to standing with and within the tradition for ecclesiological work, Kasper begins with an account of his formative years in Tübingen and Munich where

⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 1.

⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 1.

⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 1.

¹⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 1. (Italics mine)

¹¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 39.

he learned to appreciate the ecclesiality of theology. He acknowledges the legacies of the pneumatological, ecclesial and historical understandings of Church and Tradition of Johann Adam Möhler and John Henry Newman. In particular, he notes that Möhler, a student and later professor at Tübingen (1825-35), especially in his *Unity in the Church* (1825) and *Symbolism* (1832), “broke open an inflexible, purely institutional understanding of the Church and developed a decidedly pneumatocentric ecclesiology.”¹² While Kasper places his own work in line with Möhler, he goes further in situating ecclesiology clearly within the context of pneumatology:

During the controversies of the 1970s, I needed time to define my own way more precisely (on the basis of the Tübingen tradition), and to systematically unpack my own ecclesiological approach. In analogy to the Pneuma-Christology explored in *Jesus the Christ*, I first developed an ecclesiology from a pneumatological perspective. In the creed, the confession of the ‘one holy Church’ stands within the context of the confession of the Holy Spirit. Hence, *ecclesiology must not be developed only as a doctrine of an institution, but has to be dealt with in the context of pneumatology and the entire diversity of charisma in the Church.*¹³

Support for Kasper’s placement of ecclesiology firmly within pneumatology is found in the 3-fold structure of the Christian creeds. These ancient statements of Christian belief understand that the Church is placed within the broad and inclusive saving work of the Spirit:

[T]he first article opens the perspective for the whole of Creation, the second unfolds the universal significance of Jesus Christ, and the third article, which says of the Holy Spirit that he has spoken through the prophets, also points to the whole of God’s history with mankind. The Church is thus placed within the context of the whole of salvation history, even the entire history of humanity, which, as a whole, is oriented toward eschatological fulfilment. It is a sign of hope that points ahead to the new heaven and the new earth. Ecclesiology must be dealt with within this overall context. In addition, by placing ecclesiology within pneumatology it becomes obvious that the Church is more than just an organization or institution; it is one form of God’s Holy Spirit acting in history.¹⁴

The Church is one form in which the Holy Spirit acts in history to bring about the work of salvation of Jesus Christ.¹⁵ For Kasper, the Church should always be interpreted in the light of the God of Jesus Christ and God’s Holy Spirit. The Spirit reminds the Church of its source: the dynamic, trinitarian life of God. Kasper writes: “[T]he Church does not live out of itself

¹² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 137.

¹³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 21. (Italics mine)

¹⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 67.

¹⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 67.

but from the self-revealing love of the triune God, and it does not live for itself but in the inward and outward communication of love.”¹⁶ The Church does not ‘possess’ the Spirit, nor is it to be equated with the Spirit. The Church is at the service of the Spirit who reveals the overflowing love of God, mediated through Jesus Christ.

Kasper draws on rich and diverse sources for describing the Church as Spirit-led: “Holy Scripture, the testimony of the liturgy and the Church Fathers, the great theologians of the past, the documents of the magisterium, the testimony of the saints and the whole lived and suffered history of the Church in the past as well as in the present.”¹⁷ The faith experience of the whole church, not just of a select few or those from a select period in history, provides access to knowledge of the Spirit’s life and work. However, for Kasper the Spirit can be discerned especially in the experience of the vulnerable and marginalised.

According to Kasper, the central ecclesiological legacy of Vatican II, which he defines as “the compass for the way of the Church into the twenty-first century,”¹⁸ is the recognition that the Spirit leads the Church. The Council affirmed that the Catholic tradition is “not a kind of mechanical acceptance, but rather, a living, ecclesial process, guided by the Holy Spirit, which occurs in the area of doctrine as well as, moreover, the entire life of the Church.”¹⁹ The

¹⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 77. As early as 1965, coinciding with the closure of the Second Vatican Council, Kasper was already clear about the relationship between the Church and God’s work of salvation. See Walter Kasper, “The Church under the Word of God,” *Concilium* 4 (1965): 89. Here Kasper writes, drawing on Aquinas: “[T]he act of faith finds its last end not in a creedal formula, but in the content of the faith expressed in the formula, which ... consists in the very truth of God himself.... The Church, therefore, can never exhaust the whole of divine truth, which has appeared to us in bodily form in Christ Jesus (Col. 1. 19; 2. 9). The Word of God always remains greater than anything that can be said about it in human speech.... It is the Church’s task to harvest the wisdom of all nations and of every age, in order to continue her growth in the knowledge and experience of the divine fullness and the riches of God (Eph. 3.19). The transcendence and universal validity of the Word of God forbid us to confine it within fixed and developed forms and formulae. No reformulation, no matter how true it is or may be, is a *non plus ultra*; it is rather a simple beginning, a signpost, which directs us out beyond itself into the eternal mystery of God himself.”

¹⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 1. Kasper elaborates on the testimony of the suffering Church later in the book: “[P]ower and strength ... in today’s Church become obvious in the number of martyrs, countable only in thousands, of the past and the beginning of this century. They did not bend their knees in front of tyrants or new idols. They put up resistance and for their faith they accepted prisons and camps, humiliation and torture and finally death. At present, Christians are the most persecuted group of people in the world.” *Ibid.*, 333.

¹⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 11.

¹⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 12.

Spirit functions, according to Kasper, “to keep the Tradition constantly young and fresh.”²⁰ In considering the question of how the Church might continue into the future, he states: “[T]he Church is more than a sheer human institution ... rather, it is led and constantly renewed by God’s Spirit.”²¹

For Kasper, the Spirit calls the Church to be dynamic, open, contemporary and relevant. He describes the freshness that the Spirit brings to the Church as God’s unexpected in-breaking that opens up the future and brings about reform:

[R]eform does not only mean a return to the origin or to a form of Tradition previously perceived as authentic. It means a renewal, so that the old, original and lastingly valid *Traditio* does not appear old but newly asserts itself in its newness and comes to shine anew.... Renewal, rather, asserts the biblical understanding of ‘new’ in the sense of gracious, non-derivable, unused²² and continuously surprising eschatological newness.²³

For Kasper, the Spirit is the soul and source of ecclesial renewal. This assertion, made explicit in *The Catholic Church*, has been present in many of Kasper’s works. For example, in a 1974 Dutch publication *Geest-Christus-Kerk*, Kasper was already emphasising the dependency of ecclesiology on pneumatology:

[O]ne should not see the charismatic dimension of the Church within the framework of the institutional structures; rather, institutional structures should be understood inversely as a consequence, as signs and materialisations of the sending of the Spirit. The charismatic dimension is the foundation and root of the Church as institution.²⁴

In the same publication, Kasper writes that “coming together as church happened after Easter, ‘in the Spirit’ ... in such a way that the Spirit connected the word and work of the earthly Jesus to the group of pre-Easter followers. The continuity between Christ and the church is

²⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 14.

²¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 3.

²² The original German word *unverbraucher*, for which the translator has given the English word *unused*, can also be translated as *unspent* or *unconsumed*, which I think more effectively conveys the Spirit’s inexhaustibility and constant availability.

²³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 14.

²⁴ Kasper, “Geest-Christus-Kerk,” 59. This publication was presented as part of a *Festschrift* for Edward Schillebeeckx. English translation of title: Spirit-Christ Church: Theological Bearings Offered by Edward Schillebeeckx. (Original text: *[I]n de kerk moet men de charismatische dimensie niet zien binnen het kader van de institutionele structuren; veeleer moet men omgekeerd de institutionele structuren begrijpen als consequentie, als tekenen en materialisering van de zending van de Geest. De charismatische dimensie is grondslag en wortel van de kerk als instituut.*)

primarily carried on by the Spirit.”²⁵ Thus, according to Kasper, the Spirit continually communicates the life and work of Jesus Christ through the life and ministry of the Church.

In a 1976 article, “The Church as Sacrament of the Spirit,” Kasper develops his earlier work on the relationship between pneumatology and ecclesiology. Here he writes that “the Church is ... better understood as a function, better, a sacrament of the Spirit. Instead, we often understand the Spirit as a function and functionary of the Church.”²⁶ Several other publications that focus on the pneumatological foundation of ecclesiology are echoed in *The Catholic Church*.²⁷

[The Spirit] reminds the Church of all that Jesus said and did [Jn 14.26] and leads it always dynamically into all truth [Jn 16.13]. [The Spirit] makes sure that the Church remains faithful to its origin and so keeps its identity and he leads it at the same time prophetically deeper and deeper into the once-and-for-all revealed truth of Jesus Christ.²⁸

For Kasper, the Spirit is the heartbeat of the Church. He writes that the Spirit “builds up the Church, maintains it, quickens and animates it, lets it grow, orders and leads it.”²⁹ For this reason, Kasper insists, the Church must continually listen to the Spirit.³⁰

Kasper images the Church as a ‘sacrament’ not only of Christ but also of the Spirit and employs the term “universal sacrament of salvation.”³¹ However, he is careful to avoid

²⁵ Kasper, “Geest-Christus-Kerk,” 60. (Original text: *De aaneensluiting tot kerk gebeurde na pasen ‘in de Geest’; maar ze gebeurde zo, dat de Geest daarbij aanknoopte aan woord en werk van de aardse Jezus en aan de leerlingengroep van vóór pasen. De continuïteit tussen Christus en de kerk is dus primair overgebracht door de Geest.*)

²⁶ Kasper, “Die Kirche als Sakrament des Geistes,” 15. (Original text: “*Die Kirche wird ... als Funktion, besser als Sakrament des Geistes verstanden. Wir dagegen verstehen den Geist oft als Funktion and Funktionär der Kirche.*”)

²⁷ See for example Walter Kasper, “Die Heilssendung der Kirche in der Gegenwart,” in *Pastorale-Handreichung für den Pastoralen Dienst*, ed. Karl Lehmann (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1970); Walter Kasper, “Geest-Christus-Kerk”; Walter Kasper, “Die Kirche als Universales Sakrament des Heils” (paper presented at the Glaube im Prozess: Christsein nach dem 11. Vatikanum, Freiburg, 1984); Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church*.; Walter Kasper, “Church as Communion,” *Communio* 13, no. 2 (1986); Walter Kasper, “The Holy Spirit and Ecumenical Dialogue: Theological and Practical Dimensions,” in *Duquesne University Annual Holy Spirit Lecture and Colloquium* (Pittsburgh PA: Duquesne University, 2006).

²⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 136.

²⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 136.

³⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 137. Also see O’Connell, “Listen to the Spirit,” 23-4. In this interview Kasper reaffirms the need to listen to the Spirit present in the whole Church in discerning pastoral questions: “Often pastors want to control human life. It’s clericalism. They don’t trust people and therefore don’t respect the conscience of people. Of course, we have to have guidelines from the Gospel and remind people of the commandments of the Lord, but then we should trust that the Holy Spirit is working in the hearts and in the conscience of our people.”

triumphalism or narrowness when using this descriptor: “[T]he Church shaped in the image of Christ is Church under the Cross and in the shadow of the Cross.”³² The Church is a sacrament of the human-divine unity of Jesus Christ and sign and instrument of the universal salvation mediated by Jesus Christ in the Spirit. Kasper describes three dimensions of the sacramental nature of the Church. First, the Church’s external social-institutional dimensions are finite historical realities that contain, but also point beyond themselves, to the church’s ‘beginning in fullness,’ that is, to the person and work of Christ.³³ Second, the sacramental nature of the Church is revealed in the lived experience of communities of faith, hope and love. As it makes its way in history toward full unity with the living God, the Church recognises its constant need for conversion and renewal. Third, the Church as sacrament moves under the inspiration of the Spirit toward the eschatological fulfilment of the Reign of God.³⁴ For Kasper the future has a claim on the life and mission of the Church. Kasper advocates for new theological language to communicate these three interconnected and dynamic dimensions of the Church’s sacramental nature. He employs the term *sacramentum futuri*. As a sacrament of the future, Kasper writes, “in the inner order of the Church, and the interplay in the unity within the diversity of the manifold charismas, services and ministries ... [and] with all its human weaknesses and afflictions which belong to this world, the Church is a real foretaste of the eschatological glory when at the end God will be all in all (1 Cor.

³¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 78. See also Walter Kasper, “The Theological Foundation of Human Rights,” *The Jurist* 50 (1990): 165. Here Kasper writes: “The Church, especially today, is judged by its own practice. Its prophetic defense of human rights can only be credible if it is perceived by others to be just and merciful itself. Its service to human rights thus pledges the Church to a constant examination of conscience and a continuous purification and renewal of its own life, laws, institutions, and conduct.”

³² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 80.

³³ See Walter Kasper, “Vom Geist und Wesen des Katholizismus. Bedeutung, Wirkungsgeschichte und Aktualität von Johann Sebastian Dreyes und Johann Adam Möhlers Wesensbestimmung des Katholizismus,” *Theologische Quartalschrift* 183, no. 3 (2003): 209 Here Kasper writes, following Möhler, that “Tradition is not simply the organic unfolding of its beginnings. Rather, the Church relates to its ‘beginning in fullness’ in a dialectic dual movement.” Original text: *Die Tradition (ist) nicht einfach die organische Entfaltung des Anfangs, vielmehr verhält sich die Kirche in einer dialektischen Doppelbewegung zum ‘Anfang in der Fülle’.*) See also Kasper, “The Church under the Word of God,” 90. Here Kasper writes: “[T]he Church cannot go beyond her origin: nor can she ever come up to this starting-line; in this world she remains a Pilgrim Church; she is ever *in via*. In other words, no teaching of the Church can fully plumb the depths and the riches of meaning in her origin.”

³⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 80.

15.28).”³⁵ In the Spirit, the fullness or ‘completion’ of the Church comes from the future, not only the past and present.

The Spirit and Conciliar Models of Church

After establishing the nature of the relationship between pneumatology and ecclesiology, Kasper proceeds to describe three specific conciliar models of the Church’s self-understanding in relation to the Spirit: the Church as the people of God, the Church as the body of Christ and the Church as the temple of the Holy Spirit.³⁶

The People of God

Kasper sees the symbol ‘people of God’ as the “theocentric and doxological architecture of the Church.”³⁷ The Church, as the sacramental people of God, is icon of the trinitarian God who is self-giving, self-limiting, inter-relational love. The image ‘people of God,’ points to the organic and dynamic reality of three ‘persons’ in God, the Trinitarian symbol.³⁸ Kasper shows that while some interpretations of the term ‘people of God’ lead to sociological or political interpretations of church, in contrast, “the Bible speaks of the Church not simply as a people; it speaks of *the* people of God ... the Bible uses the salvation-historical term λαός [laos] in the sense of the people chosen by God and set apart from all other nations.”³⁹ *Laos*, Kasper writes, is a theologically foundational term for articulating the nature of the Church as the people of God:

³⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 82.

³⁶ LG 17. Vatican II Council, *Lumen Gentium* (hereafter *LG*), The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, in Austin Flannery, ed. *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, vol. 1 (Northport, NY: Costello, 1996), 22.

³⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 119.

³⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church* 126-128. See also Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 152. Here Kasper writes: “[A]ccording to the council, the mystery of the church means that in the Spirit we have access through Christ to the Father, so that in this way we may share in the divine nature. The communion of the church is prefigured, made possible and sustained by the communion of the Trinity ... the church is, as it were, the icon of the trinitarian fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

³⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 120. (Italics mine)

The most important passage in the New Testament speaking of λαός is found in 1 Peter 2.9f: You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people to be a personal possession to sing the praises of God who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were a non-people and now you are the people of God; once you were outside his pity; now you have received pity.⁴⁰

The people of God (*laos*) are called together by God and for God. This symbol for the Church grows from the covenant identity of the Jews described in the Hebrew Scriptures. Abraham was called by God to form a people for God. God revealed God's name to Moses, a name that symbolised God's promise of closeness and fidelity. Moses was commissioned to gather God's people for their journey together through history. The Old Testament prophets continually reminded the people of God's faithfulness and called them back to their self-understanding as God's beloved.⁴¹ Finally, a renewed and expansive relationship with God's 'People' was revealed through the faithfulness of God in the particular history and destiny of Jesus Christ in the Spirit.⁴² Kasper points out that the uniqueness of the New Testament understanding of the Church as the people of God lies in the idea of a community 'journeying together': "the term people of God expresses the being-on-the-way in history of God's people and, at the same time, God's being with us and among us on this way."⁴³

Vatican II reclaimed and made the image of the Church as the people of God, or the '*laos*' of God, central to its work of renewal. *Lumen gentium* describes the Church as a whole people, not as individuals. The Church is a gathered (LG 2), charismatically gifted (LG 4) and missioned (LG 17) community. It is formed in relation to the ongoing self-revelation of God who "instructed them gradually, making both himself and his intentions known in the course

⁴⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 121. Translation note: the original German text *sein besonderes Eigentumsvolk*, translated as 'personal possession,' can be better translated in a more relational way as 'God's own people.' The original German word for *pity* used by Kasper is *Erbarmen*. I think a more appropriate translation is 'mercy.' See for example, Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*. The German title of this book, *Barmherzigkeit: Grundbegriffe des Evangeliums - Schlüssel christlichen Leben*, draws on the root word *erbarmen*.

⁴¹ See Mark J. DeCelles, "The Faithfulness of God in the Theology of Walter Kasper" (unpublished Doctoral Thesis; Dept. of Theology, The Catholic University of America, 2016), 236. DeCelles argues that God's faithfulness is a constant theme that underpins Kasper's work. DeCelles makes a tentative link between this theme and Kasper's pneumatology: "For Kasper, it is ultimately through the Spirit that God does justice to the world, which is to say that the Spirit demonstrates God's overbidding faithfulness to creation."

⁴² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 120-2.

⁴³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 122.

of their history” (LG 9). From this foundation, the hierarchical structure of the Church is understood to be at the service of the continual growth of the identity and mission of the people of God through encouragement and coordination of the Spirit’s charisms. The people of God image shapes an ecclesiology that is future oriented, inclusive and missionary:

It was thus possible to explain the Church not solely from one founding act at a specific point in history, but to understand it within the whole context of salvation history. At the same time [the term ‘people of God] allowed the novelty of the New Testament covenant people, which is based not on biological descent but on the covenant founded in Jesus Christ and written into the heart by the Holy Spirit to be retained. Against tendencies of individual salvation it could emphasise that God does not save people individually, independent of a reciprocal relation. Instead he calls and sanctifies them as a community. In addition, the term ‘people of God’ helped the council to say that all the baptized participate in the priestly, prophetic and royal dignity of God’s people.⁴⁴

Kasper writes that the image affirms that “faith is made possible, carried and supported by the ‘we’ of faith, by the Church as the one people of God embracing synchronically and diacronically all time and space.”⁴⁵ As eschatological sign, the Reign of God, toward which the people of God are moving together, will be known in its fullness only in the future. The Church’s role, that of the whole people of God, is to announce the coming of God’s Kingdom, to point to signs of it in the midst of history and to contribute to its future fruition through witness, proclamation and prophetic words and actions.

Body of Christ

For Kasper, the inclusive image of the Church as the people of God is not replaced by, but rather, presupposes and brings to ‘fullness’ the image of the body of Christ:

[T]he ecclesiology of the people of God ... places the ecclesiology of the body of Christ more clearly into an eschatological context. For now we are still between the cross and full participation in the resurrection. So, in the New Testament the people of God are on the way along the dusty roads of history towards the eternal destination.⁴⁶

Not only are the people of God ‘on the way’ together in history, but God is on the road with and among them, forming them into Christ’s body. In the Spirit, the people of God become the body of Christ:

⁴⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 123.

⁴⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 126.

⁴⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 122.

Every celebration of the Eucharist contains the communion with all the individual churches celebrating the Eucharist and with the whole Church. In this way the term 'body of Christ' expresses the synchronic and diachronic unity of the Church at all times and places ... the Council emphatically stresses that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church's body. It refrains therefore from speaking of the continuation of the incarnation in the Church and the identification of the Church as Christ's body with Christ himself. It says, rather, that the Church, which is a complex reality growing together out of a divine and human element, is 'by no weak analogy, ... compared to the mystery of the incarnate Word. As the assumed nature, inseparably united to Him, serves the divine Word as a living organ of salvation, so also, in a similar way, does the visible social structure of the Church serve the Spirit of Christ, who vivifies it in the building up of the body.'⁴⁷

The Church as the body of Christ is not monolithic. The body of Christ is found in the many concrete local churches connected across time and space:

[T]he New Testament ecclesia is no longer bound to a geographical political ecclesia. It is in every place where Christians are gathered in Jesus Christ. It is present in each local ecclesia. Yet, as it is the one Lord Jesus Christ who is present in each local ecclesia ... the local church represents the Church and the [whole] Church is present in the local church.⁴⁸

Temple of the Holy Spirit

While, for Kasper, the images of the Church as people of God and body of Christ have a pneumatological foundation, the Church, ultimately, is the temple of the Holy Spirit. He affirms: "All statements about the Church – people of God and body of Christ – are only possible in the Holy Spirit."⁴⁹ Kasper explores this image in four ways. First, in the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ remains present in the Church and the world.⁵⁰ In the founding and missioning ecclesial event of Pentecost, the experience of fulfilment of Jesus' promise to send the Spirit opened a way into the future for the emerging community of disciples. The breathing of the Spirit "repeatedly showed the young Church unexpected and surprising ways

⁴⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 131. Here Kasper quotes *LG* 8.

⁴⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 92.

⁴⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 135. Kasper has published several works that treat the theme of the Spirit as central to the identity, nature and mission of the Catholic Church. See for example: Kasper, "Die Kirche als Sakrament des Geistes," 33-55.; "Kirche-Werk des Heiligen Geistes," in *Freiburger Akademiearbeiten 1979-1989*, ed. Dietmar Bader (Zurich: Freiburger Akademiearbeiten, 1989), 73-92.; "Den Geist Erfahren: In der Welt, in der Kirche, im Persönlichen Leben," *L'Osservatore Romano* 1992, 1.

⁵⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 135.

and opened doors (Acts 4.31; 6.5.10; 10.19; 11.12; 13.2; 14.27; 15.28).”⁵¹ The Spirit, as the soul of the Church, “maintains it, quickens it, animates it, lets it grow, orders and leads it.”⁵²

Second, according to Kasper, Vatican II affirmed that the Church is sacrament, or ‘sign and instrument,’ of the Holy Spirit: “In many passages, Vatican II gave considerable space to the testimony of Scripture and Tradition and emphasised that, in all the Church does, it is a sacrament, i.e. an instrument of the Spirit.”⁵³ Thus, the Church is called to watch and listen to where the Spirit is calling it. Kasper writes that “[t]he Church as a whole has an epiclectic structure”⁵⁴ and therefore must constantly pray for the coming of the Spirit. As sacrament of the Spirit, Kasper claims that the Church’s nature is oriented to the future.

The third approach to understanding the Church as the temple of the Holy Spirit affirms the many gifts or charisms given by the Spirit to the Church for the mission of bringing about God’s Reign. These gifts are a means by which the Church can be prevented from taking on the form of a bureaucracy or a hierarchology:

[T]ime and again [the Spirit] shakes the Church, calls charismatically gifted people who help to keep the apostolic heritage free from encrustations and to make it young and fresh again. Time and again he inspires renewal movements ... which, in times of crisis, open for the Church a new way into the future.”⁵⁵

Kasper points out that early Pauline letters acknowledged the charisms of the Spirit in the whole community, not only in Church leaders. However, later Pauline ecclesiology put limits on earlier understandings about the generous outpouring of the charisms of the Holy Spirit on the churches. Kasper writes that as “Jesus Christ appears more clearly as the head of the Church, the exceptional spiritual gifts of the whole community noticeably withdraw into the

⁵¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 135.

⁵² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 136.

⁵³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 137, 140, 141. Kasper specifically cites *LG* 4, 7, 9, 21, 23; *DV* 8, 21 23; *AGD* 2, 4, 15. Here the concept ‘sacrament’ is used to mean ‘sign and instrument.’ I have drawn from the title of an interview conducted by James S. Torrens S.J. with Kasper for *America* magazine while Kasper was Bishop of Rottenburg-Stuttgart: Walter Kasper, “Sign and Instrument of Good News,” *America* 174, no. 4 (1996): 9-13. The article explores a number of theological and pastoral issues, pointing to the need for the Church to be a sign and instrument of Good News for a hope-filled future for people who are struggling with questions about the Church, its teachings and practices, and for those who have moved away from the Church because it does not connect with their lives and for the world in need of peace and healing.

⁵⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 137.

⁵⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 138.

background in favour of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers.”⁵⁶ Kasper reclaims a pneumatic vision for the Church that recognises the abundance of the Spirit's gifts available for the ministries of the community.⁵⁷ Knowing where and how the gifts of the Spirit can be at the service of the Reign of God has implications for decision-making about the recognition, structuring and ordering of ministries. Kasper sees the ecclesial model of *communio* as the framework for such discernment:

[T]he *communio* structure of the Church is realized in an ordered interaction of different ministries and charismata. The Church is an organism of manifold charisms whose unity realizes itself in a mutually complementing and supporting dynamic interaction. They all have their own specific task and cannot replace, displace or exclude each other. They can fulfil their respective service only in the spirit of *communio* and of listening to each other, in tolerating and correcting each other and in the cooperation of all.... we do well to call [the Church] an open system that cannot be directed or even manipulated from one point or by one instance. In this openness it is possible for the underivable new of the Spirit to show itself in each respective situation of history.⁵⁸

The Church is called to organise its life and ministries according to the Spirit's generous outpouring of charisms:

[D]etermining the Church ... as sacrament of the Holy Spirit excludes ... extremes: the extreme of enthusiasm that excludes the sacramental and ministerial mediation as well as the extreme of a hierarchical-institutional view of the Church which identifies the Church with the ecclesiastical establishment and thereby overlooks the mere sign and service nature of the institution.⁵⁹

Kasper believes that the image of the Church as sacrament of the gifts of the Spirit enables the realisation of the *communio* structure of the Church.

From a fourth and final perspective, Kasper places his pneumatological understanding of the Church as temple or sacrament of the Spirit within the theology of the Trinity. Echoing themes from *Jesus the Christ* and *The God of Jesus Christ*, he understands the Spirit, and thus the Church, not as self-contained but as self-giving. The Church is called to be a sign and instrument of the self-giving love of the Trinity:

If one tries to comprehend more deeply the interaction of the charismata in the Church, especially between ministry and charisma then this can happen in analogy to the inner-trinitarian order. Augustine called the Spirit the love and the gift between Father and Son.

⁵⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 139.

⁵⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 141.

⁵⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 141.

⁵⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 141.

[The Spirit] is God as self-giving, as overflowing love, as ecstasy and at the same time as kenosis because he takes himself back in the love, as it were, and gives the other persons space. He is love that unites and binds together and that, like any true love, does not take over but makes free and gives free.⁶⁰ In this way, as spiritual gifts, ministries and charismata should be totally themselves by giving themselves and particularly by spreading love they are to keep their own freedom and that of others. In their interaction the relational nature of the Church becomes visible again.⁶¹

The Church, understood as sacrament of the Holy Spirit, is icon of the overflow into history of the mutual and freeing love of the Father and Son. In the Spirit, God's love is *kenotic*: it is love that, in giving itself away, creates freedom.⁶²

Pneumatological Interpretations of the Four Marks of the Church

For Kasper, the Church understood as temple or sacrament of the Spirit enables pneumatological interpretations of the Church as 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic.' In line with Vatican II ecclesiology, these descriptors or 'marks' of the Church point beyond themselves to express both a vision of the Church and a call to new expressions of ecclesial life in fidelity to that vision.⁶³

First, Kasper deals with the Church as sign and instrument of unity. He highlights that the concept of ecclesial 'unity' expresses the idea of unanimity, or being of one mind and heart with Christ. Unity does not mean uniformity. It values diversity. Kasper believes that the idea of Church unity must express the *communio* theology of one God who is a diversity of three 'persons' reciprocally existing in each other. The Church is called by the Spirit to be a sign and instrument of unity and a reconciler of differences for a world where estrangement, fear and suspicion keep people and communities isolated from each other.

⁶⁰ See Kasper, *Katholische Kirche*, 211. Original text of this sentence: "*Er ist Liebe, die eint und verbindet und die wie jede wahre Liebe doch nicht vereinnahmt, sondern freisetzt und freigibt.*" I think that the official translation above can be improved: "It is love that unites and binds and like every true love, it does not control, but liberates and releases."

⁶¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 142.

⁶² This understanding is echoed in the title of the publication produced to celebrate Kasper's 80th birthday: Kristin M. Colberg and Robert A. Krieg, eds. *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper: Speaking the Truth in Love*. The call of the Church, icon of the Trinity, is to engage in spiritual conversation, dialogue or communication both within and beyond itself.

⁶³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 152.

Kasper coins the term *communio*-unity to describe the idea of the Church's identity as diversity-in-unity. According to him, the Church can only be a sacrament of unity for the world if it is a credible sign and instrument of unity within itself.⁶⁴ Unity that embraces difference can only be held together through communication. Communication at the service of *communio*-unity does not dissolve or ignore difference. Nor is it suspicious or devaluing of communication partners. It is a communication that models 'journeying together' toward a common future.

Divisions between Christian Churches are a countersign of *communio*-unity. Kasper writes that such divisions "damage [the Church's] credibility and missionary appeal."⁶⁵ The ecumenical movement, in seeking to overcome divisions between Christian churches, raises questions about the nature of ecclesial unity, and points to where and how unity can be concretely experienced without eliminating valued differences among denominations. Kasper situates his pneumatological understanding of the Church's mark of unity within Vatican II's recognition that the Church of Jesus Christ subsists in the Catholic Church (*LG* 8). This ecclesiology affirms and safeguards the indestructible salvational elements found within the Catholic Church while also recognising the Spirit's work in other churches.⁶⁶ In short, Kasper understands that the Church, sacrament of the Spirit, is called to heal disunity and division within and beyond its boundaries.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ See also Walter Kasper, "The Church as Sacrament of Unity," *Communio* XIV, no. 1 (1987): 4. Here Kasper writes: "In Christ the Church is sacrament – a sign and instrument of unity with God and of people with each other."

⁶⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 157.

⁶⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 160. This idea is also found in Walter Kasper, "The Theologically Binding Nature of Unitatis Redintegratio," *One in Christ* 40, no. 2 (2005): 85-92. Here Kasper argues that the Second Vatican Council's documents consistently demonstrate a renewed understanding of the meaning of the Church's call to unity, not a call 'back' to uniformity. See also Walter Kasper, "Vision of Christian Unity for the Next Generation," *Origins* 33, no. 5 (2003): 75. Here he writes that one of his visions of unity, in response to where the Spirit is leading the ecumenical movement, is that "churches remain churches in legitimate diversity and retain the best of their traditions while yet becoming one church that praises God with one voice and gives unanimous witness to the world for justice, reconciliation and peace.... Ecumenism is [thus] not countersigned by loss, but by mutual enrichment, the authentic understanding of which is not that we convert to the other church but that all convert to Christ; and in him, who is our unity and our peace, we shall truly become one."

⁶⁷ Kasper is aware of the immense challenge of the Church in firstly healing its own divisions. See Walter Kasper, "Vatican II: Toward a Multifaceted Unity," *Origins* 45, no. 9 (2015): 156-7. Here Kasper writes: "The

Second, the Church is called to be a sign and instrument of holiness in and for the world. Kasper acknowledges that to profess belief in the holiness of the Catholic Church is not easy for many people today. However, a pneumatological interpretation of the Church's holiness is connected to the root meaning of the word 'holy.' Kasper notes that the Hebrew *kados*, Greek *ἅγιος* and Latin *sanctus* are "derived from the root to 'set apart, select, mark out and exclude.'"⁶⁸ The term expresses God's holiness as transcendence and 'otherness.' Kasper argues that God's transcendent otherness is known and concretely encountered in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Spirit, God's transcendence encounters creaturely finiteness in Jesus' experience of abandonment, finiteness and suffering. For Kasper, a pneumatological understanding of holiness as a mark or feature of the Church communicates a call to the followers of Jesus Christ, to participate in transformation of the realities of suffering. Holiness is a call to mission, especially on behalf of the poor, God's 'holy ones.' The Spirit calls the Church to holiness by leading it beyond self-absorption to actions of mercy and love. Furthermore, the holiness of the Church is not something 'achievable' by human effort alone. The Church must call upon the Spirit to transform hearts towards greater love. Thus, Kasper sees that the Church is call to holiness in every situation where its members and structures address injustice and division.⁶⁹

In referring to holiness as a pneumatological mark of the Church, Kasper recognises that the Church is both a human and divine institution. However, though structural and individual sin weakens and threatens the Church's testimony and mission as a sign and instrument of holiness, it can never destroy the Church's essential spiritual identity as icon of the self-bestowing trinitarian God. For Kasper, despite the personal, sociological and political

ecumenical movement of the 20th century was the response of the Holy Spirit to the signs of the times as a countermovement to the constantly renewed division process (UR, 1; 4)... [It was] something new: dialogue instead of controversy, the endeavour to overcome misunderstanding and prejudice, to learn from one another and to see what one had in common despite the differences."

⁶⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 163. See Kasper, *Katholische Kirche*, 238. (Original text: *Das biblische Wort Heilig ... leitet sich von der Wurzel absondern, aussondern, abgrenzen und ausgrenzen her.*)

⁶⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 167.

reality of sin and sinfulness in the Church, it is theologically impossible to speak of the symbol of Church, dwelling place of the Spirit, as sinful in the same way we might speak of a person or structure as sinful. All human experience of the Church must be measured against its central ecclesiological self-understanding: "Jesus Christ is the subject of the Church and the Holy Spirit its soul."⁷⁰ Sin and sinfulness wound this testimony but can never destroy the Church's central theological identity. Kasper writes: "[B]ecause the Church is holy, there is no other way for it than to carry and suffer vicariously the burden of the sin of its members and of the world in order to heal and sanctify them."⁷¹ The reality of sin in the Church presents a constant call to repentance, renewal and reform.⁷² In short, Kasper's description of the Church as 'dwelling place of the Spirit' calls its members to continual repentance, conversion, healing and transformation. The Church is in constant need of spiritual renewal if it is to be a means of transformation of the world. Kasper affirms Vatican II's teaching that the Church's call to holiness is not reserved for a few but is a universal call to fidelity and responsiveness to the call of the Spirit (*LG* 39). All the baptised are responsible for leading the Church, in a spirit of humility and commitment, toward greater repentance, renewal and reform at the service of a world yearning for mercy and justice.

The third pneumatological mark of identity of the Church is its catholicity. While the term 'catholic' today usually refers to a denomination of Christianity and can suggest narrowness and division, its original meaning is "wholeness in the sense of fullness."⁷³

Kasper understands the term 'catholicity' to be broad and inclusive:

[T]he Church is catholic ... where the whole faith of all times and places is kept without reductions in its fullness, where it is confessed to all peoples and in all cultures for all people regardless of their nationality, sex, ethnic group or culture, where the faith refers to and is lived for all dimensions of humanity, where within the unity space is given to a broadest possible diversity, and where one is prepared in the Holy Spirit to listen to and learn of the ever greater and new of the fullness of Christ. Catholicity means therefore the

⁷⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 172.

⁷¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 172.

⁷² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 173.

⁷³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 174.

opposite of narrowness and short-sighted stubbornness, of a polemic and apologetic mentality of separation; it means broadness, wholeness, fullness and universality.⁷⁴

Ignatius of Antioch employed the term ‘catholic’ in the first century when writing to widely scattered new Christian communities. He recognised the participation of these communities in the fullness or catholicity of Christ’s mission. Drawing on Ignatius’ vision, Kasper writes: “The adjective ‘catholic’ has ... a qualitative meaning in the sense of the fullness of salvation as well as a geographical meaning in the sense of universality.”⁷⁵ He laments that the inclusive understanding of what it means to be catholic has been reduced to denominational affiliation and loyalty.

Since Vatican II, Catholic Church relations with Orthodox and Protestant churches and ecclesial communities have been facilitated through the growth of the ecumenical movement. This movement enables joint explorations, in the Spirit of unity, of the meaning of ‘catholic’ today. According to Kasper, progress toward the fullness of the Church’s catholic identity is the work of the Spirit (*LG* 13). As such, catholicity is both a gift and a vocation for the Church in its growth toward the fullness of Christ:

[The Church] is on the way to growing in the knowledge of the fullness and riches of Christ and to realizing them in all dimensions of its life and of human existence, and to make them present in mission among all peoples and in all cultures, to become everything for everyone and to therefore be particularly with the poor and oppressed to make space again and again in its own ranks for the diverse charismas and to overcome divisions, narrowness and encrustations.⁷⁶

For Kasper, the Church is catholic where “within the unity space is given to a broadest possible diversity and where one is prepared in the Holy Spirit to listen to and learn of the ever greater and new of the fullness of Jesus Christ.”⁷⁷

Fourth, Kasper explores a pneumatological understanding of apostolicity as a mark of Church identity. The word ‘apostle’ means a representative of one who sends.⁷⁸ Kasper

⁷⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 178-9.

⁷⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 175.

⁷⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 178.

⁷⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 179.

⁷⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 182.

explains that the foundational meaning of ecclesial apostolicity is personal testimony of God's self-revelation as freedom-in-love in history. He writes:

The apostles are the original and first witnesses of Jesus' message and his resurrection. It is only through their testimony that we know at all of the resurrection. Without them, the message of Jesus' life and resurrection might have faded away totally unheeded and might be largely forgotten. For this reason the apostles and apostolic testimony pertain constitutively to the revelation event. They and their testimony are therefore the fundament upon which the Church stands, indeed with which it can stand or fall. The Church is built upon the fundament of the apostles and the prophets (Eph. 2.20).⁷⁹

Though not a direct eye-witness to Christ's life, Paul understood himself to be sent by Jesus Christ into mission. Paul, Kasper writes, "claims in his letters to be 'called to be an apostle, set apart for the service of the gospel' [Rom 1.1; 1Cor 1.1; 2 Cor 1.1 et al.]."⁸⁰ The basis of Paul's apostolicity was a direct encounter with the risen Christ. It was also discovered in the midst of community relationships.

Kasper describes apostolicity as the "diachronic identity and continuity of the Church with the Church of the apostles and the Church of all times."⁸¹ Apostolicity involves not only faithfulness to church origins but also to the eschatological vision of Christ. It is a call to the future. Thus, for Kasper, apostolic 'authority' is not simply embedded in a linear process of succession. Apostolic succession is a symbolic continuity of the presence of the risen Christ in the whole community through the power of the Holy Spirit. Kasper writes that "on the one hand, the apostolic heritage is predetermined and, on the other, it is continually newly given in the Holy Spirit."⁸²

Apostolicity, as a mark of ecclesial identity, is an identity marker for the whole Church.⁸³ The Acts of the Apostles show that 'apostolic succession' was understood very concretely in the early Church. The apostles were to ensure that they 'feed' the Church and

⁷⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 182.

⁸⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 184.

⁸¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 183.

⁸² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 185.

⁸³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 186.

not leave the community ‘as orphans’ (Acts 20.28) or ‘neglected.’⁸⁴ Over time, apostolicity became reduced to the narrower idea of a chain of leadership. The term, however, conveys a call to mission.

The systematisation of apostolic succession into leadership ‘offices’ mainly arose to defend the Church against the divisiveness of gnosticism that devalued the historicity of Christ. Kasper notes that Irenaeus of Lyons (died *circa* 202 C.E.) understood apostolic succession pneumatologically. For Irenaeus, structures for the Church’s offices were created for spiritual functions. For example, he called the episcopate to listen, discern and make possible the witnessing of the many, and, Kasper writes, “to see the apostolic succession of the Church as a whole.”⁸⁵ In a similar vein, Kasper notes that the *Traditio apostolica*, believed to be the work of Hippolytus (*circa* 215 C.E.) included a prayer calling for an *epiclesis* of the Spirit on ordinands and the whole gathered congregation. Kasper writes: “the apostolic succession of the bishops [is] sign and instrument of what is conferred and carried by the Holy Spirit [on all], but it is not the ‘object’ [*res*] of continuity and identity in apostolic faith itself.”⁸⁶ He thinks a more inclusive understanding of apostolicity can assist the church to affirm the rights and responsibilities of all the baptised to communicate the Christian tradition to others. With Irenaeus, Kasper affirms a pneumatological understanding of apostolicity that is not limited to a linear and closed idea of continuity with the original apostles.⁸⁷

Over the centuries, debates and controversies have arisen concerning the meaning of an apostolic church. According to Kasper, where there have been the most divisive clashes, such as those between Luther and the authorities of the Catholic Church of his time, “the reciprocal tie between *traditio* and *successio* [had been] largely ignored.”⁸⁸ Christ’s apostolic mission became equated with the sacramental succession of bishops that linked them back to

⁸⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 186.

⁸⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 187-8.

⁸⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 189.

⁸⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 185-7, 195.

⁸⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 191.

the original apostles. Vatican II, especially in *Lumen gentium*, and in continuity with the early church, affirmed an essential difference as well as a unity between tradition and succession. Kasper believes that “apostolic succession in the episcopal office [lies] within the apostolicity of the Church as a whole.”⁸⁹ Furthermore, he writes that, “inspired by Möhler and Newman, Vatican II made clear that, according to the creed, the Church as a whole is apostolic and that all the baptized participate in the truth in Jesus Christ and with this in the apostolic message.”⁹⁰ The apostolic tradition, following Christ in history, arises from the work of the Spirit, is nourished by Scripture and discerned in dialogue with the lived faith experience of the whole people of God. Questions about apostolic succession and authority in leadership are secondary to the call of the whole people of God to discern and witness to the presence of the Risen Christ in history. Catholic tradition is a dynamic, living process of apostolicity. Kasper notes that *Lumen gentium* 12 refers to the *sensus fidei* of the whole people of God as an expression of the Church’s apostolicity.⁹¹ He also notes *Dei verbum*’s pneumatological and eschatological understanding of apostolic tradition. The apostolic tradition of the Church is dynamically and faithfully communicated through the Church’s engagement in dialogue and mission.⁹²

⁸⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 192.

⁹⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 192.

⁹¹ Kasper clearly positions the Church’s teaching on the *sensus fidelium* within the meaning of ecclesial belonging and authority. See Kasper, *An Introduction to Christian Faith*, 141-3. He writes: “The Spirit is not reserved to a particular class in the Church – we are all spiritual (Gal. 6.1). The authority and the mission to bear witness to the ‘cause of Jesus’ in history is vested primarily in the Church as a whole and all its members.... By baptism all have had the eyes of their hearts enlightened (Eph. 1:18) All have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16) and sensitivity to discern what is right (Phil. 1:9-10).... This fundamental truth of primitive Christianity, that the testimony to the faith had been entrusted to all Christians, was for a long time largely forgotten in the Church... The truth of the Gospel can only emerge from a consensus.... All must listen to each other and learn from each other.... In other words, obedience in the Church can never be described as a one-way process; it is an interaction.”

⁹² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 192-4. See DV 8.

The Spirit and the Ecclesiology of *Communio*

In tracing his own story of growth as a theologian, Kasper highlights the year 1985 and specifically his work as theological secretary of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops. This Synod evaluated the reception and challenges of the Second Vatican Council twenty years after its closure. As noted in Chapter One, Kasper played a pioneering role at this Synod in renewing the ecclesiology of *communio* of the early Church.⁹³ He believes this ecclesial model is “one of the central ideas of the Second Vatican Council, perhaps even the leading idea.”⁹⁴ Kasper’s own pneumatological trinitarian theology, laid out in *The God of Jesus Christ*, prepared the way for the Church’s post-Vatican II reception of *communio*-ecclesiology at the 1985 Synod.⁹⁵

The concept soon became evident in Kasper’s publications following the Synod. For example, in *Theology of the Church*, published in German in 1987, he writes that “the question about the Church is subordinate to the question about God.”⁹⁶ In one of Kasper’s seminal articles on post-Vatican II ecclesiology entitled “The Church as *Communio*” he explains the relationship between God as *communio* and *communio*-ecclesiology:

The concept of *communio* integrates various different levels of meaning. Primarily it has nothing to do with structural questions. The questions which have so greatly determined

⁹³ See Page 22, footnote 39.

⁹⁴ Walter Kasper, “The Church as *Communio*,” *New Blackfriars* 74, no. 871 (1993): 232. See also Walter Kasper, “The Council’s Vision for a Renewal of the Church,” *Communio* 17, Winter (1990): 477. Here Kasper writes: “[T]he Extraordinary Synod of 1985 explicitly designated the Council as the Magna Carta of the Church on its way into the third millennium.” Also see Kasper, “The Church as *Communio*,” 233. Here Kasper writes that “only in recent years have dogmatics and canon law succeeded in raising awareness of “*communio*” as a central structural concept in the Council’s documents regarding the essential form and nature of the Church. Since the Extraordinary Bishop[s]’ Synod, which met in Rome in 1985, *communio* has become a much discussed ecclesiological concept.”

⁹⁵ Kasper’s *Der Gott Jesu Christi* was published in 1982, three years before the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops. In the index to this book the reader cannot find a direct reference to *communio* or *communio*-ecclesiology, though the theology that underpins it is definitely present (see chapter three of this thesis). However, in an article published just before the Synod, Kasper examines and draws from the work of Karl Rahner for whom, according to Kasper, “the central and essential concept of Christianity, and in a sense the formula that sums it up, is God’s gracious communication of himself to human beings and the world. This means that the whole of reality is always already aligned towards Jesus Christ, and that its final purpose is salvation. According to this conception, the church is the real symbol and the primal sacrament of this self-communication of the three-fold God in truth and love.” See Kasper, “Die Kirche als Universales Sakrament des Heils.” Reprinted in English in *Theology and Church*. The quote is from this publication, 111.

⁹⁶ Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 153. See also the very early 1965 publication which grounds Kasper’s ecclesiology of the relation between God and the Church: “The Church under the Word of God,” 87-93.

Catholic ecclesiology during the last three centuries, namely regarding the institutional form of the church, the organisation of positions of office, duties etc. are secondary for the concept of *communio*. *Communio* refers primarily to the essence “thing” – (res) in which the church has its roots and for which it lives. It refers to the essence of the Church, its mystery and the transcendental reality of salvation which is revealed for all to see and becomes a reality through it.⁹⁷

For Kasper, the Church is, first and foremost, understood within the mystery of God's interpersonal communion. The Church, understood as symbol of the *communio* of the trinitarian God, is called, particularly through its ministries, to be sign and instrument of creaturely participation in the divine life. At its heart, *communio* theology prizes openness and dialogue. It challenges ecclesiologies that lead to self-absorption and self-enclosure.⁹⁸

In an analysis of the foundations, critiques and affirmations of *communio*-ecclesiology, Richard Lennan draws on Kasper's understanding of the church as *communio*:

[P]roperly understood, communion ecclesiologies promote the engagement of every baptised person in shaping the church in ways that respond to the initiative of the Holy Spirit. Such a church must not only be constructed from the gifts and wisdom of all the baptised, but also be open, in all its dimensions, to that conversion which is inseparable from faithful reception of the Spirit. The processes of that conversion can, of course, be frustrated on every level of the church, but that fact is less an argument against communion ecclesiology, than a manifestation of the need for its authentic reception through the development of the *sensus fidei* of each baptised believer and the *sensus fidelium* of the church as a whole. A church striving to express the implications of *communio* will be one guided by a desire for authentic discernment of the Spirit.⁹⁹

Engagement of the whole people of God in discernment of the promptings of the Spirit expresses the *communio* nature of the Church.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Kasper, “The Church as *Communio*,” 234.

⁹⁸ See also Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 2 and *Theology and Church*, 152. In the latter, Kasper more explicitly develops his understanding of the mystery of the Trinity as that which underpins the identity of the Church as *communio*. He reinforces his position: “The communion of the church is prefigured, made possible and sustained by the communion of the Trinity.... The Church is, as it were, the icon of the Trinitarian fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. This chapter was originally published in German the year after the Extraordinary Synod: Walter Kasper, “Kirche als *Communio*: Überlegungen zur Ekklesiologischen Leitidee des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils,” in *Die Bleibende Bedeutung des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, ed. Franz König (Düsseldorf: Schriften der Katholischen Akademie in Bayern, 1986), 62-84.

⁹⁹ Richard Lennan, “Communion Ecclesiology: Foundations, Critiques, and Affirmations,” *Pacifica* 20, no. 1 (2007): 37.

¹⁰⁰ See also Walter Kasper and Robert Mickens, “The Whole Truth Is Only Found Together,” *The Tablet*, no. 6 (July, 2002): 4. In this interview Kasper speaks of the authority of faith in the Church: “[T]here must be three dimensions.... Firstly there must be the personal responsibility of the pope and of each bishop in his diocese. Then there must be the collegial dimension: contact between the bishop and his priests, and between the pope and the college of bishops. And finally, there must be a third dimension – a dimension of communion. We must listen to the *sensus* and the consensus of the faithful.”

Kasper describes five expressions of *communio*-ecclesiology that illustrate how and where the Spirit calls the Church into its eschatological future. These are (1) the Church of the People of God and the vocation of the laity, (2) the Offices of the Church, (3) Collegiality, (4) Mission and (5) Dialogue.¹⁰¹ I will focus attention on the latter four expressions and reserve analysis of the laity for the next chapter which deals specifically with Kasper's writings on lay ministry.

The Offices of the Church

For Kasper, sacramental ministry expresses the broad New Testament understanding of *diakonia* as service.¹⁰² He notes that in the New Testament there was “no uniform order of ministries or services and no fixed structure of service.” Kasper affirms that the foundational call of the twelve disciples to service was more important than concern for organisational arrangements within the *ekklesia*. The disciples, who were chosen by and responded to Jesus, discovered their purpose through close personal relationship with him and with each other. After intensive preparation, they were sent on a mission to communicate the trinitarian mystery of God (Matt 28: 19f). This vision of ministry, transmitted through the whole Church, expresses the response to the Spirit's call to discipleship and service.

The original Twelve were commissioned by Jesus to directly represent his apostolate (ministry), that is, to incarnate God's love and forgiveness in history. The idea of an historical continuation of the apostles' mission took firmer shape in institutional forms after the deaths of the original apostles. Paul's early ordering of ministries names apostles, prophets and teachers (1.Cor. 12.28) as important charismatic leadership roles. Kasper points out that although the community actively participated in commissionings for ministry in the early

¹⁰¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 197-327.

¹⁰² See also Walter Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*, 21. Here Kasper writes that the diaconate, as a sacramental ministry of service in its own right, points the whole church towards its communal and ministerial identity in and for the world. Kasper understands the deacon's role is to specifically represent the diaconal or servant dimension of all church ministry.

Church, it was understood that new ministers were appointed and commissioned not by the community, but directly by God.¹⁰³ In fact, Kasper shows that early church ministries were understood as gifts of the Spirit.¹⁰⁴ He writes that “the New Testament presents us with the image of a dynamic church in progress with charismatic as well as clearly developed institutional elements and, as a church in progress as such, it is a standard for later developments.”¹⁰⁵ The prime example of such later development is the three ordained ministries of bishop, priest and deacon. Kasper points out the original novelty of this structure:

The matter-of-course naturalness and speed with which the conception of the threefold ministry could prevail in such a short time has often astonished scholars and has led to the question of the origin of this impetus. A number of historical reasons can be identified. Yet, the sociological explanations suffice only at first sight, for despite all links with existing sociological and religio-historical concepts in terms of content, the episcopal office of the Old Church was something new that accorded with the eschatological novelty of the New Testament people of God.¹⁰⁶

Models of ministry were reformed as theological understandings of the Church deepened. However, according to Kasper, the three-fold office has never been defined as divinely instituted, though the Council of Trent did describe it as of “divine order and providence.”¹⁰⁷

Episcopal Office

In tracing the emergence of the episcopal office in the early Church, Kasper shows that from the beginning the role symbolised the Church: “The Bishop is in the Church and the Church is in the Bishop.”¹⁰⁸ However, the bishop’s identity was always characterised as a communion with all other bishops. In contrast to the more idealised image of the bishop as a symbol of the *communio* of the Church, in the Middle Ages the bishop’s role assumed more

¹⁰³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 223.

¹⁰⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 224.

¹⁰⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 224.

¹⁰⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 226.

¹⁰⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 227.

¹⁰⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 226. Kasper draws on Cyprian of Carthage.

‘earthly’ power reflecting the Church’s close relationship with feudal rulers.¹⁰⁹ The predominant model of Church became the Body of Christ and the priest acted in *persona Christi*. The bishop came to symbolise Christ even as he held both civil and ecclesiastical power and authority.¹¹⁰ The Reformation eventually reacted to abuses of ecclesiastical power that basically stemmed from “the unfortunate distinction between power of ordination (*potestas ordinis*) and power of jurisdiction (*potestas jurisdictionis*).”¹¹¹ It was not until Vatican II that a renewed theology of the episcopal office was made possible.

Kasper describes Vatican II as “a Copernican Revolution against the medieval tradition,”¹¹² bringing together the episcopal roles of ordering and jurisdiction that had been separated in the Middle-Ages. Conciliar renewal of the episcopacy brought together both the ordering and the jurisdiction function of the office, enabling the bishop to be understood as possessing the fullness of the ministry of priest, teacher and pastor.¹¹³ Vatican II led to greater emphasis on the dialogical, missionary and pastoral symbol of the bishop and thus of the Church.¹¹⁴ Kasper writes: “Having stressed the sacramental and collegiate character of the episcopal ministry, the Council then drew the practical consequences for the renewal of synodal elements in the Church and for a new emphasis on the significance of the local or individual church within the universal Church.”¹¹⁵

For Kasper, the *communio* mission of the Church is expressed in different but inter-related ways in the episcopal and priestly offices. The bishop is not commissioned simply by the will of the community but by the will of Christ, discerned in the Spirit. Kasper notes that

¹⁰⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 227.

¹¹⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 227-8, 232.

¹¹¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 227.

¹¹² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 231.

¹¹³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 231.

¹¹⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 231. See also Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*, 109. Here Kasper writes that the Bishop mediates the spiritual power and authority of Jesus Christ to set church ministries free for service on behalf the reign of God. The Bishop receives spiritual empowerment through his ordination and extends it to those who exercise ministry in his local Church, not in their own name but in the name and person of Jesus Christ.

¹¹⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 231. See also *Leadership in the Church*, 164.

the post-Vatican II understanding of the ministry of oversight exercised by the bishop, is that it embodies collegiality and is of service to the Spirit.

Priestly Office

Kasper acknowledges that the exercise of priestly identity and function is related to the 'fullness' of the bishop's ordination. However, the priest has his own ministry role and function within a *communio* model:

[T]he Eucharistic power which the priest has together with the bishop is conferred upon the priest in view of the concrete local congregation (or in the case of a priest entrusted with a special task for a specific group of Christians). By contrast, it is conferred upon the bishop in view of the greater and ultimately universal *communio* of the Church and its unity which is the actual intentional purpose of the Eucharist.¹¹⁶

The ministry of the priest is dependent on the ordering role of the episcopal office. Kasper writes: "[T]he Council did not simply regard the priestly ministry as outflow from the episcopal ministry."¹¹⁷ Kasper describes priestly identity as directly and intimately tied to Jesus Christ: "[The priest] is to witness for Christ with his whole life."¹¹⁸ A life of service shapes the priest's personal identity as sacramental sign of Christ's life, death and resurrection. For Kasper, celibacy is a key component of priestly witnessing. However, he affirms that freedom must characterise the link between priesthood and celibacy and believes that the testimony of voluntary celibacy is pastorally necessary today.¹¹⁹ For him, celibacy expresses a positive spirituality that seeks to participate in love, not deny it. He defends celibacy using the gendered image of the church as the bride of Christ. Regrettably, he does not explore the link between priesthood and celibacy in relation to other favourite images he has for the Church, such as *communio* or sacrament of the Spirit.¹²⁰ I find it surprising that Kasper says that "the issue of celibacy is ... not suitable as a focal point for church reform and

¹¹⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 233.

¹¹⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 232.

¹¹⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 234.

¹¹⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 236.

¹²⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 235.

renewal.”¹²¹ In fact, he describes its discussion as “harmful and counterproductive,”¹²² thus short-circuiting consideration of its link to declining priestly ordinations. On the one hand, it seems that Kasper holds a seemingly closed position that ties priestly ordination with mandatory celibacy. On the other, he recognises that priest shortages, ecumenical dialogues about ministry and the acceptance of married priests from other denominations into the sacramental ministry of the Catholic Church raise new questions about priesthood and celibacy. I think that the relationship between marriage and the priest’s sign of total dedication to Christ and the church needs to be addressed. For example, how might the sacraments of ordination and marriage be reciprocally understood in the Latin Church if celibacy becomes optional for priesthood, as it is in a number of other Catholic rites?¹²³

¹²¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 237. This comment is of interest since many Eastern Catholic Churches in union with Rome allow priests the freedom to marry e.g. Maronite, Melkite, Armenian, Ukrainian, Greek Catholic Churches.

¹²² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 237. Kasper’s position represents a change from the view he reports from his time as Reporting Secretary of the Würzburg Synod in 1973. See Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 81. Here Kasper writes: “Going forward at present can only be through intensification of a living vibrant faith communities. Only from there can grow an increasing number of spiritual vocations. Only from there can emerge again a better understanding of freely chosen celibacy. Only from there, however, can the spiritual freedom for changing the celibacy laws in the future be granted.” (Original text: *Geistlich weiterführend kann im Augenblick nur die Intensivierung eines lebendigen Glaubens in lebendigen Gemeinden sein. Allein daraus können auf die Dauer wieder mehr geistliche Berufe erwachsen. Allein daraus kann auch wieder ein besseres Verständnis für die freiwillig gewählte Ehelosigkeit entstehen. Allein daraus kann in Zukunft aber auch die geistliche Freiheit zur Änderung des Zölibatsgesetzes geschenkt werden.*) Further on in this publication, Kasper writes: “The Synod also underlines this biblical justification with the experience of many priests, according to whom freely chosen celibacy can mean ‘human happiness and fulfilment,’ despite all the human problems intrinsic to different forms of each state. On the other hand, it was equally undisputed that freely chosen celibacy is not necessarily integral to priestly ministry, and even that as a condition for admission it needed to be put aside ‘if the care for salvation of souls is severely endangered.’ It was therefore ‘generally acknowledged that extraordinary emergency circumstances could require the ordination of men proven in marriage and profession.’ Ibid., 85. (Original text: *Die Synode unterstreicht diese biblische Begründung außerdem durch die Erfahrung vieler Priester, wonach die frei gewählte Ehelosigkeit ‘trotz aller menschlichen Probleme,’ die in verschiedener Weise jedem Stand eigen sind, ‘menschliche Erfüllung und menschliches Glück’ bedeuten kann. Auf der anderen Seite war es von Anfang an ebenso unumstritten, dass die frei gewählte Ehelosigkeit nicht notwendig mit dem priesterlichen Dienst verbunden ist, ja dass sie als Zulassungsbedingung dann zurückgestellt werden muss, ‘wenn die Heilssorge der Kirche schwerwiegend gefährdet ist.’ Es wurde deshalb ‘allgemein anerkannt, dass außerordentliche pastorale Notsituationen die Weihe von in Ehe und Beruf bewährten Männern erfordern könne.*.)

¹²³ Kasper appears to have developed his thinking on this issue. See Cameron Doody, “Kasper Afirma Que la Ordenación de Hombres Casados ya Depende de las Conferencias Episcopales,” *Spiegel*, April 7, 2017, accessed May 2, 2017. <http://www.periodistadigital.com/religion/mundo/2017/04/07/kasper-religion-iglesia-vaticano-baldisseri-divorciados-vueltos-casar-amoris-laetitia-malta-alemania-curas-casados.shtml>. The article reads: ‘We have to consider whether the *viri probati* are an opportunity,’ the Pope said in a recent interview with *Die Zeit*, referring to whether certain ordinary married men - and of mature and tested Christian life with extensive experience in parishes - can have vocation to the priesthood. The lack of vocations of men who want to live a celibate life, the pontiff added on this occasion, is ‘a huge problem’, and as such ‘the Church has to solve it. ‘The Church has always to ‘recognize the right moment in which the Holy Spirit asks for something,’ reflected the

Kasper devotes a short section of his work on the priestly office to the question of women's ordination. He appeals to authoritative statements which exclude it for two main reasons: the Catholic Church cannot arbitrarily make changes to its ordering of ministry and there was no indication of women's ordination in Jesus' time.¹²⁴ Kasper draws on the symbol of the Church as Bride of Christ to support what he describes as a "binding and final" teaching.¹²⁵ For this symbol to function, the bridegroom of the Bride must be male. Kasper does not approach the topic of the relationship between ordination and gender from the foundation of other favoured images of the Church as *communio* or sacrament of the Spirit. However, he does state that the issue demands further attention as the Church continues to reflect theologically on the participation of women:

Today, thinking in symbols and the employment of gender symbolism have become largely alien to us.... Thus the discussion of women's ordination will continue for some time. Thereby it will not be enough merely to defend the Church's doctrine. It is essential to make comprehensible the deeper biblical and spiritual aspects contained therein. It is, however, also necessary to understand and take up positively the concerns of those who advocate women's ordination.¹²⁶

Pope at that time. For Cardinal Kasper, this concern of Francis shows that there is an 'imperative need for action.' Speaking with *katholisch.de*, the official website of the German bishops, the emeritus president of the Council for Promoting Christian Unity, believes that a debate about the possibility of ordaining these married men is a 'vital necessity.' 'We can not continue as always,' he said, referring to the fact that in Germany there are currently only 40 seminarians across the country. 'The discussion is very urgent.' But who has to move the discussion to action? For the cardinal, the Pope in his interview with *Die Zeit* has opened a door. 'The Pope thinks the discussion is worth it, he sees it with good eyes,' said Kasper. But the ball is already in the court of the various national episcopal conferences, according to the cardinal, from whom Francis is waiting for the next step. 'The Pope wants to leave the decision to episcopal conferences,' the German cardinal said. They can 'approach him and make a request,' he added, and 'if this request is reasonable, I have the impression that he will respond positively to it.' 'Now it depends on episcopal conferences,' he explained."

¹²⁴ See Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 414, n 170. Here Kasper refers to the declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Inter insigniores* (October 15, 1976); John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* (May 22, 1994) and the *Responsum* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (October 28, 1995).

¹²⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 238.

¹²⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 238. Kasper reported a larger vision of women's ordination, albeit ordination to the Diaconate, in his reporting of the Würzburg Synod (1971-5) deliberations. See Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 93. Here Kasper writes: "The question whether the ordination of these female deacons was considered a sacrament or just as sacramental is erroneous a priori due to the fact that this differentiation has only been made since medieval times. For the Synod, more important was the reference to the current pastoral situation: In fact, many women today administer a plethora of tasks which belong to the office of female deacons. The altered status of women in church and society makes it appear unjustifiable to exclude women from official functions which are theologically possible and pastorally desirable. Including women into the sacramental diaconate could mean an enhancement for itself as for the ecclesial Office as such." (Original text: *Denn die Frage, ob die genannten Weihnen zu Diakoninnen als Sakrament oder nur als Sakramentale verstanden wurden, ist angesichts der Tatsache, dass dieser Unterschied erst seit dem Mittelalter gemacht wird, von vornherein falsch gestellt. Wichtiger war für die Synode der Hinweis auf die gegenwärtige pastorale Situation: Tatsächlich üben bereits heute viele Frauen eine Fülle von Tätigkeiten aus, die an sich dem Diakoninnenamt zukommen. Die gewandelte Stellung der Frau in Kirche und Gesellschaft lässt es unverantwortlich erscheinen, Frauen von theologisch*

Kasper leaves open ways in which gender might function for the identity and form of priestly ministry in the future.

Diaconal Office

Kasper examines the office of the permanent diaconate that was restored as a sacramental ministry in its own right at Vatican II.¹²⁷ He affirms that the permanent diaconate is not a transition nor a substitute for priesthood. The deacon is a sacramental sign of Christ's *diakonia*. Kasper acknowledges the open question of women being admitted to the permanent diaconate in the Catholic Church and notes a long history of female deacons in both the Eastern and Western Churches. However, he insists that their role was always different from male deacons and they had different ordination rites. This observation leads him to make two seemingly contradictory points. First, he notes that "there is no continuous uniform tradition that could be taken up." Second, he says that "demanding the ordination of deaconesses is ... not a suitable approach to realize the legitimate issue of giving women more space and public status in the Church. This can be done better, more effectively in a non-clerical context."¹²⁸ Kasper seems to be concerned about the link between ordination and clericalism.¹²⁹ However, it is unclear whether he wants to avoid ordaining women to the diaconate to avoid reinforcing

möglichen und pastoral wünschenswerten amtlichen Funktionen auszuschließen. Die Hereinnahme von Frauen in den sakramentalen Diakonat könnte für diesen und für das kirchliche Amt überhaupt eine Bereicherung bedeuten.)

¹²⁷ See Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*, 13. Here Kasper also observes that "the diaconate is still far from being firmly rooted in the local churches."

¹²⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 240.

¹²⁹ For clarification of Kasper's understanding of the word 'clerical' see Walter Kasper, ed., *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Special Edition ed., vol. 6 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2006), 130-1. *Klerikalismus: "Im engeren Sinn bez. das Schlagwort Klerikalismus: eine Grenzüberschreitung des Klerus in weltliche, vorwiegend polit. Handlungsfelder; im polemischen Sinn meint es alle irgendwie kirchliche gearteten (als negativ empfundenen) Einflußnahmen auf den gesellschaftlichen und privaten Bereich. Das Phänomen des Klerikalismus ist dabei nicht auf den Katholizismus beschränkt, sondern bezieht sich auf alle Konstellationen, in denen der Klerus über Macht verfügt.... Erst das Vat.II brach mit der einseitigen Betonung des Klerus gegenüber den Laien."* (Translation: In the narrower sense, the term 'clericalism' means a border crossing of the clergy into the worldly, mainly political areas of action... In the polemical sense it refers to ecclesiastical influences of any kind (which are perceived to be negative) on the social and private spheres. The phenomenon of clericalism is not thereby restricted to Catholicism, but refers to all constellations in which the clergy has power.... Only at Vatican II was there a break away from the one-sided emphasis on the clergy over against the laity.)

clericalism among the ordained or if he thinks that admitting women to this order would not really address women's "space and public status in the Church."¹³⁰

Kasper's discussion of the ordering of priestly, diaconal and episcopal ministries leads him to a deeper consideration of their inter-relationships. These inter-relationships should be ordered toward the *communio* identity and mission of the whole Church. He affirms that priestly and diaconal ordination is not shaped out of, nor is an intensified form of baptism. Drawing from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Kasper writes that "the offices are to equip the saints (i.e. the faithful) for the fulfilment of their vocation (Eph. 4.12)."¹³¹ He develops Paul's charismatic ecclesiology that describes the Christian community as an organic body that functions through the mutual interaction of different gifts, offices and ministries.¹³² Thus, Kasper writes that "the Church is a structured fabric in which the individual parts mutually carry and hold each other."¹³³ While the Church is ordered to participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly ministries of Christ, all ministries depend on the Spirit to direct them in their mission. Kasper shows that offices have a double responsibility: to act in and speak to the community in the name of Jesus Christ while also standing within the community that is open to transformation by God's Word and Spirit.¹³⁴

Petrine Office

According to Kasper, the office of the papacy is to be a sign and instrument of unity for the whole Church. He notes, however, that at different times in history the Petrine office has been a counter-sign of unity. In recent times, the ecumenical movement has sought to

¹³⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 240.

¹³¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 241.

¹³² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 241.

¹³³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 241.

¹³⁴ See also Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*, 38. Here Kasper writes that if there is an increase in deacons and no concrete increase in diaconal ministry among the baptised, then the model of church and ministry that is developing must be questioned. He presses the point that "one reason why the traditional form of ecclesiastical offices and ministries no longer meets contemporary needs is that it can no longer ensure the *diaconia* of Christ continues to be performed adequately."

address challenges for a new appreciation of the contribution of the Petrine office to Christian unity.¹³⁵ The biblical foundations of the Petrine office lie in the story of Peter whom Christ commissioned for ministry (Mt 16: 13-20). After a long and complex history, Kasper considers that the *communio*-ecclesiology of Vatican II offers a framework for the future of the Petrine office to be a symbol of unity and reconciliation for the whole Christian Church:

[I]n a globally networked world, the Petrine office as ministry of unity will increase today and undoubtedly in the future and will prove to be a gift of the Lord to his Church. It provides the Church and the work of Jesus Christ in today's pluralism of opinions and interests with a publicly, globally audible common voice; it serves the unity of the Church as well as its freedom and independence; it proves to be helpful for furthering ecumenical dialogue and dialogue with other religions and modern culture; it stands up for the protection of human life, for furthering the dignity and rights of the human person, for social justice and for peace in the world.¹³⁶

Vatican II moved away from the idea that the pope is a Catholic monarch who rules over, and expects obedience and uniformity. However, Kasper laments that today “post-conciliar confusion together with new communication possibilities have led to a new curial centralism which the majority of the Council did not want.”¹³⁷ An ecumenical papacy, as sign and instrument of unity for the Christian Church and the world, must witness to unity as unity-in-diversity.

The dynamic and reciprocal relationship between ecclesial unity and diversity, to which the papal office must witness, can be strengthened through building synodal structures and practices. While Vatican II sought to renew the ecclesiology of synodality, Kasper acknowledges that the flourishing of its structures and practices has been slow work. Though

¹³⁵ See Denis Edwards, “The Holy Spirit as the Gift: Pneumatology and Catholic Re-Reception of the Petrine Ministry in the Theology of Walter Kasper,” in *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning*, ed. Paul D. Murray (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 208. Edwards shows that Kasper’s pneumatology offers a four step hermeneutic for re-interpretation of the First Vatican Council’s teaching on papal infallibility which has been a stumbling block for the progress of ecumenism. First, the doctrine of primacy which Vatican I affirmed must be interpreted within the whole context of ecclesiology which includes Vatican II. Second, Vatican I must be interpreted in light of the whole tradition, which includes the tradition of earlier churches. Third, Vatican I must be interpreted in the light of its historical, political and social contexts. Fourth, interpretation must always be in the light of the Gospel. In providing these principles, Edwards argues, “on the issue of the Petrine ministry, [Kasper] offers us a way of re-receiving the teaching of the First Vatican Council, in dialogue with ecumenical partners, which in my judgement loosens the logjam and offers hope for new movement forward under the impetus of the Holy Spirit.”

¹³⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 261.

¹³⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 260.

there have been developments of episcopal conferences and pastoral councils, he notes that these “cannot replace synods in the theological sense.”¹³⁸ Synodality encourages participation of the whole people of God in discerning the Spirit's presence and call to the future.

Kasper distinguishes between a parliamentary synodal model, which he associates more with Reformed churches, and the Catholic *communio* theology of councils or synods recovered at Vatican II.¹³⁹ He believes that synodality is the tangible expression of a pneumatologically inspired and animated Church. This understanding developed during his pastoral engagement in the Würzburg National Synod (1971-5) and the Rottenburg Diocesan Synod (1985-6). He describes these events as “synods in the original meaning of the Greek word ‘*sunodos*’: fellowship of the people of God on the way, expressing a church travelling together that sees itself as a communion of hope.”¹⁴⁰

In Kasper's view, at the heart of this sense of ‘journeying on the way together,’ is the impulse of the Spirit. Synodality implies a desire for unanimity, not uniformity, made possible through mutual listening and dialogue. Kasper cites Cyprian (258 C.E.) who described Christian unity as both horizontal and vertical conversation. Listening and dialogue is sought with those in the present and in the past.¹⁴¹ Kasper notes that synodality and collegiality were features of early and medieval churches. Synodality also emerged in the life of churches separated from Catholicism. The Reformation favoured the practice of synods in the spirit of the early Church because they embraced the concept of the universal priesthood of all the baptised. In Protestant churches, though members of the laity do not participate in the ministry of episcopal oversight, they can take part in governing bodies.

¹³⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 271.

¹³⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 271.

¹⁴⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 17. I have translated this quote from Kasper, *Katholische Kirche*, 41. (Original text: *Beide Synoden waren Synoden im ursprünglichen Sinn des griechischen Wortes ‘Synode’: Weggemeinschaft des Volkes Gottes, also Ausdruck einer Kirche, die gemeinsam unterwegs ist und sich als Weg- und Hoffnungsgemeinschaft versteht.*) I think that the official English translation in *The Catholic Church* is limited: “[S]ynods in the original sense of the Greek word ‘*sunodos*’: the fellowship of the people of God ‘on the way’ – that is, an expression of a Church that is together along the way.”

¹⁴¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 269.

Since Kasper insists that the Church is an ongoing creation of the Spirit, he argues that without the practice of collegiality or synodality the Church cannot be faithful to its essential nature as *communio*. He writes “[S]trengthening of the synodal principle would enable a fruitful, regular exchange of information and experiences between local churches as well as between local churches and the centre.”¹⁴² Thus, his understanding of *communio*-ecclesiology sees synodality as strengthening the identity of local churches as faith communities nourished and led by the Spirit.

Furthermore, Kasper insists that the identity of the local church in relation to the universal church, symbolised by the Petrine office must be one of mutuality. In fact, Kasper believes that the Petrine office should strengthen, not weaken, local church identity. *Lumen gentium* 13, Kasper writes, affirms the importance of local churches:

[Local Churches should] retain their own traditions, without in any way opposing the primacy of the Chair of Peter, which presides over the whole assembly of charity and protects legitimate differences, while at the same time assuring that such differences do not hinder unity but rather contribute toward it.¹⁴³

Local churches should not be a threat to the unifying work of the papacy. Instead, they should call the Petrine office to the fullness of its role of holding ecclesial unity and diversity in creative reciprocity. Similarly, the Petrine office and institutional expressions of universal faith should not threaten the flourishing of charisms and diversity. Kasper traces this understanding of charism reciprocity to a New Testament ecclesiology of catholicity where many unique churches formed, but none isolated from the others:

[T]he Church within history must be regarded historically and philosophically as unity in the diversity of individual churches as well as diversity in the unity of the one Church. Unity and diversity are always present in the earthly Church simultaneously, together and in each other in mutual perichoretic permeation.¹⁴⁴

Today the *perichoretic* unity of the local and universal Church is symbolised by the collegiality of bishops and sacramentalised in the episcopal ordination rite. The particularity of local churches in communion with the Church in Rome means honouring and protecting

¹⁴² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 272.

¹⁴³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 274.

¹⁴⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 276.

local histories which have developed in response to the Spirit working in their unique contexts.

A public debate between Kasper and the then Cardinal Ratzinger about the relationship between particular churches and the 'universal' church ensued after the publication *On Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion* [1992] issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF).¹⁴⁵ In a 1999 *Festschrift* for Joseph Homeyer, Kasper challenged the CDF teaching that "the universal church is 'a reality ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular Church.'"¹⁴⁶ He argued that this abstract position is theologically untenable and practically undermines the reciprocity of unity and diversity in the Church. In the debate, the terms 'universal church' and 'local church' needed clarification. Understanding emerged that neither 'universal' nor 'local' can be defined independently from the other, nor in terms of 'what comes first':¹⁴⁷ For Kasper, the doctrine of *perichoresis* helps to understand the nature of mutuality:

The perichoretic unity of universal Church and individual church ... must strive in its praxis, such as canon law or the appointment of bishops to do justice to both ecclesial aspects, universal and local, and it must strive for a proper balance between unity and

¹⁴⁵ See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion, (Vatican City, 1992), accessed June 5, 2016. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_28051992_communions-notio_en.html.

¹⁴⁶ Walter Kasper, "On the Church," *The Tablet* no. 23 June (2001): 927. See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: *Some Aspects of the Church*, Par. 9. See also Kristof Struys, "Particular Churches-Universal Church. Theological Backgrounds to the Position of Walter Kasper in Debate with Joseph Ratzinger," *Bijdragen, International Journal in Philosophy and Theology* 69, no. 2 (2008): 155. Here Struys writes: "Kasper's notion of ecclesiological pre-existence is related to the reality of the universal church 'in and out' of the local churches. For Kasper, pre-existence does not imply the ontological or temporal primacy of the universal church, but should be understood rather as a perichoretic simultaneity of the universal church and the particular churches." See also Kilian P. McDonnell, "Walter Kasper on the Theology and the Praxis of the Bishop's Office," *Theological Studies* 63, no. 4 (2002): 728. McDonnell reflects further on Kasper's position: "[I]t is clear that Kasper recognises the pope has undisputed rights to jurisdiction over the universal Church, rights however that do not cancel out the rights and responsibility of the local bishop. But because the universal Church and the local church exist simultaneously in the same place, the proper responsibility of the local bishop in governing his diocese can sometimes be obscured. However, Vatican II made progress in restoring the local church to its proper place."

¹⁴⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 275. A thorough treatment of Kasper's position on the local-universal church relationship debate is found in: Walter Kasper, "Das Verhältnis von Universalkirche und Ortskirche," in *Die Kirche Jesu Christi*, ed. George Augustin and Klaus Krämer, Walter Kasper Gesammelte Schriften (Freiburg: Herder, 2008), 509-22. English translation in Walter Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*, 158-76.

legitimate diversity. In everything that is essential, the Church must make efforts for unity while allowing independence and diversity in everything else.¹⁴⁸

The practice of synodality and dialogue creates the context for communal discernment about where the Spirit is leading the Church as it continues to maintain the delicately balanced relationship between ‘local’ and ‘universal.’

The Call to Mission and Dialogue

The Second Vatican Council inspired new thinking about the missionary identity of the Church. Kasper notes the Council’s clear missionary mandate: “[T]he Church, although it needs human resources to carry out its mission, is not set up to seek earthly glory, but to proclaim, even by its own example, humility and self-sacrifice.”¹⁴⁹ Kasper praises the Latin American Bishops’ Conferences (Medellín, 1968 and Puebla, 1979) in affirming that “the formula of the preferential option for the poor has been the critical and inspiring standard for a truly apostolic praxis of the Church.”¹⁵⁰ The Church’s missionary identity points beyond itself to the realisation of the Reign of God. Thus, Kasper describes the Church as ‘messianic,’ universal and eschatological.¹⁵¹

Kasper laments that in the history of the Church, the call to mission has often been experienced and interpreted as licence for subjugation of cultures and religions. However, he also affirms there have been “many heroic achievements of holy and saintly missionaries.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 276. See Struys, “Particular Churches-Universal Church. Theological Backgrounds to the Position of Walter Kasper in Debate with Joseph Ratzinger,” 162. Struys writes: “Kasper ... recognises an internal priority of unity within his simultaneous perichoretic relationship between the local church and the universal church.” In his analysis of the public debate between Kasper and Ratzinger, Struys characterises Kasper’s understanding of *communio*-ecclesiology as “in line with that proposed by Vatican II in which the local community and the bishop are ascribed their proper place.” *Ibid.*, 155. Kasper’s position, Struys argues, “recognises an internal priority of unity within his simultaneous-perichoretic relationship between the local and universal church.” See also Kasper, “The Renewal of Pneumatology,” 32. Here Kasper cites the foundation for the perichoretic relationship that constitutes unity: “an ecclesiology devised under the influence of pneumatology according to the archetype of the Trinity.”

¹⁴⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 194. Kasper footnotes *LG* 8; cf. and *GS* 1; 21.

¹⁵⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 194.

¹⁵¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 289.

¹⁵² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 290.

He deeply values the contributions of missionaries to the Church's mission: "[They] defended the locals and their rights against the colonizers and furthered their local culture, often also being the first to research this culture."¹⁵³ Kasper includes schools, health care and cultural legacies as some of the fruits and vehicles of missionary work. However, missionary endeavours that seek to make the world uniformly Christian is not a Christian goal. Kasper describes the goal of mission today as advocacy for life:

The goal of mission is only indirectly the Church and the spreading of the Church. Its purpose is first and foremost to proclaim the kingdom of God that has come with Jesus Christ and that is now breaking through in the Church in the Holy Spirit.... Mission seeks conversion from the old and new idols to the one and true God (1Thes. 1.9), it seeks that all have life and have it to the full. Thus it seeks to let all participate in the richness of God's life, in the light of the good news of Jesus Christ and in the one Holy Spirit. As in the beginning, the Church emerges again and again out of the dynamics of the coming of God's kingdom.¹⁵⁴

The spirit of missionaries, especially those who have given their lives in service to love, calls the Church to its missionary identity and commitment. Kasper points out: "Because of their Christian faith [martyrs] were witnesses of Christian freedom and hope for the victory of life over death, of truth over lie, and of love over brutal violence."¹⁵⁵ For Kasper, mission includes prophetic advocacy on behalf of justice, mercy and love. He sees the laity bearing more responsibility for mission, not because of shortages of vocations to ordained or religious life, but because of the sacramental meaning of baptism. The whole people of God are called to participate in Christ's priestly, prophetic and kingly ministries in the name of the Trinity.¹⁵⁶ For Kasper, the Church participates in the mission and dialogue of the Trinity through its sacramental and diaconal life. He calls for renewal of an ecclesiology of mission that is grounded in deeper valuing of the charisms of local churches and writes that "the mission of

¹⁵³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 291.

¹⁵⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 292.

¹⁵⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 328.

¹⁵⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 294.

the future will have to come from the respective local churches and it will have to be their responsibility.”¹⁵⁷

According to Kasper, Vatican II “showed the way from a closed and locked identity towards an open, relational and dialogical definition of Church.”¹⁵⁸ Kasper understands dialogue to be the deepest spiritual foundation of inter-human communication, respect, and solidarity and thus of the Church.¹⁵⁹ He links the Church’s capacity to engage in mission with its dialogical structure: “a more participatory and dialogical style would make the *communio* nature and universality of the Church appear more visible, tangible and trustworthy.”¹⁶⁰ Kasper illustrated his understanding of dialogue at a 2001 gathering of the International Council of Christians and Jews where he stated:

[D]ialogue is much more than mutual information and objective communication. As Jewish thinkers like Martin Buber taught us, dialogue has a deeply existential, spiritual and ethical meaning ... true dialogue respects the other in his or her otherness.”¹⁶¹

In several other publications Kasper describes the Church as “Sacrament of Dialogue.”¹⁶² He writes, for example, that “dialogue is the concrete realisation of communication, which expresses the very nature of the Church as communion.”¹⁶³ According to Kasper, processes of

¹⁵⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 293.

¹⁵⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 15.

¹⁵⁹ Walter Kasper, “Spiritual and Ethical Commitment in Christian-Jewish Dialogue,” accessed October 19, 2016. https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/kaspericcj.htm.

¹⁶⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 273.

¹⁶¹ Walter Kasper, “Spiritual and Ethical Commitment.” See also Walter Kasper, “The Jewish-Christian Dialogue: Foundations, Progress, Difficulties and Perspectives,” (2001), accessed September 14, 2015. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20011123_kasper-jews-christians_en.html. Here Kasper writes: “Dialogue is not only dialogue consisting of words and conversations. Dialogue encompasses all dimensions of our being human; it implies a global, existential dimension and implies the human subject in his or her entirety. Of great importance is especially the field of symbolic interaction. So dialogue is communication in a comprehensive sense; it withstands and criticises our western individualistic way of life, and means ultimately living together and living in solidarity for each other. Such dialogue is not only essential and necessary for individuals. Dialogue concerns also nations, cultures, religions. Every nation, culture, religion has its riches and its gifts. But it becomes narrow and evolves into ideology when it closes itself and when it absolutises itself. Then the other nation, culture and religion becomes the enemy. The ‘clash of civilisations’ (Huntington) will ensue. Dialogue is the only way to avoid such a disastrous clash. Today dialogue among cultures, religions and churches is a presupposition for peace in the world. It is necessary to pass from antagonism and conflict to a situation where each party recognises and respects the other as a partner.”

¹⁶² See, for example, “The Holy Spirit and Ecumenical Dialogue: Theological and Practical Dimensions,” 18.

¹⁶³ Walter Kasper, “Communion through Dialogue,” in *A Spirituality of Communion Through Dialogue* (Washington DC: Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious National Assembly, 2006), 23. For another image of Church see Walter Kasper, “The Church as the Place of Truth,” in *Theology and Church* (New York:

ecclesial dialogue express “the dialogical structure of human existence and of the perception of truth.” His central claim is that “as human beings, we do not carry on dialogue, we are dialogue ... this is even more true of our Christian existence, for biblical Revelation is God’s dialogue with human beings (*DV 2*).”¹⁶⁴

Ecumenical Dialogue

For Kasper, ecumenical dialogue is a work of the Spirit. His significant leadership in this work on behalf of the Catholic Church attests to this. Ecumenical endeavours must, he argues, proceed from an openness to encounter, a desire to understand and appreciate difference, a capacity to recognise convergences in relationships, and humility and confidence to testify to what each partner in the dialogue treasures.¹⁶⁵ Kasper recognises that ecumenical dialogue is far from easy and often seems to reap limited rewards. He notes that it can seem easier to hold on to that which separates rather than unites. Nevertheless, he is committed to participating in this work of the Spirit.¹⁶⁶

According to Kasper, Vatican II had two ecumenical goals: “[O]n the one hand, [to] retain the claim that the Catholic Church is undetachable from the one true Church [and] ... at the same time [to] create space for the recognition of elements of the true Church beyond the boundaries of the Catholic Church.”¹⁶⁷ He describes Spirit-led ecumenical dialogue not as “a

Crossroad, 1989), 140. Here Kasper writes: “If the church is the sacrament of God’s dialogue with men and women, then it is itself a dialogistic sacrament. Then the ministry of truth laid upon it cannot be performed as a monologue, but only in dialogue.”

¹⁶⁴ Walter Kasper, *The Church and Contemporary Pluralism*. The Fourth Annual Lecture of the Catholic Common Ground Initiative. (New York: National Pastoral Life Centre, 2002). 5.

¹⁶⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 306.

¹⁶⁶ See also Kasper, *A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism* (New York: New City Press, 2007), 87. Here Kasper writes about the nature of friendship among pastoral ministers as the strategy for being in dialogue at the service of ecumenical goals: “The Second Vatican Council entrusted the ecumenical task to bishops throughout the world, for their diligent promotion and prudent guidance. Priests, deacons and all other pastoral agents, each in their own sphere, share in this ecumenical responsibility of the bishop... This undertaking also touches each pastoral minister’s own spirituality and personal way of relating to ministers of other traditions. Friendly and fraternal relations between pastoral ministers of different traditions are a primary means of promoting a spirituality of communion.”

¹⁶⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 160. See Kasper, “Dominus Iesus,” *17th meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee* (2001), accessed May 17, 2015.

one-way street, but rather an exchange of ideas and gifts and should so lead to a realized fullness of catholicity. The dialogue is not about giving up one's own identity but about growing and being enriched in one's own identity."¹⁶⁸

Kasper's thinking about the relationship between dialogue and mission is deeply spiritual. Likewise, his ecumenical ecclesiology is deeply pneumatological. It affirms that the mutual recognition and exchange of gifts is experienced and valued as more enriching than merely an exchange of ideas.¹⁶⁹ The Catholic Church is called to recognise and receive spiritual gifts both within and beyond its borders. Kasper names this way of being Church as 'spiritual ecumenism.' Such ecumenism is underpinned by ecclesial commitments to discern the work of the Spirit in encounters of communion:

In the first instance [spiritual ecumenism] means openness to the working of the Holy Spirit who alone can open the heart towards sympathy and empathy, which are basic prerequisites for any dialogue. The Spirit thus enables us to overcome prejudices, to admit and repent the errors of the past and our own faults. [The Spirit] gives us the grace of conversion and repentance which must take effect in reform and renewal. [The Spirit] helps to overcome the notion of competition and to recognize the gifts given to others and to accept them also as gifts for us. [The Spirit] leads us to carry the burden of others (Gal. 6.2) and to share in solidarity the joy, suffering, hopes and sorrows of others. Finally, the Spirit moves and inspires us in spiritual reading of Scripture (*lectio divina*) to exchange and communicate about the prime testimony and the primal message common to all Christians and about one's own praxis and experiences in faith. On these different ways we can grow more and more intensively in unity and prepare the way for full unity.¹⁷⁰

Kasper recognises that the practice of spiritual ecumenism requires patience and courage. It presupposes the desire of those involved to come close to each other. Those who

https://www.bc.edu/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/kasper_dominus_iesus.htm.

Here Kasper writes: "The only thing I wish to say is that the document *Dominus Iesus* does not state that everybody needs to become a Catholic in order to be saved by God. On the contrary, it declares that God's grace, which is the grace of Jesus Christ according to our faith, is available to all."

¹⁶⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 309.

¹⁶⁹ Kasper's ecumenical ecclesiology is in line with that of Johann Adam Möhler who demonstrated "how opposites which egotistically lock themselves up, exclude each other and so become impoverished can, by way of reconciliation, give up their egoism and their obstinacy and become a fruitful unity in love. Neither outside or beside but within this unity, the opposites can move 'freely and easily.'" Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 309, citing J.A. Möhler, *Die Einheit in der Kirche*, (1825), 153.

¹⁷⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 310. See also Walter Kasper, *Martin Luther: An Ecumenical Perspective*, trans. William Madges (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2016), 29-30. Here Kasper writes: "We [referring to Protestant and Catholic denominations] are in agreement that we want unity, but we are not in agreement about what constitutes unity. Therefore, we are not in agreement about where the ecumenical journey is supposed to lead. A common ecumenical vision is missing, and sometimes also a common will. Too often we still feel too secure in our own denominational ecclesial fortress. We think that we can still entrench ourselves behind old ramparts, although they crumbled long ago and the majority of people who once lived in the fortress have long since been living elsewhere."

courageously seek unity, peace and reconciliation and are prepared to risk cultivating friendships across differences witness to this desire.¹⁷¹

Inter-Religious Dialogue

Kasper has made remarkable contributions to healing relations between Christians and Jews as a practical expression of his understanding of dialogue.¹⁷² His work affirms the interrelatedness of the two religions and emphasises the Jewishness of Jesus. Jesus understood himself to be faithful to his Jewish beliefs and this fidelity ultimately led to his condemnation and death. New Testament and early Church history record the tensions when Judaism tried, or was forced, to accommodate the new Jesus movement that arose from within it.

Kasper distinguishes between the theological anti-Judaism of the Church and the racial anti-semitism that results in prejudice and cruelty. However, he also is aware that these two realities cannot be completely separated. For this reason, he affirms that post-Holocaust Christianity is responsible for the healing and renewal of Jewish-Christian relationships: “[H]orrified by the Shoah, all Churches ... strove to leave the ‘language of disdain’... behind them and to begin a new positive relation to the Jewish people in mutual respect, esteem and

¹⁷¹ See also Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*, 204. Here Kasper writes: “We can learn much from one another, but only if we are willing to acknowledge our own deficits; there is no ecumenical dialogue without personal conversion and institutional renewal, and we begin not by “converting” our dialogue partner, but with our own conversion and renewal. Instead of demanding that our partners take steps in our direction that their conscience does not yet allow them to take, we should be the first to reflect on how we might move in their direction- and our steps may give them the courage to set out toward us.”

¹⁷² On July 10, 2004 Kasper was presented the “Memorial Mural Award” for his lifetime dedication to the causes of understanding and reconciliation between Jews and Catholics, accessed November 5, 2015. <http://www.raoulwallenberg.net/interfaith/dialogue/kasper/speech-cardinal-walter-kasper/> See also Kasper, “Die Kirche als Sakrament des Geistes,” 21. In this article Kasper explains the relationship between a pneumatological understanding of Church and the consequent responsibility of such a Church for dialogue: “not only the renewal of the Church, also a renewed theology of the world ... is possible only in the context of a widely renewed pneumatology.” (Original text: *Nicht nur Erneuerung der Kirche, auch eine erneuerte Theologie der Welt ... ist nur im Rahmen einer erneuerten Pneumatologie möglich.*) He continues in the same publication, writing that “a pneumatologically conceived ecclesiology calls the Church and Christians ... to a universal responsibility.” Ibid., 46. (Original text: *Eine pneumatologisch konzipierte Ekklesiologie ruft die Kirche und die Christen ... zu einer universalen Verantwortung.*)

cooperation.”¹⁷³ The Catholic Church consolidated a new position on the relationship between Christians and Jews during the Second Vatican Council with the publication of *Nostra aetate*. This document sought to overcome theological anti-Judaism. Drawing from that publication, Kasper writes that “the Church, according to Paul, is grafted on the root Israel and ... it continues to be carried and nourished by this root (Rom. 11.17-24).”¹⁷⁴ He affirms that *Nostra aetate* definitively rejected the substitution theory which posits that the New Covenant had superseded and thereby cancelled out the Old. In rejecting this theory, Christianity understands itself not only in continuity with the salvation offered by God to Jews, but as inclusive of it. Kasper writes: “The new and final covenant is ... not the abolition or replacement of the old covenant but its transcending confirmation and fulfilment. Through it the Abraham covenant has received its originally intended universality for all nations.”¹⁷⁵ Kasper condemns attempts at forced conversion of Jews (or anyone for that matter) to Christianity. Christians witness to their faith in Christ by ensuring the freedom of others. Kasper outlines his vision for the future relationship of Christians and Jews: “manifold exchange of gifts and a mutual give and take ... [and] because of historical burdens ... a great deal of sensitivity and decisiveness on both sides to keep a friendly dialogue and a good and fruitful cooperation.”¹⁷⁶ Dialogue ‘in the Spirit’ provides the impulse and reveals the gifts available for the work needed. These include overcoming prejudice, admitting to and

¹⁷³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 298.

¹⁷⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 298.

¹⁷⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 300. See also Walter Kasper, “The Relationship of the Old and the New Covenant as One of the Central Issues in Jewish-Christian Dialogue,” (Cambridge: Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, 2004), accessed June 3, 2015, https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/Kasper_Cambridge_6_Dec04.htm. Here Kasper affirms a dialogical principle that the call to unity is the foundation for appreciating and learning from difference: “In the Epistle to the Romans Paul uses the image of the root of the olive tree for Israel into which the church of the Gentiles is grafted like a branch. The root bears the branches and gives them sustenance (cf. *Rom* 11: 16-24). With this image Paul resists any Christian triumphalism.... The Church is forever dependent on Israel, it cannot turn away from or against Israel without cutting itself off from its roots, thus damaging and weakening itself. If it does so all the same, it denies and harms itself.”

¹⁷⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 301.

repenting for wrongs committed, growing in empathy, recognising the gifts of others and discerning calls for renewal.¹⁷⁷

Kasper does not directly address Christianity's spiritual relationship with Islam and other major world religions in *The Catholic Church*. However, in an article written during his role as president of the PCPCU, he develops the theme of dialogue in relation to world religions more generally. He draws on the 1991 document *Dialogue and Proclamation* of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue which describes such dialogue as more than a theological exchange by experts. Kasper calls the Church to understand and practise interreligious dialogues of life, action and experience:

[As] '*dialogue of life*, where people strive to live in an open and neighbourly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations, as *dialogue of action*, in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people' and as '*dialogue of religious experience*, where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute'. In these ways, the Spirit of God leads the way of peace among all peoples. The foundation of this peace is love based on the kind of dialogue that 'encourages, inspires and surpasses justice.'¹⁷⁸

The theological foundation for ecclesial self-understanding and mission is the dialogic structure of revelation. Kasper makes clear that "respect for the religion and culture of others and the freedom of others to live and exercise their religion [are] basic prerequisites for inter-religious dialogue and for peace in the world."¹⁷⁹ His approach to discovering common ground on which all religions can enter into a respectful dialogue is to practise the Golden Rule: "[D]o unto others everything you want them to do to you."¹⁸⁰ He also affirms the spiritual resource of *hospitality*. Engaging in such a communal, incarnational spirituality of

¹⁷⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 310. Kasper describes the resources of the Spirit for this kind of dialogue as spiritual ecumenism. See also Kasper, *A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism*, 11-12. Here he writes: "Spiritual ecumenism also requires a '*change of heart and holiness of life*,' arising from Jesus' call to conversion. The way toward reconciliation and communion unfolds when Christians feel the painful wound of division in their hearts. This experience makes them aware of how much harm has been caused by pride and selfishness, by polemics and condemnations, by disdain and presumption... It presupposes a real appreciation of the many elements of sanctification both within and beyond the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church."

¹⁷⁸ Walter Kasper, "Interreligious Dialogue and World Peace," in *Charity and Justice in Relations among Peoples and Nations*, ed. Mary Ann Glendon, Juan José Lach, and Marcelo Sánchez Sorando (Vatican City: Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, 2007), 325.

¹⁷⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 315.

¹⁸⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 319.

encounter, he believes, makes space for the future of the Church to emerge in dialogue with the world.

The Spirit Leads the Church into New Forms of Ministry

The future of a Spirit-led Church is clear in one respect for Kasper: “the future is never just the continuation of that which was and which is.”¹⁸¹ Thus, Kasper asserts, “in the future we will ... have to leave behind us many things we are used to and which are dear to us.”¹⁸² While fear and concern about the Church and its sustainability abound, for Kasper, the Holy Spirit has been promised to the Church by Christ and the Spirit will never abandon it. The Spirit is continually present to the Church, inspiring it to engage in repentance, renewal and reform.

Although Kasper believes that forms of ministry in the future will be differently understood, he laments that, at present: “The ecclesiastical ministry has yet to succeed in developing a convincing perspective for the future.”¹⁸³ Nevertheless with the scandal of the Cross “written into the nature of the Church,”¹⁸⁴ his ecclesiology is founded on the belief that the Spirit has been promised to the Church and will continually lead it into the future. This understanding of the Church calls for engagement in constant renewal and reform so that hope for the future is possible, despite current disillusionment.¹⁸⁵

Kasper looks first to the witness of the saints to inspire discernment about the future of ministry. He writes that the Church “has often suffered inner crises and substantial scandals, but it has renewed itself again and up to the present it has produced uncountable holy men and

¹⁸¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 330. See also Walter Kasper, *Faith: Practices, Models, and Sources of the Spirit* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist, 2014), 63. Here Kasper explicitly links his ecclesiology with the newness that the Spirit brings for a future of hope: “[O]nly God’s Spirit can give us a new beginning.”

¹⁸² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 331.

¹⁸³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 329. It can be assumed that Kasper is referring to offices of the Church when referring to ‘ecclesiastical ministry.’ See Kasper, *Katholische Kirche*, 464. Original text: (*Dem kirchlichen Amt ist es bislang nicht gelungen, eine überzeugende Zukunftsperspektive zu entwickeln.*)

¹⁸⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 331.

¹⁸⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 331.

women, many who let themselves be consumed in the ministry for the poorest of the poor.”¹⁸⁶

Seeds of hope for the future of the Church lie in the courage of Christians who resist the powers of evil. Ultimately, Kasper thinks that the ministry in the future can only speak with relevance, authority and meaning if it deepens its spiritual identity with the world. Ministry in the future is called to be a prophetic-critical sign that safeguards the dignity and value of the human person.¹⁸⁷ To achieve this, Kasper proposes three priorities for the Church.

First, he calls for the Church to have the courage to speak of and witness to the living God who is self-giving love. He names this a theocentric turn for the Church. Second, he calls the Church to encounter anew the living God in Jesus the Christ who walked among us and laid the foundations for a Church which faithfully witnesses to his vision. He names this a christocentric turn for the Church. Third, Kasper calls the Church to deeper discernment of those places where Jesus Christ lives and works today in the Holy Spirit. He names this a pneumatological turn.¹⁸⁸ For Kasper the Church of the future will be a Church that constantly seeks the newness of the Spirit:

[T]he Church is more than an institution; it is as institution time and again a new event in the Holy Spirit. It becomes new each time the word of God is proclaimed as the light of life and when it is accepted in faith, when the liturgy is celebrated and the sacraments administered and the service of the Samaritan is performed for the sick and the dying, for helpless, searching and frightened people and for people living on the edge of our society.¹⁸⁹

Kasper argues that attention given to all three priorities will lead to a renewal of ecclesial mission and ministry. Growth of the Church as *communio* and mission will be experienced through relationships that are “communicative, participatory and dialogical ... [where all are] willing to listen and learn.”¹⁹⁰ Ecclesial ministries in the future must be at the service of *communio* within and beyond the church. This is their mission. While structural authority is

¹⁸⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 333. Here the translator has used the word ‘ministry’ for Kasper’s original term ‘dienst’(service).

¹⁸⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 335.

¹⁸⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 338.

¹⁸⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 338.

¹⁹⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 344.

necessary for order, the ‘authorisation’ for mission is the authority of God’s love which ‘multiplies’ life.¹⁹¹ According to Kasper, the Spirit’s ‘building sites’ for ministry of the future are where efforts are made to seek unity, value difference and foster love.¹⁹²

One example of where ecclesial newness is needed for the Church’s ministry is the traditional concept and practice of ‘parish.’ Kasper notes that ‘parish structures’ were not a feature of the early Church but developed in response to the symbiosis of Church and feudal state. He opens space for consideration about the development of structures that are best suited for the contemporary Church’s identity and mission:

The end or the ending of the *Volkskirche* [popular church] supported by the milieu is one reason among others that the number of practising Catholics has decreased. This ... is one reason among others for the decrease in vocations to the priesthood. What is referred to as a shortage of priests is therefore not calculated in relation to practising Catholics but in relation to the traditional parish structure as it developed under the conditions of the *Volkskirche* [of an earlier time which no longer exists] ... the answer to the question about the right way to a new social form and form of life of the Church ... must grow on the basis of the ecclesiology of the people of God and this is only possible through a long process.¹⁹³

Kasper thinks that joining or reconfiguring traditional parish structures and ministries is generally unhelpful. These moves put undue pressure on fewer priests and threaten the capacity of local communities to respond to the work of the Spirit in their midst. Kasper offers a *communio* and missionary vision for Church organisation:

The model for a new ecclesial form will be a community of faith ... which has the joint celebration of the Eucharist at its centre, and which sees itself in solidarity with existential problems, the joys and hopes, the fears and sorrows of the people. The people of God ecclesiology of Vatican II sees priests and laity working trustingly together in it. Such a church of God’s people cannot be planned. Yet, one can notice its emergence and should further it carefully.¹⁹⁴

Kasper offers three concrete pointers for future planning. First, he warns against spreading out or thinning ecclesial presence over former territories. This, he thinks, orients the Church more to the past than the future. Second, he suggests concentrating existing resources in central Churches which function as oases from which new models of ecclesial life and

¹⁹¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 345. Kasper points out that *auctoritas* is derived from *augere* and *auctor*, meaning ‘multiplier.’ *Multiplier* connotes an empowering and freeing meaning of *authority*.

¹⁹² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 344.

¹⁹³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 278. Kasper describes the *Volkskirche* era as a time when the expression of confessional Catholic identity correlated with the values and norms of the context.

¹⁹⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 279.

ministry can emerge. Third, he advocates retrieving the ancient structures of house churches, base communities and other ecclesial models where Christian life can be concretely lived out and where “Christians can have an ecclesial home.”¹⁹⁵ These examples illustrate Kasper’s assertion that “we must hear what the Spirit tells the communities today ... [because] as the eschatological people of God [Christians] live continuously less in the environment of a cosy familiar congregation.”¹⁹⁶ The Spirit is calling the Church to ‘birth’ new ecclesial forms with all the groaning and labour pains that will possibly accompany this process.

Kasper envisages that a renewed theology of charisms as gifts of the Spirit given to the Church will lead to a new ecclesial birthing process. He thinks that religious communities, orders and monasteries offer rich resources for the creation of new expressions of local church that discern and respond to the charisms present in the community. These resources can help local churches to recognise, fuel, sustain and empower future ecclesial arrangements at the service of the Spirit’s ongoing work. Kasper affirms two other treasures he believes are yet to be fully tapped for the Church of the future: “the Church as people of God and as *communio* ... and the co-responsibility of the laity.”¹⁹⁷

Kasper envisions the Church of the future as the work of the Spirit who cajoles the people of God into communion with the person and work of Jesus Christ. For Kasper, the Spirit is a source of joy who inspires hope:

[T]he Spirit can come with storm and fire (Acts 2.2f.), with the storm that blows some things away and with fire that burns some of those things we think are important today. Yet, as with the prophet Elijah, the Spirit can also come in the light murmuring of the wind (1 Kings 19.12f.), and cleanse us and the world with its glow from inside and change us. [The Spirit] can make us newly aware that we do not need to worry, that rather, the joy in God is our strength (Neh. 8.10).¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 281.

¹⁹⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 281.

¹⁹⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 332.

¹⁹⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 347.

Since Kasper describes the Catholic Church as a church ‘on its way’ in history, allowing itself to be inspired and led by the Spirit to greater fidelity to Christ, he believes that ultimately the Church of the Spirit will be attractive and meaningful as a spiritual home for many.¹⁹⁹

Conclusion

Kasper’s ecclesiology, outlined in *The Catholic Church* is profoundly pneumatological. This chapter has shown that his robust pneumatological ecclesiology opens the way for greater understanding of and receptivity to the work of the Spirit who leads the Church into the future. His *communio*-ecclesiology enables greater recognition of the diversity of charisms of the Spirit gifted to the people of God. It calls the Church into deeper dialogical and missionary engagement with the world.²⁰⁰ *Communio*-ecclesiology underpins inclusive, participative and inter-relational models of ministries.

In his review of *The Catholic Church*, Anh Tran claims that Kasper’s treatment of questions about ministry could have been further developed. He writes that “questions raised by some contemporary Catholics regarding ministry and authority in the church have not been adequately addressed, nor were the experiences of non-Western local churches discussed.”²⁰¹ I agree with this assessment. I am also aware that within his extensive body of works Kasper has much that could have been drawn upon to address this lacuna.²⁰² For example, the Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod, penned mainly by Kasper as theological secretary, was entitled *The Church, in the Word of God Celebrates the Mysteries of Christ for the Salvation of the World*. This report declared that “because the Church is communion there

¹⁹⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 347.

²⁰⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 194.

²⁰¹ Anh Q. Tran, “Book Review: The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission,” *Theological Studies* 77, no. 2 (2016): 507.

²⁰² See for example Walter Kasper, *Pope Francis’ Revolution of Tenderness and Love*, 39. Here Kasper writes: “Francis wants the participation of the entire people of God in the life of the church – women as well as men, lay people as well as clerics, young and old. On the basis of baptism and confirmation, all are missionary disciples; they should be included in decisions. Lay ministries should not be restricted to intraecclesial tasks; they are supposed to have an impact on advancing Christian values in the social, political and economic world and should be engaged in applying the gospel to the transformation of society.”

must be participation and co-responsibility at all of her levels.”²⁰³ This statement has implications for the ways in which ministries can be understood pneumatologically and interrelationally. In particular, I believe that Kasper's favoured image of the Church as sacrament of the Spirit has important implications for the future recognition and reception of charisms in emerging and new forms of ministry.

Part B of this thesis will now address implications of Kasper's pneumatology for understanding, affirming and supporting the emergence of a new pastoral reality: lay ecclesial ministry. Chapter 5 will examine Kasper's writings that specifically deal with his theology and experience of lay ministry. Following on from this work, and in dialogue with selected theological reflections on developments of this reality in the U.S. Church, Chapter 6 will then draw implications of Kasper's pneumatology for the future development and reception of what has been termed 'lay ecclesial ministry.'

²⁰³ Synod of Bishops. "The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod." *The Church, in the Word of God, Celebrates the Mysteries of Christ for the Salvation of the World* (1985), accessed April 6, 2015. <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/synfinal.htm>.

**Part B: Implications of Kasper's Theology of the Spirit for
the Reception of Lay Ecclesial Ministry in the Catholic
Church**

Chapter 5: Kasper on Lay Ministry

*Community leadership ... means building up a community
in the commission received from Jesus Christ and in his
power, with Jesus himself as the criterion of our work.¹*

*In the Spirit of God
again and again
the new in its charismatic way must be realized.
The Spirit is given to the Church in general.²*

*Let anyone who has an ear listen
to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.³*

Introduction

Part A of this thesis has explored the foundations of Kasper's theology of the Spirit through close examination of his *Jesus, God and Church* books. Part B now considers how his pneumatology might function for ecclesial reception of a contemporary expression of Catholic life and mission: lay ecclesial ministry. While Kasper's 2003 book *Leadership in the Church* pays considerable attention to the theology of diaconal, priestly, episcopal and petrine ministries, it does not explicitly mention lay ministries and how they also serve the Church today. In a personal conversation with Cardinal Kasper in preparation for this thesis, he acknowledged the importance of the emergence of the phenomenon of 'lay ecclesial ministry.' In fact, he affirmed that my research could well address a missing chapter on this reality in his *Leadership* book. In relation to how he would see the development of his *Leadership* book if lay ecclesial ministry had been addressed, Kasper emphasised that an implication of his pneumatology would be that future conceptions of ecclesial leadership in the Church should go beyond equating leadership with ordination.⁴ To assist in addressing the

¹ Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*, 64.

² Walter Kasper, "Dienst an der Einheit und Freiheit der Kirche. Zur Gegenwärtigen Diskussion um Petrusamt in der Kirche," in *Wozu Nocheinem Papst?* ed. Walter Kasper (Cologne: Communio, 1993), 53. Translation from Thomas F. O'Meara, "A Theology of Church and Ministry," in *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper*, ed. Kristen M. Colberg and Robert A. Krieg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 133.

³ Rev 3: 6.

⁴ Walter Kasper, personal conversation with thesis author, Rome, October 26, 2013.

lacuna of reflection on lay ministries in his *Leadership* book, this chapter turns to six other publications, covering a span of 42 years, in which Kasper does discuss and evaluate the meaning, relevance and practice of lay ministry as a form of leadership for the Catholic Church. Chapter 6 will then address implications of his pneumatology for deeper understanding and reception of lay ecclesial ministry today.

This chapter begins by examining relevant sections of Chapter 5 of *The Catholic Church* that specifically focus on the laity and lay ministry. This work represents Kasper's most recent thinking on the theme (2011). Four other publications are then examined. They appear in Volume 12 of Walter Kasper's Collected Writings entitled *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter* (The Church and its Ministries), published in 2009.⁵ As I have noted, these articles are not found in *Leadership in the Church*, which does include other essays from *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*.⁶ Nor have they ever been published in English. These publications represent a chronological development, between 1969 and 1994, of Kasper's theological reflections on lay ministry.⁷

⁵ Walter Kasper, Kasper, *Die Kirche Und Ihre Ämter: Schriften Zur Ekklesiologie 2*, 12. This volume is part of a collection of 15 volumes that have not yet been translated from German. Important note: The German word *Amt* (plural *Ämter*) can be translated as Office or Ministry. Kasper's writing usually associates the word with ordained ministry. However, *Kirchliche Amt* can be translated as Ecclesial Ministry. See Catechism of the Catholic Church: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p123a9p4.htm<http://www.vatican.va/archive/DEU003/5/P2F.HTM> accessed April 9, 2016. The German version of this publication has a section entitled *Weshalb das Kirche Amt?* The official English version of this publication translates the same section as 'Why the Ecclesial Ministry?' See Part 1, sec 2, Ch 3, Art 9, # 874.

⁶ *Leadership in the Church: How Traditional Roles Can Serve the Christian Community Today*. The first four chapters of Kasper's *Leadership* book examine the ministries of the Diaconate, the Priestly Office, the Episcopal Office and the Petrine Office respectively. The original German texts of these chapters are found in *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*.

⁷ This chapter examines the first five chapters of *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter* which do not appear in Kasper's *Leadership in the Church*:

(1) 'Kollegiale Strukturen in der Kirche - der theologische Ort der Räte des gemeinsamen Apostolats' (Collegial structures in the Church - the theological place of Councils for the Common Apostolate) originally published in: *Sein und Sendung* 1 (1969), 5-17. Expanded in: W. Kasper, *Glaube und Geschichte*, Mainz, 1970, 355-370.

(2) 'Amt und Gemeinde' (Ministry and Community): presentation within the ecumenical theological working group on 14 February 1970 in East Berlin, reprinted in W. Kasper, *Glaube und Geschichte*, Mainz, 388-414.

(3) 'Die Pastoralen Dienste in der Gemeinde' (Pastoral Services in the Community) in: Synod of Dioceses in the Federal Republic of Germany. Official Issue 1, Freiburg i. Br. 1976 581-596.

(4) 'Die Schädlichen Nebenwirkungen des Priestermangels' (The Adverse Side effects of the Shortage of Priests) in: *Stimmen der Zeit* 195 (1977), 129-135.

A sixth publication, Kasper's 1987 article "Berufung und Sendung des Laien in Kirche und Welt: Geschichtliche und Systematische Perspektiven" ("The Call and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World: Historical and Systematic Perspectives"),⁸ will also be discussed. This article was published in the same year that the Synod on the Laity was held in Rome which resulted in Pope John Paul II's post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*.⁹ I will propose that "The Call and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World," though not his most recent publication on the theme, represents his most fundamental contribution to a theology of lay ministries for the contemporary Catholic Church. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the development of Kasper's work on lay ministry, arguing that the earlier publications reflect more visionary engagement with the theme than his most recent work.

The Church of the People of God and the Mission of the Laity

The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission (2015)¹⁰

In Chapter 5 of *The Catholic Church* Kasper insists that the essential nature of the Church as *communio* is not expressed in the first place through its offices and ministries, but through the identity and mission of the whole people of God. For Kasper, the Church understood as *communio* is symbolised by, but not equated with, its ministries. He thinks that for the symbol of *communio* to be effective, different ministries should be ordered for collaboration as well as be distinguished from each other. He locates the distinctiveness of lay

(5) 'Der Leitungsdienst in der Gemeinde' (Leadership Service in the Community): Paper presented at Study Day of the German Bishops' Conference in Reute 1994 (working aid 118). Published by the Secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference, Bonn, 1994.

⁸ Walter Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien in Kirche und Welt: Geschichtliche und Systematische Perspektiven," *Stimmen der Zeit* 205, no. 1 (1987). A partial and condensed English translation of this article appears in Walter Kasper, "The Mission of the Laity," *Theology Digest* 35, no. 2 (1988).

⁹ John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici: On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World* (Vatican 1988), accessed October 3, 2016. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html.

¹⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 197-219. First published in German in 2011 as *Katholische Kirche: Wesen, Wirklichkeit, Sendung*, 285-315. The translator has chosen to translate the title of section 5.2 of Chapter 5 *Die Sendung* as 'vocation' rather than the more accepted translation of 'mission' which I use here.

ministry within the vocation of all the baptised: “[T]he vocation of the laity concerns the goal and purpose of the Church, whereas the Church’s offices do not pertain to the category of purpose but to the category of media, as they are to serve the realization of the Church’s goal and purpose.”¹¹ Kasper does not consider that ordained ministry is derived from the Spirit-founded mission of the laity, nor that the laity’s identity is derived from the ministry of the ordained.¹² He writes:

The order would be misunderstood if it were called an ecclesiology from below that intends to deduce the vocation of the ecclesiastical office from that of the laity. It is neither about an ecclesiology from above (in the sense of a hierarchical above), in which the service of laypeople would be an extended office of the clergy, nor from below, in which the ministry of the office would be formed out of or commissioned by the community.¹³

The purpose of the whole Church, he affirms, is “the permeation and sanctification of the world through Christ’s Spirit. It is in this big context that we look at the proper correlation.”¹⁴ Furthermore, the *communio*-identity of the Church should manifest itself in dynamic, participatory and mutual ministerial structures that have their theological foundations in the trinitarian communion of unity-in-diversity.¹⁵

At baptism, the people of God are commissioned to participate in the mission of the Church. Kasper writes that the commissioning of baptism is public, inclusive and communal:

[T]he mission of the Church is entrusted to the whole of the Church and thus to all Christians together. Nobody is only object; all are also subject in the Church. All are in their respective way responsible for the Church and the exercise of its mission. The common priesthood is the basis of the brotherhood and sisterhood of all in the Church as the one family of God.¹⁶

¹¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 198.

¹² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 198.

¹³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 198.

¹⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 198.

¹⁵ I am indebted to Ralph McMichael’s study of Kasper’s 1965 published doctoral thesis on F. W. J. Schelling for assisting me to make a connection between Kasper’s trinitarian theology and conceptions of ministry shaped by *communio*-ecclesiology. McMichael writes: “[Kasper’s] critique of Schelling’s understanding of the Trinity issues from Schelling’s exposition of the axiom: *opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*. According to Kasper, Schelling contends that the axiom cannot mean that each person of the Trinity does the same thing. Rather, each person is involved in every work of the Trinity but in different ways.” See Ralph N. McMichael Jr., *Walter Kasper’s Response to Modern Atheism: Confessing the Trinity*, vol. 214, American University Studies (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006), 1.

¹⁶ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 203.

Baptism sacramentalises the common mission of the *laos*, the whole people of God to participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly ministries of Christ.¹⁷ The model of the Church as *communio* is founded on the belief that the Spirit of God calls all the baptised to their unique, irreplaceable yet inter-related mission – to make God's self-revelation as freedom-in-love present in history.¹⁸ Conceiving the Church as an organic structure “does not mean that any one person is able to do everything.”¹⁹

Kasper notes that in Christian experience, especially in the medieval Church, this theology had been largely forgotten. The result, he argues, was the growth of a narrow, institutional understanding of church. Examples include the hierarchical valuing of ‘office-bearers’ over the ‘ordinary’ people; the use of terms ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’ as divisive and dualistic; thinking of the laity as lacking knowledge or authority, and the advent of enclosed monasticism that reinforced lay/worldly divisions.²⁰

The Reformation sought to revalue ‘worldly’ or lay experience. Various post-medieval Catholic movements also sought to recover the meaning of the whole Church's call to holiness. Later, the Enlightenment and its socio-political agenda sought to push religion, symbolised by ecclesial institutions and the clergy, into the private sphere. The voice of Christianity came to be silenced in the secular world. The support of Pope Pius XI for

¹⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 203.

¹⁸ See Sean Christopher Paul, “By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them: Ecclesial Fruitfulness as a Standard of Protestant and Anglican Ecclesiality, Drawing on the Works of Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper” (unpublished Doctoral Thesis; Dept. of Theology, Boston College, 2011), 281. Here Paul illustrates Kasper's pneumatological ecclesiology by employing the concept of fruitfulness to identify where Kasper sees the Church recognised. He writes: “Kasper's understanding of church as the public place of the Spirit, who is the effective and vivifying presence of the risen Christ, offers an important theological foundation for developing a standard of ‘church’ centred on the recognition in a Christian community of certain public signs which point to the active and effective presence of the Spirit of Christ in its midst.” Paul recognises Kasper's emphasis on the sacrament of the Eucharist and the sacramental priesthood as major examples of such public signs that point to the Spirit's presence. In the light of Kasper's (and Ratzinger's) contribution to the ecumenical movement, he notes that Kasper also affirms that baptism sacramentalises the ecclesial identity of communities and points to the means of salvation operating in those communities, even beyond the Catholic Church. I would argue that the category of fruitfulness, according to Paul's pneumatological description above, can be expanded in assessing Kasper's understanding of Church with greater attention to the sacrament of baptism. The ecclesial fruitfulness of baptism illustrates an open space for development of Kasper's pneumatological ecclesiology at the service of deeper understanding and appreciation of the development of lay ecclesial ministry within and on behalf of the Church.

¹⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 203.

²⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 205.

Catholic Action in 1922 represented a turning point. Catholic Action affirmed the Church's recognition of the laity's role in challenging the trend towards the relegation of religion to the private sphere.²¹ Eventually, Vatican II, inspired by the renewal movements that had preceded it, sought to formulate a theology of the laity:²²

The intention was to overcome the negative description of the laity as non-clergy and not in religious orders and to present a positive description. It called lay people '*christifideles*', Christ's faithful people. As such they belong fully to the Church through baptism and its completion in confirmation. Indeed, they *are* the Church and participate in the Holy Spirit in the threefold office of Jesus Christ as prophet, teacher, priest and king or shepherd. This sacramental foundation of the place and mission of the laity means the Council could no longer regard lay people as commissaries and the extended arm of the clergy. They have received their vocation and mission not through commissioning by the ordained ministry and participation in its mission, but because of baptism in the Holy Spirit from Jesus Christ himself.²³

The Council affirmed that lay persons do not merely belong to the Church. By virtue of their baptism, they are the Church. Nor is ecclesial vocation and mission to be narrowed to the ministry of the ordained.²⁴ Nevertheless, Kasper thinks that this affirmation has not yet led to clarity about the relationship between the prophetic, priestly and kingly role and function of the lay baptised and of those ordained to 'official' priesthood. At the heart of the lack of clarity is dualism that values 'sacred' or 'special' lay leadership in the Church over 'secular' or 'ordinary' lay leadership in the world. The Council opened the way for new thinking about lay leadership in the Church:

The Council explicitly stated that the laity can participate in certain official services. This applies to liturgy, catechesis, theology, welfare and social work and building up

²¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 206.

²² A key contributor in preparing and developing Vatican II theology of the laity was Yves Congar. When thinking about the issue of the relationship between laity and clergy, Congar had to admit he was still seeking the right terminology to express the truth of what he believed. See Yves Congar, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology Conversations with Yves Congar*, ed. Bernard Lauret, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, Ltd, 1988), 67. Here Congar admits to defining the laity in terms of the clergy in such publications as *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of Laity* (London: Bloomsbury, 1957). Demonstrating a radical change of mind, he argues that it was rather that the "clergy need to be defined in relation to the laity, who are, quite simply members of the people of God animated by the Spirit."

²³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 207-8.

²⁴ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 210. This theology was revolutionary. See Kasper, *An Introduction to Christian Faith*, 141-2. Here Kasper points out: "The representative theological dictionary of Weltzer and Welte of 1884 dismisses the entry 'Laity' with the curt remark: "Laity: see Clergy.'" Here the laity were being described as a purely negative entity, as non-clerics. They were laity in the secularized sense of non-specialists who know nothing about the subject and have no say. It is not surprising that in the same dictionary, under the relevant heading 'Clergy,' there appears the terse statement: "No one can seriously maintain the existence of a priesthood of the laity."

communities. There are lay people, who are not ordained, who participate in certain tasks of the ordained clergy and who do so as their main profession.²⁵

Kasper does not write generically of 'lay ministry' or 'lay ministers.'²⁶ However, he maintains that appropriate language must express the vision of *communio*-ecclesiology. Such a vision moves thought beyond the idea of one ministry 'participating in' or being subsumed by the ministry of another to the vision of mutuality between ministries:

To do justice to the *communio*-character of the Church and the vocation and responsibility which is in common but to be realized in different ministries, it is necessary – and this is a far-reaching consequence – to develop a communicative and participatory style of life and of leading the Church which takes seriously the personal responsibility of the ministry as well as the dignity of the laity who are never just object but also responsible subject of the salvation mission of the Church. It is important to give space and to listen to God's spirit through an ordered cooperation of all charismata and by listening to each other.²⁷

Kasper believes that there are many *communio* functions today that are rightly undertaken by laypeople. Unfortunately, in my view, he refers to them as "worldly tasks in the Church."²⁸ He includes finance management, administration, public relations, teaching and formation in the realm of such 'worldly' ecclesial functions. This terminology can, even inadvertently, reinforce dualistic thought about Church and world which Kasper believes the Council sought to overcome. While he sees the participation of the laity in the inner-ecclesial life of the Church as a legitimate expression of the laity's call to co-responsibility in and for the Church, Kasper states that "the case is different when the interest focuses on the most extensive participation possible of the laity in specific tasks of the ministry."²⁹ A possible reason for delineating between ordained 'ministry' (*Amt*) and lay 'service' (*Dienst*) in intra-ecclesial settings could be Kasper's concern that the laity's call to mission in the world is not compromised in favour of lay ministry *ad intra*. He sees this danger occurring where lay ministry in the Church resembles the priestly office rather than having its own identity and

²⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 209.

²⁶ Kasper is aware of the term 'lay ecclesial ministry' but does not employ it. The term 'Lay Ecclesial Minister' is used by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (Washington D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2005).

²⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 211.

²⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 211.

²⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 212.

mission. While Kasper positively notes the increased participation of lay people in pastoral services within Church structures, he hopes that this is not at the expense of broader contexts for ministry.³⁰ For example, Kasper expresses reservations about limiting discussion of lay ministry to official inner-church involvements. He wonders if the phenomenon of ‘lay ecclesial ministry’ as he understands it to be happening, for example, in German and US dioceses, might benefit from discernment about setting priorities:

The Council basically envisages such commissioning and respective forms of collaboration. One has to attest that many people who perform these tasks do so with dedication and their work has been fruitful with a lot of success. As Christians who live and work in the world they can bring aspects of today’s life into the ecclesial service and conversely they can live out the Gospel in the contexts of life and the world. And, moreover, one will be grateful for such ‘fresh air’. Yet, by now these services have taken on a dimension that goes far beyond the originally envisaged special situation and emergency and has become in many parishes the normal state of affairs. This poses some basic problems.³¹

One of the problems Kasper points to is that of lay ministers being considered as clergy, or as a subordinate rank of clergy. According to him, such subordination obscures the sacramental basis of the Church as a unity-in-diversity *communio*.³²

Kasper writes very little in *The Catholic Church* about how the sacrament of baptism can inform future conceptions of lay ministry. He restricts himself to a quote from *Christifideles laici* 10 that describes the essence of a lay person: “Baptism regenerates us in the life of the Son of God, unites us to his Body, the Church; and anoints us in the Holy Spirit, making us spiritual temples.”³³ Kasper does provide valuable theology for understanding the relationship between baptism and lay ministry in his important publication “Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of Baptism” where he writes:

³⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 212. In a recent article, Kasper reaffirms the importance of lay ministry not being confined to inner-church life in Walter Kasper, “Open House: How Pope Francis Sees the Church,” *Commonweal*, March 13, 2015, 12, accessed October 4, 2015. <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/open-house>. Here Kasper writes: “Lay ministries ought not to be restricted to intraecclesial tasks; they are supposed to have an impact on advancing Christian values in the social, political, and economic world and should be engaged in applying the gospel to the transformation of society.” Kasper echoes this text in his *Pope Francis’ Revolution of Tenderness and Mercy*, 39.

³¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 212. Kasper is aware that in the USA the phenomenon of lay people in pastoral service on behalf of the Church is named *lay ecclesial ministry*. However, in this publication he sees this phenomenon as distinct from the call of the Church to support and defend the dignity and vocation of the laity.

³² Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 212.

³³ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 210.

[N]o one is baptised only for himself or herself, or only for their own individual salvation. Baptism is linked to the sending of the church into the whole world (Matt. 28:19); it makes the baptised a witness to Christ in the world, and is the foundation for the priesthood of all believers who are sent to proclaim the mighty acts of God (1Pet. 2:5,9). Baptism is at once a sacrament of initiation and of mission.³⁴

He continues in the same publication, pointing out that

if baptism is [not] seen sacramentally but as an act of confession and commitment by the person baptized, the church is then no longer the organism *through which* God bestows newness of life; nor is it any longer the locus of salvation, into which the baptized is received.³⁵

However, in *The Catholic Church* Kasper places more emphasis on marriage and family life than baptism as the particular, though not exclusive, foundation for the vocation of the laity to be nurtured. In my view, this can be interpreted as a limited vision of the power of the pneumatological-sacramental sign of baptism for contemporary ecclesial identity and mission. Furthermore, he does not elaborate on the challenges for the Church of diverse and evolving experiences of marriage and family life as foundations for lay ministry. However, a survey of recent publications do reflect a more nuanced understanding that opens space for links between marriage and ministry to be explored.³⁶

Kasper notes the importance of gender issues and women's participation in the official ministries of the Church. He writes: "In all honesty, one cannot deny that in the Catholic Church, though unfortunately not only here, there have been – and still partly are –

³⁴ Walter Kasper, "Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of Baptism," *Ecumenical Review* 52 (2000): 530.

³⁵ Kasper, "Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications," 535.

³⁶ Though he does not expand upon it in *The Catholic Church*, Kasper is very aware of the pressure on the Church to rethink and expand its understanding and appreciation of the Spirit's presence and work in the contemporary complex experience of marriage and family life. See John L. Allen Jr., "Kasper Says 'Amoris' Permits Communion for Divorced/Remarried," in *Catholic Newsagency* (Catholic News Agency, 2016), accessed June 3, 2017. <https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2016/10/29/kasper-says-amoris-permits-communion-divorcedremarried/> Commenting on criticisms of the latest papal encyclical *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love 2016), Kasper thinks that such criticisms come from a group "which has alienated itself from a sense of the faith and the life of the people of God." Kasper sees *Amoris Laetitia* as hopeful: "it speaks not from an abstract image of the family thought out at a desk, but a realistic one of the joys as well of the difficulties of family life today. It does not want to criticise, moralize or indoctrinate ... [but] to be merciful." See also Kasper, *The Gospel of the Family*, 1. Here Kasper writes: "Many families today see that they are confronted with serious difficulties. Many millions of people find themselves in situations of migration, flight, and forced displacement, or in degrading situations of misery, in which an orderly family life is scarcely possible." Referring to how the Church can accompany baptised Christians living out complex and varied issues related to being married and supporting families Kasper adds, "It is necessary to take seriously believer's sense of faith ... most of the faithful ... live out their belief in the gospel of the family in concrete families and in difficult situations. Therefore we should listen to their witness and also listen to what pastoral coworkers and counselors in pastoral care to families have to say to us. And they do have something to say to us." *Ibid.*, 47.

mysogynist tendencies and discrimination against women.”³⁷ He traces some post-Vatican II developments to counter the gender injustices which are a source of pain, conflict and division within the Church. On the one hand, he writes that “already in the first pages of the Old Testament, the story of creation states that God created man and woman in his own image and likeness (Gen. 1.27). Both, therefore, have the same dignity, and the woman has the same immediacy to God as the man.”³⁸ Furthermore, he recognises that “[c]ourageous women followed (Jesus) until under the cross (Lk. 23.49.55); they were the first witnesses of the Resurrection (Mk 16.1-8 par; Jn 20.1f.11-18). For this reason, Mary Magdalene is often called the apostle of the apostles.”³⁹ On the other hand, Kasper is also aware of a parallel history of devaluation, disadvantage and discrimination against women that has led to silencing their voices and has weakened the development of an inclusive *communio* ecclesial self-understanding. The Church’s complex and conflictive history with this matter, writes Kasper, “provoke[s] impulse to achieve a change of attitude and praxis.”⁴⁰ In acknowledging the increased presence of women, all of whom are lay, as subjects within Church life, Kasper sees the topic of ‘women in the church’ as unfinished: “Only if the Church gives space to the charisms of women can it reach the full realisation of its catholicity ... the Church can shine into today’s world only as a community based on partnership of men and women.”⁴¹

In summary, Kasper shows in *The Catholic Church* that a deeper appreciation for the growth of lay ministry in the Church finds its foundation in the ecclesiology of *communio*. The nature and purpose of the Church is not to be equated with the Church’s ministries and

³⁷ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 214.

³⁸ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 215.

³⁹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 215. Kasper is inconsistent in his use of this theology. In a later chapter on biblical foundations of the Petrine office he writes, “Peter is the first and primal witness of the resurrection.” (246). The commemoration of the apostolic role of Mary Magdalene was elevated by Pope Francis on June 3, 2016 to a Feast Day with the same liturgical significance as the Feast Days of the Twelve male apostles. Mary Magdalene is referred to as the “Apostle of the Apostles” (*Apostolorum apostola*) because she announced the resurrection to the apostles, and they, in turn, announced it to the whole world. See “Commemoration of St. Mary Magdalene raised to a Feast,” Vatican Radio, accessed August 16, 2016. http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/06/10/commemoration_of_st_mary_magdalene_raised_to_a_feast/1236157

⁴⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 217.

⁴¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 219.

ministers. Kasper sees *communio*-ecclesiology as able to overcome the dualism that separates ministries and reinforces 'castes' in the Church. He insists that lay ministers must not be seen as an alternative to the clergy, nor as lower ranked member of the clerical caste. Nor should lay ministry be primarily focussed on intra-ecclesial involvement at the expense of responding to the call for engagement in the world.

Collegial Structures in the Church

*Kollegiale Strukturen in der Kirche: Der Theologische Ort der Räte des Gemeinsamen Apostolats (1969)*⁴²

"Collegial Structures in the Church," not yet translated into English, represents Kasper's early thought about the relationship between ecclesiology and lay participation in the mission of the Church. The article was written during the same year Kasper became dean of the theology faculty at the University of Münster. As early as 1969, a mere four years after the closure of the Council, Kasper had already identified the new promise and potential of the laity for the life of the Catholic Church. He recognised the new expression of the collegial responsibility of all Christians as one of the fundamental legacies of Vatican II for the Catholic Church and describes it as one of the Council's most hopeful themes.⁴³ Thus, Kasper was an early post-conciliar voice advocating a broad conception of the shape of ecclesial ministry – one that deepens understanding and reception of the call of the whole Church to participate in Christ's priestly, prophetic and kingly ministries. I will examine two main points that Kasper makes in this article. First, the link between *communio* theology and

⁴² Walter Kasper, *Kollegiale Strukturen in der Kirche: Der Theologische Ort der Räte des Gemeinsamen Apostolats* (Collegial Structures in the Church - The Theological Place of Councils of Joint Apostolates) originally published in: *Sein und Sendung* 1 (1969), 5-17. Expanded in: W. Kasper, *Glaube und Geschichte*, Mainz, 1970, 355-370. This chapter engages with the text published in *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter* (19-37).

⁴³ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 20. (Original text: [E]ine der wesentlichen Aufgaben (versäumt würde) die der Kirche heute gestellt sind: kirchliche Strukturen zu schaffen, in denen die gemeinsame Verantwortung aller Christen institutionell Ausdruck findet und praktisch wirksam wird. Eines der hoffnungsvollsten Motive des Vaticanum II wäre dann verpufft.) English translation: "One of the essential tasks faced by the Church today would be to create ecclesiastical structures in which the shared responsibility of all Christians is institutionally expressed and practically effective. One of the most hopeful motives of Vatican II would then have 'gone up in smoke' [if this did not occur]."

collegiality must be reflected in ecclesial structures. Second, the call to all the baptised to participate in Christ's priestly, prophetic and kingly ministries must be enabled through collegiality.

Kasper believes that the quest for collegiality needs to be at the heart of the theology and emerging shapes of ministries. For collegiality to grow the Church must make theological, structural and pastoral space for joint structures of *all* apostolates: "the point is really to exercise collectively the mutual responsibility and mission of all Christians."⁴⁴ For Kasper, conciliar rediscovery of the theology of the Church as the people of God, the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit enables the development of *communio* identity and collegiality. Kasper identifies a fresh task for the Church: "the need to establish new institutional structures which can guarantee the shared responsibility of all."⁴⁵ Church structures should institutionally express, and practically enable, the collegial responsibility of all Christians for the life and mission of the Church. The entire church is responsible for enabling and coordinating the priestly, prophetic and governing ministries of Christ: "[E]ach individual, be it pope, bishop, priest or lay person, can only be effective in the community with the whole and as an organ of the whole."⁴⁶ Collegial structures should not imply that everyone does everything nor that only a few should do everything. This ancient insight of St Paul and developed by Johann Möhler and the Tübingen School is, once again, embraced by Kasper.⁴⁷ He points out that in the history of the Church an unfortunate development occurred

⁴⁴ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 19. (Original text: *[D]ie gemeinsame Verantwortung und Sendung aller Christen auch gemeinsam auszuüben.*)

⁴⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 22. (Original text: *Daraus ergibt sich für uns heute die Notwendigkeit zur Errichtung neuer institutioneller Strukturen, die die Mitverantwortung aller gewährleisten können.*)

⁴⁶ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 21. (Original text: *[J]eder Einzelne, ob Papst, Bischof, Priester oder Laie, kann nur in Gemeinschaft mit dem Ganzen und als Organ des Ganzen wirksam werden.*)

⁴⁷ As noted throughout this thesis, resistance to the idea that some do everything and are all important in the Church is found in several of Kasper's publications where he draws on Johann Möhler's vision of the Catholic Church. See Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 276. Here Kasper quotes from Möhler, *Unity*, (1825) §70: "Two extremes are possible in ecclesiastical life, and both are called egoism. They arise if *each as an individual* or *one individual* wishes to be all. In the latter case the bond of unity is so narrow and love so warm that one cannot free oneself of its strangling grasp. In the first case, everything falls apart, and so love grows so cold that one freezes. One egoism begets the other. Neither one nor another must wish to be all. Only all can be all and the unity of all can only be a whole. This is the idea of the Catholic Church." (Italics original)

in the bundling of the many charisms for various ecclesial ministries into the role of the bishop: “[O]ne charism, the charism of the office of the Church, has drawn all other charisms into itself. Thus, the bishop today lays claim to be teacher and shepherd, to exercise the prophetic and the apostolic ministry. Here a disentangling is absolutely necessary.”⁴⁸ Without such ‘deknottung,’ Kasper argues, growth in the charismatic identity of the Church as the whole people of God is at risk. For him, the model of the Church as *communio* supports the integration of the whole variety of the Spirit’s charisms into the Church’s life and mission. It does not support the accumulation of charisms by specific ministries or offices of the Church.⁴⁹

The people of God ecclesiology provides the foundation for deknottung the charisms necessary for the Church to be faithful to its Spirit-led identity. For Kasper, “the People of God is the most comprehensive and foundational definition of the nature of the Church.”⁵⁰ The Church, the whole people of God, is endowed by the Spirit with gifts needed for mission. The purpose of the Spirit’s charisms is to bring about God’s reign. Charisms are not derived from, contained by, nor to be reined in by institutional structures.⁵¹ They are not the possession of some, but of the whole people of God. Furthermore, no one person, including the ordained minister, can claim to hold, embody, or direct, all the charisms of the Church.

As gifts of the Spirit, Kasper thinks that charisms for collegial ministry can be received and lived out by the Church according to the historical situation. Since the Spirit

⁴⁸ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 24. (Original text: *Lehramt (im weiteren Sinn) und Leitungsamt, prophetisches und apostolisches Amt brauchen nicht unbedingt in einer Hand vereinigt zu sein. Hier hat im Laufe der Kirchengeschichte eine geradezu fatale Entwicklung stattgefunden. Es hat nämlich ein Charisma, das Charisma des kirchlichen Amtes, alle anderen Charismen an sich gezogen. So beansprucht der Bischof heute, Lehrer und Hirte zu sein, prophetisches und apostolisches Amt auszuüben. Hier wäre durchaus eine Entflechtung notwendig.*)

⁴⁹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 24.

⁵⁰ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 20. (Original text: *Volk Gottes ist die umfassendste und grundlegendste Bestimmung für das Wesen der Kirche.*)

⁵¹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 22. (Original text: *So muss es also in der Kirche jeweils eine Fülle und einen Reichtum von Charismen geben. Diese Charismen sind Geistgaben. Sie kommen aus der Freiheit und aus der Fülle des Heiligen Geistes. Sie können deshalb nicht vom Amt abgeleitet werden, sie sind nicht nur Hilfsorgane des kirchlichen Amtes. Sie haben ihre eigene Sendung und ihre eigene Verantwortung.*)

provides the Church with what it needs for collaborative ministries, tasks should be discerned and assigned in response to the gifts abundantly given to the whole Church by the Spirit.⁵² Of interest for this thesis is Kasper's insight that when charisms are understood to be the possession of a few rather than gifts for the many, the idea of the Catholic Church as sacrament of the Spirit is at risk. Thus the collegial basis of the Church cannot be limited to the ministry of the episcopate:

Everybody can, and must, proclaim [the Gospel], but they can only do it in listening intently and responding to other people's witness of faith. Everyone celebrates the Eucharist, but it can only be in communion with the whole congregation and the whole Church. Thus, the Church as a whole and not merely the episcopate is constituted collegially.⁵³

Kasper interprets the term 'lay' in its broad and rich sense. According to him, the essential meaning of the word suggests inclusivity, collegiality and equality of all in the Church before any differentiation of roles, functions or states of life. He writes:

In Greek, 'People of God' is λαός του θεου. From this Greek term λαός derives our German word of 'Laie' [lay person]. In the broadest sense of the word, therefore, a lay person is one who belongs to the People of God. In this sense, the priest, pope and bishop are also lay people as well. In its original meaning the term 'lay person' encompasses the entire church, clergy and lay people in the stricter sense of the word. Hence, the distinction between clergy and lay people may never be the starting point for determining the nature of the church, as this differentiation can only have secondary significance.⁵⁴

Kasper therefore concludes that "the priesthood of all Christians [the *laos*] is not to be defined as mere participation in the office of the priesthood. Even less can the mission of the laity be

⁵² Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 22. (Original text: *Die Charismen können sich aus der Freiheit des Geistes je nach der geschichtlichen Situation wandeln.*)

⁵³ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 21. (Original text: *Jeder kann und muss verkündigen, aber er kann es nur tun im Mithören und im Hinhören auf das Glaubenszeugnis der anderen. Jeder feiert die Eucharistie, aber er kann es nur in der Gemeinschaft mit der ganzen Gemeinde und der ganzen Kirche. So ist die Kirche als Ganze und nicht nur der Episkopat kollegial verfasst.*)

⁵⁴ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 20-1. (Original text: *Volk Gottes heißt auf griechisch λαός του θεου. Von diesem griechischen Wort λαός stammt unser deutsches 'Laie.' Laie ist also im weitesten Sinn des Wortes derjenige, der zum Volk Gottes gehört. In diesem Sinn ist auch der Kleriker, der Papst und der Bischof ein Laie. Seiner ursprünglichen Bedeutung nach umgreift der Begriff Laie die gesamte Kirche, Kleriker und Laien im engeren Sinn des Wortes. Die Unterscheidung zwischen Klerikern und Laien darf deshalb niemals der Ausgangspunkt zur Bestimmung des Wesens der Kirche sein, diese Unterscheidung kann immer nur sekundäre Bedeutung besitzen. Die Gemeinsamkeit und Gleichheit aller geht allen späteren Unterscheidungen voraus und hält sich in ihnen durch.*)

based on the current lack of priests. Rather, the starting point is the one People of God and its common mission.”⁵⁵

With this foundation established, Kasper proceeds to the question of the role of offices within the Church and for the world. He sees the strengthening of lay ministries as closely connected to a correct understanding of the position and function of the hierarchical offices of the Church.⁵⁶ Kasper insists that the original impulse for ecclesial leadership in the early Church was service to Christ. Thus, he writes, “Office cannot be defined by taking monarchic or feudal ideas as a starting point, or by explaining it in accordance with a democratic perception of authority.”⁵⁷ Leadership in the early Church was termed *diakonia* or service and was not tied to sacral-cultic duties. Kasper maintains that for today as well, “defining the essential nature of the offices of the Church cannot proceed from its sacramental-cultic functions ... the starting point for the definition of office must instead be its simple function of service within the Church or the faith community.”⁵⁸ In the early Church leadership terms such as *episcopi*, *presbyter* and *diakonia* communicated their identity as service:

[T]he charism of leading a community is a charism in the specifically theological sense of the word. As a gift of the Spirit, ecclesial ministry has a mission and a responsibility which cannot simply derive from below, i.e. from the faith community. Ecclesial Ministry is not simply the servant of the congregation, but is also subordinated to Christ in service and responsibility.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 21. (Original text: *Das Priestertum aller Christen ist auch nicht als bloße Teilnahme am amtlichen Priestertum zu bestimmen. Noch weniger kann die Sendung der Laien einfach mit dem gegenwärtigen Priestermangel begründet werden. Es ist auszugehen von dem einen Volk Gottes und seiner gemeinsamen Sendung.*)

⁵⁶ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 26.

⁵⁷ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 26. (Original text: *Man kann das Amt also weder dadurch bestimmen, dass man von monarchischen beziehungsweise feudalen Vorstellungen ausgeht, noch dadurch, dass man es einfach nach Art des demokratischen Amtsverständnisses erklärt.*)

⁵⁸ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 27. (Original text: *In der Bestimmung des Wesens des kirchlichen Amtes darf man nicht von dessen kultisch-sakramentalen Funktionen ausgehen ... Der Ausgangspunkt für die Bestimmung des Wesens des kirchlichen Amtes muss vielmehr die schlichte Dienstfunktion innerhalb der Kirche beziehungsweise Gemeinde sein.*)

⁵⁹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 28. (Original text: *[D]as Charisma der Gemeindeleitung [ist auch] ein Charisma im spezifisch theologischen Sinn des Wortes. als solche Geistgabe hat das Amt eine Sendung und eine Verantwortung, die nicht einfach von unten, von der Gemeinde, abgeleitet werden kann. Das Amt ist nicht nur Diener der Gemeinde, sondern auch dienend und verantwortlich Christus zugeordnet.*) See page 166 footnote 5 of this thesis for a defense for the translation of *Amt* as both ‘Ecclesial Ministry’ and ‘Office.’

Kasper thinks that the function of 'office' is to create more opportunities for service by recognising and encouraging the abundance of the Spirit's charisms. Ecclesial office is at the service of listening for and encouraging the Spirit's charisms in and for the mission of the Church in the world:

Here Office has a regulating function for the unity of the community. This regulating function has nothing to do with exercising authoritarian power. On the contrary, it consists in co-ordinating the various charisms in a meaningful and fruitful cooperation; in discovering and awakening charisms; providing space for them; encouraging them, but also calling them to order and reprimanding them if they endanger the unity of the church. This requires a new democratic style of leadership, in which arriving at decisions is the result of a broad formation of opinion and joint consultation, and is supported by all.⁶⁰

Such work of official ecclesial ministry is clearly at the service of the Spirit:

From there derives a global calling of the church and of church offices. It would be completely amiss to want to limit the Office to purely inner-church or even sacramental functions. The church's mission in the world is common to the office and the laity. The office therefore, has to raise its prophetic voice wherever the unity and the peace of humankind and the world are at stake.⁶¹

Kasper states that one of the most important tasks of the post-conciliar Church is the creation of new ecclesial structures which facilitate communal responsibility for the Church's 'worldly' mission. These structures would affirm, activate and concretise the abundance of charisms the Spirit has bestowed on all Christians.⁶² Furthermore, Kasper writes that "the priesthood of all the baptised is not confined only to worldly service while the service of salvation is reserved for the official priesthood."⁶³ He thinks that the separation of these ministries stifles the work of the Spirit in both contexts.

⁶⁰ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 30. (Original text: *Hier kommt dem Amt eine Ordnungsfunktion für die Einheit der Gemeinde zu. Diese Ordnungsfunktion hat nichts zu tun mit einer autoritären Machtausübung. Sie besteht vielmehr umgekehrt gerade darin, die verschiedenen Charismen in ein sinnvolles und fruchtbares Miteinander zu bringen, Charismen zu entdecken und zu wecken, ihnen Raum zu verschaffen, sie zu ermuntern, sie aber auch zur Ordnung zu rufen und zu ermahnen, wenn sie die Einheit der Kirche gefährden. Das erfordert einen neuen demokratischen Führungsstil, bei dem die Entscheidungen aus einer möglichst breiten Meinungsbildung und gemeinsamen Beratung heraus gefällt und von allen mitgetragen werden.*)

⁶¹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 30-1. (Original text: *Daraus leitet sich ein Weltauftrag der Kirche und des kirchlichen Amtes ab. Es wäre völlig verkehrt, das Amt auf rein innerkirchliche oder gar auf sakramentale Funktionen beschränken zu wollen. Der Weltauftrag der Kirche ist dem Amt und den Laien gemeinsam. Das Amt muss deshalb überall dort prophetisch seine Stimme erheben, wo es um die Einheit und den Frieden der Menschen und der Welt geht.*)

⁶² Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 33-4.

⁶³ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 21. (Original text: *Dieses Priestertum aller Getauften besteht nicht nur im Weltdienst, während der Heildienst dem Amtspriestertum vorbehalten wäre.*)

Kasper points out that the Council envisioned ecclesial structures that enable cooperation between laity, ordained and religious in the ministry of diocesan leadership.⁶⁴ One innovation which the Council suggested might help realise the collegial responsibility of the whole people of God for mission is the establishment of Pastoral Councils:

On the basis of our fundamental considerations, the pastoral council would have to assume precedence in the leadership (and not only in consultation) of ecclesial life in future. Only there is the entire people of God represented in the unity and plurality of its charisms. Therefore, this should be a starting point for initiatives, and here the decisions should be reached.... It [the pastoral council] should have the right to demand the relevant information and make decisions.⁶⁵

In addition to Pastoral Councils, Kasper names three other structures that he thinks contribute to the synodal vision of Vatican II for participation of the whole people of God in the Church's mission: Bishops' Conferences, Councils of Priests and Lay Councils. Kasper repeats a common theme: "[N]one of these three councils, not even the Bishops' Conference, is responsible for absolutely everything. They are only responsible for their respective sphere."⁶⁶ In the end, however, Kasper sees the realm for the mission of the laity as most importantly located beyond inner Church life. He suggests that structures such as Lay Councils could be set up to strengthen the laity's apostolate of love in the world. Kasper notes that models for this structure remain uncharted territory for most local churches. However, he

⁶⁴ One example of this model at the level of a local diocese was experienced in the Archdiocese of Adelaide between 1986 and 2001. Archbishop Leonard Faulkner introduced Australia's first Diocesan Pastoral Team which comprised an Archbishop, priest, religious sister and lay woman. See Michael Trainor, ed. *A Listening Ministry. Becoming a Bishop in Our World: Memories of Archbishop Leonard Faulkner* (Northcote, Victoria: Morning Star, 2016). Here Archbishop Faulkner notes that in this model "when asked what the team did, I replied that it did everything that was necessary for the growth and vitality of the church in Adelaide," 116. Furthermore, one of Australia's first Diocesan Pastoral Councils met for the first time in Adelaide on March 31, 1968 under the leadership of Archbishop Matthew Beovich who attended the sessions of the Council. See Josephine Laffin, *Matthew Beovich: A Biography* (Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2008), 274.

⁶⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 33. (Original text: *Von unseren Grundlagenüberlegungen aus gesehen müsste diesem Seelsorgerat für die Leitung (und nicht nur für die Beratung) des kirchlichen Lebens in Zukunft die erste Stelle zukommen. In ihm allein ist das ganze Gottesvolk in der Einheit und Vielheit seiner Charismen repräsentiert. Von hier müssten also die Initiativen ausgehen und hier müssten die Entscheidungen fallen.... Er müsste das Recht zur entsprechenden Information und zur Entscheidung haben.*)

⁶⁶ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 34. (Original text: *Keines dieser drei Gremien, auch nicht die Bischofskonferenz, ist schlechterdings für alles zuständig. Sie sind jeweils nur in ihrem Bereich zuständig.*) The Council's synodal vision is exemplified in *Christus Dominus*, The Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, 27: "It is greatly desired that in each diocese a pastoral commission will be established over which the diocesan bishop himself will preside and in which specially chosen clergy, religious and lay people will participate. The duty of this commission will be to investigate and weigh pastoral undertakings and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them."

envisages that “in the future, these Councils of the Laity will have an even more important function than previously. Their function is not so much to allow the voice of lay people to be heard in the Church, but to allow the Church become effective in its social context.”⁶⁷

Kasper describes the functioning of Pastoral Councils and Lay Councils as “eminently theological or rather ecclesiological” because they are related to the question of the foundational structure of the Church.⁶⁸ He calls for the creation of more structures appropriate to current tasks and open to greater possibilities for increased collegiality and communication between all ministries and charisms – all of which are at the service of the Church’s mission for the world:

The creation of these organs is particularly imperative in regard to the effectiveness of the social-political calling of the church in our time. The church can only serve peace, unity fraternity and freedom of humanity if an atmosphere of fraternity, peace and freedom within itself prevails. Therefore, the whole discussion about internal church structures is not only a question of the outward organisation of the church but also its credibility. Only if freedom and fraternity have become reality in the church itself can the Church be an authentic sign of freedom and fraternity in the world, and provide the service to which it has been commissioned in our time.⁶⁹

In summary, Kasper thinks that collegiality is key to encouraging post-conciliar developments in the theology and practice of lay ministry. Ministry gives expression to the Church’s *communio* identity. The Spirit provides what the Church needs for its ministries in each historical context. Since the Church is the work of the Spirit, institutional arrangements are at the service of the integration of the Spirit’s gifts for ministry into its life and mission. All ministry is about service to the Kingdom and the ordering of ministry should inspire and

⁶⁷ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 36. (Original text: *Diesen Laienräten kommt in Zukunft eine noch wichtigere Funktion zu als bisher. Ihre Funktion ist nicht so sehr, die Stimme der Laien in der Kirche laut werden zu lassen, sondern die Kirche wirksam werden zu lassen im gesellschaftlichen Bereich.*)

⁶⁸ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 36. Original text: (*Der Seelsorge-und Laienräte ist “ein eminent theologisches beziehungsweise ekklesiologisches” Problem. Es steht im Zusammenhang mit der Frage nach der Grundstruktur der Kirche.*)

⁶⁹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 37. (Original text: *Die Schaffung dieser Organe ist besonders notwendig im Hinblick auf die Wirksamkeit des gesellschaftlichen Auftrags der Kirche in unserer Zeit. Die Kirche kann nur dann dem Frieden, der Einheit, der Brüderlichkeit und der Freiheit der Menschheit dienen, wenn in ihr selbst nicht nur eine Atmosphäre, sondern auch eine Ordnung der Brüderlichkeit, des Friedens und der Freiheit besteht. Deshalb geht es in der ganzen Diskussion um die innerkirchlichen Strukturen nicht allein um Fragen der äußeren Organisation, sondern um die Glaubwürdigkeit der Kirche. Nur wenn Freiheit und Brüderlichkeit in der Kirche selbst verwirklicht sind, kann die Kirche ein glaubwürdiges Zeichen der Freiheit und der Brüderlichkeit in der Welt sein und den ihr aufgetragenen Dienst in unserer Zeit leisten.*)

nourish discipleship. Kasper believes that new ecclesial structures are necessary to activate charisms for collaborative ministries as practical expressions of the theology of the people of God. "Collegial Structures in the Church" reveals Kasper's pioneering openness to respond to early post-conciliar impulses for a collegial, inclusive ecclesiology of ministry.

Ministry and Community

*Amt und Gemeinde (1970)*⁷⁰

"Ministry and Community" was originally written for a visionary ecumenical gathering held in East Berlin in 1970. Kasper's main concern in this article is to clarify the relationship between official ecclesial ministers and their faith communities. He begins by noting that the nature of the relationship between public office and authority is often debated both within the Church and in society in general. Critique of authority, Kasper argues, is a legacy of the Enlightenment and of emancipation movements that challenge traditional authority structures. While the pre-conciliar Church generally criticised and distanced itself from social movements that questioned authority, Kasper thinks that "undoubtedly, through Vatican II a turnaround has occurred here." He laments, however, that greater appreciation for social movements that positively rethink the notion of power "has hardly shown any significant effect in the intra-ecclesial structural framework."⁷¹ In light of this, Kasper concludes: "[T]he intra-church effects of the contemporary estrangement between church and society, fully evident only today, cannot be overlooked any longer."⁷² For the Church to be a credible and effective sign and instrument of love, freedom and unity in and for the world it must demonstrate a liberating understanding of authority and leadership within its own

⁷⁰ Walter Kasper, 'Amt und Gemeinde' (Ministry and Community). Presentation of the ecumenical theological working group on 14 February 1970 in East Berlin, reprinted in W. Kasper, *Glaube und Geschichte*, Mainz, 388-414. The text this chapter refers to is published in *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter* (38-68).

⁷¹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 39. (Original text: *Durch das Vaticanum II ist hier zweifellos eine Wende eingetreten, jedoch hat diese positive Würdigung im innerkirchlichen Strukturgefüge noch kaum nennenswerte Auswirkungen gezeigt.*)

⁷² Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 39. (Original text: *Die innerkirchlichen Auswirkungen der modernen und erst heute voll offenbaren Entfremdung zwischen Kirche und Gesellschaft sind nicht mehr länger zu übersehen.*)

confines. This influences the way leaders and their communities think about and relate to each other:

[T]he church above all is supposed to be the prophetic sign of freedom and fraternity for all humankind. But as such it is worthy of trust only if it does not just talk about freedom and fraternity theoretically but if it clearly and unmistakably realises these values in its own social shape, or at least strives time and again with all its might to bring to fruition an order of freedom and fraternity.⁷³

In a step toward greater credibility and effectiveness for the Church's mission Kasper assesses three common approaches to ecclesial leadership. The first is 'Critical Catholicism' which sees ministries as authoritarian. Official ministries threaten freedom and thus should be rejected so that the Church can be of greater service to the world. The second is 'Reformist Catholicism' which, Kasper argues, seeks to democratise and de-sacralise ministries to promote fraternity and dialogue with the world. Ministries are critiqued as mirrors of the values of society. Third is the 'Conservative Catholicism' approach which encourages ecclesial leadership to resist new trends. Those who hold this view want ministries to remain faithfully connected to what they consider are the Church's foundational roots, and through them, to the will of God. In this approach, ecclesial ministry appeals primarily to the past to address the present and future.⁷⁴ Kasper critiques all three understandings of Church leadership as inadequate and problematic for today. He sees each approach as devaluing the identity, context and history of faith communities.⁷⁵ In contrast to these three common approaches to ecclesial leadership, Kasper argues that the basis of an authentic relationship between ministry and community must begin with consideration of the relationship between Church and world. He affirms that the most fruitful starting point for a correct understanding of this relationship is the ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus' life and destiny, understood in

⁷³ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 39. (Original text: *Dabei sollte doch gerade die Kirche in der Welt ein prophetisches Zeichen der Freiheit und der Brüderlichkeit aller Menschen sein. Als solches Zeichen ist sie jedoch nur dann glaubwürdig und wirksam, wenn sie von Freiheit und Brüderlichkeit nicht nur abstrakt redet, sondern wenn sie diese Werte auch konkret und unmissverständlich in ihrer eigenen sozialen Gestalt verwirklicht oder zumindest immer wieder mit allen Kräften darum ringt, eine Ordnung der Freiheit und Brüderlichkeit zu verwirklichen.*)

⁷⁴ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 40.

⁷⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 41.

relation to the history and sociological conditions of his time, provide the foundation for understanding the relationship between Church ministry and community identity and mission:

[N]one of the original words of our Lord nor the various structures in the times of the New Testament, or later dogmatic definitions, can be elevated to timelessly valid standards without disregarding their context, their history and sociological conditionality. Abidingly valid truth is available to us only in its specific verbal or concrete historical forms, while the inter-relation between what is lasting and what is historically variable may only inadequately come to light or perhaps never will.⁷⁶

Ministry is not only an extension of Christ's original historically situated mission. Kasper explains that "the ministry of the Church and even more the ministry in the Church ... is therefore not to be perceived as an extension but as a present realisation of the mission of Jesus Christ. It has to represent Christ in the present but it is not Christ in the present."⁷⁷

Kasper describes Jesus' ministry as revolutionary (*revolutionär*). Jesus challenged authority patterns that considered normative only what was old or ancient.⁷⁸ His teachings were open to the future. Jesus broke Sabbath commands and purity laws in the name of mercy. He modelled an open and status-free invitation to discipleship.⁷⁹ His ministry sought to overcome sacred/secular delineations and laws that imprisoned individuals rather than freed them to flourish. According to Kasper, Jesus considered revolutionary and reformist movements of his time not as too radical, but rather as not radical enough.⁸⁰ These movements had different understandings of freedom from those lived and preached by Jesus. In contrast to them, Kasper believes that Jesus understood freedom to be at the core of faith:

[B]eing always bound to its own past, humanity can never 'create' the new order of freedom out of itself. Only by a radically new beginning, can humanity receive its freedom. The focus and framework of Jesus' entire proclamation therefore is the message of the

⁷⁶ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 42. (Original text: *Weder die ursprünglichen Herrenworte noch die verschiedenen neutestamentlichen Gemeindestrukturen, noch spätere dogmatische Definitionen können ohne Rücksicht auf ihren 'Sitz im Leben,' also ihre geschichtliche und soziologische Bedingtheit zu zeitlos gültigen Maßstäben erhoben werden. Wir besitzen die bleibend gültige Wahrheit nur in jeweils konkreten geschichtlichen Sprech- und Verwirklichungsweisen, wobei die Interferenz zwischen dem Bleibenden und dem geschichtlich Wandelbaren sich nicht leicht und vielleicht nie adäquat auflichten lässt.*)

⁷⁷ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 47. (Original text: *Das Amt der Kirche und noch mehr das Amt in der Kirche kann im Grunde nur ein Amt zweiten Grades sein. Sie ist darum nicht als Verlängerung, sondern als Vergegenwärtigung der Sendung Jesu Christi zu verstehen. Sie hat Christus zu vergegenwärtigen, aber sie ist nicht der gegenwärtige Christus.*)

⁷⁸ Kasper refers to the "I say to you" statements (Matt 5: 21).

⁷⁹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 44.

⁸⁰ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 44.

coming reign of God which we cannot build, organise nor gain by force but can only receive in faith.⁸¹

Jesus preached that the Reign of God is a reign of freedom, a gift of God's Spirit. Such a reign cannot be 'achieved' through human effort. Nor can it be earned or planned. Making space for God's Reign to become enfleshed in history requires close listening to and cooperation with the source of freedom: God's Spirit.

"Ministry and Community" lays a theological foundation for ministry to be understood pneumatologically. The Church and its offices serve the freedom of the Spirit. Kasper writes: "[I]n its uniqueness, (the Church and its ministries) signify freedom and the un-derivability of grace, and are thus a sign of freedom in the world. Essentially, therefore, the Church is Church [not for itself but] for others."⁸² The Church and the arrangement of its ministries should make space for freedom. The Church, through its offices, must be an advocate for the freedom and flourishing of life.

Office here does not mean any longer dominion but service, being there for others, advocacy, or existence as pro-existence. This is as much a radical critique of all existing perceptions of ministry [of the church] as a completely novel foundation of Office, which therefore demands an equally new form of its exercise.⁸³

Kasper includes, as an example of this service, protest against the lack of freedom created by institutions. Thus, Kasper writes that the Church must be "an institution-critical institution which is essentially committed to critique and protest against all institutionally created

⁸¹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 44-5. (Original text: *Weil er stets an seine Vergangenheit gebunden bleibt, kann er die neue Ordnung der Freiheit nie aus sich selbst 'schaffen.'* Nur aus einem radikal neuen Anfang kann der Mensch seine Freiheit empfangen. Mitte und Rahmen der gesamten Verkündigung Jesu ist deshalb die Botschaft von der kommenden Herrschaft Gottes, die wir nicht bauen, nicht organisieren und nicht erkämpfen, sondern nur im Glauben empfangen können.)

⁸² Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 46. (Original text: *Sie ist in ihrer Eigenständigkeit Zeichen der Freiheit und Unableitbarkeit der Gnade und damit Zeichen der Freiheit in der Welt. Die Kirche ist deshalb wesentlich Kirche für die anderen.*)

⁸³ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 46. (Original text: *Amt bedeutet hier nicht mehr Herrschaft, sondern Dienst, Sein für die andern, Stellvertretung, Existenz als Pro-existenz. Das ist ebenso sehr eine radikale Kritik an allem sonstigen Amtsverständnis wie eine völlig neuartige Begründung des Amtes, die nach einer ebenso neuen Weise der Amtsführung verlangt.*)

unfreedoms found in the world.”⁸⁴ Ministry arrangements of the Church should be at the service of this function.

For Kasper, the ministry of the Church should bring about the ever new realization, in the Spirit, of Christ's mission. In the Spirit, ministry is a vocation to love in history. The vocation to love is not a right or privilege, nor is it simply a function or role. It leads, Kasper writes, to “a service which commandeers the person involved fully and therefore qualifies him for what he is.”⁸⁵ According to Kasper, office brings person and function into an indissoluble unity. Thus, he sees ecclesial commissioning rituals for office as important. Such rituals interpret and communicate the mission of service of the whole Church. They also interpret the meaning of the minister's promise to ‘be there for others.’⁸⁶ Such rituals should communicate that the foundation for ministry is not power but love.

Kasper identifies two central questions for ministry in Christ's name today. First, he asks if the Church and its ministry is a symbol of freedom and, as such, critical of institutions that oppress and dehumanise. Second, he asks if the Church and its ministries are aligned with the values and beliefs of dominant structures, institutions and movements that threaten the freedom of individuals. In responding to these questions Kasper recognises that “a certain sacralisation of ecclesial offices and the formation of privileges developed in the course of a complicated historical process ... which today, and for a long time to come, has not yet been dismantled.”⁸⁷ This has been, he believes, an impediment to the Church's ministries being at the service of Christ's mission. However, he also believes that the charismatic foundation of the Church that encourages collegiality can overcome this impediment:

⁸⁴ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 46. (Original text: *Sie ist eine institutionskritische Institution, die wesentlich der Kritik und dem Protest gegen alle institutionell bedingte Unfreiheit in der Welt verpflichtet ist.*)

⁸⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 49. (Original text: *[A]ber auch nicht eine äußere Funktion, sondern ein Dienst, der den Menschen, der ihn tut, ganz in Beschlag nimmt und das ihn deshalb qualifiziert in dem, was er ist.*)

⁸⁶ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 49.

⁸⁷ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 50. (Original text: *[K]am es auf Grund eines komplizierten historischen Prozesses ... im Verlauf der Kirchengeschichte doch wieder zu einer gewissen Sakralisierung der kirchlichen Ämter und zur Ausbildung von Privilegien, eine Entwicklung, die heute noch lange nicht in allem wieder abgebaut ist.*)

[T]he mission of the Church is, in the first instance, common to all baptised Christians. The tasks of proclamation, liturgy and responsibility for the unity of the church befits all Christians jointly and is a function of the church as a whole. The church as a whole is always the real bearer of the ecclesial mission of salvation, and each individual — be it as pope, bishop, priest or lay person — can only become effective within the entirety and as an organ of the total. Everybody can and must proclaim, but he can only do so in listening co-jointly and listening to the witness of the faith of the others. Everybody celebrates Eucharist but can only do so in fellowship with the faith community and with the whole church. The fundamental structure of the church could thus be described as collegial. Collegiality applies to the church as a whole and not only to the episcopate.⁸⁸

As Kasper often points out, the foundational equality and call to collegial mission of all the baptised does not mean everyone must do the same things or a few do everything. He reaffirms that the Spirit's abundant charisms for ministry must not be monopolised by, or concentrated in, a few representatives of institutional structures. Since the Spirit provides the needed charisms for the whole church's mission, their identification, coordination and ordering should occur through communal discernment. Thus, Kasper sees that creating structures for collegiality and decision-making about ministry is vital. Such structures seek to affirm both the unity of purpose and the diversity of expression of charisms for ministry.

Since Kasper thinks charisms are the foundational principle for organising the church and its ministries, it follows that the church and its ordering cannot be conceived as a closed system:

Within a closed system, the entirety can be manipulated from one point within, everything is being derived and can be standardised from one entity. A one-sided hierarchical perception of the church would be such a closed system in which all ministries were considered more or less as an emanation of the *plenitudo potestatis* of the pope and all charisms as spin-offs and auxiliary functions of the Office.

Rather, he continues, the charismatic structure of the Church flourishes according to the pattern of the Spirit's freedom:

Charisms are indeed gifts of the Spirit, emanating from the freedom and fullness of the Spirit, they are, as it were, in the Church in their own right and not only by right of derivation. The focal point of unity in the church therefore is not within the church but

⁸⁸ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 51. (Original text: *[D]ie Sendung der Kirche [ist] zunächst allen getauften Christen gemeinsam. Die Aufgabe der Verkündigung, der Liturgie sowie die Verantwortung für die Einheit der Kirche kommt allen Christen gemeinsam zu und ist eine Funktion der Kirche als Ganzer. Immer ist die Kirche als Ganze der eigentliche Träger der kirchlichen Heilssendung, und jeder Einzelne, ob Papst, Bischof, Priester oder Laie, kann nur in Gemeinschaft mit dem Ganzen und als Organ des Ganzen wirksam werden. Jeder kann und muss verkünden, aber er kann es nur tun im Mithören und Hinhören auf das Glaubenszeugnis der anderen. Jeder feiert die Eucharistie, aber er kann es nur in der Gemeinschaft mit der Gemeinde und mit der ganzen Kirche. Man könnte darum die Grundstruktur der Kirche als kollegial bezeichnen. Diese Kollegialität gilt von der Kirche als Ganzer und nicht nur vom Episkopat.*)

beyond it. The norm for collaboration of the various charisms is not obedience toward the office but the mutual subordination. Nobody can possess all charisms; no one can want to be everything in the church. Everyone has to listen to the other and needs the other as a corrective and complement; obedience and subordination can never be carried out in the church 'one-way' from the bottom to the top, the subordination is always a mutual one.⁸⁹

Kasper offers practical examples of the freeing and collegial relationship that should exist between leaders and their communities:

The post-conciliar parish and diocesan councils must be given a co-decision making and not only an advisory function; the prepared joint synod of the German dioceses should become a permanent institutional meeting at regular intervals; there must be possibilities for the laity to co-decide in the appointment of bishops and priests; a clearer separation of powers is to be envisaged; and a particularly urgent necessity would be the establishment of an administrative tribunal of the church. Finally, public access to a reasonable form of decision-making processes as well as the disclosure of reasons for a decision could be suggested. Solving the many practical problems without doubt connected with these proposals is not a concern for the theologian. We are concerned here only with the general perspectives for creating structures that make possible a maximum number of collaborative processes to jointly arriving at insights and judgments which can be realised in the unity and plurality of all charisms in the church.⁹⁰

These examples illustrate Kasper's commitment to the growth of collaborative, synodal, participative and transparent relationships between the community and its leaders so that the Spirit's charisms may thrive.

Kasper's pneumatological vision for collegial ministry impels the community to recognise its identity in relation to Jesus Christ: "In its position *vis-a-vis* the community,

⁸⁹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 53. (Original text: *Bei einem geschlossenen System kann das Ganze von einem Punkt innerhalb des Systems aus manipuliert werden, da ist alles von einer Größe ableitbar und von ihr aus normierbar. Eine einseitig hierarchische Auffassung der Kirche, wo alle Ämter mehr oder minder als Ausfluss der plenitudo potestatis des Papstes und alle Charismen als Ausgliederungen und Hilfsfunktionen des Amtes verstanden würden, wäre ein solches geschlossenes System. Genau dies schließt aber die charismatische Struktur der Kirche aus.... Die Charismen sind ja Gaben des Geistes, sie kommen aus der Freiheit und Fülle des Geistes, sie sind gleichsam eigenen und nicht nur abgeleiteten Rechts in der Kirche. Der Einheitspunkt des Ganzen der Kirche liegt also nicht nochmals innerhalb der Kirche, sondern außerhalb ihrer. Die Norm für das Zusammenwirken der einzelnen Charismen ist nicht der Gehorsam gegenüber dem Amt, sondern die gegenseitige Unterordnung. Keiner kann alle Charismen besitzen, niemand kann in der Kirche alles sein wollen. Jeder muss auf den anderen hören und bedarf des anderen als eines Korrektivs und zur Ergänzung. Gehorsam und Unterordnung können sich in der Kirche nie 'einbahnig' von unten nach oben vollziehen, die Unterordnung ist immer eine gegenseitige.*)

⁹⁰ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 36. (Original text: *Die nachkonziliaren Pfarr- und Diözesanräte müssen mitentscheidende und nicht nur beratende Funktion bekommen, die vorbereitete gemeinsame Synode der deutschen Diözesen müsste zu einer in regelmäßigen Abständen tagenden Dauereinrichtung werden, es muss Möglichkeiten der Mitentscheidung der Laien bei der Bestellung von Bischöfen und Pfarrern geben, es wäre auf eine größere Trennung der Gewalten zu sehen, besonders wäre eine Art kirchlichen Verwaltungsgerichts eine dringende Notwendigkeit. Schließlich könnte man eine vertretbare Form der Öffentlichkeit der Entscheidungsfindung sowie der Offenlegung der Gründe für eine Entscheidung nennen. Die Lösung der vielen praktischen Probleme, die damit zweifellos verbunden sind, ist nicht Sache des Dogmatikers, deshalb kommt es uns hier nur auf die allgemeine Perspektive an, Strukturen zu schaffen, die ein Höchstmaß eines gemeinsamen Erkenntnisprozesses und einer gemeinsamen Urteilsfindung ermöglichen, in dem die Einheit und Vielheit aller Charismen in der Kirche zum Zuge kommt.*)

office is particularly and singularly the reflection and representation of the pneumatic and charismatic reality of the community.”⁹¹ While ministers are located in communities, they are also, because of their Spirit-given charismatic gifts of service, called to stand *vis-a-vis* their communities in the name of Christ, but not as Christ. Kasper thinks that ministers act as symbolic reminders, encouragers and enablers of the call of the Spirit to all. He sees the commissioning of official ministers as vital for the fruitful personal and ecclesial reception of their symbolic and practical service.

In conclusion, Kasper’s views about the relationship between ministers and faith communities has four aspects. First, ecclesial office symbolically represents the authority of Jesus Christ which is the authority of service. Christ’s service is the service of freedom: “[H]e is wholly there for us to make us free for others.”⁹² Second, while the shapes of ecclesial offices have been determined by history, Kasper thinks there is freedom for new forms of office to emerge for present day conditions and needs. Such forms should ensure that ministry is “authorisation of a specific form for realising that which the church as a whole is.”⁹³ Kasper cites the *Didache* that suggests that teachers and prophets celebrated the Eucharist in the early history of the Church.⁹⁴ Knowledge of Church history, Kasper believes, could open the future to “allow for an essentially more pluriform, mobile and open form of ecclesial ministry.”⁹⁵ Third, as gift of the Spirit, the identity and function of ministries in the life of the Church are not discovered in isolation from the communities they serve, but in relationship

⁹¹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 61. (Original text: *So erkennt die Gemeinde sich selbst erst recht im Gegenüber zum Amt, das nicht ein Produkt der Gemeinde ist, sondern gerade und allein im (relativen) Gegenüber zur Gemeinde Spiegel und Repräsentant der pneumatischen und charismatischen Wirklichkeit der Gemeinde ist.*)

⁹² Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 61. (Original text: *Jesus Christus hat deshalb Autorität, weil er ganz für uns da ist, um uns für die andern frei zu machen.*)

⁹³ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 63. (Original text: *Das Amt kann nach allem bisher Gesagten ja nur die Bevollmächtigung bestimmter Art sein zum Vollzug von etwas, was die Kirche als Ganzes ist.*)

⁹⁴ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 63. Citing *Did.ii. 3 f.*

⁹⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 64. (Original text: *[K]önnten eine wesentlich pluriformere, mobilere, offenere Gestalt des kirchlichen Amtes ermöglichen.*)

with them. Finally, Kasper sees in the model of shepherd leadership a summary of the right relationship between leadership and community:

The approach by way of shepherd ministry ... allows the integration of all essential elements of the priestly service. In contrast to other approaches it has the advantage that it defines the office not in isolation but sees it from the outset in its relationship with the faith community. According to this model, the function of the office is to discover, revive and organise the charisms of the congregation through the Word and in the sacramental celebration and to bring them into a meaningful inter-relationship.

Thus, Kasper concludes, ecclesial office is a charism of spiritual leadership:

Spiritual leadership and the discernment of spirits (cf 1 Cor 12, 10) in turn presupposes a charism, an openness to the capacity and calling of the Spirit; an ability for connection, dialogue and listening; and also a talent for initiative and leadership. As such it is a ministry for other ministries, and as a specific task constitutive for the church, Office does not contradict the common mission and responsibility, i.e. the priesthood of all Christians. Rather it serves that mission and is the condition for its possibilities. The authority of Office, therefore, can only be exercised in utmost selflessness. Its job is to ensure the 'functionality' of other charisms. Office, therefore, means representative service for the others; its authority is the 'authority of freedom.'⁹⁶

Kasper envisages new beginnings for reforming ecclesial structures as more faithful to the foundational authority of Christ's service of freedom and love.

⁹⁶ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 66-7. (Original text: *Der Ansatz beim Hirtenamt ist also in der Lage, alle wesentlichen Elemente des priesterlichen Dienstes zu integrieren. Er hat darüber hinaus gegenüber den anderen Versuchen den Vorteil, dass er das Amt nicht isoliert bestimmt, sondern von vornherein in seiner Zuordnung zur Gemeinde sieht. Funktion des Amtes ist es, nach diesem Modell durch das Wort und in der sakramentalen Feier Charismen in der Gemeinde zu entdecken, sie zu erwecken, zu ordnen, sie in ein sinnvolles Zueinander zu bringen. Die geistliche Führung und die 'Unterscheidung der Geister' (vgl. 1 Kor 12,10) setzt selbst wieder ein Charisma voraus, eine Offenheit für die Wirksamkeit und den Anruf des Geistes, eine Fähigkeit zum Kontakt, zum Gespräch, zum Hinhören, aber auch zur Initiative und zur Führung. Als solcher Dienst für die anderen Dienste widerstreitet das Amt als spezifischer und für die Kirche konstitutiver Auftrag nicht der gemeinsamen Sendung und Verantwortung, dem gemeinsamen Priestertum aller Christen, es steht vielmehr in dessen Dienst und ist dessen Möglichkeitsbedingung. Die Autorität des Amtes kann deshalb nur in äußerster Selbstlosigkeit ausgeübt werden. Seine Sache ist es, für die 'Funktionstüchtigkeit' der anderen Charismen zu sorgen. Das Amt bedeutet stellvertretender Dienst für die andern, seine Autorität ist die 'Autorität der Freiheit'.)*

Pastoral Services in the Community

*Die Pastoralen Dienste in der Gemeinde (1976)*⁹⁷

Kasper exercised significant theological and pastoral leadership between 1971 and 1975 in the Würzburg Synod sponsored by the German Bishops' Conference.⁹⁸ "Pastoral Services in the Community" records Kasper's learnings from participation in that synodal experience. One of the goals of the Würzburg Synod was to deeper implementation of the theology of Vatican II in the German Church. Kasper situates the foundational work of the Synod especially within the ecclesiology of *Lumen gentium*. He summarises six key features of this ecclesiology: "the idea of the Church as the people of God, the common priesthood of all the baptised, the charismatic dimension of the Church, ecclesial office as service, the collegial structure of ministry, the meaning of the local church and the local faith community."⁹⁹ The Würzburg Synod addressed the conciliar vision of the one people of God, Kasper writes, to "embrace all the various ministries, incorporating them into one theologically and pastorally comprehensive concept."¹⁰⁰ Alongside hopeful directions of the Synod, Kasper identifies specific issues vital for the future of the Church: "the catastrophic developments in the recruitment of priests and the related question of the future of pastoral ministries in parishes"¹⁰¹ New ministries of permanent deacons and pastoral assistants had been emerging in the post-conciliar Federal Republic of Germany, but, Kasper believes,

⁹⁷ Walter Kasper, 'Die Pastoralen Dienste in der Gemeinde' (Pastoral Services in the Community) in: Synod of Dioceses in the Federal Republic of Germany. Official Issue 1, Freiburg i. Br. 1976 581-596. The text this chapter examines is published in *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter* (69-95).

⁹⁸ Kasper exercised the role of *Berichterstatter* (reporting secretary) during the Würzburg Synod. This Synod, named for its location, was convoked in 1969 and met between 1971 and 1975. More information: <http://wuerzburger-synode.jimdo.com>, http://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Synoden/gemeinsame_Synode/band1/synode.pdf. accessed May 5, 2016.

⁹⁹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 70. (Original text: [*G*] Kirche als Volk Gottes, vom gemeinsamen Priestertum, von der charismatischen Dimension der Kirche, vom kirchlichen Amt als Dienst, die kollegiale Struktur des Amtes, die Bedeutung der Ortskirche und Ortsgemeinde heraus.)

¹⁰⁰ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 71. (Original text: [*G*]alt es zum andern, entsprechend der konziliaren Idee von dem alle einzelnen Dienste umgreifenden einen Volk Gottes, die verschiedenen Dienste in ein theologisches und pastorales Gesamtkonzept einzubringen.)

¹⁰¹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 69. (Original text: Die katastrophale Entwicklung im Priesternachwuchs und damit verbunden die Frage, wie der pastorale Dienst in den Gemeinden weitergehen soll, stellte sich immer deutlicher als eine Lebensfrage für die Zukunft der Kirche heraus.)

without conceptual clarity. As a result, he writes that these ministries “often experienced mistrust and misunderstandings and thus had to strive for recognition.”¹⁰²

Kasper describes the Synod's intense regime of listening, consultation, data gathering, sifting and discernment that eventually resulted in, among other outcomes, the document which the Synod presented to the German Bishops' Conference in May 1973.¹⁰³ Rather than have separate documents on each ministry, the Synod wanted a statement inclusive of all ministries exercised by laity, priests and religious. Over the following two years, debates, refinements and consensus building continued to open the way for the emergence of an “outline of a community of tomorrow” (*die Umrisse einer Gemeinde von morgen abzeichnen*).¹⁰⁴ A key outcome of the decision to examine ministry from the starting point of the whole community rather than from separate ministries, was a rediscovery of the importance of the local church within the universal church (*die Wiederentdeckung der Rolle der Ortskirche innerhalb der Universalkirche*). The variety of communal faith models, including base communities (*Basisgemeinden*) and traditional parish structures, were noted as important pointers to the future for ministries.¹⁰⁵

The Würzburg Synod sought to strengthen the capacity of faith communities to discern their unique calls to the priestly, prophetic and kingly ministries of Christ. Kasper writes that “the renewal of the church and its pastoral ministries ... is only possible by intensifying the unabridged and living faith in Jesus Christ.”¹⁰⁶ To make this kind of renewal easier, the Synod recommended two important tasks for ecclesial reform: education and the

¹⁰² Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 69. (Original text: *Für die neuentstandenen Dienste (Ständiger Diakon, Pastoralassistent und andere) fehlte es weithin an klaren und einheitlichen Konzepten, oft begegneten sie noch Misstrauen und Missverständnis, so dass sie erst mühsam um ihre Anerkennung kämpfen mussten.*)

¹⁰³ The prepared synodal document was entitled ‘*Die Pastoralen Dienste in der Gemeinde*,’ after which the current article being examined was named.

¹⁰⁴ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 75.

¹⁰⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 75.

¹⁰⁶ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 76. (Original text: *Denn die Erneuerung der Kirche und ihrer pastoralen Dienste ... ist nur durch eine Intensivierung des unverkürztem, lebendigen Glaubens an Jesus Christus möglich.*)

generation of vibrant communities.¹⁰⁷ The Synod envisioned five features of the faith communities of the future. First, they would be founded on Word and Sacrament and especially the celebration of the Eucharist as the sacrament of unity. Second, there would be broad opportunities for the whole community to worship Jesus Christ “through bridging the tension of gathering in and sending out, action and contemplation, being open and unambiguous.”¹⁰⁸ Third, the community’s life would take shape as a unity-in-plurality of charisms, services and ministries. Fourth, the structure of communities would be constituted by cooperative and mutually empowering relationships between ecclesial ministries. Finally, a variety of faith communities would be recognised, such as, “the various groups, circles, house fellowships, base communities, spiritual communities as well as other ecclesial associations and organisations.”¹⁰⁹ From this broad vision, it was assumed that different expressions of faith communities and forms of ministry would emerge.

Kasper recognises the emergence of new forms of ministries in light of the post-conciliar call for lay co-responsibility for the mission of the Church:

The re-discovery of the common priesthood of all the baptised belongs to the great achievements of the ecclesial reform movement of our century, and in association with it the development of a theology of the laity, which experienced confirmation and further development through the Second Vatican Council. After the Council, the active co-responsibility of the lay person in church and congregation gained an increasing awareness and assumed a variety of institutional forms in the newly established councils.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 76. (Original text: *Die Synode geht ... von der Erwartung aus, dass die Bildung und Erneuerung lebendiger Gemeinden eine der wichtigsten Aufgaben und Ziele der kirchlichen Reformbemühungen ist.*)

¹⁰⁸ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 77. (Original text: *[D]ie Spannung zwischen Sammlung und Sendung, Aktion und Kontemplation, Offenheit und Eindeutigkeit.*)

¹⁰⁹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 78. (Original text: *[D]eren wesensmäßiger Einbindung in die Diözese und in die Universalkirche und deren lebensnotwendigen ‘Substrukturen’ in verschiedenen Gruppen, Kreisen, Hausgemeinschaften, Basisgemeinschaften, geistlichen Gemeinschaften sowie anderen kirchlichen Vereinigungen und Verbänden.*)

¹¹⁰ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 78. (Original text: *Die Wiederentdeckung des gemeinsamen Priestertums aller Getauften und damit verbunden die Entwicklung einer Theologie des Laien gehört zu den großen Errungenschaften der kirchlichen Reformbewegung unseres Jahrhunderts, die durch das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil ihre Bestätigung und Weiterbildung erfuhr. Nach dem Konzil trat die aktive Mitverantwortung des Laien in der Kirche und in der Gemeinde noch deutlicher ins Bewusstsein, in den neuerrichteten Räten nahm sie institutionelle Formen an.*)

According to Kasper, the Würzburg Synod affirmed the spirit of the Council documents, (especially *LG 31* and *AA 7*) that declared the mission of the laity as especially important for the Church's contemporary identity. He writes:

Lay people ... represent an essential aspect of the church since the church is by its nature a missionizing church, it is the church for others, church for the world. The church, however, can fulfil its mission to the outside [world] only by paying consistent attention to the 'signs of the times.' This is the point where the Synod accepts the newer developments positively and defines the laity's service to the world as being at the same time service to the faith community... "Lay people shall contribute to the life of the congregation, in particular their own experiences and the problems of contemporary society, and they shall take care that the [community] remains vibrant and open to the diverse questions and hardships of the people." Therefore, the sphere of the laity is the tension between the outside and the inside of the church.¹¹¹

The Würzburg Synod, Kasper observes, affirmed that the 'essence' of lay ministries is to be discerned in the tension between the church's mission *ad intra* and *ad extra*. He notes that this idea assisted the Synod in supporting the emergence of new forms of lay ministries that engaged that tension and enabled the conciliar understanding of the Church as missionary and dialogical. The Synod tried to prevent the development of a new 'hierarchy' of inner Church lay professionals that might dissolve the tension.

Along with the ministries of permanent deacons and priests, the emergence of the phenomenon of lay pastoral assistants was discussed at length at the Würzburg Synod. Kasper reports on it as one of two 'hot potato' or tricky issues (*Heiße Eisen*) raised by the Synod. The other was priestly celibacy. Kasper points out that since the 1920s female and male lay theologians had already been present in Germany. These theologians worked mainly in the church as religious educators in university settings. However, after World War II their employment was expanded to other areas of church ministry including youth work, social work and adult education. Over time, lay theologians assumed parish work that had formerly

¹¹¹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 79. (Original text: *Die Laien repräsentieren ... einen der wesentlichen Aspekte der Kirche, denn die Kirche ist ihrem Wesen nach missionarisch, sie ist Kirche für die andern, Kirche für die Welt. Die Kirche kann ihre Mission nach außen jedoch nur erfüllen, wenn sie immer wieder neu auf die 'Zeichen der Zeit' achtet. Hier ist die Stelle, wo die Synode die neuere Entwicklung positiv aufgreift und den Weltdienst der Laien zugleich als Dienst an der Gemeinde bestimmt. "Die Laien sollen vor allem ihre eigenen Erfahrungen und die Probleme der heutigen Gesellschaft in das Leben der Gemeinde einbringen und dafür sorgen, dass diese lebendig und offen bleiben für die vielfältigen Fragen und Nöte der Menschen." Der Ort der Laien ist also die Spannung zwischen dem Außen und Innen der Kirche.*).

been performed by priests. The Synod recognised that the pastoral assistant role was now of “irreplaceable importance” (*unersetzliche Bedeutung*) in the life of local churches. However, Kasper also notes that the work of pastoral assistants had an uncertain and insecure status as an official ministry of the Church. He thinks the reason for the uncertainty and insecurity was that pragmatic need had motivated the emergence of their role rather than serious theological reflection on the meaning of their ministry.

Kasper believes that the challenges related to the role of pastoral assistant are related to questions about the identity and role of priests. This is particularly relevant in the light of post-conciliar priest shortages.¹¹² He notes that some initial developments of lay ministries seemed to threaten the identity of ordained ministries:

[The emergence of lay co-responsibility] sometimes caused the danger that the clergy sought to break out of the church sphere and push their way into the secular sphere especially into politics and social welfare, while the laity predominantly wanted to become active within the space of the church and often retreated from secular responsibilities. This remarkable switching of roles was connected, in particular in the Federal Republic of Germany, with the danger of an over-organisation of the church through full and part-time lay ministries.¹¹³

The Würzburg Synod reaffirmed the central link between presidency of the sacrament of unity, the Eucharist, and leadership oversight of a community. However, it also noted the appropriateness of pastoral assistants participating in community leadership, according to their gifts and skills. This can occur especially through participation in parish structures of discernment and decision-making. The Synod also affirmed that “in emergency situations, declared as such, experienced and proven lay people are to assume certain tasks in the community leadership of parish filial congregations as ‘reference persons’ on behalf of the

¹¹² Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 88.

¹¹³ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 78. (Original text: *Dabei war freilich manchmal die Gefahr gegeben, dass die Kleriker aus dem innerkirchlichen Bereich heraus- und in die Welt, besonders in die Politik und in den sozialen Dienst hineindrängten, die Laien aber vornehmlich im innerkirchlichen Bereich tätig sein wollten und sich oft aus der Weltverantwortung zurückzogen. Dieser merkwürdige Rollentausch war besonders in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland verbunden mit der Gefahr einer Überorganisation in der Kirche mit haupt- und nebenberuflichen Laiendiensten.*)

minister.”¹¹⁴ Kasper does not elaborate on what might constitute emergency situations. Nor does he comment on the insecurity for a person in a role that is not clearly recognised as an official and stable Church ministry and is understood more as an emergency ‘stop gap’ measure.

Despite these concerns, the Würzburg Synod wanted the role of pastoral assistant to have its own integrity and not be understood as participation in the ministry of the ordained nor be seen as a stop gap for priest shortages. Rather, Kasper writes:

The professional profile for the pastoral assistant, as sketched by the Synod, takes as its starting point particular specialist areas in which the pastoral assistant works by specific commission of the bishop and as such participates in the ecclesial Office. These special areas are the social and charitable sphere; in the sphere of proclamation [of the Gospel], in particular religious instruction and parish catechesis; and specific liturgical ministries. In these fields, the pastoral assistant shall establish and support groups, circles, base communities and the like and so contribute to enlivening the faith community. This approach has the advantage of conferring on the pastoral assistant a specific professional authority (independent authority) and not to consign him more or less to the lowest ranks of the clergy.¹¹⁵

The Synod wanted pastoral assistants to be commissioned and authorised by the bishop to exercise the ministry of ecclesial leadership in their own right. The Synod recognised that appropriate education and formation was needed for the development of such ministry leadership. However, it left open space for the growth of a diversity of lay ministries to develop in the life of the local Church in response to local needs and plans.¹¹⁶ Kasper believes that the role of pastoral assistant is best understood in relation to, not isolation from, other roles such as priests and deacons. He characterises the inter-relationship in terms of poles; for

¹¹⁴ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 90. (Original text: *erklärten Notsituationen sollen als befristete Übergangslösung erfahrene und bewährte Laien im Namen des Pfarrers als ‘Bezugspersonen’ bestimmte Aufgaben der Gemeindeleitung in Filialgemeinden übernehmen.*)

¹¹⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 90. (Original text: *Das Berufsprofil, das die Synode vom Pastoralassistenten entwirft, geht darum aus von bestimmten Sachbereichen, in denen der Pastoralassistent im besonderen Auftrag des Bischofs und insofern in der Teilhabe am kirchlichen Amt tätig ist. Solche Sachbereiche sind der soziale und caritative Bereich, der Bereich der Verkündigung, besonders Religionsunterricht und Gemeindekatechese und einzelne liturgische Dienste. In diesen Bereichen soll der Pastoralassistent Gruppen, Kreise, Basisgemeinschaften und ähnliches aufbauen und betreuen und so zur Verlebendigung der Gemeinden beitragen. Dieser Ansatz hat auch den Vorteil, dass er dem Pastoralassistenten eine eigenständige Verantwortung (Sachautorität) gibt und ihn nicht mehr oder weniger auf die niedersten Ränge des Klerus verweist.*)

¹¹⁶ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 91.

example, deacons function between the inner church poles of community centres and fringes and pastoral assistant between the poles of church and world:

In recent times questions are raised not only about the relationship of the pastoral assistant to the priestly office but also to the deacon. The Synod document says nothing on this issue in more detail. This may be related to the fact that the more detailed clarification of the specific ministry of the deacon has likewise been disputed for a long time. For this reason a definition of the relationship deacon-pastoral assistant could not be envisaged anymore. In principle, the two ministries are easy to differentiate: the position of the deacon is between the poles of the margin and the center of the congregation; the pastoral assistant is placed between the secular sphere and the whole of the congregation, and as such fundamentally within the outside-inside relationship which is characteristic for the laity.

In practice, Kasper continues, the nature of these relationships is still being clarified. The suggestion raised by the Synod of appointing pastoral assistants as deacons met resistance. A desire to wait for greater clarity about lay ministries was expressed so that ministry diversity and collegiality would not be collapsed into ordination:

In reality, the distinction between the two ministries is usually more or less fluid. For this reason, it may be highly desirable at some time that the official commissioning of the pastoral assistant with his personal relationship with the church be sacramentally reinforced through ordination as a deacon. A general regulation, however, may be neither possible in practice nor fundamentally necessary in the current stage of development. One should leave space for a lively development and calmly take into account a legitimate diversity.¹¹⁷

In addition to consideration of the nature of the position of pastoral assistants in the Church's ordering, the Synod did raise the possibility that lay leaders be ordained:

The church may find itself forced in the future, because of the lack of priests, to entrust the leadership of many faith communities to a lay person, not in a theological but in a practical sense. This would then affect the perception of the congregation and the essence of the priestly Office more negatively than changes to non-essential admission criteria. In the long run there would be no other alternative than to consider many of those lay people who are proven in their community ministries as "viri probati" for ordination to priestly ministry.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 91. (Original text: *Neuerdings wird nicht nur nach dem Verhältnis des Pastoralassistenten zum priesterlichen Amt, sondern auch zum Diakon gefragt. Der Synodentext sagt dazu nichts Konkretes, was damit zusammenhängt, dass die genauere Klärung des spezifischen Auftrags des Diakons ebenfalls lange umstritten war, so dass eine Verhältnisbestimmung Diakon-Pastoralassistent nicht mehr ins Auge gefasst werden konnte. Grundsätzlich sind beide Dienste relativ leicht zu unterscheiden: Die Aufgabe des Diakons steht im Spannungsfeld von Rand und Mitte der Gemeinde, die des Pastoralassistenten zwischen weltlichem Sachbereich und Ganzem der Gemeinde und insofern grundsätzlich innerhalb der Außen-Innen-Relation, die für den Laien charakteristisch ist. Praktisch werden die Grenzen zwischen beiden Diensten jedoch meist mehr oder weniger fließend sein. Deshalb kann man es zwar für sehr wünschenswert halten, dass sich die amtliche Beauftragung des Pastoralassistenten wie seine persönliche Bindung an die Kirche früher oder später durch die Weihe zum Diakon sakramental verdichtet. Eine allgemeine Regelung in dieser Richtung dürfte jedoch im gegenwärtigen Stadium der Entwicklung weder praktisch möglich noch grundsätzlich nötig sein. Man sollte in dieser Frage zunächst der lebendigen Entwicklung Raum geben und dabei ruhig mit einer legitimen Vielfalt rechnen.*)

¹¹⁸ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 92. (Original text: *Sollte die Kirche in Zukunft über längere Zeit durch akuten Priestermangel gezwungen sein, die Leitung vieler Gemeinden zwar nicht in einem theologischen, aber in einem praktischen Sinn Laien anzuvertrauen, dann dürfte sich dies für das Gemeindeverständnis und für das Verständnis des Wesens des priesterlichen Amtes weit negativer auswirken als Änderungen von nicht*

Kasper notes that not all the deliberations of the Würzburg Synod, including reflection on the possibility of ordaining women and relaxing priestly celibacy rules, were submitted to Rome for consideration and approval. While important issues were discerned, of more importance, he maintains, is that the synodal process enabled increased awareness of the complex issues facing the future of ministry in the Church. As a result of the Würzburg Synod, Kasper identifies two practical processes that enable communities to be engaged in mission rather than only viewing themselves as recipients of the sacraments.

The first practical process is that of continual reflection on the community's self-understanding. Questions for communities to consider in this regard, Kasper suggests, might include:

How does a community concretely perceive itself? ... Where do we find the first signs of such community life? Which ministries exist? Are they accepted, supported, and desired? Which ministries are lacking for the exercise of important or even new and not yet recognised tasks?¹¹⁹

The second process requires actively involving individuals and groups in communication of the Church's vision: through education, formation for ministry and enrichment of small community spiritual experiences.¹²⁰

In summary, Kasper believes that synodal participation strengthens the ecclesial identity of local churches. Such participation involves listening, planning and discerning the Spirit's call to the whole people of God to participate in Christ's three-fold priestly, prophetic and kingly ministries. Kasper affirms the centrality of the Eucharist for the local Church's identity and mission. It grounds the missionary life of the faith community. Priests, deacons and lay ministers, such as pastoral assistants, should be free to grow in their own identities

wesensnotwendigen Zulassungskriterien. Es bliebe dann auf längere Sicht gar nichts anderes übrig, als viele der Laien, die sich im Gemeindedienst bewährt haben, als viri probati für die Ordination zum priesterlichen Dienst zu betrachten.)

¹¹⁹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 94. (Original text: *Wie versteht sich eine konkrete Gemeinde?... Wo sind Ansätze eines solchen Gemeindelebens? Welche Dienste sind vorhanden? Werden sie angenommen, gefördert, gewünscht? Welche Dienste fehlen für die Wahrnehmung wichtiger, unter Umständen neuer und bisher nicht wahrgenommener Aufgaben?*)

¹²⁰ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 95.

and be clear about their roles in encouraging the missionary life of the local church. However, this clarity cannot develop in isolation.

The Adverse Side Effects of Priest Shortages

*Die Schädlichen Nebenwirkungen des Priestermangels (1977)*¹²¹

“The Adverse Side Effects of Priest Shortages” continues Kasper’s analysis of the Würzburg Synod. In this article Kasper explores in more depth one of the complex issues that the Würzburg Synod examined, namely the link between priest shortages and the theological and practical development of lay ministries. He claims that one affects the other: the fewer priests, the less sound the theology and practice of lay ministries; the less sound the strengthening of lay ministries, the fewer priests.

Kasper notes that in Germany in 1977 there was already a growing downturn in the number of priestly ordinations. However, paradoxically, there was also an increase in the numbers of students studying theology. Kasper writes that “a fundamental reversal of this tendency [i.e. fewer theology students aspiring for ordination], which indeed would presuppose a comprehensive intellectual and spiritual awakening, is not in sight for the time being.”¹²² What might Kasper hope for in such a ‘mental and spiritual awakening’? Is the priest shortage a sign of conciliar renewal of the Church or a threat to it? Kasper certainly believes the latter, describing the phenomenon of priest shortages as an ecclesial emergency.¹²³ Parishes without priests, Kasper writes, means communities without access to the Eucharist, the heart of Catholic identity and mission. He notes a further paradox in this situation. Investigation into the increase in theology students reveals that “more and more of

¹²¹ Walter Kasper, *Die Schädlichen Nebenwirkungen des Priestermangels* (The Adverse Side Effects of the Shortage of Priests) in: *Stimmen der Zeit* 195 (1977), 129-135. The text examined in this chapter is published in *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter* (96-104).

¹²² Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 96. (Original text: *Eine grundsätzliche Tendenzwende, die ja einen umfassenden geistigen und geistlichen Aufbruch voraussetzen würde, ist vorläufig nicht in Sicht.*)

¹²³ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 96.

these students complete a full theological study program on par with that of the priesthood candidates and yet aim for ecclesial service as pastoral assistants or lay pastors.”¹²⁴ What is happening? Kasper thinks that because the meaning of the role of pastoral assistant in the life of the Church has not been adequately addressed theologically, the emergence of this role in the German Church is in fact about “patching holes” (*Löcherstopfen*). This idea results in pastoral assistants being perceived as replacements for the lack of priests.¹²⁵ According to Kasper, this situation causes confusion for faith communities and clouds discernment about the future shape of ministries by taking the “sting” (*der Stachel*) out of the current priest shortage question.¹²⁶ He wants to encourage the growth of both priestly and lay ministries, each with their own uniqueness. He insists on the need for sound theological reflection on the emergence of lay ministries, together with consideration of the challenge of diminishing priestly ordinations. Both forms of ecclesial ministries must have a chance to flourish in new ways for the future. The first step is to ensure that lay ministries are not seen as stop gaps or threats to the growth of priest numbers. Thus Kasper insists:

[P]astoral assistants are not a mere replacement for a lack of priests. Rather, in collaboration with all other ministries, in particular with the ministry of the priesthood, they perform a ministry with its own professional authority. Their ministry is an appropriate response to the increasingly more specialised requirements of the pastoral ministry which are overexerting the capacity and expertise of the individual pastor. The ministry of the pastoral assistant, therefore, constitutes an essential enrichment, and deserves to be fostered considerably more.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 97. (Original text: *Immer mehr Studierende der Theologie absolvieren ein theologisches Vollstudium, das dem der Priesteramtskandidaten völlig gleich ist, und streben danach als sogenannte Pastoralassistenten beziehungsweise -referenten in den pastoralen kirchlichen Dienst.*) In Germany, a pastoral assistant is in the process of full time theological studies for the role of “*Pastoralreferent*” to work in a parish or pastoral context. See: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pastoralreferent>. accessed September 13, 2016.

¹²⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 97.

¹²⁶ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 102.

¹²⁷ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 98. (Original text: *[D]ie Pastoralassistenten (sind) kein bloßer Ersatz für fehlende Priester. Sie nehmen vielmehr in Kooperation mit allen anderen Diensten, besonders mit dem priesterlichen Dienst, einen eigenständigen Dienst mit eigener Sachautorität wahr. Ihr Dienst ist eine sachgerechte Antwort auf die differenzierter gewordenen Anforderungen im pastoralen Dienst, die die Arbeitskraft und die Kenntnisse des einzelnen Seelsorgers überfordern. Der Dienst der Pastoralassistenten stellt also eine wesentliche Bereicherung dar, und er verdient es, wesentlich mehr gefördert zu werden.*)

And yet, Kasper laments, “the shortage of priests apparently weighs so heavily that this new ministry cannot really gain traction.”¹²⁸ For Kasper, the theological rationale for the growth and sustenance of lay ministries cannot be considered in isolation from the question of the future of priestly ordination. Similarly, the question of priestly ordinations cannot be considered in isolation from the development of lay ministries. This is why Kasper thinks that concentration on the question of priest shortages without proper development of a theology of lay ministry has curtailed the growth of both.

Kasper states that an adverse effect of this situation in the German Church is that lay ministers perform the same tasks as priests, except for officiating at the Eucharist or ministering the Sacrament of Penance. He sees this theological and psychological ‘schizophrenia’ as leading to new versions of clericalism:

These pastoral assistants are young people who perform presbyteral functions out of a personal commitment of faith but without being ordained as presbyters. Such schizophrenia is a theologically and psychologically intolerable situation. Theologically, because such a split between Word and Sacrament, between ordination and pastoral commissioning splits the one ecclesial ministry; it even destroys it in its inherent sense of meaning and brings to nought all the embryonic successes of the last Council — towards a more profound relationship between Word and Sacrament and of the authority of ordination and of jurisdiction. Psychologically, because not only the churches, but also the priests and priesthood candidates, and not least the pastoral assistants themselves, become confused about their understanding of church and ministry. Ultimately, it has to be asked: Do we not drive these people – employed in pastoral ministries and qualified and motivated for presbyteral functions, but always having to stand in the second rank – almost inevitably and against their own will and intention into a new anti-clericalism?¹²⁹

The growth of a variety of ministries should be a sign of the Spirit’s unifying presence and work, not a source of confusion and competition. Thus, Kasper rejects three solutions that are often proposed to counter ministry confusion and competition. First, he rejects the ordination

¹²⁸ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 98. (Original text: *Das Problem des Priestermangels ist jedoch offensichtlich so bedrängend, dass dieser neue Dienst gar nicht recht zum Zug kommen kann.*)

¹²⁹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 98. (Original text: *Denn bei diesen Pastoralassistenten handelt es sich um junge Menschen, die aus einem inneren Engagement des Glaubens heraus presbyterale Funktionen wahrnehmen, ohne jedoch zu Presbytern geweiht zu sein. Eine solche Schizophrenie ist ein theologisch wie psychologisch untragbarer Zustand. Theologisch, weil eine solche Spaltung von Wort und Sakrament, von Weihe und pastoraler Sendung das eine kirchliche Amt spaltet, ja es in seiner inneren Sinngestalt zerstört und alle Fortschritte des letzten Konzils auf ein tiefere Verbindung von Wort und Sakrament sowie von Weihe- und Jurisdiktionsvollmacht schon im Ansatz wieder zunichte macht.*¹²⁹ *Psychologisch, weil dadurch nicht nur die Gemeinden, sondern auch die Priester und die Priesteramtskandidaten und nicht zuletzt die Pastoralassistenten selbst in ihrem Kirchen- und Amtsverständnis verunsichert werden. Schließlich muss man fragen: treibt man nicht junge Menschen, die im pastoralen Dienst stehen, zu presbyteralen Funktionen qualifiziert und motiviert sind und die doch immer im zweiten Glied stehen müssen, gegen deren Willen und Absicht fast zwangsläufig in einen neuen Antiklerikalismus hinein?)*

of pastoral assistants as permanent deacons which was suggested in "Pastoral Services in the Community" (1976).¹³⁰ Kasper sees this move as distorting the ministry of the diaconate and degrading it to a substitute for the priesthood. Second, Kasper rejects defacto ordinations for pastoral assistants through quasi-sacramental acts which effectively reintroduce so-called higher and lower ordinations into ministry ordering. Third, Kasper rejects liturgical commissionings of pastoral assistants that can be construed as entry into a lower-rank clerical caste. He writes that "in the long view this is a disservice above all to the pastoral assistants themselves."¹³¹

Kasper does not reflect on the identity of lay ministry as unique and distinct in itself. His concern in this publication is for theologically sound solutions for priest shortages. He insists, however, that such solutions can only be found if lay leaders do not assume presbyteral functions, and if priests let go of power and roles that prevent lay ministries from flourishing.

Pastoral assistants can only be served appropriately by seeing them in their distinct function and not by being clericalized through some sort of back door: as lay people they act in a certain sphere of activity, and are officially delegated by the church. Therefore, pastoral assistants can only conditionally be considered as a solution to the problem of the shortage of priests.¹³²

Kasper suggests an interim solution for priest shortages that he believes will not threaten the development of the uniqueness of lay ministries: the ordination of married men who have exercised parish leadership and are recognised as such by a parish community.

The other option is to place for a limited transitional period deacons and pastoral assistants as "reference persons" in parishes without priests and to commission them with particular tasks of parish leadership. This solution, however, is only justifiable if there is a definite resolution to ordain in a foreseeable future as priests those who have proven themselves as "*virī probati*" in profession and marriage and have been accepted as such by the congregation. In the past few years, such a solution has won a considerable level of plausibility amongst an increasing number of lay people and priests. Many of them

¹³⁰ See Page 199, footnote 117.

¹³¹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 100. (Original text: *Auf längere Sicht ist damit jedoch am allerwenigsten den Pastoralassistenten selbst gedient.*)

¹³² Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 100. (Original text: *[D]en Pastoralassistenten ist nur gedient, wenn man sie nicht durch irgendeine Hintertür klerikalisiert, sondern sie in ihrer eigenständigen Funktion sieht: als Laien, die in einem bestimmten Sachbereich im amtlichen Auftrag der Kirche handeln. Zur Lösung des Problems des Priestermangels kommen die Pastoralassistenten also nur bedingt in Frage.*)

anticipate hereby even an enrichment of the priestly ministry and a greater authenticity for the symbol of celibacy.

Kasper recognises that such an option has implications for the Church's understanding and valuing of celibacy:

An indispensable precondition for this solution would be to significantly improve the spiritual formation of pastoral assistants in order to prevent a spiritual decline through the partial change of the celibacy obligation. The risk inherent in this solution is that the symbol of celibacy could be weakened although its significance for the church in general and its appropriateness for the office of the priest in particular is undeniable. There could even be a development like in the Orthodox churches where in practice celibacy is limited to religious priests. However, such a prognosis is purely speculative.¹³³

In the end, Kasper makes clear that the future of ecclesial ministry cannot be planned and made concrete by human effort alone. He lays a foundation that directs ecclesial effort toward the theological vision of “activating the communities themselves; addressing them regarding their responsibility, including their responsibility for more priests; and, at the same time, awakening voluntary ministries in these communities.”¹³⁴ Discernment is crucial to ensure that future ministry forms emerge in faithful response to the promptings of the Spirit:

[T]he future of the church and of priestly vocations cannot be planned and made but is the work of the Spirit of God and his guidance. Yet, the Spirit of God works through human mediation. Therefore, it is an authentic Catholic attitude believe like a Protestant who hopes for everything from the all efficacious grace of God, and at the same time to act like a Pelagian, i.e. as though everything depends upon our human deeds.¹³⁵

¹³³ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 103. (Original text: *Die andere Möglichkeit besteht darin, dass man in einer begrenzten Übergangszeit Diakone und Pastoralassistenten als ‘Bezugspersonen’ in priesterlosen Gemeinden einsetzt und sie mit bestimmten Funktionen der Gemeindeleitung beauftragt. Diese Lösung ist jedoch nur dann verantwortbar, wenn man fest entschlossen ist, in absehbarer Zeit diejenigen von ihnen, die sich als ‘viri probati’ erwiesen haben, das heißt die sich in Beruf und Ehe bewährt haben und die von den Gemeinden akzeptiert werden, zu Priestern zu weihen. Eine solche Lösung hat in den letzten Jahren für eine wachsende Zahl von Laien und Priestern ein erhebliches Maß an Plausibilität gewonnen. Viele erhoffen sich auf diese Weise sogar eine Bereicherung des priesterlichen Dienstes und eine größere Glaubwürdigkeit für das Zeichen der Ehelosigkeit. Eine unabdingbare Voraussetzung für diese Lösung wäre, dass die spirituelle Ausbildung der Pastoralassistenten wesentlich verbessert wird, damit die teilweise Änderung der Zölibatsverpflichtung nicht zu einem spirituellen Abbau führt. Das Risiko, das diese Lösung in sich birgt, besteht jedoch darin, dass auf diese Weise das Zeichen der Ehelosigkeit, dessen Bedeutung für die Kirche im Allgemeinen und dessen Angemessenheit für das priesterliche Amt im Besonderen nicht zu bestreiten ist, geschwächt werden könnte, ja dass eine Entwicklung einsetzt, die ähnlich wie in den orthodoxen Kirchen dazu führt, dass die Ehelosigkeit praktisch auf Ordenspriester beschränkt bleibt. Selbstverständlich ist eine solche Prognose rein spekulativ.)*

¹³⁴ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 102. (Original text: *[Man] könnte versuchen, die Gemeinden selbst zu aktivieren, sie auf ihre Verantwortung anzusprechen, auch auf ihre Verantwortung für mehr Priester, und gleichzeitig ehrenamtliche Dienste in den Gemeinden zu wecken.*)

¹³⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 104. (Original text: *[D]ie Zukunft der Kirche und der Priesterberufe [ist] nicht planbar und machbar, sie ist ein Werk des Geistes Gottes und seiner Führung. Aber der Geist Gottes wirkt in der Kirche durch menschliche Vermittlung. Deshalb ist es authentisch katholische Grundhaltung, zu glauben wie ein Protestant, der alles von der allein wirksamen Gnade Gottes erhofft, und gleichzeitig zu handeln wie ein Pelagianer, nämlich so, als ob alles auf unser menschliches Tun ankäme.*)

In summary, Kasper believes an inter-dependent relationship should exist between the future shapes of both lay and ordained ministries. Each is activated by the Spirit. Priest shortages are indeed a crisis for the life and mission of the Church, as are shortages of lay ministries and leadership. Furthermore, Kasper shows that one ministry must not be conflated or confused with another.

The Call and Mission of the Laity in the Church and the World

Berufung und Sendung des Laien in Kirche und Welt (1987)¹³⁶

Kasper's 1987 article "The Call and Mission of the Laity in the Church and the World" was published in the same year as the Synod on the Laity met in Rome. The article contributed to preparations for Synodal discussions. Here Kasper situates the vocation and identity of the laity firmly within the context of Vatican II's rediscovered *communio* theology and ecclesiology. For Kasper, a *communio*-ecclesiology of lay ministry is dependent on a theology of the Spirit. If ecclesiology is not located within pneumatology, a pre-conciliar hierarchical theology of ministry remains in place that tends to institutionalise the Spirit. Such theology implies ordained ministry is superior to, more effective than, and therefore non-mutual in relation to lay ministry. Hierarchology silences the Spirit who gifts each baptised person with charisms for ministry. To counter a non-pneumatological approach to ministry, Kasper reaffirms that the laity's call to ministry stems from understanding the Church's relationship with the world:

[The laity's mission] is not due to the shortage of priests, let alone the increasing significance of co-responsibility and participation in today's world, or even the Church's democratisation. These are more or less external factors. It is inherently grounded in a clearer and deeper awareness of the Church itself and its mission in today's world.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien in Kirche und Welt: Geschichtliche und Systematische Perspektiven." According to the *Kardinal Walter Kasper Stiftung (für Theologie, Ökumene und Spiritualität)* this article will be published in German in 2018 in Volume 16 of the Walter Kasper Collected Writings, entitled *Church and Society*.

¹³⁷ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 579. (Original text: *Die Begründung für diese These liegt nicht in erster Linie im Phänomen des Priestermangels, in der zunehmenden Bedeutung der Idee und der Praxis der Mitverantwortung und der Mitwirkung in der Welt von heute oder gar im Postulat einer Demokratisierung der Kirche. Das sind mehr oder weniger äußere Faktoren. Die innere Begründung liegt in einem deutlicheren und tieferen Bewußtwerden der Kirche von sich selbst und ihrer Sendung in der Welt von heute.*)

Kasper notes that while the questions about lay vocation and mission in the Church are not new, they do have new significance for ministry in the contemporary Church. The emergence of new theologies and forms of lay ministry, he argues, are a sign of the Holy Spirit's activity in our time. Kasper wonders, however, whether the Church has really understood the meaning of the Spirit's activity in the growth of post-conciliar lay ministries. He writes: "Have we really done justice to the signs of the Spirit in the Church's praxis?" In immediate response, he states: "We can hardly say so. Otherwise the resentment and criticism, particularly from women, would be hard to understand and we would not need a specific Synod of Bishops devoted to this topic."¹³⁸

Kasper insists that the days are gone when theological references for the term 'lay' would simply say 'see clergy.' Nevertheless, he realistically notes that "the precise relationship between clergy and laity, despite the progress of Vatican II and in Canon Law has not been theoretically or practically resolved [and thus] on this question ... the reception of the Council is only at the beginning."¹³⁹ He traces the history and use of the term 'lay' and notes the common understanding of the term as non-specialist or non-expert. In Christian usage it became a derogatory term. It denoted non-membership into the select, separate and superior state of life of the cleric. Kasper cites Clement of Rome (*circa* 90 C.E.) who referred to a *laikos* as someone who had not been consecrated for leadership. The *laos* were the common folk or simple people, as distinct from those in the leading and educated circles.¹⁴⁰ Eventually the lay 'state' was simply defined in the negative: non-clerical, non-monastic and non-religious. The ecclesiological context for this definition demonstrates three features: (1) a

¹³⁸ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 579. (Original text: *Fragen müssen wir freilich, ob wir die Signale des Heiligen Geistes auch wirklich verstanden haben. Sind wir ihnen gerecht geworden in der praxis der Kirche? Das wird man kaum sagen können. Anders wäre der Unmut und die Kritik, besonders von seiten der Frauen, unverständlich, anders bräuchte es auch keine eigene Bischofssynode zu diesem Thema.*)

¹³⁹ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 579. (Original text: *[D]as genaue Verhältnis von Klerikern und Laien ist trotz des Zweiten Vatikanums und trotz der Fortschritte im neuen kirchlichen Recht weder theoretische noch praktisch befriedigend gelöst. Auch in dieser Frage stehen wir mit der Rezeption des Konzils erst am Anfang.*)

¹⁴⁰ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 580.

hierarchical model of Church that prizes the spiritual over the secular; (2) use of terms such as 'perfection' to describe the ordained and 'imperfection' for the laity and (3) an understanding of the laity as passive and objectified recipients of the gifts of salvation that only the clerical caste can offer. For most of Christian history, the people of God, the *laos*, have not been characterised as responsible agents of the Church.

In light of its negative history, Kasper recognises that there is an impulse to simply delete the use of 'lay' from ecclesial language.¹⁴¹ But he rejects this idea. He seeks, instead, to reinterpret the term: "If we want to fill the word 'lay' with Christian meaning and with theologically responsible content, then there is no other way but to hammer out the Christian interpretation of the term in contrast to its worldly [and not ecclesially relevant] usage."¹⁴² To assist with this reinterpretation, Kasper draws from the Vatican II retrieval of the people of God ecclesiology. In stark contrast to the meaning of the term for the vast majority of Christian history, this ecclesiology understands the *laikos* as one who, because of a personal calling by God, belongs to God and is entrusted with contributing to the mission of God's Kingdom. The term 'lay,' Kasper points out, contains within itself designation of honour and worth. It is linked to the meaning of baptism. This sacrament has always consecrated the new Christian to be a member of "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own possession (1 Pet. 2:9)." This theology was lost. Thus, Kasper asserts:

The Second Vatican Council's *greatest* act was to clarify the binding commonality of all Christians. This was brought about by the Council in the Constitution of the Church *Lumen Gentium* (LG) placing ahead of the specific, narrow-cast chapters on the hierarchy and the laity (in the narrow sense), a special chapter on the People of God in which is treated the common vocation and mission of all Christians ... and their participation in the prophetic, priestly and royal office of Jesus Christ.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 580.

¹⁴² Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 580. (Original text: *Will man den Begriff Laien dennoch mit christlichem Sinn und mit theologisch verantwortliche Inhalt füllen, dann gibt es keinen anderen Weg, als die christliche Deutung des Wortes Laie im Unterschied zu dessen profaner Verwendung herauszuarbeiten.*)

¹⁴³ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 581. Italics mine (Original text: *Es war die große Tat des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils, daß es dieses alle Christen verbindende Gemeinsame wieder herausgestellt hat. Dies geschah dadurch, daß Konzil in der Kirchenkonstitution "Lumen Gentium" (LG) dem Kapitel über die Hierarchie und dem Kapitel über die Laien im engeren Sinn ein eignes Kapitel über das Volk Gottes insgesamt voranstellte, in dem gemeinsame Berufung und Sendung aller Christen, ihre Teilhabe am gemeinsamen Priestertum aller Getauften, also ihre gemeinsame Teilhabe am prophetischen, priesterlichen und königlichen Amt Jesu Christi behandelt wird.*)

Since all the baptised take part in the one salvific mission of the Church, Kasper writes: “The task of the laity thus concerns both these things: they should act as co-workers both in the building up of the Church *and* also in its mission to the world. The two are inextricably interwoven together and indissolubly interdependent.”¹⁴⁴ The nature of these dual roles inevitably leads to tension about how to differentiate between the identity and role of lay and priestly ministries in the common mission of the whole people of God. To address this tension, Kasper draws again on the insight of Johann Adam Möhler: in the Catholic Church no-one can be everything, nor can everyone do everything. Unity of mission can only be achieved through encouragement and affirmation of the charisms of a diversity of ministries.

Kasper’s vision of the Catholic Church is much more than clerical or lay: “It is a structured and differentiated whole, a living *communio* reality.”¹⁴⁵ He draws on several sources from early Church history to illustrate a broad and inclusive understanding of the Church. For example, Irenaeus of Lyon (*circa* 125-202 C.E.) wrote of the whole community being a priestly people; Cyprian of Carthage (200-258 C.E.) warned that nothing should happen in the Church without the consent of the whole people of God; John Chrysostom (347-407 C.E.) saw the community as sign of the priestly fullness of the bishop; Augustine (354-430 C.E.) affirmed that the whole church possessed the keys to the Kingdom and thus the authority to bind and loose. High scholasticism and the Council of Trent (1545-1563 C.E.) described the Church as all believers, together, sacrificing and consecrating their lives through the service of the priest.¹⁴⁶ In the early Church, the co-responsibility of the laity was exercised in the choice of the community’s office-bearers and in the role of councils. For Kasper, the theological basis for these practices is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He notes

¹⁴⁴ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 581 Italics mine (Original text: *Die Aufgabe der Laien betrifft darum beides: Sie sollen sowohl am Aufbau der Kirche wie an deren Sendung in der Welt mitwirken, wobei beides unlösbar miteinander verknüpft und ineinander verschränkt ist.*)

¹⁴⁵ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 581. (Original text: *Sie ist ein gegliedertes und differenziertes Ganzes, eine lebedinge Communio-Wirklichkeit.*)

¹⁴⁶ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 581.

John Henry Newman's study of the Christianity in the 4th century. Newman showed that the innate or spiritual sense of the lay faithful, more than that of the bishops of the time, contributed to the development of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁴⁷ However, Kasper writes: "[I]n the course of further ecclesial and theological history the *communio*-structure of the Church and the common priesthood of all believers were ... not only undeveloped, but ... often ignored, dismissed and even forgotten."¹⁴⁸ When Christianity became the official state religion of the Roman Empire, this erasure was secured. The identity of bishops became equated with that of officials of the Roman Empire and bishops began to share in their privileges of social, economic and political power. This resulted in institutionally accumulated charisms being disastrously intermingled with power.¹⁴⁹ In the Middle-Ages, the clerical caste became the most educated. Even in response to the protest movements against the development of such clerical castes in the middle-ages, the Gregorian reform of the 11th century perpetuated the divide that categorised the clergy as belonging to the sacred and superior realm, and the laity as belonging to the feared and flawed secular realm. Kasper cites Pope Boniface VIII who, in his 1296 Papal Bull, declared that the laity had always been hostile to the clerics, referring to the political and theological divides between two mutually suspicious classes in the Church. This led to deeper entrenchment of hierarchical ecclesiology.¹⁵⁰

In the light of these developments, Kasper believes that the growth of anti-clerical movements made sense. He writes that "clericalism and laicism are always two sides of the same coin. What was fatal about all this was that the political and theological dimension was

¹⁴⁷ John Henry Newman, *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*. Edited by John Coulson. Collins Flame Classics ed. London: Collins, 1986. 1859.

¹⁴⁸ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 582. (Original text: *Im Laufe der weiteren Kirchen - und theologieggeschichte wurden die Communio-Struktur der Kirche und das gemeinsame Priestertum aller Gläubigen ... nicht nur entfaltet, sondern sehr oft auch verkannt und sogar vergessen.*)

¹⁴⁹ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 582. (Original text: *Auf diese Weise vermischten sich Charisma und Macht auf oft verhängnisvolle Weise.*)

¹⁵⁰ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 583.

thereby hopelessly knitted together.”¹⁵¹ Protest movements were not only protesting against theological issues but also political and economic issues. Kasper points out that right up to Vatican II, theology presented office and ministry in the Church in a one-sided fashion that led to power abuse. He describes the resulting model of Church: “It was a pyramid view of the Church, no longer the *communio*-ecclesiology of Sacred Scripture and of the early Church.”¹⁵²

Fortunately, Kasper notes, a positive understanding of the laity began to emerge in the modern era. Freedom movements, such as the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and religious wars sought to reclaim the dignity of those at the bottom of pyramidal power structures. This was gradually recognised by the Church. In 1922 Pope Pius XI opened the way for new ecclesial thought about the laity to emerge. In his encyclical *Ubi arcano*, Pope Pius affirmed that the laity should not be considered the long arm of the clergy, since this misinterprets their relatively independent mission.¹⁵³ Kasper declares this papal affirmation as “an important new beginning.”¹⁵⁴ He also affirms the contributions of the pioneering theologies of the laity developed by Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, Gerard Phillips, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Edward Schillebeeckx, among others, who influenced the deliberations of Vatican II. According to Kasper, these theologians, for the first time in the history of the Church, affirmed two main insights. First, the mission of the laity is not based on extraordinary participation in the ministry of the clergy but has its foundation in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and marriage. Second, secular spheres such as work, politics, the economy and science have their own legitimacy as sites of the Spirit at work.

¹⁵¹ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 583. (Original text: *Klerikalismus und Laizismus sind stets zwei Seiten einer Medaille. Das Fatale daran war, daß die politische und die theologische Dimension dabei heillos miteinander verknüpft waren.*)

¹⁵² Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 583. (Original text: *Es war eine pyramydale Sicht der Kirche, nicht mehr die Communio-Ekklesiologie der Heiligen Schrift und der alten Kirche.*)

¹⁵³ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 584.

¹⁵⁴ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 584. (Original text: *[E]s war ein wichtiger neuer Anfang gemacht.*)

This is to be the main arena for the laity's mission. This conciliar ecclesiology calls the laity to be experts in influencing the Christian vision of God's reign in secular spheres. Thus, the baptised are not to be considered objects of the Church's mission, but its active subjects both in and beyond Church boundaries.¹⁵⁵ As a bold summary, he writes that "the newly-discovered theological mission for lay people is an important part of the new birth of the church."¹⁵⁶

Vatican II opened the way for renewal of the Church's identity despite the emerging confusion about the relationship between clergy and laity. Thus, Kasper states: "[W]e should not regard the current situation as catastrophic, but as a hope-filled new birth of a new form of Church."¹⁵⁷ According to him, the new form of Church that the documents of Vatican II envisioned has three main features. First, it values the unity in diversity of gifts, offices and services in the Church as charisms of the Spirit. Second, it affirms lay people as active participants in the priestly, prophetic and kingly ministries of Jesus Christ. Third, it confirms the laity as people of faith who participate in the mission of the whole people of God.

From a foundation of *communio*, Kasper asserts that the concept of the ordained priesthood as an intensification (or perfection) of the common priesthood of the people of God should be rejected. Such a concept implies that the ordained are better and 'more complete' Christians which, he writes, is clearly not true.¹⁵⁸ For Kasper, the 'common' priesthood and 'special' priesthood are not differentiated as intensifications or gradations of 'being Christian.' Rather, they are united as unity-in-diversity within the communion of the whole Church. Kasper describes the Council's affirmation of the importance of the laity's role for the Church's mission as having the potential to lead to growth of "a partnership-like

¹⁵⁵ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 584.

¹⁵⁶ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 584. (Original text: *Die Neuentdeckung der theologischen Sendung der Laien ist ein wichtiger Teil dieser Neugeburt der Kirche.*)

¹⁵⁷ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 585. (Original text: *[W]ir die gegenwärtige Situation nicht als katastrophal betrachten sollen, sondern als hoffnungsvolle Neugeburt einer neuen Gestalt der Kirche.*)

¹⁵⁸ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 585.

relationship between priests and laity.”¹⁵⁹ He laments however, that this vision of *communio*-ecclesiology and co-responsibility between laity and clergy is not really reflected in reality.¹⁶⁰

In his assessment of the post-conciliar reception of the Council’s vision of *communio* ecclesiology, Kasper notes that from the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s new trends towards secularisation and emancipation contributed to deeper questioning about the relationship between priestly and lay ministries. This was a question he had explored ten years earlier in “The Adverse Side Effects of Priest Shortages” (1977). Some extreme positions led to the eradication of differences or even sharper delineations between each ministry: the clergy to the sacred, inner Church; the lay to the secular, beyond Church. With the emergence of lay ministry within ecclesial jurisdictions Kasper returns to his concern: “A tendency towards laicising the clergy corresponded, paradoxically, to a certain clericalisation of laity.”¹⁶¹ In the end, Kasper is certainly not in favour of developing new lay ministries that will contribute to either clericalisation or laicisation of the Church.

Since Kasper proposes that the relationship between ordained and lay ministries is founded in the right relationship between the Church and the world, he shows that conciliar theology sought to overcome a dualistic, non-mutual determination of this relationship. This is illustrated by the Council’s understanding of the relationship between nature and grace. Grace is not something superimposed on nature but is its end point.¹⁶² By analogy, the Church is woven into history; it is a Church in and for the world. This leads Kasper to assert that “the service of lay people in the world is not simply secular service, it is healing service

¹⁵⁹ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 586. (Original text: *Das Konzil hat zu einer partnerschaftlichen Verhältnisbestimmung zwischen Priestern und Laiern gefunden.*)

¹⁶⁰ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 586. (Original text: *Das ist ein Leitbild von Communio-Ekklesiologie und Mitverantwortung, das noch längst nicht überall der Wirklichkeit entspricht.*)

¹⁶¹ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 586. (Original text: *So entsprach einer Tendenz zur Laisierung der Kleriker paradoxerweise eine gewisse Klerikalisierung der Laien.*)

¹⁶² Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 587. (Original text: *Die Botschaft von der Erlösung und von der Gnade ist ihr nicht etwas Äußerlich aufgesetztes Stockwerk; sie ist deren innerste Finalität.*)

that is at the same time ecclesial service.”¹⁶³ The laity symbolise the incarnation of Christianity in the world and thus bear the sacramental-symbolic character of the Church as instrument of salvation for the world.

From the perspective that the fundamental identity of lay ministry lies in the relation between the Church and the world, Kasper turns to the question of the inner life of the Church. He examines what he terms “*new offices of the laity in the Church.*”¹⁶⁴ He does not want to reduce the mission of the laity to these new offices. Nor does he want to reduce the Church's understanding of ministry to a simple, dualistic schema of clergy and lay. Such simple reductions, he writes, are contrary to the Spirit of God.¹⁶⁵ Instead, he opens a broader vision:

[I]t is one of the joyful signs and symbols of the contemporary Church that today, as in the early Church, so many lay people are prepared to cooperate actively in the narrower sphere of the Church and on the basis of special commissioning assume responsibility for pastoral services. The Church has taken this new development into account and on the basis of corresponding new directives of the Council and in Church Law has conceptualised a new idea of ministry which includes the ministries of Deacons, Presbyters and Bishops through sacramental ordination *as well as* new pastoral offices of the laity.¹⁶⁶

Kasper provides examples of possible new pastoral offices. These include acolytes, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, cantors, catechists, religion teachers, pastoral assistants, those responsible for caring and diaconal service, leaders of small communities, those responsible

¹⁶³ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 587. (Original text: *Der Dienst des Laien in der Welt ist kein rein weltlicher Dienst, er ist Heildienst, der zugleich ein kirchlicher Dienst ist.*)

¹⁶⁴ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 587. (Original text inclusive of Kasper's italics: *Aus dieser grundsätzlichen Ortsbestimmung des Laien innerhalb des Verhältnisses von Kirche und Welt ergibt sich an zweiter Stelle die Antwort auf die mehr innerkirchliche Frage bezüglich **der neuen Ämter des Laien** in der Kirche.*)

¹⁶⁵ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 588. (Original text: *Dem Geist Gottes ist jedoch jede simple Schematisierung zuwider.*)

¹⁶⁶ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 588. Italics mine (Original text: *So gehört zu den erfreulichen Zeichen in der gegenwärtigen Kirche, daß heute wie schon in den Ursprungszeiten der Kirche so viele Laien bereit sind, aktiv im engeren Bereich der Kirche mitzuarbeiten und aufgrund einer besonderen Beauftragung (mandatum) bestimmte, den Laien mögliche pastorale Dienste zu übernehmen. Die Kirche hat dieser neuen Entwicklung Rechnung getragen und aufgrund einer entsprechenden Anordnung des Konzils im neuen Kirchenrecht einen Amtsbegriff konzipiert, der sowohl die durch sakramentale Weihe übertragenen Ämter des Diakons, Presbyters und Bischofs wie neuartige pastorale Ämter von Laien umfaßt.*) Here Kasper draws on the following documents: LG 33; AA 20; EN 73; CIC can 228, PO 20, CIC can 145.)

for Sunday services without a priest as well as whole communities without a priest.¹⁶⁷ He makes two points in relation to the proposal for new offices of lay ministry. First, these new ministries have their sacramental foundation in baptism and confirmation and thus cannot be understood as derivations of the sacrament of ordination. Second, the new offices of the laity (*die neuen Ämter der Laien*) are not replacements for, nor competitors with, ordained ministries. In fact, Kasper writes that “they are a positive contribution and addition for the Church’s ministry and therefore a sign that world service and salvation are not two hermetically separated zones.”¹⁶⁸ Here Kasper enthusiastically embraces an anticipated expansion in size and range of the Church’s ministries that span the pole of Church and world.

Importantly, Kasper hopes that the new lay offices will make the pastoral activities of the Church more ‘world embracing’ (*welthaltig*). Expanding on this, he writes: “[T]he Church needs the worldly experience of lay people in its pastoral activity, precisely in this world that has become more differentiated, in order to practice evangelisation in a contemporary and effective manner.”¹⁶⁹ He also believes that lay ministers should work in partnership with clergy who are themselves personally engaged in the world. Kasper sees the new lay

¹⁶⁷ Kasper refers with positive interest to the Mokambi experiment in Zaire as an example of the office of lay leaders assuming responsibility for service of the Word or Sunday services without a priest, as well as responsibility for communities with no priest. See Raymond Maloney, “The Lay Pastors of Kinshasa : A Challenge from Africa,” *The Furrow* 40, no. 4 (1989): 216. Here Maloney describes the model in practice: “In 1975 Cardinal Malula took the decision to create a first series of eight parishes to be structured as ‘parishes entrusted to the laity.’” In an interview with an experienced lay pastor, Mongu Ekongu, who was leader of the Catholic parish of St Andrew Kaggwa within Malula’s archdiocese of Kinshasa (which had at the time of writing the largest Catholic population in Africa), Maloney reports: “The key to the whole thing ... is collaboration. If priest and pastor are prepared to co-operate and delegate, both in relation to each other and in relation to the other parish leaders and organizations, then the system works ... [the idea is that the pastors] are a ‘prophetic sign’, challenging the whole people of God to take up their responsibilities in the mission of the Church.... The *Bakambi* [plural of *Mokambi* meaning pastors or ‘guides’] of Kinshasa are very conscious of the symbolic power of their position in challenging the faithful generally to accepting their Christian responsibilities.” *Ibid.*, 220. Maloney’s article concludes: “We can learn from Kinshasa, not only their readiness to share responsibility with the non-ordained, but also something of their initiative and originality in analyzing the problems that exist and in developing a diversity of ministry such as the documents of the Church suggest.” *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁶⁸ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 588. (Original text: *Sie sind ein positiver Beitrag und Zuwachs für das kirchliche Amt und ein Zeichen dafür, daß Weltdienst und Heildienst nicht zwei hermetisch voneinander geschiedene Bereiche sind.*)

¹⁶⁹ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 588. (Original text: *Die Kirche braucht gerade in der differenzierter gewordenen Welt von heute in ihrem pastoralen Bereich die weltliche Erfahrung der Laien, um auf diese Weise die Evangelisation in zeitgemäßer und wirksamer Weise ausüben zu können.*)

ministries as bridge builders who construct new ways for the contemporary Church to move beyond clericalisation and laicisation into collaborative mission. In this way, as Kasper phrases it, “the laity provides for a breath of fresh air into the Church.”¹⁷⁰ Kasper also sees lay ministry and the ‘worldly’ spirituality that underpins it, contributing to a more merciful Church in and for the world. He writes:

In a special way [lay ministry] is open to the world, but does mean a spirituality conformed to the world. Its motto runs: find God in all things, which means rejoicing in the wonderful gifts of God, being thankful, it also means suffering with troubled creation, especially the poor, suffering, sick and persecuted, in whom Jesus Christ meets us in a special way (Mt 25:31-46). Solidarity with the poor and the persecuted is precisely today an important marker of Christian world-spirituality.¹⁷¹

Kasper wants the Church to avoid pastoral plans and actions that inadvertently make it stale and functional rather than committed to mercy and spiritual encounter. If that happens, he writes, “long term developments [made possible by the introduction of new lay ministries] would be blocked for the sake of short-term advantage: new wine would be poured into old skins. Thus, it is worth being wise and patient and letting the new developments grow.”¹⁷²

Kasper turns to the question of the role of women in the Church as a key element in the discussion of lay ministry. He chooses not to treat the topic of women and ministry from the perspective of ordination but restricts himself to the challenges for the Church of women in lay ministry. He describes the impact of changed social consciousness about the role of women “as one of the most burning pastoral problems.”¹⁷³ Reflecting on these challenges he questions why women do not hold positions of leadership in the Church:

¹⁷⁰ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 587. (Original text: *Die Laien sorgen sozusagen für Frischluftzufuhr in der Kirche.*)

¹⁷¹ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 591. (Original text: *In besonderer Weise wird sie eine weltoffene, was nicht heißt: eine weltförmige, Spiritualität sein. Ihre Devise lautet: Gott finden in allen Dingen, das heißt, sich der herrlichen Gaben Gottes zu freuen und dafür zu danken, das heißt aber auch, mitzuleiden mit der bedrängten Kreatur, besonders mit den Armen, Leidenden, Kranken, Verfolgten, in denen uns Jesus Christus in besonderer Weise begegnet (vgl. Mt 25, 31-46). Die Solidarität mit den Armen und Verfolgten ist gerade heute eine wichtige Signatur einer christlichen Weltspiritualität.*)

¹⁷² Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 589. (Original text: *Man würde um kurzfristiger Vorteile willen längerfristige Entwicklungen blockieren; man würde in alte Schläuche füllen. Es gibt deshalb, in Klugheit und Geduld die neuen Entwicklungen wachsen zu lassen.*)

¹⁷³ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 589. (Original text: *[E]ines der brennendsten pastoralen Probleme.*)

There is not the slightest theological or canonical reason why lay women should not be represented proportionally in leading positions of ecclesial adult education, theology, Church administration or in charitable works. Why should a woman not be an officer in the Curia, a Caritas director, even a professor of theology? In fact, men should be ashamed that up till now there are so few of such women! Is this a lack of a sense of justice, of love, or even simply a lack of imagination?¹⁷⁴

Kasper sees the issue of women and leadership deeply impacting the future of the Church. While women are available for ministry co-responsibility, he sees much work to be done in increasing the readiness of the whole Church to encourage women to exercise ecclesial leadership roles.

In summary, in “The Call and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World,” Kasper affirms that the theology of the people of God is inextricably linked with, and emanates from, a theology of the Spirit. He believes that the Spirit activates the whole people of God for mission. However, he also thinks that this theology has hardly been received by the post-conciliar Church. Kasper’s reflections affirm the importance for this reception of further theological work of the meaning of two terms: ‘lay’ and ‘office.’

Since Kasper insists that the Church is called to minister at the critical intersections between sacred and secular realities, with all the associated tensions and challenges, he thinks that the best support that can be received by those called to exercise ministry at these intersections is in the area of discernment. He describes the challenges of living lives of ‘everyday’ faith as tension-unity (*Spannungseinheit*). Living the tension-unity of faith involves deliberations about dialogue, martyrdom, turning towards the world and being a counter-cultural, prophetic witness. Since a Christian is always a Christian with others, lay ministries must be nurtured communally. Kasper acknowledges the important spiritual roles that families, friends, groups, associations and basic Christian communities play in formation for ministries at the service of the healing and renewal of the world. Desiring a deep embrace

¹⁷⁴ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 590. (Original text: *Es gibt nicht die geringsten theologischen oder kanonistischen Gründe, warum Frauen als Laien nicht auch in leitenden Positionen der kirchlichen Erwachsenenbildung, der Theologie, der kirchlichen Verwaltung oder Caritasarbeit repräsentativ vertreten sein sollten. Warum sollte eine Frau nicht etwa Ordinariatsrätin, Caritasdirektorin ebenso wie Theologieprofessorin sein? Eigentlich mußten die Männer selbst darüber beschämt sein, daß es dies bisher nicht oder noch kaum gibt! Ist das mangelndes Gerechtigkeitsempfinden, mangelnde Liebe oder auch nur mangelnde Phantasie?*)

of the world by the Church, and with a rejoicing tone, Kasper writes: “[T]he hour of the laity has arrived in a special way. It is an hour of a great new hope.”¹⁷⁵

The Ministry of Community Leadership

*Der Leitungsdienst in der Gemeinde (1994)*¹⁷⁶

In “The Ministry of Community Leadership” Kasper deepens his hope-filled assessment of the current situation in the Church. He writes: “The question of the ministry of community leadership ... can only adequately be understood and confronted if it is perceived in the context of a profoundly radical shift in both society and Church and of the transformation of the form of the Church, comparable with the great upheavals in the 5th, 11th and 16th centuries of church history.”¹⁷⁷ In this 1994 article, Kasper reaffirms five relevant directions laid out at Vatican II, that is “the People of God ecclesiology, the emphasis on the common priesthood of all the baptised, the establishment of councils of co-responsibility at parish and diocesan levels, the emergence of new pastoral services (pastoral reference persons and many others) and ecumenical rapprochements.”¹⁷⁸ However, even with these positive ecclesial achievements he believes that the deepened reception of conciliar directions can be thwarted by the social challenges posed by secularisation, democratisation, desacralisation, functionalisation, anti-authoritarian and emancipatory ideologies. He also thinks that some of

¹⁷⁵ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 592. (Original text: *Deshalb ist heute in besonder Weise die Stunde der Laien gekommen. Es ist eine Stunde großer neuer Hoffnungen.*)

¹⁷⁶ Walter Kasper, “Der Leitungsdienst in der Gemeinde” (The Ministry of Community Leadership): Paper presented at Study Day of the German Bishops’ Conference in Reute 1994 (working aid 118). Published by the Secretariat of the German Bishops’ Conference, Bonn 1994. The text this chapter draws on is published in *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter* (105- 126).

¹⁷⁷ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 105. (Original text: *Die Frage des Leitungsdienstes in den Gemeinden ... kann nämlich nur dann adäquat verstanden und ‘bewältigt’ werden, wenn man es im Zusammenhang eines tiefen gesellschaftlichen wie kirchlichen Umbruchs und eines Gestaltwandels der Kirche sieht, der mit den großen Umbrüchen der Kirchengeschichte im 5., 11. und 16. Jahrhundert verglichen werden kann.*) Though Kasper does not explicitly explain his choice of these centuries, it can be assumed that the upheavals he refers to correspond to the legalisation of Christianity as the official religion of the Holy Roman Empire, the Schism of Eastern and Western Christianity and the Reformation.

¹⁷⁸ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 105. (Original text: *[D]ie Betonung des gemeinsamen Priestertums aller Getauften, die Einrichtung von Räten der gemeinsamen Verantwortung auf der Pfarr- und Diözesanebene, das Entstehen neuer pastoraler Dienste (Gemeinde- und Pastoralreferenten/innen und andere), die ökumenische Annäherung.*)

these movements can make positive contributions to the Church's ecclesiology and practice of *communio*, noting for example, the influence of democratic awareness and demands for equality on ecclesial discussions about leadership. Nevertheless, he limits consideration of the impact of these new contexts to decreasing priest numbers. Kasper does not want the identity of priests to be pragmatically reduced to cultic functions because numbers are low. He explains that such a functional approach to ministry may have two unfortunate outcomes: a negative spiritual and existential impact on priests and increased "resignation, frustration and aggression"¹⁷⁹ in the Church. Low priest numbers indicate that the Church is "at the end of a particular history of priestly leadership as it has been developed historically and functioned 'successfully' throughout the centuries."¹⁸⁰ However, the present historical context can also herald possibilities for new, hopeful beginnings:

[T]he resulting pressure of suffering also contains the chance that something new can mature. But even a new birth is not without pain. At least it grants hope for a renewed form of priestly ministry which may perhaps be committed more authentically to the Gospel of Jesus Christ than it has been possible in its more recent familiar form.¹⁸¹

This new birth, Kasper thinks, may mean the death of shapes of ministry the Church has become used to. This death can make space for the emergence of new forms. For space to be made for new births, he writes: "[I]t is therefore necessary to cleanse the traditional form of leadership, to disentangle it and "*salva illorum substantia*" [save its substance] to make it more genuine and up-to-date. Beyond purely pragmatic considerations, this task requires foundational work and a new forward-looking vision of the Church and its spiritual ministries."¹⁸² Kasper reiterates that he is convinced that the ecclesiology of *communio* is the

¹⁷⁹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 107.

¹⁸⁰ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 107. (Original text: *Wir stehen ... am Ende einer bestimmten historisch gewordenen und über Jahrhunderte auch 'erfolgreichen' Gestalt priesterlichen Leitungsdienstes.*)

¹⁸¹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 107. (Original text: *Der dadurch entstehende Leidensdruck birgt freilich auch die Chance, dass etwas Neues heranreifen kann. Doch auch eine Neugeburt geht nicht ohne Schmerzen vonstatten. Sie schenkt jedoch die Hoffnung auf eine erneuerte Gestalt des priesterlichen Dienstes, die vielleicht authentischer dem Evangelium Jesu Christi verpflichtet ist, als es die uns aus der jüngeren Vergangenheit vertraute Gestalt sein konnte.*)

¹⁸² Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 107. (Original text: *Es gilt also, die überkommenen Gestalten kirchlichen Leitungsdienstes zu reinigen und zu entflechten und sie 'salva illorum substantia' sowohl ursprünglicher als auch heutiger zu machen. Diese Aufgabe verlangt über rein pragmatische Überlegungen hinaus vor allem*

foundation on which the future of the ministry will grow.¹⁸³ He describes *communio* ecclesiology as a “Copernican revolution *vis-à-vis* a one-sided clericalist, centralist and patriarchal conception of Church.”¹⁸⁴ Faithful to the past, but with an eye to the future, the realities of priest shortages *and* lay ministry growth in the western Churches challenge closed thinking about the future of the ministry of ecclesial leadership.

Kasper affirms that the term *communio* does not primarily refer to structural organisation of the diversity of gifts and talents in the Church, though it does have consequences for pastoral practice. *Communio*, first and foremost, refers to the mystery of the Church itself. As icon of the Trinitarian relationship of Father, Son and Spirit, the whole Church, including its ministries and ministers, is called to be sign and instrument of *communio* or dialogue in and for the world. The mission of the Reign of God then shapes the arrangement of ministries.

Mission and ministries shaped by *communio*-ecclesiology presuppose and respond to communication by the Spirit of all that is needed to bring about the fulfilment of God's Reign. For Kasper, *communio*-ecclesiology encourages and makes possible the shared responsibility of all the baptised for the mission of the Church. To this end, he is convinced that synodal structures enable the growth of shared responsibility for mission.¹⁸⁵ Kasper reflects on *Lumen gentium* 33 which describes the Church as living not out of itself, but from Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name, the Church calls all the baptised to discipleship and mission. In addition to their participation in the Church's mission by virtue of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, *LG* 33 also states that some are also called through a special *missio* to more direct

theologische Grundlagenarbeit und eine neue zukunftsfrüchtige Vision von Kirche und geistlichem Amt in der Kirche.)

¹⁸³ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 107.

¹⁸⁴ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 108. (Original text: *Die Communio-Ekklesiologie wird oft sogar als kopernikanische Wende gegenüber einer einseitig klerikalistischen, zentralistischen und patriarchalen Konzeption von Kirche bezeichnet.*)

¹⁸⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 110.

participation in the apostolate of the hierarchy.¹⁸⁶ Kasper believes that using the language of ‘collaboration’ (*Zusammenarbeiten*) alongside participation (*Teilnahme*), the Council left space for the development of lay ministry. He notes that while AA 24 opens the way for the baptised to be entrusted with ecclesial functions connected to the hierarchical office, such as teaching, liturgical actions and the care of souls, it also raises questions and leaves open for future reflection the precise nature of the relationship between ministries that participate in, and cooperate with, the hierarchy.

Kasper believes that conciliar teaching and the reality of priest shortages have both enabled new thinking about the question of lay participation in and cooperation with the ministry of the hierarchy: “[L]ay people can be called into church ministries and tasks (*officia ecclesiastica et munera*). This can happen permanently as well as temporarily. Where permanently, it is a true office of the church (*officium ecclesiasticum*) requiring a canonical conferring of the office.”¹⁸⁷ He names examples of such participative *ad intra* ministries: preaching, catechesis, teaching, liturgy commentating, cantoring, leading worship services, administering baptism, distributing Holy Communion, exposing the Blessed Sacrament, assisting with marriage preparation and funerals, taking up membership in councils and managing ecclesial documents and properties, and working in welfare agencies, hospitals and other caring services of the Church.¹⁸⁸ In addition to such roles, which are provided for in Canon Law, Kasper addresses the German Church’s “reference person” (*Bezugsperson*) as an example of ministerial participation in an ecclesial office:

[A] publicly accessible dialogue partner and contact person who in a parish without a local minister assumes a certain function of coordination and integration. This can happen in various ways: voluntarily or in a casual position as for instance by a lector, a Eucharistic assistant, a leader of the liturgy of the Word, catechists, a pastoral secretary, the sexton, the

¹⁸⁶ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 116.

¹⁸⁷ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 116. Kasper cites the 1983 Code of Canon Law: CIC 228; 231.1; 145; 146.

¹⁸⁸ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 117.

chair-person of the parish council. It is important that the respective person is known and respected and, because of his/her personality, accepted by the respective faith community¹⁸⁹

Nevertheless, Kasper warns again of theological and pastoral problems if the need for priestly ordinations is downplayed as a consequence of emerging lay leadership. Rather than the model of the individual professional lay minister who may be misunderstood as an ordained minister, Kasper encourages voluntary and team based parish ministers, including priests, who participate together in the three *munera* of the hierarchical leadership. A team model, he believes, can avoid clericalisation:

[T]he Second Vatican Council already created the guiding principle of community leadership which is not patriarchal, clerical and authoritarian but is based on partnership, dialogue, communication and cooperation. This is the only way [leadership] can give authentic witness to the liberating and reconciling message of the Kingdom of God.¹⁹⁰

Drawing on the vision of *communio*-ecclesiology, Kasper is positive about the various opportunities for participation of lay ministers in parish leadership, as co-workers with priests:

All in all, the various opportunities for participation of the laity in the ministry of parish leadership yield a broad spectrum of options for lessening the burden of the priest and separating the strands of his office. In addition, these options are a chance for the enlivening and renewal of the community in the spirit of the *communio*-ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council. Thus, the possible diversity of ministries in a community corresponds to possible varieties of implementation in the respective parishes and dioceses. They open up a considerable scope for judgment and action according to the situation, needs, necessities and possibilities on the ground, depending on the wise discretion of the local bishop or priest. The look of communities and dioceses will therefore be much more colorful in the future.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 118. (Original text: [E]in öffentlicher Ansprechpartner beziehungsweise eine Kontaktperson gemeint, die in einer Gemeinde ohne eigenen Pfarrer am Ort eine gewisse Koordinations- und Integrationsfunktion wahrnimmt. Dies kann verschieden geschehen: ehrenamtlich beziehungsweise nebenamtlich etwa durch einen Lektor, Kommunionhelfer, Leiter von Wortgottesdiensten, Katecheten, eine Pfarramtssekretärin, den Mesner, Vorsitzenden des Pfarrgemeinderats. Wichtig ist, dass die betreffende Person bekannt und anerkannt sowie aufgrund ihrer Persönlichkeit in der jeweiligen Gemeinde angenommen ist.)

¹⁹⁰ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 113. (Original text: [Z]eichnet bereits das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil das Leitbild einer Gemeindeleitung, welches nicht patriarchalisch, klerikalistisch und autoritär vorgeht, sondern sich partnerschaftlich, dialogisch, kommunikativ und kooperativ darstellt. Nur so kann sie in glaubwürdiger Weise Zeugnis geben von der befreienden und versöhnenden Botschaft des Reiches Gottes.)

¹⁹¹ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 119. (Original text: Zusammengekommen ergeben die aufgeführten Mitwirkungsmöglichkeiten von Laien am Leitungsdienst in der Gemeinde ein breites Spektrum für die Entlastung des Pfarrers und die Entflechtung seines Amtes. Sie sind darüber hinaus eine Chance für die Verlebendigung und Erneuerung der Gemeinden aus dem Geist der *Communio*-Ekklesiologie des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils. Der dadurch möglichen Vielfalt der Dienste in einer Gemeinde entspricht die mögliche Vielfalt der Verwirklichung dieser Möglichkeiten in den einzelnen Gemeinden und Diözesen. Sie eröffnen dem klugen Ermessen des Ortsbischofs beziehungsweise des Ortpfarrers einen beträchtlichen Beurteilungs- und Handlungsspielraum je nach Situation, Bedürfnissen, Notwendigkeiten und Möglichkeiten vor Ort. Das Erscheinungsbild der Gemeinden und der Diözesen wird also in Zukunft wesentlich bunter werden.)

Kasper describes seven possible models for future ecclesial leadership. These models envisage lay ministers and priests participating together in collaborative ministries. First, and his preferred model, a priest leads a parish in collaboration with a team of pastoral co-workers. Second, a priest leads a central parish with a pastoral team and, together with the team, cares for smaller and dependent branch parishes. Third, a minister leads several parishes together with a pastoral team, and thus several parishes share a minister. Often there is a presumption that while maintaining independence, the communities will eventually form a pastoral entity or a community of parishes, and they will agree to mutual arrangements and coordination, for example, regarding the times of worship. Fourth, a minister leads one or several parishes together with a team and is at the same time the parish administrator in one or several neighbourhood parishes. Fifth, several priests together lead one or several parishes, and thus all are ministers in all parishes though one of them is named moderator. Sixth, a priest moderates a parish in a part-time capacity. He is not the minister but administers certain powers and mandates for ministry. A deacon or several lay leaders then assist in the exercise of pastoral tasks. A final model Kasper outlines is for deacons to lead remote communities on behalf of a priest or bishop while remaining under the authority of the bishop and the respective priest in charge. Kasper insists that this model must ensure that the specific profile of the deacon is not compromised.¹⁹² He points out that the current hopeful, yet ambivalent, situation of community leadership calls for new theological reflection:

[T]he church has – in the current situation of a decreased, and continually declining, number of priests – [an increasing] demand of men and women for pastoral ministry in congregations. Their roles may go well beyond the individual commissioning and include *de facto* parish leadership, with the exception of tasks reserved in a strict sense to an ordained priest. Such men and women exist, and they often exercise their ministry with great personal commitment and high spiritual motivation. They are commissioned by the bishops for their ministry that is so important today, and they are acknowledged in their ministry by the faith community. This is a situation which can be found not only amongst us here in Germany but in comparable forms in many local churches of other countries and continents. Without doubt, the intensified participation of lay people in the ministry of the church belongs to the “credit side”, and by that to the practical aspects of the current situation of the church.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 121.

¹⁹³ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 123. (Original text: *[D]ie Kirche (hat) in der gegenwärtigen Situation einer geringer gewordenen und in Zukunft weiter abnehmenden Zahl von Priestern Bedarf an Männern und*

Kasper insists that the celibacy requirement for priests, considered in isolation, can become narrowly understood as the main issue facing Church ministry. This thinking, Kasper believes, limits the Church's vision for the future of its mission and ministry inasmuch as it can give the false impression that relaxing the requirement for ordination would solve all issues:

Regarding the question of admission standards for the ordination of priests, only this much can be said in this context: My fore-going reflections show that the problem with which we are confronted is so multi-layered that it cannot be solved solely by changing the admission requirements. On the contrary, an isolated removal or alteration of the celibacy requirement would not be a 'future-pointing' act at all as it would instead consolidate the *status quo* of the church and parish structures.¹⁹⁴

Kasper encourages new thinking about the future shape of ministry by imagining how *communio* ecclesiology can be practically realised whilst maintaining the current celibacy requirements for priests. He writes: "For the Council, the renewal of *communio*-ecclesiology and the option for celibacy as a gift to the Church, obviously belong together and form one unit. According to the will of the Council, both constitute a Magna Carta for the pathway of the Church into the immediate future presented to us."¹⁹⁵ Kasper thinks that the challenge is to

Frauen, welche einen pastoralen Dienst in den Gemeinden tun, der wesentlich über Einzelbeauftragungen hinausgeht und eine De-facto-Gemeindeleitung beinhaltet, mit Ausnahme der Aufgaben, die in einem strikten Sinn dem geweihten Priester vorbehalten sind. Solche Männer und Frauen gibt es, und sie tun ihren Dienst sehr oft mit großem persönlichem Einsatz und mit hoher spiritueller Motivation. Sie werden von den Bischöfen zu diesem heute so wichtigen Dienst beauftragt und von den Gemeinden in ihrem Dienst angenommen. Dies ist eine Situation, wie sie sich nicht nur bei uns in Deutschland, sondern in einer vergleichbaren Weise auch in vielen Ortskirchen anderer Länder und Kontinente findet. Die verstärkte aktive Mitwirkung der Laien im kirchlichen Dienst gehört ohne Zweifel zur 'Habenseite' und damit zu den praktischen Aspekten der gegenwärtigen kirchlichen Situation.)

¹⁹⁴ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 125. (Original text: *Zur Frage der Änderung der Zulassungsbedingungen zur Priesterweihe soll in diesem Zusammenhang nur soviel gesagt werden: Aus den bisherigen Überlegungen geht hervor, dass das Problem, vor dem wir stehen, so vielschichtig ist, dass es mit der Änderung der Zulassungsbedingungen allein nicht gelöst werden kann. Im Gegenteil, die isolierte Aufhebung beziehungsweise Änderung der Zölibatsverpflichtung wäre eben kein zukunftsweisender Akt, dadurch würde vielmehr der Status quo der Kirchen- und Gemeindestruktur befestigt.*)

¹⁹⁵ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 125. (Original text: *Die Erneuerung der Communio-Ekklesiologie und die Option für den Zölibat als einer Gabe an die Kirche gehören für das Konzil offensichtlich zusammen und bilden eine Einheit. Beide Entscheidungen zusammen bilden nach dem Willen des Konzils die Magna Charta für den Weg der Kirche in die uns unmittelbar aufgegebene Zukunft.*) See also Walter Kasper, "Canon Law and Ecumenism," *The Jurist: Studies in Church Law and Ministry* 69, no. 171-189 (2009): 187. Here Kasper writes: "Scholars agree that besides the diachronic and synchronic readings, the reception of a council also plays an important role in its interpretation and application. This principle, confirmed by modern hermeneutics, is based theologically on pneumatology, i.e., the guidance of the Church by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit guided the Church during the development and the definition of its doctrine, in the words of John Henry Newman; but that guidance does not stop with the "definition," but continues during the process of reception of the doctrine by the whole Church. So reception is decisive for the correct understanding and interpretation of doctrine. If we believe that

creatively hold the tension of today's ecclesial leadership challenges while making space for the newness of the future to emerge:

[I]t is important to implement the possibilities opened up to us by the Second Vatican Council, which have by no means yet been exhausted, in a wise and prudent way. We have to do this in ways that do not undermine and ultimately destroy the foundations and presuppositions of these regulations, which are sacramentally rooted in *Communio*-ecclesiology, and thereby ultimately destroying them. If we succeed in this, then the present situation does not appear only as danger and collapse but also as an opportunity or, in biblical terms, a *Kairos* for the renewal and the enlivening of our communities in the diversity of their ministries and also for an unbundling and renewal of priestly ministries. We would have then come a considerable step closer to the conciliar vision of a church renewed from its sources. We can confidently leave the next step to the further guidance of the Spirit of God.¹⁹⁶

In summary, Kasper sees the emergence of lay ministries as a highly significant sign of the times for the identity and mission of the contemporary Church. He is hopeful about the promising new beginnings that lay ministries signal for the Church in its reception of Vatican II. Furthermore, he sees lay ministries as contributing to the Church's *communio* identity.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined Kasper's writings on lay ministry that have mostly remained untranslated into English. They are important for building a comprehensive understanding of the implications of his pneumatology for lay ministry today. For Kasper, the growth in lay ministries must express the Council's vision of *communio*-ecclesiology. However, he demonstrates with his own inconsistencies, and in the development of his thinking, that the Church is still searching for the right language to express the theology of this new reality in the Church today. In *The Catholic Church* (2011), Kasper does not use the

the council is a Spirit-guided event, then we must also trust that the Spirit will guide the Church in the reception of the council."

¹⁹⁶ Kasper, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter*, 125-6. (Original text: [G]ilt es zu-nächst, die noch längst nicht ausgeschöpften Möglichkeiten, die das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil uns erschlossen hat, in einer klugen und umsichtigen Weise zu verwirklichen. Wir müssen dies in der Weise tun, dass wir dadurch nicht die Grundlagen und Voraussetzungen dieser Regelungen, die sakramental begründete *Communio*-Ekklesiologie, unterlaufen und letztlich zerstören. Gelingt uns dies, dann ist die gegenwärtige Situation nicht nur Gefahr und Zusammenbruch, sondern auch eine Chance, biblisch gesprochen: ein *Kairos* für eine Erneuerung und Verlebendigung unserer Gemeinden in der Vielfalt ihrer Dienste wie für eine Entlastung, Entflechtung und eine erneuerte Gestalt des priesterlichen Dienstes. Wir wären dann der konziliaren Vision einer aus den Quellen erneuerten Kirche ein wesentliches Stück nähergekommen. Den dann fälligen nächsten Schritt dürfen wir getrost der weiteren Führung des Geistes Gottes überlassen.)

same terminology as in “The Call and Mission of the Laity in the Church and the World” (1987) where he opens the way for thinking about some ecclesial ministries being named ‘new offices’ in the Church.¹⁹⁷ By using the German word *Amt* (office) rather than *Dienst* (service) in “The Call and Mission of the Laity” Kasper is positioning lay ministries alongside other leadership roles that serve the Christian community today.

In the articles examined in this chapter, it can be seen that Kasper is seeking ways to enhance and incorporate into ecclesial praxis the Church’s reception of *communio* ecclesiology. In relation to lay ministries, this implementation work is less developed in *The Catholic Church* than in his earlier publications. Nevertheless, the challenge of this work remains.¹⁹⁸ Of the six publications explored in this chapter, Kasper’s “The Call and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World” (1987) is the centrepiece. This article represents his most original thinking about the identity and role of lay ministries. I believe it calls the Catholic Church to deeper post-Vatican II reception of its new understanding of the relationship between the Church and the modern world through its embrace of the ‘newness’ of lay ministries.¹⁹⁹ The publications that precede and follow “The Call and Mission of the

¹⁹⁷ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 587. (Original text inclusive of Kasper’s italics: *Aus dieser grundsätzlichen Ortsbestimmung des Laien innerhalb des Verhältnisses von Kirche und Welt ergibt sich an zweiter Stelle die Antwort auf die mehr innerkirchliche Frage bezüglich der neuen Ämter des Laien in der Kirche.*)

¹⁹⁸ Translation in English of the German nouns *Amt* and *Dienst* as Office and Ministry/ Service has proven challenging in this chapter. Of all the publications examined in this chapter, only in *The Call and Mission of the Laity in the Church and the World* does Kasper use the word *Amt* to describe new leadership roles of the laity. In the others, *Dienst* is preferred. However, it is noted that in *The Catholic Church*, the translator has translated a sub-chapter “*Amt als Dienst*” as “Ministry as Service.” See Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 219. Here Kasper writes: “Obviously, if one looks in the New Testament for the foundation and understanding of ministry and ministries in the Church, one encounters immediately the difficulty that the New Testament does not know our term ‘ministry’ in the sense of a social position invested with certain competencies.” In comparison see Kasper, *Katholische Kirche*, 315. Note the original text: *Fragt man freilich im Neuen Testament nach Begründung und Verständnis von Amt und Ämtern in der Kirche, dann steht man sofort vor der grundsätzlichen Schwierigkeit, dass das Neue Testament unseren Begriff Amt im Sinn einer mit bestimmten Kompetenzen ausgestatteten gesellschaftlichen Position nicht kennt.*

¹⁹⁹ See Walter Kasper, “The Theological Anthropology of Gaudium et Spes,” *Communio* XX111, no. 1 (1996): 132. Kasper affirms in this publication: “It was the renewal of ecclesiology during the Second Vatican Council, and thus the deepening of the understanding of the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation, that furnished the categories for a theological account of the Church-world relationship which would bring the supernatural and the natural planes into close connection.” Lay ministries offer the Church important new ways to speak not only about the world, but with it.

Laity” each point, in varying degrees, to what Kasper asserts in his 1987 article – that is, what the Spirit is doing for the Church and in the world through the possibilities for emerging new offices (or ministries) for the laity.

At the end of this chapter it is possible to identify eight foundations that underpin Kasper’s developing theology of lay ministry. First, the *laos* is the whole people of God. Lay or clerical roles are secondary to the common identity of all the baptised as members of the people of God. Second, all the baptised are called to participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly offices of Christ according to their Spirit-inspired gifts. Third, charisms for ministry are gifts of the Spirit given, not to some, but to all. Fourth, the ecclesiology of *communio* affirms the practice of synodality and makes possible the co-responsibility of lay and ordained ministers in the Church’s mission of service to love and freedom in the world. Fifth, the ecclesiology of *communio* affirms the diversity of inter-dependent forms of ministry that are sacramentally founded in baptism. Sixth, ordained ministry is not understood as intensification or perfection of baptismal ministry, but at the service of releasing, affirming and encouraging the gifts of all for collaborative ecclesial ministry. Seventh, the essence of lay ministry is characterised as ministry at the boundaries between the Church and world. Dualistic thought that separates clerical ministries within the Church and lay ministries outside Church boundaries is no longer appropriate. Finally, the eighth foundation, according to Kasper, affirms that the reception and implementation of Vatican II teaching on the relationship between priestly and lay ministries, Church identity and engagement in the world, as a work of the Spirit, has hardly begun.²⁰⁰ Chapter 6 will now consider how these foundations for a theology of lay ministry can be deepened in the light of Kasper’s pneumatology, and thus contribute to the ongoing reception of Vatican II’s ecclesiology of *communio*.

²⁰⁰ Kasper, “Berufung und Sendung des Laien,” 579. (Original text: *in dieser Frage stehen wir mit der Rezeption des Konzils erst am Anfang.*)

Chapter 6: Implications of Kasper's Pneumatology for the Reception of Lay Ecclesial Ministry

*Man's discovery of his previously unknown past
alters his present and provides him
with a potentially new future.
By the same token, he can only find answers
for his questions about the future
by finding something open, unrealized and undischarged up to the present.
Viewed in this light, historical recollection
has nothing to do with museum history.
It is animated by the human spirit's
thrust towards the new
and its power to stand outside itself (ek-stasis),
which the historical question releases.¹*

*The last word has not been yet been spoken about the historical importance of
the Second Vatican Council...
Whether this council will count in the end as one of the highlights of church history
will depend on the people who translate its words into terms of real life.²*

*What is the future for the theology of lay ecclesial ministry?
How will we understand this phenomenon
in ten or twenty or one hundred twenty years?
Where will faithful reflection on this ministerial reality lead?³*

Introduction

Thus far, this thesis has examined key features of Kasper's pneumatology in his major works and has traced his thought on the development of post-Vatican II lay ministry. This final chapter is more constructive. Kasper's pneumatology has found expression, for example, in deepening the identity and mission of ordained ministry as well as strengthening the theology and practice of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. However, even Kasper has not fully developed its potential for contributing to systematic reflection on the identity and mission of lay ministry.⁴ In this chapter I will explore how his pneumatology can be fruitfully applied to a new ecclesial issue. The term 'lay ecclesial ministry' represents an innovative

¹ Kasper, *The Methods of Dogmatic Theology*, 43.

² Kasper, "Renewal from the Source," 168.

³ Edward P. Hahnenberg, "Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Future Trajectories," in *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Pathways toward the Future*, ed. Zeni Fox (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 67.

⁴ See, for example, Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*. As noted in Chapter 5, Kasper himself is aware of the lacuna of lay ministry in his *Leadership* book. This book does not mention lay ministry as a form of leadership in the Church today.

expression of leadership in the Catholic Church today. However, along with its hopeful possibilities for the future, Kasper's work has identified deep ambiguities and concerns about lay ministry that require fresh theological reflection on the new reality. His proposal that some lay ministries might be termed offices of the Church in his 1987 article "The Call and Mission of the Laity" was not developed in later publications. Furthermore, in the short section in his Church book entitled 'Laypeople in Pastoral Service' (*Laien im pastoralen Dienst*) he thinks that the reality of lay ecclesial ministry in the USA and Germany "poses some basic problems."⁵ I think that the problems he is alluding to are four-fold. First, such ministries should not be recognised as replacing clergy. Second, such ministries should not be recognised with ordination rites. Kasper wants to 'unbundle' the need for all ecclesial leadership to be ordained leadership. Third, Kasper's work makes it clear that developments of lay (or ordained) ministries should not contribute to further clericalisation or bureaucratisation in the Church. Finally, I think that Kasper does not want lay ecclesial ministers to focus solely on intra-Church concerns at the expense of their mission in the world. It would seem that he wants the unique identity of lay ecclesial ministries to have space to emerge within *communio* structures that enable the discovery, valuing and celebration of the unity-in-difference of all ministries.

This chapter identifies key elements of Kasper's pneumatology that can contribute to deeper understanding and reception of the reality and potential of lay ecclesial ministry for the Church's mission today. Kasper's work envisions lay and ordained ecclesial leaders, together with and as the whole people of God, contributing to the Catholic Church's envisioning and planning to cooperate with the Spirit's "bold emergence into tomorrow."⁶ The chapter develops in five steps. First, it describes the phenomenon of lay ecclesial ministry. It then locates the development of lay ecclesial ministries within the processes of reception of

⁵ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 213.

⁶ Kasper, *Pope Francis' Revolution of Tenderness and Love*, 27.

Vatican II and its teaching on the laity.⁷ Third, it brings Kasper's pneumatology into dialogue with the US Bishops' *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* document on lay ecclesial ministry and with the work of English language theologians writing about these new ecclesial ministries in the United States. Fourth, this chapter identifies key themes from Kasper's work on lay ministry that deepen and broaden the vision of lay ecclesial ministry. Finally, the chapter will conclude by identifying nine implications of Kasper's pneumatology for ongoing theological reflection on the development and reception of lay ecclesial ministry as a work of the Spirit and as a vital expression of leadership in the Catholic Church today.

What is Lay Ecclesial Ministry?

While the term 'lay ecclesial ministry' describes a contemporary expression of leadership in the Catholic Church in many parts of the world. I will limit my focus to its experience in the Catholic Church in the USA. In its 2005 document *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops uses the term 'lay ecclesial ministry' to describe a specific ecclesial leadership reality. Lay ecclesial ministers are those among the baptised who work in and for the Church, "focusing on the building of ecclesial communion, which has among its purposes the transformation of the world."⁸ The *Co-Workers* document provides a foundational definition of lay ecclesial ministry:

The term reflects certain key realities. The Ministry is *lay* because it is service done by lay persons. The sacramental basis is the Sacrament of Initiation, not the Sacrament of Ordination. The ministry is *ecclesial* because it has a place within the community of the Church, whose communion and mission it serves, and because it is submitted to the

⁷ Here I am using the idea of reception found in Ormond Rush, *Still Interpreting Vatican II. Some Hermeneutical Principles* (New Jersey: Paulist, 2004), 3. Here Rush writes "By 'reception' I mean an interpreter's or group of interpreters' hermeneutic activity of making sense of people, events, traditions, or texts. Reception is the assimilation and "making one's own" of another reality. This process of appropriation involves the interpreter in an active and creative way; the "effect of past events or texts is determined to a certain degree on the active 'reception' of a receiver."

⁸ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2005), 8.

discernment, authorization, and supervision of the hierarchy. Finally, it is *ministry*, because it is a participation in the threefold ministry of Christ, who is priest, prophet and king.⁹

The term ‘lay ecclesial ministry’ describes the growing phenomenon, not only evident in Catholic dioceses in the USA, but also in Australia, Germany and elsewhere, of women and men being called from the larger pool of the people of God to exercise their baptismal identities in a new way through participation in publically recognised ministry roles. They make personal and professional commitments to stable ecclesial ministries deemed important for the Church’s response to its contemporary call to mission. Lay ecclesial ministers are not ordained. Nor are they simply living out their baptismal mission directly in the secular spheres of life as ‘laity.’ Unfortunately, their identity in the life of the Church is still unclear and their presence in the Church often ignored.¹⁰ Many wonder if they are merely stop gaps until the hoped-for time when there will once again be large numbers of ordained ministers. Others wonder if they are signs of the Catholic Church’s downward spiral. In sharp contrast, I propose that, in the light of Kasper’s pneumatology, lay ecclesial ministries can be recognised as vital signs of newness and hope for the Church. These ministries symbolise the unfinished business, and call to deeper reception, of Vatican II reforms. Kasper’s Spirit-christology, trinitarian theology and *communio*-ecclesiology provide invaluable theological resources that enable lay ecclesial ministries to be recognised as a powerful and hope-filled work of the Spirit for the Church’s identity and mission today.

Alongside the official numbers of lay ministers who are authorised, professionally formed and compensated for their participation in official ministries of the Church, there are many more who live out active lives of discipleship in view of contributing to the coming of

⁹ USCCB, *Co-Workers*, 11.

¹⁰ For example, see the 2017 report on ministry from the Vatican’s Central Office of Church Statistics of the Secretariat of State. Here only the numbers of bishops, priests, permanent deacons and religious are recognised and tracked as public ministries of the Church: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2017/04/06/170406e.html>. This compares with the 2016 Centre of Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) study that clearly recognises 23,149 lay professional ministers publically ministering in the US Church in comparison with 37,149 priests: <http://cara.georgetown.edu/frequently-requested-church-statistics/> accessed October 15, 2017.

God's reign. Many Catholics exercise prophetic and practical leadership in their professional work outside the Church, in the world of politics, education, culture, media, health-care and so on. Lay ministers are found teaching, healing, offering hope, praying, opening up the Gospels and accompanying others in a myriad of ways on their individual and communal journeys. As an expression of their baptismal call, many lay Catholics prepare children and families to deepen their faith, and support couples who desire to marry or need support on their path of deeper commitments. There are ministers who accompany the imprisoned or those who are grieving the loss of loved ones. Others help the poor, support refugees, care for the natural world and advocate for greater justice. The contexts which give birth to the call to participate in these ministries are often the ordinary challenges and realities of family and community relationships and responsibilities. However, my focus will be limited to those who are ministering in specific and publically recognised ways as lay ecclesial ministers.

A key feature of lay ecclesial ministry is that a sense of 'vocation' can precede, as well as follow, an appointment to a ministry role. Edward Hahnenberg notes that questions about whether lay ecclesial ministers 'have' vocations challenge the Church to recognise new kinds of ministerial pathways. An ordained minister may discern a sense of call to discipleship, engage in formation and preparation for ministry, be ordained and then be appointed to a pastoral setting. Discernment of a call to lay ecclesial ministry, engagement in formation and appointment to a specific ministry role may follow a different pathway, perhaps beginning with a ministry appointment. However, regardless of the ordering of the varied steps, Hahnenberg affirms that language is needed that clearly positions lay ecclesial ministers, with ordained ministers, in a relation of vocation and service to the ecclesial community and the Gospel: "Communion among ministries is important so that the many ministers within the body of Christ might be strengthened to more effectively serve the mission of Christ. It is

mission that provides both the context for communion and the common goal of all our ministerial efforts.”¹¹

Reception of the Second Vatican Council and its Teaching on the Laity

In his essay “The Continuing Challenge of Vatican II” written 20 years after the event, Kasper writes that “the last council is very much on the agenda. Its reception and implementation are by no means finished. In some ways it is only beginning.”¹² He notes a fundamental understanding that Councils are ‘events’ inspired by the Spirit who guides the Church into a larger history.¹³ Kasper insists that paying attention to the ways in which the ‘event’ of Vatican II is interpreted is essential for the process of ongoing reception of its teachings. He emphasises that the Council did not simply repeat tradition: “It wished to actualize it and give it a living interpretation, in the light of the changed situation of the time.”¹⁴ This means, he explains further, that “historical origins must be adopted responsibly against the horizon of the future.”¹⁵ However, he is clear that the ongoing reception of Vatican II presents particular challenges for the Church:

It challenges us, in complete faithfulness to the tradition to which the council testified, to go beyond the actual conciliar texts themselves and, in the face of modern atheism, to develop anew the message about the triune God, the God of Jesus, in its meaning for the salvation of men and women and the world. Ultimately speaking, the whole labour of the council, the post-conciliar reforms and the dispute about them, will have been worth while only if more faith, hope and love grows out of them ... the council’s hour is still to come and ... its seed will spring up and bear rich fruit in the field of history.¹⁶

¹¹ Hahnenberg, “From Communion to Mission: The Theology of Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord,” 27.

¹² Walter Kasper, “The Continuing Challenge of the Second Vatican Council: the Hermeneutics of the Conciliar Statements,” in *Theology and Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 167.

¹³ Kasper, “The Continuing Challenge,” 168.

¹⁴ Kasper, “The Continuing Challenge” 171. See Kristin Colberg, “The Hermeneutics of Vatican II: Reception, Authority, and the Debate over the Council’s Interpretation,” *Horizons* 38, no. 2 (2011): 231. In this article Colberg echoes Kasper’s (and Rush’s) understanding of reception. She writes: “Reception constitutes the process whereby the faithful appropriate a teaching or decision of the Church so that they assimilate and make it their own. In so doing, the act of reception transforms the teaching or decision not by fundamentally altering the reality it presents but by elucidating further aspects of its meaning. In this process, then, the faithful do not validate the decisions of the Church’s teaching office; rather, their reception affirms the effectiveness of a given teaching and the degree to which its articulation is opportune in the life of the Church.”

¹⁵ Kasper, “The Continuing Challenge,” 173.

¹⁶ Kasper, “The Continuing Challenge,” 176.

Kasper understands the reception process itself quite specifically: “[R]eception and re-reception do not mean questioning the validity of the affirmations of the Council; rather, they mean its acceptance on the part of the ecclesial community. This is not a passive and mechanical acceptance; rather, it is a living and creative process of appropriation and is therefore concerned with interpretation.”¹⁷

Fifty years after Vatican II, Kasper reaffirms his optimistic yet challenging call for the ongoing reception of the reforms of the Council. In the 2013 Keeley Vatican Lecture “Renewal from the Source: The Interpretation and Reception of the Second Vatican Council,” Kasper insists that in many cases, “the developments set in train by the council ... have become part of the church’s everyday life.”¹⁸ Yet he also thinks that, especially in Europe, the hopes for the impact of the Council “have not (led) to the springtime of the church that we expected then but instead (to) a stagnating church with signs of crisis.”¹⁹ Kasper writes that the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Council provides an important opportunity to reflect on the Church’s future. His assessment is that “the Council has left us an agenda that is still a long way from being completely worked through.”²⁰

Kasper points out that Vatican II was unique in that, in contrast to other Councils, it did not seek to articulate new doctrines nor to condemn false ones. He writes: “John XXIII had a much more comprehensive perspective.... He saw the coming of a new age and sought an *aggiornamento* of the church, bringing it up to date.”²¹ This ‘bringing up to date’ aimed to express the Church’s traditional faith in contemporary ways “so that it could reach people’s hearts and shed light on the problems of the day.”²² In the Keeley lecture Kasper laments that

¹⁷ Walter Kasper, “Introduction to the Theme and Catholic Hermeneutics of the Dogmas of the First Vatican Council,” in *The Petrine Ministry: Catholics and Orthodox in Dialogue*, ed. Walter Kasper (Mahwah, New Jersey: The Newman Press, 2006), 13.

¹⁸ Kasper, “Renewal from the Source,” 279.

¹⁹ Kasper, “Renewal from the Source,” 279.

²⁰ Kasper, “Renewal from the Source,” 280.

²¹ Kasper, “Renewal from the Source,” 280.

²² Kasper, “Renewal from the Source,” 280.

“[m]any of the impulses given by the council have so far only been implemented halfheartedly, such as the significance of the local church, the collegiality of the episcopate, the shared responsibility of the laity, especially the role of women in the Church.”²³ Kasper argues that even 50 years later, “we should (continue to) read the texts and ask for the adequate hermeneutic of the council, that is, look for the right method of interpreting it. Only then can we unearth the council’s undiscovered treasures.”²⁴

For Kasper, signs of the Spirit at work in the wake of the Council include increased valuing of the modern world and new thinking about the identity and role of the Church and its mission in varied contexts. Indeed, many lay Catholics who may have once seen themselves as passive, uncritical church members have responded to the call to co-responsibility for the mission of the Church at both the local and universal levels. They reject the no longer appropriate descriptor of the laity as church members who ‘pray, pay and obey.’ Vatican II marked a turning point for the Church’s affirmation of the identity of the whole people of God who, together, are Church. With this affirmation comes enhanced valuing of local contexts where the Spirit is at work, encouraging active participation and co-responsibility for the mission of the Church.

The Council was the first to deal with ecclesiology as a central theme and to specifically deal with the topic of ‘laity.’ Its deliberations provided both a theological culmination and a catalyst for future reflection about the Church’s identity and mission that could no longer ignore the meaning of lay people in the Church.²⁵ All share a common dignity

²³ Kasper, “Renewal from the Source,” 285. See also Walter Kasper, “The Position of Woman as a Problem of Theological Anthropology,” in *The Church and Women: A Compendium*, ed. Helmut Moll (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 64. While Kasper writes primarily about the challenges inherent in belief in the relationship of equal dignity between men and women in the Church and the world, an analogy can be drawn for understanding the relationship between lay and ordained ministers for the mission of the Church in the world: “The Church has no reason for clinging to unrealistic, one-sided, and outmoded models. She ought to give her energetic support to the new possibilities. In her own sphere she should try to promote models of this new kind of partnership in which women and men can make their full and specific contribution to the life of the Church.”

²⁴ Kasper, “Renewal from the Source,” 287.

²⁵ William Henn, *The Identity and Mission of the Laity from the Point of View of Ecclesiology*, vol. 49, *Studia Missionalia: Lay Missionaries in the Third Millennium* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2000), 183.

and are called, together, to take responsibility for, and participate in, the priestly, prophetic and royal ministry of Christ, as his Body in and for the world. The call to holiness is directed by the Spirit to all and for all. *Lumen gentium* 9 retrieved the New Testament understanding of the term *laos* as the whole people of God who constitute the New Israel. St Paul laid the theological foundation for understanding that differences among the people of God stem from their unique charismatic gifts, given personally by the Spirit. Many and varied gifts are given for a unity of purpose: building and strengthening the ecclesial community at the service of the mission of Jesus Christ.²⁶ Many lay people resist divisions that cloud the reality of a unity of purpose for all the baptised - divisions that separate into different 'realms' a church that governs from those governed, a church that teaches from those taught, or a church that sanctifies from those who are sanctified.

An example of the Council's affirmation of the importance of the laity for the unity of identity and mission of the whole people of God occurred on November 18, 1965. Less than a month before the closure of the Council, the decree *Apostolicam actuositatem* (The Decree on the Laity) was promulgated.²⁷ The English translation of the opening line of this document calls the Church "to intensify the apostolic activity of the people of God." Hahnenberg points out that the Decree on the Laity "is remarkable not so much for *what* it says, but *that* it says it at all. By placing the laity as a major issue on the agenda, Pope John XXIII set Vatican II apart from all previous councils."²⁸ Three main threads from the Decree are important to note:

(1) Baptism

The Decree on the Laity states that by their baptism the lay person is assigned to the apostolate (or service) of the Gospel by Christ himself: "Inserted as they are in the mystical body of Christ by baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation,

²⁶ 1 Cor 12: 4-11

²⁷ Vatican II Council, *Apostolicam actuositatem* (hereafter AA) in *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* Vol. 1. ed. A. Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello, 1996): 403-442.

²⁸ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II* (Cincinnati, OH: St Anthony Messenger Press, 2007), 101.

it is by the Lord himself that they are assigned to the apostolate” (AA 3). The Decree affirms that the Spirit of God is at work in the baptised, enabling them to grow in knowledge of their gifts, capacities, and competencies and encouraging their desire to offer their charisms in service to the Gospel.

(2) Call to mission

The Decree on the Laity affirms that their apostolate should involve sharing in the living conditions, labours, sorrows and aspirations of neighbours, helping to transform society, in fact the whole world, for the common good (AA 13). We read that because of the importance of family, social and professional experience, wisdom and expertise “the weight of [the layperson’s] opinion should be felt” in discerning the directions of Church life and mission (AA 14). The laity should enable “an increasing sense of solidarity with all peoples” (AA 10). The Decree, which expanded on Chapter 4 of *Lumen gentium*, especially calls the laity to “take up the renewal of the temporal order – personal life, family, culture, economics, trades, professions, politics, international relations and so on – as their special obligation” (AA 7). The Decree calls the laity to be educated, to engage in dialogue, be prophetic, exercise just stewardship of the Church’s and the earth’s resources, and know and live out the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (AA 31).

(3) Unity of mission through a plurality of ministries

A third key theme in the Decree on the Laity, echoing Pauline theology, is that the development of ecclesiology is founded on the recognition that a diversity of ministries and ministers are needed for mission. In Article 2 of the Decree we read: “In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission. Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors the duty of teaching, sanctifying and ruling in His name and power ... the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God and in the world” (AA 2).

The Council's teaching that the laity have a responsibility for the Church's work of evangelization and sanctification was revolutionary. Georgia Keightley points out that the Council made it clear that "[a]uthentication for service comes with one's baptismal union with Christ and one's participation in the life of grace (LG 11) ... this missionary responsibility encompasses both church and world."²⁹ *Gaudium et spes* (1965) especially sets out the call for the Church, through the work of the laity, to renew history in the light of the Gospel (GS 37, 43, 60, 67).

The 'distinctiveness' of the lay vocation is its call to mission especially at the critical and creative intersections between sacred and secular realities, with all of the associated tensions, challenges and opportunities of these frontier spaces. This understanding of the call of the Spirit in the emergence of the vocation and mission of the laity was deepened in the 1988 apostolic exhortation *Christifideles laici*. This document sought to situate the emerging identity and mission of the laity in the life of the Church in more focused ways within the *communio* ecclesiology of Vatican II.³⁰ Within the intervening 23 years, between the closure of the Council and the promulgation of *Christifideles laici*, conciliar ecclesiology had already spurred much creativity in local Churches in response to new and demanding questions about ministry and the needs of the modern world. Furthermore, in the light of the possibilities unleashed in the original documents, new experiences of lay ministry in the life of local Churches have continued to inspire discernment and creativity.³¹

While conciliar teachings such as *Apostolicam actuositatem* retrieved the ecclesial value of baptism for the service of the Gospel, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* contributes to deeper appreciation of interdependent and mutually valued ecclesial

²⁹ Georgia M. "Laity." in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, eds. Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins and Dermot A. Lane (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1987), 561.

³⁰ Henn, *Identity and Mission of the Laity*, 84.

³¹ See Colberg, "The Hermeneutics of Vatican II," 245. Colberg affirms that the interpretation of Vatican II as an 'event,' as Kasper describes it, "recognizes that the style of the conciliar documents is not propositional but dialogical, which suggests that their meaning is meant to be determined, at least in part, through exchanges which take place beyond the limits of the conciliar assembly."

relationships at the service of God's mission. Perhaps unintentionally, the Council was creating space for the emergence of reciprocal and co-responsible ministry among the lay and the ordained. Especially since the Council, the word 'ministry' has become more broadly used in the Catholic Church to encompass many ministry roles alongside the ordained. In the face of this, the Church is asking itself new questions about ministry distinctiveness and ordering. How do all the visible ministries of the Church today express the meaning of the Church's relationship with the world? How does the ordering of all its ministries communicate the Church's nature? Indeed, through the advent of post-conciliar lay ecclesial ministries, the Church is loosening the knots that tie ordination to all forms of ecclesial leadership.³²

Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry in the USA

The 2005 US Bishops' *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* document is an example of a highly significant and influential official statement on lay ecclesial ministry in the English-speaking world. It is the fruit of extensive field research and theological reflection on the post-Vatican II emergence of lay ministry in the United States.³³ While the theology of *Apostolicam actuositatem* created space for the reality that *Co-Workers* attempts to describe, it did not bring about this reality. Hahnenberg points out that "[t]his transformation of the Church's ministerial life was not the result of a Vatican mandate or a national pastoral plan.

³² A recent example of implementation of this vision is the new Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life. Gerard O'Connell reports: "[T]he dicastery's new statute calls for qualified laypeople to hold most of the key posts." See Gerard O'Connell, "Cardinal Farrell: Time to Implement Vatican II's Teaching on the Laity," *America Magazine*, 7 July, 2017, accessed August 20, 2017. <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/07/07/cardinal-farrell-time-implement-vatican-iis-teaching-laity>. This loosening was further illustrated at the universal church level on November 7, 2017 with the Vatican announcement of the appointment of two lay women as the first two under-secretaries of the large dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, accessed November 10, 2017. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-names-two-laywomen-to-key-positions-in-vaticans-family-office-82082>.

³³ The theology of lay ecclesial ministry affirmed by the US Bishops predates the work of some other Bishops' Conferences around the world. For example, see Secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference, *Being the Church Together. Statement by the German Bishops on Pastoral Renewal* (Bonn, 2015), 27, accessed September 7, 2017. http://www.dbk-shop.de/media/files_public/rsvqxhgqty/DBK_1110001.pdf. Here the German Bishops write: "In a Church that derives its vitality from trust in the charisms of all the faithful, a fixation on the question as to what a priest is 'entitled to do' or what a layperson is 'not entitled to do' will not take us any further. We need to ask the much more radical questions as to what a Church with Her many ministries and charisms is there for, and whom She serves."

Instead, ministerial forms grew from the ground up, as expanding needs in the community were met by a new sense of active participation among the people of God.”³⁴ Even the *Co-Workers* document does not ‘capture’ the impulse of the Spirit that led to its publication and continues to shape the Church.

Nevertheless, *Co-Workers* does affirm five theological insights that recognise in the ‘newness’ of lay ecclesial ministries that Vatican II is an ongoing, unfinished event of the Spirit:

1. Baptism is the theological and liturgical foundation for all ministries, not ordination
2. Ministry is an expression of discipleship and vocational commitment that grows from baptism
3. An ecclesiology of *communio* implies a new understanding of interrelationship or ordering among collegial ministries
4. The identity and relevance of the Church is communicated through all forms and practices of ecclesial ministries
5. Local churches play an essential role in the discernment, recognition and reception of an individual’s call to ministry leadership.

In relation to the ongoing work of recognising, sustaining and encouraging new forms of post-conciliar lay ministries, Kasper’s words remind us: “Our pursuit of the council’s path has not yet reached its end. We have perhaps not even completed half the course. We have to continue along this path with patience and courage and overall with joy in order to overcome the sadness of the world (2 Cor 7:10).”³⁵ The significant numbers of lay women and men who have chosen to make long term commitments to ministry in the Church and on behalf of the

³⁴ Edward P. Hahnenberg, “Learning from Experience: Attention to Anomalies in a Theology of Ministry,” in *A Church with Open Doors: Catholic Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium*, ed. Richard R. Gaillardetz and Edward P. Hahnenberg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 159.

³⁵ Kasper, *Renewal from the Source*, 293.

Church is a new and hopeful sign of vitality for the post-Vatican II church.³⁶ However, how is the Church ‘making theological sense’ of this new expression of ecclesial hope and leadership?

The US Bishops’ Subcommittee on Lay Ministry in its final report, *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions*, provides detail about this phenomenon within which new ministers find their personal and ecclesial identity:

Identity as a lay ecclesial minister is partly a question of personal awareness and intentionality and partly a matter of recognition by official church authority. The two dimensions must converge ... ‘lay ecclesial minister’ has come to mean the following:

- A fully initiated lay member of the Christian faithful (including vowed religious) who is responding to the empowerment and gifts of the Holy Spirit received in baptism and confirmation, which enable one to share in some form of ministry
- One who responds to a call or invitation to participate in ministry and who has prepared through a process of prayerful discernment
- One who has received the necessary formation, education, and training to function competently within the given area of ministry
- One who intentionally brings personal competencies and gifts to serve the Church’s mission through a specific ministry of ecclesial leadership and who does so with community recognition and support
- One to whom a formal and public role in ministry has been entrusted or upon whom an office has been conferred by competent ecclesiastical authority
- One who has been installed in a ministry through the authority of the bishop or his representative, perhaps using a public ritual
- One who commits to performing the duties of a ministry in a stable manner
- A paid staff person (full or part-time) or a volunteer who has responsibility and the necessary authority for institutional leadership in a particular area of ministry.³⁷

In his doctoral study on lay ecclesial ministry, Hahnenberg synthesised the characteristics provided by the Subcommittee on the Laity into a succinct descriptor: “Lay ecclesial ministry is the work of a baptized Christian, who is not ordained as a bishop, presbyter, or deacon, who

³⁶ Hahnenberg, *Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, 72.

³⁷ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Subcommittee on Lay Ministry, *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, Inc., 1999), 8.

has made a vocational commitment to a significant public ministry that is formally recognized as such by the Church community and its leadership.”³⁸

Since the Council, many new opportunities for lay ecclesial ministries have opened up in local Catholic Churches throughout the world. Examples include pastoral associates, parish ministers, liturgists, catechists, chaplains, school leaders, teachers and leaders in Catholic institutions such as health, welfare, counselling, social justice agencies. Lay leaders work with many religious congregations to establish canonical processes to help carry their history, charism and ministries forward. There are lay theologians, canon lawyers, church historians, administrators and diocesan chancellors. In these examples there are three elements of importance: an experience of call, a stable and long-term commitment to a publically recognised ministry, and a formal recognition of the service or ministry by the Church through its leaders. Richard Gaillardetz provides helpful insight into the difference between one's baptismal call and the call to such ministries: “[O]ne of the distinguishing features of ministry pertains to its public character. A ministry is something to which I am called by the community over and above my baptismal call.”³⁹

Zeni Fox's research confirms the experience of many lay leaders that contemporary ecclesial language is unable to express their experience of an unfolding, enduring call or vocation. However, she argues that a call to ecclesial leadership today, both lay and ordained, must be sustained through structures that affirm the desire for permanence or stability in exercising Christian ministry. Lay ecclesial ministries are commitments beyond spontaneous or occasional acts of service. They involve a whole life orientation and set of ecclesial commitments which the Church is being called to recognise.⁴⁰ Fox suggests that when lay leaders reflect on why they chose or continue to choose their enduring work or life

³⁸ Edward P. Hahnenberg, “The Emergence and Sources of Lay Ecclesial Ministry” (unpublished Doctoral Thesis: Dept. of Theology, Notre Dame University, 2002), 2.

³⁹ Richard R. Gaillardetz, “The Theological Reception of *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*,” in *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Pathways toward the Future*, ed. Zeni Fox (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 23.

⁴⁰ Zeni Fox, “Why Did You Choose Your Work? Reflections on Vocation,” in *Called and Chosen: Toward a Spirituality for Lay Leaders*, ed. Zeni Fox and Regina Bechtle (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 3-15.

commitments, they often speak of their story in terms of three threads. First, despite knowing that choices about how to live, work or serve may lead to risk, uncertainty and criticism or questioning by others, there is an inner certainty that it ‘feels right.’ Second, they have a deep belief in the mission of the organisation, the people or the task to which they are committed. Third, there is a sense that they do not choose the work but that the work or ministry chooses them. Fox notes that since the Middle Ages use of the term ‘vocation’ has usually been restricted to a call to priestly or religious life. However, she insists that at the heart of lay ministry is an experience of call to a vocation that is no less than that of a religious or priest. Lay ecclesial ministers often see their path as a life-long journey of vocation, not of short term service. Like the ministries with which the Church has been familiar, lay ecclesial ministry is an expression of Christian commitment and competency, calling for deeper recognition.⁴¹ However, it is not a ‘state of life.’ The Church is expanding its understanding of vocation and its relationship to ministry. Fox’s work illustrates that this understanding must be grounded and enriched by attending to what Kasper himself prizes: discernment of the Spirit at work within experience and history.

Hahnenberg claims that the Church is “living in one of the most significant periods of ministerial transformation in the history of the church.”⁴² In fact, he believes that “the emergence of lay ecclesial ministry since the Council stands out as one of the top four or five ministerial shifts of the past two thousand years.”⁴³ He compares it to the rise of monasticism in the fifth century, mendicant orders in the thirteenth century and women’s religious

⁴¹ For an analysis of the theological meaning of the term ‘recognition’ see Gerard Kelly, *Recognition: Advancing Ecumenical Thinking*, American University Studies (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 17. One of the challenges of ‘recognition’ of lay ecclesial ministry is to identify, as Kelly writes, that “(Recognition) is based on a theology of the church as communion and stresses not only continuity in the apostolic faith, but also catholicity across time and space.”

⁴² Hahnenberg, *Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, 71.

⁴³ Hahnenberg, *Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, 71.

communities in the seventeenth centuries.⁴⁴ Hahnenberg points out that the emergence of new forms of ministry has often raised challenges for the institutional Church, especially concerning how they are to be incorporated into the official ministerial life of the Church. He notes the slowness of the institutional Church in recognising and receiving certain ministries into its official life, and names the mendicant monks of the Middle Ages and the active sisters of the last few centuries as examples.⁴⁵ Hahnenberg believes that the reality of lay ecclesial ministry holds much potential for the future of the Church in that it “does not fit into the boxes we have traditionally used to order our ministries”⁴⁶ and therefore opens space for new knowledge. The Church’s experience of lay ecclesial ministry, especially at the local church level, provides a new ecclesial self-understanding for the whole Church. There has been no Vatican directive to bring about the emergence of lay ecclesial ministries. Hahnenberg points out that the *Co-Workers* document reflects the Bishops’ pneumatological interpretation of the shift in ministry forms, contexts and tasks especially at the local level:

Lay Ecclesial Ministry has emerged and taken shape in our country through the working of the Holy Spirit. In response to these new opportunities and situations, lay men and women have responded generously to renewed awareness of the implications of their Baptism and to the needs of their Church communities.⁴⁷

Paul Lakeland offers several challenging reflections on the emergence of lay ecclesial ministries. First, he thinks there is still a tendency for lay ecclesial ministers to be compared with clergy since they are perceived to exercise roles that in the past were only filled by priests and/or religious.⁴⁸ Thus, he wonders if, in light of this, lay ecclesial ministers are thought of as gap-fillers for a hopefully temporary shortage of clergy. Second, he wonders if lay ecclesial ministries are really being recognised as responses to genuine and enduring

⁴⁴ Hahnenberg, *Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, 71. Kasper shares a similar conclusion to Hahnenberg’s in Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 162. Here Kasper writes: “the preparedness of lay people to take a share of responsibility, is perhaps the most valuable and most important contribution of the post-conciliar period.”

⁴⁵ Hahnenberg, *Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, 71.

⁴⁶ Hahnenberg, *Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, 72.

⁴⁷ Hahnenberg, *Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, 71.

⁴⁸ Paul Lakeland, *A Council That Will Never End: Lumen Gentium and the Church Today* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), 89.

ecclesial vocations.⁴⁹ Finally, he notes a lack of clarity about what makes lay ecclesial ministers not only distinct from the ordained, but from the ‘lay apostolate’ to which all the baptised are called. After engagement with documents such as *Co-Workers* and precursor publications of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops *Called and Gifted: The American Catholic Laity* (1980) and *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium* (1995),⁵⁰ Lakeland describes lay ecclesial ministers as “[n]ot (yet) clergy, not (any longer) laity, they live in some muddied middle realm, some twilight zone of priestly ambiguity, where their service to Christ’s Church, for all that it is often much-appreciated, is frequently ill-understood.”⁵¹ Lakeland’s challenges invite the Church to seek greater clarity about its current ministry realities and theological understandings. In the meantime, Lakeland thinks that at present the phenomenon of lay ecclesial ministry could be considered a “theological monster”⁵² because of the unresolved theological tensions and uncertainties inherent in the term.

Although *Co-workers* affirms that lay ecclesial ministry is located within the wider context of the baptismal call to mission that all lay people share, Lakeland thinks that there is ambiguity in the document. *Co-Workers* states that there are four characteristics that distinguish lay ecclesial ministers: *authorization* of the hierarchy to serve publically in the local church; *leadership* in a particular area of ministry; *close mutual collaboration* with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests and deacons; and *preparation and formation* appropriate to the level of responsibilities that are assigned to them. Lakeland thinks that the fulfilment of these requirements can lead to recognising lay ecclesial ministers as “ministerial insiders.”⁵³ I think that Lakeland’s observation presents a challenge. A dividing model of ‘ministerial

⁴⁹ Lakeland, *A Council That Will Never End*, 89.

⁵⁰ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Called and Gifted: The American Catholic Laity*. Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing, 1980, accessed July 14, 2017. http://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/laity/upload/called_and_gifted.pdf. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium*. 1995, accessed July 15, 2017. <http://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/laity/called-and-gifted-for-the-third-millennium.cfm>.

⁵¹ Lakeland, *A Council That Will Never End*, 89.

⁵² Lakeland, *A Council That Will Never End*, 88.

⁵³ Lakeland, *A Council That Will Never End*, 90.

insiders and outsiders' is not helpful for the growth of *communio*-ecclesiology. Lakeland's work assists in recognising that the newness of lay ecclesial ministry calls the Church to examine the ways collegiality and hierarchy are understood for the ordering and authorising of ministries today. Lakeland wonders about *Co-worker's* understanding of 'hierarchy.' Is it about order or rank? If it is about order rather than rank in the Church, then he calls for appropriate commissionings or appointments of lay ecclesial ministers that symbolise how the Church understands itself as a *communio* 'hierarchy.'⁵⁴ Hahnenberg concurs that the growth of a diversity of ecclesial ministers and ministries for the life and mission of the Church can be more deeply received by the Church through appropriate liturgical actions. He thinks that the Church could speak of "ordained, installed and commissioned ministers within our local church."⁵⁵ Lakeland affirms that liturgical commissionings should not reinforce the idea that there are new rankings or new hybrid 'lay/clergy' forms of ministry emerging in the Church.

Lakeland also thinks that when the *Co-Workers* document distinguishes the deacon from the lay minister or priest, even when the ministries they may exercise are the same, the implication is that ordination has created a new kind of person rather a new ecclesial relationship.⁵⁶ He sees this as deeply problematic. His concerns reinforce Kasper's insistence that ordination does not produce 'graded' or 'better' Christians. In the end however, Lakeland wonders if lay ecclesial ministry and the complex questions the new phenomenon raises is a sign of the Church that, as he puts it, is "struggling to be reborn."⁵⁷ According to him, the Church needs new theological models that can adequately respond to questions about the identity of the lay ecclesial minister. He affirms the intuition of Yves Congar, and which Kasper also takes up, that reflection on the apostolicity of the whole Church is key to the construction of new theological models for ministry:

⁵⁴ Lakeland, *A Council That Will Never End*, 93.

⁵⁵ Hahnenberg, "From Communion to Mission," 32.

⁵⁶ Lakeland, *A Council That Will Never End*, 94.

⁵⁷ Lakeland, *A Council That Will Never End*, 99.

The crucial point (Congar) is making about apostolicity is not that our times are short of priests and so laity can and must take up the slack, but because our times are short of priests, it becomes progressively clearer that apostolic activity in its fullness requires the involvement of the laity. The relative profusion of priests in the past has served to hide the apostolicity of the laity.⁵⁸

Lakeland's observations draw attention to the need for the Church to understand itself as 'on the way' with its discernments about what the Spirit is doing in and through the emergence of lay ecclesial ministers.

In writing about future trajectories for a theology of lay ecclesial ministry, Hahnenberg demonstrates Kasper's theological method that values and engages with the reality of history. The emergence of lay ecclesial ministries is the fruit of the lived experience of God's presence in history in contextually specific locations. According to Hahnenberg, to understand the ministerial reality of lay ecclesial ministry, it is important to begin by attending to its lived reality in the Church today.⁵⁹ This approach is well illustrated by Kasper's ecclesiological starting point in *The Catholic Church*.⁶⁰ Hahnenberg insists on researching the ways in which ministries in the Church are actually 'happening' on the ground today. This source of knowledge goes beyond official documents to get a fuller picture of lived reality. In his article "Learning from Experience," Hahnenberg reaffirms the novelty of the explosion of lay ministry since the Council in many local churches around the world. However, he questions the sufficiency of methods employed to discern what the actual novelty means. He argues for the use of the science of ethnography: "Ethnography seeks not a representative voice but an authentic one. It pushes below the ideas (about ministry) to the actual practices of ministry, inviting a way of thinking marked by engagement and participation."⁶¹ Furthermore, he believes that careful listening to the experience of lay

⁵⁸ Lakeland, *A Council That Will Never End*, 96. Lakeland is referring to Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, 374.

⁵⁹ Hahnenberg, *Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, 69.

⁶⁰ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 39. Here Kasper writes that "if we want to know what the Church is, then we must not describe the reality of the Church from the outside ... we must first let the Church itself say what and who it is and then proceed from that self-conception." Also refer to Chapter 4 of this thesis: page 116, footnote 10.

⁶¹ Hahnenberg, "Learning from Experience," 170.

ecclesial ministers can reveal the genuinely new and radical sources of the Spirit at work. For him, the emergence of lay ecclesial ministries cannot be explained as simply an outcome of Vatican II. He writes: "When we consider the council's fairly limited discussion of ecclesial offices open to the laity and its extensive treatment of the laity's "secular character," couldn't we say that lay ministry is less an example of Vatican II's teaching than it is an exception?"⁶² Hahnenberg introduces the term 'anomaly' to describe the nature of the explosion of lay ecclesial ministries.

Hahnenberg notes that one of the fruits of 20th century theological and scriptural renewal has been recognition that reflections on concrete lived experience must contribute to theological investigation, interpretation and development. This inductive approach contrasts with a deductive approach that applies deliberations of theologians and the magisterium to shape the Church's identity and mission without attending to the work of the Spirit embedded in experience. Hahnenberg affirms that official documents on Lay Ministry, such as *Co-Workers* represent a theological trajectory that understands theology as a response to reality - and specifically "the emergence and expansion of a new form of ministry."⁶³

As early as 1969 a young Kasper wrote that "the significance of history ... lies in the moment, the here and now of faith."⁶⁴ This abiding conviction about the relationship between theology and history is the foundation of his pneumatology:

The venture within history belongs then as much to the Christian's approach to the world as it does to his faith. The Christian is always concerned about the constantly unfamiliar; he should commit himself to the untried and unpredictable, and not cling to the *status quo* or to the past, in attempts to preserve or even restore them. He should be open to the Word of God, which makes history and again and again intervenes in history - selecting, rejecting, interpreting and revolutionizing.⁶⁵

⁶² Hahnenberg, "Learning from Experience," 171.

⁶³ Hahnenberg, *Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, 69.

⁶⁴ Walter Kasper, "Are Church and Theology Subject to Historical Law?" in *The Crisis of Change: Are Church and Theology Subject to Historical Laws?* ed. Walter Kasper, Leo Scheffczyk et al. (Chicago, Illinois: Argus Communications, 1969)

⁶⁵ Kasper. "Are Church and Theology Subject to Historical Law?" 16.

Lay ecclesial ministries, as they are experienced and reflected on today, could not have been envisaged by the young Kasper fresh from completion of the post-doctoral study on which this article was based. Nevertheless, the article exemplifies the way in which he sees the Spirit at work in the history of God's unfolding relationship of freedom-in-love with creation. The newness of this history is being mediated today in and through the Church's experience of lay ecclesial ministries.

In summary, from the seeds of Vatican II renewal, ecclesial ministry is blossoming into a large tree with many branches. The pneumatological ecclesiology of *communio*, underpinned by the relational theology of the Trinity, has nourished the soil. *Apostolicam actuositatem* retrieved ecclesial valuing of the individual's baptismal call to the service of the Gospel. However, *Co-Workers* and the work of theologians such as Hahnenberg, Fox, Gaillardetz and Lakeland, call for deep reflection on the meaning of the lived experience of lay ecclesial ministers to discern more carefully what the Spirit is doing among the people of God. Especially since the Council, the word 'ministry' has been used in the Catholic Church to encompass many leadership roles alongside deacons, priests and bishops. In the face of this, the Church is asking itself new questions about its ordering so that ministries can express its *communio* identity. Through the advent of post-conciliar lay ecclesial ministries, the Church is 'loosening knots' to enable deeper understanding about the inter-relationship, not equivalency, of ordination and ministry.

Implications of Kasper's Pneumatology for the Reception of Lay Ecclesial Ministry

The emergence of lay ecclesial ministry points to a hope-filled new understanding of the relationship between vocation and leadership in the Catholic Church today. The Spirit, through the services of lay ecclesial ministries, is making space for the flourishing of unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity in the Church and for the world (LG 40-42). Though

applied to assess the achievements of the ecumenical movement in the 20th century, Kasper's words can also affirm the potential and promise of lay ecclesial ministry for the Church's identity and mission: "God's Spirit has opened anew a door and is preparing a new future."⁶⁶ Kasper's pneumatology can help to move theological reflections on lay ecclesial ministry into a new phase. In this final section I identify nine implications of Kasper's pneumatology that I believe can be woven into the ongoing constructive work of developing a theology of lay ecclesial ministry so that its vision and reality can be received more deeply by the Catholic Church as unfinished, creative work of the Spirit.

1. In and through the emergence of lay ecclesial ministries, the Spirit is leading the Church into the new.

Kasper interprets the newness and freshness that the Spirit brings to the life of the Church in terms of God's unexpected in-breaking that opens space for emergence of the future and that brings about hope. Lay ecclesial ministries embody the Spirit's hope-filled newness. They can contribute in bold and new ways to the transformation of history in the light of the Gospel. They expand the whole Church's self-understanding and call to mission. Scripture's foundational stories of creation and salvation show God's Spirit as the dynamic, creative force that brings about the extraordinary and the new at the service of the flourishing of life. The Spirit not only keeps Christ's words and actions present but also points to the new things that are to come. Through lay ecclesial ministries, Jesus Christ, in the Spirit, is continuing to meet humanity concretely, relationally and in hope-filled ways. Thus, lay ecclesial ministers should never be considered as short-term emergency 'stop gaps' for priest shortages. New ecclesial history is being realised in the dynamic unfolding of lay ecclesial ministries that are transforming the nature, reality and mission of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. The Spirit acting in history, through the Church in the world, will

⁶⁶ Walter Kasper, "Be Joyful in Hope," in *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper; Speaking the Truth in Love*, ed. Kristin M. Colberg and Robert A. Kreig (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 297.

continually call women and men to new forms of ministry. Lay ecclesial ministries expand the Church's apostolic identity.

2. The theological foundation for lay ecclesial ministries is the charismatic and spiritual nature of the Church.

Kasper shows that the Church is a charismatic 'event.' Kasper's image of the Church as sacrament of the Spirit points to the centrality of charisms of the whole people of God for the identity and mission of the Church. In the breathing of the Spirit, known in the incarnation, resurrection and pentecost 'events' of Jesus Christ, the *Logos* of God is eternally missioned into history. To assure the success of this mission, the Spirit bestows gifts or charisms on human beings to encourage and enable them to participate in salvation history. The charisms of the Spirit animate, nourish and sustain the life and mission of the Church. Kasper's work offers encouragement and challenge for ecclesial repentance when the Spirit's work is repressed by absorbing it into institutional forms and structures. For Kasper, the Spirit does not guarantee the Church's *status quo*, but rather inspires continual renewal. Kasper's work challenges the Church to avoid narrowing ministries to institutionalism. The Spirit is not a function or functionary of the Church. Ministers of the Church are not custodians of the Spirit. Institutional structures, including those that order lay ecclesial ministries, should be understood as consequences, not sources, of the sending of the Spirit. Identifying the Spirit with the Church, even more with ministries of the Church, means belief in the freedom and universality of the Spirit's work is at risk. The Spirit's activity cannot be limited to, nor be absorbed by, specific roles or responsibilities in the community. Lay ecclesial ministries symbolise the charismatic and spiritual nature of the Church that includes, transcends and creates new organisational arrangements at the service of Christ's mission. Lay ecclesial ministries are an expression of the spiritual renewal of the Church sought by Vatican II.⁶⁷ In

⁶⁷ Kasper, "The Renewal of Pneumatology," 9.

short, lay ecclesial ministries are gifts of the Spirit for the Church and as such, they orient the Church toward the future.

3. Lay ecclesial ministries are empowered by the sacrament of Baptism.

Kasper's important pneumatological foundation for lay ministry is that "Church and baptism belong together from the very beginning."⁶⁸ One of the fruits of Kasper's ecumenical work has been deepening reception of the importance of baptism across the Christian churches, not only for ecclesial identity, but also for ministry. The description of ministry in Acts 2: 41, he writes, links baptisms of the earliest Christians to mission in the name of the triune God.⁶⁹ Kasper argues that the sacramental significance of baptism has ecclesiological implications. He draws on his theology of the Spirit as the foundation of this claim:

The early church sees the foundation of baptism as laid down in the baptism of Jesus himself in the Jordan (Mark 1:9-11 and par.). The baptismal command is indissolubly linked to the cross, the resurrection and the exaltation of Jesus Christ. Acts 2:38-41 links the practice of baptism with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Thus we cannot detach baptism from history, from the fate of Jesus and from confessing Jesus Christ, any more than from the action of the Holy Spirit. Baptism stands in the great context of salvation-history: that the Father sends the Son into the world, exalts him through the cross and resurrection to be the *kosmokrator* to whom all power has been given in heaven and in earth; and that the Holy Spirit makes the person and work of Christ present (2 Cor. 3:17), and has been poured out "on all flesh" as an eschatological gift (Acts 2:17).⁷⁰

Ministry that has its roots in the sacrament of baptism is a gift of the outpouring of the Spirit. The sacramental sign and grace of lay ecclesial ministries is located within the meaning of baptism. With this foundation, lay ecclesial ministries, are signs and instruments of the Spirit who makes all things new. The Spirit goes with and ahead of the Church to make a path for the coming of Jesus Christ in history. Kasper explains further the intrinsic link between baptism and mission:

Baptism is linked to the sending of the church into the whole world (Matt. 28:19); it makes the baptized a witness to Christ in the world, and is the foundation for the priesthood of all believers who are sent to proclaim the mighty acts of God (1Pet. 2:5,9). Baptism is at once a sacrament of initiation and of mission.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Kasper, "Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of Baptism," 526.

⁶⁹ Kasper, "Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of Baptism," 526.

⁷⁰ Kasper, "Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of Baptism," 528.

⁷¹ Kasper, "Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of Baptism," 530.

Baptism, as the sacrament of initiation and mission, clearly situates the source of authority for lay ecclesial ministries in the triune God who overflows into history in the Holy Spirit. As we have seen, Kasper's understanding of God as a Trinity of persons "represents the multiplicity and manifoldness of reality."⁷² God's diversity expresses a unity that does not impoverish individuality but brings difference to completeness and fullness, in a communion of plurality. The Spirit of God "draws the faithful into the unity which is the mark of the Divine being."⁷³ Thus, the diversity and multiplicity of ministries do not dissipate nor weaken the Church. On the contrary, they strengthen and unify the Church in the Spirit. Also central to Kasper's theology is the experience of God being both sender and 'being sent.' Thus, while the importance of the baptised being called to mission is essential, equally essential and deserving of more theological and pastoral attention is the notion of 'being sent.' Kasper has shown that this insight can be lost when emphasis in lay ministry is placed on intra-church involvements, thus losing clarity that these involvements are in view of the mission of Christ who sends the Church to embrace the world in freedom and love.

4. Lay Ecclesial Ministry can be received by the Church as a Spirit-inspired and authorised expression of ministry.

New language is needed to affirm the public and spiritual identity and significance of lay ecclesial ministers for the life of the Church today. Kasper's pneumatology opens space for fresh thinking about the meaning of the term 'office' in the Catholic Church. In Kasper's 1987 article "The Call and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World," he names leadership roles of the laity as 'offices' (Ämter).⁷⁴ In so doing, he raises the question of the meaning of the term 'office' in relation to lay ministries of the Church. Kasper's work questions whether the terms 'office' and 'ordination' are necessarily interchangeable.

⁷² Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 236.

⁷³ Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 248.

⁷⁴ Kasper, "Berufung und Sendung des Laien," 587.

However, his work is also clear: 'office,' in the Church, whether ordained or lay, must be at the service of the freedom of the Spirit's charisms and not attempt to pull them to itself. Kasper writes that "[t]he new situation requires us to study the whole question of office in the churches in the wider theological context of Christ, the Spirit and the Church."⁷⁵ This call is being taken seriously by theologians grappling with the meaning of lay ecclesial ministry being "submitted to the discernment, authorisation and supervision of the hierarchy."⁷⁶

Can lay ecclesial ministers participate in, as well as benefit from, the work of 'office' that involves the recognition, reception and coordination of the charisms of the Spirit for the life of the Church without contributing to the 'harnessing' of the Spirit to institutional organisation?⁷⁷ In *Jesus the Christ*, for example, Kasper makes clear that our share in the abundance of the Spirit makes a public claim on us and affirms that who we are and what we do has saving significance for history.⁷⁸ Kasper's work also affirms the importance of questions about recognition, authorisation and ordering related to the reception of lay ecclesial ministries. For example, what criteria validate ministries in the Catholic Church today? How might these criteria be discerned by and for the whole people of God? A further question which Kasper's earlier work raises is whether, along with ordained ministries, lay ecclesial ministries, though without ordination, can be more formally understood as official offices of the Church *and* work in response to the freedom of the Spirit.⁷⁹ For Kasper, the Spirit's

⁷⁵ Kasper, Walter Kasper, "Convergence and Divergence in the Question of Office," in *The Plurality of Ministries*, ed. Walter Kasper and Hans Kung (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 116.

⁷⁶ USCCB, *Co-Workers*, 8.

⁷⁷ See The Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland, *The Canon Law Letter and Spirit* (Alexandria, NSW: E.J. Dwyer, 1995), 86-7. Canon 145§1 "An ecclesiastical office is any post which by divine or ecclesiastical disposition is established in a stable manner to further a spiritual purpose." The commentary points out that "Providing the distinguishing features ... are fulfilled, it is clear that an ecclesiastical office, as such, may be given not only to clerics but also to the laity." Referring to the stability of the office, the commentary also notes that "the continuity of the post is guaranteed so that it survives indefinitely if the holder of the post changes, or if the post becomes vacant."

⁷⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 241.

⁷⁹ See Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*, 61. Here Kasper writes "The tradition is profoundly marked by the insight that the ministry represents the church and acts on its behalf." Following Cyprian, Augustine and Aquinas, Kasper believes that the Church is in the ecclesial office bearer and the office bearer is in the Church. Community and its official leadership cannot be divided.

charisms are the foundational principle for organising the Church and its ministries. In his inclusive and expansive work on offices of the Church, he shows that discernment of the Spirit's charisms has implications for the recognition, structuring and ordering of ministries. He considers the ecclesial model of *communio* as foundational for the growth of synodal structures of discernment. Kasper makes clear that conceiving the Church as an organic, synodal structure means understanding that one person does not do everything, and everyone does not do the same thing in the Church. Discernment, recognition and reception of Spirit-given charisms become the authoritative and sustaining principle for all forms of ecclesial ministries. If the role of 'office' is to awaken charisms and coordinate them to enhance meaningful and fruitful ministerial relationships, I think Kasper's proposal that lay ministers might participate in this service of ecclesial 'office' merits further attention.

5. Lay ecclesial ministries open the Church to broader and deeper reception of the *communio* vision of Vatican II.

The growth of lay ecclesial ministries expresses the Council's vision of *communio*-ecclesiology. Kasper shows that collegiality and dialogue are at the heart of the ecclesiology of *communio*. Lay and ordained ecclesial ministries should be oriented to collegial ministerial inter-relationships. Kasper's pneumatology takes the discussion of ministerial collegiality beyond the concepts of delineation and even complementarity into the dynamic of reciprocity and dialogue.⁸⁰ The theological foundation for lay and ordained ecclesial ministries exercising co-leadership is the reciprocity of the *communio* love of the Trinity. Though Kasper has not specifically taken up the development of *communio*-ecclesiology in relation to lay ecclesial

⁸⁰ See Myriam Wijlens, "Leadership, Delineation and Complementarity: Laity and Clergy in Service to the People of God." in *Practical Theology and the Interpretation of Crossing Boundaries*, edited by Bert Roebben and Leo van der Tuin, (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003), 100. Here Wijlens writes: "The theologian Walter Kasper sees the different *charismata* ministries and offices as complementary to each other. He takes recourse to the concept of *communio* to explain that there is a diversity in unity in them." I argue that Kasper's pneumatology would expand this assessment beyond the idea of complementarity to partnership and reciprocity.

ministry, this thesis has shown that he provides vital building blocks. The Spirit is source of ecclesial unity, though not uniformity, of identity and mission. Since ministries of the Church, including those exercised by lay ecclesial ministers, are gifts of the Spirit, they must not function in competition with each other. The emergence of lay ecclesial ministries calls for greater transparency, collaboration and mutual accountability in ministry to reflect the *communio* identity of the Church.

6. Lay Ecclesial Ministers represent new expressions of Christian vocation and discipleship.

The Church is being called to recognise and receive as the gifts of the Spirit new lay expressions of Christian vocation and discipleship. Kasper shows that the Spirit invites human cooperation in its mission of freedom and love. He points to the fruitfulness of 'unbundling' leadership and ordination for the sake of encouraging contemporary discipleship. In the emergence of lay ecclesial ministries the Church expands its understandings of authentic and diverse vocational pathways to promote freedom and love in the world in and through the Church. Furthermore, lay ministries challenge earlier thinking that certain vocations can be 'ranked' as holier or more important than others. Lay ecclesial ministries can be recognised as genuine, long term, publically accountable vocations. They respond to the dynamic of God calling and sending individuals into the service of the Gospel. Lay ecclesial ministry is not a 'state of life.' It must be nourished by a spirituality of incarnational mercy. Lay ecclesial ministers require meaningful, authorised pathways and formation that help develop confidence and competence for their roles. They require practical support and encouragement by the Church for their vocational choices and commitments.

7. Lay Ecclesial Ministers are called to live and work in the tension between the poles of Church and world.

Kasper has identified that the ‘essence’ of lay ecclesial ministry is its location in the tension areas or frontier spaces between the Church’s mission *ad intra* and *ad extra*.’ Lay ecclesial ministries should call the Church to respond to urgent pastoral and spiritual needs in today’s world. As co-workers with the Spirit, they are called to build the Church of the future and also participate and exercise leadership in actions that transform history in the light of the Gospel. Following Kasper, neither involvement can be pulled apart. They are inter-related and inextricably knotted together.

The mission of the Church is grounded in participation in Christ’s ministries of priest, prophet and king. Kasper insists that wherever and whenever human partners participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly offices of Christ, there the power of the Spirit is revealed. In the Spirit, the Church mediates the saving work of Jesus Christ through ecclesial practices and traditions that promote truth, life and service for the world. Therefore, the emergence of lay ecclesial ministries can be understood as calling the Church to deeper recognition that there can be a plurality of publically recognised leadership roles available that help animate the contemporary mission of Christ.

In the light of Kasper’s theology, it seems clear that the Catholic Church is being called by the Spirit to new ways to order its life so that its ministries enflesh the prophetic, priestly and kingly ministries of Christ in history. As Kasper has shown, in the future the Church will have to leave behind many things if it is to be faithful to the call of the Spirit’s leadership. Through the sacrament of baptism, the Spirit’s anointing of Christ to these saving ‘offices’ is constantly made available for history. Lay ecclesial ministries call the Church to attend to new ways in which the Spirit brings about the abiding presence and significance of Jesus Christ in history. Lay ecclesial ministers can be icons of the humanity of the Church for a suffering world, taking the Church to the margins of society, to the poor, vulnerable and

suffering. Furthermore, they can be empowered to critique and act when confronted by the abuse of power at any level in the Church and in the world. In the Spirit-filled life and destiny of Jesus Christ, God's power is revealed in compassion and vulnerability.

8. Lay ecclesial ministers must together, and in dialogue with the ordained, deepen understanding of their specifically 'lay' identity.

The term 'lay' needs to be freshly received into the life of the Church. Kasper has made this clear: "the term people of God (*laos*) expresses the being-on-the-way in history of God's people and, at the same time, God's being with us and among us on this way."⁸¹ The 'idea' embedded in the term calls the Church to deep immersion in, and valuing of, the 'ordinariness' and concerns of history. Lay ecclesial ministries should take the Church into the world, bring the world to the Church and find themselves on journeys that contribute to the world's humanisation and transformation in the light of the Gospel. The meaning of the term should not be compromised at the expense of focussing on the functions of *ad intra* ecclesial service. Lay ecclesial ministries need space and opportunity to emerge in their own uniqueness, not as substitutes for, nor competitors with, ordained ministries. They are being called to discover the uniqueness of their theological identities within a *communio* model of Church. In short, their positioning in the Church's ordering should assist in, as Kasper puts it, 'unbundling' all ministry and leadership with ordination.

As Kasper has shown, the nourishment and growth of lay ministries cannot be considered in isolation from the question of the future of priestly ordination. Ministry relationships are reciprocal, not interchangeable. Lay ecclesial ministries are making possible the growth of teamwork and collaboration in ministry. Since the particularity of each ministry form can only develop and be discovered in reciprocal relationship of inter-dependence, collegial ministry between lay and ordained ecclesial ministers is made possible if lay and

⁸¹ Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 122.

ordained ministry candidates are formed together but not uniformly for their leadership roles. Formation for ministry should ensure there are opportunities for different charisms and ministries to discover their uniqueness and value for the Church's mission in the presence of otherness. Co-participation and co-responsibility for the Church's mission is nurtured and sustained by genuine friendship and mutual concern among ministers.

9. Lay Ecclesial Ministers need to function within the synodal structures of the whole people of God.

Lay ecclesial ministries need to find their identity and purpose within inclusive, dialogical synodal structures. They must contribute to the Church's listening to, discernment of and communication about where the Spirit is leading the whole Church. For Kasper, this identity is nourished through experiences of ecclesial dialogue and synodality. Growth in synodality can guard the Church against the emergence of new forms of clericalism. Kasper affirms that clericalism involves a lack of trust in the people of God and their consciences and thus is a serious threat to the work of the Holy Spirit.⁸²

Lay ecclesial ministries symbolise the diversity of the Spirit's gifts for the life and mission of the Church. Kasper has affirmed the importance of the Church speaking of its own identity, especially at the local levels, rather than being described from the outside or with 'ideal' images. This suggests the need for careful listening to the experience of lay ecclesial ministers in the field. What can the Church learn about the Spirit's call to the whole Church through dialogue with the voices of lay ecclesial ministers in synodal structures? How can the voices of lay ecclesial ministers be included in structures of discernment? Kasper insists that

⁸² O'Connell, "Listen to the Spirit," 24. See also Walter Kasper, "Petrine Ministry and Synodality." *The Jurist* 66 (2006): 303. Here Kasper writes that Vatican II took up the theme of synodality that could not be developed at Vatican I. He writes: "The Second Vatican Council took up the question and made a second step towards the integration of primacy into the whole doctrine of the Church as well as into the whole collegiality of the episcopal ministry. The Council reaffirmed the importance of the local church, of the sacramental understanding of the episcopal ministry and, above all, of the Church as *communio*. This has revived synodal elements, especially at the level of synods and bishops' conferences."

since the Church is an ongoing creation of the Spirit, without the practice of collegiality or synodality, the Church cannot be faithful to its essential nature as *communio*. His understanding of *communio*-ecclesiology sees synodality as strengthening the identity of the local church as a faith community nourished and led by the Spirit.

Conclusion

Kasper's academic and ecclesial leadership has been at the service of the ongoing and often surprising new expressions of Vatican II reception. For Kasper, ministry is conceived as cooperation with the Spirit's call to the Church to be of service to the world. His work affirms a dynamic, future oriented understanding of ecclesial tradition. For Kasper, faith traditions arise from the historical experience of the dynamic communication of God's Word and its Spirit-led interpretation and fulfilment in human response. Kasper's theology of the Spirit provides a valuable resource for future work on the theology of lay ecclesial ministry. His pneumatology has been creatively inspired by his Tübingen heritage that is 'scholarly, rigorous, ecclesially faithful and critically and constructively contemporary,'⁸³ As noted in Chapter One, on the occasion of his 80th *Festschrift* celebration Elizabeth Johnson called upon Kasper to turn his attention to new pneumatological issues that would benefit from his theology. She was confident of the fruitfulness of his thought and method.⁸⁴ This thesis has confirmed that lay ecclesial ministry is a new phenomenon emerging in the history of the Church's developing self-understanding and engagement with the modern world that can benefit greatly from being in dialogue with Kasper's pneumatology.

This thesis has shown that the emergence of lay ecclesial ministry points to a future for the Catholic Church that can be boldly expanded through engagement with Kasper's pneumatology. These pages lay the ground for further research into how Kasper's theology of

⁸³ See Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 6.

⁸⁴ Johnson, "Pneumatology," 108.

the Spirit can be engaged to understand the emergence of lay ecclesial ministry as necessary for the growth of Catholic identity and relevance for the 21st century. The thesis has argued that the phenomenon of post-Vatican II growth of lay ecclesial ministry can be affirmed, sustained and developed within the theological framework of *communio* ecclesiology. Within this framework, Kasper shows that the Spirit ‘demolishes frontiers’ and creates relationships of care and mutuality. Kasper’s pneumatology enables ministers to grow into their baptismal identities, to cultivate friendship among those who minister together, and to recognise that they can only be fully who they are, relational and dialogical beings, in the presence of each other. For this to happen, there needs to be a foundation of equality, reciprocity and esteem.

This study has identified the potential and promise of Kasper’s pneumatology to encourage the emergence of lay ecclesial ministry in the Catholic Church at the service of kindling hope in our world today. Lay ecclesial ministries, along with ordained ministries, partner with the Spirit in bringing about the humanisation, fulfilment, liberation and salvation of history. In the Spirit, they point the Church toward the future as it continues to respond to and be transformed by the light of Christ’s call to participate in God’s mission of freedom and love. The last words of this thesis will be Kasper’s. They serve as encouragement for the work that lies ahead, that of deepening the reception of lay ecclesial ministries for the life and future of our church and world:

We are well aware that human capacities are insufficient and that we depend on the help of God’s Holy Spirit for the success of our endeavours ... we should anchor our hope in the Holy Spirit, that He may enlighten our understanding with his wisdom so that we can find the way towards one another; may he fill our hearts with His love so that we can also have the courage of setting on this journey toward each other.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Walter Kasper, ed. *The Petrine Ministry*, 8.

Publications based on this Thesis

Trinidad, Julie. “*Apostolicam Actuositatem* and ‘Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord’ in Dialogue with the Communion Theology of Walter Kasper.” In *The Letter and the Spirit: On the Forgotten Documents of Vatican II*, edited by Annemarie C. Mayer. Leuven: Peeters Press, Forthcoming.

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