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# **The Reformation and the Laity's Role in Church's Mission Today**

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*Abstract:* The quinentennial commemoration of the Reformation as well as the fifty year anniversary of Vatican II with its emphasis on the people of God along with the centrality of mission invite the Christian community to spell out the need for focusing on the baptismal call of every Christian based on Scripture. Two key concepts of the Reformation as advocated by Luther were the spiritual authority of Scripture and the common priesthood of Christians based on baptism. The paper argues how these ideas can strengthen ecumenism and pave the way for church unity.

*Keywords:* Ecumenism, Reformation, common priesthood, mission, Martin Luther

The year 2017 is the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation that Martin Luther gave rise to. The quinentennial commemoration of the reformation movement is an invitation to revisit some of the principles that Luther emphasised and which are also basic to Christian Faith. The course of events and developments that have transpired during the past five centuries as well as the distance in time enable

one to review what Luther said with a certain equanimity but also with a view to enrich the church's life and mission today.

As Hans Kung has pointed out<sup>1</sup> the Reformation may be attributed to several persons and factors though basically it was Luther who triggered the event by his questioning of the church's granting indulgence, that is, remittance of punishment due to a dead person, in return for the money a living person gives to the church. The conflict concerning the indulgences developed into a question of spiritual authority which Luther understood in terms of the Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

The five hundred-year anniversary of the Reformation must prove to be an event strengthening ecumenism, eventually paving the way for the unity of the Church. "Commitment to ecumenism responds to the prayer of the Lord Jesus that 'they be one' (Jn 17:21)," wrote Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) (no 214). The Pope went on to say: "The credibility of the Christian message would be much greater if Christians could overcome their divisions and the Church could realize the fullness of catholicity proper to her."

In the same spirit the Pope in his address to the Ecumenical event in Malmo Arena, Sweden on 31 October 2016, remembering the 500 anniversary of the Reformation, said: "We remember this anniversary with a renewed spirit and in the recognition that Christian Unity is a priority, because we realize that much more unites us than separates us."<sup>3</sup> In this the Pope is only following one of the leading guidelines of Vatican II saying that the Church of Christ has to be unique and one (UR 1).

Charting that path of ecumenism, this paper will argue how the Catholic Church can draw inspiration from Luther to make the Church ever more missionary, especially with regard to the role of the Laity. For this, the paper will depend on Luther's

insistence on the priority of the Word of God as well as the Common priesthood of the people of God, always in the light of Vatican II.

### ***Significance of Church Unity/Ecumenism***

It is widely recognized how the world at large is changing in interactions and collaborations, tending to greater unity, despite the fissiparous tendencies fostered by narrow-minded vested interests. This has not left the Christian churches unaffected as shown by the many joint study groups and inter-ecclesial commissions to usher in greater unity among Christians. The ecumenical ideal is upheld by all churches, more so by the Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches and the Orthodox Churches.<sup>4</sup>

Christian mission has to take into account the socio-cultural context. A core element of Asian culture is harmony and interdependence. This is further compounded by the plurality of religions in Asia, in the midst of which Christians are called to render their service. The Lord of the Church reminds Christians how they are to be one so that the world may believe in them (Jn 17:21). The vexing problems that the western churches face with regard to ecumenism must be relativised in terms of the missionary priority in Asia. This missionary priority makes inter denominational confrontation obsolete and insignificant. The common Christian call to mission compels Asian Christians to make use of ecumenical opportunities to be faithful to the Christian call to witness to the Gospel. While the past cannot be changed, what the churches remember and celebrate today can affect Christian mission vitally.

No wonder, on the occasion of the commemoration of the 500 years of the Reformation the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church have taken further steps towards

reconciliation and move forward in the field of joint service to express and strengthen their commitment to seek unity. This is amply expressed in their joint study document, “From Conflict to Communion.”<sup>5</sup> It advocates how Catholics and Lutherans should witness together to the mercy of God in proclamation and service to the world. No 243 of the document reads: “Ecumenical engagement for the unity of the Church, does not serve only the Church, but also the world, so that the world may believe.”

As disciples of Jesus both the Catholics and the Lutherans have the irreplaceable duty to be best advocates of human lives, animated by the Christian faith, in a secularised world. Christians believe that the God who sent Jesus Christ is working through his Church, the community of his disciples, to confront evil and rebuild lives. The two churches are looking forward to work together in harmony and collaboration.

The commemoration is a fitting occasion to look back on the events that occurred 500 years back, putting the Gospel of Jesus Christ at the centre with the intent how this Gospel can be celebrated and communicated to the people of contemporary times, so that the world may believe how God gave God’s self to humans and calls them into communion with God in the Church. In that spirit the present paper builds on Luther’s contribution in order to make every Christian responsible in his/her vocation. This, in turn, can reinvent the ecumenical dialogue and the common journey.

As the joint commission of Catholics and Lutherans pointed out in its statement in 1983, on the occasion of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther’s birth, Christians, whether Protestants or Catholics, cannot disregard the person and message of this man.<sup>6</sup> “Luther’s reforming agenda poses a spiritual and theological challenge for both contemporary Catholics and Lutherans.”<sup>7</sup> They offer us both opportunities and obligations. This paper will emphasise the implications

of Luther's teachings for the mission of the church especially with regard to the laity.

The 2017 quincentennial of the Reformation has added significance due to the fact that it is the first ecumenical celebration of the Reformation in which Catholics also participate. Equally, it offers Catholics the opportunity to interpret their theological tradition and mission adopting and accepting Luther's influence.

It is to be acknowledged that even if initially Catholics firewalled themselves against Luther's ideas, in the long run they had their impact on the Catholic Church as well. A major area of this impact was Scripture. With his encyclical *Divino Aflante Spiritu*, Pope Pius XII opened the floodgates of the study of Scripture in the Catholic Church.

As the joint declaration *From Conflict to Communion* underlined the Reformation should be freed from the notion of separation or division in the Church. What Luther intended was reform, not division which was the result of various factors, including the institutional failure to assess the situation. Equally, it was due to the political climate of the Supreme authority of the Holy Roman Empire from which many wanted to free themselves. Nor was it a 'rediscovery of the gospel' as many of the followers of Luther traditionally claimed.<sup>8</sup>

Even if the present cannot cancel what has happened in history, the remembrance can enable Christians to recreate the past for the present. They can narrate that history in a fresh way. The many secular events like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations (1948), the growing phenomenon of secularization, the revival of world's religions as well as the mutual influence of Catholics and Protestants, more so in recent times, all invite Christians to a new era of collaboration and unity. They impel Christians to search for

what is common among them rather than what is dividing them and pursue ways of working towards overcoming the differences.

## **Centrality of Scripture**

Until John Guttenberg's (1394-1468) discovery of the printing press, the bible remained for ordinary Christians, by and large, a closed book, except for the occasional sermons and through art works. True, as pointed out earlier, there were trail-blazing minds such as that of John Wycliff and Jan Hus that attempted to popularize the bible by translating it into local languages but were met with stiff opposition. However, it is Luther's merit that he made scripture the integral part of Christian life.

Luther along with colleagues from the University of Wittenberg translated the New Testament into German and with the help of the recently introduced printing press made it easily accessible to ordinary Christians. Luther was a biblical scholar and was convinced of the power of the Word of God in his own life.<sup>9</sup>

Luther recommended for the study of the scripture a process of three steps: prayer, meditation and affliction. One should read the scripture in the presence of God, in prayer and while meditating on the words of the Scripture one must be attentive to the situations in life that often seem to contradict what is found in the scripture. Through this process scripture proves its authority by overcoming those afflictions. "Note that the struggle of the Scripture is this, that it is not changed into the one who studies it, but that it transforms one who loves it into itself and its strength."<sup>10</sup> A person not only interprets the Scripture but is also interpreted by it, which is the power and authority of Scripture.

Luther's central teaching that the bible is the core source of religion and authority opened a rising wave of interest and study of Scripture and this has continued to the present.

## **The Common Priesthood**

An associate idea of Luther, and flowing from the centrality of the Scripture, is the dignity and responsibility of every baptized person. In contrast to the prevailing medieval division of Christians into spiritual (hierarchy) and temporal (the laity), Luther insisted how all Christians are priests in the eyes of God and that they have direct access to God. In his letter to the German nobility he put forward the doctrine that all baptized Christians were priests and spiritual, dismissing the existence of two classes of believers, the spiritual and the secular.<sup>11</sup>

Luther understood the relationship of believers to Christ as a "joyful exchange, in which the believer takes part in the properties of Christ, and thus also in his priesthood."<sup>12</sup> Commenting on 1 Peter 2:9, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people," Luther insisted, "We are all consecrated priests through baptism."<sup>13</sup> Similarly, in his writing, *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520) he wrote: "In this way we are all priests, as many of us are Christians. There are indeed priests whom we call ministers."<sup>14</sup>

Luther held that all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there are no differences among them, except that of office.<sup>15</sup> "There is no true basic difference between layman and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of authority."<sup>16</sup> Commenting on 1 Corinthians 12:12, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ,"

he explained, “This applies to all of us because we have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all equally Christians. For baptism, gospel and faith alone make men (sic) religious, and create a Christian people.”<sup>17</sup>

However, Luther’s teaching on the Common Priesthood of the baptized was not at the expense of the ministerial priesthood. Thus, in article 14 of his *Augsburg Confession*, he wrote: “No one should publicly teach or administer sacraments in the church unless properly called.”<sup>18</sup> It may also be pointed out how all through his career at the University of Wittenberg there used to be ordinations for the ministerial priests.

Even if Luther made a distinction between priesthood and ministers who have an office in the Church as a preacher, the fact of sharing in Christ’s priesthood is an invitation to share in Christ’s ministry, to witness to the Gospel that Christ did all through his ministry. This is significant for the mission of the Church today which the paper will develop in the following pages.

## **Some Key Teachings of Vatican II**

As the Catholic-Lutheran joint document, “From Conflict to Communion” points out, today Catholics and Lutherans are able to narrate the story of Luther and his reformation together, overcoming traditional mutual prejudices that, in the past, frequently afflicted the interpretation of each other (no 35). In fact, some of the fresh teachings of the Second Vatican Council have their remote incubation beginning with Luther.

A major aspect of Luther’s call for reform was his invoking the importance of the bible and its role in Christian life. The bible is so fundamental to Vatican II that most of its teachings are founded on the bible, in contrast to the earlier Councils. Already in 1943 Pope Pius XII, through his encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, had liberated Catholic biblical research that



had suffered a setback due to the fear of ‘modernism’ and encouraged Catholic Scholars to use critical methods in the study of Scripture and this in turn paved the way for one of the key texts of Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.

The very opening sentence of *Dei Verbum* signals the biblical spirit that envelops the Council as well as this document specifically: “Hearing the Word of God reverently and proclaiming it confidently...” (DV 1). The bible is the narrative of salvation history in terms of the words and deeds of God, intrinsically bound together (DV 2). *Dei Verbum* made the Word of God central to the life and worship and spirituality of the Church and affirmed how the teaching authority of the Church is not above the Word of God but stands at its service (DV 10). “The force and power in the Word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life” (DV 21). Therefore, *Dei Verbum* admonishes the faithful to read Scripture through which God speaks to them (DV 25). It calls for a biblical revival in the formation of priests, in liturgy, in the Church’s mission and in every aspect of the Church’s life. In short, the document set in motion a biblical culture that underpinned the huge renewal program that the Council gave rise to.

Vatican II was a reforming Council and the greatest impact of this was felt in the very self perception of the Church as “a sacrament of God’s reign in the world (LG 8).” Its identity is to serve as a sign to the world, its vocation is to actualize and to symbolize God’s reign in its life and through this inviting the world to be transformed to this divine reign and this is done by the Church as a whole. In contrast to the previously held view of perceiving the hierarchy as the main part of the Church, Vatican II defined the Church as “the people of God” (LG 10) with different ministries. This is an acknowledgement

of the significance of every member of the Church. No wonder, in the decree on the Religious Life, the Council spoke of the “Universal Call to Holiness,” in sharp contrast to different states of perfection!

The Church as a sign, with the same call to holiness of all members, reminds all Christians how they all share in the same mission of bringing the message of the good news of God’s reign to the world. *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, rather than beginning with the Pope and the hierarchy and working downwards, in the first two chapters describes the Church as a mystery and as the people of God. The following chapters speak about the hierarchy, situating it as a service to the people of God. Further, *Lumen Gentium* (and later the Mission Decree *Ad Gentes* as well) showed how the Church, as the continuation of God’s mission to the world through Jesus Christ and God’s Spirit, is missionary by its very nature. To be involved in mission is the very purpose of its existence.

The Council, thus, was a liberating and hence, an exuberant event in the life of the Church, of the Catholic Community. The new starting point is the fresh perspective on mission, as projecting the image of the Kingdom, always inviting the world to be conformed to the Kingdom and equally significant is the description of the Church as a community, sharing in the priesthood of Christ, making every Christian responsible to witness to the Good News. The Council’s teaching “make a serious claim on the conscience of the Catholic Christian,” wrote the German theologian and Cardinal Walter Kasper.<sup>19</sup>

In as much as the Council found it appropriate to enact a decree on the laity, *Apostolicam Autuositatem*, (AA) and lay concerns were treated in many Conciliar discourses, one can qualify the Council as a ‘Council of the laity’.<sup>20</sup> The laity came a long way from the status: ‘pay, obey and pray’ or better in the words of Pope Pius X, “the one duty of the laity is to allow

themselves to be led and, like a docile flock, to follow their pastors,”<sup>21</sup> to that of being called to assume their responsibility to be actively involved in the church’s mission (LG 30, 33).

As the internationally recognized Canadian Canonist Ladislav Orsy pointed out, already in 1938 Pope Pius XI said, while addressing a group of seminarians in Rome: “The Church, the mystical body of Christ, has become a monstrosity. The head is very large but the body is shrunken. You the priests must rebuild that body of the Church and the only way in which you can rebuild it is to mobilize the lay people. You must call upon the lay people to become, along with you, the witnesses to Christ. You must call them especially to bring Christ back to the workplace, the market place.”<sup>22</sup> This prophetic words of the Pope about rebuilding the Church was initiated by Vatican II by rectifying the disproportionality of the various parts of the body of the Church. No doubt, the efforts of Catholic Religious Orders like the Dominicans, the Jesuits and others, as well as the writings of many theologians like Yves Congar, Joseph Cardijn and others,<sup>23</sup> prepared the way for Vatican II in its retrieval of the role and dignity of the laity in the Church.

As Dolores R. Lecky has shown, “By the time the Second Vatican Council was convened in the fall of 1962, the movements and organizations that had been promoting increased responsibility for the laity within the Church and those that had been exploring the new frontiers of Christian education converged in significant ways.”<sup>24</sup> For the first time the Council was attended also by laymen and women, even if only as ‘auditors’. Similarly, qualified lay persons like Patrick Keegan, President of the Catholic Workers’ Movement, addressed the Council. No wonder the Decree on the Laity stated: “Since in our time women are taking an increasingly active share in the whole life of the society, it is very important that their participation in the various sections of the church’s apostolate should likewise develop” (AA no 9).

AA no 4 while situating family life within secular concerns and as a means of holiness in the life of the laity uses the idea of vocation. The very use of the word ‘vocation’ is significant in so far as it was a word used almost exclusively to refer to the call of priests and religious. The laity are called by God to forward the reign of God in the world and in the church (AA no 4). The spirit of God is making the laity more conscious of their calling and their responsibility. The Council made it foundational that the laity share in the redemptive responsibility of the Church, participating in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Jesus Christ confirmed by the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation (AA no 2). There is a diversity of ministry in the Church to fulfil the one mission (AA no 2).

## **Laity and the Mission of the Church Today**

Vatican II’s affirmation of the vocation of the laity anchored on Baptism and Confirmation is very much scriptural. Already in the Old Testament, just before Israel is made as God’s people through the covenant (Ex 20-24), God informs the people of the very purpose of the whole process: “That you may be holy and a priestly people, and a kingly nation...” (Ex 19: 4-5). Israel is constituted as God’s people for the sake of a mission, that they may serve as light to the nations (Is 42: 6, 49:6). The role of a priest and a king is that of service to the people.

Ex 19:4-5 is almost verbatim repeated by St. Peter in his first letter to the Christian community: “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who call you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pt 2:9). The purpose of the Christian community is precisely that it may declare the wonderful deeds of God.

The missionary vocation of the Christian community is reflected in every page of the New Testament. Evangelist

Mark is very precise in his call narrative: “He called unto him whom he was wanting to call and made them twelve – created a community - to be with him and to be sent out to proclaim and to cast out demons” (3:14-15).<sup>25</sup> Though there are individual differences among the evangelists the major elements are common to all: creation of a new community, presence of the community with the Lord and mission through word and deed. It is obvious from Acts 11:19ff that the Risen Lord’s mandate to be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem and to the ends of the world (Acts 1:8) is discharged by the community as a whole. Interestingly, the very first Gentile community is the fruit not of any of the Apostles’ proclamation, but of the ordinary Christians (Acts 11:19-26).

However, the Post-Constantinean era witnessed a steady marginalization of the laity in the Church, especially with regard to their role in mission. This was aggravated also due to the changed understanding of mission. If mission in the Apostolic era was primarily a matter of sharing of an experience leading to transformation (see 1Jn 1:1-4), gradually it becomes a question of conquest, displacement and expansion, especially, during colonial days. It was executed by professional missionaries belonging to the Religious Orders, who were sent to the ‘pagan lands’ to save the souls of ‘the natives’. That missionary era began to change with Vatican II.

Luther rightly insisted on the beauty and dignity of Christian baptism. However, due to his polemic against the Roman Curia, he did not devote equal space to the duties that baptism brings to every Christian, more so the missionary character of baptism. It is to the merit of Vatican II that the Council spelt out the missionary nature of the whole Church, basing it solidly on God’s love. The greatest insight of Vatican II, I would suggest, is its declaration that God is a “fountain like love” (AG 2). The first five articles of the Mission Decree *Ad Gentes* spells out this love further in terms of God’s reaching

out to the world through God's Word Incarnate, Jesus Christ, and through God's Spirit. As the nature of love is reaching out the whole process of mission can be described as the divine dynamism of self-reaching out, beginning with creation. Thus, *Ad Gentes* goes beyond what some theologians name as *Missio Dei* (God's mission) and say how God, as self-expansive love, **is Mission**. Church is missionary by nature because God in God's being is missionary!

True, *Ad Gentes* used the traditional concept of sending. In so far as sending is more congenial to a geographical sense of mission, not to speak of its colonial hangovers, and since the contemporary context of mission is much more complex than geography, mission has to make use of the self-diffusive nature of love as reaching out. This would be more meaningful when we speak of the mission of the laity in so far as they are not sent out as the professional missionaries.

In Jesus Christ God entered human history and Jesus told his listeners how in him God's reign has come (Mk 1:15, Mt 4:17). Love and service are foundational to Divine reign. When a lawyer asked Jesus what was the basic norm of life, Jesus replied to him through the love command and outlined Christian life through the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10: 25-37). This is the good news of the Gospel. Vatican II's reform movement was precisely to take this good news to the heart of every human person, in his/her living context.<sup>26</sup> Every Christian is called to bring this good news to the neighbour through the practice of the Christian reaching out to the neighbour.

Christian living cannot be limited to certain devotional practices or the Sunday masses, but must include a genuine Christian outlook that does not shutout the neighbour. Mary's concern for the wedding host who ran out of wine must inspire any Christian. Reaching out to anyone who is in genuine need is the ultimate Christian value (Lk 10:37). The Christian

preoccupation is not so much the salvation of one's soul as much as becoming a blessing to others even as Abraham is called to be a blessing to all the families of the world (Gen 12. ). That is how the common identity of the Church as the light to the world (Mt 5:13-14) is concretized at the individual level. Only then can we appreciate the Lucan inaugural proclamation of the Lord (Lk 4:16-19).

The prophetic dimension of Christian baptism sharing in the mission of the prophet from Nazareth (Mt 21:11) must be exercised by every Christian. In a world where there is so much self-seeking and lying, the very Christian life has to become an unsettling presence, powerful enough to effect a disturbance in the hearts and minds of the onlookers. Such a missionary perspective is present in most documents of Vatican II but more so in the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*. Having said how the Church, "coming forth from the eternal Father's love, founded in time by Christ the Redeemer and made one in the Holy Spirit," article 40 of *Gaudium et Spes* goes on to say: "she serves as a leaven and a kind of soul for the human society<sup>27</sup> as it is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God's family."

All this spells out the baptismal foundation of mission rather than the priestly ordination or the religious vows, though the ordained ministers in their ministry can raise the awareness of the Christian community of its basic call to mission and to do everything possible that the community fulfils this vocation. Through their baptism Christians are 'reconfigured' (Gaillardetz) so as to have this constant habitual outlook of reaching out, even as the Good Samaritan did. The vocation of the laity for mission is not transitional or substitutional, i.e., temporary or filling a gap. It is the permanent call to make present God's other-centeredness experiential to people, and thus to become 'God with us, Emmanuel' (Mt 1:23).

## Conclusion

The 500th anniversary of the Luther-inspired reformation is an invitation to get rid of any prejudice about what Luther did and stood for. In the middle ages the concept of the reformation meant the idea of changing a bad present and retrieving the pristine purity as the Religious Orders spoke about the reformation of the order to overcome a decline in the religious spirit. The Council of Constance (1414-1418) regarded the freeform of the Church a necessity.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Luther advocated a reformation of the Church. Equally we have to be sensitive to the social and political context.

While the Council of Trent (1545-1563) dealt with the moral reformation of the Church that Luther advocated, it was equally a guarding against Luther, as far as the church teachings were concerned. Generally speaking, Luther's teachings bore fruit in Vatican II which the paper examined. The focal interest of the paper was Luther's insistence on the baptismal priesthood as the basis of the ministerial priesthood.<sup>29</sup> This was unpacked in the light of the teachings of Vatican II with regard to the missionary nature of the Church. The quincentennial of commemoration of the Reformation can release new energy and commitment to make the Church truly the sacrament of divine reign by the active involvement of every Christian.

## Notes

- 1 Hans Kung, *Christianity: The Religious Situation of Our Time*, London: Collins, 1995, 525. The humanistic revival that began during the late middle ages, to a large extent, paved the way for the reformation. People wanted to hear more enlightened sermons from the ministers. (See John Dillenberger, *Martin Luther; Selections from his Writings*, Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961, 166). Similarly, John Wycliffe (1320-1384), a century before Luther, had advocated the translation of the



Bible into English and it influenced Jan Hus (1352-1445) who, though, was burned at the stake.

- 2 Luther, in his struggle, sought the help of the Nobility of Germany, as he felt powerless before the well-entrenched institutional power of the church of the time. Luther was convinced of the need for a General Council to discuss and usher in reform, especially with regard to the spiritual authority that the Church claimed to have, namely, to change divine will regarding a person who is in purgatory to be taken out by a substitutionary order of the Church in the form of a total indulgence which one could win for oneself or for one in purgatory, by paying money for the construction of the basilica of St. Peter.
- 3 See [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20161031\\_svezia-evento-ecumenico.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161031_svezia-evento-ecumenico.html) (accessed on 20/01/2017).
- 4 See the Declaration on Ecumenism (Unitatis Redintegratio) of Vatican II. The Church: Towards a Common Vision, (Faith and Order Paper 214, WCC).
- 5 From Conflict to Communion. Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017. [www.bonifatius.de](http://www.bonifatius.de).
- 6 From Conflict to Communion, no 2.
- 7 From Conflict to Communion, no 3.
- 8 As mentioned in foot note 1, persons like John Wicliffe and Jan Hus had already advocated the need for translating the bible into the languages of the people and the place of the bible in the lives of the faithful.
- 9 Cf. Ronald D. Witterup, *Rediscovering Vatican II: Scripture*, New York: Paulist Press, 2006, 5.
- 10 Luther, *First Lecture on the Psalms*, in Herbert J.A. Bouman, *Luther's Writings*, WA 3, 397, 9-11, quoted in Conflict and Communion, no.197.
- 11 See *An Appeal to the Ruling Class*, in *Reformation Writings of Martin Luther*, Bertran Lees Woolf (ed), Library of Ecclesiastical History, 1952, 114.

- 12 See From Conflict to Communion, no 162.
- 13 Letter to the Christian Nobility, in *Weinmar Gusgabe* 6, p.407. See Conflict and Communion, foot note no 3.
- 14 Ibid. I may add that this idea is foreshadowed already in the Old Testament when God reminds the people just before the making of the Covenant that they are to be a holy priestly and kingly people at the service of God (Ex 19: 6-7).
- 15 See Helmut T Lehmann (ed), *Luther's Works*, Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1970, 5.
- 16 Lehmann, 14.
- 17 Bertran Lees Woolf (ed), "An Appeal to the Ruling Class," in *Reformation Writings of Martin Luther*, 113.
- 18 Timothy J Wengert, *Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops: Public Ministry for the Reformation and Today*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008, v.
- 19 Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church*, London: SCM Press, 1989, 9.
- 20 Dolores R. Lecky, *The Laity and Christian Education*, New York: Paulist Press, 2006, 1.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ladislav Orsy, *Receiving the Council*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009, 36, quoted by Neil Ormerod, "The Laity in the Australian Church," in N. Ormerod *et al.*(eds), *Vatican II: Reception and Implementation in the Australian Church*, Mulgrave, Vic: Garratt Pub., 2012, 62.
- 23 The late Cardinal Valerian Gracias of Bombay made a presentation at the World Congress for the Lay Apostolate in 1951, advocating a theology of the laity who shared responsibility for the Church's mission. Others like Cardinal Newman, Cardinal Suhard, G.K. Chesterton, Frank Sheed, Maisie Ward *et al.*, had their formative impact on the Council.
- 24 Dolores Lecky, *The Laity and Christian Education*, 11.
- 25 This is my translation of the original Greek text.

- 26 The Pastoral Constitution of the Church, *Gaudium et Spes*, which deals with this service to the world, begins with the words: “The joys, the agonies and the aspirations of the world are our joys, our agonies and our aspirations...” (GS 1).
- 27 *Letter to Diognetus*, an early Church document taught how Christians were to serve the world as soul did to the body (n 6).
- 28 Session 3, 26 March 1415.
- 29 “Appeal to the Ruling Class,” in Bertran Lee Woolf, *Reformation Writings of Martin Luther*, Library of Ecclesiastical History, 1952, 114.

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