The Eucharist and Ecclesial Communion

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Abstract: This paper examines chapter four of the encyclical letter Ecclesia de Eucharistia. In particular, Roman Catholic teaching on intercommunion with its impact on ecumenical relations between Roman Catholic and other churches is outlined. While not presenting solutions to the problems involved, the paper explores some of the limits to Eucharistic sharing. It is argued that the encyclical introduces new limits in terms of communion with the hierarchical order of the Roman Catholic Church. The impact of these limits and what may be regarded as Church-dividing issues with respect to Church order are explored. Some consideration is given to the broader application of principles for intercommunion provided by Roman Catholic canon law. Questions arise. Can an extension of these principles be applied to isolated ecclesial communities as well as to individual Christians? What might be the impact of the extension of such principles on inter-ecclesial communion?

Key Words: Ecclesia de Eucharistia; Eucharist; intercommunion; ecumenism; ecclesial communion; ecclesial division; Unitatis Redintegratio

The encyclical letter Ecclesia de Eucharistia\(^1\) affirms the central place of the Eucharist in the life of the Church and elaborates elements of Catholic belief about the Eucharist. In discussing the relationship of Eucharist to koinonia/communion there are elements that require some careful consideration in the light of Catholic understanding of ecumenism and communion since the Second Vatican Council. Chapter Four of the letter entitled, The Eucharist and Ecclesial Communion, raises questions about some aspects of the Church and communion in terms of the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to other Christian communities. This paper will consider the ecumenical implication of this section of the encyclical.

Chapter four commences with the affirmation of the central place of the ecclesiology of communion in the documents of the Second Vatican Council.\(^2\) The same paragraph notes that because the Eucharist is the culmination of the sacraments and perfects our communion with God it is fitting to refer to the sacrament of Eucharist as communion. It seems a little curious that the document refers next to “spiritual communion”. Spiritual communion is defined as the constant desire in our hearts for the sacrament of the Eucharist, a desire which is so efficacious that if a person is unable to attend Mass or receive the Eucharist it can have benefits for the individual. Through the “spiritual communion” the love of God may transform us. Spiritual communion is not to be substituted for the normal means of receiving communion in Mass, where such normal means are available. The concept is not curious in itself, although its precise meaning may require further elaboration in another context. It seems curious because of the location of

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\(^2\) John Paul II, Ecclesia de Eucharistia, §34.
the concept of spiritual communion within the structure of the document. Chapter three deals principally with the role of the priest as presider at the Eucharist and the relationship of priest to the rest of God's people. Chapter four deals essentially with the ecclesial dimension of communion in its ecumenical aspects. An impression could be formed that the introduction of spiritual communion is offered as an alternative to real communion for the Churches separated from Rome. Some consideration of this proposition will be presented later.

In the following paragraph the letter states, “The celebration of the Eucharist, however, cannot be the starting point for communion; it presupposes that communion already exists, a communion which it seeks to consolidate and bring to perfection.” Ecumenical conversations between the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian communities has recognised that communion is not a black and white matter. Ecumenical conversation since the Second Vatican Council has been based on the premise that some communion already exists between the Roman Catholic Church and what it calls churches and ecclesial communities. An assumption, which predicates the current ecumenical scene, is that we have between us (Christian communities) an imperfect communion, not a total lack of communion. Ecumenical conversations presuppose some communion already exists and it seeks to consolidate this and bring it to perfection. Questions then emerge as to how much communion or what quality this communion should possess before shared Eucharist is possible between the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian communities.

The letter seeks to qualify the meaning of communion by introducing the concepts of invisible and visible dimensions of communion. Invisible communion is the communion of believers with the Father and among them that is affected through the Son in the Holy Spirit. The visible dimension of communion is expressed in three aspects; communion in the teaching of the Apostles, communion in the sacraments and communion in the hierarchical order of the Church. Invisible communion is available to all the Baptised and would constitute part of the communion that the Roman Catholic Church would teach is already shared among all Christian communities. In fact baptism already admits a member of any church into “some, though imperfect communion with the Catholic Church.” When we consider the visible dimension of communion greater diversity exists among Christian communities. It is true, as the document claims, that there is a profound relationship between the visible and invisible dimensions of communion. The nature of that relationship needs to be examined to evaluate how churches are related to one another through these dimensions. The three aspects of the visible dimension can be subjected to additional investigation.

**Foundations of Communion**

All communities that accept the Word of God in the Sacred Scripture and profess the Creeds of Nicea and Chalcedon, or at least agree with their contents could be said to share in the apostolic teaching. There is no requirement that each church expresses the apostolic teaching in the same words of formulas for communion to be said to exist. Some

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3 John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, §35.
6 Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, §3.
divergence exists about elements of the Creed and other statements of faith that are recognised by a variety of Churches. I do not wish to minimise the fact of doctrinal differences between Christians, substantive issues remain to be clarified between Churches. Clarification about precisely which aspects of doctrine remain areas of disagreement and which of these areas of disagreement remain church dividing, is a process that needs to continue. Ecumenical conversations since the Second Vatican Council has at least revealed that there is much more agreement about the content of our shared apostolic faith now, than there was forty years ago. Divergence of expression of doctrine is not necessarily church dividing. The Roman Catholic Church accepts that legitimate diversity can exist within the theological elaboration of revealed truths. An example of the application of this principle would be the agreement reached between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church about Christological definitions. Each of the Churches has been able to recognise that they shared the same faith in Jesus although each had formulated their definition in quite different terms.

Sacramental understanding and agreement between Christian communities about sacraments remain significant issues to be resolved. Baptism is regarded as a shared heritage among Christians and Eucharist in some form; Roman Catholic Mass, Orthodox Divine Liturgy, or Lord’s Supper celebrated in many Churches of the Reformed tradition, is at least seen as a minimum for agreement about sacraments. Significant issues remain as regards the number, liturgical form and theological understanding of sacraments. Diversity is recognised as legitimate in this sphere as for doctrinal issues, *Unitatis Redintegratio* acknowledges that legitimate variety may exist as to discipline and liturgical practice. The same document outlines the rich liturgical heritage of the Eastern churches acknowledging the diversity that exists between the rites and communities of this tradition and concludes that worship in common (communicatio in sacris) is not only desirable but is to be encouraged. Sacramental theology and liturgical practice of the Eastern Churches while being different to that of the Roman Catholic Church are more closely aligned with it than that of the theology or practice of Churches that have their origins in the Reformation. To the extent that greater affinity exists between the Roman Catholic Church and those of the East, communicatio in sacris is viewed as being more possible between these Churches. Indeed, within the twenty-one rites of the Roman Catholic Church there exist Churches, which share the same sacramental and liturgical heritage as the Eastern Churches not in communion with Rome. A lack of ecclesiastical communion prevails between the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental and Orthodox Churches of the East and this remains as an obstacle to realisation of any practice of communicatio in sacris, with the exception of particular instances of pastoral application of reception of Eucharist by individual Orthodox or Roman Catholic Christians.

Some progress has been made in the various bilateral dialogues between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformation Churches about sacraments and although much of this has been positive it has not probably reached a point of agreement that would mirror

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7 World Council of Churches, *Towards a Common Confession of Faith.*
9 *Common Agreement between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.* In this definition each Church has acknowledge the validity of the others formulation. The Catholic Church had previously rejected the Coptic Christological formula regarding it as Monophysite.
10 Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, §4
11 Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, §§14-15
12 Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, §17
that which exists between Roman Catholics and Orthodox and Oriental Christians. Applying the principle of not complete agreement but substantial agreement it is worth taking stock of what agreement has been reached and what remains that is church dividing. Again, without minimising real differences, consideration should be given to what are essential elements of sacraments and sacramentality necessary for preserving unity. How much diversity of sacramental theology and practice can be tolerated and still facilitate genuine communion among Roman Catholics and their dialogue partners? Roman Catholicism has repudiated any “return to Rome” approach to ecumenical dialogue and so it must consider the limits of acceptable diversity in a unified Church.

Communion in the hierarchical order of the Church is presented as the third element of the visible dimension of communion. The precise meaning and origin of this element is not clear. Communion in the hierarchical order of the Roman Catholic Church is not explicitly presented in *Unitatis Redintegratio* as one of the elements required for full communion with that church. Perhaps the encyclical is drawing together the separate statements from *Unitatis Redintegratio* that the Churches of the East have maintained the Eucharist and priesthood through apostolic succession and the statement that churches that separated from the Latin Rite or Western Church have not preserved the sacrament of orders, to create a new statement about the hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church.¹³ The requirement for communion with the hierarchical order as a precondition for full communion seems to be a novel requirement that first found expression in the letter to Roman Catholic bishops from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; *Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*. Although this document was intended to clarify aspects of an ecclesiology of communion, it introduced a number of elements that were not part of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and it tended to stress the priority of the Universal Church over the local. The letter stated, rather than argued that the Universal Church had ontological priority over the local church in such a way that could be seen to suggest that the fullness of the Roman Catholic Church was lacking in the local community. If that is the position of the Congregation’s letter, it is a contradiction of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that in the particular or local church “the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of Christ is truly present and active.”¹⁴

What is the precise meaning of the term "communion in" when applied to the hierarchical order? Is it necessary for all of the churches to have a common expression of Church order? If so then the standard that is proposed is too high and not consistent with doctrinal agreements that have accepted between the Roman Catholic Church and other churches when the language of doctrinal formulas is quite different. Some room for legitimate diversity must exist with communion in the Churches hierarchical order. The Statement of the World Council of Churches: *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* recognises that the three-fold order of deacon, presbyter and episcopate, are located in essence in the Scriptures and underwent development in later centuries.¹⁵ All Churches were urged to examine their own ministerial order to consider the full and complementary development of the threefold ministry in their community.¹⁶ There is a desire on the part of the

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Churches that have accepted the Statement to participate in the communion of the hierarchical order of the church.

*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* quotes from the Congregation’s letter on communion when it states that a profound link exists between the invisible and visible elements of ecclesial communion.\(^{17}\) From a Roman Catholic perspective, it is a deeply held belief that the invisible communion of believers is identified with a historical and visible Church. To that extent, the profound link between the invisible and visible elements is constitutive of the Church. However this is not to say that the particular historical expression of any of the visible elements is constitutive for the communion of the Church. For example, the role of the Bishop of Rome in the life of the Roman Catholic Church has undergone profound change and development over the past two millennia. The Bishop of Rome functions in the Roman Catholic Church in today, in ways that would be scarcely recognisable to Christians of the third, six or nineteenth century. John Paul II is acutely aware of the need for dialogue on the role of the Bishop of Rome in any unified Church and invited churches to enter into a dialogue with him about claims to papal primacy and other issues surrounding the office of Bishop of Rome.\(^{18}\) The invitation to discuss the role of the Bishop of Rome, in itself is an acknowledgement that participation in the Church’s hierarchical order requires some definition.

A useful distinction can be made between constitution and institution of the Church as a sacrament of salvation, following on from ideas developed by the Orthodox theologian Zizioulas.\(^{19}\) Zizioulas argues that institution is a static concept that is related to the initial formation of the Christian community, it is about beginnings. Applying this concept, the threefold order of the Church can be located in the foundation documents of the community, the Scriptures, and so form part of the way that the Church has been instituted by Christ as a community. Constitution is a dynamic concept whereby the Holy Spirit gives life to the Church and constitutes it anew in every generation. The Holy Spirit is able to speak to the Churches and the community can faithfully listen and discern responses in concrete historical experience. In this dynamic process, the visible elements of the communion of the Church may grow and change in ways that can be authenticated by the sensus fidei. It is through being faithful to the voice of the Holy Spirit that the Church is able to clarify and reformulate the language of doctrinal and dogmatic expressions, develop sacramental theology and practice and modify the actualisation of ministerial practice and church order. The faithfulness of the Church to the voice of the Holy Spirit also allows the church to discern the hierarchy of truths, to determine which expressions of the visible elements of communion are essential and which may be the subject of legitimate diversity.\(^{20}\) In this way the church is able to maintain those elements that are constitutive for unity and accept legitimate diversity of expression of the elements.

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\(^{17}\) John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, §35; *Some Aspects of the Church as Communion*, §4.


\(^{19}\) John Zizioulas, *Communion as Being*.

\(^{20}\) Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio* §11 speaks of a hierarchy of truths since they vary in relation to the foundations of the Christian faith. §4 speaks of essential and legitimate diversity, and refers to several of the visible elements of communion.
Eucharist and Communion

_Ecclesia de Eucharistia_ restates the Roman Catholic tradition that “it is an intrinsic requirement of the Eucharist that it should be celebrated in communion...”\(^{21}\) The present pastoral practice of the Roman Catholic Church does permit intercommunion under clearly defined circumstance at the level of individual believers but not whole communities.\(^{22}\) The Roman Catholic position is that the full participation in the Eucharistic requires that communion already exists between the Churches. Individual priests taking unilateral decisions to participate in intercommunion, as happened recently in Germany, is potentially divisive within the Catholic community and hence seems to run counter to the spirit of genuine community and communion.\(^{23}\) Progress in ecumenical dialogues, improved understanding of an ecclesiology of communion and charity suggest that we need to reassess our practice in relation to intercommunion and Eucharistic hospitality. If we examine the issue of communion more closely perhaps there are times when intercommunion may help to “consolidate and bring to perfection” the communion that already exists between the Roman Catholic Church and other churches. Such reassessment may require that Roman Catholics continue with the current practice as the best means to express the desire for full communion, the pain of separation from eucharistic communion may be the experience that makes separation seem real to all Christians. Reassessment may open a range of possibilities.

Valid Eucharist requires communion with “Peter and with the whole church, or objectively calls for it, as in the case of Christian Churches separated from Rome.”\(^{24}\) The source for this quote is the letter on ecclesiology of communion from the CDF and that letter in turn refers to LG 8b. The terms the CDF used are not explicitly found in LG 8b and seem to represent a stronger statement than may have been intended by the Second Vatican Council. The Council states that “this sole Church of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic...subsists in the Catholic Church which is governed by the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him.”\(^{25}\) Subsist is taken to mean, in its common sense, to continue in. The statement does not mean that the Catholic Church is exclusively identified as the Church of Christ. In fact the same paragraph goes on to state “many elements of sanctification and truth are found outside its (Roman Catholic Church) visible confines.” The re-ordering of the words of LG 14 in _Ecclesia de Eucharistia_ 38 have the impact of creating a slightly stronger statement than seems to be intended in the Second Vatican Council. _Ecclesia de Eucharistia_ seems to suggest that through the visible framework of the Roman Catholic Church a person is united with Christ and the Church established by him, rather than being united with Christ on the basis of common Baptism and faith. Such a statement could not be supported from the teaching of the Second Vatican Council in various places in _Lumen Gentium_ and _Unitatis Redintegratio_. Certainly the meaning of the statements requires some further elucidation.

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21 John Paul II, _Ecclesia de Eucharistia_, §35.
23 The Tablet, 14 June 2003 (internet version). While not restricting the freedom of conscience of individuals in the Catholic Church, the position of clergy in a public setting can take on a different meaning than that which may have been intended in good faith. The response of the local bishop may not have been helpful for the unity and communion of the local church either. It is not my intention to debate the relative merits of this particular case.
24 John Paul II, _Ecclesia de Eucharistia_, §39.
25 Vatican II, _Lumen Gentium_, §8b.
Perhaps the differences between the encyclical and Lumen Gentium are due to variations in translation?

Qualification may be required of the statement "...it is not possible to celebrate together the same Eucharistic liturgy until those bonds (profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical governance) are fully re-established." Without a point blank challenge to the concept that shared Eucharist requires ecclesial communion legitimate qualifications can be suggested to clarify the limits that may be imposed on shared Eucharist. If we take shared Eucharistic liturgy to be the equivalent of communicatio in sacris, then we would need to distinguish between the Churches of the East and West. Unitatis redintegratio encourages communicatio in sacris with the Eastern Churches separated from Rome because of the “closest intimacy they have with the Roman Catholic Church” and because they possess “true sacraments, apostolic succession, the priesthood and Eucharist.” Such encouragement of communicatio in sacris is limited by suitable circumstances and the approval of Church authority. Perhaps the identification of the two is not warranted and what the Council intended by communio in sacris is not the equivalent of shared Eucharist. Still the encouragement of worship in common is significant because the element that is missing from the list of elements possessed by the Eastern Churches is visible communion with the Bishop of Rome. Would the encouragement of Eucharistic sharing between communities of Eastern Churches and the Roman Catholic Church work toward consolidation of and perfecting the communion that exists between these communities or would it be peremptory?

With regard to the Churches of the West, a great deal of progress has been made on significant elements of ecumenical discussion. Churches have a clearer understanding of apostolic succession, moving away from a notion of an unbroken historical chain between a particular apostle and a historical bishop and his diocese. A nuanced understanding of apostolic succession has emerged that has allowed Churches to recognise in each other the same apostolic patrimony expressed in different ways and transmitted through the ages by different means. Careful study of the historical episcopate has uncovered a broader understanding of the ministry of episcopate and forms that this has taken in a variety of Churches. The agreed statement Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry has challenged churches with and without the historic episcopate to examine the modes of expression of this vital ministry in the life of the Church. Agreement on Eucharist and the role of the Bishop of Rome seem to create the greatest difficulty for the bilateral dialogues between the Roman Catholic Church and other Churches of the West, although other significant issues continue to divide these Christian communities.

Ecclesial Realities and Ecclesial Communion

In the abstract is seems relatively easy to draw clear distinctions between the full communion that Ecclesia de Eucharistia presents and the possibilities for intercommunion. The tradition of the Catholic Church is to make a pastoral application of the broad principles. Canon law makes provision for non-Catholics to receive communion in a Catholic liturgy under certain conditions and cases of need, provided that the communicant is properly disposed. The principle is intended to be applied at the level of individual conscience and in response to personal necessity. This could be said to be a

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26 John Paul II, Ecclesia de Eucharistia, §44.
27 Vatican II, Unitatis Redintegratio, §15.
28 Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry, §46.
second principle regarding intercommunion that takes cognisance of the realities of the lives of individual Christians.

The law as it is written does not take into account the full dimension of ecclesial realities. A question that could be considered is what the principle behind the canons can contribute to consideration of ecclesial communities that do not have access to Eucharist through their own communities? There are two ecclesial realities that could be considered in the broader application of the canons on intercommunion. The first case is that of places where Christians are extremely few in number and from a variety of Churches, in a country largely dominated by another religious tradition, such as Hinduism or Islam. The second case is that of isolated Christian communities such as in remote parts of Australia where clergy from the various traditions may only visit their communities several times a year. These are ecclesial realities because the situations refer to difficulties faced by entire communities not only a few individuals.

In the first case the degree of communion shared between the Christians of the various traditions is far greater than the degree of communion shared with their fellow citizens. They profess faith in the Lord Jesus, baptism, celebration of the Word and Sacrament. In addition they may share the bonds of charity between themselves and in common or separate action for the service of their fellow citizen through works of charity and justice. Collectively this minority of Christians represents the Church of Christ to the people of their region. If some of these communities were unable to celebrate the Eucharist regularly in their own Churches could the pastoral principles behind the canons on intercommunion provide for the normal extension of Eucharistic hospitality between the communities? If in one month a Catholic priest celebrated Eucharist and another month a Baptist pastor celebrated the Lord’s Supper, would there be greater witness to the bonds of communion to the rest of the population then if each community kept to itself? Notwithstanding the real differences that exist between Christians, and in particular Eucharistic theology and practice, all Eucharist’s share elements of belief that are acceptable to Catholics. While some churches may emphasise historical remembrance and others more of the sacramental dimensions of presence and communion, each one is at a minimum a belief that Catholic do have about Eucharist. The coming together for worship in this situation may have produce three benefits for the local Churches. First would be the benefit of common witness to faith in Jesus to the wider community. Second would be a witness to each of the Christian communities that they share some communion with each other now. Finally, if the situation is handled sensitively, it would also remind the communities that they do not share full communion since their own separate identity as ecclesial communities remain. This separation would be maintained by the celebration of liturgies that are from a particular tradition and presided over by a particular minister, not a common or agreed liturgical format that reduces all differences. Reflection on the reality of separation may in fact be an impetus to dialogue toward understanding why they are separated and encourage joint works for charity and justice.

The second ecclesial reality, remote communities, is a common experience in Australia and may be common in other countries where distances are vast. In remote Australian centres clergy may visit a town on a kind of circuit tour. The minister may visit communities and lead worship services in each centre in her/his circuit less than once each month. If we were to imagine a town of 500 inhabitants with 100 Christians representing Lutheran, Presbyterian, Uniting Church and Catholic Christians in varying proportion. Each of the Churches may or may not have a circuit minister. The communion that exists between them is greater than the communion that exists between the non-
Christian or non-Church attending Christians. In a manner similar to that outlined in scenario one above, would there be greater benefit to the communion and life of the Church if the Churches that had a circuit minister rationalised their ministry. Each of the Churches could call together the others when Eucharist is available and worship together.

The objection to a broader application of the principle of intercommunion contained in the canons may be that there is a risk of indifferentism. This risk may present itself as an equation between common worship of communities that in reality are separated and a belief that such differences do not matter. There are two counters to this argument. The first is that by maintaining the liturgical form of the host community the reality of difference, the reality that we still have a way to travel toward full communion, is presented each time the communities gather. The second counter is that Eucharist also has a role in building up community, the communion of the body of Christ. Catholics acknowledge the role of the Eucharist in deepening communion among the assembled faithful, with their Bishop and with the worldwide communion of the Church. Through communion with the Father in Jesus the assembly becomes conscious of its communion with the whole human community, so “that nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their heart.”

Courage, good pastoral planning, charity and a desire to witness to the communion of the Church would be required to implement the broader application of the intercommunion proposal outlined above. Being open to the questions involved in such a proposal would in itself be a sign of openness to communion. To move toward implementing such a proposal may be one means to focus attention of Christians on the reality of the communion that exists between them. It is not a full communion, it is not a perfect communion but it is a communion.

**Conclusion**

*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* is a timely reminder that the Churches committed to full communion seek to share in the one bread and the one cup. Roman Catholics for their part believe that the time for such sharing between them and other Churches has not yet arrived. There is a desire on the part of Catholics to work toward a time when full Eucharistic sharing will be possible, as this letter makes clear. The Church believes that bonds of communion need to be fully re-established as a precondition for Eucharistic sharing. The time has come for a re-assessment of how much progress Churches have made toward full communion, recalling that partial communion already exists. Perhaps it is time for some dreaming too, about what shape full communion could take. For example, is it essential that every Church be in communion with the Bishop of Rome in the same way? Is the way that communion with the Bishop of Rome is expressed one of those matters for which legitimate diversity is possible and even required. Sometimes Roman Catholic scholars and official documents have expressed the desire to re-establish the full communion that existed between the Eastern Churches and the West as it was in the first millennia.

Recent studies, such as those by Klaus Schatz, have revealed that there was no one model that could be defined as the model for communion between these Churches in the first millennia. Indeed Schatz has provided us with a sense that communion between the

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30 Klaus Schatz, *Papal Primacy: From Its Origins to the Present* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996). This study presents a very dynamic view of the relationship of the See of Rome to the Churches of East and West.
Churches of the West, even before the Western Schisms of the sixteenth century, reveals a
great deal of diversity. Churches such as North Africa and Spain retained a considerable
degree of autonomy over doctrinal, liturgical and juridical matters throughout a large part
of the first millennia. Each church retained the confidence to disagree with the Bishop of
Rome and to challenge him about aspects of doctrine and church discipline, and the
confidence to settle matters of doctrine in their own name. Schatz’ study gives Churches
today the confidence that the particular relationship that the Latin Rite Churches have
with the Bishop of Rome, as expressed in canon law and custom, is also one historically
conditioned relationship that may be subject to change. Communion with the Bishop of
Rome does not necessarily require adoption of structures familiar to the Latin Rite of the
Roman Catholic Church. Hopefully *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* will refocus ecumenical
questions and encourage all Churches to consider more deeply the link between
eucharistic communion and ecclesial communion.

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