

CHALLENGING SOCIETIES AFTER SECULARISATION:
A PROPHETIC JOY?
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Setting a Context

Listening

Vatican II seems to be in a second phase of its reception now. Councils, in the course of Church history, always took about a century to unfold. The most programmatic document authored by the Council of the 1960's was its last, the Pastoral Constitution. It is "pastoral" in a new sense: *Gaudium et Spes* starts from what people actually experience and aspire. The Church wants to understand, empathise with and respond to today's fears and worries, today's "joy and hope" which became the Constitution's title. Almost 50 years later, Pope Francis is taking up this attitude. He even picks up the 1965 wording, when he names his own programmatic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* "the joy of the Gospel." In Francis's theology, there is a particular link between the evangelic message, the evangelic experience, the evangelic activity and the evangelic messenger. That messenger is, according to *Evangelii Gaudium*, the "missionary disciple" (50) a formula that spells out the two sides of every truly apostolic life. It is, at the same time, receptive, listening, learning ("disciple") and pro-active, creative, daring, self-giving ("missionary"). A one sentence summary of Francis's Exhortation could be this: Through the experience of Jesus's love, we receive his mercy and are thus enabled, as members

of the outgoing Church, to take the initiative in courageous involvement (cf. *EG* 120, 128, 24, 46, 20, 269). So, this second phase of Vatican II reception is marked by what we might call apostolic listening.

Secularity

Every vision of what the Church is to be has still another context, beyond the formulations of ecclesial documents and the examples of leading Christians. The Church namely lives within and for the zones of life that have not yet been transformed by the Gospel: the places, constellations, expressions and experiences which become a pastoral starting point in the view of *Gaudium et Spes* and which Pope Francis calls “the human peripheries” (*EG* 46). Theologians like to name them “the world.” What then makes today’s world so special for the Church? In what sense is the present age different from others? Western analysts keep claiming that this is a “secular age.” Secularism is then easily seen as the Church’s greatest challenge, danger, or even hindrance. Before discussing whether that is true, two other questions need to be asked. What does “secular” really imply and is this age accordingly really secular? Some of the leading researchers on secularity recently gathered at the Gregorian University (March 4–5, 2015). Let us briefly discuss what three major authors on the social developments around Christianity had to say in this setting.

- Rather than speaking of a secular present, José Casanova describes today’s global situation of religions as “post secular.” We might say, we are “after secularisation” also in the sense that the description of our time as secular is past. Religious phenomena do shape today’s minds and living conditions. Indeed,

religion is back, visibly also in polarising radicalisations. Pope Francis helpfully observed that what makes inter-religious dialogue difficult is fundamentalism. He did, however, not simply point to others. He rather gave a self-critical turn to his analysis when he used fundamentalism in the plural and dared to speak of “fundamentalisms on both sides” (EG 250).

- Charles Taylor says that, yes, this is a secular age, but religion has not lost all impact. Rather, religion has become “unbundled.” One does not have to buy wholesale into one group, say for instance, one particular parish, for all spiritual relations. Rather, you may now simultaneously attend a yoga group in one religious association, a sharing circle in a different tradition, a wisdom course elsewhere; and liturgy has become a question of taste, too. Religion has become, for Taylor, optional.
- Hans Joas continues along that line. Now in the West it is really possible to choose your particular religious observation; you can even switch from one to another or choose to keep away from any. Religion as optional does not, however, mean for Joas that people simply pick their faith according to arbitrary reasoning. Behind a religious choice, there is often a deep sense that one has been “taken, grasped, seized” by the holy (*Ergriffenheit*, in German). Paul entrusts to his favourite congregation his own experience: “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own” (Philippians 3:12).

These attempts to describe the present religious situation may serve as a backdrop for our own response to the question about the Church's role in today's societies. In order to find a formula to answer that, a simple historical scheme may prove helpful. Let us start with a sharp thesis. The Western Church has arrived at a third chapter of her existence without noticing it; therefore, she is not living her present call faithfully. What are those three chapters? They are three different ways of understanding what Christianity is. We might call them: nation, confession, and inspiration.

The baptism of Europe happened in what we may term the national model. It was not the individual person that was expected to know and practise Christianity. You were Christian if you belonged to the Christian nation. One was a Christian by birth (*Christianus natus*); and when the sovereign was baptised, that sufficed to consider all his subjects Christians, as well. The national model was shaken only by the Reformation. Suddenly, decision was required; knowledge of faith was needed, and the difference became a formative factor. Faiths only became identifiable over against others. We are in the age of "confessionalisation." The Church had become divided into denominations; or, as they came to be called after the various texts that now delimited one's creed: divided into "confessions." Accordingly, even the Pope's Church, counter-profiled by the Council of Trent, became a group: the "Catholic confession." That is ironical; the universality and communion promised by the origins of the word "catholic" were lost. It seems, however, that we are no longer in that second phase; we do not live in the confessional model any more. Many Europeans have little understanding for the separation of Christian communities or for doctrinal dissent between the Churches. That lack of

understanding exists outside the Church, but also inside. Counter-identity over against other religious, indeed, over against other Christian groups seems to be an obsolete pre-occupation. What, then, could be the role of the Church in a time where so many different voices and movements compete for attention and influence, where adherence is no longer automatic? There seems to be a real interest in what the Christian witness means for people's lives and for their discernment. Competence, credibility, humility is required; and that also means that Christians need to bid farewell to their concepts of success in numbers. The Church's new call is, in my perception, to *inspire* the world.

If the Church's mission today is to be faithful to Christ's mandate, we need, after this programmatic description of the present situation, to study the New Testament. In the light of the present situation, we need, so to speak, to harken back to Jesus's own ecclesiology. Matthew's Gospel is perhaps the most carefully constructed account; and Matthew's presentation has a particular interest in community questions. We will, therefore, use Matthean material here.

Mission and Joy

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. (Mt 5:1)

After years of hidden work in Nazareth, Jesus now becomes publicly present. He has called disciples into his fellowship; and people have shown interest in his ministry and message. He speaks with authority (Matthew 7:29). What is that to say? Those who accept Jesus are set by his word into a new condition of life. He calls that new life condition: the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom can be understood on the canvas of Israel's view of history. In that perspective, God has created the world. That is to say, he allows for existence that is not himself. Those created beings can now acknowledge God. They do not have to, though: they can refuse to acknowledge God as source of life. Today, we call this possibility to acknowledge or reject: "freedom." So we can say, God wants us to be free. It is freedom that makes love possible. Only where there is willing acknowledgement can there be love. Believers hope that at the end of time all creatures will have come to acknowledge God. Then, it will be obvious and recognized by everyone that he is God, origin and fulfillment of all being. This manifest, all-pervasive and all-accepted divinity is God's "glory." Even now, however, creatures can acknowledge the Creator; they can, in Biblical wording, "give him glory." Where that is happening, where he is Lord, the Kingdom of God has begun.

Why is not everybody joining in? Acknowledging God requires a renunciation. It means to leave the independence in which we may, because of creation, live. Giving up this independence looks frightening. We have an understandable tendency in us towards "keeping life." Therefore, the call into its contrary feels like an invitation to lose. Expectably, not everybody takes that risk. One can, however, be seized by the sense that, in fact, alternative ways of living are not taking away your real life but bringing it to fulfillment. This different way of living is that to which what Jesus calls people. It may be named as opposed to "keeping life": "giving life." Jesus witnesses to this by showing people that giving life liberates human existence; not by the appeal of risk in itself but because it allows human beings to share Jesus's life; indeed it allows people to share in God's own life. The new condition of a

“giving life” beyond the fearful grasps of “keeping life” can also be called “freedom”; not in the sense of freedom to say yes or no, only; but freedom from the self-entanglements of possessive having. Our various languages offer telling ways of expressing this movement out of oneself; the movement which makes for the lively peace in faith. “I trust you” in German is expressed: “*ichverlasse mich auf dich*” which renders literally, “I am leaving myself onto you.” English can use the verb “I rely on you,” which takes up the root of *religio*, that is, “binding backup”; and Hebrew uses the causative forms of *’-m-n*, which literally means, then, “I make myself stand fast within you.” From that, is made the prayer-word known to all Jews, Christians and Muslims: “Amen.”

Climbing the mountain, Jesus presents himself as the new Moses, Israel’s new lawgiver. God’s reign is now being erected not with violence, however, but by the liberating experience that “giving life” is possible. There are different ways of living the Kingdom, there are the disciples and the crowds. Everyone is called into a radical change from “keeping life” to “giving life.” Everybody is challenged to follow Christ, that is, to share life with him; but that means different things in people’s different living situations. The various forms of following Christ set apart with official mandate, or in the challenging ambiguities of everyday life are all vital and, indeed: all in need of the other types of discipleship.

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying...
(Matthew 5:2)

Matthew creates tension, stresses the importance of what is to come and gives biblical solemnity to this very moment of Jesus’s authoritative word.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:10-12)

“Blessed” are, classically, only the pagan gods: they enjoy an exclusive pleasure. With Jesus, the time of God’s nearness begins, the time of healing and forgiveness. Now human beings can be “blessed” they can experience divine happiness. What Jesus is saying here or, rather, what Jesus is doing here, is radical. He is initiating the world’s new age. Creation had to bring about the separation of creatures from God and from each other, because they chose not to open themselves towards the source of life. Now some people have dared to share Christ’s life. Now some are, therefore, living according to the dynamics of God’s own life. Now, some people are no longer closing themselves in but share the “giving life.” Now starts, therefore, the hoped-for time of God’s being everything in everybody. Now the end of history has begun. That is, what Christ’s “blessed” proclamations the Beatitudes mean.

Jesus announces the presence of full joy to those who have entered his way of living; but is he not speaking about the future? Yes, happy because of the future; before that, however, there will be much trouble, indeed heavy suffering in the lives of those who accept his call. That is to be expected because a “keeping life” is necessarily afraid of the ground-breaking shakes of a “giving life.” Still, Jesus’s message is not only “be patient, it is going to be terrible, but after death you’ll have a reward.” Jesus opens up a different experience: you are happy already now. The perspective of eternal joy in God’s glorious

Kingdom at the end of history creates in you, through Jesus's promise, an anticipation of that eternal future. The German word is *Vorfreude*: the joy of looking forward. The biblical wording of "hope" needs to be understood along these lines. It is not the probability of a positive outcome. Hope is the present joy of the coming fulfilment.

Jesus reminds his listeners of people who, in his own people's history, have already shared that experience of courageous witnessing to God and violent resistance: the prophets. It helps to be reminded of living examples. Persons who dared to live in faithful gratuity may exist in all human communities. The newness that comes with Christ is not the ideal of trusting. What is new is the joy based on the Paschal experience. Through his witness to Jesus's pre-Easter words, Matthew is, of course, transmitting to his listeners the Easter spirit.

Like Jesus's prophetic memory, we may remind each other of courageous witnesses to the God of giving life. A person that comes to mind when we reflect on giving life, is Maximillian Kolbe. He was sent to Auschwitz in 1941. One day, the vice commander arbitrarily selected ten inmates to be starved to death in recompense for three who had disappeared. One of those chosen to die, Franciszek Gajowniczek, cried out, "My wife! My children!" Upon this, the Franciscan said he would want to take his place. The Nazis, rather than finally realising what true humanity is, accepted his offer. Gajowniczek was, later, able to return to his family and he was living his vocation as father and husband and a Catholic lay person ready to teach his experience, just as Kolbe was living his vocation as friar and priest. He kept leading his fellow convicts in faith and prayer until only he himself was left alive for a Nazi injection to kill him after two weeks in the hunger bunker. Witnesses

reported that he remained, till his last second, serene. “Blessed are you when...”

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. (Matthew 5:13)

These are the words immediately subsequent to the eighth Beatitude “Happy are you.” Those addressed are his persecuted fellows. They are not the stronger ones, not the winners; and it is precisely them that he calls the salt of earth: the word “you” is stressed. Of all people, his followers have this particular role in history. The idea behind it is that if people want their food’s taste to come out more fully, they need salt. It is supportive of others, necessary, irreplaceable and gives to nourishment its taste. Jesus’s message here is: your existence is for others. If it is “keeping,” rather than “giving,” it is pointless; and if there are still doubts about the meaning of “earth” is it the ground, the Promised Land, a restriction to Israel? the next verse will immediately clarify.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. (Matthew 5:14)

Just like everybody sees the city up there, so your existence is meaningful for the whole world.

Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a bucket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. (Matthew 5:15)

It is refreshing to see that our founding texts are not sticking to one image. Rather than the one formula, there is plurality, even in the images offered. Furthermore, in Jesus’s original words, there is often a lightness, a sense of humour: how stupid would one be to put a lit oil lamp under a

container? If only you do not hinder the light from spreading, however, your (one-room) house will be fully lit. Thus, everyone will profit from it. A chapter before, it was still Jesus who was bringing light into the darkness. With the beginning of his public ministry, “the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned” (Matthew 4:16, quoting Isaiah 9:1–2). Now the disciples are to shine that same light into the whole house as light to all of the world. We can be reminded of Isaiah 49:6, too, where the suffering servant is addressed by God: “It is too little that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the survivors of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. (Matthew 5:16-17)

Jesus has not only given to his disciples a task; he has given them an identity: “you are...” rather than only “you have to...” Those who listen are set into a new reality; first in the Beatitudes, then in the word of salt and light. Without any ado, however, Jesus now shows us that identity is not only an “is.” It is also a call, a task; it is an identity to be lived out. The point of discipleship is: realising God’s Kingdom sensing its arrival and making it happen. Here, now we are back to God’s glory: acknowledging him as source, principle and fulfilment of life. It seems not so much to be the disciples’ words that make the difference: their living witness will speak to others and make them, in their turn, “realise” God’s Kingdom.

A helpful way to express the dynamic in which Jesus works is: “fulfilment.” Fulfilling something means, bringing it to its true reality. Jesus fulfils the Law. That does not simply mean, he implements the Law’s letter; nor does it mean he replaces it. That would just be recreating old problems in a second try. His newness is not one of substituting; he lets, rather, flourish. The point of the Torah was not the institution of an enslaving rule system. The Torah is guidance to life the constitution of God’s people, free for covenantal faithfulness. On the mountain of the Beatitudes, Jesus will show in the next minutes that he radicalises the Torah, rather than abolish it. He brings it to its core to love (cf. Gal 5:14: “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’”). Jesus will, within the same discourse, make his disciples discover how the joy of the Kingdom transforms them into creative peacemakers (Matthew 5:39, cf. 5:9). Their imaginative liberty can transform even situations of victimising suppression into occasions for reconciliation by turning the other cheek or walking the second mile. Jesus’s newness is not ‘spiritual’ in the negative sense, which would be disregarding Israel’s tradition of good works. Jesus’s newness brings, rather, his followers’ good works to their fullness as testimony. Thus witnessing to God’s Kingdom, they move others to acknowledge, in prayer and action, God’s glory.

Jesus also fulfils the prophets. Their predictions, their expressions of desire and trust in God’s definitive action have come true in Jesus’s coming, speaking, healing: in his making present the Kingdom of God in people’s lives.

Inspiration

How can we fulfil Jesus’s mission in the present situation? We need to see, first of all, that even elements of today’s life

that we like to see as particularly threatening to the Church are to some extent historical fruits of Christianity. Consider the observation that “religion has become optional.” There is, clearly, a dynamic of choice in Christianity: alongside the experience that people are being seized personally by God’s call, there is an awareness that one has, in order to be a disciple of Christ, to make up one’s own mind. There is a strong sense of individuality in the Sermon of the Mount prayer is to happen in your own hidden room, doors locked (Matthew 6:6); still, there is a marked community accent in Christ’s proclamation: the stressed “you” of the light and salt sayings is a plural; and already the Beatitudes address the disciples as a group gathered around him addressed in view of the crowds, they are to minister. So how can we change – or in the wording of our three chapter scheme of nation, confession, inspiration – how can we inspire the world today? What can we do?

Adoration

The first answer must be that it is not our doing that will salvifically change the world. We have to acknowledge that the steering committee of world development is, with all our activity, no human body. In the end, God will prove to have been the Lord of history. We need to accept that, if we do not want to overestimate our own power. The acknowledgement of God as Lord of history is: prayer. In prayer we may feel how we receive a call, and the courage to collaborate in God’s plan. Prayer’s basic gesture is, however, that of a renunciation. In the sometimes long hours of the Church’s liturgies or personal meditations we realise that it is not our doing that brings about the decisive turn. It is at its most fundamental essence, adoration.

Celebration

Christian liturgy always also has, however, a character of joy. The verb we use for actuating the eucharist, or any other sacrament, is: “celebrate.” All our rites are a memory of the Paschal Mystery. All our liturgies are celebrations in the light of Christ’s resurrection. We are not only thinking back to what happened during his earthly life, we are also celebrating our future. We are “invited to the marriage banquet of the Lamb” (cf. Revelation 19:9). That is why we may celebrate the eucharist. Thus, we are being told that human destiny, the point of our life, is to get into living community with God. We are looking forward to that and therefore, we celebrate it. Christian liturgy offers no less than a new definition of human being: anticipating the personal, universal, eternal communion with God.

Communion

The Christian vocation is personal, but it is not individual. It is a call into community. That community is, however, more than the spiritual network made up of the believers’ hearts. The Church is meant to be visible. It is the world’s light, the city on the mountain shining for all. Even if we criticise ecclesial hierarchies or a Church of stones as mere fossils of the Gospel: its spirit needs recognisable structures, material existence, a body. This visible communion is meant to give witness to the future of humanity. It is the tangible beginning of God’s Kingdom. That also means that the Church has to show to everyone what that future community will be like. Within history, that future communion has become manifest in the risen Christ. He is no longer separated from his heavenly Father; but it is recognisably Jesus. The future community represented by the

Church will not abolish difference or personality. A truly ecclesial witness has to make generously space for diversity. The body of Christ has different members. The Church's vocation is also to be sacrament of the future communion in her way of dealing with those who want see themselves as her enemies. The Church is praying for them; and she is always sent to plea for reconciliation rather than polarisations.

Pertinence

The Church makes manifest what constitutes real life, true humanity, authentic joy. She celebrates the fulfilment of human existence as a gift from God. Therefore, the Church has a strong effect on all human achievements. What we construct and organise becomes, through the witness of the Church, unmasked as preliminary, provisional, less than ideal. All human authority, especially that power which tries to legitimate and immunise itself through sacrality, is put under the only true reign that of God. The Church is offering discernment as to what is really the will of God for human decision making. One criterion for that will always be the readiness to listen: even if a decision is taken according to what one has come to understand as God's will, a readiness to adjust and revisit it in humility and spiritual docility, is a sign of God's voice being received.

Since the Church's services and celebrations follow no worldly order, she is counter-cultural. The surrounding cultures are often strongly influenced by that reality, from official ministries to the ideals and practice of charity. By showing people what they are able to do, the Church reminds humanity of its inherent weakness. She openly pins down humanity's basic problem: our tendency to affirm ourselves at the expense of others, to work for our own

pocket. We tend to curve in toward ourselves rather than generously open ourselves in a life of giving. That is, in biblical analysis, a basic human inclination. That is, in biblical language, sin. Because of this permeating tendency, any human entity is bound to be less than perfect. The Church reminds all human beings of that, by her very existence the body of Christ representing the life that has now become possible for all.

Representation

The Church is, thus, in many senses, a body of representation. It is sent to make present to its respective surroundings the presence of the risen Christ. It is not identical with Christ, because he will always challenge his Church anew to become more credibly his body. Where the Church herself seizes power, it is no longer representing Christ's Lordship but is taking it on. Then, she herself needs, in the name of the Gospel, precisely such a critical, prophetic representation of God's Kingdom: one can take part in it by acknowledging him; but one cannot take it over. Representation is also important as the offer of an official person for people to be told the liberating words of divine forgiveness - and for people to express their criticism, disappointment or pain. Especially in a mass media age, figures like the Pope are being perceived as representative of the Church, of the beginning Kingdom. Also, because of her representative structure, the Church is a symbol and is constantly using symbols. That is to say that Christians use forms of non-terminological, ambiguous, involving and evolving, open expressions; and that the witnesses are aware, in their usage of language and other signs, that the reality they are testifying to is greater than any present manifestation - and

that, still, Christ faithfully wants to be represented by this very body. Finally, representation also means that the Church is called to stand in for groups or individuals who are forgotten by majority society; she has to lend her voice to the voiceless. Think of refugees, of minorities. Representation means advocacy.

Consolation

Talk of advocacy brings us to another aspect of how the Church can inspire the world. The advocate par excellence is the Spirit, the Paraclete (cf. John 14:16.26). The Church has a paracletic mission. Paraclesis is, in fact, a key orientation for Christian life. It means, first of all, “consolation.” The Church can, by example and word, encourage people to keep up their good work patiently and wisely. Christ’s consolation is, however, no cheap belittling of suffering. It is the application of salvific authority in proclaiming the arrival of the Kingdom in a particular person’s particular life situation: “Blessed are you, when...”. Still, paraclesis has yet another meaning in Biblical language. It is the New Testament word for “exhortation.” The Church is betraying its prophetic mission where it is too shy to speak up and point out our blind spots, the shortcomings of “all human beings of good will” (as papal texts without specific faith content address their universal readership).

Transformation

Most Church work is, however, not in the news. Human beings in pastoral work are rightly seen as shepherds. In the middle of their flock, there is a helpful loneliness about them; not sad but beyond the others’ striving. A pastor is, thus, accessible for people who need to talk in discretion, to

discover in their seemingly unresolvable situations the opportunity for God to work. For many processes of healing, reconciliation and new beginning the encounter with the unselfish, simple, merciful, spiritual person has proven vital. Especially in societies oriented excessively toward efficiency, such a “different place” is salvific: the field hospital next to the battle (cf. Pope Francis’s interview to *La Civiltà Cattolica* of September 2013). Thus, real change can happen. The Church’s agenda is, however, not overestimating the efficacy of her own contribution: she is, rather, “sign and instrument” of what is ultimately God’s work (*Lumen Gentium*1). Seeing herself as ferment of transformation (cf. Matthew 13:33), she also sees what is already there as the material for God’s project: he does not want to replace humanity but to reform it. What is already there is, in Jesus’s words, to be “fulfilled.”

Evangelisation

The Church is, of course, sent to evangelise. “To evangelise is to make present to the world the Kingdom of God” (*Evangeliu Gaudium* 176). The spirit of evangelisation does not originate in a rejection of the world but in the faith perspective that sees every given situation as an occasion. The joy of the missionary disciple has been aptly christened by Karl Rahner to be *Weltfreudigkeit*: the cheerful courage to accept today’s world and the freedom to address it. Talk of evangelisation today is normally aware of the fact that the Church is no longer the only voice that claims authority in questions about value and purpose. Credible evangelisation is carried out by competent interlocutors for people in their difficult discernments and decision processes, in politics, the economy, academic reflection. An evangelisation faithful to Christ is, through adoration, celebration, communion, contributing to

the formation of human consciences; but it has no ready-made answer to all questions: that would fall into the dangers of integralism.

Reception

The mission of the Church today seems to be to inspire the world. We have in this reflection tried to explicate the dynamics of inspiration. We have already at several points come to sense that the Church is not only the agent of inspiration. The evangelising Church herself is always in need of being evangelised herself; and a Church that is offering her service will also be a Church of listening. The witnesses of Christ are themselves receiving. They are receiving from the people they work for; they are often struck by the generosity of others; the poor in particular often become their models. Many evangelisers testify that their encounters, their successes and also their failures, have purified them, made them less self-centred, more open to God's surprises.

The Church is "receiving" also in other senses. It is again and again receiving the paracletic critical encouragement - from Christ's Gospel; and it is in a constant process of receiving its own tradition. Any energetic attempt to revive old habits remains artificial. Living tradition is the experience that we are part of a growth process. Living tradition is the grateful acceptance of a long-proven wisdom. It is the experience of having inherited a home. We are to look after it, and we have to keep it open for others. After all, they might be inspired by it.