The Bride of Christ

A Metaphor for the Church

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Norbert Schnell Breda, 20 August 2020

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Abbreviations

- *Bible Texts*
- *Bible Versions*
- *Church Documents*
- *Primary Sources*
- *Secondary Sources*
- *Technical Abbreviations*

Bible texts:

Gn	Genesis	Mt	The Gospel according to Matthew
Ex	Exodus	Mk	The Gospel according to Mark
Lv	Leviticus	Lk	The Gospel according to Luke
Dt	Deuteronomy	Jn	The Gospel according to John
Nb	Numbers	Ac	Acts of the Apostles
Jos	The Book of Joshua	Rm	Romans
Jg	The Book of Judges	1 Co	1 Corinthians
Rt	The Book of Ruth	2 Co	2 Corinthians
S	The Books of Samuel	Ga	Galatians
K	The Books of Kings	Ep	Ephesians
Ch	The Books of Chronicles	Ph	Philippians
Ezr	The Book of Ezra	Col	Colossians
Ne	The Book of Nehemiah	1 Th	1 Thessalonians
Tb	Tobit	2 Th	2 Thessalonians
Est	Esther	1 Tm	1 Timothy
M	Maccabees	Tt	Titus
Jb	Job	Heb	Hebrews
Ps	The Psalms	Jm	James
Pr	The Proverbs	1 P	1 Peter
Sg	The Song of Songs	2 P	2 Peter
Wi	The Book of Wisdom	1 Jn	1 John
Si	Ecclesiasticus / Ben Sira	2 Jn	2 John
Is	Isaiah	3 Jn	3 John
Jr	Jeremiah	Rv	Revelation to John
Ba	Baruch		
Ezk	Ezekiel		
Dn	Daniel		
Hos	Hosea		

Jl	Joel
Mi	Micah
Zp	Zephaniah
Zc	Zechariah
Ml	Malachi

Bible versions:

AB	The Anchor Yale Bible
KJB	King James Bible
LXX	Septuagint
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NJB	The New Jerusalem Bible

Church documents:

AAS	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
AL	Amoris Laetitia
ASS	Acta Sanctae Sedis
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CIC	Codex Iuris Canonici
CN	Communionis notio
DC	Deus Caritas est
DV	Dei Verbum
EG	Evangelii Gaudium
GS	Gaudium et spes
LG	Lumen Gentium
MC	Mystici Corporis
MD	Mulieris Dignitatem
SacrCar	Sacramentum Caritatis
SC	Sacrosanctum Concilium

Primary sources:

En. Ps.	*Enarrationes in Psalmos*
Epist.	*Epistula*
Io. eu. tr.	*In Johannis euangelium tractus CXXIV*
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers

Secondary sources:

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
AM	*Psychol American Psychologist*
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ARS	*Annual Review of Sociology*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
Bib	*Biblica*
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BRLJ	Brill Reference Library of Judaism
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BThZ	*Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift*
BTS	Biblical Tools and Studies
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CH	*Church History*
DH	Denzinger-Hünermann; *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, Latin-German edition
EBib	Études Bibliques
EdF	Erträge der Forschung
EKKNT	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EncJud	Encyclopaedia Judaica
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
EWNT	Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament. 3 vols.
FC	Fontes Christiani
FaCh	Fathers of the Church
HDG	Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte
Hermeneia	A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible
Hor	*Horizons*
HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HThKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HThK-ZVK	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ICEL	International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation

ITQ	*Irish Theological Quarterly*
JLW	*Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JoP	*Journal of Pragmatics*
JRGS	Joseph Ratzinger Gesammelte Schriften
JSNTSup	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Serie*
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KathDoc	*Katholieke Documentatie*
KD	Katholische Dogmatik
KEK	Meyers Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
KKD	Kleine Katholische Dogmatik
LHB-OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies
LThK	*Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*. 11 vols. Special edition 2009.
MH	*Museum Helveticum*
MySal	Mysterium Salutis
MTZ	*Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift*
NAC	The New American Commentary
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NCE	The New Catholic Encyclopedia
NEB	Die Neue Echter Bibel
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NLchM	Neus Lexikon der christlichen Moral
NSK-AT	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar Altes Testament
NTAbh NF	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen: Neue Folge
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
Pspy	*Pastoral Pschology*
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
SBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
SChr	Sources Chrétiennes
STAC	Standorte in Antike und Christentum
Str-B	Strack, H. L., and P. Billerbeck. *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*. 6 vols.
StZ	*Stimmen der Zeit*
THAT	*Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*. 2 vols.
ThR	*Theologische Rundschau*
ThKNT	Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament

ThP Sup	Theologische Perspektiven Supplement Series
ThWAT	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*. 8 vols.
TS	*Theological Studies*
TrSt	*Translation Studies*
TThS	Tilburg Theological Studies
TTZ	*Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift*
TvL	*Tijdschrift voor Liturgie*
TWNT	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. 10 vols.
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UnSa	Unam sanctam
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WBG	Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZBK AT	Zürcher Bibelkommentare Altes Testament
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*
ZThK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

Technical abbreviations:

A.D.	anno Domini
B.C.	before Christ
cf.	*confer*, compare
ed(s).	editor(s) or edition
e.g.	*exempli gratia*, for example
et. al.	*et alii*, and others
ibid.	*ibidem*, in the same place
i.e.	*id est*, that is
no.	number
n.p.	no page
MT	Masoretic Text
NTL	Neural Theory of Language
par.	parallel
SL	Source language
TL	Target language
vs.	versus
v./vv.	verse/verses
vol(s).	volume(s)

Introduction

For several decades now, the Roman Catholic Church in Western Europe has been undergoing a transition. This transition is sometimes characterised by the slogan 'from a broad mass church to a small minority church'. The transition is visible particularly in such things as a steady decline in Mass attendance, the ageing of Sunday congregations, the fall-off in celebrations of the sacraments, the closing of church buildings and the Church's reduced presence in public debates on ethical issues. Some among the faithful regard these occurrences, which concern mainly the visible aspects and thus the development of the institute, as a loss, and they see few positive developments to compensate for them. Others view this development as an opportunity to 'be Church' in a different and new way, one that bears new significance for the current time. This study is meant to contribute to the latter view: to provide a different and new perspective on what it is to be the Church, an alternative to the institutional view that is currently predominant. The angle that I have chosen for this study in Catholic ecclesiology is both biblical and systematic-theological.

Lumen gentium, the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, uses various images to speak about the Church. The first image that *Lumen gentium* uses is that of a countenance that reflects the light of Christ by proclaiming the Gospel to every creature (LG 1). A full chapter in *Lumen gentium* is dedicated to the Church as the People of God (LG 9-17). This chapter also calls the Church the Body of Christ (LG 17, and, before that, in LG 7) and the Temple of the Holy Spirit (LG 17). The Church as a hierarchical institution is discussed in a separate part (LG 18-29). LG 6 lists a whole range of biblical images of the Church. Lumen gentium speaks of the Church successively as a sheepfold, a piece of land to be cultivated, a building, a household, a temple, the Jerusalem which is above, our mother, and finally "the spotless spouse of the spotless Lamb (Rv 19:7; 21:2.9; 22:17)."

As is evident from the title of this study, this dissertation is about the Church as the Bride of Christ. Unlike the great images of the Church as the People of God and the Body of Christ, the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ has never been extensively examined since the Second Vatican Council. The current research is a biblical and systematic-theological study of this image. Its main question is what this metaphor can tell us about the essence of the Church, and what its consequences are for the life of the Church.

The study consists of three parts. The first chapter begins with a description of modern metaphor theory and metaphorical concepts. It focuses on the theory of metaphor that George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) developed and that Lakoff (1993) later partially revised and elaborated further. A number of concepts will be clarified: What is a metaphor and what is a metaphorical concept? How do metaphors function within the various cultures and religions? We will also discuss the fact that metaphors never coincide fully with the reality they describe. In this sense, every metaphor is partial in nature. We will look at the danger of conceptual blindness, which is likely to arise when the partial nature of metaphors is obscured. Finally, we will also address the way metaphors function within systematic theology and examine how metaphors are interpreted in the life of the Church (chapter 1.).

Once the methodological foundations have been laid in the first chapter, metaphor theory can then be applied to the metaphor of the Church as the Bride of Christ. Chapter two will first consider the role that metaphors play in the Bible (chapter 2.1.). Then we will investigate the bride metaphor at length as it appears both in the Old and in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the bride metaphor occurs primarily in the prophetic writings, where it expresses the relationship between YHWH and the people of Israel. Israel features in this context as the beloved bride of YHWH. We will look specifically at the bride metaphor in Hosea 2:21-22; Jeremiah 2;2.32; 7:34; Isaiah 49:18, 61:10; 62;5. Our focus in each of these passages will be on how the bride metaphor is used in the text as it has been handed down to us: what is the text trying to say through the bride metaphor? On the basis of Psalm 45, we will finally investigate whether the bride metaphor was possibly also used in reference to a Messianic figure (chapter 2.2).

Our attention then turns to the bride metaphor in the New Testament. The bride metaphor appears in many writings of the New Testament. Unlike in the Old Testament, it is not the relationship between YHWH and his people that takes centre stage, but that between Christ and the community of the faithful. We will look successively at 2 Corinthians 11:1-4; Ephesians 5:21-33; Mark 2:18-22; Matthew 22:1-14 and 25:1-13; John 3:24-30; Revelation to John 18:23; 19:7-9; 21;2.9; 22:17. Here, again, we will examine how the bride metaphor is used in the text as it has been handed down to us (chapter 2.3.).

Following the biblical study, the third chapter sets out the systematic-theological research. As *Lumen gentium* indicates, many images or metaphors are used to denote the Church. History shows that every age favours its own metaphors. A certain metaphor for the Church retains its value as long as it is able to answer the questions that preoccupy the people

of that age. Once circumstances change, metaphors are replaced or complemented by other metaphors.

This part of the study is a prelude to our own analysis of the metaphor of the Bride of Christ, and it focuses first on one of the oldest metaphors for the Church, that of *Ecclesia*. How did this metaphor arise and how did it affect the Early Church's thinking (chapter 3.1.)? We then take a leap in time and look at the great metaphors that the Church has used to speak about itself since the beginning of the twentieth century. The metaphors discussed are, successively, *Societas perfecta*, the Body of Christ, the People of God, Sacrament, and *Communio*. We will study the unique features of each of these metaphors. Modern metaphor theory speaks of a conceptual system with innumerable branches, and we will assess on this basis whether, and if so, how the bride metaphor has been used by various ecclesiological writers in relation to these metaphors (chapter 3.2.).

Then we look at the bride metaphor itself. How did the Church Fathers use the bride metaphor, and how do contemporary theologians – especially those who work in ecclesiology – use it? We will ask these questions from the angle suggested by the results of the second chapter. In this part we will speak successively about the unity and exclusivity of the relationship between Christ and the Church, about the bridal garment of the Church, about joy, and about the Marriage of the Lamb (first part of chapter 3.3).

In the last part, we will address possible new applications of the bride metaphor. By contrast with similes, which describe a more or less strict similarity between two distinct terms ('Mary is as strong as a lion'), metaphors are open to new insights and applications. We will ask in this last part whether the bride metaphor can also have a heuristic value: can the metaphor of the Bride of Christ as it appears from the biblical and systematic-theological research yield new insights on the essence and life of the Church, insights that can be meaningful for the way we think about the Church of today? We will speak here about the Church as a Community of Eros, the Church as a House of Joy, and about the bridal garment of the Church. We will conclude by examining the feminine dimension of the Church, to which the bride metaphor also points (last part of chapter 3.3.).

The study will end with a short summary and a number of conclusions (chapter 4.).

1. Methodological introduction – a metaphorical concept

All human speech, thought and experience is fundamentally metaphorical in nature and consequently metaphor pervades everyday life. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson express this insight in their ground-breaking work *Metaphors We Live By* (2003).[1] Until then metaphor was mainly regarded as a linguistic phenomenon and certainly not as an essential part of language. In the earliest work on literary theory known to us, Aristotle's *De Poetica*, metaphor is defined as "the application of a word belonging to something else."[2] This was the guiding definition all through the following ages and caused metaphor to be regarded mainly as a figure of speech in poetry and prose.[3] Since the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's work in 1980, however, it is quite generally understood that metaphor is not just a matter of language, but much rather of thought and action.[4] Present day theory of

[1] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

[2] "Μεταφορὰ δέ ἐστιν ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορὰ." Aristotle, *De Poetica*, XXI, 1457b6. English translation: Aristotle, *On Poetics* (trans. Seth Bernardete and Michael Davis; South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2002), 51.

[3] Note that for instance in the internet version of the Encyclopedia Britannica (last updated 2013) metaphor is still a "figure of speech" and "the fundamental language of poetry." Encyclopedia Britannica, "Metaphor," n.p. [cited 4 September 2014]. Online: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/377872/metaphor. The Merriam-Webster online defines metaphor as "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them." Merriam-Webster, "Metaphor," n.p. [cited 4 September 2014]. Online: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metaphor. It should be noted, however, that Aristotle wrote his work for poets and therefore concentrated on the way in which poets may use language. *De Poetica* is not a philosophical work. Still Aristotle also shows that with the help of metaphors poets may designate things that do not yet have a name. Cf. Aristotle, *De Poetica* 1457b25. Although this is not mentioned in *De Poetica*, it is not inconceivable that according to Aristotle metaphors may be used, not only by poets but by everybody, in order to increase understanding. Thus metaphors also have a cognitive function. However, this does not alter the fact that Aristotle's linguistic definition was adhered to through the ages. Cf. Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3-10.

[4] Lakoff and Johnson have some forerunners. Lakoff himself mentions Michael Reddy as discoverer. Cf. George Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought* (ed. Andrew Ortony; 2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 203. Other important precursors are I.A. Richards, "Metaphor," in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (ed. I.A. Richards; London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 48-61; and Max Black, "Metaphor," in *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and*

metaphor shows that metaphor is first and foremost "conceptual, conventional and part of the ordinary system of thought and language."[5] The question now arises what exactly is the essence of the theory developed by Lakoff and Johnson.

Philosophy, (ed. Max Black; 6th ed.; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976), 25-47. Black distinguishes three ways of looking at metaphor, a substitution view of metaphor, a comparison view of metaphor and an interaction view of metaphor. Black shows that in the third view interaction of contexts takes place, showing that metaphor is more than a figure of speech. He does not yet show, however, that a cognitive system is involved. Cf. Black, ibid., 25-47. In the wake of the work by Lakoff and Johnson a large number of publications on metaphor has appeared. Cf. for instance Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Raymond W. Gibbs, ed., *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); George Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Georg Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Mark Turner, *Death is the Mother of Beauty: Mind, Metaphor, Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Christa Baldauf, *Metapher und Kognition: Grundlagen einer neuen Theorie der Alltagsmetapher* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997); Pierre Van Hecke, ed., *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (BETL 187; Leuven: Peeters, 2005); Eckard Rolf, *Metaphertheorien: Typologie, Darstellung, Bibliographie* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005); Denis Donoghue, *Metaphor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

[5] Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," 203. In 2008 Lakoff publishes another progress report regarding the modern theory of metaphor. Here he shows himself to be a representative of the Neural Theory of Language (NTL). NTL explains how metaphors arise in the brain ("a flow of neural activity") and why particular metaphors are used or not used ("the activation of certain neuronal groups in the brain is given prior activation of other neuronal groups"). In this report Lakoff remarks that the results of the modern theory of metaphor remain fully intact but that the mechanism by which they come about may be explained by NTL: "the neural theory of metaphor changes cognitive linguistics vastly, not the analyses themselves so much, but our understanding of how metaphor systems work". George Lakoff, "The Neural Theory of Metaphor," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (ed. Raymond W. Gibbs; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 37. For this investigation the question as to how a metaphor arises is not relevant. It is, however, relevant that the principles of the modern theory of metaphor remain fully applicable.

1.1. Development of a theory of metaphor and metaphorical concept

1.1.1. Metaphorical language use

I won't stomach that insult. This programme needs time to get off the ground. Their relationship is on the rocks. The fat's in the fire. My aunt is all at sea. He is on the wrong track. By means of these everyday sentences we express our thoughts, experiences and actions, or we indicate how we relate to other people. They seem to be very ordinary, arbitrary sentences but, without realising it, we act here, more or less automatically, in accordance with certain rules, even in accordance with extensive systems in which all our thoughts and actions are incorporated and which are essentially metaphorical in nature.

Apart from things that are quite literal (*the cat sat on the mat*) we think, see and experience something *as* something else. If we speak about the love relationship between two people, we usually do so in terms of a journey or a voyage. *They have the wind in their sails; it is quite an adventure; they are at a crossroads; their relationship is on the rocks*. This everyday way of speaking is metaphorical, but there is more at stake than just figures of speech, only meant to enliven the language use a little. The choice to designate a certain thing or situation in terms of another is not altogether free, at least if people want to make themselves understood in normal communication. A statement like *their relationship has lost all its feathers* sounds nonsensical without a context and will not be understood without a context either. Is this relationship on the rocks perhaps, or have these people cast off all sense of shame in their relationship and do they tell everyone about their intimacies, or is this a child speaking that may have heard something but does not know what it is talking about? What is meant here?

1.1.2 Conceptual metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson show that in a conceptual metaphor we draw on one domain of experience, the source domain, to express a thought or experience that belongs to another domain, the target domain. Lakoff speaks of "general mappings across conceptual domains."[6] The use of images and terms from the one domain in the other domain is not arbitrary, but strictly regulated. It is a system in which one may 'map' back and forth. Experiences, utterances and knowledge from the source domain are transferred to the domain about

[6] Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," 203.

which something is to be said, the target domain. Certain entities of the one domain consistently correspond with entities from the other domain.

> It is characteristic for the conceptualisation of everyday experiences which Lakoff and Johnson have postulated that immediate, concrete physical or cultural experiences are used to structure vague and abstract issues that are not easy to approach either rationally or linguistically. The direction of the projection, from the concrete and physical to the abstract, is always a given fact.[7]

In the example of a love relationship as a journey or voyage the lovers correspond with the travellers, the relationship with the various means of transport and the difficulties one may encounter in a relationship with the troubles one may have on the way. A remark like *their relationship is on the rocks* describes the present situation of the relationship in terms of another experience, namely that of a ship that has struck a rock. By making use of this experience, which will generally be familiar or at least understood (the ship is stuck, unable to move in any direction, and has possibly sustained irreparable damage) something is said that is comparable to what is happening in the relationship referred to.

The metaphor does not just describe the situation of the relationship, however, it does more. The use of the metaphor calls up a world of associations and almost naturally makes us have a closer look at the source domain. If a ship has struck a rock, in most cases an attempt will be made to get it afloat again, whether or not with the help of a tugboat. People may also decide to take another ship, however, and to continue the voyage in a different way. It may also be decided that this was it and that the voyage will not be continued, etc. Transferred to the love relationship this means that the lovers may try to get the relationship going again, whether or not with the help of a therapist. They may also decide to start doing things quite differently or to stop altogether. This example shows that the utterance *their relationship is on the rocks* does not only say something about the

[7] "Charakteristisch für die von Lakoff und Johnson postulierte Konzeptualisierung alltäglicher Erfahrungen ist eine Nutzung unmittelbarer, konkreter physischer oder kultureller Erfahrungen zur Strukturierung vager, abstrakter und rationaler wie sprachlich schwer zugänglicher Sachverhalte. Dabei ist die Projektionsrichtung vom Konkreten, Physischen auf das Abstrakte stets gegeben." Christa Baldauf, "Sprachliche Evidenz metaphorischer Konzeptualisierung: Probleme und Perspektiven der kognitivistischen Metapherntheorie im Anschluss an George Lakoff und Mark Johnson," in *Bildersprache verstehen: Zur Hermeneutik der Metapher und anderer bildlicher Sprachformen* (ed. Ruben Zimmermann; München: Wilhelm Fink, 2000), 118. All translations by Norbert Schnell, unless otherwise noted.

relationship in itself and thus makes the present condition of the relationship 'understood,' but the use of the metaphor also provides a framework as to the possibilities for action in this situation. Thus insight is provided that 'mapping' between conceptual domains is a matter of thought and reason. Language is secondary and the 'map' is primary.[8] A metaphor thus structuring life and action is a conceptual metaphor, in the terminology of Lakoff and Johnson.[9]

There is a difference between a conceptual metaphor (TIME IS MONEY) and the accompanying metaphorical expressions (*I have no time to lose*). Both the conceptual metaphor and the metaphorical expression may be called 'metaphor.' Following Lakoff and Johnson, I will reserve the term 'metaphor' for conceptual metaphor. Also following Lakoff and Johnson's practice, a metaphor will always be printed in capital letters.[10]

1.1.2.1. Types of metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson distinguish three types of metaphor, structural metaphor, orientational metaphor and ontological metaphor. In the case of a structural metaphor one concept is metaphorically structured by another concept ARGUMENT IS WAR – *know what strategy to use to defeat your opponent;* or TIME IS MONEY – *that traffic jam cost me an hour*.[11]

There are, however, also metaphorical concepts that are not structured in terms of another concept, but rather with the help of a spatial category, the so-called orientational metaphors. Thus we have for instance HAPPY IS UP – *he is in the seventh heaven*; SAD IS DOWN – *she was very depressed by the sad news*; MORE IS UP – *unemployment figures are rising*; LESS IS DOWN – *the prices of vegetables are at rock bottom*; BEING IN CONTROL IS UP – *When he crowned himself emperor of France in 1804, Napoleon was at the height of his power*; BEING SUBJECT TO CONTROL IS DOWN – *After the failure of the invasion of Russia, Napoleon's power declined rapidly and the Battle of Waterloo brought him down definitely.*[12]

The third and last category mentioned by Lakoff and Johnson consists of ontological metaphor. Unlike what the term 'ontological' seems to suggest, this does not involve a philosophical category but rather human experiences that are structured by means of experiences with physical objects. At first sight ontological metaphor resembles structural metaphor, but ontological

[8] Cf. Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," 208.
[9] Cf. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors*, 4 and 7-9.
[10] Cf. Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," 209.
[11] Cf. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors*, 10-13.
[12] Cf. ibid., 14-21.

metaphor is characterised by the expression of experiences in terms of physical objects. The target domain, a certain experience, is put within artificial boundaries and in this way can be 'understood' and communicated. Examples are THE MIND IS A MACHINE (or more specifically A COMPUTER) – *I cannot get this information processed right now*; INFLATION IS AN ENTITY – *inflation needs to be combatted*.[13]

1.1.2.2. Metaphors and culture

On the whole metaphors are culturally determined and depend strongly on the value system of the culture concerned. The value system itself is consistent with the metaphorical system in which people of the culture in question express themselves. In a culture in which having a career is important, we will find the metaphors HIGH STATUS IS UP and LOSS OF STATUS IS DOWN, with expressions like *he is not yet at the top* and *the bankruptcy has broken him*. Various representations of values may clash, which then is also true of the metaphors associated with them. Take for instance MORE IS UP and GOOD IS UP. What does this mean for expressions like *inflation is rising* and *the crime rate is rising*? Assuming that both rising inflation and a rising crime rate are not qualified as 'good', we must conclude that the metaphor MORE IS UP has priority over the metaphor GOOD IS UP.[14]

Within each culture there are subcultures with their own representations of values. Although the priorities of these subcultures clearly differ from those of the main culture and they have value systems of their own that are internally coherent but differ from those of the large group, the most important orientational metaphors are still coherent with the culture of which they form part. Lakoff and Johnson present monastic orders as an example. Where property or status is concerned monks live in accordance with the metaphors LESS IS BETTER and SMALLER IS BETTER. This seems to be in direct conflict with the common metaphors MORE IS BETTER and BIGGER IS BETTER. However, the monks regard total dedication to God as their main goal in life. This goal is coherent with the widespread presentation of values of a virtuous life and the metaphor VIRTUE IS UP. This VIRTUE IS UP is, however, filled in by the monks in their own specific way, namely by renouncing property and devoting a great deal of time to prayer. However a metaphor like STATUS IS UP will also be endorsed by the monks. It is true that status in this world does not mean a thing to them, but they live for a

[13] Cf. ibid., 25-34.
[14] Cf. ibid., 22-24.

different status, to get a share in the Kingdom of God. "Virtue, goodness, and status may be radically redefined, but they are still UP."[15]

In this investigation of THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST we will have to take into account that the Roman Catholic Church has a value system that differs on many points from the value system of present day Western culture. In this sense the Church represents a subculture, which in fact is true of every religion for that matter, unless it coincides to a high degree with the dominant culture of a country or a region. When discussing the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, I will deal with this matter in detail.

1.1.2.3. Partial structuring

The metaphorical structuring of concepts is always partial.[16] If it was a matter of total identification (A THEORY IS A THEORY), then there would no longer be a metaphor. The fact that structuring is always partial also implies that it is always only part of reality that is described and even highlighted. A certain part of reality remains underexposed or is perhaps hidden altogether. If an argument is experienced and expressed in terms of war (*develop a strategy, get the better of your opponent by shooting down his arguments*, etc.) other important and possibly very positive notions are underexposed or perhaps altogether hidden, for instance that someone takes the trouble to listen to you and takes you seriously.[17]

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[15] Ibid., 24.

[16] Cf. Ibid., 10-13 and 52-55.

[17] Christa Baldauf remarks that the choice for a metaphor often appears to be quite arbitrary: ARGUMENT IS WAR (*shoot down a person's arguments*), but an argument might just as well be conceptualised by a ROAD (*this argument does not get us anywhere*) or a CONTAINER (*empty arguments, what you say does not hold water*). So life may be a ROAD or a PATH (*the path of life, to be stuck at the crossroads of life*) but also a CONTAINER (*he lives a full life*). Empirical research of a large number of data does not indicate which concept is to be preferred. Baldauf is of the opinion that conceptualisation should be situated at a more abstract level and comes up with abstract concepts like CHANGE and FINITENESS. Passing from situation A to situation B is extremely abstract and at the same time this happens in life in innumerable ways and all kind of situations in life, at work, in time, etc. Baldauf calls these abstract units of experience "abstract sub-concepts." A number of these sub-concepts (further research is needed to find out which they are and there are only a limited number of them) constitute a concept, like for instance LIFE. LIFE knows change, for instance, but also finiteness, and therefore both the 'road metaphors' and the 'container metaphors' may be applied to life. The sub-concepts finally form a grid ordering thoughts and experiences, and rendering the intangible tangible. Cf. Baldauf, "Sprachliche Evidenz,"117-132 and esp. 125-128. In my opinion this is a refinement of the theory developed by Lakoff and Johnson, but it is not immediately relevant for this

The partial character of metaphorical structuring also becomes quite clear in speaking about God. It is not possible to speak about God in any way except metaphorically.[18] Consequently the Bible presents us with many images. So God may sometimes be a father (Jr 3:19; Mt 5:45), at other times a king (Ps 29:10; Mt 25:34), or a shepherd (Ezk 34:23; Jn 10:11) and then again a rock (Dt 32:31; Mt 7:24). Every metaphorical expression allows us to 'understand' a little of God. "However, every one of these expressions also contains the whispering 'it is, *and it is not.*'"[19]

If it is no longer recognised that metaphors provide us with a partial understanding of the concept they structure, and consequently the similarities and the differences, as well as the highlighting and the hiding they bring about, are no longer perceived, they may become dangerous. In the case of speaking about God, the concept of God as Judge (Mt 25:31-46) may become so absolute that God the merciful Father (Lk 15:11-32) completely disappears from view. Subsequently this 'partial understanding' of God as a 'total understanding' will permeate everyday life and will determine how people will make their way through life. If God is only regarded as the severe Judge, this might instil fear of the Final Judgment in people, which would in turn lead to fear of life. Then the word of the apostle John is no longer heard, "In love there is no room for fear, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear implies punishment and whoever is afraid has not come to perfection in love" (1 Jn 4:18).

Following the psychologists Bruner and Goodman, Vincent Brümmer calls the phenomenon of regarding a metaphor as absolute, 'conceptual blindness.'[20] "When this happens we need new 'iconoclastic' metaphors which make us experience the shock of recognition needed to break down

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investigation, as the subject is the existing metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST and not the way in which thoughts and experiences are conceptualised.

[18] Thomas Aquinas makes an exception for the five intrinsic qualities of God: being, one, truth, goodness and beauty.

[19] Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (London: Fortress Press, 1982), 13. McFague's italics.

[20] Cf. Vincent Brümmer, *The Model of Love: A Study in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 8-9. A little further on, Brümmer remarks that a lack of sensitivity for the limits of conceptual models gives rise to heresy, which the history of Christian theology actually shows. Cf. ibid. 14. Note that Brümmer speaks of conceptual models, not of conceptual metaphors. Brümmer agrees with Lakoff and Johnson that all human speech, thought and experience is metaphorical in nature and that coherence, and therefore a system, may be discerned in the large variety of metaphorical expressions. In this sense Brümmer's models and Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphors are very much geared to the same purpose. Cf. ibid., 11-13.

our mental set and thus enable us to see those features of the world which we have been conditioned to overlook."[21] Brümmer points out that this danger is also inherent in the use of models in scientific inquiry. Here too a model may become a kind of straitjacket forcing one to think in accordance with fixed patterns. He quotes R.B. Braithwaite's warning that "the price of the employment of models is eternal vigilance."[22]

Now, even before I have done any research concerning the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, it may already be stated that this investigation, in as far as it will yield results, will only enable us to 'understand' some part of the phenomenon which is the Church and will highlight certain particular aspects. Other images and metaphors will be necessary to better comprehend the greater whole, which is the Church.[23] In this sense eternal vigilance is called for here too. "It is the task of systematic theology to explore which inferences may be validly drawn from the conceptual models of a religious tradition."[24] Drawing inferences and accounting for them will also be part of this investigation.

1.1.2.4. Conceptual and conventional

Metaphors provide frameworks or grids for understanding and acting in the reality designated by the metaphor concerned. Without people being aware of it, metaphors permeate everyday life, not only where language is concerned but precisely also with respect to thought and action. It is a matter of a conceptual system with innumerable ramifications. As the conceptual system forms part of everyday thinking and acting, this system is also conventional. This is revealed by, among other things, the fact that countless words, expressions or phrases are often no longer recognised as metaphors, let alone experienced as such, *discover, gold fever, surfing the internet, lose*

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[21] Ibid., 10. Brümmer puts the word 'iconoclastic' in inverted commas. He has borrowed this word from Sallie McFague. McFague uses this word to characterise her metaphorical theology, "to be open, tentative, and iconoclastic." Cf. McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 19.

[22] Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 12. Avery Dulles also points out the danger of regarding metaphors, or models as he calls them, as absolute. "Each model of the Church has its weakness; no one should be canonized as the measure of all the rest. Instead of searching for some absolutely best image, it would be advisable to recognize that the manifold imagines given to us by Scripture and Tradition are mutually complementary." Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Expanded edition; New York: Doubleday, 1987), 32.

[23] Cf. also Dulles, *Models*, 31-32.

[24] Brümmer, *The Model of Love,* 15.

one's reason, evening falls, the future looks bleak, overplay one's hand, etc.[25]

Where understanding reality is concerned metaphors play an important role in scholarship and science as well as in religion. It should be noted, however, that they fulfil very different functions in the various areas. "Religious metaphors are not intended to help us discover or explain how physical phenomena work, but rather to help us understand the meaning or sense of our lives and of the world in which we live and in relation to which we act."[26] This double function, understanding one's own life and being offered means to act in the world, is the typical characteristic of a metaphor in religion.[27]

The use and understanding of metaphors in religion is less self-evident than the use and understanding of everyday metaphors, although everyday metaphors and metaphorical expressions may also be used in a religious context and will then be immediately understandable, e.g. VIRTUE IS UP and *the Church does not have the wind in her sails these days*. For an outsider such everyday metaphors and metaphorical expressions used in relation to a religion will still be understandable but as soon as they concern the religion itself, 'inside knowledge' is required. For the average nonbeliever THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST is perfectly unintelligible, and in this particular case we may assume that this also holds for the average believer. It may be stated generally that in a religion knowledge 'from the inside' is necessary in order to understand the metaphors of the religion in question.[28]

1.1.2.5. Metaphors in religion

As is the case with every metaphor, it is important to realise that in religion structuring by metaphors is also partial and that we should be aware of both the similarities and the differences between the source domain and the target domain. At the same time a certain knowledge is required to determine to what degree a specific source domain may be used, or not. It is especially the task of the theologian to figure out how metaphors may be understood,

[25] Cf. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors*, 46-51.
[26] Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 13-14.
[27] It is better to speak of a *metaphor in religion* than of a *religious metaphor*. All human speaking, thinking and acting is metaphorical. Therefore we come across metaphors in all areas of life and consequently also in religion. All the same, in the literature on this topic we do encounter the term religious metaphor.
[28] Cf. also Dulles, *Models*, 26-27.

what conclusions may be drawn and what conclusions may not be drawn.[29] Within the Roman Catholic Church the magisterium also plays an important part in establishing the right interpretation. In section 1.1.2.10. of this chapter I will come back to the position and role of the magisterium.

For understanding metaphors in a religion two skills are required, i.e. interpreting correctly and applying correctly. In order to interpret religious reality (target domain) familiar images and experiences from everyday reality are essential (source domain). It is of great importance to sharply distinguish where images and experiences from the source domain resemble the target domain and where they differ.[30]

Let us take as an example GOD IS LOVE. Love is an earthly concept and is used first of all to express a human experience. Still it is not an unambiguous experience. The way the ancient Greeks speak of love differs from the way a Christian does, or a romantic, which is again different from the way of speaking of a modern, twenty-first century, Western person. What concept of love is employed when we speak of a God who is love? It is important to analyse properly the various concepts of love as a human experience and subsequently indicate in how far these are applicable to God, or not.[31]

In addition it is important to notice what implications the metaphors in a religion have for real, everyday life and how the faithful may use them to understand and interpret their own lives and the world around them.[32] Let us return to the metaphor GOD IS LOVE. Imagine that an important conclusion would be that one aspect of God's love is the unconditional gift of Himself to all human beings: *I am who I am and I am there for you*. The believer may first of all now trust that God also gives Himself to him or her personally and, even more, finally to every person, "He causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and sends down rain to fall on the upright and the wicked alike" (Mt 5:45). It goes even one step further, however; having been created in God's image, after his likeness, believers

[29] Lakoff and Johnson say nothing about the use of metaphors in religion, apart from what has already been said about metaphors in subcultures. Subcultures have their own value systems, but in the end follow the most important orientational metaphors of the main culture concerned.

[30] Obviously it is also important in everyday life to see where the source domain and the target domain of metaphors resemble one another and where they differ. As these everyday metaphors are conventional, however, the understanding is practically always self-evident. A remark like *their relationship is on the rocks* needs no further explanation and if we hear that *Mary has stolen John's heart*, we do not draw the conclusion that there will shortly be a funeral.

[31] Cf. Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 15 and 33.

[32] Cf. ibid., 15-16.

are called, in imitation of God, to make their own lives into a gift of self for others. Therefore Pope Benedict XVI could write in his first encyclical *Deus caritas est*:

> Love of God and love of neighbour (…) both live from the love of God who has loved us first. No longer is it a question, then, of a 'commandment' imposed from without and calling for the impossible, but rather of a freely-bestowed experience of love from within, a love which by its very nature must then be shared with others. Love grows through love.[33]

Here we have a good example of the way in which a metaphor in religion helps to understand and direct the lives of the faithful.

1.1.2.6. Translation of a metaphor

Metaphorical expressions are systematically linked to metaphorical concepts. Language and way of thinking mutually determine one another. Brümmer notes that the vocabulary within a particular culture determines the way in which experiences in the world are ordered and expressed, but also, on the other hand, how cultural interests and concerns determine the ordering of reality and subsequently establish what words are used.[34] The close relationship between language on the one hand and thought and experience on the other is revealed by – among other things – the fact that certain words in a Sprachraum cannot be translated in another Sprachraum. Sometimes this involves words that call up a world of experiences and associations, but may not be translated just like that. An obvious example is the Dutch word *gezellig*.

The translation of metaphor has been a matter of discussion among linguists over the past decades.[35] The positions move between two poles, on the one hand the impossibility of translating metaphors and on the other the conviction that a word-for-word translation will be quite adequate. At the moment there is no generally recognised theory of translation with respect to

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[33] Pope Benedict XVI, "Deus caritas est," *AAS* 98 (2006): 217-252, henceforth DC, at DC 18. The English translation is from the official website of the Vatican.
[34] Cf. Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 9.
[35] Cf. Christina Schäffner, "Metaphor and Translation: Some Implications of a Cognitive Approach," *JoP* 36 (2004): 1253-1269; Peter Newmark, *Approaches to Translation* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988); and Elena A. Burmakova and Nadezda I. Marugina, "Cognitive Approach to Metaphor Translation in Literary Discourse," *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 154 (2014): 527-533.

metaphor. Most translation specialists hold a position somewhere between the two extremes mentioned, although there is some consensus that knowledge of a culture is important in order to understand a metaphor and consequently translation of a metaphor into another language and culture is by no means self-evident.[36]

The difficulty in translating a metaphor may be caused by the language itself, but also by the way of thinking. Where the language itself is concerned, a particular metaphor may often be translated without much trouble into another language. If the source language (SL) corresponds with the target language (TL) there is no trouble at all, as for instance Dutch *hun relatie is op de klippen gelopen* is perfectly equivalent with English *their relationship is on the rocks*. In other cases the content is the same, but the expressions differ. SL and TL differ, but they do conceptualise the same thought or experience, as in Dutch *de beer is los* and English *the fat's in the fire*.[37]

Another, more complex question is in how far the translation of a metaphor may influence what the metaphor is intended to say. Is the original thought or experience conveyed by the translation? This problem is pointed out especially by those linguists who are of the opinion that certain metaphors cannot be translated. The effectuation of a metaphor is a creative process; within a particular culture, within the possibilities offered by the culture and the language, certain thoughts and experiences may be conceptualised and expressed by metaphors. In this way such a metaphor is culture-specific. On account of the cultural roots and the specific experiences 'put into words' by the metaphor, it is not self-evident and even very unlikely that another culture should have corresponding words to express the same thoughts and experiences. In other words, the SL has no equivalent in the TL. Menachem Dagut illustrates this by means of the Hebrew metaphor *ne'ekad*, the passive form of a verb that means 'to bind'. This metaphorical expression refers to the Biblical story of Abraham, who sacrifices his son Isaac at God's command (cf. Gn 22:1-19). In Modern Hebrew culture this metaphor stands for the readiness to suffer and even give one's life for the Jewish ideals. Not only does the literal translation of *ne'ekad* by 'be bound' fail to put across the meaning of the metaphor, namely *to suffer for an ideal*, but the content is even completely nullified, as 'to be bound', if used metaphorically, means *not be free to act*, *have a lack of choice*. This is an example of a specific, culturally determined metaphor

[36] For a survey of various positions with respect to the translation of metaphor see Mortaza Taheri-Ardali and Mohammad Bagheri and Reza Eidy, eds., "Towards a New Model to Metaphor Translation: A Cognitive Approach," *TrSt* 11 (2013): 35-52.
[37] Cf. ibid., 3.

with a power of expression that will not be noticed by a person with a different cultural background and that cannot be translated.[38]

Not only the translation of metaphors may cause problems, the meaning of metaphors may also change in the course of time. To take an example, consider the Biblical expression *a voice (crying) in the wilderness*, in Is 40:1 and quoted once in all four gospels.[39] The context makes clear that the voice is the voice of the prophet, who announces that the Lord God will return to Jerusalem and that consequently appropriate preparations, detailed in the following verses in highly metaphorical terms, have to be made. In fact it is a very joyful moment, with the announcement of the end of the Exile, the deliverance of the people of Israel and finally, a total restoration of Jerusalem as the place where the Lord dwells, and where his people will worship Him again. There is no indication whatsoever that the prophet is not believed, which is indeed unusual with respect to Old Testament prophets.[40] The texts in Matthew, Mark and Luke are identical and read "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight". They all apply the text to John the Baptist, whose public ministry is a preparation for the ministry of Jesus and who is therefore identified with those who had to prepare the way for the Lord God returning to Jerusalem. In the gospel according to St. John, John the Baptist applies the text to himself.[41] There can be no doubt that "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" is the voice of a prophet who announces the coming of the Lord, in the Old Testament of the return of the Lord God to Jerusalem, in the gospels of the public ministry of Jesus, the Messiah. Neither in the Old nor

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[38] Cf. Menachem B. Dagut, "Can 'Metaphor' be Translated?" *Babel* 22 (1976): 21-33, 29, and Menachem B. Dagut, "More about the Translatability of Metaphor," in *Babel* 33 (1987): 77-83, 79. In the second article Dagut remarks that it is true that the metaphor may be explained, for instance by translating *bound like Isaac for the sacrifice*, but that this is not enough, because not only *knowledge* of the Biblical story is involved but also the collective and culturally determined *experience* that is implied in this one single word. "The Hebrew reader's emotions are here played upon by powerful lexico-cultural connotations which are non-existent for the TL-reader." Ibid., 79.

[39] The gospel references are Mt 3:3, Mk 1:3, Lk 3:4 and Jn 1:23. The Isaiah text (in the King James Version, 1611) reads "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight". The King James Version is quoted here, because the present-day English expression is based on this translation.

[40] For an explanation of the various images marking the return of the Lord to Jerusalem, in Is 40:1-9, see John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66* (WBC 25; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 78-83.

[41] Matthew and Luke explicitly refer to Isaiah, Mark to the prophets in general. In the gospel according to St. John we find, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias" (Jn 1:23). King James Bible.

in the New Testament is there any indication of disbelief, except that some Pharisees are sceptical with regard to John. In present-day English, however, the expression *a voice (crying) in the wilderness* refers to someone who expresses an opinion that no one believes or listens to, sometimes with the implication that the person will be proved right later. The idea of joyful preparation has totally disappeared, not to mention the notion of preparing for the Lord's coming. A considerable shift of meaning has obviously taken place and the expression has been fully secularised. It is still perfectly understandable, but in a very different sense.

This investigation concentrates on the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. This is an image that has been used and still is, in different cultures and in different ages. Therefore it is important for the interpretation of this metaphor to make a proper analysis. In what context did it arise, how was it used and what meaning does it have today, on the basis of its original meaning? As a result of the great distance in time and place it is not always easy to retrieve the original meaning, but all the more important.

1.1.2.7. Coherence and consistence

The use of metaphorical concepts is not fortuitous, more than that, different metaphors form a coherent system together.[42] In daily language use, however, it seems that metaphorical expressions may contradict one another and are therefore not coherent. Lakoff and Johnson show this on the basis of the conceptual metaphor TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT. In our daily language use we have sentences like *time drags on* and *time flies*. The two utterances are not consistent with one another. Whereas metaphorical expressions use very concrete images, for metaphors less specific categories are used, in this case TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT. This metaphor causes the two inconsistent metaphorical expressions to be coherent with one another.[43]

Metaphors need not be consistent with one another, although they do form a coherent system together. Let us look again at TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT. This metaphor covers expressions like *the time will come that everyone ...* and *the time is long past*. There is another metaphor TIME IS STATIONARY AND WE MOVE THROUGH IT with sentences like *look how far we got together* and *we're approaching the end of the year*. The metaphors mentioned are not consistent and yet they turn out to fit together and are therefore coherent. In the case of time there is coherence in the 'higher metaphor' (major category), FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW TIME GOES PAST US,

[42] Cf. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors,* 9.
[43] Cf. ibid., 45.

FROM FRONT TO BACK. The two metaphors mentioned first, which are consistent in themselves, are subcategories of a major category.[44]

This phenomenon also presents itself when we speak about Christ, for instance. From the perspective of a believer we may say CHRIST IS OUR SHEPHERD, but also CHRIST IS THE BRIDEGROOM. The two metaphors are not consistent with each other, but they are coherent in that they both express relationship.

The Utrecht School,[45] which seeks ways of mapping out the Christian faith conceptually, and consequently in metaphors or models, speaks similarly about "emphasis on logical consistency"[46] and "comprehensive conceptual coherence as ideal."[47] Consistency is considered important because inconsistencies and contradictions are completely meaningless in theology, as they are in every form of life. According to the Utrecht School every statement about God, but also for instance about the Church, has to be logically connected with what is said elsewhere about God or the Church.

1.1.2.8. New metaphors

In 'cross mapping' certain parts of the source domain are taken over, others are not. The parts that are taken over belong to everyday language use. In connection with the metaphor THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS everyone understands sentences like *his theory has no foundation whatsoever* or *this theory has been ingeniously constructed*. More or less fixed expressions in which the *roof* or the *stairwell* is used in relation to theories, are not in use. We do not come across a sentence like *his theory has a fine roof* in everyday language use. Still metaphors are open to new mappings between source domain and target domain and thus new metaphorical expressions may come

[44] Cf. ibid., 41-45. Other authors speak in this context of: a keymodel, cf. Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 20; a root-metaphor, cf. Stephen C. Pepper, *World Hypothesis: A Study in Evidence* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1942), 95; or a model, cf. Dulles, *Models*, 15.

[45] Name for a movement at the (former) Faculty of Theology of Utrecht University, originating in the ideas of Vincent Brümmer, which gathered a following as from the 1980s. Point of departure is a way of practising theology in which systematic reflection on the Christian faith, which is also personally professed, takes place within a philosophical framework, taking into account and processing atheistic, philosophical-cultural and specifically theological criticism. For a characterisation of this movement see Gijsbert van den Brink and Marcel Sarot, "Contemporary Philosophical Theology," in: *Understanding the Attributes of God* (eds. Gijsbert van den Brink and Marcel Sarot; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 9-32.

[46] Ibid., 22.

[47] Ibid., 23.

into being. These new expressions are easily understood because they build on existing metaphors. In that case we have to do with imaginative metaphors: *his theory has a thousand rooms and long corridors* or *the data are the building blocks and the mortar*. Especially poets use the system in this way to express their emotions or experiences of reality. Poets can use imaginative metaphors, precisely because the poets and their readers are familiar with conventional metaphors. Although formerly people thought otherwise, we now know that the primacy of metaphorical language use lies with everyday speech, while literary use in poetry and prose is extended and specific metaphorical language use.[48]

1.1.2.9. Explanatory and exploratory

According to Avery Dulles images are of eminent importance in the Church because they enable the faithful to communicate their experiences of God. For theologians images are important to come to a better understanding of the mysteries of the faith. Images may become models or in the terminology of Lakoff and Johnson conceptual metaphors: "When an image is employed reflectively and critically to deepen one's theoretical understanding of a reality it becomes what is today called a 'model.'"[49] So a model will help us to come to an understanding of reality, by means of reflection and critical consideration on the basis of an image (or metaphor). This is also the purpose of metaphor, as described by Lakoff and Johnson. Models may be images (the Church as temple, vine, flock or bride), but models may also be more abstract and not directly an image of something (the Church as institution or community). Dulles distinguishes two types of models, the model that explains (explanatory) and the model that explores (exploratory).[50]

The explanatory model summarises what we *know* about the faith or what we are inclined to believe. The models may be useful if they have Biblical roots, are embedded in the Church and have proved themselves in the life of the Church through the ages. Explanatory models help to understand one's own Christian life here and now. There are for instance various parables about the Kingdom of God. If we assume that these parables communicate something about the way in which the Church grows as the community of the faithful (the mustard seed that grows into the biggest shrub and becomes a tree, Mt 13:31-32), and also about the way the Church has to deal with evil

[48] Cf. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors*, 52-55; Lakoff "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," 202-203 and 210.
[49] Cf. Dulles, *Models*, 23.
[50] Ibid., 24-26.

in the world (weeds among the wheat, Mt 13:24-30), these various images together help to explain how the Church develops in the course of time, without the Church's basic character being questioned – she is still the one Church of Christ in the changing circumstances of time.

These 'agrarian' models concerning the Kingdom of God help us today to understand something of the phenomenon of being Church in our days. At the same time they are also limited and do not explain everything. They need to be supplemented in order to clarify and render comprehensible more of the relational character of the Church, for instance.[51]

The exploratory model may lead to new theological insights. This is, however, a more difficult course, as unlike for instance the sciences, theology is not an empirical and experimental discipline. In the person of Jesus Christ the fullness of revelation has come to us, "in Christ (…), who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation".[52] New insights are ultimately already implicit in Scripture and Tradition, which does not mean that theology cannot discover new aspects of the Gospel, of which people were not aware before.[53]

As an example Dulles mentions the Church as servant. This image is relatively new, although it has its roots in both the Old and the New Testament. It is only in the modern era, when on the one hand the world began to function more autonomously with respect to the Church and on the other Christians have become more aware of their responsibility for the well-being of all people, that this model has developed and gained in power of expression over a longer period, culminating in *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World from the Second Vatican Council.[54] Here one might in principle speak of an explanatory model, because we have been made aware again of already existing images and notions, which have been brought together to form a model. What is made manifest in this way has always been implied in revelation, for instance when Jesus says: "For the Son of man himself came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45 and par. Mt 20:28 and Lk 22:27). Dulles still chooses to speak of an exploratory model, because the model is new as such and leads to new theological insights, which are not self-evident in advance.

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[51] Cf. ibid., 24-25.

[52] "In Christo (…), qui mediator simul et plenitudo totius revelationis exsistit." Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, Rome 1965, henceforth DV, at DV 2. The English translation is from the official website of the Vatican.

[53] Cf. Dulles, *Models*, 25-26.

[54] Cf. ibid., 89-102.

In their theory of metaphor Lakoff and Johnson do not differentiate between explanatory and exploratory metaphors. They do state, however, that metaphors are by definition open to further interpretation and deepening.[55] The degree to which interpretation and deepening should be regarded as in accordance with the faith, has to be established time and again, especially if it is a matter of new theological insights.

The metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST will probably turn out to be both explanatory and exploratory. On the one hand the bride metaphor is a rich Biblical metaphor that has played a role in the life of earlier Biblical tradition and in the Church all through history and in terms of which the Church has understood and expressed herself. On the other hand it is to be hoped that this investigation, on the basis of this metaphor, will lead to new insights as to the way the Church is understood in this present age and will possibly give a new impulse to present-day ecclesiology.

1.1.2.10. Interpretation of images and metaphors

The force of images and metaphors is that they give room to representations and interpretations, in contrast with definitions, which may provide clarity to a certain extent, but at the same time define and therefore also 'delimit'. Images

> not only structure thought, they also activate the imagination of the recipient, they appeal, they immediately draw the reader or observer into a process of understanding that encompasses the entire person. (...) It is no surprise therefore that metaphorical language constitutes a unique medium for religious language construction and communication processes, which entails an opportunity, but also a limitation.[56]

The chance is provided by the fact that knowledge and experience of the faith are not only 'put into words' and passed on in a cognitive way, but that rather the whole person is addressed. The boundary, and also the danger, lies

[55] Cf. Lakoff and Johnson *Metaphors*, 52-55; Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," 210.

[56] "Strukturieren nicht nur das Denken, sie aktivieren die Imaginationskraft des Rezipienten, sie sprechen an, ziehen den Leser bzw. Betrachter unmittelbar in einen Verstehensprozess hinein, der die ganze Person umfasst. (…) Es verwundert dann nicht mehr, dass die Bildersprache für religiöse Sprachbildung und Kommunikationsprozesse ein einzigartiges Medium darstellt, in dem eine Chance, aber ebenso eine Grenze impliziert ist." Ruben Zimmermann, "Metaphorntheorie und biblische Bildsprache: Ein methodologischer Versuch," *TZ* 56 (2000): 108-133, at 108-109.

in the fact that images and metaphors may be construed in accordance with a person's own views and therefore arbitrarily. Zimmermann pleads for 'Verstehenskorridore', delimitations, within which an image or a metaphor may be interpreted.[57]

Avery Dulles deals with the problem of explaining images and models. He deals with this problem in relation to images regarding the Church, where he sees an important task for theologians but mainly for the Church as the community of the faithful. As the Church is a mystery, she cannot be investigated by means of processes of deduction or empiricism. Deduction is not an option as we do not have a clear abstract concept of Church and therefore we cannot deduce and understand our images of the Church on the basis of that concept. Empirical investigations are not an option either, because these may provide all kinds of information about the visible church, but in the end do not say anything about what is true and what the essence of the Church is.

In order to understand images and models concerning the Church, Dulles presents the notions *connaturality* and *sense of Christ*. He quotes from Paul VI's encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* (1964), "The mystery of the Church is not a mere object of theological knowledge; it is something to be lived, something that the faithful soul can have a kind of connatural experience of, even before arriving at a clear notion of it."[58] The presence of the Holy Spirit in the whole Church and in every individual member causes there to be "a taste and instinctual judgment for the things of God, a deeper perception of God's truth," as Dulles quotes John Powell.[59] The faithful themselves in as far as they allow themselves to be guided by the Spirit, 'know' what is true. The Church uses the term *sensus fidelium* or *sensus fidei* to indicate this phenomenon.

Whether an image or a model is correctly explained and understood, is shown by the fruits of the Spirit. Does this image produce fruits such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness (cf. Ga 5:22-25), or rather antagonisms,

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[57] Cf. ibid., 109. Christiane de Vos, who has investigated the metaphor 'God is a rock' and notes that commentators often regard every rock and fortress in the Bible as metaphors for Mount Zion, remarks, "Nicht alles, was hoch liegt, ist gleich der Zion." Christiane de Vos, "Es gibt mehr Felsen in Israel," in *Metaphors in the Psalms* (BETL 231; ed. Pierre Van Hecke; Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 1-11, at 10.

[58] Quoted from Dulles, *Models*, 27. Original Text: "At Ecclesiae mysterium non eiusmodi veritas est, quae scientiae theologicae finibus contineatur, sed in ipsam vitae actionem transire debet; adeo ut christifideles, antequam claram de hac veritate notionem animo concipiant, eam quasi experimento naturae suae consentaneo, cognoscere possint." Pope Paul VI, "Ecclesiam suam," *AAS* 56 (1964): 609-659, at 624.

[59] Dulles, *Models*, 26.

rivalry, quarrels, factions, disagreements, etc. (cf. Ga 5:19-21)? The appropriateness of models is finally judged in the life of the Church itself.[60]

The Roman Catholic Church has also tackled the interpretation of Scripture and consequently the interpretation of images and metaphors in Scripture. During the Second Vatican Council this was an important subject of discussion. The issue of Bible interpretation was discussed in the context of the Church's speaking on the divine Revelation. The question is what the relationship between Scripture and Tradition is, but also what the role of the teaching office or magisterium is with respect to the interpretation of Scripture.[61]

In the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* the Council Fathers state that the Word of God is the foundation of the Church, meaning by Word of God not only Sacred Scripture but also the Word that was manifested to us (1 Jo 1:2), Jesus Christ Himself. As foundation the Word of God is above everything and everyone and therefore also above all speaking and acting of the Church. Here it immediately becomes evident in which role the magisterium sees itself, "This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it."[62]

The Word of God does not enunciate only articles of faith but the Word enunciates itself, "In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will."[63] The written Word (Sacred Scripture) and other articles of faith (Tradition) have a mediating role. Both belong to the deposit of faith. About the Tradition *Dei Verbum* goes on to say that it develops (*proficit*) with the help of the Holy Spirit. This development does not hold for Revelation itself, as this has reached its fulfilment in Christ and "we now await no further new public revelation before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ,"[64] but it does hold for the understanding of Revelation, "for there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down."[65] This development may happen in three ways, 1) by considering

[60] For a fuller exposition see ibid., 26-27.

[61] I have already expressed the following idea in a lecture for the Diocese of Rotterdam on the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum,* see: Norbert Schnell, "Dogmatische Constitutie Dei Verbum over de goddelijke openbaring: Jaar van het geloof – bisdom Rotterdam," [cited 25 July 2019]. Online: https://www.academia.edu/10491480/-Dogmatische_Constitutie_Dei_Verbum_over_de_Goddelijke_Openbaring.

[62] "Quod quidem Magisterium non supra verbum Dei est, sed eidem ministrat." DV 10.

[63] "Placuit Deo in sua bonitate et sapientia Seipsum revelare et notum facere sacramentum voluntatis suae." DV 2.

[64] "Et nulla iam nova revelatio publica expectanda est ante gloriosam manifestationem Domini nostri Iesu Christi." DV 4.

[65] "Crescit enim tam rerum quam verborum traditorum perception." DV 8.

and studying on the part of the faithful: the part of the theologians; 2) by inner understanding, proceeding from prayer and spiritual exercises: the part of the saints and the *sensus fidelium*[66] and 3) by pronouncements on the part of the magisterium. Thus penetrating into knowledge of the truth and thus into knowledge of Scripture is not only a matter of the magisterium but rather of the whole Church at all levels.[67]

Nevertheless the magisterium has its own specific task with respect to Tradition and Scripture. The last paragraph of section 7 of *Dei Verbum* deals with this. The episcopacy has been instituted by the apostles. They handed over to the bishops "the authority to teach in their own place."[68] *Dei Verbum* here quotes Irenaeus of Lyon. With respect to the authority to teach, Irenaeus is not just concerned with historical proof of the apostolic succession but rather more with the primary commission of the episcopacy "to keep the Gospel forever whole and alive within the Church".[69] The magisterium has the mandate to interpret authoritatively Tradition and Scripture.[70]

"There exists a close connection and communication between Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture."[71] Both proceed from the same divine origin and therefore both "are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence."[72] Where the relationship of the two with the whole Church is concerned, *Dei Verbum* only says, "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church."[73] The task of authentically interpreting the word of God has been entrusted to the magisterium, exercising its authority in the name of Jesus

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[66] Cf. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, Rome 1964, henceforth LG, at LG 12.

[67] Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, "Kommentar zur Dogmatischen Konstitution über die göttliche Offenbarung," in *LThK: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil* 2 (2nd ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1967): 520: "Die gesamte geistliche Erfahrung der Kirche, ihr glaubendes, betendes, liebendes Umgehen mit dem Herrn und seinem Wort läßt das Verstehen des Ursprünglichen wachsen und entbindet im Heute des Glaubens aus dem Gestern seines geschichtlichen Ursprungs neu das allzeit Gemeinte und doch nur in den wechselnden Zeiten und auf ihre Weise zu Verstehende."

[68] "Suum ipsorum locum magisterii tradentes." DV 7.

[69] "Ut autem Evangelium integrum et vivum iugiter in Ecclesia servaretur." DV 7. Cf. also Ratzinger, "Kommentar zur Dogmatischen Konstitution," 517.

[70] Cf. DV 10.

[71] "Sacra Traditio ergo et Sacra Scriptura arcte inter se connectuntur atque communicant." DV 9.

[72] "Quapropter utraque pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipienda et veneranda est." DV 9.

[73] "Sacra Traditio et Sacra Scriptura unum verbi Dei sacrum depositum constituunt Ecclesiae commissum." DV 10.

Christ.[74] As was said above, the magisterium "is not above the word of God, but serves it." This chapter of *Dei Verbum* is concluded with the observation that Tradition, Scripture and the magisterium are so linked together that one cannot stand without the others. To characterise this interdependency one might use a term borrowed from the doctrine of the Trinity, i.e. *perichoresis.* Just like the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one, permeate one another and may be distinguished but not separated from one another, thus Tradition, Scripture and magisterium proceed from the one source of God's revelation and may indeed be distinguished but not separated from one another.

Interpretation of Scripture, as understood in the Roman Catholic Church, belongs to the whole community, at all its levels, and is nourished by study, prayer and life. It is characteristic of the magisterium that it has the mandate to interpret Tradition and Scripture authoritatively or, in Zimmermann's terms, the magisterium decides whether an interpretation is within the "Verstehenskorridor" or not.

1.1.3. Summary

In this first section we have established that all human thinking, speaking and experiencing is metaphorical in nature. New thoughts and experiences are expressed in thoughts and experiences that we are already familiar with: a target domain is expressed in terms of a source domain. Metaphors provide frameworks or grids for understanding reality and for acting in certain situations. In this sense metaphor is conceptual. Thus, with regard to metaphor, Lakoff speaks of "general mappings across conceptual domains". Metaphors form part of everyday thinking and acting. Therefore they are not only conceptual but also conventional. This is also revealed by the fact that many metaphors have become part of the standard vocabulary of a language.

Metaphors may be isolated but usually they form part of a system with infinite ramifications, in which the metaphors together form a coherent and consistent system. As there can be no total identification of source domain and target domain in the case of metaphors, a metaphor provides by definition a partial structuring or description. Part of reality is described. Where the partial nature of metaphorical description is no longer noticed and the metaphor tends to be made absolute, conceptual blindness will occur. Often various metaphors will be necessary to describe or understand a specific matter. This is especially true of matters regarding God.

[74] Cf. DV 10.

Lakoff and Johnson distinguish three types of metaphor: structural metaphor, orientational metaphor and ontological metaphor. In the case of a structural metaphor one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another concept. THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST is an instance of a structural metaphor. Structural metaphors are usually culturally determined, so that knowledge of the culture is necessary in order to understand the metaphor. This also holds for subcultures within a culture. Nowadays the Roman Catholic Church is to be understood as a subculture within Western culture. For the investigation of the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, an investigation conducted in the context of the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, it is important to keep this in mind. It should also be borne in mind that metaphors may acquire a different meaning in the course of time. As is the case with the cultural context, time is a factor to be taken into account in the interpretation of a metaphor.

Metaphors play an important role in religion. In principle metaphors function in a religion in the same way as they do in any other context. The two most important functions of metaphor in a religion are 1) understanding the life of the faithful and 2) offering the faithful tools in order to be able to act in the world. Unlike everyday metaphors, which do not require specialised knowledge, a metaphor in religion does require knowledge of the religion in question in order to be understood. Deciding to what degree a metaphor is suitable for the faithful or may be elaborated into a suitable metaphor is an important task for theologians. Moreover, in the Roman Catholic Church the magisterium has its own and irreplaceable role in this. The magisterium has the mandate to interpret authoritatively Scripture and Tradition for the faithful, and consequently also the use of metaphors in the life of the Church.

As is the case in many branches of learning and knowledge, in theology metaphors or models are used. The metaphors in theology communicate the thoughts and experiences of the faithful with and about God. The metaphors may be explanatory but also exploratory. The metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, being a rich Biblical metaphor, may be called explanatory from the start and, in the course of this investigation, may prove to be exploratory as well.

2. THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST – Biblical foundation

2.1. Metaphors in the Bible

As we have seen in the first chapter, Lakoff and Johnson have distinguished three types of metaphor: orientational metaphor, ontological metaphor, and structural metaphor. All three types occur in the Bible. Thus the orientational metaphor MORE IS UP and LESS IS DOWN can be found in expressions such as "YHWH, your faithful love is in the heavens, your constancy reaches to the clouds" (Ps 36:5) and "You, God, will thrust them down to the abyss of destruction" (Ps 55:23). Expressions such as "he will enter peace" (Is 57:2) and "blessed are the peacemakers" (Mt 5:9) are examples of the ontological metaphor PEACE IS AN ENTITY.

The principal metaphor in our inquiry into the Church as the Bride of Christ is a structural one. In structural metaphors, one concept is metaphorically structured by another. Conceptual metaphors together provide frameworks or grids for understanding and acting within a certain reality, which is designated by the metaphor in question. We have also established that metaphors are always partial: a certain part of reality is described, leaving other parts of reality out of the limelight. Metaphors are also conventional, and therefore fundamentally intelligible for hearers who belong to the same culture. All these aspects can also be found in the way the Bible speaks about God.

God is not an object like so many objects in our human existence. Many objects in this world can be perceived with the human senses: they are tangible and measurable, are part of our reality, have a beginning and an end, can be compared to and classified with other objects, and can thus be made comprehensible. It is impossible to speak adequately about God in this sense. Scripture itself testifies to this. In Dt 4:12, the people are reminded that God spoke to them from the heart of the fire, "but [you] saw no shape; there was only a voice."[1] John says the same both in the prologue of his Gospel and in his first letter: "no one has ever seen God" (Jn 1:18; 1 Jn 4:12). The Apostle Paul speaks of God "who alone is immortal, whose

[1] The prohibition of images in Ex 20:4 and Dt 5:8 applies to idols, and was intended to warn human beings against creating a god for themselves who would reflect their own desires and expectations. Indirectly it also reminds us that our image of God will never be a complete image – either literally or metaphorically.

home is in inaccessible light" (1 Tm 6:16). At the same time, God has revealed himself in history, and human beings have over the centuries had experiences with God. These faith experiences, like experiences of any kind, cannot be expressed other than in images and metaphorical expressions: experiences, utterances and knowledge from a familiar domain (source domain) are transferred to the domain about which something is going to be said (target domain).

The experiences that people have had with God have been reflected in the Bible in countless metaphors, including: GOD IS THE KING, GOD IS A ROCK, GOD IS A FIRE, GOD IS THE SHEPHERD, GOD IS THE FATHER. These metaphors are not all equal to each other. Some metaphors are capable of being developed more systematically than others. Thus the metaphor GOD IS A ROCK says much about the trustworthiness of God, "I take refuge in him, my rock" (Ps 18:2), but nothing at all for instance about God's mercy or love. The metaphor GOD IS THE SHEPHERD, by contrast, says more about God's love and mercy. This metaphor immediately evokes a much wider range of associations than does GOD IS A ROCK. The first associations to which GOD IS THE SHEPHERD gives rise are a flock of sheep, a sheepdog, a shepherd's staff, and of course the shepherd himself, who has love and care for his sheep and who guides his sheep. If we look at the various metaphorical expressions that can be subsumed under this metaphor, then we find that these aspects of God can in fact be encountered in Scripture. In the famous Good Shepherd discourse (Jn 10:11-16), Jesus says about himself, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep" (Jn 10:11). This shows that the fact that God is shepherd is related to love and care. In the same discourse, Jesus also says, "And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and I must lead these too" (Jn 10:16). This reveals that the fact that God is shepherd involves leadership and that it is not limited to one particular fold, but ultimately encompasses all people. The fact that God is shepherd is therefore universal. The metaphor GOD IS THE SHEPHERD complements the metaphor GOD IS A ROCK: God is trustworthy in his care and love, and in leading his flock, and ultimately in leading the whole world. The different metaphors help us to understand more about God, and to better appreciate our life for God. We have seen in the first chapter that it makes a lot of difference whether you live with the metaphor GOD IS THE JUDGE or with GOD IS THE PHYSICIAN. The dominant metaphor to a considerable extent determines how believers ultimately live.

Although the metaphor GOD IS THE SHEPHERD is more comprehensive than GOD IS A ROCK, it is still a partial metaphor. We will need other metaphors to better understand the fullness of God. We can see in Scripture that both personal and impersonal metaphors are used for God. We can

immediately deduce from the multiplicity of metaphors used for God that God cannot be grasped by any single category, not even by the category of personhood. "God is more and God is different. Therefore, the Bible describes God by such a variety of metaphors that it is impossible to transform them to just one metaphor, not even the one that most Christians favour: God as father."[2]

Structural metaphors also occur in the Bible to express the relationship between God and his people, between Christ and the community of the faithful. Again there is a great abundance of metaphors, which together form a grid or a network, and together help us understand the unique identity of this community. Thus the community of people who belong to God is described metaphorically both in the Old and in the New Testament as a people (cf. Ex 19:6 and 1 P 2:9), and not, for example, as an army or a kindergarten class. Again, there is great variety in the language used to describe God and his people. Here too, the images used are derived from domains that were familiar to the audience, and each one emphasises some different aspect. Thus there are metaphors from agriculture: vineyard (cf. Is 5:1-7; Jn 15:1-5), farm (cf. 1 Co 3:9), and sheepfold (cf. Is 40:11; Ezk 34:11-12; Jn 10:1-5). The Apostle Paul uses the metaphor of the human body (cf. Rm 12:4-5; 1 Co 12:12-27) and shows with the body-head metaphor that the community forms an indissoluble bond with Christ as its head (cf. Col 2:19; Ep 4:15-16). Elsewhere, Paul speaks of an edifice (cf. 1 Co 3:9) or temple (cf. 1 Co 3:16). Every metaphor highlights a certain aspect of the relationship that God has with his people, and together they help us to achieve a deeper understanding of this relationship. Not infrequently, metaphors are used alongside each other to enhance and deepen the expressiveness of the experience or idea. As we will see below, Ep 5:21-33 mentions the metaphor of the body in conjunction with the bride metaphor.

Two metaphors are particularly important in the context of the current study: the marriage metaphor and the bride metaphor. Both metaphors appear in the Old Testament, but they can be clearly distinguished from each other. The marriage metaphor is used in the Old Testament to speak about the quality of the relationship between God and his chosen people. The covenant that God makes with the people of Israel on Mount Sinai, a

[2] Kristen Nielsen, "Metaphors and Biblical Theology," in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (BETL 187; ed. Pierre Van Hecke; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 264-273, at 264. Cf. also Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger, "Gottesbilder des Alten Testaments," in *Studien zum Alten Testament und seiner Hermeneutik* (SBAB 40; ed. Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005), 99-112, at 112; Brümmer, *The Model of Love,* 28.

covenant sealed in blood (Ex 24), has the character of a marriage.[3] The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea frequently use the marriage metaphor to illustrate, not the fidelity, but the infidelity of the people in its relationship with God. This infidelity, the worship of idols, is described in terms of adultery and harlotry that leave little to the imagination.[4] In addition to the marriage metaphor, the Old Testament also mentions the bride metaphor.

2.1.1. The bride metaphor in the Bible

The bride metaphor appears in the Old Testament in Hosea, Jeremiah, and Isaiah. It emerged during the time of the Babylonian exile and was also used in the post-exilic period, although it occurs less frequently than the marriage metaphor.

The period before the sealing of the covenant on Mount Sinai, and particularly the period before the exodus from Egypt up to the establishment of the covenant, is characterised as the time of the bridal days. This is so for instance at the beginning of the Book of Jeremiah: "YHWH says this: I remember the loyalty of your youth, the love of your bridal days, when you followed Me through the desert, through a land unsown" (Jr 2:2).[5]

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[3] In Rabbinic literature, the establishment of the covenant on Mount Sinai is often described as the actual marriage between God and his people. The Torah is regarded as the bridal treaty, with Moses as the bridesman, and God meets his people like a bridegroom meets his bride. Cf. Ethelbert Stauffer, "γάμέω, γάμος," *TWNT* 1:646-655, at 652.

[4] Cf. for instance Is 50:1; Jr 2:19-20; 3:6-13; Hos 2:4-15; Ezk 16; 23. Cf. for studies of the bride metaphor Nelly Stienstra, *YHWH is the Husband of his People: Analysis of a Biblical Metaphor with Special Reference to Translation* (Kampen: Kok, 1993); Brad E. Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Susan E. Haddox, *Metaphor and Masculinity in Hosea* (SBL 141; New York: Peter Lang, 2011).

[5] NJB, slightly adapted to bring it closer to the original. The bridal days are often described at greater length in rabbinic literature. Thus Rabbi Eliezer writes, "And Moses went forth and came to the camp of the Israelites, and he aroused the Israelites from their sleep, saying to them: Arise ye from your sleep, for behold, your God desires to give the Torah to you. Already the bridegroom wishes to lead the bride and to enter the bridal chamber. The hour has come for giving you the Torah, as it is said, 'And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God' (Ex. xix. 17). And the Holy One, blessed be He, also went forth to meet them; like a bridegroom who goes forth to meet the bride, so the Holy One, blessed be He, went forth to meet them to give them the Torah, as it is said, 'O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people (Ps. Ixviii. 7)." Gerald Friedlander, ed. and trans., *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer (The chapters*

Elsewhere the bride metaphor is used not to look back to a past period, but to look ahead to a future time. In the next section we will examine the following bride metaphors from the Old Testament more closely: Hos 2:21-22;[6] Jr 2:1-3; 2:32, 7:34;[7] Is 49:18; 61:10 and 62:5. We will also look at a short passage from Jl 2:14.

The pivotal aspect of the bride metaphor is God's relationship with his chosen people. It is not used anywhere in the Old Testament to announce the Messiah in the strict sense of this word; the image of the bridegroom is nowhere presented as the figure of the Messiah.[8] This does not mean that were no texts that, perhaps subsequently, received a Messianic interpretation; Psalm 45 may have been a case in point. We will examine Psalm 45 more closely in this light later on in this section. However, we will pass by the Song of Songs in this study as our focus is limited to prophetic literature.[9]

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of Rabbi Eliezer the Great): According to the text of the manuscript belonging to Abraham Epstein of Vienna (London, 1916), 322. In the first edition of this text, Moses is described as the friend of the bridegroom, "The best man came and led forth the bride just like a man who acts as best man to his companion." Ibid., 322.

[6] A number of English translations use a different division, for instance Hos 1:10-11, which is 2:1-2 in the Masoretic text; and Hos 2:1-23, which is 2:3-25 in the Masoretic text. We will follow the Masoretic numbering.

[7] I.e. the expression, "The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride" which occurs no fewer than four times in Jeremiah (Jr 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; 33:11) and once in the Prophet Baruch (Ba 2:23). We will examine Jr 7:34 as an exemplary case for these parallel expressions.

[8] Cf. Joachim Jeremias "νύμφη, νυμφίος," *TWNT* 4:1092-1099, at 1094. Joachim Gnilka, who studied this again in relation to a Qumran text (1QIs[a]), reached the same conclusion. Cf. Joachim Gnilka, "'Bräutigam' – spätjüdisches Messiaspredikat?" *TTZ* 69 (1960): 298-301. Important Old Testament images for the Messiah are King (e.g. 2 S 7:12-16; Zc 14:9), Prophet (e.g. Dt 18:15), the suffering Servant of the Lord (Is 52:13-15; 53:2-12) and Shepherd (Jr 3:15 and Ezk 34).

[9] The Song of Songs is a collection of love poems/songs about the love relationship between a man and a woman. We know very little about the origins of these poems/songs. It is certain that the Song of Songs was part of the Jewish canon in the first century A.D. There was much debate in rabbinic literature on the sacred character of this book and therefore on whether or not it could be part of the canon. The question as to whether the Song of Songs should be interpreted literally or allegorically was an important topic in these debates. The allegorical exegesis eventually became the received interpretation among Jewish biblical exegetes: the Song of Songs is about the love relationship between Israel and its God. Among Christian exegetes, Hippolytus of Rome (170-253) was one of the first to apply the Song of Songs to the relationship between Christ, the Bridegroom, and the Church, the Bride. The New Testament does not contain any immediate references to the Song of Songs. Given the complexity of the Song of Songs, both as regards its origins and its content and interpretation, given also

The New Testament also contains examples of use of the bride metaphor. Unlike in the Old Testament, it is used there not to describe the relationship between God and his people, but that between Christ and the community of those who believe in Him. The Synoptic Gospels and John, the Apostle Paul and the author of the Book of Revelation all use the image of the bridegroom and the bride. This chapter's section on the New Testament will successively discuss the following pericopes: 2 Co 11:1-4; Ep 5:21-33; Mk 2:18-22; Mt 22:1-14; 25:1-13; Jn 3:22-30; and Rv 18:23; 19:7-9; 21:2.9; 22:17. But we will begin with our inquiry into the bride metaphor in the Old Testament.

2.2. The bride metaphor in the Old Testament

As has already been noted, the bride metaphor does not occur often in the Old Testament. Hosea is the first prophet to use the bride metaphor in speaking about God and his people. Therefore, in this section the bride metaphor in Hosea will first be dealt with, followed by the metaphor in Jeremiah and Isaiah.[10]

2.2.1. The bride metaphor in Hosea

The prophet Hosea embarks on his prophetic task in Israel, the Northern Kingdom, during the last years of the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.). His prophetic activities do not begin before 760 B.C. and probably end around 724 B.C. [11] The central theme in Hosea's work is the relation

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the fact that the New Testament contains no references to the Song of Songs, and that the interpretation of this book as being about a love relationship between God and Israel and between Christ and the Church only emerged in the first and the third centuries respectively, the Song of Songs has not been included in this study. For an introduction to the Song of Songs that addresses many of the questions and problems mentioned here, see: Yair Zakovitch, *Das Hohelied* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2004), 30-106.

[10] The emphasis in this analysis will be on synchronous exegesis. I will examine the texts in question primarily in the context of the Bible book in question, and in the context of Scripture as a whole. Text-critical and redaction critical issues will be discussed only to the extent that they are relevant for the bride metaphor, or if the interpretation of the bride metaphor occasions this. My exegesis is based on the original text and on my own translation, and the sources used for my analysis are Biblical manuals, several prominent commentaries, and scholarly articles in English or German on specific sub-issues.

[11] Cf. for a brief introduction to the prophet Hosea and his work: Douglas Stuart, *Hosea – Jonah* (WBC 31; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 6-19; Archibald van Wieringen,

between God and his chosen people, in which Hosea concentrates on denouncing the unfaithfulness of the people.[12] The people have turned away from the Lord and have turned to other gods. Idolatry, including the worship of the fertility god Baal, is the order of the day.[13]

The Book of Hosea contains benedictions (cf. Hos 2:16-25; 14:1-8) as well as maledictions (cf. for instance Hos 3:4-5; 4:6; 5:7; 8:13-14). Because of the persistent unfaithfulness of the people, the maledictions are obviously in the majority. In the short term the people will be punished for their faithless deeds, but in the end God's love for his chosen people will finally prevail. Destruction and exile will be the people's share, before they will receive the benedictions. The Book of Hosea has seven of these eschatological benedictions: Hos 2:1-3; 2:16-25; 3:5; 6:1-3; 10:12; 11:8-11 and 14:1-8. In the second benediction the bride metaphor is used, which will now be further investigated.

2.2.1.1. Analysis of Hos 2:4-25

The Book of Hosea may be subdivided into two large parts, first a narrative part, consisting of the first three chapters, followed by a discursive part, consisting of the rest of the book.[14] The first narrative part has three narrators; it begins with a he-narrative (Hos 1:2-2:3), followed by a part in which the Lord Himself is the speaker (Hos 2:4-25), after which in the third part the prophet finally speaks (Hos 3:1-5).[15] The bride metaphor occurs in the part in which the Lord Himself speaks.

"Hosea," in: *Toen zond de Heer een profeet naar Israël: Het voor-exilisch profetisme van het Oude Testament* (eds. Erik Eynikel and Archibald van Wieringen; Baarn: Gooi en Sticht, 1996), 47-62.

[12] The relation with other nations as well as social criticism, which is also quite usual in the case of other prophets, are two other important themes. These are not relevant for this investigation, however, and therefore will not be dealt with. Anyway, in Hosea's criticism the emphasis is on worship and far less attention is paid to social chaos and the contrast between the rich and the poor.

[13] The fact that the idol Baal was served and worshipped by a large number of Israelites in those days probably has to do with the fact that Baal is the god of fertility. He provides rain, which is very important in a dry region and, as an almost natural consequence, he also provides offspring. "There was a tendency to accept him as the god who granted both the fruits of the earth and the fruits of the womb." Stienstra, *YHWH*, 99.

[14] In the literature there is a good deal of consensus where this division into two parts of the Book of Hosea is concerned. Cf. Van Wieringen, "Hosea," 50-51. I limit myself to the first part, because it is only there that the bride metaphor occurs.

[15] For this subdivision cf. ibid., 53-59. Other subdivisions are possible as well, for instance one in accordance with the outline of calamity followed by rescue: Hos 1:2-9

The part in which the Lord Himself speaks may again be subdivided into two parts: divorce proceedings with a surprise ending (Hos 2:4-17) and images of restoration (Hos 2:18-25).[16] In the prophecy of doom in the first part, the people are charged with unfaithfulness by means of the marriage metaphor (Hos 2:4-7). Subsequently three punishments are announced with metaphors from the agrarian world: 1) "I shall block her way with thorns, and wall her in to stop her in her tracks" (Hos 2:8); 2) "I shall take back my grain when it is due and my new wine, when the season for it comes. I shall withdraw my wool and my flax, which were to cover her naked body" (Hos 2:11); and 3) "I shall make her vines and fig trees derelict (…) I shall turn them into a jungle: wild animals will feed on them" (Hos 2:14). However, the prophecy of doom takes a surprising turn at the end, as it ends with restoration. (Hos 2:16-17).

"Therefore I am going to seduce her and lead her into the desert and speak to her heart" (Hos 2:16). This restoration is introduced by the adverb לָכֵן, *therefore*. One would expect some kind of final, terrible punishment. However, לָכֵן introduces just the opposite. The Lord will allure the people of Israel, his beloved, to come to Him and He will speak to her heart.[17] The verb פָּתָה, *seduce*, *allure*,[18] and the phrase "speak tenderly" or "speak to her heart" belong to the language of lovers. The image of the desert here points to the period of the exodus from Egypt, the period before the establishment of the covenant on Mount Sinai, during which the people learned to love the Lord. "*Wooing* Israel, *speaking to her heart*, and *bringing her to the*

(calamity) and Hos 2:1-3 (rescue); Hos 2:4-15 (calamity) and Hos 2:16-25 (rescue); Hos 3:1-4 (calamity) and Hos 3:5 (rescue).

[16] In the literature various subdivisions occur. Thus J. Andrew Dearman opts for the division: Charge against the mother as sign of the case against Israel, Hos 2:2-13 [MT 4-15], and Reversal of the judgment against Israel and its transformation, Hos 2:14-23 [MT 16-25]. Cf. J. Andrew Dearman, *The Book of Hosea* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), 106-131. I follow Stuart, *Hosea*, 41-62. Stuart opts for distinguishing Hos 2:18-25 [16-23] from Hos 2:4-17 [2-15], because in this last part censure no longer occurs but only the praises of the new age are sung.

[17] "'Therefore,' a word that establishes connection and continuity, becomes in this poem a pivot between antitheses and a sign of discontinuity. It does not further one argument but undecidable supports irreconcilable arguments and associates indiscriminately with threat and promise." Yvonne Sherwood, "Boxing Gomer: Controlling the Deviant Woman in Hosea 1-3," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* (ed. A. Brenner; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 105.

[18] The verb פָּתָה may be used in both a positive and a negative sense. For instance in Ex 22:15 and Jb 31:9 the seducing takes place in the context of adultery. It is always the context that makes clear in which sense the verb is used. Cf. also Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, 121.

wilderness are ways to reprise the national identity as a second bridal period."[19]

The central message of this prophecy of doom is that although God will punish the people for their unfaithfulness, He will also restore the covenant, "for he has never ceased to love her."[20] Therefore the announcements of punishment are never absolute, but every time we may discern that God wants to win back his beloved people for Himself (Hos 2:4; 8-9; 15). This prophecy already makes clear that God is not unmoved by his people's lot. His attitude is one of love, of impassioned *agape*, which will later come to light in all its fullness in the Person of Christ. "Hosea thus presents a metaphorical picture that has some referents in Christ himself."[21]

In the subsequent oracle of salvation (Hos 2:18-25) four images follow, in which the nature of the relationship between God and his people Israel is described after the restoration of the covenant. This is the development of what has already been announced in Hos 2:17, namely that it will be "as when she was young, as on the day when she came up from Egypt". The bride metaphor occurs in the third image (Hos 2:21-22).

The oracle of salvation begins with the introductory בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, *in that day* (Hos 2:18). This introductory phrase has already been used before, in Hos 1:5, and occurs twice again, in Hos 2:20 and 2:23. The phrase "in that day" does not indicate a possible period of change that Hosea expects to occur during his lifetime but is synonymous with a new age that will come. In this sense "in that day" is to be interpreted eschatologically.[22]

The first image builds on the marriage metaphor (Hos 2:18-19). The unfaithful people have returned to the Lord. The idol Baal will no longer be worshipped, but once and forever God will be recognised and venerated as the one true God. The name of Baal will not even be remembered anymore. The restoration consists in the people living in accordance with the true covenant, in which there are no other gods at the expense of the Lord (Ex 20:3; Dt 5:7) and the names of foreign gods will not be mentioned anymore (Ex 23:13).[23] In this covenant the people call on God as אִישִׁי, *my husband.* This metaphor expresses great intimacy between God and His people, an intimacy with a degree of mutuality that was unknown in the Canaanite veneration of the gods at that time.[24]

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[19] Ibid., 121. Dearman's italic.
[20] Stuart, *Hosea*, 54.
[21] Ibid., 54.
[22] Ibid., 57.
[23] Ibid., 57-58
[24] Cf. Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, 124. The word בַּעַל first of all has the very general meaning of *lord* or *owner*. As the name of a god in the Old Testament בַּעַל usually

The second image is one of heavenly peace (Hos 2:20). The images used here link up with the images of the covenant that God had established after the Flood (Gn 9:8-17). The essence of the restoration is that God creates a world in which, on the one hand, humans and animals will live in harmony with one another and in which, on the other hand, there will be lasting peace. This heavenly peace is the reversal of the doom announced in the preceding prophecy of doom (Hos 2:5; 14). Finally the covenant that is made here, is not made עִם, *with,* the people of God but *on behalf of* the people of God. The formulation *on behalf of* probably indicates that the covenant transcends the people of Israel: "Hosea has already prophesied the existence of a new kind of Israel, very different from the one he knew in the eighth century B.C."[25]

Subsequently in the third image the bride metaphor is mentioned (Hos 2:21-22). Here a metaphor appears that is completely new for the people of Israel. This image is not about reconciliation, the unfaithful wife who is again embraced, rather this image is about restoration. The former marriage is annulled and the Lord takes His people once again as His bride.

2:21 I shall betroth you to Myself for ever
I shall betroth you in uprightness and justice,
and faithful love and tenderness
2:22 Yes, I shall betroth you to Myself in loyalty
and in the knowledge of YHWH.

As often as three times we hear וְאֵרַשְׂתִּיךְ, *I shall betroth you*, from the Hebrew verb אָרַשׂ, *to gain as bride*. The Lord Himself is the subject here: He gains the people of Israel as his bride. In the Old Testament this is the only passage where a betrothal of God with his people is explicitly mentioned.[26]

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stands for the Canaanite deity, on its own or in combination with another name, such as for instance *Baal-Berith* in Jg 8:33 or *Baal-Peor* in Nb 25:3. On a few occasions God Himself is also called בַּעַל, as in Jr 3:14; 31:32. In relation to a woman the word בַּעַל also has the meaning of husband (Gn 20:3). Compared to the other Hebrew word אִישׁ for husband, the use of בַּעַל rather emphasises the fact that the wife is subordinate to her husband, whereas אִישׁ is more neutral. However, 2 S 11:26 shows that אִישׁ and בַּעַל are quite close to one another; when Uriah's wife hears that her husband, אִישׁ, is dead, she mourns for her בַּעַל. The fact that in Hos 2:18 the words בַּעַל and אִישׁ are so close to one another serves to emphasise that in future there will be no uncertainty as to who will be the real husband of the people of Israel. Cf. J. Kühlewein, "אִישׁ, *'îš*, Mann," *THAT* 1:130-138 and J. Kühlewein, "בַּעַל, *ba'al*, Besitzer," *THAT* 1:327-333.

[25] Stuart, *Hosea*, 58.

[26] Although the betrothal is never explicitly referred to elsewhere, there are other passages in the Old Testament, where a period of betrothal is referred to, being the

The verb אָרַשׂ calls up the way in which a betrothal was brought about in ancient Israel. It was an arrangement between two families, the bridegroom paying a מֹהַר, *bride price*, to the father of the bride. The payment of the bride price effects a commitment with a legal status that is equivalent to marriage.[27] We find this for instance in the case of David, who insists on his wife Michal, the daughter of king Saul, being restored to him, as he acquired her for a hundred foreskins of Philistines (1 S 18:25; 2 S 3:14).[28]

About YHWH acquiring Israel as His bride, we first learn that it will be עוֹלָם, *forever*. Normally speaking the bridal period is of limited duration, as it passes into marriage. This is not so in the case of this metaphor. In fact it is explicitly stated that Israel will be the bride forever.[29] How should this be understood? An important aspect of the bride during the bridal period is her virginity and her unqualified desire for the bridegroom. In this way forever expresses the fact that in the new age the people will always be virginal, that is to say free from every kind of idolatry, fully and undividedly devoted to the Lord. The undivided devotion to the Lord is an important element in the salvation prophecies of various prophets. No idolatry whatsoever will be practised anymore.[30] This quality of the relationship will be irrevocable and permanent.

Acquiring the bride happens at the moment in which the bridegroom has paid the bride price to the bride's father. The question now is whether a bride price plays a role in the metaphor in the book of Hosea. This depends on the way the preposition בְּ in Hos 2:21 is interpreted. This preposition may mean *with* or *by means of* and in that case we might be dealing with a bride price. However, it may also mean *accompanying* and then it is not a matter of a bride price but of the blessings that will accompany the wedding.

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period between the exodus from Egypt and the establishment of the Covenant on Mount Sinai, as in Jr. 2:2 and Hos 2:16-17.

[27] Cf. J. Kühlewein, "אָרַשׂ, *'rs*, anverloben," *THAT* 1:240-242. Grace Emmerson says regarding the practice of giving *môhar*: "the translation 'marriage present' represents it more adequately than does 'bride price'". Grace Emmerson, "Women in Ancient Israel," in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives Essays by Members of the Society for the Old Testament Studies* (ed. R.E. Clements; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 382.

[28] In this quotation David does not do justice to himself, as in 1 S 18:27 he turns up with 200 foreskins, twice the number demanded. As had been agreed, Saul then gave his daughter Michal to David in marriage.

[29] In the literature before the Exile עוֹלָם does not yet have the clearly eschatological meaning that it later has in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. It is, however, clear that it indicates qualitative permanence and irrevocability. Cf. E. Jenni, "עוֹלָם, *'olam*, Ewigkeit," *THAT* 2:228-243, at 233-234; 236-239.

[30] See for instance Jr 30:8; Ezk 14:1-11.

J. Andrew Dearman begins by opting for the bride price, which he does on the basis of the parallel in 2 S 3:14. He regards the gifts provided by the bridegroom as a basic building block of the new marriage covenant. At the same time Dearman also makes a proviso when he says that the metaphor should not be overcharged and we should not, for instance, ask about the bride's father and family, to whom the gifts will be given.[31] Douglas Stuart points out both possible interpretations, indicating the difficulty that in the case of a bride price the Lord pays this to Himself, as the husband and the father of Israel. Stuart opts for the meaning *accompanying* as "more prominent".[32] Stuart is of the opinion that the five gifts of צֶדֶק, *righteousness*, מִשְׁפָּט, *justice*, חֶסֶד, *covenant loyalty*, רַחַם, *compassion*, and, אֱמוּנָה, *faithfulness*, to which he adds עוֹלָם, *forever*, as the sixth gift, characterise the new marriage covenant and "reflect the deep sense of social justice that set orthodox Israel apart from its less socially-concerned neighbours in the ancient world."[33]

Although several present-day authors see a bride price in the five gifts,[34] this interpretation is to be carefully considered. At least three points of criticism may be raised. First of all, although a parallel with 2 S 3:14 may indeed be pointed out, the big difference is that David, through his messengers, speaks directly to Ishbaal, son of Saul, about the bride price which he, David, the bridegroom, has given to Saul, the father of the bride. In Hosea the father of the bride is not in the picture. Here God, the bridegroom, does not address the bride's father, but rather speaks directly to the people as his bride. So the words are addressed to the bride and not to the bride's father, with whom one normally speaks about the bride price. Secondly, assuming that this is a matter of a bride price all the same, it is very difficult to decide who is the bride's father and to whom the bridal gifts are given. We will have to decide in the end that God, being both the bridegroom and the Father of the bride, gives a present to Himself. The third point I would like to mention is that the five gifts belong to the attributes and qualities of God.[35] How are we to visualise that these attributes and

[31] Cf. Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, 127-128. Wilhelm Rudolph also makes mention of a bride price. Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph, *Hosea*, (KAT 13/1; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1966), 80-81.
[32] Stuart, *Hosea*, 59.
[33] Ibid., 59.
[34] Cf. among others Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, 127-128; and Rudolph, *Hosea*, 80-81.
[35] The five gifts mentioned concern core concepts from the Old Testament. The concepts צֶדֶק, *righteousness*, and מִשְׁפָּט, *justice*, often occur as a pair, for the first time in Gn 18:19, but also for instance in 2 S 8:15; 1 K 10:9; Jr 23:5; Ezk 18:5. Here and elsewhere צֶדֶק and מִשְׁפָּט are used in connection with human action. However, it is also

qualities are given as presents? Does God renounce these Himself or does He only give them in part, and how then should we visualise that? Therefore, in my opinion, considering the five gifts of *righteousness*, *justice*, *covenant loyalty, compassion* and *faithfulness* to be the bride price is overcharging the metaphor. The interpretation by Stuart, who speaks of gifts that will accompany the marriage, is therefore easier to understand.

In addition to paying a bride price to the father, the bridegroom also gave presents to his bride (cf. Gn 24:53). These presents belonged to the bride, but the bridegroom had the usufruct of them and in the case of a divorce part of the bridal gifts were returned to the bridegroom. With the gifts of *righteousness*, *justice*, *covenant loyalty, compassion* and *faithfulness* God, the Bridegroom, acquires and embraces his bride, the people of Israel. The gifts are, as it were, put on the bride like jewels. Thus Bridegroom and bride are united and thus the bride also gets to *know* her Bridegroom (Hos 2:22).

This יָדַע, *know*, is not a matter of intellectual knowing, in the sense of having knowledge about certain qualities of God. In Gn 4:1 יָדַע has the sense of sexual intercourse: "The man had intercourse with his wife Eve."[36] In the domain of the bride metaphor יָדַע, in this interpretation, might point to the consummation of the marriage, thus making God and the people of Israel once again husband and wife. If this were the case, however, God would not have spoken about Himself in the third person, using the Name of God, but rather in the first person: "then you shall know Me". If God Himself speaks of *knowing* and in the process uses his own Name in the third person, this can also mean that one will attain knowledge of the Lord and consequently

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said of God that He is צֶדֶק and מִשְׁפָּט, as for instance in Dt 32:4 and Jb 37:23, or that He grants צֶדֶק and מִשְׁפָּט, as for instance in Is 33:5 and Jr 9:23 (24). In Jr 9:24 צֶדֶק and מִשְׁפָּט occur in combination with חֶסֶד, *covenant loyalty*. In Hosea the concept חֶסֶד occurs six times (Hos 2:21; 4:1; 6:4; 6:6; 10:12; 12:6). All through the Old Testament the word חֶסֶד is frequently used, almost half of the total number occurring in the Book of Psalms. However, חֶסֶד does not occur very often in prophetic literature, apart from the Books of Hosea and Jeremiah. Cf. H.J. Stoebe, "חָסָד, *hæsæd*, Güte," *THAT* 1:600-622, at 601. חֶסֶד is a rich concept with meanings like *mercy*, *benevolence*, *grace* and *love*. It may be used in both a profane and a religious context. In the important divine revelation in Ex 34:6 God's חֶסֶד is mentioned. In Hos 2:21 it is brought up together with רַחַם, *compassion*. Although the two words are related in meaning, חֶסֶד implies mutuality, whereas in the case of רַחַם it is more a matter of one-way traffic. God has mercy on humans; the great One looks graciously on the little ones. Finally the concept אֱמוּנָה, *faithfulness*, is used both in connection with God and with humans. Thus for instance the praise of God's faithfulness is sung in the Song of Moses, together with the two other qualities צֶדֶק and מִשְׁפָּט. Cf. Dt 32:4.

[36] Also cf. Nb 31:18 and 1 K 1:4.

of his nature: "You will see what the Name of Yahweh means, all the things that this Name encompasses."[37]

The gifts presented to the bride will bring about that the people will know the Lord as He is. The people of Israel will begin to experience the nature of God and come to a full and all-encompassing communion with God. In this communion there is no room for the idol Baal, nor for any other form of idolatry. Here we may already discern what Jesus will present as the first of the two Great Commandments: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind" (Mt 22:37).

The fourth and last pronouncement (Hos 2:23-25) recapitulates what the new covenant will bring about. It is dominated by the verb עָנָה, *respond*, that occurs no less than five times. A mutual responding between the Creator and the land is described, while the Creator and the land listen to each other. The Lord shows Himself as the God of the weather, who will finally grant fertility. Here it is also made clear that what the Israelites wanted from the idol Baal, is only to be found with the Lord. At the end the pronouncement comes back to the children's names. Jezreel is granted fertility and the other two names will be reversed. God will recognise the people as "My people" and the people will answer God with "my God".

2.2.1.2. The bride metaphor in Hos 2:21-22

The bride metaphor in Hosea is brought up in the context of an oracle of salvation in which God Himself speaks by the mouth of His prophet. Whereas the people have drifted far away from God as a result of their idolatry, God speaks, through the prophet Hosea, about a new age, in which the people of Israel will belong to Him in a new way, fully and undividedly. On the basis of the analysis of the bride metaphor in Hos 2:21-22, in the context of on the one hand a people that is unfaithful to God and on the other a God who announces restoration to this people in spite of their apostasy, the following metaphors may be formulated.

In the bride metaphor God addresses his people as his bride, the bride that He will acquire for Himself. Thus the people will be the bride and God Himself is the Bridegroom. This results in two metaphors: THE PEOPLE IS THE BRIDE OF YHWH and, as a result YHWH IS THE BRIDEGROOM OF HIS PEOPLE. In acquiring the bride God takes the initiative. This initiative is directed at a people with whom He had established a covenant before, which was broken by the unfaithfulness and idolatry of the people. The Lord intends to restore

[37] "Du wirst erkennen was es mit dem Namen Jahwe auf sich hat, was alles dieser in sich begreift." Rudolph, *Hosea*, 81.

this covenant. Within the context of the bride metaphor this involves the restoration of the virginity of the people, leading to the metaphor YHWH RESTORES THE VIRIGINITY OF HIS PEOPLE.[38]

The Lord takes his people as his bride *forever*. This restoration implies the following metaphor: THE VIRGINITY OF THE PEOPLE IS FOREVER. In acquiring the bride, the bridegroom gives his bride a bridal gift. In Hosea's bride metaphor the gifts of *righteousness*, *justice*, *covenant loyalty, compassion* and *faithfulness* are mentioned. We have seen that the Bridegroom, as it were, decks out his bride with these gifts. This leads to the metaphor: RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE, LOYALTY, COMPASSION AND FAITHFULNESS ARE THE BRIDAL GIFTS OF THE BRIDEGROOM. Finally we have seen that as a result of the gifts the bride gets to know the Bridegroom. This knowing means acquiring knowledge of the nature of God. In this new bridal community there will no longer be room for the idol Baal or for any other form of idolatry, on the basis of the five gifts mentioned. Here we discern the metaphor: THE PEOPLE OF GOD IS UNDIVIDEDLY ONE WITH THE BRIDEGROOM.

2.2.2. The bride metaphor in Jeremiah

The Book of the prophet Jeremiah is the longest book of the Bible. Considering the length of the Book of Jeremiah, the uncertainty regarding the original text[39] and questions with respect to authorship and other themes, this book calls up many historical and theological questions.[40] We already

[38] Nelly Stienstra also mentions this metaphor and arrives at it within the framework of the marriage metaphor. Cf. Stienstra, *YHWH*, 121-122. She fails to note, however, that what is at stake here is not a marriage metaphor, but much rather a bride metaphor.

[39] The Book of Jeremiah has been handed down in both a Masoretic and a Greek text variant, which differ rather significantly, both where the amount of text is concerned as well as in the way the passages are grouped. In the course of the last decades many publications have appeared with regard to the question which text variant is the more original. Nowadays a majority of the investigators tend to regard the text of the Septuagint as the more original one, assuming it to go back to another, hypothesised, Hebrew text. The basis for this hypothesis is formed by a Hebrew text fragment found in Qumran, Manuscript 4Q71, which largely corresponds with the Greek translation. For a short survey of the history of modern research on the Book of Jeremiah see: Łukasz Popko, *Marriage Metaphor and Feminine Imagery in Jer 2:1-4:2: A Diachronic Study Based on the MT and LXX* (EBib Nouvelle série 70; Pendé: Gabalda, 2015), 29-66. I here follow Georg Fischer, who seriously doubts the option for the Greek text variant and rather opts for the Masoretic text as the older version. Cf. Georg Fischer, *Jeremia 1-25* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2005), 39-46.

[40] For a survey of the most important points of discussion and the various positions see: Georg Fischer, *Jeremia: Der Stand der theologischen Diskussion* (Darmstadt: WBG,

come across the bride metaphor, which is of importance for this investigation, in the second chapter, Jr 2:2 and Jr 2:32. In the rest of the book the bride metaphor may crop up in a saying about the singing for bride and bridegroom, which occurs no less than four times, as well as once in the Book of Baruch: Jr 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; 33:11 and Ba 2:23.

The time in which Jeremiah prophesies is a time of great and radical changes. The fall of Jerusalem (587 B.C) marks the definite end of the monarchy of Juda, the throne of David, and the beginning of the Babylonian Exile. Large parts of the population, especially influential people, are banished to Babylon.

The whole of the Book of Jeremiah is overshadowed by the treat of the fall of Jerusalem and the imminent exile. It is, however, not easy to divide the book into sections.[41] Particular for this investigation it is important to position the second chapter, in which the bridal metaphor is mentioned, in the whole of the book. It is clear that Jr 1 is an introductory chapter to the whole of the Book of Jeremiah. As from Jr 2 until the end of the book, the catastrophes announced are described and explained extensively and emphatically, up till the fall of Jerusalem and the people being carried off into exile. In spite of all the disasters that are predicted, God's speaking by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah begins with a reminder of a joyful past, the faithfulness of the people in her youth, the love of her bridal days (Jr 2:2).

2.2.2.1. Analysis of Jr 2:1-3

After the introductory text of Jr 1, we come to Jeremiah's first prophecy. This consists of a series of poetic texts comprising five chapters, Jr 2-6. In Jr 6:27-30, the end of chapter 6, Jeremiah is again personally addressed with

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2007). In this book we also find an extensive survey of the various positions regarding the question as to the original text of Jeremiah. Cf. ibid., 17-53. For another survey see Rüdiger Liwak, "Vierzig Jahre Forschung zum Jeremiabuch I: Grundlagen," *ThR* 76 (2011): 131-179.

[41] On account of the length of the Book of Jeremiah and the many repetitions, there are authors who think that there is absolutely no structure in the book. Cf. Konrad Schmid, *Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches: Untersuchungen zur Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Jer 30-33 im Kontext des Buches* (WMANT 72; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996), 327. On the other hand there are also those who recognise a very clear structure. One of these is Siegfried Hermann, who does admit that for instance the first twenty five chapters have been put together from many small collections of independent texts and that few changes have been made but states that these "in einer einigermaßen überzeugender Ordnung gebracht wurden". Siegfried Herrmann, *Jeremia: Der Prophet und das Buch* (EdF 271; Darmstadt: WBG, 1990), 39.

regard to his mission and thus this forms, together with chapter 1, in which Jeremiah is called and sent, the frame in which the first prophecy is spoken. This delimitation is natural, as in Jr 7 a fairly long prose text follows.[42] Within these first five chapters two main parts may be distinguished: Jr 2:1-4:4 in which the unfaithfulness of Israel is denounced, and Jr 4:5-6:26 in which Jeremiah speaks about the enemy from the north, and the fall of Jerusalem is announced.[43] In the first main part the unfaithfulness of the people is frequently referred to by means of the marriage metaphor, cf. among other texts Jr 2:19-20; 3:1-5 and 3:6-13. At the beginning, however, we encounter an instance of the bridal metaphor. This bridal metaphor forms part of the first cycle of poetic texts, Jr 2:1-13, within which Jr 2:1-3 forms an entity of its own.[44]

Jr 2:1 begins with a *Wortereignisformel* (word-event formula): "The word of YHWH came to me."[45] The same formula ("The word of YHWH came to me") is also used in the story of the calling of Jeremiah (Jr 1:4.11.13) and thus links the first to the second chapter. It is followed by a command: "Go and shout this in Jerusalem's ears" (Jer 2:2a). The expression "shout in Jerusalem's ears" is to be found only in Jeremiah and only in this place. On a number of important occasions in the history of salvation we do find the formulation "read in the ears", however, for instance when the Covenant is established (Ex 24:7) and when the Law of Moses is given to the Levitical priests (Dt 31:11) and when the Law is read out during the reign of King Josiah, after the Book of the Law has been

[42] There are a few prose passages in Jr 2-6 but these are all very short.

[43] Cf. for this subdivision Fischer, *Jeremia 1-25*, 145.

[44] There is no consensus as to the exact demarcation. Jr 2:1 is generally considered to be an editorial addition. From that point onwards, however, the opinions strongly diverge. There is a reasonable consensus that Jr 2:2-3 forms an entity, whether or not it belongs to the following passage, Jr 2:4-13. For a survey of the various positions see Heinz-Dieter Neef, "Gottes Treue und Israels Untreue: Aufbau und Einheit von Jeremia 2,2-13," *ZAW* 99 (1987): 40-42.

[45] The formula "Word of the Lord (YHWH)" first occurs in the Book of Jeremiah in this way. In the authentic words of prophets in the eighth century B.C. the phrase "Word of the Lord (YHWH)" does not occur. However, in the later books of the prophets the formula occurs quite frequently. We are faced here with a theological concept. The phrase "Word of the Lord (YHWH)" results from reflection on the speaking of the prophet. It so happens that the speaking of the prophet begins by arousing either faith or doubt. The listener has to relate to this. If in the context of concrete historical events, the words of the prophet are recognised to be true – in the case of Jeremiah because of the fall of Jerusalem – the spoken word of the prophet is really understood as a word of God. The concept "Word of the Lord (YHWH)" arose from this experience. Cf. Christoph Levin, "Das Wort Jahwes an Jeremia: Zur ältesten Redaktion der Jeremianischen Sammlung," *ZThK* 101 (2004): 257-280.

found in the temple (2 K 23:2). This reference to the sense of hearing emphasises the most important notion with respect to the faith, which is hearing, right at the beginning of the Book of Jeremiah.[46]

Even before Jeremiah speaks about the present situation and about the disaster that will come over the people, those to whom the prophecy of the Lord is addressed may hear a reminder. This remembering is not simply a matter of thinking back to, but has the connotation of "emphasize a particular past action with present consequences"[47] and it is also a remembrance with hope: "This remembrance of God constitutes the unshakeable foundation for hope in Jeremiah."[48] The remembrance is a good remembrance:

> 2:2b I remember the loyalty of your youth,
> the love of your bridal days,
> when you followed Me through the desert,
> through a land unsown.[49]

This remembrance is in sharp contrast with the present situation, in which the people have committed two crimes: "They have abandoned Me, the fountain of living water, and dug water-tanks for themselves, cracked water-tanks that hold no water" (Jr 2:13).

"The loyalty of your youth" and "the love of your bridal days" form a parallelism. The word נָעוּר, *youth*, used of a woman, refers to the period before marriage (cf. Lv 22:13) and thus may be regarded as the bridal period.[50] Of this period it is said that it was characterised by חֶסֶד, *loyalty*, on the part of the people, and that the bridal period was characterised by אַהֲבָה, *love*. It is remarkable that the חֶסֶד of the people towards God is mentioned. In Jeremiah this only occurs here. In other places God expresses His חֶסֶד with respect to the people.[51] Here Jeremiah links up with Hosea, where the

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[46] The call to hear and to listen will come back many times in the Book of Jeremiah. Cf. among other texts Jr 2:4; 5:21; 7:2; 7:32; 10;1; 11:4; 13:15; 17:20; 19:3; 21:11; 31:10; 42:15; 44:24.

[47] William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 82.

[48] "Dieses Gedenken Gottes bildet das unerschütterliche Fundament für Hoffnung in Jeremia." Fischer, *Jeremia 1-25*, 155.

[49] NJB slightly adapted to bring it closer to the original.

[50] Cf. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 83.

[51] Cf. among other texts Jr 9:23, where חֶסֶד is mentioned together with צֶדֶק and מִשְׁפָּט; or Jr 31:3 and 33:11, where the חֶסֶד for the people is said to be everlasting.

people's חֶסֶד with respect to the Lord is mentioned more often.[52] Normally speaking חֶסֶד is not a reciprocal concept, but rather a case of one-way traffic: it concerns a favour or a boon that a superior may bestow on a lower ranking person. Thus Jacob, on his deathbed, asks Joseph to grant him חֶסֶד and not bury him in Egypt (Gn 49:29). Another good example is the case of Jonathan and David, in which the חֶסֶד shifts. When David is not yet king, in his distress he asks Jonathan, king Saul's son, for חֶסֶד (1 S 20:8), and in that same conversation Jonathan in his turn asks David for חֶסֶד, as the latter may be of help to him in the future (1 S 20:15).[53] Although the חֶסֶד of the people to God is of a different order than God's חֶסֶד to the people, we may state that here חֶסֶד "means the devotion and the limitless trust, with which the young people of Israel followed Yahweh in the wilderness."[54] The second word, אַהֲבָה, *love*, has a rich spectrum of meanings and may be used both in human relationships and in the relationship between God and man. Unlike in the case of חֶסֶד, here mutuality plays a role. In Jr 31:3 we hear of an eternal love for Israel, but the people are also charged to love the Lord their God (cf. Dt 6:5; 7:9). Because loving the Lord is the first of the Ten Commandments, we may call love, together with חֶסֶד, the foundation of the bridal relationship. "Jeremiah's use of the term here [i.e. love] then suggests, as much as חֶסֶד does, a love of Yahweh for Israel marked by fidelity, and a love of Israel for Yahweh marked by adherence to covenantal stipulations."[55]

In connection with this love of the bridal period the Lord refers to the "desert," "a land unsown." Here the period of the exodus from Egypt until the establishment of the covenant is specifically indicated. The establishment of the covenant itself is metaphorically regarded as the marriage. This marriage covenant is "born and nourished in youthful love that could not be diminished or weakened by the experience of wilderness."[56] Thus, remembering the bridal period is not longingly recalling the hardships and the tribulations in the desert, nor is the desert

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[52] Cf. Hos 4:1; 6:4.6; 10:12; 12:7. It is only in Hosea 2:21 that the חֶסֶד of God is mentioned.

[53] Cf. Michael V. Fox, "Jeremiah 2:2 and the 'Desert Ideal,'" *CBQ* 35 (1973): 441-450, at 443-444. Fox, however, considers it impossible that the people of Israel should show חֶסֶד to God. He regards חֶסֶד in Jr 2:2 to be a genetivus objectivus so that what is intended is after all God's love for Israel. Cf. ibid., 442-446. However, others consider this problematic. Cf. Neef, "Gottes Treue," 44, footnote 38.

[54] "Die Hingabe und das schrankenlose Vertrauen meint, mit der das junge Israel Jahwe in der Wüste folgte." Ibid., 44.

[55] Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 83.

[56] Peter C. Craigie et al., *Jeremiah 1-25* (WBC 26; Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 24.

itself extolled.[57] It is true, however, that the bridal love has proved itself in the desert, in spite of all hardships and deprivations.

After a brief introduction, Jr 2:3 continues with an agrarian metaphor: "Israel was sacred to YHWH; the first fruits of his harvest; all who ate this incurred guilt, disaster befell them, YHWH declares." After the very personal bridal metaphor, evidence of intimacy, the next passage is more factual and more aloof. The speaker also switches from second person to third person. Israel, not in the sense of just the Northern Kingdom but meaning the whole community that was originally referred to by this name,[58] is confirmed as God's chosen people. With the word קֹדֶשׁ, *holy* or *sacred*, the special status of the people is emphasised, even meaning participation in the nature of God.[59] This being holy and belonging to God also expresses the exclusiveness of the relation between God and his people. The following agrarian metaphor supports this. Just as the first-fruits of the harvest are reserved for God (Dt 26:1-11), so the people of Israel also belongs to God, "Israel, the First-Fruits of the world of the nations."[60] Just like no one can eat of the first-fruits of the harvest with impunity, so disaster befalls all who assault the people of God; he or she incurs guilt.[61] A last phrase ends the first part and confirms it as being true: "YHWH declares" (Jr 2:3).

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[57] In the twentieth century the "Desert motif" was a topic of discussion for many decades: did the prophets, faced with tremendous apostasy, have something like a nomadic ideal for Israel? Texts like Hos 2:15-17 and Jr 2:2 were considered to provide an affirmative answer to this question. Only a return to the desert would make it possible to regain the true worship of God. Research has shown that the desert is not idealised anywhere in the Bible, on the contrary it is rather experienced as a place of evil and death, of course apart from the fact that at important moments in history God reveals Himself in the desert. The prophet Jeremiah, too, does not ever describe the desert as an ideal place to live, nor does he describe a nomadic existence as an ideal. "For Jeremiah the ideal is the attitude that Israel showed Yahweh while wandering the desert. Jeremiah wants Israel to return to following after her true husband." Michael DeRoche, "Jeremiah 2:2-3 and Israel's Love for God during the Wilderness Wanderings" *CBQ* 45 (1984): 364-376, at 375. Also see the complete article by Michael DeRoche: ibid., 364-376 and Fox, "Jeremiah 2:2," 441-450. Łukasz Popko notes that Jr 2:6-7 itself implies that the desert never has been the ideal: "God led is people through the terrifying wasteland to give them fruitful territory." Popko, *Marriage Metaphor*, 294. For further reference to literature concerning this theme: cf. ibid., 294, footnote 670.

[58] Cf. Fischer, *Jeremia 1-25*, 155.

[59] We also encounter the qualification 'holy' in Ex 19:6. Cf. Fischer, *Jeremia 1-25*, 155.

[60] Craigie et al., *Jeremiah 1-25*, 24.

[61] Cf. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 85.

2.2.2.2. The bride metaphor in Jr 2:2

The bridal metaphor is mentioned at the beginning of the Book of Jeremiah. If we leave out of consideration Jr 1, which mainly serves to introduce the prophet and to confirm him in his office of prophet, the prophecy of Jeremiah begins with the bridal metaphor. The main line of the Book of Jeremiah is a dark and pessimistic line, leading to death and exile. However, before God makes his complaint by the mouth of the prophet, He first calls up a memory, a memory that is dear to Him: "The divine memory was of pure love, before the religious and the political perversions of love had arisen in later times to spoil the continuing relationship."[62] He speaks about the bridal period and the way in which the people have followed Him. On the basis of this we may first distil once again the two metaphors that we have already recognised in the Book of Hosea: YHWH IS THE BRIDGEROOM OF HIS PEOPLE and THE PEOPLE IS THE BRIDE OF YHWH. It is said that the relationship is characterized by faithfulness and love. This brings us to the metaphor: FAITHFULNESS AND LOVE IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE BRIDAL RELATIONSHIP.

The bride is said to have followed the bridegroom in the desert, a land unsown. This results in the metaphor: THE BRIDE FOLLOWS THE BRIDEGROOM. The previous analysis has shown that life in the desert is not an ideal in itself, but that in the desert, the place of hardships and tribulations, the bride has proved her love and faithfulness for the bridegroom. This leads to the metaphor: HARDSHIPS AND TRIBULATIONS IS DESERT.

2.2.2.3. Analysis of Jer 2:32

In Jr 2:32 we again encounter the bride metaphor. As has already been pointed out, the second chapter consists of a series of texts that are mainly poetical. With the exception of the verses Jr 2:1-3, which have already been dealt with and which call up positive memories of a previous bridal period, Jr 2 is one extensive accusation on the part of God regarding the unfaithfulness of Israel. By means of many rhetorical questions (Jr 2:5.11.17.18.21.23.28.29.31) God tries on the one hand to understand how the people came to be unfaithful, and on the other to bring them to repentance. Leaving the Lord (Jr 2.13.17.19) is an important theme, which also returns in the accusation of their following futility (Jr 2:5) and idols (Jr 2:23.25) and finds its climax in forgetting the Lord. This forgetting returns in the bride metaphor in Jr 2:32.

[62] Craigie et al., *Jeremiah 1-25*, 24.

What is true of the first part of Jr 2:1-13 and also holds for all of Jr 2-6, is also true of the remainder of Jr 2, namely that is not evident how Jr 2 is structured. For this investigation this is not important, however. It is important, though, to know that the bride metaphor in Jr 2:32 is situated within God's accusation regarding the unfaithfulness of His people. Jr 2:32 is to be dealt with within the unity of Jr 2:29-32.[63]

Jr 2:29 begins with a question, which is a reversal of the lawsuit that God Himself had started against the people: "Why make out a case against Me?" However, there can be no question of the people making out a case, because the people themselves have been unfaithful to the covenant, which is explicitly confirmed with a final "YHWH declares". Subsequently the Lord defends Himself by referring to the past, how He has tried to make the unfaithful people see the error of their ways, by punishing them[64] and by sending prophets. However, the people refused to take notice, even worse, the prophets were killed (Jr 2:30).[65] God continues by asking three questions (Jr 2:31), a rhetorical device which has already been used in Jr 2:14 and which makes the questions even more probing. The first two questions are rhetorical: God is not like a desert or a land of gloom;[66] on the contrary, God grants life, in contrast to the idols the people run after (cf. Jr 2:13). The third question touches the heart of the matter. The people want to be independent of God: "We are our own masters" or, as another more free but all the same very apt translation has it: "We have taken control."[67] In the desert the people were still dependent on God, but now they think they do not need God anymore. Worse still, they pretend that God Himself is a desert and a

[63] For a survey of different subdivisions see: Fischer, *Jeremia 1-25*, 152-153. In the delineation of Jr 2:29-32 I follow Fischer, but others also consider this to be a separate unit. Cf. among others Gunther Wanke, *Jeremia: Teilband 1: Jeremia 1,1-25,14* (ZBK AT 20/1; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1995), 43, which also includes the vv. 33-35; and Craigie et al., *Jeremiah 1-25*, 39.

[64] It is not clear what exactly is meant here. Perhaps it is a reference to Dt 5:9 and 28:59, and only meant as a reminder that God's punishments are aimed at bringing people to repentance. Cf. ibid., 40.

[65] It is unclear whether this is meant to be a general reproach or that specific prophets are meant, in which case Uriah is a candidate: Jr 26:20-24. Cf. ibid., 40. William Holladay shows that this text remains unclear to many researchers. By means of a reconstruction with the textual variant of LXX he tries to reach a logical explanation, but this is no more than a thesis. Cf. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 106-107.

[66] The expression אֶרֶץ מַאְפֵלָיָה is a hapax legomenon and its meaning is not quite clear. מַאֲפֵל only occurs in Jos 24:7, where it has the meaning of *darkness*. The addition *yah*, the short form of *Yahweh*, may indicate that the darkness of the Lord is meant, and therefore a kind of absolute darkness. Cf. ibid., 108.

[67] Craigie et al., *Jeremiah 1-25*, 39.

land of gloom. They have deserted God and turned away from Him. This turning away is so absolute that they do not want to come to God anymore.

Turning away from God and deserting Him has a superlative. This is brought up in Jr 2:32 with the help of the bride metaphor.

> 2:32 Does a girl forget her ornaments,
> a bride her sash (KJV: attire)?
> And yet my people have forgotten Me,
> days beyond number.

The verb שָׁכַח, *forget,* is used twice here, first in a parallelism, in the form of a rhetorical question, to which the obvious answer is *never*: "Does a girl forget her ornaments or a bride her attire?"[68] At first sight it is striking that there is no mention of the bride who will never forget her bridegroom, but rather of the bride who will never forget her ornaments and her attire. Is the bridegroom not more important? A woman's attire and ornaments are for the woman and for the one who gave them to her first of all a source of pride (2 S 1:24).[69] If we consider the matter metaphorically, there is more to be said, however. In Ezk 16 we are told that Jerusalem is abandoned in the open field,[70] on the day of her birth, and that YHWH takes pity on her (vv. 1-7). When the time of love has come, the Lord spreads His "cloak" over her and covers her "nakedness". This covering indicates that the Lord takes her as his wife (cf. Rt 3:9),[71] which is confirmed in the second part of this verse: "I gave you my oath, I made a covenant with you […] and you became mine". Subsequently we are told how YHWH lavishes love and care on her by bathing her, washing the blood off her,[72] anointing her with oil (v. 9), dressing her in the finest clothes and loading her with jewels, so that she really looks like a queen (vv. 10-13).[73] "Here is related how the groom

[68] Ezk 16:10-13 gives a fine description of bridal clothes and the bride's ornaments.
[69] Taking off one's ornaments, on the other hand, is a sign of mourning (cf. Ex 33:4).
[70] Here Jerusalem stands for the people of Israel, for God has made a covenant with a people (Ezk 16:8), never with a town. Cf. Moshe Greenberg, *Ezechiel 1-20* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder 2001), 324-325.
[71] Cf. ibid., *Ezechiel 1-20*, 334.
[72] Various scholars have come up with proposals as to what blood this might be: the blood of her birth, menstrual blood, or the blood that should prove the virginity of the bride when the marriage is consummated. Stienstra remarks here that we should not overcharge the metaphor and that it is mainly important that YHWH actually cares for his people. Cf. Stienstra, *YHWH*, 137, footnote 19.
[73] For an extensive description of the value of the various articles of clothing see also Greenberg, *Ezechiel 1-20*, 335-337.

lavished his love upon the bride"[74] and thus we may understand the bride's attire and ornaments metaphorically as the love of YHWH.

Whereas a bride will never forget her ornaments and so metaphorically speaking the love of her bridegroom, the people of Israel do forget the love of YHWH. This bride is brazen enough to turn to all kinds of idols with the divine love she has received.[75] The contrast between the unfaithfulness of the people and the faithfulness of the Lord is augmented by the bride metaphor at the beginning of Jr 2:2, where God emphatically declares that He has good recollections of the bridal period, when the people did respond in the proper way to the love of YHWH.

This forgetting is again brought up in no uncertain terms in the second half of v. 2:32: "And yet my people have forgotten Me, days beyond number." We encounter the forgetting of the people on more occasions, including in Jr 3:21; 13:25; 18:15. Here God's accusation reaches its climax: "What the people are doing is not a mere oversight, incidental misconduct, a momentary turning away (for instance abandoned v. 13). There is longer *any remembrance* of the covenantal Partner among them. It is as if God has been erased from memory."[76]

2.2.2.4. The bride metaphor in Jr 2:32

Jr 2 is dominated by the Lord's accusation against the unfaithful people. In the course of the chapter a kind of climax occurs, the unfaithfulness first manifesting itself by the people leaving God, then following idols and finally forgetting God. For this last superlative Jeremiah uses the bride metaphor with special focus on the bride's jewels.

From the analysis of Jr 2:32 the following metaphor may be deduced THE LOVE OF YHWH IS THE JEWEL OF THE BRIDE.

2.2.2.5. Analysis of Jr 7:34

The Book of Jeremiah is known for its many repetitions. A phrase that occurs no less than four times and also comes back once in the Book of Baruch is: "the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness and the voice of the

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[74] William H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1-19* (WBC 28; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1986), 225, and also cf. ibid., 226-227.
[75] Cf. Ezk 16:15-18.
[76] "Was das Volk macht ist nicht nur rein Versehen, ein gelegentliches Fehlverhalten, eine momentane Abwendung (z.B. 'verlassen' v. 13). In ihm gibt es *kein Gedenken* an den Bundespartner mehr. Gott ist wie aus dem Gedächtnis gelöscht." Fischer, *Jeremia 1-25*, 174. Fischer's italics.

bridegroom and the voice of the bride."[77] In all four cases the voices of mirth and gladness and the voices of bridegroom and bride will be silenced (Jr 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; Ba 2:23) and in one case the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness and the voices of bridegroom and bride will be heard once more (Jr 33:10).

Jr 7:34 will be investigated as representative of these texts to see whether we have metaphorical language use here. In a brief analysis the phrase will first be discussed and analysed in the context of Jr 7. Then it will become clear whether this is a matter of metaphorical language use. If this is the case, it will have to be decided what metaphors may be deduced from it.

Jr 7:34 is the final verse of Jr 7, the first long piece of prose in the Book of Jeremiah. After the opening in Jr 1 and the series of poetical texts in Jr 2-6, Jr 7-10 may be regarded as the third unit. Within Jr 7-10 again two main parts may be distinguished, the first part in which abuses in the temple cult are broached in the so-called temple sermon (Jr 7:1-8:3) and a second part consisting of miscellaneous sayings concerning national evil and its consequences (Jr 8:4-10:25).[78] We will limit ourselves to a discussion of Jr 7:1-8:3.

The central point of Jr 7 is the question as to the correct worship of God. The words שָׁמַע, *hear*, (Jr. 7:2.13.16.23.24.26.27.28), and מָקוֹם, *place* (Jr 7:3.6.7.12.14.20.32; 8:3) both occur no less than eight times and permeate the whole chapter. The שָׁמַע is a call from God to listen to Him (Jr 7:2.23), or a denunciation that in spite of the call the people do not listen (Jr 7:13.24.26.27.28), followed by the clear reaction of the Lord that in the end God Himself will no longer listen to the people (Jr. 7:16). מָקוֹם primarily refers to Jerusalem and the temple (Jr 7:3.6.7.14.20), but Shiloh, the place of the previous sanctuary, is also mentioned (Jr 7:12). However, at the end of Jr 7 מָקוֹם stands for burial ground (Jr 7:32) and finally in the plural for places where people will stay during the Exile (Jr 8:3). In מָקוֹם we may see the movement from being at home with the Lord in the city of Jerusalem and in the temple, to death and exile. Both words, שָׁמַע and מָקוֹם, clearly reflect the imminent disaster: the communication between God and his people, the mutual hearing, will fall completely silent and this will result in death and exile.[79]

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[77] Taken from the King James Bible, one of the few translations that has not opted for elegant variation, which has the unfortunate effect of rendering the text far less forceful.

[78] Cf. Fischer, *Jeremia 1-25*, 287, who divides the second part into two subparts: Jr 8:4-9:25: "Klage und Trauer über den Tod der Gemeinschaft;" and Jr 10: "Israel und sein Gott." Cf. ibid. 327-328 and 373, unlike Peter C. Craigie, who keeps to two parts. Cf. Craigie et al., *Jeremiah 1-25*, 111-112 and 129-130.

[79] Cf. Fischer, *Jeremia 1-25*, 293.

The abuses in the worship of God are exposed in various ways: Jr 7:3-15 deals with the discrepancy between worship and the shortcomings in daily social life, Jr 7:16-20 deals with sacrificing to other gods, and Jr 7:21-28 is about listening to the Lord as the true worship and the fact that the people will not listen. Finally the people will go to meet their death because they do not listen, which is described in 7:29-8:3. Sharp criticism is voiced with respect to the child sacrifices that the people make on the high places of Tophet in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom (Jr 7:31),[80] which God has strictly forbidden (Lv 18:21). The people will be severely punished for this. The Valley of Ben-Hinnom will become a valley of slaughter and one large burial ground (Jr 7:32). Death will be so omnipresent that the dead cannot be buried anymore but will be devoured by the birds and the wild animals (Jr 7:33). The destruction will be so extensive that in all towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem all joy and also the voices of bridegroom and bride will be silenced:

7:34 Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah,
and from the streets of Jerusalem,
the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness,
the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride:
for the land shall be desolate.[81]

In the context of Jr 7:29-34 the saying might be taken literally. Considering the horrors that are announced, there can only be one great lamentation and all joy will have disappeared, also quite literally the bridal joy.[82] However, there may be more here.

First of all it is striking that the saying in question occurs five times in the Old Testament, so that we might possibly speak of a set or idiomatic phrase.[83] When we look at the first pair of words in this saying, שָׂשׂוֹן, *mirth*,

[80] The Valley of Ben-Hinnom lies to the south-west of Jerusalem. This valley runs from the west to the east, in a curve, thus bounding the city of Jerusalem on the south. Cf. Fischer, *Jeremia 1-25*, 317.

[81] Text taken from the King James Bible.

[82] Cf. Fischer, *Jeremia 1-25*, 320; and Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 270. In addition Peter C. Craigie provides a possible explanation why precisely bridegroom and bride are mentioned here: "The joy of a wedding carries the happy anticipation of the birth of children, but a nation that sacrificed its children forfeited all right for such a cheerful occasion. The union of marriage promised only another candidate for the slaughter, and so God, in an act of mercy for generations yet unborn, must act in judgment." Craigie et al., *Jeremiah 1-25*, 126.

[83] That it is a set phrase, or has at least developed into one, is shown by the fact that it is still used nowadays in Jewish life. It occurs in the benediction *Sheva Berachot*, *the*

and שִׂמְחָה, *gladness* or *joy*, we note that this pair of words occurs more often in the Old Testament. It is used to express earthly mirth and gladness (cf. Is 22:13), but also to designate the joy and gladness a person will feel, whose sins will have been forgiven, as in Ps. 51:8: "Let me hear the sound of joy and gladness, and the bones you have crushed will dance". The second pair of words in this saying concerns the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. If this is a case of parallelism, then the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride are equated with the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, and this would indeed refer to bridal joy. Then in this passage of Jeremiah the addition of the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride in the second part of the saying stresses and reinforces the fact that really all joy will cease.

However, if we consider the second half of this saying within the bride metaphor, with which Jeremiah is familiar, then the voice of the bridegroom stands for the voice of YHWH and the voice of the bride for the voice of the people. Then the first part of the saying in Jr 7:33 describes the ceasing of all earthly joy and the second part, moreover, the ceasing of the communication between God and his people: YHWH, the Bridegroom, will not speak anymore, for the bride, the people, does not listen to Him anyway, and the people are punished by death. For the people earthly joy ceases, but also the joy of living in a bridal relationship with the Lord will cease, a joy that far transcends all earthly joy.[84] On the one hand this interpretation fits in with the central pronouncement of Jr 7:1-8:3, that the communion between God and his people, the mutual communication, will cease altogether and that this will result in death and exile, and on the other hand it expresses another important aspect of the bridal relationship between YHWH and his people, that is the concomitant joy.

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seven benedictions, pronounced over a bridal couple. Cf. Raphael Posner, "Marriage ceremony," *EncJud* 13:567.

[84] That there is something like "the voice of the bridegroom" or "the voice of the bride" does not occur anywhere else in the Old Testament. In the New Testament we do hear about "voice of the bridegroom" (Jn 3:29). In the analysis of this passage in the next section we will consider what this means. It should also be noted that in the tenth century after Christ the feast of *Simchat Torah*, *Rejoicing in the Torah*, emerges. On this day the end of the reading of the Torah, which is completely read in a one-year cycle, is celebrated. The last part of the Book of Deuteronomy is read, immediately followed by the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. The person who reads the last part of the Torah is called the "Bridegroom of the Law"; the one who reads the beginning of Genesis is called the "Bridegroom of the beginning". In these titles the bride metaphor also resonates, the Torah, the Word of God, being identified with the Bridegroom. Cf. Rela Mintz Geffen, "Bridegrooms of the law," *EncJud* 4:179-180.

Unlike the other passages mentioned (Jr 16:9; 25:10 and Bar 2:23), Jr 33:11 stands in the context of a promise of salvation, that is the restoration of Jerusalem and Judah (Jr 33:1-13). Here the voices of the bridegroom and the bride do not cease but are rather heard again.

33:11 The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness,
the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride,
the voice of them that shall say,
Praise the LORD of hosts:
for the LORD is good;
for his mercy endureth for ever.[85]

The relationship has been restored and consequently also the communication between God and his people. We note that immediately the bride, the people, again worships the Lord in the right way: "Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." As the relationship has been restored, as a result the joy will also return.

2.2.2.6. The bride metaphor in Jr 7:34

The saying "The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride" is metaphorical in nature. The saying may be used both in the positive and in the negative sense and in both cases it deals with joy. Where the voice of the bridegroom ceases, the voice of the bride will not be heard anymore either. As a result joy will cease. The reverse is also true, if the voice of the bridegroom is heard, his bride will rejoice. This leads to the metaphor JOY AND GLADNESS IS HEARING THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE.

2.2.3. The bride metaphor in Isaiah

The words חָתָן, *bridegroom*, and כַּלָּה, *bride*, twice occur together in the Book of the prophet Isaiah (Is 61:10; 62:5) and the bride occurs a third time, without the bridegroom (Is 49:18). Although at first sight these texts seem to contain comparisons as כְּ, *like,* occurs, the images of bridegroom and bride are used in a context of metaphorical speaking about a prospective time of salvation. In this metaphorical speaking the images of bridegroom and bride are used as source domain in order to render another reality, the target

[85] KJB.

domain, clear and discussable. Therefore these bridal images will also have to be dealt with in this investigation.

The Book of Isaiah took a long time to develop and encompasses a much longer period than the life span of the prophet Isaiah. Three periods may be distinguished: the period of Is 1-39, also called Proto-Isaiah, coinciding with the life of the prophet Isaiah, forms part of the Assyrian period (911-605 B.C.); Is 40-55, also called Deutero-Isaiah, coincides with the Neo-Babylonian period (ca 625-539); and finally Is 56-66, also called Trito-Isaiah, falls in the Persian period (ca 550-333 B.C.).[86]

2.2.3.1. Analysis of Is 49:14-50:3

Is 49 begins with what is generally called the Second Song of the Suffering Servant of the Lord (Is 49:1-6). What is new in this prophecy is that the Servant of the Lord is no longer called only to restore Jacob and to bring back Israel (v. 5), but is rather given a universal mission: "I shall make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach the remotest parts of the earth" (v. 6).[87] What follows is a message from God: "Thus says YHWH, the redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." It is true that Israel is still "the slave of despots" but in the future a fundamental change will take place, when kings will stand up[88] and princes will bow low because of YHWH (v. 7). The land will be restored and ravaged properties returned (v. 8). With the image of a new exodus the changes are announced: those who are in darkness (v. 9) will be taken outside and guided to springs of water (v. 10); they come from far away (v. 12), but there may be rejoicing and exultation, as the Lord has taken pity on the afflicted, which is sung out in a little song (v. 13). In this second prophecy a transformation is described.

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[86] Cf. Klaus Baltzer, "The Book of Isaiah," *HTR* 103 (2010): 261-270, at 261. Since the publication of Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja* (4th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922), there is general consensus among academics as to this tripartite division, the unity of Is 40-66 being emphasised rather more emphatically in recent literature. Cf. among others Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40-66: Translation and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012), 5-12. For a general survey of the various positions see Peter Höffken, *Jesaja: Der Stand der theologischen Diskussion* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2004), 91-146.

[87] אור, *light*, stands for justice and fair judgement, which in their turn stand for salvation. In Is 51:4-6 it becomes even clearer that light stands for justice and fair judgement, as is the case in Is 42:1-5. Also cf. Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Jesaja* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag, 1999), 394. Also cf. Is 42:6; 60:3, as well as the opening of the Second Song of the Servant of the Lord (Is 49:1) with respect to the turning towards the nations.

[88] This is a sign of respect. Cf. Lv 19:32; Jb 29:8.

The following part is "a proclamation of salvation"[89] over Zion (Is 49:14-5:3), in which we hear that God has not forgotten his people (Is 49:14-21). He will bring his children together (Is 49:22-26) and He will redeem them (Is 50:1-3).[90] In the first part of this proclamation of salvation we encounter the bride metaphor.

Is 49:14 begins with a word by Zion.[91] Zion thinks that God has עָזַב, *abandoned*,[92] and שָׁכַח, *forgotten*,[93] her. The reason why Zion thinks this is not mentioned. It is probably a matter of disappointment because salvation still has not dawned.[94] The Lord answers with a double rhetorical question: will a woman ever forget her baby and a loving mother the child she has borne? And even if this were imaginable, the Lord will never forget his people (v. 15).[95] "This is a strong affirmation of his love and care of his people".[96] In v. 16 this love and care is reinforced by means of another image, the image of the palm of the hand on which the name has been written (v. 16a). The writing of the name on the palm of the hand says something about the exclusiveness of a relationship.[97] It is a powerful image, also because the hand of God is not just any hand. In the words of the prophets the hand of God represents creation and redemption.[98] "God's affection is binding to such a degree, that Israel can no longer wriggle its

[89] Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66* (NAC 15b; Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 361.

[90] With this division I follow Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 361-362, who indicates that other options are also possible where the division is concerned.

[91] As from Is 49:14 Zion-Jerusalem is the main character and no longer Jacob-Israel (esp. in Is 41-44). From Jacob-Israel as the people of God we now pass to Zion-Jerusalem as the city of God, where Zion stands for the place where God is present and the people live together in peace and justice. Baltzer, *Deutero-Jesaja*, 403.

[92] We also come across עָזַב in relation to a wife who has been abandoned in Is 54:6; 60:15; 62:4. There it is used in the sense of *temporarily abandoned and neglected*, but not in the sense of heading for a divorce. Cf. H.-P. Stähli, "עָזַב, *'zb*, verlassen," *THAT* 2:249-252.

[93] שָׁכַח occurs no less than four times in vv. 14-15. It is an important concept in the Old Testament, expressing specifically men's aversion from God and his commandments. In the lamentations שָׁכַח is used to express the human experience of godforsakenness (cf. Ps 13:2; 44:25; 77:10). Cf. W. Schrottroff, "שָׁכַח, *škḥ*, vergessen," *THAT* 2:898-904.

[94] Cf. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 364.

[95] Cf. also Dt 4:31; Ps 27:10.

[96] Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 365.

[97] Cf. also Is 44:5, where the people write the name of the Lord on their hands.

[98] Cf. Is 40:12; 42:6; 45:11; 48:13; 53:10.

way out of God's hand."[99] The walls of Jerusalem are always before God as well (v. 16b). The walls offer protection and in this way God also protects his people. Within the walls He offers peace and security (cf. Ps 122:7).

The listeners may take courage, for the builders/sons[100] rush forward and the enemies are leaving (v. 17). Something really new is beginning. If we consider v. 17a together with vv. 22 and 23, it cannot be generally stated anymore that all those who do not belong to the people of God are enemies of the people of God. There are nations that cooperate in rebuilding Zion, but there are also nations that will continue to belong to the enemies of Zion.[101]

The exiles are called upon to lift up their eyes and look around. Far from home there is nothing to be seen, but they are invited to join in seeing the Vision of the Servant. Subsequently God swears an oath, introduced by: "As I live, says YHWH" (v. 18). The city that was once the scene of war (Is 42:25) and is now desolate, in a devastated land (Is 49:19), will be rebuilt and all will reassemble there (cf. Is 49:12). Two images, introduced by כִּי, *will surely*, are put forward to confirm this:

49:18 You will put them on as jewels,
like a bride, you will fasten them on.

The fate of the people will change for the better. From many foreign countries they will return to Zion (cf. Is 49:12) and they will be accompanied by those who are well-disposed towards the people of God. Those who will now live in the city are the city's jewels: "Every new person to arrive (and the things he/she brings with them from the treasures of the peoples), will become a gem, a jewel that adds to the beauty of the community – a reflection of the glory of God, which reveals itself in everyone."[102] As the new people of God the exiles and all other new

[99] "Die Zuwendung Gottes ist derart verbindlich, daß sich Israel nicht mehr aus der Hand Gottes herauswinden kann." Dieter Schneider, *Der Prophet Jesaja: Kapitel 40-66* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus Verlag, 1990), 174.

[100] MT reads *banayik*, *your sons*; another vocalisation yields *bonyk*, *your builders*. The second makes sense, because the context is the rebuilding of the city. However, the first meaning – *your sons* – also fits in with the image of the mother and her children (v.15). There is no agreement as to which interpretation is the more original. Cf. Baltzer, *Deutero-Jesaja*, 409. The LXX reads οἰκοδομέω, *to build*: καὶ ταχὺ οἰκοδομηθήσῃ ὑφ᾽ ὧν καθῃρέθης, *and soon you will be built by those by whom you were destroyed*. NETS translation.

[101] Cf. Schneider, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 175.

[102] "Jeder Neuankömmling (und das, was er aus dem Schatze der Völker mitbringt), wird ein Kleinod, ein Schmuckstück sein, durch das die Schönheit der Gemeinde

inhabitants will adorn Zion like jewels, the comparison with the bride being made in the second half of the sentence. The bride adorns herself with the most beautiful and precious jewels (cf. Ezk 16:10-13) and this is the way God regards his new people: to Him it is a precious people. Thus the bridal jewel stands for the inhabitants of newly rebuilt Zion, every one of them being equally precious to God.[103] All will live in unity and peace inside the walls of Zion, under the protection of God.[104]

After the bridal metaphor it is confirmed once again that Zion will be transformed from a desolate city in a devastated land into a place that will be too cramped for its inhabitants and where there will be life in plenty. Childlessness and barrenness, images of punishment and exile, will give way to fertility and numerous offspring (vv. 19-21). The people that were treated like slaves while in exile, will be brought home by their oppressors and everyone will acknowledge that YHWH is the one and only God (vv. 22-23). If there might be resistance among the nations, the possibility of which is raised by the question "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty?", YHWH will reveal Himself for all nations as the Saviour and Redeemer (vv. 24-26). This refers to the final goal of the rebuilding of Zion:

> However much Deutero-Isaiah's proclamation of salvation over Zion is oriented to the rebuilding and repopulation of the city, and to the fate of its inhabitants, ultimately precisely this proclamation that is entirely one with the divine will of salvation as it is made concrete in history is focused on the Person of Yahweh, which it proclaims as its Initiator.[105]

This section is concluded with a short oracle (Is 50:1-3). Once again the question is asked regarding the how and why of the disaster. By the rhetorical asking after the writ of divorce, the theme of "abandoned and forgotten" (Is 49:14) is resumed once more. YHWH, the husband, has never forgotten Zion, his wife. In this sense there has never been a divorce, which

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zunimmt – Abglanz der Herrlichkeit Gottes, die sich in dem allen offenbart." Schneider, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 176.

[103] Cf. Is 43:4; Ps 139; 1 P 2:6-7.

[104] Also cf. Ps 87, where it is joyfully proclaimed that Zion will be the Mother of all nations.

[105] "So sehr sich die Zion betreffende Heilsverkündigung Deuterojesajas am Wiederaufbau der Stadt und ihrer Neubevölkerung und am Ergehen ihrer Bewohner orientiert: in ihrer letzten Tiefe ist gerade diese vollkommen im geschichtlich konkretisierten göttlichen Heilswillen aufgehende Verkündigung auf die Person Jahwes abgezweckt, der als ihr Initiator verkündigt wird." Dieter Baltzer, *Ezechiel und Deuterojesaja: Berührungen in der Heilserwartung der beiden großen Exilspropheten* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971), 47.

is made clear to the children by means of the rhetorical question: "Where is your mother's writ of divorce by which I repudiated her?" A second image, about selling the children to creditors, leads to the same conclusion: the misdeeds and the acts of rebellion of the people were the cause of all the misery and therefore "I have repudiated her" and "I have sold you" (v. 1). With the help of another set of rhetorical questions the relations are clearly stated. Being in exile Israel was not in a position to do anything, not even answer to the voice of the Lord (v. 2a). Being in exile the people might think that the power of God would fail (v. 2b), but nothing was further from the truth. The hand of God can save the people (cf. Dt 26:8) but, reversely, also strike the people (cf. Jr 21:5-6). Finally God's omnipotence is shown by means of some powerful images (vv. 2c-3), to make clear once and for all that the Exile was not the result of failure on the part of God. "It is rather a justly deserved punishment over which Yahweh has intentionally presided."[106]

2.2.3.2. The bride metaphor in Is 49:18

In Isaiah the bride metaphor is first mentioned in Is 49. Is 49 forms part of Deutero-Isaiah. Is 49 opens with the Second Song of the Suffering Servant of the Lord (Is 49:1-6). The Servant gets a universal mission, not only to gather the scattered children of the house of Israel and Jacob, but to bring light and salvation to all nations. Zion will be the city of salvation. In a proclamation of salvation the Lord turns to his people. God announces that He has never forgotten his people and will never forget them. Even more, God's love for his people has never vanished, which He will show by restoring everything, although that is not deserved, and by rebuilding the city of Zion. All exiles will return and with them all those who recognise YHWH as the Lord. The image of the bride with her jewels is used to describe the return to Zion and the repopulation of the city. Those who will now come to live in the city are like the jewels with which a bride adorns herself. Here we recognize the metaphor: THE PEOPLE ARE ORNAMENTS This results in the metaphor THE RETURNING EXILES AND ALL THOSE WHO RECOGNISE YHWH AS THE ONLY GOD ARE THE JEWELS OF THE BRIDE.

We have also seen that bridal jewels are precious jewels. Just like the bridal jewels are precious to the bride, so every person of the new people of God is precious in the eyes of God. This results in the metaphor: THE PEOPLE OF YHWH ARE PRECIOUS BRIDAL JEWELS.

[106] Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Know Press, 1998), 121.

In this metaphor it is the jewel rather than the bride that is important. The bride is mentioned to emphasise the preciousness of the jewel. Although in the literature Zion is sometimes called the bride, this may not be deduced from this metaphor.[107]

2.2.3.3. Analysis of Is 61-62

We next meet the image of bridegroom and bride in Is 61:10 and Is 62:5. Is 61-62 forms part of so-called Trito-Isaiah, consisting of Is 56-66. Is 60-62 is regarded as the central part of Trito-Isaiah. Here the future glory of Zion is described extensively. It begins with the summons to arise, for the glory of the Lord rises over the city (Is 60:1) and ends with the appeal to the people to accept the salvation of the Lord and to become the people that will be called a "holy people" (Is 62:10-12).

In Is 61:1-3 the one who brings the good news announces himself. He says that he has been anointed by God and subsequently describes his mission. The Lord has anointed him to bring a message of consolation and hope to all who are oppressed.[108] It is striking that it does not become clear who the anointed one is. Claus Westermann speaks very much in general of "the proclamation of a man, who understands himself as being sent and prepared by God to announce the message of salvation."[109] There is no question of a vocation story or vision, as we know from Isaiah (Is 6) and Jeremiah (Jr 1). The words do correspond, however, with Songs of the Suffering Servant of the Lord (Is 42:1-4; 49:1-6) and therefore, so Gary Smith, the anointed one might point to a Messianic figure.[110] Archibald van

[107] For instance Baltzer, *Deutero-Jesaja*, 408-409, who equates Zion with the bride in this text, without any further explanation.

[108] In the whole of the Book of Isaiah this is the only mention of an anointing. Originally it was especially kings who were anointed (cf. for instance 1 S 10:1; 1 S 16:13). In 1 K 19:16 the prophet Elijah is commissioned to anoint Jehu as king of Israel and Elisha as prophet to succeed him. Being filled with the Spirit and having been anointed by the Lord grants the speaker authority. Cf. Peter Höffken, *Das Buch Jesaja: Kapittel 40-66*. (NSK-AT 18/2; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1998), 219.

[109] "Proklamation eines Mannes, der sich von Gott gesandt und ausgerüstet weiß, die Heilsbotschaft zu verkünden." Claus Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja. Kapittel 40-66* (2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 290.

[110] Cf. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 630-632, who gives a survey of the various interpretations as to who the anointed one might be. Smith clearly takes a stand against the view that the anointed one might be the prophet Isaiah, Trito-Isaiah or some ruler in the past. Smith is inclined to identify the anointed one with the Servant of the Lord: "The overall function of both the 'Anointed one' in 61:1-3 and of the 'Servant' in chaps. 42 and 49 is to bring God's salvation to his people so that the nations will see God's marvellous work and turn to him." Ibid., 632.

Wieringen speaks of "a messenger of joy."[111] Whoever the anointed one is, he has been filled with the Spirit of God and he will act in accordance with the will of God. Finally the message that the anointed one will bring is more important than who he actually is.

The joyful message is summarised in the announcement of a year of favour from the Lord, which will also be a day of vengeance for our God. All who mourn will be comforted (Is 61:2). Is 60:20 indicates that all mourning will belong to the past once the kingdom of the Lord has been established forever, as the Lord Himself will be the everlasting Light.[112] In the following verse (Is 61:3) the transformation announced is described by means of a few metaphors: the פְּאֵר, *turban* or *crown*, festive headgear, will replace the אֵפֶר, *ashes*, that one puts on one's head in days of adversity and mourning (2 S 13:19). The oil of gladness (cf. Ps 23:5; 45:8) replaces the mourning garment and festal attire replaces despondency. This change of attire and disposition, from someone languishing at heart, dressed in a mourning garment, with ashes on his head, to someone in festal attire, anointed with the oil of gladness, and with a festive headgear, stands for a fundamental change of the person's situation and disposition. Mourning will be over for ever and the time of feasting and praising has dawned. "The head ornament (a positive symbol) will be used 'instead of' the ashes (a negative symbol) because a new era of salvation has arrived."[113]

In the following verses we are told how the towns and the country will be rebuilt (vv. 4-5), how the people to whom the message is addressed are granted a new priestly dignity with respect to all nations (v. 6). After the return from the Exile it will again be possible to perform the priestly service and it seems to be the case that the priesthood will no longer be restricted to the descendants of Aaron in the tribe of Levi. All the people will be able to perform the priestly service, as was already announced in Ex: "For Me you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:6).[114] As ministers of God (v. 6) the abundance of the land and everlasting joy will be their portion (v. 7).

A word of the Lord (vv. 8-9) confirms the salvation promised in vv. 1-7: God is the God of love and justice. He hates injustice and makes an everlasting covenant with those who are faithful to Him. The covenant implies that the same Spirit that rests on the anointed one will rest on all those with whom the covenant will be made: "This is my covenant with

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[111] "Vreugdeboodschapper." Archibald van Wieringen, *Jesaja* ('s-Hertogenbosch: KBS, 2006), 100 and 105.
[112] Also cf. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 635.
[113] Ibid., 636.
[114] Cf. Höffken, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 221.

them, says YHWH. My spirit with which I endowed you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, will not leave your mouth, or the mouths of your children, or the mouths of your children's children, says YHWH, henceforth and forever". (Is 59:21) The nations will see that God's people is a blessed people.[115]

Finally in vv. 10-11 there is a song of praise on God's actions in which the image of the bridegroom and the bride is used:

61:10 I will rejoice, rejoice in YHWH,
my soul will be joyful in my God,
for He has clothed me in garments of salvation,
He has wrapped me in a cloak of righteousness,
like a bridegroom wearing his garland,
like a bride adorned in her jewels.[116]

The hymn opens with a double שׂוּשׂ, *rejoice*, and a גִּיל, *be joyful*. There is overwhelming joy on account of a new time of salvation.[117] The joy is directed at God and the reason for the joy is clarified by means of the clothing metaphor. The Lord has clothed the anointed one in the garments of יֶשַׁע, *salvation*, and wrapped him in a cloak of צְדָקָה, *righteousness*. In the bride metaphor in Hos 2:21 we have also come across the notion of being clothed in righteousness. In the case of Hosea it is the bridegroom who clothes the bride in righteousness. Here it is YHWH who clothes his anointed one in righteousness. "The symbolism of clothing expresses someone's mood and the intention of his actions towards others."[118] Thus we see that God Himself puts on "the clothes of vengeance like a tunic" and "wrapped Himself in jealousy like a cloak" (Is 59:17), in order to repay everyone according to their deeds. Similarly Jerusalem is called upon to "put on your finest clothes" (Is 52:1) and keep out the uncircumcised and the unclean.[119]

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[115] Cf. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 641.
[116] NJB text amended by me to obtain a rendering closer to the original.
[117] The infinitive absolute *śôś* followed by the finite form *ʾāśîś* stands for overwhelming joy. This is reinforced by the synonym *gîyl* in the parallel verse. We also encounter the two synonyms in Is 65:18; 66:10. Cf. Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 546-547 and Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah III: Isaiah 56-66* (trans. Antony P. Runia; Leuven: Peeters 2001), 292-293.
[118] Ibid., 293.
[119] Cf. ibid., 293. We also encounter the image of being clothed with *righteousness* or *justice* in Ps 132:9, where it is applied to priests. Here we may see a link with Is 61:6. It may already be noted here that Paul also makes ample use of the clothing metaphor; I will come back to this in the section on the New Testament.

Then the clothing metaphor is compared to the bride metaphor. It is not immediately clear who the bridegroom and the bride are. Knowing that investigation of the bride metaphor in Hos 2:21-22 and Jr 2:2 has yielded the result that in the bride metaphor in the Old Testament YHWH is the bridegroom and the people the bride, one might think of YHWH and the people, but that does not make sense in this comparison. Rather than focussing on bridegroom and bride, it seems a better idea to consider their attributes,[120] even more so because at the beginning of Is 61 the clothing metaphor has already been used and the פְּאֵר, *garland* or *crown*, has already been mentioned. In v.3 the פְּאֵר is contrasted with the אֵפֶר, *ashes of mourning*, and thus expresses joy. What exactly the headgear of the bridegroom is, is not clear. It might possibly be a priestly turban (cf. Ezk 44:18). The word יְכַהֵן which precedes פְּאֵר, probably derives from the verb כָּהַן, which means *to act as a priest*.[121] This would mean that the anointed one is dressed in priestly garments.[122] The crown, the headgear of the bridegroom, and the bride's jewels certainly stand for the bridal joy. In general it may be remarked that whenever bridegroom and bride are mentioned in the Old Testament, it is generally a matter of rejoicing: "No specific person is ever mentioned by name. Rather, the 'Bridegroom' – like the 'Bride' (*kallah*) who is usually subordinate to him – almost always appears as a type of the human being who is filled with a special joy."[123] This means that the anointed one being dressed in the garments of salvation and righteousness goes hand in hand with joy. Again, this joy has already been sung out in the opening words of this verse with the double שׂוֹשׂ reinforced by a גִּיל thus producing an inclusion.

The brief hymn continues with images from the agrarian world. Here it becomes clear that the joy coming over the anointed one is not meant only for him. Ultimately the object of the salvation and the righteousness that is announced is Zion, for just as the earth makes seeds sprout and produces fruits, so salvation for Zion will spring up and all nations will see the glory of Zion (v. 11).[124]

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[120] Cf. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 643. Note that later the apostle Paul will also make use of the clothing metaphor to give expression to the Christian's disposition. Cf. Ep 6:14-16; 1 Th 5:8.

[121] Cf. Koole, *Isaiah III*, 294.

[122] Cf. Schneider, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 292.

[123] "Nie [wird] eine bestimmte Person (namentlich) bezeichnet. Vielmehr erscheint der 'Bräutigam' – wie auch die ihm meistens zugeordnete 'Braut' (*kallah*) – fast immer als der Typus des Menschen, der besondere Freude hat." E. Kutsch, "hatan," *ThWAT* 3:288-296, at 292.

[124] Also cf. Is 45:8; 51:3.

Is 62 concludes Is 60-62 and was probably the original conclusion of Trito-Isaiah.[125] The subject matter of this chapter is the glory of Jerusalem on the reception of a new name and the relationship with the nations. There is no consensus regarding the division of this chapter: vv. 1-17 are generally regarded as a unity, with a subdivision between vv. 1-5 and vv. 6-7; this is followed by the oath sworn by YHWH and concluded by the announcement of salvation in vv. 10-12.[126] In the first part the bride metaphor occurs (v. 5).

Is 62:1 begins with the words of an "I", God Himself, who speaks by the mouth of the prophet.[127] The Exile may be over but the promised time of salvation has still not arrived. "About Zion I will not be silent, about Jerusalem I shall not rest …" (NJB). The Dutch Willibrordvertaling, the 1978 version as well as the 1995 version, renders: "Uit liefde voor Sion kan ik niet zwijgen, uit liefde voor Jeruzalem ken ik geen rust." The New Living Translation has something similar: "Because I love Zion, I will not keep still. Because my heart yearns for Jerusalem, I cannot remain silent". Although these translations are rather free, as there is no word meaning love in the source text, these versions do go to the heart of the matter. God will act because He loves Zion, which He has chosen, the people, who are his chosen people. So He will act out of love (cf. Is 43:4) and not because of certain merits or faithfulness shown. Salvation and righteousness (Is 61:10) are mentioned again: God will not be silent until they will shine like the dawn and blaze like a burning torch. Dieter Schneider points out that עַד, *until*, is a keyword here. God does not promise that salvation will break through within the foreseeable future. Salvation will break through, but rather abruptly, at a time fixed by Him. Till that time, however, God will not rest, even though that may not always be noticeable for the people.[128]

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[125] Cf. Zapff, *Jesaja IV*, 396.

[126] Peter Höffken distinguishes: Is 62:1-5.6-7.8-9.10-11. Cf. Höffken, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 223. Gary Smith distinguishes: Is 62:1-5.6-9.10-12. Cf. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 645. Shalom Paul distinguishes: Is 62:1-9.10-12. Cf. Paul, *Isaiah 40-66.*, 550. John Watts is of the opinion that the unity includes the first part of Is 63. He distinguishes: Is 62:1-7; 62:8-63:6. Cf. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 306.

[127] There are scholars who, in subdividing the text, distinguish between the speaking of God and the speaking of the prophet, for instance Burkard M. Zapff, *Jesaja IV 56-66* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2006), 396. Ultimately this distinction cannot be made, however: "Das prophetische Ich und das göttliche Ich ist im Akt des Redens nicht auseinanderzudividieren." Schneider, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 295.

[128] Schneider, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 295. Schneider also points out that the use of the image of righteousness shining like the dawn will call up a rather different picture in the Orient than it does in North Western Europe. The coming of dawn, i.e. the rising of the sun (and its setting, for that matter), is a much more abrupt phenomenon there than it is in the countries of North Western Europe.

The salvation of Zion will not go unnoticed by the nations, on the contrary, they will see the righteousness and the glory of God (v. 2).[129] There will be a new name, which stands for the radically new situation, a kind of rebirth.[130] The nations will give call Zion by this name, but ultimately it is God Himself who gives it. עֲזוּבָה, *Forsaken*,[131] for Zion, and שְׁמָמָה, *Desolate*, for the land, will become חֶפְצִי בָהּ,[132] *My delight is in her*, and בְּעוּלָה, *Espoused* (v. 4).[133] *My delight is in her* gives expression to the personal and emotional relationship, whereas *Espoused* is a term taken from marriage law, thus emphasising the covenantal character and the permanence of the relationship.[134]

> These new names are not just perfunctory or meaningless new labels carelessly thrown about; they accurately describe the new state of the nation in the future when God has marvellously transformed his people and their land. The old way of life will be over, and the new reality will involve a complete transformation of God's people.[135]

The completely new and joyful situation is clarified by means of two bridal images:

> 62:5 Like a young man marrying a virgin,
> your rebuilder will wed you,
> and as the bridegroom rejoices in his bride,
> so will your God rejoice in you.

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[129] Cf. also Is 40:5.

[130] On other occasions the new name is also announced: Is 1:26; 60:14; Jr 3:17; 33:16; Ezk 48:35. In addition to places and regions, persons may also get a new name, which then indicates that there will be a change in their situation, e.g. from Abram to Abraham (Gn 17:5). Cf. Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 551.

[131] עֲזוּבָה is derived from the verb עָזַב. "The verb *azab* indicates divine abandonment of the city or His 'divorce' from it." Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 553. See also Is 60:15 where Zion is also called Forsaken. Apart from that *ʿăzûbâ* is also the name of the mother of king Jehoshaphat (1 K 22:42) and of the wife of Caleb (1 Ch 2:18).

[132] חֶפְצִי בָהּ is also the name of the mother of king Manasseh (2 K 21:1), but there is no further association with her here. The expression "my delight is in her" is also to be found in, among other texts: Gn 34:19; Dt 21:14; 1 K 10:9.

[133] Cf. also Hos 1:4-9; 2:3, where a similar change of names is programmatic.

[134] Cf. Schneider, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 296.

[135] Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 648.

Like a young man marrying a virgin, "your rebuilder,"[136] i.e. God, will marry his people. This will be a permanent love relationship and a permanent covenant, over which there will be great rejoicing. With the image of bridegroom and bride this joy is made clear. The joy is so great that שׂוּשׂ, *rejoice*, occurs twice, as it does in Is 61:10. It is remarkable that God's rejoicing in his people is expressed, not the other way around.[137] "In the end God's miraculous transformation of the people will bring back the joy and delight that should have always characterized the relationship between God and his chosen people."[138]

In order to protect the covenant against enemies, God will post watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem. He will take care that the people will always enjoy prosperity. They will harvest and eat the fruits of their own land and they themselves will drink the wine made of the grapes they have picked (vv. 6-9). "The relational aspect of covenant fidelity has a counterpart: the covenantal fruitfulness of the land."[139] The vision is concluded with seven imperatives. Zion is called upon to rouse itself: "Pass through, pass through the gates" (v. 10). Just as the Lord will not rest (v. 1), so all righteous people in Jerusalem are called upon to stir themselves. They should not wait for the nations to come but rather go and meet them with "missionary fervour:"[140] "Clear a way, level up the highway, remove the stones, hoist a signal to the peoples" (v. 10). In the Name of the Lord, the people bring the good news: "Say to the daughter of Zion: 'Look, your salvation is coming'" (v. 11), and all those from the nations who come to the city will be given the same names of honour: "The Holy People" and "YHWH's Redeemed" (v.12).

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[136] The translation and interpretation of בָּנַיִךְ, is not obvious. We find it in the sense of 'your children' or 'your sons' in, among other texts, Ps 147:13; Is 49:17.25; 51:20. In Is 62:5 this would result in: "so your sons will marry you (i.e. Zion)". It is hard to understand a mother marrying her own children, although many English translations, including the King James Bible (but not NJB) opt for this unlikely interpretation. A different vocalization, *bonāyik*, results in 'your builders', as we find in, among others: Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 296. In the light of Ps 147:2, where God is said to build up Jerusalem, 'your builders' would then refer to God. Although this solution is also debatable (all MT that have come down to us have בָּנַיִךְ), it does make sense. For a survey of the various solutions and interpretations proposed, see Koole, *Isaiah III*, 310-311.

[137] Cf. ibid., 311.

[138] Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 649.

[139] Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 221.

[140] Expression proposed by Schneider, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 298.

2.2.3.4. The bride metaphor in Is 61:10; 62:5

Is 61:10 and 62:5 form part of so-called Trito-Isaiah. The salvation that has been promised fails to manifest itself. By the mouth of the prophet a year of favour from the Lord is announced, in which salvation will definitively break through. All mourning will be turned into joy and the Spirit of God will rest on everyone. The praises of God's actions are sung in a hymn and in this hymn the image of bridegroom and bride is used (Is 61:10). There is joy because the Lord will bring redemption and salvation to His people, which is expressed by means of a clothing metaphor. The anointed one will be clothed in a garment of salvation and righteousness. This results in two metaphors: STATE OF MIND IS CLOTHING and CHANGE IN STATE OF MIND IS CHANGE IN CLOTHING.

This being clothed in salvation and righteousness is compared with the clothing of bridegroom and bride: "like a bridegroom wearing his garland, like a bride adorned in her jewels" (Is 60:10). As was also the case in Is 49:18, the emphasis is not so much on who the bridegroom is or the bride, but rather on the fact that the attributes, the clothing of the bridegroom and the bride, stand for joy. This means that clothing in salvation and righteousness goes hand in hand with joy. From this we derive the metaphor: JOY IS BRIDAL CLOTHING.

In Is 62 God again says that for Zion He will not be silent. Salvation will come; it is true that the time is not yet known, but when it comes, it will not escape anyone's notice. A fundamental change will take place, which will express itself in, among other things, the new name that will be given to Zion: from *Forsaken* and *Desolate* to *My delight is in her* and *Espoused*. Like the clothing metaphor this results in two metaphors: STATUS IS NAME and CHANGE IN STATUS IS CHANGE IN NAME.

The completely new and joyful situation is clarified by means of two bridal images. "Like a young man marrying a virgin, your rebuilder will marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices in his bride, so will your God rejoice in you" (Is 62:5). This will be a permanent love relationship and a permanent covenant, over which there will be great rejoicing. With the image of bridegroom and bride this joy is made clear, and the comparison with the young man and the girl makes clear that God and his people are meant. This brings us first of all to two metaphors that are familiar from Hosea and Jeremiah: YHWH IS THE BRIDEGROOM OF HIS PEOPLE and THE PEOPLE IS THE BRIDE OF YHWH. In addition specific mention is made of God's love and joy in his people. This results in the metaphors: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YHWH AND HIS PEOPLE IS A BRIDAL RELATIONSHIP AND UNITY BETWEEN YHWH AND HIS PEOPLE IS BRIDAL JOY.

2.2.4. Bridegroom and bride in Joel

In the Book of Joel mention is also made of bridegroom and bride. They are called upon to leave their bridal chamber and come together with all the other people (Jl 2:16). This is not metaphorical language use, however. The summons occurs in the context of a general summons to all the people to prepare for the day of the Lord, by fasting, among other things. Whereas certain groups, like children and elderly people, but also bridegroom and bride, were dispensed from certain obligations, like for instance fasting, they are now called upon to join in with all the others. By mentioning elderly people, children, infants, bridegroom and bride, all in one breath, Joel make use of the rhetorical figure of speech of accumulation in order to emphasise the urgency of the moment.[141]

2.2.5. Psalm 45

At the beginning of this section we have established that in the Old Testament the image of the bridegroom is not used to indicate the Messiah. Up till now this investigation has shown that when the metaphor of bridegroom and bride is used in the Old Testament, YHWH is indeed the bridegroom and the people the bride. Perhaps an exception should be made for psalm 45, in which the bride motif is to be found. It is true that no explicit mention is made of a Messiah, but perhaps structures may be recognised that may have led to the interpretation of a Messianic figure at a later date. In a brief analysis of psalm 45 we will consider in how far this psalm can and should be included in the Old Testament bride metaphor.[142]

Psalm 45 is originally a royal hymn, composed in the period before the Exile. The original part consists of vv. 2-10, 17 and 18. Presumably the hymn was written on the occasion of a coronation solemnity. The king is honoured as a representative of God (v. 3: "God has blessed you forevermore" and v. 8 "God has anointed you"), who stands for God's order of right and justice (vv. 5, 7 and 8). Nothing can be said with any certainty about the historical occasion for this royal hymn.[143] After the fall of

[141] Cf. Elie Assis, *The Book of Joel: A Prophet between Calamity and Hope* (LHB-OTS 581; London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 150.

[142] In the following analysis I rely on Zimmermann, "'Bräutigam' als frühjüdisches Messias-Prädikat? Zur Traditionsgeschichte einer urchristlichen Metapher," *BN* 103 (2000): 85-99.

[143] Various commentators regard this psalm as a royal hymn composed on the occasion of a wedding, as for instance the wedding of king Solomon with a daughter of Pharaoh (1 K 3:1) or the wedding of king Ahab and Jezebel (1 K 16:32). Cf. Nancy DeClaissé-

Jerusalem and in the period of the Exile, this royal hymn was read again, but in a different light, bridal elements being added to it (vv. 11-16). Possibly the hymn was then linked to the vision of salvation of a new Zion,[144] thus gaining an eschatological-Messianic interpretation. In the Early Christian community we clearly notice this eschatological-Messianic interpretation in the Letter to the Hebrews, in the opening hymn of which vv. 7-8 of psalm 45 are applied to Christ without any reservations.[145] It should be noted, however, that in the reception of the psalm in Judaism this interpretation also occurs. In the Aramaic Targum the king as he is mentioned in v. 3 becomes a Messianic figure: "*Your beauty, O King Messiah, is greater* than the sons of men; *the spirit of prophecy has been placed* on your lips."[146]

If we assume a remodelling and a renewed interpretation of this psalm, making it into an eschatological-Messianic hymn, the question presents itself as to who is the king, who is also the bridegroom, and also as to who is the בַּת, *bath*, *the daughter,* whom the king is marrying. From a metaphorical perspective within the aforementioned vision of salvation of Zion, the daughter can only be Zion and therefore the people of Israel.[147] Where the Old Testament bride metaphor is concerned, YHWH would then have to be the bridegroom. In the context of this psalm that does not fit, however, as we are presented with a king who has been anointed by God (v. 8) and whose beauty, splendour and majesty resemble God's (vv. 3, 7 and 8). Thus the king is a Messianic figure. This same king is also the bridegroom. All in all

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Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth Laneel Tanner, *The Books of Psalms* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2014), 416. Alfons Deissler puts the psalm in its present form after the Exile and dates it in the fourth century B.C. The author of the psalm has mingled elements of the outlines of royal bridal songs, familiar to him, with prophetic traditions, and the psalm was intended for "die Verlebendigung des messianischen Glaubens und Hoffens der Gemeinde." Alfons Deissler, *Die Psalmen* (5th ed.; Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1986), 185.

[144] This would also explain the position of Ps 45 in the Book of Psalms. It is preceded by a lamentation of a persecuted people (Ps 44) and followed by three songs of Zion (Ps 46-48). Cf. Zimmermann, "'Bräutigam' als frühjüdisches Messias-Prädikat," 87-88.

[145] Cf. Heb 1:8.

[146] Edward M. Cook, trans., "Psalm 45," in *Targum Psalms*, n.p. [cited 8 September 2015]. Online: http://targum.info/pss/ps2 htm. The Aramaic Targum arose during the Second Temple Period and originates traditional with Nehemiah: "They read from the book of the law of God, translating and giving the sense, so the reading was understood" (Ne 8:8). Also cf. Zimmermann, "'Bräutigam' als frühjüdisches Messias-Prädikat," 88-89.

[147] Zion is also referred to as daughter in Is 62:11 and Jr 6:2.

we may detect here a first development in the Old Testament where the bride metaphor is also used to indicate a Messiah figure.[148]

The other bride elements used in this psalm link up with that which we have discovered about the bride metaphor before now. The summons "Forget your own people and your father's house" refers to the fact that in the course of a Jewish wedding the girl leaves her people and her father's house in order to move in with the bridegroom and become a member of a new family. The king-bridegroom becomes the new אָדוֹן, *lord*, which is shown by the fact that the bride will שָׁחָה, *pay homage to him*. Here we recognise the metaphor THE BRIDE FOLLOWS THE BRIDEGROOM. Now we learn in addition that an aspect of this following consists in paying homage to the bridegroom, worship in relation to God. The beauty of the bride's garments is extensively described, but the meaning of this does not become clear in the psalm.

The reference to the accompanying virgins is new. Whether virgins played a role in the celebration of a Jewish wedding is unknown.[149] Whether, and if so how, the virgins may be regarded metaphorically, does not become clear from the text of psalm 45. In the next section, in which the New Testament parable of the ten virgins (bridesmaids) will be dealt with, the meaning of the virgins will be extensively discussed. Finally joy and rejoicing are explicitly mentioned (v. 16). We have already discovered that joy will be an important characteristic of the new community. We have already concluded that there is a metaphor UNITY BETWEEN YHWH AND HIS PEOPLE IS A BRIDAL JOY. In the case of the eschatological-Messianic figure, the joy would also apply to this relationship.

The analysis of psalm 45 shows that a possible Messianic interpretation of the bride metaphor in which the Bridegroom is a Messiah figure should certainly not be excluded as a development in the Old Testament.

2.2.6. Summary

In the Old Testament we encounter the bride metaphor in the books of the prophets Hosea, Jeremiah and Isaiah. It is one of the many metaphors the prophets use to speak about God in relation to his people. The bride metaphor arises in the period of the Exile and thereafter. Compared to the marriage metaphor, which is used very frequently by the prophets, the bride

[148] Also cf. Zimmermann's conclusion, "'Bräutigam' als frühjüdisches Messias-Prädikat," 90.

[149] In the analysis of the New Testament the parable of the παρθένοι, *virgins*, who go to meet the bridegroom (Mt 25:1-13), so where there are in fact virgins taking part in a wedding feast, the significance of the virgins will be dealt with.

metaphor occurs only a couple of times in the Old Testament. The marriage metaphor, on the contrary, is far more dominantly present.

Every metaphor is partial and obviously this holds for the marriage metaphor and the bride metaphor as well. The metaphor highlights parts of reality and hides others. It is obvious that the marriage metaphor is mainly employed to express the people's unfaithfulness with respect to God. This unfaithfulness is described in terms of adultery and fornication. In the first part of this chapter we have investigated which aspects of the relationship between God and his people in the Old Testament are highlighted by the bride metaphor.

To begin with we may decide that the bride metaphor is a structural metaphor. One concept, the relationship between God and his people, is metaphorically structured in terms of another concept, the Jewish wedding. The source domain is the wedding as it was celebrated at the time of the prophets. In the analysis we have established that, where the target domain is concerned, the bride metaphor speaks about both the past and the future. In this sense the bride metaphor is used as remembrance as well as promise. As remembrance the bride metaphor tells us something about the origin of the relationship between God and his people. As a promise the bride metaphor helps us to look forward from remembering the original situation and to seeing what God will bring about in the future. Consequently the bride metaphor as remembrance is also the source domain for understanding the future and thus for understanding the promise (target domain).

The bride metaphor as remembrance concerns the period of the exodus from Egypt until the establishment of the covenant. It is a fairly concrete and circumscribed period in the history of the people of Israel. The prophets Hosea and Jeremiah speak about this period, making use of the bride metaphor, and call it the bridal period (Ho 2:16-17; Jr 2:2). On the one hand it is the period in which God reveals Himself to the people of Israel as a God who is concerned about his oppressed people and frees it from the slavery in Egypt. On the other hand it is a period in which the people of Israel fully entrusts itself to God and sets out with Him, literally and metaphorically. The analysis of the bride metaphor as remembrance has yielded the first and most fundamental metaphor: YHWH IS BRIDEGROOM OF HIS PEOPLE. The metaphor automatically following from this, which we also traced in the analysis is: THE PEOPLE IS THE BRIDE OF YHWH.

These two metaphors YHWH IS THE BRIDEGROOM OF HIS PEOPLE and THE PEOPLE IS THE BRIDE OF YHWH come back when the future is mentioned. After the Exile the time of salvation that has been promised does not break through in all its fullness either. Now the bride metaphor is also used to announce a new epoch. God makes a promise to his people, the promise of a

time when the original relationship of mutual love and faithfulness, metaphorical the virginity of the bride, will be restored. So the bride metaphor is used to look to the future and to interpret the future. Thus the target domain of the bride metaphor is the relationship between God and his people, both in remembrance and in the promise.

The analysis has also yielded the following derived metaphors, listed here in the order in which they occur in the text:

1) YHWH RESTORES THE VIRIGINITY OF HIS PEOPLE (Hos);
2) THE VIRGINITY OF THE PEOPLE IS FOREVER (Hos);
3) RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE, LOYALTY, COMPASSION AND FAITHFULNESS ARE THE BRIDAL GIFTS OF THE BRIDEGROOM (Hos);
4) THE PEOPLE OF GOD IS UNDIVIDEDLY ONE WITH THE BRIDEGROOM (Hos);
5) FAITHFULNESS AND LOVE IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE BRIDAL RELATIONSHIP (Jr 2:2);
6) THE BRIDE FOLLOWS THE BRIDEGROOM (Jr 2:2);
7) HARDSHIPS AND TRIBULATIONS IS DESERT (Jr 2:2);
8) THE LOVE OF YHWH IS THE JEWEL OF THE BRIDE (Jr 2:32);
9) JOY AND GLADNESS IS HEARING THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE (Jr 7:34);
10) THE PEOPLE ARE ORNAMENTS (Is 49:18);
11) THE RETURNING EXILES AND ALL THOSE WHO RECOGNISE YHWH AS THE ONLY GOD ARE THE JEWELS OF THE BRIDE (Is 49:18);
12) THE PEOPLE OF YHWH ARE PRECIOUS BRIDAL JEWELS (Is 49:18);
13) STATE OF MIND IS CLOTHING (Is 61:10; 62:5);
14) CHANGE IN STATE OF MIND IS CHANGE IN CLOTHING (Is 61:10; 62:5);
15) JOY IS BRIDAL CLOTHING (Is 61:10; 62:5);
16) STATUS IS NAME (Is 61:10; 62:5);
17) CHANGE IN STATUS IS CHANGE IN NAME (Is 61:10; 62:5);
18) THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YHWH AND HIS PEOPLE IS A BRIDAL RELATIONSHIP (Is 61:10; 62:5);
19) UNITY BETWEEN YHWH AND HIS PEOPLE IS BRIDAL JOY (Is 61:10; 62:5).

The derived metaphors can be classified into three coherent categories. The first category says something about the relationship between YHWH as bridegroom and the people as bride. These metaphors speak about the undivided and eternal unity of the relationship, the foundation of the relationship, and the order within the relationship. This category contains metaphors 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 18. The second category of derived metaphors is

related to the bride's dress and jewelry. These metaphors say something about who the people of God is, and also about the gifts which YHWH lavishes upon his people: metaphors 11 and 12 enunciate who the people of God is; YHWH's gifts can be found in metaphors 3 and 8. The third and last category of derived metaphors concern joy. This is to the fore in metaphors 9, 15, and 19.

In addition to the derived metaphors, we have also encountered a number of other structural metaphors. The metaphor HARDSHIPS AND TRIBULATIONS ARE DESERT (no. 7) is a metaphor in its own right that has been used in conjunction with the bride metaphor to increase the latter's expressiveness. We see here that metaphors, as Lakoff and Johnson argue, together provide frameworks or grids that can help to understand reality better. It is a conceptual system with innumerable branches. In this case the bride metaphor makes clear that faithfulness and love have been put to the test in the desert, "a land unsown" (Jr 2:2). The relationship was so strong that it held out in spite of all difficulties.

Similarly, the metaphors 10, 13, and 16 are independent structural metaphors. The metaphors 14 and 17 can be regarded as derived metaphors from 13 and 16. What this mainly shows is that this is a system with innumerable branches. Dress for instance in its generality says something about someone's state of mind. If this is specifically focused on the bride metaphor, then, as our analysis has shown, bridal dress expresses joy. If the state of mind changes, the dress changes too.

Finally, the analysis of Ps 45 has shown that a possible Messianic interpretation of the bride metaphor, in which a Messiah figure is the bridegroom, is certainly not to be excluded as a development in the Old Testament, and is even likely. This last conclusion provides the link with the next section, in which the bride metaphor in the New Testament will be investigated. In addition to the analysis of the bride metaphor in the New Testament, the possible links with the bride metaphor in the Old Testament will also be considered.

2.3. The bride metaphor in the New Testament

The bride metaphor appears frequently in the New Testament. This section will look at the following passages, based on the earliest testimonies: 2 Co 11:1-4; Ep 5:21-33; Mk 2:18-22; Mt 22:1-14; 25:1-13; Jn 3:22-30; and

Rv 18:23; 19:7-9; 21:2.9; 22:17. Our focus will be on the bride metaphor as such rather than the wider exegesis of the text units in question.[150]

2.3.1. The bride metaphor in 2 Co 11:1-4

The structure of the second letter to the Christians of Corinth is rather complex. It was long assumed that the letter originally consisted of several letters.[151] There is wide consensus that the chapters 10-13 form a single unit. They are testimony to the tense relationship that existed between Paul and this community. The Apostle Paul defends himself in these chapters against his adversaries, οἱ ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι, *super-apostles* (2 Co 11:5; 12:11) and οἱ ψευδαπόστολοι, *counterfeit apostles* (2 Co 11:13).[152] The greatest part of chapters 11 and 12 consists of the so-called "Fool's Speech" (2 Co 11:16-12:13). Just before the "Fool's Speech," the Apostle gives an account of his ministry. Paul uses the bride metaphor in the first unit of this justification, and we will now analyse this in greater detail.

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[150] I have used the Greek text in *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece,* (28th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft), 2013. As with the analysis of the bride metaphor in the Old Testament, the emphasis in this analysis will be on synchronous exegesis. I will examine the texts in question primarily in the context of the Bible book in question, and in the context of Scripture as a whole. Text-critical and redaction critical issues will be discussed only to the extent that they are relevant for the bride metaphor, or if the interpretation of the bride metaphor occasions this. My exegesis is based on the original text and on my own translation, and the sources used for my analysis are Biblical manuals, several prominent commentaries, and scholarly articles in English or German on specific sub-issues.

[151] For an overview of the various positions, see Hans-Josef Klauck, *Zweiter Korintherbrief* (NEB 8; 2nd ed.; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1988), 5-10; Thomas Schmeller, *Die Zweite Brief an die Korinther (2 Kor 1,1-7,4)* (EKKNT 8/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Patmos, 2010), 19-40. Schmeller himself ultimately assumes that 2 Co is a unity.

[152] There is disagreement among scholars as to the identity of the opponents. Jerry Sumney has mentioned Judeans, Gnostics, holy men, and charismatics as possible opponents. For an overview, see Jerry L. Sumney, *Identifying Paul's Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians* (JSNTSup 40; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 13-73. The precise identity of Paul's opponents is not of crucial importance for the current investigation.

2.3.1.1. Analysis of 2 Co 11:1-4

The structure of 2 Co 11:1-4 is clear: in v. 1, Paul personally addresses the community, in vv. 2-3 he expresses his concern, and in v. 4 he exhorts the community to resist its adversaries.[153]

Paul is willing to assume the role of a fool (v. 1).[154] The reason (γάρ) he gives for doing so is ζῆλος, *jealousy*, for the addressees of the letter (ὑμᾶς), the community of Corinth; Paul equates his jealousy with God's jealousy (v. 2a).[155] God's *jealousy* is a topos in the Old Testament (cf. Ex 20:5; 34:14; Dt 4:24; 5:9; 6:15.). It is a metaphoric way of speaking that expresses an important aspect of the relationship between God and the chosen people of Israel: God demands unconditional and exclusive love from his chosen people, and this demand is expressed as jealousy. He does not tolerate any other gods beside Himself, and claims exclusivity of worship and adoration.[156] By comparing his own jealousy with that of God, Paul therefore expresses his own exclusive commitment to the community of Corinth, against the super apostles and counterfeit apostles. At the same time, Paul evokes the Old Testament *topos* of God's jealousy for his people by using this image.[157]

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[153] As regards the division of the text, I am adopting the proposal recently made by Thomas Schmeller in his commentary, where he divides 2 Co 11:1-15 into three parts: 1-4; 5-11; and 12-15, and interprets the first part as a kind of prologue to the "Fool's Speech" which begins in 2 Co 11:16. Vv. 1-4 are enclosed by the verb ἀνέχομαι. Additionally, there are a number of contrasts: the "single husband" (v. 2) vs. the "other Jesus" (v. 4); and the "pure virgin" (v. 2) vs. the "seduced Eve" (v. 3). Cf. Thomas Schmeller, *Die Zweite Brief an die Korinther (2 Kor 7,5-13,13)* (EKKNT 8/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Patmos, 2015), 194-195.

[154] The verb ἀνέχομαι, *to bear, to endure*, that Paul here uses twice, is also used by Jesus when he expresses amazement at the γενεὰ ἄπιστος, *faithless generation*, among which He finds Himself (cf. Mt 17:17).

[155] Ζῆλος can mean both *zeal* and *jealousy*, *envy*. In 2 Co 7:7.11; 9:2 and in many other places in the New Testament, it usually means zeal, but Paul's ζῆλος here, which is compared with God's ζῆλος, appears to mean jealousy. Cf. A. Stumpf, "ζῆλος" *TWNT* 2: 879-884, at 883.

[156] The affirmation that God is a jealous God always occurs in the context of the prohibition of the worship of other gods. Cf. for instance the beginning of the Decalogue: Ex 20:3-6; Dt 5:7-9. God's jealousy is aroused in particular when the people are unfaithful and follow foreign idols. Cf. for instance Ezk 16:38; 23:25. For an overview, see A. Stumpff, "ζῆλος," 880-882.

[157] Cf. for this Ruben Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik und Gottesverhältnis: Traditionsgeschichte und Theologie eines Bildfelds in Urchristentum und antiker Umwelt* (WUNT 2/122; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 307-310.

After Paul has said that he is motivated by jealousy, he again uses the pronoun γάρ to connect this jealousy with the bride metaphor:

11:2 a I am jealous for you with God's jealousy:
b because I betrothed[158] you to one husband,
c to present you to Christ as a pure virgin.[159]

Paul betrothed someone to someone else (2b). The betrothed party cannot be other than the community of Corinth, which Paul personally addresses in this passage (ὑμᾶς). It is unclear for the moment who the εἷς ἀνήρ, *one husband*, is. The community is addressed again in the third part of the verse (2c), but now in the singular as a *pure virgin*. This is metaphorical language use. "Paul compels the audience to envision the collective, the Corinthian community, as an individual, specifically a woman and bride."[160] Finally, the one husband to whom the community is betrothed is identified: Christ. Within this metaphor, He is the bridegroom.

Paul uses the image of the betrothal to speak about the beginning of the relationship between Christ and the community. He has led the community to Christ through his preaching. The community has accepted the Word,[161] and in this manner Paul has metaphorically betrothed it to *one husband*. You can become the bride by listening to the Word that has been proclaimed, and by accepting it.[162]

In the Judaism of New Testament times, betrothal, the so-called *kiddushin*, was the first stage of marriage. By contrast with engagement in current Western modern culture, the *kiddushin* had legal force. The engaged couple were bound to each other from the moment of betrothal, and could

[158] The verb ἁρμόζω means *to connect*. It is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament, which makes it difficult to translate. It is usually translated as *to betroth* in this context. Cf. Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3rd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000-2002), 133.

[159] Παρθένος can mean *young woman* or *virgin*, although the young woman's virginity is usually implied in the case of the former. The addition of ἁγνός, *pure*, make it certain that this passage refers to a virgin. Cf. G. Delling, "παρθένος," *TWNT* 5: 824-835.

[160] Lynn R. Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned: Reading metaphor in John's Apocalypse* (ESEC; New York: T&T Clark International, 2007), 146.

[161] Cf. Paul's contrasting experience which he describes in verse 4, i.e. that the Corinthians are listening to a different preaching and are accepting a different Gospel. Other communities are also exposed to the temptation to believe another Gospel or another prophecy. Cf. Ga 1:6-9; 2 Th 2:2.

[162] Cf. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 35.

not simply renege on their commitment.[163] Thus Paul uses a powerful image, because the coming bride's obligation to be faithful to her spouse and to preserve her virginity throughout the betrothal is absolute.[164]

Betrothal also embodied a promise, that of the actual wedding, and was thus oriented to the future. In this sense, betrothal was always imbued with expectation. The expectation of the community of Corinth was of that the Lord would return, and this, metaphorically speaking, was the actual wedding.[165]

In addition to this image of the betrothal, itself already quite strong, Paul's use of the metaphor also evokes the memory of the well-known Old Testament image of bridegroom and bride: YHWH is the husband, and the people of Israel are the bride. In the first part of this chapter we have seen that in the Old Testament context, this image expressed both exclusivity (the bride and bridegroom are one), and a hierarchical order (the bride follows the bridegroom).[166] Paul now applies this image to the community of Corinth in relation to Christ. This is not a case of substitution in the sense that YHWH and his people are replaced by Christ and the community of

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[163] Cf. Michael L. Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 69-83. Satlow has observed that the Bible does not have much to say about the concept of betrothal. The only passage that contains any explicit reference to a betrothal is Mt 1:18-25 and its parallel Lk 1:26-38. Satlow's research has led him to conclude that the Biblical form of betrothal was probably only practiced in rural Galilee during the first century B.C., and that the practice of marriage in the Jewish community otherwise was very diverse, with the manner of entering into marriage often totally adjusted to local and profane customs. As Satlow has argued at the beginning of his monograph: "*There is nothing essentially Jewish about 'Jewish' Marriage in antiquity*." Ibid., xvi. Satlow's italics.

[164] Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 303-306. Sexual ethics in Ancient Israel was asymmetrical. The virginity of young women had to be preserved up to the day of marriage. There was much less emphasis on the same requirement for men, although they were forbidden from having relations with married or engaged women. Cf. Christine Gerber, *Paulus, Apostolat und Autorität oder vom Lesen fremder Briefe* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2012), 59-60. Although there was a certain hierarchy to the relationship between husband and wife in Judaism, with the husband as the head, there were also aspects of equality and unity. Equality was rooted in the fact that they were both created in God's image and likeness (Gn 1:27), and unity in the fact that the man left his father and mother, to bind himself to his wife, "and they become one flesh" (Gn 2:24). Scripture contains various passages which refer to the relationship between husband and wife in equal and positive terms. Cf. for instance: Pr 31:10-31; Si 25:1; 26:1-4. Nor does Scripture make any distinction in relation to the fourth commandment, that of honouring father and mother. Cf. for instance Ex 21:15.17; Si 3:16; Pr 19:26.

[165] Cf. for instance 1 Co 15:23-26, but also 2 Co 1:14; 4:14; 5:1-10.

[166] Cf. section 2.2.2.6.

Corinth. But it is true that the relationship between Christ and the community of Corinth is equally characterised by exclusivity,[167] and by a hierarchy in which Christ is the dominant party.[168] What is articulated for the first time, is the fact that the community of Corinth which has accepted Christ is called the bride.[169] This means that Christ is portrayed as the bridegroom.

The Apostle Paul has a specific role to play in this image. He regards himself as the one who betrothed the bride to the bridegroom. There is some debate among scholars about whether Paul is acting here as the father of the bride or as a friend of the bridegroom's.[170] The passage is not an allegory, however, but a metaphor, and we can therefore leave this question unanswered. What is at stake in this metaphor is the relationship between Christ and the community of Corinth, which demands the community's unconditional fidelity to the person of Jesus, and which Paul believes is under threat (cf. v. 4). During the time between betrothal and actual wedding – i.e. for the community of Corinth: the present with its expectation for the future – what is at stake is the community's metaphorical virginity. Paul's endeavour is to preserve this pure relationship with Christ.[171] Paul fulfilled his role as an evangelist by bringing the community to faith in Christ, and he now sees it as his pastoral mission to preserve the purity of the Gospel that the community professes.[172]

In v. 3, Paul expresses his view that the exclusive relationship, and thus the community's fidelity to Christ, is under threat. He does this once again by using an image, this time that of Eve and the serpent. Eve and the bride are contrasted with each other. Eve was seduced by the serpent, thus disrupting her relationship with God, and causing her, metaphorically speaking, to lose her virginity, and similarly the interference of outsiders might disrupt the pure relationship between the community of Corinth and Christ.[173] Paul possibly also uses this image of Eve because the community

[167] Cf. also 1 Co 6:12-20.
[168] Cf. also Ep 4:11-16; 5:23.
[169] Paul addresses this letter exclusively to the community of Corinth, and addresses this community specifically as bride. This does not change the fact, however, that for Paul, every community represents the entire community of Christ. Cf. Christine Gerber, "Krieg und Hochzeit in Korinth: Das metaphorische Werben des Paulus um die Gemeinde in 2 Kor 10,1–6 und 11,1–4," *ZNW* 96 (2005): 99-125, at 121.
[170] As the father of the bride, Paul's main task would be to guard the bride's virginity. As the bridegroom's friend, it would be his task to arrange to bring bridegroom and bride together. Cf. for an overview: ibid., 122-123, footnote 113 and 114.
[171] Cf. ibid., 122-123.
[172] Cf. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 738.
[173] Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 312-314.

of Corinth is unaware that it is being seduced, just like Eve did not realise for some time that she was being seduced by the serpent. This can also explain Paul's jealous intervention.[174] "There is no need to state explicitly what is at stake. It is well known from the Paradise story."[175]

Paul identifies the quarters from which danger to the community is coming in v. 4. It is someone who does not belong to the community.[176] He is the serpent and thus represents evil. He is preaching another Jesus, another spirit, and another Gospel,[177] and is thus leading the community away from Jesus. Paul concludes this pericope with an exhortation already made in v. 1, but applied now to the community of Corinth: καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε, well, put up with it!

2.3.1.2. The bride metaphor in 2 Co 11:1-4

In 2 Co 11:2, Paul articulates his concern about the community of Corinth's possible lack of undivided faithfulness in its relationship with Christ. Paul uses the bride metaphor to express the exclusive bond between Christ and the community, and Paul's focus is first and foremost on the community. The community is betrothed to a husband. Metaphorically speaking, this means that the community is the bride. Paul first speaks somewhat indeterminately about *one husband* to whom he has betrothed the community, but then he mentions the name of Christ. This means that Christ is the bridegroom. This analysis has thus identified two important metaphors: CHRIST IS THE BRIDEGROOM and THE COMMUNITY IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. A third metaphor can instantly be deduced from these two: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE COMMUNITY IS A BRIDAL RELATIONSHIP.

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[174] Although Paul also fights to vindicate his own authority in the community in the Second Letter to the Corinthians, this is not his ultimate focus. Paul's goal is the undivided and pure relationship between the community of Corinth and Christ. Cf. Christine Gerber, *Paulus und seine Kinder: Studien zur Beziehungsmetaphorik der paulinischen Briefe* (BZNW 136; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 218.

[175] "Was auf dem Spiel steht, muss nicht mehr ausgesprochen werden. Es ist aus der Paradiesgeschichte bestens bekannt." Gerber, *Paulus, Apostolat und Autorität*, 61.

[176] The original text has the singular ὁ ἐρχόμενος, but this probably does refer to a group of missionaries. In v. 5, the super-apostles reappear in the plural. The singular is probably due to the link with the serpent. Cf. Schmeller, *Die Zweite Brief an die Korinther (2 Kor 7,5-13,13)*, 204.

[177] This enumeration of Jesus-spirit-gospel occurs nowhere else in Paul, and it is ultimately impossible to determine on the basis of the text what Paul meant precisely. Cf. ibid., 204-207.

In New Testament times, betrothal in Judaism had the legal status of a marriage. Betrothal creates an exclusive and indissoluble bond between husband and wife. By using the bride metaphor, Paul focuses on the exclusive and indissoluble bond between Christ and the community of Corinth. We can discern a second metaphor derived from the titular metaphor here: THE COMMUNITY IS UNDIVIDEDLY ONE WITH THE BRIDEGROOM. In Judaism, there was a hierarchical order in marriage, and the husband was the head. This order does not appear explicitly in Paul's use of the metaphor in 2 Co 11:2.

In addition, Paul speaks of the way in which the betrothal was established: because the community of Corinth accepted the Word and gave credence to it. There is a second derived metaphor here: THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD OF THE BRIDEGROOM.

The betrothal says something about the present, but also expresses a future reality: bride and bridegroom are in expectation of something – the actual wedding. The community of Corinth's expectation is the return of the Lord. This reveals yet another derived metaphor: THE COMMUNITY EXPECTS THE RETURN OF THE BRIDEGROOM.

By using the additional image of Eve and the serpent, Paul articulates the danger to which the exclusive bond between Christ and the community of Corinth is being exposed. The bride must beware of the temptation of infidelity, and thus, within the metaphor, of losing her virginity. In the case of the community of Corinth, the infidelity in question is infidelity to the person of Jesus himself, his Spirit, and the Gospel that Paul has preached.

2.3.2. The bride metaphor in Ep 5:21-33

The letter to the Ephesians consists, after the opening (Ep 1:1-2), of two major parts: a doctrinal part (Ep 1:3-3:21) and an exhortation (Ep 4:1-6:9). Before the letter is concluded, the author first gives an admonition, the *peroratio* (Ep 6:10-20), followed by the conclusion which consists of a statement and a salutation (Ep 6:21-24).[178]

The bride metaphor (Ep 5:21-33) appears in the last section of the second part. It is part of a so-called "Haustafel" or household code. Household codes address the social relations within the family, viewed in the light of the Gospel as "God's household" (Ep 2:19). The focus of the household code is the role of the *pater familias* in his capacity as spouse, father, and

[178] For an extensive introduction to the letter to the Ephesians and the various hypotheses on the authorship of this letter, see: Gerhard Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (KEK 8; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 49-64.

master.[179] This classical division of roles also appears in Ephesians. We will limit ourselves for the purposes of our analysis to the relationship between husband and wife.

2.3.2.1. Analysis of Ep 5:21-33

Before we look at the text, we must begin with a methodological comment. The passage we are about to analyse functions at two levels: on the one hand the text, as a household code, discusses the relationship between husband and wife, and on the other it addresses that between Christ and the Ecclesia.[180] Marriage, as we will see, serves as an image for the relationship between Christ and the Ecclesia, but conversely, the relationship between Christ and the Ecclesia also has implications for the understanding of the relationship between husband and wife within marriage. Both levels mutually intersect, but the passage's primary goal is to give instructions to husband and wife on their life together. As my research focuses, by contrast, on the Church as the Bride of Christ, my analysis of this passage will look particularly at the implications of the bride metaphor for the understanding of the Ecclesia in Ephesians. Aspects concerning marriage that can be distilled from the image of Christ and the Ecclesia will be mentioned only in passing. They are not the object of the current study, nor therefore of this analysis.[181]

The structure of the passage is clear. Ep 5:21-33 begins with an introductory verse (v. 21), followed by a first part about wives in relation to their husbands (vv. 22-24), followed by a second part about husbands in relation to their wives (vv. 25-32), and the passage is concluded by a

[179] For an overview of the phenomenon of the household code, see: Michael Theobald, *Mit den Augen des Herzens sehen* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2000), 165-169; John Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (BNTC; London: Continuum, 2001), 250-255; Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 426-433.

[180] The Greek word ἐκκλησία is usually translated as *church*. However, the term ἐκκλησία as it is used in Ephesians cannot simply be equated with the current understanding of the Church. To prevent premature or erroneous conclusions for the current understanding of the Church, the Greek word ἐκκλησία will appear untranslated in this part of the study, unless the reference is specifically to the current use of the word Church. Ecclesia has been capitalised to indicate that it refers to the community that belongs to Christ.

[181] For a concise overview that explains how the two levels are interwoven, and that also contains a number of conclusions for understanding Christian marriage, see: Jostein Ådna, "Die eheliche Liebesbeziehung als Analogie zu Christi Beziehung zur Kirche: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Studie zu Epheser 5,21-33," *ZThK* 92 (1995): 434-465.

sentence that serves as a kind of summary (v. 33).[182] The bridal metaphor appears in the second part.

The introductory verse (v. 21) begins with a call addressed to husband *and* wife: ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις, *be subject to one another*.[183] Ὑποτάσσω involves a principle of order. Order is an important principle in Sacred Scripture. Creation has a particular order (Gen 1), the Church too occupies her own place (Ep 5:24), and ultimately everything will be subjected to God in Christ (1 Co 15:27-28). In Ephesians, the order between husband and wife is discussed further in the remainder of the household code, but we can already observe that this order must be seen in the light of the core statement of Ep 5:2: "follow Christ by loving as he loved you."[184] A Christological foundation is provided for the call to be subject to each other: ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ, *in the fear of Christ*. The fear of the Lord is a well-known topos in the Old Testament[185] and it also appears in various places in the New Testament.[186] Fear means reverence, esteem, and respect, and it is expressed in willingness to listen to the other.[187] Husbands and wives must have reverence and esteem for each other in the same way that they honour and esteem Christ.

After this introductory thought, the order is further elaborated both in respect of the wife (vv. 22-24) and of the husband (vv. 25-32). The same verb ὑποτάσσεσθει is used to describe the wife's relationship with the husband (v. 22). A first metaphor is introduced in the two subsequent verses

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[182] Ephesians almost literally follows Colossians in respect of the household code, although the author of Ephesians has expanded the Colossians version in many respects. A first addition is the introductory verse Ep 5:21. For a textual comparison of Col 3:18-4:1 and Ep 5:21-6:9, see: Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 432. We will not include further comparisons with Colossians here unless they are necessary to understand Ephesians.

[183] Ὑποτάσσω literally means *to subordinate to*, *to subdue,* and must not be confused with ὑπακούω, *to obey*, which is used later in the same epistle when discussing father-child relationships (Ep 6:1) and master-slave relationships (Ep 6:5). In Tt 2:9 and 1 P 2:18, ὑποτάσσεσθει is used for the relationship between slaves and their masters.

[184] The participle ὑποτασσόμενοι in Ep 5:21 depends on the finite verb in Ep 5:18. The connection that should be made is as follows: πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι (v.18) … Ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν (v.21), *let yourselves be animated by the Spirit … by being subject to one another*. Ultimately, life in the Spirit also refers back to a life in love. Cf. also Joachim Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief* (2nd ed; HThKNT 10/2; Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 274.

[185] Cf. for instance 2 S 23:3; Jb 28:28; Ps 111:10; Pr 9:10; Is 33:6.

[186] The expressions φόβος τοῦ θεοῦ (Rm 3:18; 2 Co 7:1) and φόβος τοῦ κυρίου (Ac 9:31) can be found in the New Testament; the expression φόβος Χριστοῦ only occurs here in the New Testament.

[187] Cf. H. Baltz and G. Wanke, "φοβέω," *TWNT* 9:186-216, at: 197-199 and 211-214.

(vv. 23-24): that of the head and the body. Christ is the head, and the Ecclesia is the body.[188] As head, Christ is called the σωτήρ, *saviour*, of the body.[189] The metaphor of the head and body confirms the order: the Ecclesia is subject to Christ, just like the wife was subject to her husband in the Judaism of the time. That which is true for the wife (ὑποτάσσεται ἐν παντί), is also true for the Ecclesia: the Ecclesia can never exalt itself above her Lord.[190]

The focus then shifts to the husband (vv. 25-30). Husbands are first exhorted to love their wives (v. 25).[191] Like the appeal to the wives, this call is also related to Christ and thus given a Christological foundation. The text then describes more precisely of what Christ's love for the Ecclesia consists: καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς, *and delivered himself up for her*. The

[188] In 1 Co 12:12-31 and Rm 12:4-8, Paul already uses the metaphor of the body for his ecclesiology, but not yet that of the head. In 1 Co 12:12-31 and Rm 12:4-8, Paul mainly uses the metaphor of the body to emphasise the unity of the community in its diversity, as well as the equal value of every member. Cf. Annemarie C. Mayer, *Sprache der Einheit im Epheserbrief und in der Ökumene* (WUNT 2/150; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 140-144. In 1 Co 11:2-16, Paul does use the word head, but without reference to a body, and probably only to indicate a hierarchy. In Colossians and Ephesians, head has become a Christological concept. The husband as the head of his wife is derived from Gn. Metaphorically speaking, Adam is Eve's head as her *ruler* (Gn 3:16), and as her *source* (Gn 2:23). This interpretation of being the head is now also applied to Christ, as the last Adam (1 Co 15:45), in relation to the Church. Metaphorically speaking, Christ is the head of the Church as her *ruler* (cf. also Ep 1:22) and *source* (cf. also Ep 4:15-16). Both modalities of ruler and source also resonate in Ep 5:23, and it is in this way that salvation is realised. Cf. Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians,* 259-261.

[189] The Greek philosophers used the metaphor of the body to speak about the state. Cf. for instance Aristotle, *Politica* 5,1302b. The title of σωτήρ, *saviour*, was frequently used as honorific for the Roman emperor: σωτήρ του κόσμου and σωτήρ τῆς οἰκουμένης, although it was not part of the fixed set of imperial titles. Instead, it was a general distinction that could be bestowed upon gods, as well as upon physicians, philosophers, and statesmen. Cf. Foerster, "σωτήρ, *TWNT* 7:1004-1012, at 1006-1012. John Muddiman suspects that early Christian writers were reluctant to use the concept of σωτήρ on account of its associations with the cult of the emperor as the saviour of the world. Later writers on the contrary used the title of σωτήρ precisely by way of competition with the cult of the Roman emperor. The Saviour was no longer the emperor, but Christ. Cf. Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 262. Franz Jung, however, has rejected this view; his research has shown that Christians used the σωτήρ title precisely because it was so well-known. Cf. *Franz Jung*, *ΣΩΤΗΡ: Studien zur Rezeption eines hellenistischen Ehrentitels im Neuen Testament* (NTAbh NF 39; Münster: Aschendorff, 2002), 351-352.

[190] Cf. Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 446-447.

[191] This beginning is remarkable. After the lengthy exposition about the wife's subjection to her husband, one would expect something along the lines of governing, leading, or even dominating when it comes to the husband (cf. Gn 3:16).

verb παραδίδωμι, *to deliver up*, is often related in the New Testament to the Lord's death.[192] The formula used in Ephesians here corresponds literally to part of the core passage of Ep 5:2. Ep 5:2 further specifies the meaning of παραδίδωμι: προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν, as *an offering and a sacrifice*. This formula is derived from the sacrificial cult of the Old Testament (cf. Ps 40:7; Dn 3:38) and is mainly used in the context of the New Testament to highlight that what is at stake is a person's total gift of self.[193] When it comes to loving his wife, the husband is presented with the example of Christ's total gift of self which culminated in the cross.[194]

Ephesians then continues with the bride metaphor:

26 a so that He should make her holy,
b cleansing her in the washing of water through the word.
27 a so that He might lead the Ecclesia to himself in glory,
b without speck or wrinkle or anything like that,
c but so that she should be holy and faultless.

The bride metaphor consists of two ἵνα constructions that both contain a participle (καθαρίσας in v. 26b and μὴ ἔχουσαν in v. 27b) and is concluded with yet another ἵνα construction. The first ἵνα construction depends on v. 25 and sheds light on what Christ's act of delivering himself up has wrought for the Ecclesia: the sanctification of the Ecclesia.[195] Within the context of betrothal, the sanctification of the Ecclesia does not so much indicate a certain quality of life, but metaphorically stands for the election by Christ through which the Ecclesia belongs to God. Just as a bride legally belongs to the bridegroom through betrothal, so the Ecclesia belongs to God

[192] W. Popkes has shown that παραδίδωμι has a wide spectrum of meanings. Many of these are related to the Lord's suffering and death (cf. for instance Mk 9:31; 10:33; 14:21.41) and to Judas' betrayal (cf. for instance Mk 3:19; 14:10.18.21). The meaning in the Corpus Paulinum varies, ranging from handing over a man to Satan (1 Co 5:5) to passing on a tradition (1 Co 11:2). The Christological meaning returns in Ga 2:20 and Ep 5:2,25. Cf. W. Popkes "παραδίδωμι," *EWNT* 3:42-48.

[193] Cf. Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 245, who adds that the concepts of προσφορά and θυσία were applied in the early Church to the martyr's death. Cf. also Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 367.

[194] Ruben Zimmermann has observed that it is striking in the context of the matrimonial rite that the bridegroom should give himself to the bride, given that normally the bride was given to the bridegroom. This movement on the bridegroom's part does match Gn 2:24, where the husband also leaves his father and mother to bind himself to his wife. Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 368.

[195] *Holy*, *saints*, is a much used term in Ephesians: Ep 1:1.4.15.18; 2:19; 3:18; 4:12; 5:3.

or to Christ through sanctification.[196] Although sanctification, metaphorically speaking, is election, the quality of the election is coloured by the bride metaphor itself: the context of a love relationship between husband and wife in which aspects such as love, passion, sexuality, and mutual attraction play a part. The sanctification which Christ brings about must be conceived in the context of this relationship between husband and wife.[197]

The sanctification is followed by an aorist participle: καθαρίσας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι, *cleansing her in the washing of water through the word* (v. 26b). An aorist participle refers to a one-off event that can imply simultaneity in relation to the finite verb or that can precede the finite verb.[198] If there is simultaneity, sanctification and cleansing are two sides of the same coin.[199] Most scholars interpret the washing of water, which refers to the bridal bath in the context of the bride metaphor, as baptism.[200] Although many authors regard the washing of water as a metaphor for baptism, there are in fact no specific indications in Ephesians that this was meant, nor anywhere else in Scripture with the exception of Tt 3:5.[201] The tradition of the Church nonetheless at an early stage equated the cleansing bridal bath of Ep 5:26 with baptism.[202]

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[196] As we have seen in Jr 2:3, the word holy (in Jr 2:3: *qôdesh*) expresses the exclusiveness between God and his people, which even implies participation in God's essence. Cf. section 2.2.2.1. Zimmermann has also pointed to 1 Co 7:14, where Paul mentions that an unbelieving spouse is sanctified through the believing spouse. Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 372-373.

[197] Cf. ibid., 373.

[198] Cf. Friedrich Blass and Albert Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*. (16th ed.; rev. ed. by Friedrich Rehkopf; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 263-264 and 277-278.

[199] For Joachim Gnilka, to sanctify and to purify refer to the same thing, 'to sanctify' being a more positive, and 'to purify' a more negative description. Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 280.

[200] Baptism is mentioned by Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (7th ed.; Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1971), 256-257; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (EKKNT 10; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 255; Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 280-281: Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 375. Zimmermann is inclined to think it means baptism, but admits that there is no strict proof for this in Scripture. Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 341. John Muddiman is also unsure, but eventually settles for baptism. Cf. Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians,* 265. Sellin has only commented that the interpretation that it means baptism is controversial, but has not taken any position himself. Cf. Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 448.

[201] The only place which mentions a λουτρόν παλινγενεσίας, *bath of rebirth,* that could refer to baptism is Tt 3:5. There could be a link with Ephesians here, but this is not

This leaves us with the issue of ἐν ῥήματι, *through the word*. Authors who interpret the washing of water as baptism often also choose to view *through the word* as referring to baptism too, specifically to the baptismal formula that is recited over the baptismal candidate.[203] However, there are no other instances in the New Testament of ῥῆμα being used to designate a ritual formula such as the baptismal formula.[204] Usually, ῥῆμα has the more general meaning of the Word of God that is proclaimed (Ep 6:17).

If *through the word* is applied to the act of cleansing, the cleansing *through the word* refers to a "process of Christian edification which is *subsequent* to the initial act of commitment in baptism (…) and is completed only at the final consummation."[205] The bridegroom's love for his bride is thus also expressed in the Word that the bridegroom speaks. This is not a one-off event, but a process in which the bride is made ever more holy; is transformed and led further into the bridegroom's love.[206]

Betrothal is mentioned in the following verse. The central action here is παριστάνω, *to lead* (v. 27a), which in this context means *to make, to create*.[207] This word from the bridal vocabulary is used as a metaphor to

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necessarily so. Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 370-371. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the Greek word βάπτισμα is widely used to denote baptism. Cf. for instance Mt 3:7; 20:22; 21:25; Mk 1:4; 10:38; Ac 1:22; Ep 4:5; 1 P 3:21. Carolyn Osiek has contended that the audience at the time would automatically have associated the bridal bath with baptism. Cf. Carolyn Osiek, "The Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33): A Problematic Wedding," *BTB* 32 (2002): 29-39, at 32.

[202] Odo Casel has referred to the Church Father Methodius of Olympus (+311). Cf. Odo Casel, "Miszellen: Die Taufe als Brautbad der Kirche." *JLW* 5 (1925): 144-147, at 144. Cf. also Augustine, who quotes Ep 5:25-27 in a sermon on Jn 4:1-42 to prove that Christian baptism involves a washing of water accompanied by words. Cf. Augustinus, *Io. eu. tr. CXXIV*, XV,4.

[203] Cf. for instance Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 257; Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 282. Like Augustine (see footnote 276), John Chrysostom also associates ἐν ῥήματι with the baptismal formula: cf. John Chrysostom, *In epistulam Pauli ad Ephesios*, Homily 20.

[204] Cf. Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians: an exegetical commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2002), 755.

[205] Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians,* 265. Muddiman's italics. Muddiman has observed that Jn 15:3 also mentions a purification through the world. Cf. ibid., 264-265.

[206] Paul speaks of the necessity of hearing the Word in order to come to faith in the first place. This means that the Word is a constitutive element for the act of faith (cf. Rm 10:14). But John, in addition to its purifying and sanctifying effect at the beginning (Jn 15:3), also affords to the Word a lasting effect of being consecrated in the truth (Jn 17:17). This reveals the process character of sanctification.

[207] Walter Bauer has argued that the word παριστάνω means *darstellen* (*to portray*), which in the context of Ep 5:27 almost becomes *herstellen* (*to make*). Cf. Walter Bauer and Babara Aland, eds., *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen*

give a more precise description of the dynamism between Christ and the Ecclesia. This can be likened to a betrothal, the entering into an indissoluble bond. The two persons who are party to this are αὐτὸς, *Christ*, and ἡ ἐκκλησία, *the Ecclesia*. Christ is the active person: *He leads to himself*.[208] The Ecclesia is the receiving person. She is passive and undergoes the process. The Ecclesia, this metaphor says, is led by Christ, to Christ as his bride. Christ is both the bridegroom and the person who leads the bride to the bridegroom.[209] The predicate that the Ecclesia acquires through this betrothal is ἔνδοξος, *glory*. The following sentences will show us what this glory consists of.

The next part of the verse (v. 27b) uses two images, σπῖλος, *speck* and ῥυτίς, *wrinkle*. The glory consists of being without *speck* or *wrinkle,* ἤ τι τῶν τοιούτων, *or anything like that*. Speck also occurs in 2 P 2:13, where it is used in the context of the judgement on false teachers who abandon themselves to a debauched life. Their immorality and debauchery are characterised using several images, of which speck or blot is one.[210] The word wrinkle appears only in Ep 5:27 in the New Testament. The first association of without speck or wrinkle is youthfulness. Both words speck and wrinkle are derived from a medical context. Without speck or wrinkle is said of the Ecclesia, the community, which means that it is metaphorical language use. The word pair speck and wrinkle denotes an aesthetic aspect of the bride. This aesthetic aspect may describe the outside, her external appearance, but in fact it refers to the interior, to the essence: the bride is wholly pure, immaculate, and will be totally dedicated to the bridegroom.[211] The association with youthfulness could point metaphorically to the fact that the Church as Bride bears the future within herself; a future that will, through its relationship with the Bridegroom, be metaphorically without speck or wrinkle in its fullness, eternally young and everlasting.

Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur (6th ed.; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), 1268. A. Sand is less cautious and has simply translated "Christus hat die Gemeinde in Herrlichkeit *erschaffen*." A. Sand, "παρίστημι, παριστάνω," *EWNT* 3:95-98, at 96-97.

[208] Gerhard Sellin has observed that a tension can be detected here with Ep 5:25b: in Ep 5:25b, Christ gave Himself (ἑαυτὸν) for the Church; and in Ep 27c Christ leads the Church to Himself (ἑαυτῷ). According to Sellin, the image of the love that gives itself is thus complemented, not without tension, with the image of the wedding. Cf. Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 449. It is a matter of complementarity.

[209] Cf. also ibid., 449.

[210] Other images that are mentioned are *senseless animals* (2 P 2:12) and *dried-up springs* and *clouds chased by the storm* (both 2 P 2:17).

[211] Cf. also Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 372. He emphasises that this verse shows that there is an interest in aesthetics.

The concluding part of this verse (v. 27c) then once again describes the state of being without speck or blot in positive terms: the Ecclesia will be ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος, *holy and faultless*.[212] This, too, is metaphorical language use. As in Ep 5:26, holy refers to election. Faultless is a word derived from the sacrificial cult, where it referred to the flawlessness of the sacrificial animal (cf. Ex 29:1; Lv 1:3; Nb 6:14; 19:2), but it is also used in the Old Testament to describe the way of God (Ps 18:31) and the Law of God (Ps 19:8). Within the bride metaphor, it signifies the perfection that is alike God and that is given to the Ecclesia. "Holiness, purity, and flawlessness are therefore not moral demands or achievements, but gifts that result from the union with Christ and that include physical-aesthetical dimensions."[213]

After the bride metaphor, the passage returns in v. 28 to the theme of love which was last mentioned in v. 25. The metaphor of the body (v. 23) is also taken up again in v. 28. Husbands are told to love their wives as they love their own bodies.[214] The body is so intimately part of a man's person that he cannot hate it (v. 29).[215] Again there is a comparison with Christ and the Ecclesia: Christ cannot hate the Ecclesia, which is his body; on the contrary, He ἐκτρέφει, *feeds* it, and θάλπει, *looks after* it.[216]

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[212] The word pair *holy and faultless* also occurs in Ep 1:4 and Col 1:22. In addition to ἁγία and ἄμωμος, Col 1:22 also uses ἀνέγκλητος, *irreproachable*. In Ep 1:22, the word pair is used in a hymn of praise which praises God for having chosen the community. This election dates back to before the foundation of the world, although this does not mean that the Church is a pre-existing entity. Cf. Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 70.

[213] "Heiligkeit, Reinheit und Makellosigkeit sind demnach keine moralischen Forderungen oder Leistungen, sondern Geschenke, die aus der Christusgemeinschaft resultieren und leiblich-ästhetische Dimensionen einschließen." Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 374.

[214] It is not clear whether the conjunction ὡς in ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα refers to the husband's body or the wife's. In the translation "in the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies" the body is the husband's body, and thus his person. This meaning corresponds to Lv 19:18: "you will love your neighbour as yourself." However, the conjunction ὡς could also point back to the wife, who forms one body together with her husband, a body of which the husband is the head: just like Christ as head loves his Ecclesia as his body, so husbands as head must love their own wives. Both interpretations are possible and meaningful. Cf. Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 451-452.

[215] The word σάρξ, *flesh*, is now used instead of σῶμα. The use of the word σάρξ points forward to the Biblical quotation that will be used in v. 31, and in the context of Ephesians it is a synonym of σῶμα here. Cf. ibid., 452.

[216] Various authors have applied feeding to the sacrament of the Eucharist, for example Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 261. If the word feed had been used by itself, this might indeed have been the case. But in fact it is used in connection with look after it, and this means it is more likely to point to Christ's comprehensive care for his Church, which is of course eminently expressed in the Eucharist, even though the latter is not

Christ's love for the Ecclesia is confirmed once more using the metaphor of the body (v. 30). The body that is the Ecclesia, is loved by Christ because it is his own body. The Ecclesia is no abstract entity for Christ. Just like a body has various members, thus the Ecclesia consists of individuals, all of whom are personally loved by Him.

A Scriptural quotation from Gn 2:24 prepares the way for the conclusion of this passage (v. 31).[217] The Scriptural quotation again raises the bridal theme, as it revolves around the fact that husband and wife become one flesh when they unite in the marital bond.[218] To describe this unity and provide the foundations for it - those are the goals of Ephesians: like a man leaves his father and mother, becomes attached to his wife and becomes one flesh with his wife, so Christ and the Ecclesia are one. The same reversal that occurred in v. 25, where Christ delivers himself up to the Church, can incidentally be observed here: in the quotation from Genesis, it is not the wife who is delivered up to the husband, but it is the man who leaves his parental home to give himself to his wife.

The union between husband and wife that is enclosed in the order of creation is a metaphor for the relationship between Christ, the Bridegroom, and the Ecclesia, his Bride. At the same time, however, this latter relationship transcends the former. Ephesians therefore speaks of a μυστήριον, *mystery*, that is μέγα, *of great significance* (v. 32). Μέγα here does not indicate quantity, a very large mystery, but quality: it is of immense significance.[219]

The conclusion (v. 33) focuses again entirely on husband and wife, as does the beginning of the household code (v. 21). The introductory word

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explicitly intended here. Cf. Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 285-286, who says of the word combination feed and look after: "Alles, was Christus für das Leben der Kirche tut, ist darin eingeschlossen, Wort und Sakrament."

[217] Unlike in Ep 4:8 and Ep 5:14, where Scriptural quotes are introduced by διὸ λέγει, the Scriptural quotation in Ep 5:31 is not described as such. The quotation in Ep 5:31 is largely identical to the LXX text of Gn 2:24, except for the beginning: Ep 5:31 has ἀντὶ τούτου, *therefore*, and Gn 2:24 has ἕνεκεν τούτου, *because, as a consequence of*; moreover, Gn 2:24 contains two possessive pronouns: τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ, *his father* and τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ, *his mother*. Cf. also Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 454-455 and Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 286.

[218] Petr Pokorný has discerned a second meaning in addition to the union: leaving the parental home points to the way of Christ, who unites heaven and earth in the incarnation. He has pointed to Ep 4:9-10 in support of this, where the incarnation and the way of Christ are also mentioned. Cf. Petr Pokorný, "Dies Geheimnis ist groß: Eph 5,21-33: Theologische Voraussetzungen und hermeneutische Folgen einer paränetischen Aussage: Ein Beitrag zur Begründung der christlichen Ethik," *BThZ* 19 (2002): 175-182.

[219] Cf. Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 455.

πλὴν, *in any case*, draws the preceding argument to a close and announces the conclusion. Ephesians then returns from the level of theology to the level of the lives of husbands and wives. Husbands and wives are exhorted once again to perform acts of mutual love, taking Christ as their example and their measure.

2.3.2.2. The bride metaphor in Ep 5:21-33

The household code in Ep 5:21-33 speaks on the one hand about the relationship between husband and wife, and on the other about the relationship between Christ and the Ecclesia. The current study is concerned with the relationship between Christ and his Church, so it is this theme on which we will concentrate here. In the household code of Ephesians, the bride metaphor is used as a source domain to speak about the relationship between Christ and the Ecclesia as target domain. The analysis of the bride metaphor has produced two foundational metaphors for Christ and the Ecclesia: CHRIST IS THE BRIDEGROOM and THE ECCLESIA IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. Just as in 2 Co 11:1-4, a third metaphor can be deduced from these two metaphors: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE ECCLESIA IS A BRIDAL RELATIONSHIP.

The Ecclesia becomes a bride through Christ the Bridegroom: He leads the Ecclesia to himself. The Ecclesia is the receiving party, and everything is subject to the Bridegroom. However, together they form an indissoluble union. It is easy to recognise here the derived metaphor that we had already discovered in the letter to the Corinthians: THE ECCLESIA IS UNDIVIDEDLY ONE WITH THE BRIDEGROOM. Additionally, we can now formulate another derived metaphor: THE ECCLESIA IS SUBJECT TO THE BRIDEGROOM.

It is said of the Ecclesia as a bride that He sanctifies her. The sanctification of the Ecclesia is linked to the aspect of election, which itself is coloured by the bridal motif, by that of love. This contains the derived metaphor: THE ECCLESIA IS SANCTIFIED AND LOVED BY THE BRIDEGROOM. In addition to sanctification, there is also mention of glory and of "without speck or wrinkle or anything like that" in relation to the bride. The analysis has shown that this appearing in glory, without speck or wrinkle, does not primarily refer to a moral qualification or norm, but to an aesthetic element, and that it says something about the essence of the Ecclesia. The beauty of the Ecclesia is increased by the concluding characterisation as holy and faultless. All these external characteristics ultimately point to a quality of the essence of the Ecclesia. This leads to the metaphor: ESSENCE IS EXTERNAL APPEARANCE. This metaphor is not a metaphor derived from the bride metaphor, but a conceptual metaphor in its own right. It does stand in

relation to the bride metaphor and it helps to gain a deeper understanding of the bride metaphor. When describing the external features of the bride, the emphasis is on her beauty. This beauty is reflective of a perfection that is identical to God, and this can be recognised as the derived metaphor: THE ECCLESIA IS WITHOUT SPECK OR WRINKLE.

The bridegroom's love is also evident from the fact that he continuously speaks the Word to his bride. This Word sanctifies the bride and constantly leads the bride further into the bridegroom's love. This is not a matter of a single instant, like in the act of baptism, but of a process that will continue, metaphorically speaking, until the eventual wedding. We can recognise the same derived metaphor here that we have already discovered in the use of the bride metaphor in the letter to the Corinthians: THE ECCLESIA LISTENS TO THE BRIDEGROOM'S WORD. In addition, it is possible to identify the derived metaphor: THE ECCLESIA IS FORMED BY THE BRIDEGROOM'S WORD.

In the household code, finally, the bride metaphor is used alongside the head-body metaphor. Both metaphors are more or less mixed, thus exemplifying Lakoff and Johnson's point about the partial character of any metaphor.[220] For the Ecclesia, too, we need different metaphors to understand the complex reality that is the Ecclesia. Whereas the head-body metaphor points primarily to notions like hierarchical order and mutual unity: CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE ECCLESIA; THE ECCLESIA IS THE BODY; THE ECCLESIA IS ONE WITH THE HEAD, the bride metaphor privileges the personal relationship between Christ and the Ecclesia, with notions such as election, love, beauty, and perfection.

2.3.3. The bride metaphor in the Synoptic Gospels

Jesus uses the bride metaphor in three places in the Synoptic Gospels: first in a discussion of fasting (Mk 2:18-22 and par. Mt 9:14-17 and Lk 5:33-39); then in a parable about a wedding feast (Mt 22:1-14); and finally in a parable on the Kingdom of God (Mt 25:1-13).[221] We will discuss these three pericopes consecutively, beginning with the discussion of fasting as recounted by Mark. This choice of Mark is inspired by the fact that it probably represents the oldest tradition.[222]

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[220] Cf. section 1.1.2.3.

[221] There is one other passage in the Synoptic Gospels in which Jesus mentions a marriage, but He does not use the nuptial image there to speak of another reality, but as a comparison, see Lk 14:7-14.

[222] I am following the hypothesis of the two-source theory, which is widely accepted by scholars.

2.3.4. On the fasting of the bridegroom's friends: Mk 2:18-22

Jesus uses the bride metaphor a first time in his teaching on fasting. Jesus speaks these words at the beginning of his public ministry, as he is travelling around Galilee. In Mark's Gospel, the discussion about fasting is preceded by the calling of the tax collector Levi, which saw Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners (Mk 2:13-17). The discussion of fasting is followed by a disputation with the Pharisees about picking corn on the Sabbath (Mk 2:23-28). The occasion for the teaching on fasting is the circumstance that John's disciples and the Pharisees were keeping a day of fasting (Mk 2:18).

2.3.4.1. Analysis of Mk 2:18-22

The pericope describes an encounter between a number of people and Jesus: καὶ ἔρχονται καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, *and they come and say to Him*. It is not clear who these people were.[223] The central issue is the question about fasting. John's disciples and the Pharisees observe fasts, but Jesus' disciples do not.[224] The question posed to Jesus is why this is so.

Jesus' answer then follows in three aphorisms. Jesus uses the bride metaphor in the first aphorism (vv. 19-20), directly associating it with the question on fasting. The second aphorism concerns the way a piece of new cloth should be affixed to an old cloak (v. 21), and the third is about putting new wine into old wineskins (v. 22). There is no direct link with fasting in the two last aphorisms. Although the second and third aphorisms probably constitute traditions of their own, they were likely associated with each other

[223] In Matthew, John's disciples themselves are the ones who ask this question: cf. Mt 9:14. In Luke, the people who ask the question are not identified either: cf. Lk 5:33.

[224] The practice of fasting in the Judaism of the time consisted of two forms: a general fast that was obligatory for everyone, and a private fast that was voluntary. The general fast was observed on days of atonement, such as the main Day of Atonement (cf. Nb 29:7), the day of the destruction of the temple (cf. Zc 7:3), and during public emergencies, such as during times of war or drought (cf. for instance 1 S 14:24; 2 Ch 20:3). The voluntary private fast could be observed as an expression of personal devotion or by way of preparation for a special occurrence. Reasons to fast were mourning (cf. Est 4:16), penance (cf. 2 S 12:16), lending force to prayers of supplication (cf. Ezr 8:23), and preparation for the seeing of a vision (cf. Dn 10:3). The private fast was not restricted to any particular day, although Mondays and Thursdays were increasingly chosen as days of fasting. This fast was a personal initiative, held to mark particular occasions. It was forbidden to fast on Sabbath or other feast days. Cf. Eliezer Diamond, *Holy Men and Hunger Artists: Fasting and Asceticism in Rabbinic Culture* (New York: Oxford Press, 2014), 94-98.

at an early stage and handed down to Mark as such. They form a literary unit together with the question about fasting and the bride metaphor.[225]

Jesus' disciples do not fast. Jesus introduces the bride metaphor to explain why his disciples do not fast:

2:19 a And Jesus said to them:
b 'surely the wedding guests[226] cannot fast,
c while the bridegroom is with them?
d As long as they have the bridegroom with them,
e they cannot fast.'
2:20 a 'But days will come
b when the bridegroom will be taken away from them,
c and then, on that day, they will fast.'

A wedding feast in Judaism represents ultimate joy. There can be no fasting, because there is a wedding, which means that a time of joy has come. To careful readers, the image of the wedding would also have revealed the cause of the joy: the coming of the Messianic era.[227] By speaking about wedding guests who cannot fast so long the bridegroom is with them, Jesus identifies the disciples who do not fast with the wedding guests. Jesus himself is the bridegroom.

Whether the disciples do or do not fast is determined by the presence of the bridegroom, meaning that the bridegroom is the final criterion. The presence of the bridegroom at a wedding is naturally required, and it is not entirely clear how the bridegroom's absence should be interpreted. The

[225] Cf. Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus: Mk 1-8,26* (EKKNT 2/1; 3rd ed.; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989), 111-113. Vv. 18-20 have the common theme of fasting. Vv. 21-22 then follow with two aphorisms from wisdom literature, which are shaped according to a strict parallelism, and express the incompatibility of various elements, thus continuing the themes of vv. 18-20: wedding and fasting, new cloth and old cloak, old wine and new skins. Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechter-metaphorik*, 277-278.

[226] Literally, Υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος, *sons of the wedding hall*. This is a Semitic expression that does not refer to any wedding guests in particular, but to the whole community assembled at the wedding in general. Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 286.

[227] We have demonstrated on the basis of Psalm 45 in the first part of this chapter that certain developments in the Old Testament possibly had already given rise to the interpretation of the bridegroom as a Messianic figure. Cf. section 2.2.5. Moreover, Ruben Zimmermann has shown on the basis of a number of texts from Qumran (1QIs[a] 61,10), Targum Sacharya (Sach 3,1-10), and a number of Rabbinic works, that the time of the Messiah could be characterised in Early Judaism as a nuptial time. Cf. Ruben Zimmermann, "'Bräutigam' als frühjüdisches Messias-Prädikat? Zur Traditionsgeschichte einer urchristlichen Metapher," *BN* 103 (2000): 85-99.

ἀπαρθῇ, *he will be taken away*, can be interpreted in three ways. First it might just mean *leave*. In this case, the bridegroom would be present at the feast of the betrothal, but be absent in the intermediate period between the betrothal and the actual wedding, when he will return to collect his bride. But the passive form ἀπαρθῇ renders this explanation rather unlikely. Second, 'being taken away' can also refer, in a Christian context, to Jesus' death, or to his exaltation. In the latter case, ἀπαρθῇ could refer to the Ascension of the Lord (cf. Ac 1:9). But in the Gospel of Mark, the exaltation refers more to the transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and the transfiguration is not described in terms of absence, but of the contrast with Jesus' suffering and death (Mk 9:2-13). The most probable interpretation is that the bridegroom's being taken away refers to Jesus' death.[228]

In the altered situation of the bridegroom's being taken away, ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, *on that day*, the question of fasting presents itself again. Jesus foretells that there will be fasting in the future: ἐλεύσονται δὲ ἡμέραι, *but days will come* (v. 20a). The question at issue therefore is not *whether* there will be any fasting, but *when* there will be fasting. There will be fasting when the bridegroom is absent.[229] The fasting that Jesus is foretelling here not only refers to the actual practice of fasting, but must also be seen metaphorically within the context of the bride metaphor as an expression of sorrow at the bridegroom's absence. One indication for this could be the parallel in Mt, where there is no mention of fasting, but of πενθεῖν, *mourning* (Mt 9:15). "The absence of the bridegroom is not the occasion for fasting, but it itself 'fasting'."[230]

The two aphorism that follow (vv. 21-22) again point out with different images that a wedding feast and fasting are incompatible. They probably derive originally from two separate secular aphorisms that once again clarify in the context of the question about fasting that a new era has begun. [231] The old and the new are no longer in harmony with each other.

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[228] Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 287-288 and 297-299.

[229] Cf. ibid., 290. Jesus does not reject the practice of fasting as such. He Himself fasted for 40 days before beginning his public ministry (Mt 4:2), and the Sermon on the Mount contains teaching about the correct attitude when fasting (Mt 6:16-18).

[230] "Die Abwesenheit des Bräutigams wird dann aber nicht zum Anlass des Fastens, sondern ist selbst 'Fasten'." Ibid., 294. Jürgen Roloff had previously already interpreted fasting as a "metaphorischer Ausdruck für Trauern." Jürgen Roloff, *Das Kerygma und der irdische Jesus: Historische Motive in den Jesus-Erzählungen der Evangelien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 233.

[231] According to Joachim Gnilka, both aphorisms originated with Jesus. The new stands for the Kingdom of God, which begins to work and regards the old as that which has passed. The wine may have symbolised the time of salvation. Cf. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* 2/1, 116. Cf. also Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* 2/1, 177.

When we look, finally, to the two parallels in Mt 9:14-17 and Lk 5:33-39, we see that they do not contribute anything apart from what has already been mentioned to obtaining a deeper understanding of the interpretation of the bride metaphor. Minor, often editorial redactions served to streamline the text or clarify individual aspects.[232] They do not change anything substantial about the meaning of the bride metaphor.

2.3.4.2. The bride metaphor in Mk 2:18-22

Jesus uses the bride metaphor to answer the question why his disciples do not fast. Although the question about fasting is the main focus, the discussion is ultimately about the person of Jesus Himself. By using the bride metaphor, and describing the disciples as the bridegroom's guests, Jesus identifies Himself as the bridegroom. This leads to the fundamental metaphor: JESUS IS THE BRIDEGROOM. The metaphor that can be derived from this is: THE DISCIPLES ARE WEDDING GUESTS.

The failure of Jesus' disciples to fast is due to the fact that Jesus the Bridegroom is in their midst. The coming of Jesus marks the beginning of the Messianic era, a time of joy, not a time for fasting. This leads to the metaphor: THE MESSIANIC TIME IS BRIDAL JOY.

The presence or absence of the Bridegroom determines the way in which the issue of fasting is addressed. For the disciples, the time with the Bridegroom is naturally a time of celebration and joy. We recognise in this the derived metaphor THE DISCIPLES REJOICE AT THE PRESENCE OF THE BRIDEGROOM. The absence of the bridegroom, by contrast, is a time for fasting. The analysis has shown that fasting means mourning: FASTING IS MOURNING. This metaphor is not derived from the bride metaphor, but must be seen as a conceptual metaphor in its own right, even though it is linked to the bride metaphor.

The two consecutive aphorisms in vv. 21-22 again emphasise that a new era has begun with the coming of the Bridegroom, an era that has its own content and form and to which old forms and tradition cannot be applied.

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[232] Both Matthew and Luke omit the opening v. 18a. They probably did this to remove certain tensions from the text and smoothen the flow of the text. This is also true for the duplication in v. 19b which both Matthew and Luke omit. Luke has added an additional aphorism at the end: Lk 5:39. According to Heinz Schürmann, this aphorism criticises the behaviour of those who close themselves off to the new things that Jesus brings, and who want to keep everything the way it is; the scribes and Pharisees first and foremost. The faithful are told in this way that they will have to accept the co-existence of people who believe in Jesus and people who reject Him. Cf. Heinz Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium 1,1-9,50* (HThKNT 3/1; Special edition; Freiburg: Herder, 1981), 300.

2.3.5. The unwilling guests and the wedding feast: Mt 22:1-14

The parable of the wedding feast appears in Matthew in the second great parabolic discourse (Mt 21:28-22:14).[233] The second parabolic discourse consists of three parables: the parable of the two sons (Mt 21:28-32), the parable of the wicked tenants (Mt 21:33-45), and the parable of the wedding feast (Mt 22:1-14). Within the context of the Gospel of Matthew, this parabolic discourse is preceded by a disputation about the authority underlying Jesus' actions.[234] The parabolic discourse is immediately followed by the Pharisees consulting among each other on how to trap Jesus (Mt 22:15). The parables on the one hand provide an answer to the question as to Jesus' authority, but on the other they are also an increasingly powerful indictment of the high priests and Pharisees who do not give credence to the words of Jesus.[235] The third parable in the series is the one that is relevant for our current purposes.

2.3.5.1. Analysis of Mt 22:1-14

The parable is structured as follows: there is an introductory verse (v. 1), followed by the corpus (vv. 2-13), and a concluding verse (v. 14). The corpus of the parable can be divided into three parts: a first part in which the king invites guests to the wedding, and the guests decline (vv. 2-6), a second part in which the king gives free rein to his anger at the guests' refusals and invites new guests (vv. 7-10), and, finally, a third part in which the wedding banquet begins but one of the guests is removed (vv. 11-13).[236]

Jesus speaks about ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, *the Kingdom of Heaven* (v. 2), in this parable. This means that it is first and foremost an eschatological parable. To speak about the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus then

[233] Matthew has three great parabolic discourses: Mt 13:1-52; 21:28-22:14; and 25:1-46.
[234] The immediate occasion for this question is the cleansing of the temple (Mt 21:12-17) and Jesus' teaching in the temple (Mt 21:23).
[235] Cf. Joachim Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium* (HThKNT 1/2; 2nd ed.; Freiburg: Herder 1992), 233.
[236] There has been much debate among scholars about the origins (Does the parable originate with Jesus?) and the unity of the parable (Perhaps it originally consisted of two parables: the parable of the unwilling guests, and the parable of the unprepared guest). The redaction history of this parable is not important to the current study. There is wide consensus that Matthew must have made drastic editorial changes, or that he received an already edited parable as a tradition. In both cases, the current form of the parable must be situated in the earliest Christian community. For an overview of the possible origins of this parable, see: Ulrich Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus: Mt 18-25* (EKKNT 1/3; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2002), 231-236.

uses the image of a βασιλεύς, *king*, who is hosting a γάμος, *wedding*, for his υἱός, *son*. The audience of the time will immediately have associated the king with God.[237] There is no automatic association within Judaism between the image of a wedding and the Messianic time of salvation. However, as the current research has shown, there possibly were tendencies that pointed in that direction. The audience had by this stage become familiar with references to the Messiah in terms of the bridegroom (cf. Mt. 9:15), and for this reason the hearers may have associated the son with Jesus: He is the one whose feast is being celebrated.[238] There is no mention in this parable of a bride. Although a wedding was perhaps not at this point immediately connected with the Messianic time of salvation, this was the case for a banquet, which is explicitly mentioned later in the parable. Banquets in prophetic literature were metaphors for a new era (cf. Is 25:6-12). This parable speaks of a new era by using the images of the wedding and the wedding banquet.

The two most important actors are mentioned at the very beginning of the parable: God as king and Jesus as his son. For his son's wedding, the king sends for people, whom he calls οἱ κεκλημένοι, *those who have been called*. The community thus convoked can therefore be characterised as the community of those who have been called. The first to have been called are the high priests and the Pharisees, to whom this parable is initially addressed (Mt 21:45-22-1).

Οἱ δοῦλοι, *the servants*, must be understood metaphorically as God's messengers.[239] The invitation they send out on behalf of the king is bluntly

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[237] Cf. Mt 18:23-35, but the metaphor of God as king also occurs very regularly in the Old Testament. Cf. for instance Ps 29:10; 97:1-2; Jr 10:7. Cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 239.

[238] Cf. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium* 1/2, 237.

[239] In Matthew, the servants are sent out twice. It was the custom for royal weddings to invite guests twice: the first time in writing, and the second time in person, when the guests were also collected. Cf. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium* 1/2, 237. Scholars have interpreted the double sending out in various ways, for instance as representing different periods in the history of salvation. Some authors have contended that the first group represents the prophets of the Old Testament and the second group (Jesus Himself), the apostles, and the first Christian missionaries. Cf. for instance Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu: Zwei Teile in einem Band* (Unchanged reprographic reprint of the edition Tübingen 1910; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 421; Jakob van Bruggen, *Matteüs: Het evangelie voor Israël* (Kampen: Kok, 1990), 390; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium 16,21-28,20* (NEB 1; Würzburg, Echter Verlag, 1987), 209. Other scholars, however, have interpreted all of the emissaries as Christian missionaries. Cf. for instance Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (SP 1; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 308, and Luz, *Das Evangelium nach*

declined. Then the ἄριστον, *banquet*, is mentioned explicitly (v. 4). The Kingdom of Heaven and the wedding banquet have thus both become eschatological entities that are fundamentally mutually interchangeable.

Unlike Lk 14:18-20, Matthew does not give the reasons for the refusal. In any case, the invitees placed earthly issues and worries above the festive joy of the eschatological wedding, and as the following verses show, this causes them to miss out on salvation. The king's response seems somewhat disproportionate: he gives orders for a punitive expedition.[240]

The king then sends out his servants once more. The exclamation πορεύεσθε, *go*, is a missionary command (cf. Mt 28:19). New people must be called to the wedding (v. 9) The servants must go to the ends of the roads, literally and metaphorically going to the very borders of the realm, this time inviting everyone: συνήγαγο πάντας οὓς εὗρον, *they brought everyone with them, as many as they could find.* It is clear from the result that everyone was invited and everyone in fact attended: πονηρούς τε καὶ ἀγαθούς, *bad and good alike* (v. 10), are brought together. We may conclude that the new community is primarily a *corpus permixtum*.[241]

The king makes his entry in the last part of the parable (vv. 11-13). There is no mention any more of the wedding banquet or the son. The guests themselves no longer occupy centre stage. They are inspected by the king; a visitation that metaphorically represents the judgement.[242] One of the guests, it transpires, is not properly dressed for the wedding, and is therefore

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Matthäus 1/3, 240, who does however leave open the possibility that the first group are the prophets of the Old Testament.

[240] Many scholars believe that this event refers to the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. If this verse does indeed allude to the fall of Jerusalem, this also has consequences for the question of the dating of Matthew's Gospel. Cf. for an overview: Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium* 1/2, 239. It is not essential in the context of the current enquiry to take position on this issue. Many authors have detected a rupture in the text at the transition from v. 5 to vv. 6-7. They have tried to imagine how the preparations for the wedding (v. 4) could be interrupted to carry out a punitive expedition, which would surely take a few days (v. 7), before continuing with the wedding feast, which had in the meantime been fully prepared, by inviting new guests (vv. 8-10). These authors have contended that the parable ultimately turns into an allegory. But Ulrich Luz has observed that for the audience at the time, the parable was more of a unity than for current readers. At the time, the audience would have been familiar with the fate of the Biblical prophets (cf. Mt 5:12; 23:34), as they would have been with punitive expeditions against the recalcitrant people (cf. for instance Jg 1:8; 2 S 12:26-31). Cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 241.

[241] Cf. also the parable of the wheat and tares: Mt 13:24-30.36-43, although it must be remarked that it this parable primarily concerns the world, whereas the parable of the wedding feast is about the Kingdom of Heaven.

[242] Cf. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 240.

excluded. Some authors have called the king's reaction unreasonable – who can be expected to be properly dressed for a wedding if you are plucked off the street at the last minute.[243] It is clear that the wedding garment at issue must be interpreted metaphorically.

The metaphor of the garment or of clothing occurs frequently in Scripture. We have already concluded in the previous section that the clothing metaphor in the Old Testament "expresses someone's mood and the intention of his actions towards others."[244] Thus the Lord clothes his anointed with garments of salvation, and wraps him in a cloak of saving justice (cf. Is 61:10), but He also puts on the "clothes of vengeance" (Is 59:17). In the New Testament, Paul reminds his readers that Christians have been clothed in Christ (Ga 3:27).[245] When we look at clothes in the context of Matthew's Gospel, we see that Mt 7:15 warns against false prophets ἐν ἐνδύμασιν προβάτων, *in sheep's clothes*, who are ravenous wolves underneath. In the subsequent sayings about telling a tree by its fruit and about false prophets (Mt 7:16-23), Jesus shows that it is not enough to profess faith in words, but that it is important to do good works. Jesus concludes with: "Away from me, all evil doers!" (Mt 7:23). Doing good deeds is a recurring theme in Matthew's Gospel (cf. Mt 5:16.20.48; 6:1.33 and 25:31-46). A person's works show what really drives them. Rv 19:8 speaks of the bride's white garment: "His bride is ready, and she has been able to dress herself in bright white linen, because her linen is made of the good deeds of the saints." We could similarly interpret the wedding garment metaphorically, as the doing of good works, the doing of justice.[246]

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[243] Cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 232. Conversely, Rudolf Schnackenburg has expressed surprise and irritation at the fact that all the other guests are dressed in wedding garments. He has rejected the possible explanation that the guests would have been handed a wedding garment at the entrance to the wedding hall. Cf. Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium*, 210.

[244] See section 2.2.3.3. The quotation is from Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah III*, 293.

[245] Paul often uses the metaphor of clothing, cf. for instance Rm 13:12; Col 3:12; Ep 4:24; 6:14.

[246] This is done for instance by Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), 439. Other scholars have advanced various alternative possibilities, like faith, cf. Manfred Köhnlein, *Gleichnisse Jesu: Visionen einer besseren Welt* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009), 221; salvation with a reference to Is 61:10, cf. Alexander Sand, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (RNT; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1986), 440; obedience to the will of the Father, cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus: Mt 18-25*, 245; lack of respect for the king, cf. Van Bruggen, *Matteüs*, 391; Jewish leaders who refuse to believe Jesus' call to conversion and his proclamation of the Kingdom of God, cf. Craig A. Evans, *Matthew* (NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 368.

Ulrich Luz has commented that the king's tone when speaking to the guest who is not wearing a wedding garment by addressing him as ἑταῖρε, *friend* or *mate*, is condescending, but also hard and uncompromising. It silences the guest, who says nothing further.[247]

The guest without the wedding garment is thrown out by the king's servants[248] into the darkness, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. This formula also occurs in Mt 8:12; 13:20 and 25:30. This movement of throwing someone out returns in Mt 25:46. Weeping and grinding of teeth, as well as casting outside represent eternal punishment.[249] Within the context of the first Christian communities this means that being part of the new Christian community is no guarantee that you will eventually be saved. The call to become part of the community must still be answered by doing justice. It is possible to squander final salvation.

The concluding sentence of the parable summarises the content of the entire parable: being called is not the same thing as being saved. Many are called, initially the people of Israel and ultimately all people, but not all who have been called will belong to the chosen, to those who are permitted to partake in the heavenly banquet. Matthew does not mention figures. The parable must rather be viewed as a warning. Until the day of judgement, the community of those who have been called will be a *mixtum compositum*; it will be judged on whether it does justice or not.[250]

2.3.5.2. The bride metaphor in Mt 22:1-14

The parable tells of a king and his son. The king is the host of his son's wedding. We have seen that the king, almost as a matter of course,

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[247] Cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 244. This hard and uncompromising aspect is also present in other parables on the last judgement. In the other parables, the condemned raise all kinds of objections that are unable to change the judge's mind: cf. Mt 25:11-12; 25:44-46.

[248] Up to that point the word δοῦλος had been used in the parable, but from this point on it is διακονος. These διακονοί possibly refer to the angels who attend the last judgement. This is the theory that is advanced by such authors as Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, 425, and Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 245, who refers by way of proof to Mt 13:41.49.

[249] This image also occurs in wisdom literature: Ws 17:2.

[250] A number of authors have commented that the final sentence is wrong, because all from the first group are rejected, but only one from the second group. It is important not to forget, however, that this is a metaphor and not an exercise in arithmetic. The final sentence which these authors think is an exaggeration is in fact a serious warning against an erroneous and sluggish view of discipleship of Jesus. Cf. Gundry, *Matthew,* 440-441.

represented God for the audience at the time. The audience had moreover become familiar by this time with the image of the bridegroom as the Messiah, acknowledging and professing Jesus as the Messiah. This brings us to two fundamental metaphors: GOD IS THE KING and JESUS IS THE BRIDEGROOM. Moreover: JESUS IS THE KING'S SON.

There is no mention in this parable of the bride, but the guests at the wedding do play an important role. The king sends out his servants to invite and collect the guests for the wedding. The king refers to the guests as those who have been called. Our analysis of the parable has demonstrated that the invitation is addressed initially to the high priest and the Pharisees, but that everyone is ultimately called, which means that the king's invitation to the wedding of his son is universal. This brings us to the derived metaphor: GOD THE KING CALLS EVERYONE TO HIS SON'S WEDDING. A first group of people who have been called decline, and a second group of people who have been called come in their place. This second group consists of all others, as many as the servants can find. In the parable, this group is also characterised as consisting of bad and good alike: a *corpus permixtum*. In this we can identify the metaphor: THE COMMUNITY IS A CORPUS PERMIXTUM. This metaphor is not derived from the bride metaphor, but is a structural metaphor in its own right.[251]

Where there is a bridegroom and where there are wedding guests, there is a wedding. At the beginning of the parable, Jesus immediately mentions the wedding. He uses the metaphor of the wedding to speak about the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven itself is also a metaphor for the reign of God which has definitively come with the coming of Christ, and which will manifest itself in its fullness at the end of time. The Kingdom of Heaven, and therefore the wedding, represent the eschatological time. This leads to the metaphor: THE END TIME IS A WEDDING. The parable also mentions a wedding banquet. The audience of the time would have been familiar with the image of a banquet as a metaphor for the end time. The end time is characterised more specifically in this parable as a wedding banquet. This leads to the metaphor: THE END TIME IS A WEDDING BANQUET. The question is whether this is a derived metaphor or a structural metaphor in its own right. In a study of the Kingdom of Heaven, both metaphors would probably be regarded as structural metaphors, alongside metaphors such as THE KINGDOM

[251] The metaphor THE COMMUNITY IS A CORPUS PERMIXTUM could be viewed as a derived metaphor of the structural metaphor THE COMMUNITY IS THE BODY OF CHRIST. But the Church as the Body of Christ is not the object of the current study, and for the purposes of this enquiry into the Church as the Body of Christ, I will therefore regard the metaphor THE COMMUNITY IS A CORPUS PERMIXTUM as a structural metaphor in its own right.

OF HEAVEN IS A VINEYARD (cf. Mt 20:1-16) or THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS A MUSTARD SEED (cf. Mt 13:31-32). The current study however concentrates on the Church as the Bride of Christ; its main focus is not the Kingdom of Heaven but the Church as a community of believers. If the Church is called a bride, there must also be a bridegroom, a wedding, and a wedding banquet. Our analysis of the bride metaphor shows us that the wedding feast and the wedding banquet are future realities. For the purposes of the current study therefore, both metaphors must be regarded as derived metaphorical concepts. They help the community, which understands itself as the Bride, to be oriented to the future above all else.

Once the king enters the wedding hall, he judges the guests. Not every guest proves to be appropriately dressed for the wedding. The analysis has shown that the wedding garment is a metaphor for the right disposition for the wedding: the doing of good works. Clothing is thus a metaphor for deeds, and this leads to the metaphor DEEDS ARE CLOTHES. This is a structural metaphor in its own right. If it is associated with the bride metaphor, and if the clothes are specified as wedding garments, this brings us to the derived metaphor: DOING GOOD WORKS IS A WEDDING GARMENT.

The various people invited in the parable – both the first group of people who are called and those who are called later, including the unworthy wedding guest – show the audience's future prospects. The invitation can be declined out of hand, but it can also be accepted in the wrong way. In both cases, the rewards are darkness and eternal punishment. This leads to the metaphor: PUNISHMENT IS DARKNESS. This is a conceptual metaphor in its own right, and not a metaphor derived from the bride metaphor. But it is also possible to accept the invitation and to respond to it correctly by doing just deeds. This will result in a place at the table at the heavenly banquet. In the concluding verse this choice is summarised once more with the aphorism: many are called, but few are chosen.

2.3.6. The foolish and wise virgins: Mt 25:1-13

In Matthew, the parable of the ten virgins is part of the discourse on end times (Mt 24-25). The middle part of the discourse on end times contains a number of parables: the budding fig tree (Mt 24:32-33); the days of Noah (Mt 24:37-42); the watchful owner and the thief (Mt 24:43-44); the conscientious steward (Mt 24:45-51); the ten virgins (Mt 25:1-13); and the use of the talents (Mt 25:14-30). The parables have a common theme in that they proclaim the coming of the Son of Man, but also declare that the time of the coming of the Son of Man is unknown (cf. Mt 24:36.42.44.50; 25:6.13). It is necessary therefore to be vigilant (Mt 24:42; 25:13) and to be

always prepared (Mt 24:44), because it is possible to miss the moment (Mt 24:40-41.51; 25:12.28-30).

2.3.6.1. Analysis of Mt 25:1-13

The structure of the parable is clear. The parable begins with a verse that contains the theme of the parable (v. 1), and concludes with a didactic comment (v. 13). Structurally speaking, the body of the parable (vv. 2-12) can be divided into three parts: exposition (vv. 2-5), middle part with the actual drama (vv. 6-9), and a concluding scene in the house of the bridegroom (vv. 10-12).[252]

The opening verse immediately indicates the subject of the parable: ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, *the Kingdom of Heaven*. This means the parable is eschatological. The central figure is the νυμφίος, *bridegroom*. He is absent in the first part of the parable, but he appears towards the end and also expresses a judgement. Within the context of the discourse on end times, there is no doubt that the bridegroom is the Son of Man who will come at the end of time. Thus Jesus is speaking about Himself in this parable.

[252] I am following Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 467 here. Just as for the parable of the wedding banquet (Mt 22:1-13), it is a hotly debated question among scholars whether this parable originated with Jesus. The ten virgins who go out to meet the bridegroom, the bridegroom's tardy arrival, and the closing of the door of the wedding hall in particular are seen as alien to Jewish weddings of the time. However, Ruben Zimmermann has demonstrated that the wedding as described in the parable could perfectly well have taken place, and is not therefore a construction. Zimmermann has argued that there was no such thing as a homogenous Jewish nuptial rite at the time of Jesus, but that there was a multitude of local traditions, that had often been influenced by Hellenistic customs. Zimmermann has compared the stereotypical Jewish rite with the stereotypical Hellenistic rite, and has concluded that the adoption of certain Hellenistic elements (for instance the bride's home as the location of the wedding, which can explain the prolonged absence of the bridegroom as well as his nocturnal arrival, or that the closing of the doors does not refer to the wedding hall but to the bride chamber; or that the virgins are indeed virgins from the bridegroom's house, who together with the bridegroom's parents are waiting for the return of the bridegroom and the bride) does in fact point to a realistic nuptial scene that would have been familiar and comprehensible to the audience at the time. Cf. Ruben Zimmermann, "Das Hochzeitsritual im Jungfrauengleichnis: Sozialgeschichtliche Hintergründe zu Mt 25.1-13," *NTS* 48 (2002): 48-70. Zimmermann's argument has been supported by Herbert W. Basser and Marsh B. Cohen. They have contended that Jesus' parables "concerning kings, households, feasts and weddings are most likely rooted in Hellenistic settings, not Jewish ones." Herbert W. Basser and Marsh B. Cohen, *The Gospel of Matthew and Judaic Traditions* (BRLJ 46; Leiden: Brill, 2015), 640. I am following Zimmermann's view in this study.

Although the bridegroom is the central figure, the focus of the parable is nonetheless on the ten παρθένοι, *virgins*.[253]

The ten virgins are introduced at length in the first part (vv. 2-5). They can be divided into two groups, the μωραὶ καὶ φρόνιμοι, *foolish and wise* (v. 2).[254] The grounds for these characterisations are not given. In Matthew, a similar distinction between foolish and wise is also made towards the end of the Sermon on the Mount in the parable of the house on the rock (Mt 7:24-27). They are wise who listen to Jesus' word and who act on it (Mt 7:24), and they are foolish who listen to Jesus' word, but do not act on it (Mt 7:26). The word refers to the whole Sermon on the Mount. This is the first association we must make; it will become evident during our analysis of the parable whether this interpretation can be sustained.

There has been much speculation among scholars as to who the virgins are. In the context of the parable, the only thing that is certain is that the virgins are waiting for the coming of the bridegroom. If we look at the context of Matthew, it is clear that the discourse on end times is addressed to the disciples (Mt 24:1). This makes it likely that the virgins must be seen as representing the Christian community.[255] A more important issue than the virgins' identity are their actions, because these determine their own future. The ten virgins present the hearer with two models of action.[256]

The difference between wise and foolish lies in taking or not taking the ἔλαιον, *oil,* with the λαμπάδες, *lamps* (vv. 3-4).[257] There is no immediate

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[253] Παρθένος, *young woman* or *virgin*, is used mainly for Mary in the New Testament (cf. Mt 1:23; Lk 1:27). We have already encountered παρθένος in 2 Co 2:11 with the adjective ἁγνός, *pure*, to emphasise, as we observed at the time, that the woman in question was a virgin. In Mt 25 we may assume that παρθένος is used in its general secular sense as *young woman*, who is as a matter of course assumed to be a virgin. Cf. Delling, "παρθένος," *TWNT* 5: 824-835, at 830-832.

[254] Jakob van Bruggen has commented that the division of the virgins into two groups of five ensures that there is no majority behind which the hearer can shelter: everyone has their own responsibility to bear. Cf. Van Bruggen, *Matteüs,* 428.

[255] Most recent commentaries identify the virgins with the Christian community. A number of authors have argued that only the wise virgins represent the Christian community. Jerome regarded the virgins as symbolising all people who believe in God, with the foolish virgins representing the synagogue and the wise virgins the Church. John Chrysostom, on the contrary, took the word virgins very literally and believed they stood for a specific group of women. For an overview of the various (historical) interpretations: Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 477-485.

[256] Cf. also Moisés Mayordomo, "Kluge Mädchen kommen überall hin … (Von den zehn Jungfrauen) Mt 25,1-13," in *Kompendium der Gleichnisse Jesu* (ed. Ruben Zimmerman; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2007), 488-503, at 497.

[257] There has been some debate about whether αἱ λαμπάδες are oil lamps or torches. Gnilka and many other authors have assumed that they are oil lamps because of the fact

indication in the parable as to what the lamps and oil stand for metaphorically. Nor do the virgins themselves initially realise the difference. In the absence of the coming of the bridegroom, all ten of them become drowsy, and eventually they are all asleep (v. 5). No reason is given for the bridegroom's delay.[258] This is not clarified within the context of the parable, and nor is it emphasised. The focus, as we have seen, is on the ten virgins.

The actual drama takes place in the middle part (vv. 6-9). The setting is μέσης δὲ νυκτὸς, *in the middle of the night*. This expression does not refer to any particular time, but it is a metaphorical manner of speaking. The νύξ, *night,* could refer to the unexpected moment of the bridegroom's coming.[259] But in Scripture, night and darkness also stand for the condition of the human being who has not yet come to the light of faith. Thus Nicodemus encounters Jesus at night (Jn 3:1) and Jesus later says in a dialogue with the disciples that those who walk around ἐν τῇ νυκτί, *at night*, will stumble, because τὸ φῶς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῷ, *there is no light in him* (Jn 11:10). For Paul, the night is the period before the manifestation of the dominion of God (cf. Rm 13:12).[260] Thus the night can be interpreted metaphorically as the time of the world; the current time, in which the light of faith is indeed present, but has not yet become fully manifest.

Then there is a loud cry: Ἰδοὺ, *Look*! It is unclear who is calling. The virgins are told to go out (ἐξέρχομαι) to meet the bridegroom (v. 6). Before they go out, the virgins prepare their lamps (v. 7). The foolish virgins now realise that they have no oil with them and that their lamps will soon go out (v. 8).[261] The five wise virgins are reluctant to share their oil, because they

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that they are about to go out (v. 8). Cf. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 350. Luz on the contrary has preferred to think of them as torches. Oil lamps were only used inside. Torches were unsuited for domestic use, but could on the contrary be used outside. Perhaps the torches in question had pieces of cloth soaked in oil, or a small container on a stick containing oil-soaked cloths. Cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 469-471. Similarly, Zimmermann, *Das Hochzeitsritual*, 62-65, who has also pointed to images on Greek and Roman vases that depict wedding processions with torches.

[258] Several scholars have associated the bridegroom's delay with the delay in the return of the Lord. They have viewed this parable as an allegory constructed by the Early Church to respond to the Lord's failure to return. Cf. for instance Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (9th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 190-191.

[259] Cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 475.

[260] Cf. also Delling, "νύξ," *TWNT* 4: 1117-1120.

[261] If we assume that the torches were equipped with pieces of cloth soaked in oil, the cloths that are lit without oil would burn only very briefly.

are afraid there will not be enough. Instead, they send the foolish virgins to the sellers to provide for their oil themselves.[262]

The bridegroom finally appears in the third and concluding part of the parable (vv. 10-12). Of the foolish virgins, the parable says that they went off (ἀπέρχομαι), while it is said of the wise, now called αἱ ἕτοιμοι, *those who were ready*, that they went in (εἰσέρχομαι) (v. 10). The two groups thus move in opposite directions in relation to the bridegroom. The foolish turn away from the bridegroom, and those who are ready go εἰς τοὺς γάμους, *into the bride chamber*.[263] The door is locked (v. 10).

The closing of the bride chamber is final. This is clear from the sequel, when the other virgins return. Their urgent double plea Κύριε, Κύριε, *Lord, Lord*, is a call to the bridegroom to open the door (v. 11), but he can no longer be persuaded. With a solemn Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, *Amen, I say unto you*, the five other virgins are rejected: οὐκ οἶδα ὑμᾶς, *I do not know you* (v. 12). This final rejection represents the eschatological judgement. There will be a moment that the door will close finally, and that the judgement passed can no longer be undone.[264] The closed door metaphorically stands for the

[262] Ulrich Luz has rightly observed that it is not necessary to look for explanations of the five wise virgins' refusal by asking whether there really was not enough to share, or whether the oil should be interpreted allegorically as the *good works* that cannot be done vicariously for others. The refusal serves the narrative function of working towards the end of the parable. Cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 476.

[263] Dutch translations have generally rendered εἰς τοὺς γάμους as *bruiloft* ('wedding') (such as the *Statenvertaling* ['States Bible'] and the Willibrord version of 1979). English translations have *into the wedding banquet* (thus for instance the New Revised Standard Version), but also *into the wedding place* (Aramaic Bible in Plain English). Ulrich Luz has translated it as *Hochzeitsfest* ('wedding feast'), although he has noted that γάμος can also be translated as *Hochzeitsmahl* ('wedding banquet') if the context requires this, such as in Mt 22:1-14. Cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 466, footnote 5. Gnilka has similarly translated it as *hinein zur Hochzeitsfeier* ('into the wedding feast') and has rejected Jeremias's translation as *in das Hochzeitshaus* ('into the wedding house'). Cf. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 351, footnote 29. Ruben Zimmermann has demonstrated that γάμος in a broad sense can mean wedding feast, but in a stricter sense can also refer to the union of bridegroom and bride. The context must determine the meaning. If the wedding banquet has already taken place in the bride's home, then entering the bridegroom's parental home points to entering the bride chamber. The virgins have a role to play in the entering of the bride chamber. Similarly, the closing of the door can then be easily explained, which is much more difficult in the case of a wedding feast. The entire village community would normally be invited to a wedding, which in any case would last for seven days. Where and when would there be any doors to close? Cf. Zimmermann, *Das Hochzeitsritual*, 61 and 66-67. The Nova Vulgate incidentally has *ad nuptias*, which refers more generally to a wedding.

[264] Rudolf Schnackenburg has observed that this final rejection is in fact difficult to understand. Although the parable possibly contains original words spoken by Jesus, he

separation of two worlds: it is no longer possible to pass from one to the other.

The all-important commodity in this parable is ἔλαιον, *oil*. As a metaphor, oil appears in Scripture mainly as a gift of the Spirit. Thus in the Old Testament, kings and priests are anointed with oil as a sign of their election and the gift of the Spirit (cf. 1 S 16:13; Ps 89:21). The Old Testament also has the image of the oil of gladness (Is 61:3; Ps 45:8) and of oil as an image of empty words (Ps 55:22; Pr 5:3). Oil does not appear very often in the books of the New Testament, but anointing with the Holy Spirit does (cf. Lk 4:18; 1 Jn 2:20). On the rare occasions that oil is mentioned, it is in the context of anointing the sick (Mk 6:13; Lk 10:34: Jm 5:14), care of the head (Lk 7:46), or the oil appears as merchandise (Lk 16:6; Rv 18:13). None of these meanings make any sense in the context of the parable of the ten virgins.

If we look at the purpose of the oil in the parable, then we see that it is to keep the λαμπάδες, *lamps*, burning. Marianne Blickenstaff has pointed out that the word λαμπάς does not appear elsewhere in Mt, although the verb λάμπω, *to shine*, *to radiate*, does. The disciples are told: "In the same way your light must shine in people's sight, so that, seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:16). We can see here that doing good works is described in terms of light.[265] From this we can deduce the meaning of the parable; the lamps with oil stand for light. The light in its turn is a metaphor for doing good works and oil as a metaphor for love.[266] This interpretation fits perfectly into the wider context of Matthew. Matthew assigns great importance to doing good works. In his description of the last judgement (Mt 25:31-46), the doing of good works even appears as the decisive factor. And in the Sermon on the Mount, lip service (Mt 7:21) is contrasted with the importance of doing the will of the Father (Mt 7:21) and acting on the Word of the Lord (Mt 7:24).[267]

The parable that began with a joyful wedding feast, ends for five of the ten virgins in final rejection. They are denied access to the bride chamber, and are locked out. Within the context of a parable on the end times, this

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views the parable in its current form as a product of the Early Church. Cf. Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium*, 244.

[265] Marianne Blickenstaff, *'While the Bridegroom is with them': Marriage, Family, Gender and Violence in the Gospel of Matthew* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 94-95.

[266] Similarly Gnilka, *Matthäusevangelium*, 352 and Mayordomo, "Kluge Mädchen kommen überall hin," 500. Luz has referred to Mt 5:16 which says that the disciple can spread light by doing good works. He has mentioned love as a metaphor for the oil. Cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 477.

[267] The same theme occurs in Jm 1:22-25; 2:14-18; 1 Jn 3:18.

rejection represents being barred from entering the Kingdom of Heaven. The expectation of an encounter with the bridegroom has turned into everlasting separation.[268]

The final verse sums up the entire parable (v. 13). It is important to stay awake,[269] to be ready to receive the bridegroom at any time. The emphasis is on the fact that the time and the hour are unknown. Until the moment the bridegroom appears, all of the virgins are together, the foolish as well as the wise. The separation occurs only when the bridegroom comes. Up to that moment, the community is a *corpus permixtum*.[270]

2.3.6.2. The bride metaphor in Mt 25:1-13

The parable of the ten virgins forms part of a discourse on the end time. In this discourse, Jesus speaks about the coming of the Son of Man at the end of time. The context in which this parable is set makes it clear that the bridegroom in the parable is the Son of Man who will return at the end of time. Thus Jesus is speaking about Himself. This brings us to the structural metaphor that we have already identified before: JESUS IS THE BRIDEGROOM. As in Mt 22:1-14, there is no mention of a bride in this parable. Instead, the emphasis in this parable is on the ten virgins.

The virgins are the most important characters in the parable. Although the analysis of the pericope has not yielded an unambiguous indication as to who the virgins represent, it is likely in the context of Matthew that the virgins are a metaphor for the community that is expecting the coming of the bridegroom. The derived metaphor THE COMMUNITY EXPECTS THE COMING OF THE BRIDEGROOM can be detected here. The virgins are divided into two groups: the foolish and the wise. The characterisations of foolish and wise are in reference to their actions: they do something sensibly or foolishly. The difference between acting sensibly and acting foolishly lies in having or not having oil. The oil and the lamps, as our analysis has demonstrated, refer to light, and stand metaphorically for doing good works. This leads to the metaphor: GOOD DEEDS ARE SOURCES OF LIGHT. This is a structural metaphor in its own right.

The parable is set for a large part *at night*. We have observed that this is not primarily an indication of time, but a metaphor for the time of the world; the current time in which the light of faith has not yet become manifest in its fullness: UNBELIEF IS DARKNESS. This, too, is a structural metaphor in its own right.

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[268] Cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 477.
[269] The call to alertness recurs in Mt 24:42; 26:38.41.
[270] Cf. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 1/3, 477.

Once the bridegroom appears, a separation takes place between the foolish and the wise virgins. The wise virgins are permitted to enter the bride chamber together with the bridegroom, but the foolish virgins are excluded. The door is locked definitively. Until the moment that the bridegroom appeared, it was not clear who was prepared and who was not. This will become visible only when the bridegroom comes. The same metaphor can be discerned here that we have also identified in the parable of the unwilling wedding guests: THE COMMUNITY IS A CORPUS PERMIXTUM. This is a structural metaphor in its own right.

We look finally at the wedding. The virgin's actions are oriented to the bridegroom's wedding. At the beginning of the parable, Jesus says that the parable is about the Kingdom of Heaven, and He then uses the image of a wedding. In the parable of the unwilling wedding guests we have already observed that both the Kingdom of Heaven and the wedding are used to speak metaphorically about the end time. On the basis of what we have said about this in the previous section, it is possible to identify the following derived metaphor in this parable too: THE END TIME IS A WEDDING.

2.3.7. The bride metaphor in John's Gospel

In the Gospel of John, the bride metaphor is used by John the Baptist, in a story that does not appear in the Synoptic Gospels. The bride metaphor can be found in John the Baptist's second and last witness (Jn 3:22-30). All we hear of him after this pericope is that he is thrown into prison (Jn 3:24); there are no further references to John. The bride metaphor as well as the adjoining phrase "He must grow greater, I must grow less", are John the Baptist's last words in this Gospel.

2.3.7.1. Analysis of Jn 3:24-30

The greater part of this pericope is dedicated to the dialogue between John and his disciples (vv. 26-30). Their conversation addresses the identity of Jesus and the identity of John the Baptist. It culminates in, and is thematically determined by the bride metaphor (v. 29), and the concluding phrase on growing greater and less (v. 30). Before the dialogue, it is mentioned that John the Baptist had not yet been taken prisoner (v. 24). There was a ζήτησις, *questioning*, between the disciples of John and a Judean (v. 25) on καθαρισμός, *purification*. This discussion was probably about the meaning of the baptisms of Jesus and of John and the fact that

large crowds were apparently coming to Jesus.[271] In any case the disciples of John went to John after this conversation to say that He who had, like John, baptised in the River Jordan was now attracting everyone (v. 26).

John replies with four short aphorisms. The first aphorism (v. 27) concerns Jesus' actions: He would not be able to attract these people if God, here designated by the metaphorical expression ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, *from heaven*, had not given Him power to do so. The second aphorism (v. 28) concerns John's own actions. John again points out to his disciples something he had previously also said about himself: he is not the Christ, but he is only the one who goes before Him. His disciples, John says, can bear out his earlier testimony to this effect.

The third aphorism contains the bride metaphor:

3:29 a He who has the bride is the bridegroom:
b yet the bridegroom's friend,
c he stands and hears him,
d rejoices with joy at the bridegroom's voice.
e So this joy has been fulfilled in me.

John the Baptist begins by pointing out the obvious: Ὁ ἔχων τὴν νύμφην, νυμφίος ἐστίν, *He who has the bride is the bridegroom*. There can be no bridegroom without a bride. It is not instantly clear at the beginning of the bride metaphor who the bride and the bridegroom are. A third person is then immediately introduced: ὁ φίλος τοῦ νυμφίου, *the bridegroom's friend*.[272] It

[271] Καθαρισμός also occurs in Jn 2:6, where it is used in the context of Jewish purification rituals. However, καθαρὸς, *pure*, is also used in John's Gospel for inner purification, cf. Jn 13:10 and 15:3.
Schnackenburg has contended that the discussion might have been about the issue to what extent the baptism of John and Jesus possessed an inner, purifying power, a power capable of forgiving sins. Cf. Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium 1-4* (HThKNT 4/1; Special edition; Freiburg: Herder, 1979), 452.

[272] For a long time, there was scholarly consensus about the figure of the bridegroom's friend, who was believed to be a kind of best man. Cf. A. van Selms, "The Best Man and the Bride – From Sumer to St. John with a New Interpretation of Judges: Chapter 14 and 15," *JNES* 9 (1950): 65-75. In a more recent study, however, Mirjam and Ruben Zimmermann have argued that this identification of the bridegroom's friend with the best man has been too easily adopted by scholars, in particular if they also assume that the joy experienced by the bridegroom's friend is due to hearing the voice of the bridegroom after consummating the marriage in the wedding night. There is no indication at all within the context of the metaphor in Jn 3:29 that the friend's joy has anything to do with this specific aspect of the wedding. Not to mention the fact that the contracting of marriage according to Jewish custom was not finalised during the wedding night, but earlier, when the bride price was paid in the context of the betrothal.

is clear from the last part of the bride metaphor that John the Baptist regards himself as the bridegroom's friend. John says there that the bridegroom's friend rejoices at the bridegroom's voice, and that this joy has come to fulfilment in him.

John had previously already characterised himself as φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, *the voice of one who cries in the desert* (Jn 1:23). This depicts him as the Messianic precursor, who more importantly has already borne witness to the Messiah: οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, *This is the Son of God* (Jn 1:34). In the verse immediately preceding the bride metaphor, John also says that he is not ὁ Χριστός, *the Christ* (v. 28), but he then speaks of the Christ in the bride metaphor. In the context of John the Baptist's discourse, the bridegroom can therefore be identified as Jesus. In the previous section we have seen that the bridegroom in the Old Testament is used only to refer to YHWH, except perhaps in Psalm 45. Here we see there has been a shift: the bridegroom is now the Messiah.[273]

The question remains who the bride is. The image of the bride and bridegroom does not exist in Judaism as a Messianic image.[274] The bride here cannot therefore simply be identified as the Messianic community, despite the fact that, within the context of the metaphor of Jn 3:29, the bridegroom must be interpreted as the Messiah. John the Baptist probably primarily uses the image of the bridegroom's friend to clarify his own position vis-à-vis Jesus.[275] We have seen earlier on in this chapter that in

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Nor is the joy limited to this specific aspect, but joy is the keynote of the wedding as a whole. Mirjam and Ruben Zimmermann have instead seen the bridegroom's friend as a theological construction to support the testimony that Jesus is the Messiah-bridegroom – this would mean that this witness, the bridegroom's friend, is John the Baptist. Cf. Mirjam Zimmermann and Ruben Zimmermann, "Der Freund des Bräutigams (Joh 3,29): Deflorations- oder Christuszeuge?" *ZNW* 90 (1999): 123-130.

[273] Cf. also Uta Poplutz, "Parabelauslegung im Kompendium der Gleichnisse Jesu: Reflexion der Methodenschritte und exemplarische Exegese von Joh 3,29f," in *Hermeneutik der Gleichnisse Jesu: Methodische Neuansätze zum Verstehen urchristlicher Parabeltexte* (ed. Ruben Zimmermann; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 64-83, at 80-81.

[274] Cf. Joachim Jeremias, "νύμφη, νυμφίος," *TWNT* 4:1092-1099, at 1094-1095. See section 2.2.5. for a possible Messianic interpretation of the bride metaphor in the Old Testament.

[275] Cf. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium 1-4*, 453-454. For Joachim Gnilka, bridegroom and bride here do represent Christ and the Church. Gnilka has interpreted this pericope as a mixture of historical facts and problems that arose in the Early Church due to the fact that the baptism of John was still being administered, making it necessary to explain this baptism's relationship to Christian baptism (Ac 18:25). Cf. Joachim Gnilka, *Johannesevangelium* (NEB 4; 3rd ed.; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1989), 30-31. Adele Reinhartz, who has studied the bride metaphor in Jn 3:29 from a

Paul's work, the community does regard itself as the bride, but this does not automatically mean that this is also true for the Gospel of John.

In addition to the relationship between the bridegroom and the bridegroom's friend, joy is also an important motif in this aphorism. Normally, it is the bridegroom's friend's task to heighten the festive mood.[276] In this case, however, it is not the bridegroom's friend who heightens the festive mood, but he himself is overcome by joy: joy has come to fulfilment in the bridegroom's friend by hearing the voice of the bridegroom.

There are a number of other references in the Johannine works to the fullness of joy.[277] In the Old Testament, joy is something that involves the whole person. Although joy is also an emotion that occurs in profane situations (cf. 1 S 2:1; Ps 144:15), its usual context is cultic and its object is God Himself (cf. Ps 149:2). Wisdom literature particularly sings the praises of the joy of the Law.[278] In prophetic literature, joy has an eschatological connotation, and it is associated with the rule of a Messianic king: "Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion! Shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem! Look, your king is approaching" (Zc 9:9).[279] The new Messianic era has begun with the coming of Jesus, and John the Baptist is therefore able to say that joy *has been* fulfilled in him. In the Gospel of John, this joy is always connected with Jesus Himself, and is given to the disciples, "so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete" (Jn 15:11). It is the divine joy that is characterised in John's Gospel as a perfect joy. "Joy here – like

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feminist perspective, has concluded that it is an obvious choice in the context of other Biblical passages to identify the bride with the Church, but that the bride in this aphorism itself is totally eclipsed by the bridegroom and the bridegroom's friend. The aphorism is about the two men, and not about the bride. Cf. Adele Reinhartz, "The 'Bride' in John 3:29: A Feministic Rereading," in *The Lost Coin: Parables of Women, Work and Wisdom* (ed. Mary Ann Beavis; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 230-241.

[276] The bridegroom's friends and the other guests are expected to contribute to the festive mood. Strack-Billerbeck have illustrated this with a quotation from Rabba Chelbo (c. 300) and Rab Huna (died 297) who quote Jr 33:10 to say: "Wer von dem Mahl des Bräutigams genießt, ohne dies zu erfreuen (belustigen), begeht eine Übertretung gegen die fünf Stimmen: die Stimme des Jubels, der Freude, des Bräutigams, der Braut, und dessen der da sagt: 'Preiset Jahwe Ç^{e}baoth'." Cited in Str-B 1:506.

[277] Jn 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; 1 Jn 1:4; 2 Jn 1:12.

[278] Cf. Ps 1:2. The previous section has already discussed the feast of *Simchat Torah*, *Rejoicing in the Torah*. See footnote 158.

[279] See also Is 25:9; Zp 3:14-17 and Jl 2:21-27. For the whole see Hans Conzelmann, "χαίρω, χαρά, σμγχαίρω," *TWNT* 9:350-362, at 353-354.

elsewhere in the New Testament – becomes the embodiment of subjective participation in the heavenly world."[280]

When John the Baptist says that he ἀκούει, *hears,* the voice of the bridegroom, then this cannot be true in a literal sense, as Jesus is not in the vicinity. Nor is there any other mention earlier on in the Gospel of John of any dialogue between John the Baptist and Jesus, like the one Matthew has included in his Gospel (cf. Mt 3:13-17). John the Baptist is speaking metaphorically. Ἀκούω, *to hear,* is an important topos in the Gospel of John.[281] This can be seen in the hearing that gives eternal life (Jn 5:24-25), or in hearing the voice of the shepherd (Jn 10:3.16.27), or in Jesus' words before Pilate: "All who are on the side of truth listen to my voice" (Jn 18:37). Listening to Jesus, and believing in the words that are heard, words which are ultimately the Word of the Father (Jn 5:24; 14:24; 15:15), are important features of being a disciple of Jesus (cf. Jn 10:4).[282] He who hears the voice of the bridegroom and believes it can be called a disciple.[283]

In the fourth aphorism, which is also John the Baptist's concluding word (v. 30), John again unambiguously rejects any competition with Jesus.[284]

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[280] "Freude wird hier – wie auch sonst im Neuen Testament – zum Inbegriff subjektiver Teilhabe an der himmlischen Welt." Mirjam and Ruben Zimmermann, "Der Freund des Bräutigams," 128. Rudolf Schnackenburg has commented that except in Jn 3:29, perfect joy is only mentioned in conjunctive constructions (ἵνα sentences) and that the Johannine community was aware of the fact that this joy as such cannot be attained on earth. Cf. Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium 13-21* (HThKNT 4/3; Freiburg: Herder, 1975), 118. In Rabbinic literature, perfect joy also functions as an eschatological category; it will be realised when the King comes. Cf. Conzelmann, "χαίρω," 9:355.

[281] *Hearing* in conjunction with *seeing* is an important topos in all New Testament writings. The two verbs frequently occur together: cf. Mt 11:4; 13:13.16.17; Mk 4:12; Lk 2:20; Joh 3:32; 5:37; 6:45-46; 8:38: Ac 2:33. In the Johannine corpus, hearing appears to be more important than seeing (cf. Jn 8:38; 18:37; 1 Jn 2:7). Cf. G. Kittel, "ἀκούω," *TWNT* 1:216-225, at 220-221.

[282] Cf. also Mirjam and Ruben Zimmermann, "Der Freund des Bräutigams," 127.

[283] Cf. Reinhartz, "The 'Bride' in John 3:29," 239-240. In her search for possible reciprocity in the relationship between bridegroom and bride, Reinhartz has commented that there are always hierarchical elements to all relationships between Jesus and other persons, and Jesus always is the leader while others follow Him. Reinhartz has observed in relation to John the Baptist: John "is subordinate to Jesus even as he contributes to his success, and not only accepts but also rejoices in this role." Ibid., 241.

[284] In speaking about growing greater and less, John is not referring to his following and Jesus' following, but about ἐκεῖνος, about Jesus Himself. Rudolf Schnackenburg has pointed in this context to the Church Fathers, who use the image of the setting and rising sun, and apply this to the salvation of history. John may still be actively pursuing his ministry, but his time has nearly come to an end. Cf. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium 1-4*, 454.

Jesus' time has not yet come in its fullness, but the beginning is there. All in all, a new time has begun.[285]

2.3.7.2. The bride metaphor in Jn 3:24-30

The bride metaphor is used in a dialogue between John the Baptist and his disciples. The dialogue is about the identity of Jesus and of John the Baptist, and about their mutual relationship. The analysis has allowed us to conclude that John the Baptist was speaking metaphorically about himself, designating himself as the Bridegroom's friend, thus metaphorically pointing to Jesus. This leads to the structural metaphor we know already: JESUS CHRIST IS THE BRIDEGROOM, and to the derived metaphor: JOHN THE BAPTIST IS THE BRIDEGROOM'S FRIEND.

John the Baptist does not mention the bride. Although it is natural to imagine that there must be a bride – where there is a bridegroom, there must be a bride; this is how metaphors work – and to designate the community as the bride, there are no indications in this pericope that point in that direction. The person of Jesus in his relationship to John the Baptist is the central focus of the text. There is nothing in the text to permit us to decide who the bride might be.

John the Baptist also uses the bride metaphor to express joy. As the bridegroom's friend, he is not the one who gives joy, but joy comes to him. When he hears the bridegroom's voice, joy is made complete in him. The bride metaphor gives joy the inflection of bridal joy, which arises upon hearing the bridegroom Jesus Christ. We can deduce from this the metaphor HEARING JESUS CHRIST MAKES THE BRIDAL JOY COMPLETE.

The analysis has finally shown that hearing the bridegroom's voice stands for being Jesus' disciple. This leads to the metaphor: DISCIPLES LISTEN TO THE BRIDEGROOM'S VOICE.

2.3.8. The bride metaphor in the Revelation to John

The Revelation to John is a work full of images, and it has therefore captured the imagination of a great many people. The book has clearly had

[285] Cf. ibid., 454-455. Jan Nieuwenhuis has characterised John the Baptist as he appears in John's Gospel as "someone who is not" ("iemand-niet"): Jesus speaks and John listens (Jn 3:29); Jesus is the Light and John testifies to the Light (Jn 1:6-9); Jesus is the Word and John is the one who hears the Word (Jn 3:29); John is initially first, but he will subsequently be later (Jn 3:28). Despite this "someone who is not," John the Baptist is not an adversary of Jesus, but an ally. In fact, he is the principal witness for Jesus. Cf. Jan Nieuwenhuis, *Johannes de Ziener* (Kampen: Kok, 2004), 80.

an impact on history, both in art and music, and in interpreting events in time. It is important to keep in mind that Revelation was written at a particular time for a particular community of Christians. Although the book is an apocalyptic work, Revelation is not a coded representation of the course of world history, much less of the future.[286]

The author of Revelation is a man called John, who presents himself as ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν συνκοινωνὸς ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ βασιλείᾳ, *brother and partner in oppression and in the kingdom* (Rv 1:9). He belongs to a group of prophets (Rv 22:9).[287] The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Rv 1:1) which John is called to transmit, is described as a prophecy (Rv 1:3; 10:11; 22:7), but the book certainly also belongs to the genre of apocalyptic literature and has the form of a letter.[288]

Apart from an opening (Rv 1:1-8) and a conclusion (Rv 22:6-21), Revelation consists of two main parts. The first consists of the letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor (Rv 2:1-3:22); the second of a number of prophetic and apocalyptic visions (Rv 4:1-22:6). Rv 1:9-20 serves as an introduction to the two main parts.

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[286] Cf. Hermann Lichtenberger, *Die Apokalypse* (ThKNT 23; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014), 33-38.

[287] In the early Church, the John of Revelation was quickly identified with the Apostle John, and thus with the author of John's Gospel and John's epistles, for instance by Justin Martyr (died around 160). Papias (c. 65-130), bishop in Hierapolis in Asia Minor, ascribed Revelation to a certain presbyter John, a figure he distinguished from the Apostle John. Neither hypothesis, the Apostle John nor the presbyter John, is supported by compelling arguments. Although there are certain similarities between Revelation on the one hand and John's Gospel and John's epistles on the other, the number of significant differences is much greater, both as regards language use and content. Most scholars nowadays believe that the author of Revelation was not the Apostle John. Cf. Lichtenberger, *Die Apokalypse,* 47-48; and Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 38A. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2014), 65-69. Cf. also Klaus Berger, *Die Apokalypse des Johannes 1: Apk 1-10* (Freiburg: Herder, 2017), 78-79.

[288] Cf. for a short characterisation of the apocalyptic genre: Lichtenberger, *Die Apokalypse*, 38-47; and Koester, *Revelation*, 104-107. As regards the form of a letter: the opening (Rv 1:1-3) is followed in Rv 1:4-6 by the address of the letter, containing the Pauline elements of author, addressee, extensive salutation, and a doxology. Paul usually concludes with words of thanksgiving. The conclusion, too, Rv 22:21, is similar to Paul. Cf. Udo Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (8th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 607. Klaus Berger has also recognised elements from the apocalyptic genre and from epistolary literature, but has characterised Revelation as mainly a prophetic book. He has observed strong similarities in structure with Ezekiel, and in content with Isaiah and Daniel. Cf. Berger, *Die Apokalypse 1-10*, 55-65.

The second main part consists of a number of vision cycles.[289] In the second section of this second main part, two cities are contrasted with each other in two metaphors: Babylon on the one hand as the πόρνη, *whore,* described in Rv 17-18;[290] and the heavenly Jerusalem on the other, as νύμφη, *bride,* described in Rv 21-22. The bride metaphor which we will now examine more closely occurs in this second section of the second main part.[291] First we will analyse every pericope that contains the bride metaphor: Rv 18:23; 19:7-9; 21:2.9; and 22:17. At the end, we will summarise the use of the bride metaphor in Revelation in a concluding section.

2.3.8.1. Analysis of Rv 18:23

The image of the bridegroom and the bride is used for the first time in Rv 18:23; Rv 18 describes the fall of Babylon. The chapter can be divided into three parts: 1) vv. 1-10: two angels announce the downfall of Babylon; 2) vv. 11-19: the traders mourn the fate of Babylon; and 3) vv. 20-24: a call to joy and the sign of the third angel. This third part prophecies that the voices of the bridegroom and bride will be silenced.

Rv 18:20-24 begins with a call to joy. This call is addressed to the heavens, the saints, the apostles, and the prophets. God will pass his judgement. In Rv 18:21, this judgement is represented with the vision of an

[289] A number of these cycles is dominated by the number seven: the seven seals (Rv 6:1-17; 8:1); the seven trumpets (Rv 8:6-21; 11:15-19); and the seven bowls with the description of the fall of Babylon (Rv 16:1-21).

[290] Babylon no longer played any role of significance in the time of Revelation. It is most probably mentioned as a metaphor for the city of Rome. The Old Testament does contain references to Jerusalem as a whore (cf. for instance Ezk 16), but never to Babylon, and it is not very likely therefore that it is an image for Jerusalem. Cf. Mimi Deckers-Dijs, "Beelden in Openbaring: De stad en de vrouw," in *Het boek Openbaring: Een eindeloos verhaal* (ed. G. Van Oyen; Leuven: Acco, 2001), 98-108.

[291] I have limited the current study to those passages in which the bride metaphor occurs explicitly, i.e. by using words such as bridegroom and bride: Rv 18,23; 19:7-9; 21:2.9 and 22:17. Ruben Zimmermann has observed that the letters to the Churches also contain references to the bride metaphor when they speak of the στέφανος τῆς ζωῆς, *crown of life* (Rv 2:10; 3:11). This crown could be a reference to the crown that was placed upon the bride's and bridegroom's heads in Jewish and Hellenistic marriage rites. Furthermore, Rv 14:4-5 uses nuptial imagery to describe the identity of the 144,000 redeemed. Cf. Ruben Zimmermann, "Nuptial Imagery in the Revelation of John," *Bib* 84 (2003): 153-160. I have omitted these passages from the current study, because they do not contain any explicit references to a wedding. With regard to the crown, it must be said that Lynn Huber has remarked that this metaphor could also refer to a crown of glory from the world of athletics. Cf. Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned,* 136.

angel who casts a great millstone into the sea. This is reminiscent of a vision in Jr 51:63-64, where a prophecy is tied to a stone, which is then thrown into the Euphrates as an image of the final destruction of the great city of Babylon. Like the great city of Babylon, the Whore of Babylon (cf. Rv 17:1-6) too will be razed to the ground. The specific meaning of this is clarified in the verses 22-23 with the example of everyday activities. First, the sound of the harp and of singing will cease (v. 22a), which represents the praise of God that will no longer resound (cf. Ps 150:3). Similarly, the flutists and trumpeters will no longer be heard (v. 22b), and these instruments will no longer be used to play music at feasts or funerals. No trades will be performed any longer (v. 22c), which means the city's vitality has ended. The sound of the domestic mill (v. 22d), a symbol of daily life, will never again be heard. Nor will the lamps emit light anymore (v. 23a), something that implies total darkness and metaphorically stands for destruction and chaos (cf. Jb 18:6; 21:17).[292]

The list of the various elements that will cease to exist is concluded with the bride metaphor:

18,23 b the voice of the bridegroom and bride;
no one will hear it within you any longer.

In our analysis of Jr 7:34 we concluded that the silencing of the voice of the bridegroom and bride is a metaphor for the breaking off of communication between God and his people.[293] The people that does not listen to God is punished by death. In Revelation, too, the bride metaphor is used to prophecy the total destruction of the city of Babylon. Where people no longer get married, there is no hope of offspring, and thus of a future. Joy, an important aspect of the bride metaphor which results from life with God, has thus finally left the city.

The reason for the total destruction is rehearsed once again in the concluding verses of 23c - 24: it is the turning away from God (v. 23c), and the killing of prophets, saints, and of all other innocent people on earth (v. 24).

2.3.8.2. Analysis of Rv 19:7-9

The focus shifts in Rv 19 from the judgement on Babylon (Rv 17-18) to the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rv 21:9-22:5). The first ten verses of

[292] Cf. for the entire passage: Koester, *Revelation*, 709-710 and 723-724.
[293] See section 2.2.2.5. of this study.

Rv 19 can be divided into: vv. 1-8: a number of songs of victory; and vv. 9-10: the angel's command. These first ten verses together constitute a kind of hinge point between the judgement on Babylon and the vision of the New Jerusalem.[294]

The structure of Rv 19:1-8 is more or less evident from the four Alleluias (Rv 19:1.3.4.6). They accompany four short hymns, of which the first and the last are particularly important. The first hymn (Rv 19:1-2) sounds like it is sung by a huge crown in heaven, and it praises the glory and power of God on account of his actions in history: He has judged, and avenged the blood of his servants. The fourth and final hymn (Rv 19:6-8) again praises God. The crowd that sings this hymn consists of an immense, indeterminate crowd.[295] They praise God, not for his actions in history, but for what is still to come in the future: the marriage of the Lamb, the new reign. Rv 19:1-8 contains the tipping point in the text: "The time of judgement and vengeance is replaced by the all-encompassing wedding feast. But there is also a structural difference between the new and the old: God's judicial actions have a monocratic structure, and the marriage a communitarian one."[296]

The fourth hymn begins with an Alleluia, and the new reign is praised using the bride metaphor:

19:7	a	Let us be glad and rejoice
	b	and give glory to Him:
	c	because the time has come for the marriage of the Lamb[297]
	d	and his bride[298] has made herself ready.
19:8	a	She was given fine linen, bright, pure, to wear;
	b	fine linen made of the good deeds of the saints.

[294] Cf. David Aune, *Revelation 17-22* (WBC 52c; Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 1019.

[295] This is not the same group as that of Rv 19:1. The group of Rv 19:6 possibly refers to the 144,000 from Rv 14:1-5, who stand before the Lamb and who have preserved their faithfulness to Christ. Cf. Koester, *Revelation*, 736.

[296] "Die Zeit des Richtens und Vergeltens wird abgelöst durch das umfassende Hochzeitsfest. Das Neue ist eben auch strukturell vom alten unterschieden: Das richterliche Handeln Gottes hat monokratische Struktur, die Hochzeit kommunitäre." Klaus Berger, *Die Apokalypse des Johannes 2: Apk 11-22* (Freiburg: Herder, 2017), 1247.

[297] We have chosen to capitalise *Lamb* in this study, as the Lamb always refers to Christ in the context of Revelation, except in Rv 13:11.

[298] Γυνή, *woman*, can be translated as *bride* in relation to the marriage of the Lamb and the subsequent description of her wedding garments. A number of textual variants has νυμφή, e.g. Sinaiticus*, gig, cop, Apr. Cf. also Zimmermann, "Nuptial Imagery," 162.

The bride metaphor begins with a double call to joy: χαίρωμεν καὶ ἀγαλλιῶμεν, *let us be glad and rejoice*. We have already encountered a similar double call to joy in Is 61:10,[299] and we have observed in the previous section that this double call is used to emphasise that the joy in question is overwhelming. It is joy at the new era that has come through God's actions (v. 7b); the new era of ὁ γάμος τοῦ ἀρνίου, *the marriage of the Lamb* (v. 7c).

The marriage of the Lamb ἦλθεν, *has come*. It is something that happens in time, something that happens to people, without any influence on their part. The marriage of the Lamb follows the judgement on the city of Babylon (Rv 19:2). Although the marriage of the Lamb is a reality that has actually been realised (ἦλθεν, *has come*), in the context of Revelation as a whole, the final wedding is yet to come, because John is shown "what is now to take place very soon" (Rv 1:1).

The metaphor of the marriage is associated with the Lamb. The connection between wedding and Lamb occurs only in Rv 19:7 and 19:9. In Revelation, the Lamb is first mentioned at length in Rv 5. Although there is no explicit confirmation that the Lamb refers to Jesus Christ, it was clear to the readers of the time that this was so.[300] The wedding of Christ the Lamb is praised, and this means that Christ is the bridegroom. In the context of Revelation, he is a royal bridegroom.[301]

It is not immediately clear who the bride is. It is said of the bride that she ἡτοίμασεν ἑαυτήν, *has made herself ready* (v. 19:7d). This making ready was an important aspect of the bridal ritual especially in Greco-Roman culture: a kind of pre-wedding toilet. The bride demonstrated by the clothes and symbols she wore that she was preparing for her new role as a spouse: "the bride is a figure who is in the process of moving into a new role or

[299] Is 61:10 uses the words שׂוּשׂ, *sûws* (LXX: εὐφραίνω*), to rejoice*, and גִּיל, *gîyl, to be joyful, to exult* (LXX: ἀγαλλιάω). Cf. also Mt 5:12: χαίρετε καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, *rejoice and be glad*.

[300] Cf. Koester, *Revelation*, 386; and Zimmermann, "Nuptial Imagery," 167. In other New Testament writings, the Lamb also always refers to the person of Jesus Christ. Cf. Jn 1:29; Ac 8:32-35; 1 Co 5:7; 1 P 1:19.

[301] The Lamb had already been called "Lord of lords and King of kings" in Rv 17:14. Similarly, directly before Rv 19:7, in Rv 19:6, there is mention of the Lord's kingship, thus establishing a connection between the two. Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 423-424. Lynn Huber has shown that in addition to the dominant metaphor CHRIST IS THE LAMB, the metaphor CHRIST IS THE KING is also strongly developed in Revelation. She has pointed for instance to Rv 1:5; 19:11-16. Cf. Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 148.

identity."[302] The clothes and symbols make this change visible; the symbols point especially to her faithfulness, fertility, and coming family life.[303]

Once the bride has made herself ready, there is a second clothing with βύσσινον λαμπρὸν καθαρόν, *fine linen, bright, pure* (v. 19:8a).[304] This dress is given to the bride as a kind of wedding dress: ἐδόθη αὐτῇ, *she was given*. It is in fact a gift from God.[305] This clothing of the bride is reminiscent of the bride metaphor in Is 61:10, where God also clothes his people with garments of salvation, and wraps his people in a cloak of justice. In Revelation, this garment represents the δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων, *the good deeds of the saints* (v. 19:8b). In the context of Revelation, the good deeds stand for ἡ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ, *the witness about Jesus*.[306]

The wedding garment is described using two adjectives: λαμπρός, *bright,* and καθαρός, *pure*. This is not a simple description of the beauty of the wedding garment, but it is a metaphor. Λαμπρός, *bright,* is an important metaphor in Revelation to describe the person of Christ (cf. Rv 1:12-16). The light metaphor is also used to describe the throne of God (Rv 4:5) and God Himself (Rv 22:5). By being clothed in light, the bride as it were reflects God's light.[307]

Καθαρός, *pure*, is contrasted with the purple and scarlet garment of the Whore of Babylon (Rv 17:4). Idolatry and other immoral practices are metaphorically portrayed with purple and scarlet. Those who act on the Word that they have received, on the contrary, are pure, clothed in white garments (cf. Rv 3:3-4; 14:4-5). "The external appearance of the bride, including the appearance of her garments, metaphorically describes the essence of the bride – her faithfulness, purity, and closeness to God."[308] We

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[302] Ibid., 150-151.

[303] Cf. ibid., 102; 150-151.

[304] Βύσσινος, *fine linen* (Rv 18:12.16), is also mentioned in relation to Babylon, but there it is connected with πορφυροῦς, *purple*, and κόκκινος, *scarlet*, and, unlike the bride's white garment, it stands for decadence and luxury. Cf. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1030.

[305] The passive form ἐδόθη occurs more frequently in Revelation, for instance in Rv 6:2; 7:2; 8:3; 9:3, and it always refers to power or something else given by God: "all things, in heaven and on earth, are ultimately under the control and authority of the one who sits on the throne." Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 151.

[306] Μαρτυρία, *witness*, occurs nine times in Revelation (Rv 1:2.9; 6:9; 11:7; 12:11.17; 19:10 (2x); 20:4). On eight occasions it is used as μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ, *witness about Jesus,* (but not in Rv 1:2) in the sense of giving witness about Jesus in word and deed. Cf. Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 934. It is said earlier in Revelation of God that He has revealed his δικαιώματα, *good deeds* (Rv 15:4).

[307] Cf. Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 156.

[308] Ibid., 157.

may conclude that the clothing with garments metaphorically expresses the fact that the bride is being introduced "into the intimate relationship with him [God] that he has initiated."[309]

Within the bride metaphor, the clothing of the bride always plays an important role. We have already seen this in our discussion of the bride metaphor in the Old Testament.[310] Although the wedding garment and the jewellery are usually metaphors for certain characteristics, the aspect of clothing also points to the aesthetic dimension, the bride's beauty, "you grew more and more beautiful; and you rose to be queen" (Ezk 16:13). The elegant clothes and accompanying ornaments also point to the bridegroom, the abundance of whose dedication to his bride is evident precisely in the apparel she wears. When interpreting the bride metaphor, it is therefore necessary to "consider aesthetics, transformation, and royal dignity."[311]

The good deeds of the saints taken together, their witness about Jesus, are represented by the bride's wedding garment. This also reveals the identity of the bride: the community of the saints: "Revelation makes Christian discipleship analogous to betrothal."[312] Klaus Berger has observed in relation to the good works that people in Revelation are judged according to their good deeds (Rv 14:13; 20:12-13; 20:12) and that these deeds are therefore also necessary for salvation, but that they become significant only once the person in question has been washed in the blood of the Lamb.[313]

A transition takes place in Rv 19:9. The hymn is concluded and the angel once again addresses John:

19:9 a And the angel said to me:
b 'Write down:

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[309] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 940. Koester, *Revelation*, 738, refers to Rv 18:5, which speaks of the ἀδικήματα, *iniquities*, of the city of Babylon; iniquities that will ultimately lead to her fall. The bride and the whore are polar opposites on account of the former's dedication to justice, and the latter's to iniquity.

[310] Cf. Is 49:18; 61:10; Ps 45.

[311] "Ästhetik, Veränderung und Königswürde zu berücksichtigen." Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 421.

[312] Koester, *Revelation*, 737. Many authors have chosen this interpretation. Cf. for instance Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 162-163; André Villeneuve, *Nuptial Symbolism in Second Temple Writings, the New Testament and Rabbinic Literature: Divine Marriage at Key Moments of Salvation History* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 258. David Aune has commented that the woman of Rv 19:7 is not clearly defined, but he has then given an extensive description of the fact that the metaphor of Christ as the bridegroom and the Church as the bride was widespread in early Christianity, and that this interpretation must therefore be favoured. Cf. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1029-1030.

[313] Cf. Berger, *Die Apokalypse 11-22*, 1264-1265.

c blessed are those who are called
to the wedding banquet of the Lamb.'

There is no longer any mention of the bride, but instead of guests of the wedding banquet, who are described as οἱ κεκλημένοι, *those who are called*.[314] The first word μακάριος, *blessed*, indicates that the community is the addressee.[315] If the wedding guests represent the community, this would mean that the bride in Rv 19:7 and the wedding guests in Rv 19:9 are the same people. This is rather unlikely at first sight, but we are dealing here with a metaphor and not with an analogy. Rv 19:9 is not a continuation of the song of victory in Rv 19:7-8, but is an angels' address. It is the beginning of a new unit (Rv 19:9-10). The question we must ask is what source domain the angel is trying to speak about by using the bride metaphor.[316]

We have already seen earlier on in this chapter that the wedding banquet is an eschatological reality.[317] In Revelation, too, the new reign is described with the metaphor of the wedding banquet, with the specification that it is the wedding banquet τοῦ ἀρνίου, *of the Lamb*. It is the reign of Christ. Those who are called to it, are called μακάριος, *blessed*. The description οἱ κεκλημένοι, *those who are called*, means that participation in the wedding banquet must be characterised as a calling, and therefore also as election.

[314] Cf. also Mt 22:8 where the same expression is used for the wedding guests.
[315] Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 426.
[316] Most authors do not view this equating of the bride and the wedding guests as problematic. Cf. for instance Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1034, who has only remarked that this does make the metaphor "somewhat awkward". Koester has argued that there are other instances in Revelation where different images are used to denote the same group in the same context, referring for example to Rv 7:4.9; 14:4. Cf. Koester, *Revelation*, 738. Huber is of the same opinion. Cf. Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 162-163. For Gregory Beale, too, bride and wedding guests are the same group, with the bride representing the community as a whole and the wedding guests representing individual members of the community. Cf. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 945. Ruben Zimmermann has demonstrated that it is possible to conclude in Rv 19:7-8 on the basis of the analogous structure of *linen stands for the bride's clothes is equal to linen stands for the good deeds of the saints* that the bride is identical to the saints, and thus to the community. However, given the sequel in Rv 19:9 he leaves the question as to who the bride represents temporarily unanswered. According to Zimmermann, the question who the bride is can only be answered in relation to Rv 21:2.9. Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 426.
[317] Cf. the section on the bride metaphor in Mt 22. In the prophetic literature of the Old Testament, the image of the heavenly banquet is also used frequently to speak about the eschatological truth. Cf. for instance Is 25:6; 62:9; Ezk 39:17-20; Zp 1:7.

The initiative, when it comes to participation in the eschatological reality that is the reign of Christ, belongs to God.

2.3.8.3. Analysis of Rv 21:2

Rv 21 describes the New Jerusalem. The chapter can be divided into two parts: 21:1-8 and 21:9-27.[318] Both parts discuss the New Jerusalem – the second part gives a detailed description of what was announced in rather general terms in the first part.[319] The bride metaphor is used in both parts to speak about the New Jerusalem, but in reverse order: in Rv 21:2 the holy city Jerusalem is first seen and then described as a bride; Rv 21:9 first discusses the bride of the Lamb, after which John is permitted to see the holy city Jerusalem.

A new era commences after the last judgement (Rv 20:11-15), during which death and the underworld are metaphorically hurled into the pool of fire and thus finally destroyed. Four metaphors are used in two verses (Rv 21:1-2) to describe this new era: οὐρανὸς καινός καὶ γῆ καινή, *a new heaven and a new earth*; ἡ πόλις ἁγία, *the holy city*; ἡ Ἱερουσαλήμ καινή, *the New Jerusalem*; and νύμφη, *bride*.

It is said of the first heaven and the first earth that they have ἀπῆλθαν, *disappeared*, and the sea similarly has ceased to exist (Rv 21:1). In Revelation, sea is used as a metaphor for evil (cf. for instance Rv 13:1) and of the place of death (Rv 20:13).[320] There will be a new heaven and a new earth. Καινός, *new*, here must be seen as metaphorical use of language. What it means is that there will be a radical and qualitative difference between the first heaven and the first earth on the one hand, and the new heaven and the new earth on the other.[321] One of the features of this qualitative difference is that there will be no night (Rv 21:25) – again, metaphorically speaking – and that the light of sun and moon will no longer be needed (Rv 21:23), but that it will be lit by ἡ δόξα τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the glory of God*, and ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ Ἀρνίον, *the Lamb is its lamp* (Rv 21:23).[322]

[318] Rv 22:1-5 is also often connected with Rv 21. Cf. for instance Zimmermann, "Nuptial Imagery," 169.
[319] Cf. Lichtenberger, *Die Apokalypse,* 259 and Zimmermann, "Nuptial Imagery," 169.
[320] Cf. also Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1042-1043 and 1050-1051.
[321] A different Greek word for new is νέος. Καινός is used for "neu der Art nach, verschieden von dem Gewohnten" and νέος for "neu der Zeit, dem Ursprung nach, jung." Johannes Behm, "Καινός," *TWNT* 3:450-453, at 450.
[322] It is not clear whether this refers to a full destruction of the first heaven and the first earth, or a transformation. For an overview of the various positions, see: Felise Tavo, *Woman, Mother and Bride: An exegetical Investigation into the 'Ecclesial' Notions of the Apocalypse* (BTS 3; Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 307-308. For an overview of the

This motif of the creation of a new heaven and a new earth also occurs in Is 65:17-18. A characteristic feature of this new creation is that no one will think any more about what was in the past. Instead, there will be שׂוּשׂ, *sûws, joy*, and גִּיל, *gîyl*, *rejoicing*, that will last *forever*. The word pair of *joy* and *rejoicing*, together with *forever* says something about the quality of this new creation.

The new creation is then described with the metaphor of John seeing "the holy city, the New Jerusalem" (Rv 21:2). Scripture contains a rich tradition of metaphorically representing the city as a female figure. Thus Rv 17:1 describes the city of Babylon as a whore. The Old Testament has many female metaphors for Jerusalem-Zion: she is daughter (cf. Is 52:2; Jr 4:31; Zp 3:14; Zc 2:14), or wife (cf. Is 50:1; 62:4; Ezk 16:8-14), mother (cf. Ps 87; Is 54:1-3; Hos 4:5), widow (cf. Is 54:4), bride, and there are many other examples.[323] The various metaphors can be classified into two groups. One group describes the city's relationship with its inhabitants: the metaphor of the mother with her children. The other group describes the relationship with God – metaphors such as wife and bride. The many female metaphors for the city of Jerusalem-Zion on the one hand emphasise the singular and unique relationship that the city has with God and with its inhabitants, but on the other hand also show that Jerusalem-Zion cannot simply be equated with its inhabitants or with the people of God. Ruben Zimmermann has observed in this context that "the personified city is a quantity *sui generis*."[324]

In Rv 21:2, the New Jerusalem καταβαίνω, *comes down,* from heaven. This coming down from heaven is a metaphor for the fact that this new

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positions in Judaism and at the time of the Early Church, see: Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1115-1120. It is likely that what is at stake is more a kind of transformation than a *creatio ex nihilo*. This is what Rv 21:5 would suggest: "Look, I am making the whole creation new." Paul speaks of a *spiritual body* (1 Co 15:44) to express the continuity and discontinuity between the earthly body and the resurrected body, and this is perhaps similar to what is meant by the difference between *the first heaven and earth* and the *new heaven and earth*. Cf. also Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1040: "καινός ("new") … refers predominantly to a change in quality or essence rather than something new that has never previously been in existence."

[323] For instance queen (Ezk 16:13; Mi 4:8) or prisoner (Is 52:2). For a more extensive overview, see: Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 429.

[324] "Die personifizierte Stadt ist dabei eine Größe *sui generis*." Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 433. Zimmermann's italics. Zimmermann has compared the city of Jerusalem/Zion with other mediator figures, such as Wisdom and the Messiah. Cf. ibid., 430-434. It is clear from what is said about the city in the sequel that the New Jerusalem is not identical to its inhabitants or to the people of God: "Look, God's dwelling place among human beings" (Rv 21:3).

creation comes from God. As far as Jerusalem is concerned, the text does not speak about the historical city of Jerusalem, nor does heaven mean a particular place outside this world. The metaphor coming down from heaven expresses that it is something that was not visible before, that is becoming manifest in glory through God's grace, and is becoming visible to everyone.[325] In the context of Revelation, the New Jerusalem stands for those who have been through the great trial (Rv 7:14); ultimately, it is Israel renewed.[326]

The city is then characterised as a bride:

21:2 b prepared, as a bride has dressed for her husband.

The city is the bride.[327] It had already been given the predicate ἅγιος, *holy*, in Rv 21:1a. The word holy is used in Revelation for those who are faithful to God and to God's commandments, and who faithfully preserve their faith in Jesus (cf. for instance Rv 14:12; 18:20; 19:8). Thus the holy city is a metaphor for the community of people who are dedicated to God. The picture of the community is made more complete by introducing the bride metaphor. By metaphorically portraying the city as a woman, and more specifically as a bride, the focus is placed on the relational aspect. The bride, who is the community, stands in a personal relationship with God, and this relationship is a bridal relationship. This evokes notions such as love, fidelity, joy, undivided and exclusive commitment. Unlike adulterous Babylon (Rv 17:2), the community will obey the Word of God and will not repudiate the name of Jesus (Rv 3:8). In the New Jerusalem, God and man will live together in undivided love and exclusive fidelity.[328]

What has been said about the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven can also be said about the bride. The bride too is described metaphorically.

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[325] Cf. Berger, *Die Apokalypse 11-22*, 1401.

[326] Cf. Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 166-168. See also Tavo, *Woman, Mother and Bride*, 305, who has provided an extensive overview of authors for whom the New Jerusalem cannot be the historical city. Cf. also Ruben Zimmermann: "The bridal city is most closely linked to the skill of the chosen ones, or the church, and can even be seen partially as a code for the completed church of salvation." Zimmermann, "Nuptial Imagery," 167. Cf. also for the issue as a whole: Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 434-436.

[327] The word ὡς, *like*, appears to point to a comparison and not a metaphor. But in fact this is not a comparison, because there is no explicit similarity. Instead, the reality to be described, the target domain of the New Jerusalem, is described in terms of another known reality, the source domain of the bride, as it is also possible to read: "the holy city, the New Jerusalem is a bride." Cf. also Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 164-165.

[328] Cf. also Tavo, *Woman, Mother and Bride*, 310-311.

The bride who comes down from heaven, is the same bride who was mentioned in Rv 19:7 and who will be mentioned shortly, in Rv 22:17. It is the community of the saints, who are in Rv 21:2b no longer being tested in the trial (cf. Rv 7:14), are no longer on their earthly pilgrimage, but have reached the state of fulfilment, through God's grace and in a way that is visible to everyone.[329]

The expression κεκοσμημένην τῷ ἀνδρὶ αὐτῆς, *dressed for her husband*, evokes associations with Is 61:10.[330] In Is 61:10, there is mention of clothing in garments of salvation and wrapping in a cloak of righteousness. At this point in Revelation, the garments themselves are not described further. Clothing, we have observed in our analysis of Rv 19:7-8, describes man's interior. The bride's clothes, i.e. the orientation of the community, are "her faithfulness, purity, and closeness to God."[331] In the eschatological community, these faithfulness, purity, and closeness to God are given in their fullness, or, to put it in terms of yet another metaphor: "And the two become one flesh" (Gn 2:24; Ep 5:31).

2.3.8.4. Analysis of Rv 21:9

In a final vision, the new city of Jerusalem is described once more in great detail (Rv 21:9-22:5). John is invited by an angel to come with him. The angel makes a promise:

21:9 b Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

Previously, John had already been permitted to see the judgement of the whore, and he was brought in the spirit to the desert (Rv 17:1). Now, John is taken to a very high mountain (Rv 21:10). Whore and bride are contrasted as opposites. The bride is specified further as γυνή τοῦ ἀρνίου, *the wife of the Lamb*. The phrase the wife of the Lamb links this passage with Rv 19:7, and clarifies that the bride is the bride of Christ, thus again turning attention to the community of the saints.

The angel says that he will show John the bride (Rv 21:9), and John is then shown the holy city, Jerusalem (cf. Rv 21:10). Whereas the city was still metaphorically called a bride in Rv 21:2, the roles have been reversed here: the bride is now the city. This reversal in one and the same chapter of Revelation blurs the boundaries between city and bride. But what is at stake

[329] Cf. Berger, *Die Apokalypse 11-22*, 1401.
[330] The LXX uses the same verb κοσμέω in Is 61:10: καὶ ὡς νύμφην κατεκόσμησέν με κόσμῳ.
[331] Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 157.

in both cases is the same eschatological community of salvation. The two metaphors help to obtain a deeper understanding of each other. The metaphor of the city with high walls evokes connotations such as unity and security, whereas the metaphor of the bride focuses more on love and faithfulness.

The greatness, pricelessness and beauty of the city are then described in great detail (cf. Rv 21:11-22:5). The accumulation of images metaphorically expresses the single reality of the new creation: God will be all in all, and He will exercise his reign. The people, in its turn, will be undividedly faithful to God. Or, as Rv 21 put it: "He will make his home among them; they will be his people, and he will be their God, God-with-them" (Rv 21:3). No power will ever be able to destroy this relationship.[332]

2.3.8.5. Analysis of Rv 22:17

The last time the bride metaphor is used in Sacred Scripture is in the concluding chapter of Revelation (Rv 22:6-21). The conclusion of Revelation returns to the theme of the opening of the book: δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, *to reveal to his servants what is soon to take place* (Rv 1:1; 22:6). Various witnesses are produced to show that all the words that John has spoken are πιστός καὶ ἀληθινός, *faithful and true* (Rv 22:6). The first witness to be mentioned is the angel (Rv 22:6), then Christ (Rv 22:7), John himself (Rv 22:8-11), again Christ (Rv 22:12-16), followed by the Spirit and the bride:

22:17a The Spirit and the bride say: 'Come!'
b Let everyone who hears it, say: 'Come!'
c Let all who are thirsty come.
d All who want it, let them take the water of life, for free.

Ἔρχομαι, *to come*, is an important theme in this concluding chapter. Jesus says three times that He will come: ἔρχομαι ταχύ, *I am coming soon* (Rv 22:7.12.20), and the third time, this is the last word that the Lord speaks in Sacred Scripture as a whole. The Lord's speedy return is enhanced by the angel's word that ὁ καιρὸς ἐγγύς ἐστιν, *the time is close*. The call to sinners not to sin any longer, and to the upright to persevere in virtue also evokes urgency. The concluding chapter is thus marked by the expectation that the end of time is imminent.

[332] See for an extensive description of the symbolism of the city: Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1068-1089.

In Rv 22:17a, it is the Spirit and the bride who say "come!"[333] Within the context of the concluding chapter in which Jesus says three times that He will come soon, the Spirit's and the bride's call to come are addressed to Jesus, the bridegroom. It is their reply to Jesus' promise to come soon.

Who is the bride? In Rv 19:7, the bride is the wife of the Lamb. We have seen that the bride there represents the community of the saints. In Rv 21:2.9, the bride and the New Jerusalem are associated with each other, and the metaphor of the bride is used to denote the eschatological community of salvation. We have already concluded that ultimately, this is one and the same community. There is little sense in identifying the bride in Rv 22:17 exclusively with the eschatological community of salvation, because the eschatological community of salvation already lives with Christ the bridegroom.[334] It is more likely that it is the community which has been betrothed to Christ (cf. also 2 Co 11:2), and in its bride days looks forward to the coming of the bridegroom to celebrate the wedding. She is calling for her bridegroom. The bride here thus represents the earthly community of the saints.[335]

The bride may have issued her call to come from her parental home, addressed to the bridegroom to come and collect her and bring her to the bridegroom's house to celebrate the wedding. However, the call to come could also be associated with the bride's invitation to the bridegroom to enter the bride chamber and consummate the marriage. This latter possibility is the most likely one. The imperative come should then not be interpreted as a command, but as a supplication, an urgent request, an ardent desire. Once the bridegroom has finally arrived, the ultimate union of bride and bridegroom can take place: "the most intimate form of communion with Him and in Him."[336]

The bride and the Spirit both call. In addition to the community's act of calling, the Spirit acts in his own right as a mediator for the community. The

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[333] In Rv 14:13, too, the Spirit Himself speaks in reply to a voice heard before. The same thing happens here. Cf. Koester, *Revelation*, 856; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1148.

[334] Craig Koester has opted for the eschatological community: "The voice from the bride comes from the future into the present, awaking the desire to meet the bridegroom at his coming." Koester, *Revelation*, 857. Koester regards Rv 22:17b as the reply of the earthly community: "Each listener is called to become a speaker by joining those who ask Jesus to 'come.'" Ibid., 857.

[335] Cf. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1148.

[336] Villeneuve, *Nuptial Symbolism*, 264. Cf. also Zimmermann, "Nuptial Imagery," 176. Klaus Berger has remarked in relation to this one word come in the context of marriage: "Es ist die kürzeste und eindeutigste Formulierung von Sehnsucht, die es gibt." Cf. Berger, *Die Apokalypse 11-22*, 1409.

Spirit is the *paraclete*, *advocatus*, he who speaks the language that the higher court understands. It is a calling in parallel.[337]

In the second part of Rv 22:17, the call to answer Christ's promise by saying "come!" is addressed to a third group (Rv 22:17b). They are ὁ ἀκούων, *those who hear* According to Gregory Beale, the group of those who hear are not automatically the same as the faithful and visible community, but they consist only of the faithful who have ears to hear what the Spirit says. This distinction is made in the letters to the seven communities (Rv 2:7.11.17.29; 3:6.13.22) and later it is made again in Rv 13:9.[338]

Finally, the call to come is addressed to all who are thirsty (Rv 22:17c). This call is not addressed to Jesus, but to those who wish to be part of the community which ultimately makes up the New Jerusalem. Those who hear it, are invited, and this means it is a universal invitation.[339]

2.3.8.6. The bride metaphor in the Book of Revelation

The bride metaphor is used as a source domain in Revelation to speak both about the community of the saints which is expecting the Lord's return, and about the eschatological community which is united with the Lord. In both cases, the bride metaphor is used to express the unity between Christ and the community. From this we can derive the two familiar structural metaphors: CHRIST IS THE BRIDEGROOM, and THE COMMUNITY IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. Here, too, we find the derived metaphor: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE COMMUNITY IS A BRIDAL RELATIONSHIP.

The community of the saints is still living in expectance of the Lord's return, and the eschatological community already lives in full unity with the Lord. This gives rise to two derived metaphors that we have also seen in Paul: THE COMMUNITY EXPECTS THE RETURN OF THE BRIDEGROOM, and THE COMMUNITY IS UNDIVIDEDLY ONE WITH THE BRIDEGROOM.

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[337] Klaus Berger refers here to Rm 8:26, which also speaks of human weakness and the Spirit who comes to help people. This too is a parallel calling. Rm 8:27 shows that the Spirit speaks in its own way: ὅτι κατὰ Θεὸν, ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἁγίων, *because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God*. Cf. Berger, *Die Apokalypse 11-22*, 1512-1513.

[338] Cf. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1148.

[339] The metaphor to be thirsty and the metaphor of drinking the water of life (Rv 22:17cd) have strong Biblical foundations. Cf. for instance Is 55:1; Jr 2:13; Ps 42:2; 63:1; but also the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:1-42); Jesus' promise of living water (Jn 7:37-39) and in Rv 21:6. It is a metaphor of salvation. Cf. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1229.

The eschatological community of salvation is portrayed both with the image of a wedding and with that of a wedding banquet. The banquet was already used in the Old Testament as a metaphor for the time of salvation. In Revelation, and before that in Matthew, this banquet is further specified as a wedding banquet. This leads us to the familiar metaphors of THE END TIME IS A WEDDING, and THE END TIME IS A WEDDING BANQUET. As has been seen, both metaphors as such can be regarded as structural metaphors, but in the context of the bride metaphor in the New Testament, they are both derived metaphors. Another peculiarity, finally, is that the wedding in Revelation is associated with the metaphor of the Lamb: THE END TIME IS THE WEDDING OF THE LAMB.

Just as in the parable of the wedding feast (Mt 22:1-14), the garments with which the bride is clothed also play an important role in Revelation. In general, the metaphor of clothing can be summed up in the same way that it has been summed up before: DEEDS ARE CLOTHES. In the context of Revelation, the wedding garments represent the witness about Jesus. This leads us to the derived metaphor: THE WITNESS ABOUT JESUS IS THE WEDDING GARMENT.

Another metaphor that we have discovered already is: ESSENCE IS EXTERNAL APPEARANCE. Just like in the Old Testament, where God clothed his people in salvation and righteousness, clothes in Revelation show the close and intimate bond between the community and Christ. The purity of the clothes refers to bride's faithfulness, purity, and closeness to God. This leads us to the derived metaphor: FAITHFULNESS, PURITY AND CLOSENESS ARE THE WEDDING GARMENT.

We see in Revelation that the bride on the one hand prepares herself for the wedding, but on the other that she is given new garments. These garments make the bride new. This leads to the metaphor: A CHANGE OF STATUS IS A CHANGE OF CLOTHES. This, again, is a structural metaphor in its own right that is applied within the context of the bride metaphor.

A wedding banquet requires wedding guests. The analysis has shown that the wedding guests stand for the community of saints. The fact that the images of the bride and the wedding guests are both used for the community does not pose any problem within modern metaphor theory. The determining factor is the context in which the metaphor is used. In Revelation, the members of the community are referred to metaphorically as wedding guests to emphasise that participating in the community is a matter of being called and of election: THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ARE CHOSEN WEDDING GUESTS.

Whenever Revelation mentions the wedding and the bride metaphor, it also includes a call to joy and rejoicing. In Revelation, too, joy is an

important aspect of the bride metaphor. The joy in question is joy at the coming of the marriage of the Lamb. The analysis has demonstrated that it is ultimately joy at Christ the bridegroom. This leads us to the derived metaphor: THE COMMUNITY REJOICES AT THE BRIDEGROOM.

Finally, we must observe that Revelation uses various metaphors to describe the same reality. Thus in the pericopes that we have examined, Christ not only is the Bridegroom, but also the Lamb and the King. These different metaphors are mixed to aid the task of interpreting the reality that is being expressed. Thus the bride is also called the wife of the Lamb, and the bridegroom in the context of Revelation is a royal bridegroom. And as we have seen in the analysis, the community is described not only as bride, but also in another metaphor as the holy city and the New Jerusalem. This leads us to the metaphor THE COMMUNITY IS A CITY, with the derived metaphors THE COMMUNITY IS THE HOLY CITY, and THE COMMUNITY IS THE NEW JERUSALEM.

2.3.9. Summary

The structural metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST is the object of this study. In this section, we have looked at the use of the bride metaphor in the New Testament. The study has shown that the concept of the wedding as a source domain is used in the Corpus Paulinum, in the Synoptic Gospels, in John's Gospel and in the book of Revelation to speak about the target domain, Christ and the community of those who believe in Him. In each case in the New Testament where the bride metaphor is used, this has produced two structural metaphors: JESUS CHRIST IS THE BRIDEGROOM and THE COMMUNITY IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. We may conclude that the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST is firmly rooted in the New Testament.

The analysis has additionally identified the following derived metaphors, listed here in the order in which they occur in the text:

1) THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE COMMUNITY IS A BRIDAL RELATIONSHIP (2 Co; Ep, Rv);
2) THE COMMUNITY IS UNDIVIDEDLY ONE WITH THE BRIDEGROOM (2 Co, Ep, Rv);
3) THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD OF THE BRIDEGROOM (2 Co, Ep);
4) THE COMMUNITY EXPECTS THE RETURN OF THE BRIDEGROOM (2 Co, Mt 25, Rv);
5) THE ECCLESIA IS SUBJECT TO THE BRIDEGROOM (Ep);

6) THE ECCLESIA IS SANCTIFIED AND LOVED BY THE BRIDEGROOM (Ep);
7) THE ECCLESIA IS WITHOUT SPECK OR WRINKLE (Ep);
8) THE ECCLESIA IS FORMED BY THE BRIDEGROOM'S WORD (Ep);
9) THE DISCIPLES ARE WEDDING GUESTS (Mk);
10) THE MESSIANIC TIME IS BRIDAL JOY (Mk);
11) THE DISCIPLES REJOICE AT THE PRESENCE OF THE BRIDEGROOM (Mk);
12) GOD THE KING CALLS EVERYONE TO HIS SON'S WEDDING (Mt 22);
13) THE END TIME IS A WEDDING (Mt 22; 25; Rv);
14) THE END TIME IS A WEDDING BANQUET (Mt 22; Rv);
15) DOING GOOD WORKS IS A WEDDING GARMENT (Mt 22);
16) JOHN THE BAPTIST IS THE BRIDEGROOM'S FRIEND (Jn);
17) HEARING JESUS CHRIST MAKES THE BRIDAL JOY COMPLETE (Jn);
18) DISCIPLES LISTEN TO THE BRIDEGROOM'S VOICE (Jn);
19) THE END TIME IS THE WEDDING OF THE LAMB (Rv);
20) THE WITNESS ABOUT JESUS IS THE WEDDING GARMENT (Rv);
21) FAITHFULNESS, PURITY AND CLOSENESS ARE THE WEDDING GARMENT (Rv);
22) THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ARE CHOSEN WEDDING GUESTS (Rv);
23) THE COMMUNITY REJOICES AT THE BRIDEGROOM (Rv).

These derived metaphors that we have discovered can be grouped into four coherent categories. The largest group of derived metaphors deals with the relationship between the community as bride and Christ as the bridegroom. This group includes the metaphors 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 16, 18, and 22. A second group deals with the community and the essence of the community itself, mainly the metaphors that involve the wedding garment. This group includes the metaphors 7, 15, 20, and 21. A third group of derived metaphors concerns one specific feature of the bride metaphor: joy. It includes numbers 10, 11, 17, and 23. The last group is about the wedding feast itself, and includes numbers 4, 12, 13, 14, and 19.

In addition to these derived metaphors, we have also identified a number of other structural metaphors. This is consistent with Lakoff and Johnson's theory that metaphors provide a framework or grid that can help to understand reality and act within reality. The bride metaphor does not appear in isolation. A number of the metaphors associated with the bride metaphor are about the community: THE ECCLESIA IS A BODY (Ep) with the derived metaphor THE ECCLESIA IS ONE WITH THE HEAD (Ep); THE COMMUNITY IS A CORPUS PERMIXTUM (Mt 22; 25); and THE COMMUNITY IS A CITY (Rv) with the derived metaphors THE COMMUNITY IS THE HOLY CITY (Rv) and THE COMMUNITY IS THE NEW JERUSALEM (Rv). Three metaphors

concern the person of Jesus Christ: CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE ECCLESIA (Ep); JESUS IS THE KING'S SON (Mt 22); and CHRIST IS THE LAMB (Rv). We have also discovered a metaphor for God in the parable of the unwilling wedding guests: GOD IS THE KING (Mt 22). All these derivations and connections help to fathom and gain a more profound understanding of the complex reality that is the relationship between Christ and the community.

Finally, we have also discovered a number of structural metaphors that cannot be derived from the bride metaphor, but that can also be used in other situations. These metaphors include DEEDS ARE CLOTHES (Mt 22; Rv); GOOD DEEDS ARE SOURCES OF LIGHT (Mt 25); ESSENCE IS EXTERNAL APPEARANCE (Ep; Rv); A CHANGE OF STATUS IS A CHANGE OF CLOTHES (Rv); FASTING IS MOURNING (Mk); PUNISHMENT IS DARKNESS (Mt 22); and UNBELIEF IS DARKNESS (Mt 25).

3. THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST – ecclesiological implications

We have seen in the first chapter of this study that Lakoff and Johnson have proposed the theory that human speech, thought, and experience are essentially metaphorical in nature. They have spoken of a system that is "conceptual, conventional, and part of the ordinary system of thought and language".[1] Complex realities are evoked through various conceptual metaphors. Together they form a network, a system, which describes the reality in question from several angles, so that it can be better understood and explored further. To a great extent the metaphors that are used – and this is the core of Lakoff and Johnson's theory – determine the way in which we experience and live reality. This is true also for the reality which we usually call the Church, and which is the subject of the third and last chapter of this study.

According to the Second Vatican Council, the Church as a phenomenon is "one complex reality which coalesces from a divine and a human element."[2] The Church has a visible side that is made up of its people, buildings, organisation, liturgy, doctrine etc. But it also has an invisible side; the Church teaches for instance that "The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple."[3]

Although attempts have been made in the past to give an exhaustive definition of the Church,[4] it is necessary to use a network of images and metaphors to speak about the Church. Every image and every metaphor sheds light on a partial aspect of the Church, and together they give an impression of the abundance that the Church embodies. The New Testament

[1] Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," 203.

[2] "Sed unam realitatem complexam efformant, quae humano et divino coalescit element." LG 8.

[3] "Spiritus in Ecclesia et in cordibus fidelium tamquam in templo habitat." LG 4.

[4] Probably the most famous definition of the Church is Robert Bellarmine's (1542-1621). In response to the Reformers of the fifteenth century, he defined the Church as the "community of men brought together by the profession of the same Christian faith and conjoined in the communion of the same sacraments, under the government of the legitimate pastors and especially the one vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman pontiff." Bellarmine, *De Conciliis et Ecclesia, Liber III, De Ecclesia militante toto orbe terrarum diffusa, Caput II, Definitione Ecclesia*. (Coetus hominum eiusdem christianae fidei professione et eorumdem sacramentorum communione colligatus, sub regimine legitimorum pastorum ac praecipue unius Christi vicarii, Romani Pontificis.) Cited in Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 16.

is the best example of this. Paul Minear has drawn up a list of no fewer than 96 major and minor images for the Church in the New Testament.[5]

Throughout the ages, time and again new images and metaphors from the New Testament have been used to speak about the Church. Every age generates its own metaphors or models, and favours these. They are answers to the questions and issues that predominate in the age in question. In this sense, metaphors must also be regarded as reflections of their time. Metaphors are retained for as long as they are capable of giving satisfactory answers to the questions posed, and if they no longer do this, they are replaced or supplemented by other ones: "models have a history: they emerge, have influence, and then fade or are subsumed into new models or perspectives."[6]

There have also been images and metaphors among those introduced over the course of the centuries that are not directly derived from the Bible. These include metaphors such as that of THE CHURCH IS A SOCIETAS PERFECTA or THE CHURCH IS A SACRAMENT. The quest for images and metaphors that help to understand the Church in one's 'own time' continues even today. A good example of a new metaphor is that of THE CHURCH IS FIELD HOSPITAL. Pope Francis used this metaphor at the beginning of his pontificate in an interview with Antonio Spadaro. The Pope's intention in introducing this metaphor was to show that the Church is there primarily for every man or woman who has been metaphorically injured, and just needs mercy,

> I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds.... And you have to start from the ground up. The church sometimes has locked itself up in small things, in small-minded rules.[7]

In this third and last chapter, we will examine to what extent the metaphor of the Church as the *Bride of Christ* can contribute to the current discourse about the Church. We will be taking three steps in this chapter.

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[5] Paul Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960).

[6] Edward P. Hahnenberg, "The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels," *ITQ* 70 (2005): 3-30, at 5.

[7] Antonio Spadaro, "Interview with Pope Francis," n.p. [cited 11 December 2018]. Online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130921_intervista-spadaro html.

First we will see that metaphors were already used in the communities of the New Testament to speak about themselves and their community in relation to the world. We will do this on the basis of the metaphor of *Ecclesia* as a kind of test case (section 3.1.). Then we will present an overview of the main images or metaphors of the Church that have been used by the Church to speak about herself since the beginning of the twentieth century. For each metaphor, we will be looking at how the spirit of the age affected the choice for the metaphor in question. We will successively examine THE CHURCH IS A SOCIETAS PERFECTA, THE CHURCH IS THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH IS THE PEOPLE OF GOD, THE CHURCH IS A SACRAMENT, and THE CHURCH IS COMMUNIO. In discussing these various metaphors of the Church we will also be asking whether the metaphor of THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST played any role in them: was this bride metaphor used in one way or another to give greater depth to the predominant image, and if so, how (section 3.2.). In the third and last step, we will confront the ideas discussed in chapter two with the current discourse about the Church. We will see here what speaking about THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST could bring to current thinking about the essence and life of the Church (section 3.3. and 3.4.).

3.1. The Ecclesia metaphor in the New Testament communities

One of the oldest metaphors for the Church is that of the *Ecclesia*. Interestingly, Paul Minear's overview does not mention *Ecclesia* as an image of the Church.[8] There are in fact not many people who realise that seeing the Church as Ecclesia was originally a metaphor. At a very early stage probably, perhaps still in the time of the New Testament, the *Ecclesia* metaphor became a proper name for the community of the faithful.

The word ἐκκλησία appears in the very first sentence of the oldest book of the New Testament, the first letter to the Thessalonians. Paul addresses the faithful there as the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων, *the Ecclesia of Thessalonica* (1 Th 1:1). It is currently not known whether this metaphor originated with Paul, or whether he used *Ecclesia* as an existing metaphor.

Paul Trebilco has contended that ἐκκλησία was first used by the Hellenists in Jerusalem (Ac 6:1). The Hellenists there wanted to distinguish themselves as a group from the non-Christian Jews. In the LXX, the words ἐκκλησία and συναγωγή appear as more or less synonymous designations of the community. Because the word συναγωγή was used by the Jews, both for

[8] Cf. Minear, *Images of the Church*, 268-269.

their gatherings and for their buildings, and because ἐκκλησία was publicly known, the Hellenists – Trebilco has surmised – chose the word ἐκκλησία. This permitted the Hellenists to express their continuity with the 'assembly' of the Old Testament people of God, while simultaneously setting themselves apart from the other Jewish communities without claiming that they were this people's only heirs.[9] George van Kooten has rejected this thesis. He does not share Trebilco's assumptions, and has argued that the Greco-Roman civic assembly was Paul's model for speaking about his own community of the faithful.[10]

Bart Koet's approach leaves scope for both of these possibilites: "So Paul recalls two worlds, the world of the Greek people's assembly and the world of the *kehal adonai*, the *kehal yisrael*, the assembly of Israelites."[11] Walter Kasper has pointed out that the choice for ἐκκλησία must not be interpreted exclusively as a reference to the Old Testament. Jerusalem was a Hellenistic city at the time of Herod the Great. Hellenistic influences played a role in the genesis of the early Church, and thus very probably also in the Hellenistic use of the word ἐκκλησία as a political concept. Kasper has not ventured an opinion on who first introduced the word ἐκκλησία as a metaphor for the Church.[12] What is clear however is that "It was Paul who picked this term up and brought it to the center of the Christian movement."[13]

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[9] Cf. Paul Trebilco, "Why Did the Early Christians Call Themselves ἡ ἐκκλησία?" *NTS* 57 (2011): 440-460.

[10] Cf. George H. van Kooten, "'Εκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ: The 'Church of God' and the Civic Assemblies (ἐκκλησίαι) of the Greek Cities in the Roman Empire: A Response to Paul Trebilco and Richard A. Horsley," *NTS* 58 (2012): 522-548.

[11] Bart Koet, "Ethics or Halacha? 'Calling' as a key to the dynamics of behaviour according to Paul in 1 Cor 1:1-11," in *Biblical Ethics and Application: Purview, Validity, and Relevance of Biblical Texts in Ethical Discourse* (ed. R. Zimmermann and S. Joubert; WUNT 1/348; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 234-257, at 252. In an analysis of 1 Co 1:1-11, Koet has shown that Paul interweaves ἐκκλησία into the pattern of καλέω, and that this was certainly related to aspects from the Old Testament background. Cf. ibid., 252-254.

[12] Cf. Walter Kasper, *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission* (ed. R. David Nelson; Trans. Thomas Hoebel; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 90-92. The original German edition is called *Katholische Kirche: Wesen – Wirklichkeit – Sendung* and was published in 2011.

[13] Young-Ho Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as a Civic Assembly* (WUNT 2/393; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 150. The word ἐκκλησία is also used as a matter of course in the other authentic Pauline letters, as well as in many other New Testament writings. Evidently, *Ecclesia* became the familiar and general word for the community's self-understanding at a very early stage. In total, Paul uses the word ἐκκλησία more than 40 times in his letters. The word ἐκκλησία appears in various combinations. In 1 Th 2:14,

The choice of this metaphor cannot have been neutral or accidental. Other possible alternatives, for instance Ἀκαδήμεια, *Academy*, or ἀγορά, *marketplace*, could have been, but were not chosen as a metaphor for the first Christian communities. Evidently, *ecclesia* contained enough elements for "general mappings across conceptual domains"[14] to speak about the Christians' own community in a metaphorically intelligible way. The word *ecclesia* in itself is a metaphorical expression. It is composed of the prefix ἐκ, *out*, and the verb καλέω, *to call*. Thus the word *ecclesia* designates a community of people who have been called out from somewhere. We cannot be certain whether the use of *ecclesia* originated in a Jewish or a Hellenistic background. But Paul, who was familiar with both, includes the image fields that this metaphor evokes in both groups in his use of the metaphor.

For his Jewish audience, *ecclesia* will primarily have meant the people called by God, which gathers together for God (cf. Dt 31:11; Jg 20:2; Ne 5:7). This is how the Jewish Christians will initially have understood ecclesia. However, in 1 Co 1:2 Paul not only addresses the community as the *ecclesia* in Corinth, but he specifies this by saying in the second half of the verse that he means those "who have been called" and those "who call on the Name of our Lord." This is possibly an allusion to Jl 3:5 (or 2:32 in a different division), which prophesies that all who are called by YHWH and who call on the Name of YHWH will be saved (cf. also Is 49:1-6). But Paul speaks of those who call on the Name of Jesus Christ, "their Lord and ours." This places the *Ecclesia* in a different context, "Paul alludes to this text [Joel 3:5] to indicate a new era that has dawned with Jesus' death and resurrection Acts 2:17-21)."[15] The *Ecclesia* is no longer the assembly of the people of Israel chosen by God, but the assembly of Jews and non-Jews, of all who call on the Name of Christ.[16]

Paul still refers to a number of other ἐκκλησίαι, particularly those in Judea. *Ecclesia* could be used as a singular and be linked to a certain place, or even to a domestic church (Ph 1:2), but *Ecclesia* could also be used in the plural to designate a number of communities in an area or region. In his letter to the Romans, Paul even speaks of πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῶν ἐθνῶν, *all Ecclesias of the Gentiles* (Rm 16:4). For an extensive overview see: ibid., 98-150. The word ἐκκλησία also appears very frequently in the other New Testament writings: 23 times in Ac, three in Mt, nine in Ep, four in Col, twice in 2 Th, three in 1 Tm, twice in Heb, once in Jm, three in 3 Jn, and twenty in Rv.

[14] Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," 203.

[15] Koet, "Ethics or Halacha," 253.

[16] Cf. ibid., 251-254.

For non-Jewish readers, the word *ecclesia* will primarily have evoked associations with the conventional expression for the civic assembly.[17] "In a city like Corinth, hearing ἐκκλησία will have reminded the newly converted Christians of their political heritage, as ἐκκλησία for them first of all meant the assembly of the free, enfranchised citizens of a community."[18] By linking the use of *ecclesia* to the assembly of the faithful, Paul evoked an image for the Hellenistic world, a concept, "a new reality, which finds its closest parallel in the civic culture of the Greco-Roman world."[19] With this metaphor, Paul says something about the community itself, and also articulates his claim in relation to the world.[20]

In the secular world, the primary meaning of *ecclesia* is the assembly, the event of gathering itself. Compared to Classical Athens, where the *ecclesia* was an important core institution of Athenian democracy,[21] the *ecclesia* had become politically less significant in Hellenistic times. But this is not to say that the role of the *ecclesia* was unimportant. It was the forum where the decisions of the council (βουλή) or the governing magistrates were proclaimed, and where these decisions also had to be confirmed. Even during the period of Roman rule, the *ecclesia* remained an important organ

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[17] The word as such was already used in Classical Athens, but ἐκκλησία in the Hellenistic period and that of the Roman Empire continued to mean the political assemblies of the people. Cf. Park, *Paul's Ekklesia*, 5-61.

[18] "In einer Stadt wie Korinth fühlten sich die neu gewonnenen Christen, wenn sie ἐκκλησία hörten, an ihr politische Erbe erinnert, denn für sie bedeutet ἐκκλησία zunächst die Versammlung der Freien, stimmberechtigten Bürger eines Gemeinwesens." Hans-Josef Klauck, *Alte Welt und neuer Glaube: Beiträge zur Religionsgeschichte, Forschungsgeschichte und Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (NTOA 29; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 290.

[19] Park, *Paul's Ekklesia*, 124.

[20] Cf. ibid., 124; K.L Schmidt, "ἐκκλησία," *TWNT* 3:502-539, at 518-519. George van Kooten has pointed out that the political significance of *ecclesia* must have been clearly evident to the audience of the time. Paul uses the metaphor of the *ecclesia* to indicate that this is an alternative community that exists alongside the existing political order. This by way of analogy with the Stoic notion that it is possible to be a member of two different communities at the same time. Van Kooten's argument challenges the views of Richard Horsley, who also acknowledges the political implications of the use of the word *ecclesia*, but who then refers to an alternative community rooted in the history of Israel and juxtaposed to the *pax Romana*. Van Kooten has argued that Paul's call for respect for the secular government and forbids causing offence (cf. Rm 13:1-7; 1 Co 10:32) shows, on the contrary, that it was not Paul's intention to create a truly alternative community. Cf. van Kooten, 'Εκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ, 535-539. Van Kooten has extensively quoted Horsley in his article.

[21] For an extensive description of the *ecclesia* in Classical Athens, see: Park, *Paul's Ekklesia*, 5-26.

of governance in the Greek cities. It involved an assembly of the entire people, and these meetings were often the scene of chaos, tumult, and revolt. It was also the place where the people were educated, for instance about the ideal of a worthy man within the community (ἄνδρες ἀγαθοί) or on how an individual could contribute to the wellbeing of the community. Finally, the *ecclesia* appertained to the honour of the city. The behaviour of the citizens was the measure of this honour, and whether or not the *ecclesia* took place in an orderly fashion was an important gauge.[22]

By almost invariably beginning his letters with a greeting to the *Ecclesia* in question (1 Th 1:1; 1 Co 1:1; 2 Co 1:1; Ga 1:2; Phm 2:1), Paul spontaneously evokes images of the secular *ecclesia* among his audience. This is a basis on which he can speak intelligibly about the meetings of the community in question. First he uses the metaphor of the *ecclesia* to demonstrate that the faithful must in fact gather together. Being a believer, confessing Jesus Christ, is not an abstract idea or individual event, but it has a physical component, that of actually coming together. Once gathered in the communal assembly, the faithful listen to the letters that are read (1 Th 5:27). This notion is concomitant with that of *ecclesia*: listening to the word of God together.

The metaphor of the *ecclesia* also helps the community to understand that the assembly is a place where it receives education; where advice is given on how to interact with each other. Thus in his letters, Paul teaches his hearers about the person of Jesus Christ and about topics related to the faith, as well as about issues concerning daily life. Furthermore, Paul points to the importance of the *Ecclesia* as the place of teaching (1 Co 4:17), and he gives instructions on how the meetings should take place. Partisanship was a common feature of the secular *ecclesia*, because wherever the people gather factions almost inevitably arise.[23] In 1 Co 11:18 Paul writes that he has heard of factions in the context of the Lord's Supper in Corinth, and he is inclined to believe what he has heard: "It is no bad thing, either, that there should be differing groups among you so that those who are to be trusted among you can be clearly recognised" (1 Co 11:19). This is followed by a discourse on why there must be no factions in the assemblies of the faithful. Paul here clearly rejects the secular *ecclesias*. There must be no factions in the context of the Lord's Supper. After explaining the essence of the Lord's Supper, Paul then gives instructions on the way in which the assemblies should take place (1 Co 11:33-34). Another difference between the secular

[22] Cf. for this issue and for an extensive description of the *ecclesia* in the Hellenistic period: ibid., 26-55.
[23] Cf. van Kooten, 'Εκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ, 540-542.

ecclesia and the ecclesial *Ecclesia* is that not only men, but also women and children attend the latter.[24]

To highlight that the assembly of the faithful is a different kind of reality than simply an organisational or political expedient, Paul describes the *Ecclesia* by ascribing certain characteristics to it. Thus he speaks of the ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the Ecclesia of God* (1 Co 1:2; 2 Co 1:1), but also of αἱ ἐκκλησίαι πᾶσαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *all the Ecclesias of Christ* (Rm 16:16), and of the ἐκκλησία τῶν ἁγίων, *the Ecclesias of the saints* (1 Co 14:33).

Like all metaphors, the *Ecclesia* metaphor is partial: it illuminates part of reality. Other metaphors are necessary in order to come to a more profound or broader understanding. This happens for instance in the letter to the Ephesians; in the previous chapter we examined the pericope Ep 5:21-33 from this letter. We see that the author there speaks of the Ecclesia almost as a matter of course. The word *ecclesia* appears nine times in the letter to the Ephesians, six of which in the short passage we examined. The word *ecclesia* appears in this letter without any modifiers such as *of God* or *of Christ*. We may assume that the word *ecclesia* had become a conventional notion for this letter's audience, a kind of proper name for the community.[25] Apart from the fact that the author wants to say something about the relationship between men and women in the Ep 5:21-33 pericope, he also uses this relationship to come to a more profound understanding of the *Ecclesia*. As we have seen in the previous chapter, he does this by connecting the metaphor of the *Ecclesia* with the head-body metaphor and with the bride metaphor. The head-body metaphor gives the community a clear structure. The bride metaphor intends to show that the *Ecclesia* is primarily a communion of love.

As has been said at the beginning of this section, the *Ecclesia* metaphor is one of the oldest metaphors that the Church has used to speak about itself. What is striking is that the Greek word *ecclesia* persisted in Latin, and continued as a borrowing to describe the Christian community or communities. In any case, possible alternatives such as *comitia*, *convocatio*, or *civitas Dei* never gained any ground.[26] But *Ecclesia* has long become a fixed-form expression, and we have become immune to its metaphorical

[24] Cf. Kasper, *Catholic Church*, 91-92.

[25] Much has been written about the question whether *Ecclesia* only means a local community or also the entire universal Church, and what possible developments may have taken place in this respect. This issue is of limited relevance to the current study, as this focuses primarily on how the metaphor of the secular *ecclesia* was used by the first Christians to speak about their own community.

[26] Cf. Schmidt, "ἐκκλησία," 518.

character. This means that new metaphors are required to continue to speak about the same phenomenon.[27]

3.2. Metaphors of the Church from the early twentieth century to the present

3.2.1. THE CHURCH IS A SOCIETAS PERFECTA

The term *societas perfecta* originates in classical philosophy. In his *Politica*, Aristotle describes the essence of the state. He contends that man's actions are always oriented to the good, and that this has led him to organise communities. The smallest unit is that of man and woman, which is oriented to the preservation of the species. The most natural form of community that arises from this unit is the family. The family sees to most daily needs. When a number of families join together, they make up a village, which is able to provide for a greater number of daily needs than a family can. When a number of villages then join together, giving them the ability to provide for more or less all needs, Aristotle speaks of a πόλις, *city*, *state*. For him, this constitutes a κοινωνία τέλειος, *a perfect society*. "When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life."[28]

In the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) adopted the notion of the perfect societ*y* in his *Summa Theologiae*. In the second part of his Summa, Thomas addresses issues related to human actions. When he comes to speak of the making of laws, he asks whether any human being is competent to make laws. First Thomas argues that anyone can make laws: like the head of a state can make laws for the state, so the head of a household can make laws for the household.[29] In his reply to refute this, Thomas refers to Aristotle and adopts the latter's notion of the κοινωνία τέλειος: "As one man is a part of the household, so a household is a part of

[27] The word Ecclesia for Church can still be discerned today in languages such as French, *l'église*, and Spanish, *iglesia*. In other languages, The word Church is derived from *kuriakè* (of the Lord), which is itself derived from *Kurios*: *Kerk* in Dutch, *Kirche* in German, and *Church* in English.
[28] Aristotle, *Politica*, 1.1252b. English translation: Ernest Barker, *Aristotle: The Politics* (rev. R.F. Stalley; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 9-10.
[29] Cf. Thomas, *Summa* I-II q. 90 a. 3 arg. 3.

the state: and the state is a perfect community."[30] Thomas' conclusion is then that the head of a household is indeed competent to draw up commands (*praecepta*) and ordinances (*statuta*), but that these do not have the force of law (*ratio legis*).[31] The making of laws is an exclusive prerogative of the state as the *communitas perfecta*.

At the time of the Counter-Reformation, the term *societas* was also used in relation to the Church. Referring to the national states that were emerging at the time, Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) spoke of the relations between the Church and the state. On the basis of natural law and political philosophy, he regarded the state as a perfect society endowed with the corresponding authority to preserve itself and to keep the peace against disruption by agitators.[32] The power of the state includes the drawing up of laws, the administration of justice, and the executive power. The state is the highest form in its kind, and as such it is not subject to any other power, including the spiritual power of the Church. The Church, Bellarmine thinks, is distinct from the state. The Church too is a visible community, a *respublica*. Like the state, the Church is a perfect and autonomous community with its own order, and it is oriented to its own goal.[33] Like the state, the Church is not subject to any other power, and she is endowed with its own means and power to achieve her goals. Moreover, the essence of the Church is determined by the fact that she has not only an external and visible, but also an internal and spiritual side. The Church's origins constitute another difference between the state and the Church. The state is founded on the natural order of things, whereas the Church goes back directly to Christ. According to Bellarmine, state and Church exist side by side as two independent entities, different in their essence, but both autonomous, while both are capable of existing independently of the other.[34] The image of the Church as an autonomous community as Bellarmine

[30] "Sicut homo est pars domus, ita domus est pars civitatis, civitas autem est communitas perfecta." Thomas, *Summa* I-II q. 90 a. 3 ad 3. English translation: Fathers of the English Dominican Province, "Summa Theologica: Part I-II ("Prima Secundae")," n.p. [cited 9 December 2019]. Online: http://www.gutenberg.org/-cache/epub/17897/pg17897-images html.

[31] Cf. Thomas, *Summa* I-II q. 90 a. 3 ad 3.

[32] "Humana societas debet esse perfecta respublica: ergo debet habere potestatem seipsam conservandi et proinde puniende perturbatores pacis." Bellarmine, *De membris ecclesiae*, Lib. III, c. 6. Quoted in: Fidelis van der Horst, *Das Schema über die Kirche auf dem I. Vatikanischen Konzil* (Paderborn: Verlag Bonifacius, 1963), 140.

[33] "Respublica ecclesiatica debet esse perfecta et sibi sufficiens in ordine ad suum finem." Bellarminus, *De. S. Pontifice*, Lib V, c. 7. Quoted in: ibid., 140.

[34] Cf. ibid., 139-141.

described it would shape Catholic thinking about the Church until well into the twentieth century.[35]

From the mid-eighteenth century, it became common to speak of the Church as a *societas*. Before that time, it was more usual to describe the Church as a *respublica*, *congregatio*, or *communio*. Benedikt Stattler (1728-1797) was one of the first Catholic theologians to build his ecclesiology on the concept of *societas*.[36] In the second half of the nineteenth century, the term *societas* also began to appear in Church documents.[37] From a Catholic perspective, this period can be characterised as the period of the struggle against the modernists. In fact the Church had to relate to two developments in society. First, the Church had to relate to the established churches in the Protestant countries, which conceived of the Church as a kind of association that is part of the state, and that is also to a certain extent subject to the state. This puts the autonomy of the Church in jeopardy. At the same time, Europe saw the rise of the modern states. This went hand in hand with a number of political movements, each of which in its own way sought to limit the power of the Church.[38] This was also a threat to the autonomy of the Church.

An important milestone in the thinking about the Church as a *societas perfecta* was the First Vatican Council (1869-1870). Although the council

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[35] Theologians did add their own emphases over time. Thus Suarez, a contemporary of Bellarmine's, shared the latter's view, but argued that because the Church's objective was the salvation of souls and she was therefore supernatural, the Church was more excellent than the state, which only had the care for people's earthly wellbeing. Cf. ibid., 141-143.

[36] Cf. ibid., 155.

[37] Thus Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) in the encyclical *Quanta cura* and the accompanying *Syllabus Errorum* of 8 December 1864 condemned those who hold that the Church is not a true, perfect, and fully free community: "Ecclesia non est vera perfectaque societas plane libera." *Syllabus Errorum*, 19. Quoted in DH 2919.

[38] For instance Gallicanism, Febronianism, and Josephinism, but the Church also had to respond to the French Revolution which fully abrogated the power of the aristocracy and of the Church, and in the nineteenth century, Germany witnessed the Kulturkampf. Cf. Henk Witte, "'Ecclesia, quid dicis de teipsa?' Can Ecclesiology Be of Any Help to the Church to Deal with Advanced Modernity?" in *Towards a New Catholic Church in Advanced Modernity: Transformations, Visions, Tensions* (TThS 5; ed. S. Hellemans and J. Wissink; Münster: LIT, 2012), 121-145, at 124-125. For a characterisation of the period spanning the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century: Jaques Gadille, "Der Höhepunkt des Antiklerikalismus - Die Strategien Leos XIII. und Pius' X," in *Liberalismus, Industrialisierung, Expansion Europas (1830-1914)* (ed. J. Gadille and J.-M. Mayeur; *Die Geschichte des Christentums: Religion-Politik-Kultur* 11; Special edition; Freiburg: Herder, 2010), 446-473.

was abrogated prematurely, and the dogmatic constitution on the Church which it ultimately adopted,
Pastor Aeternus, speaks almost exclusively about the primacy of the See of Peter and the infallibility of the pope, the theme of the Church as a *societas perfecta* is extensively discussed in the draft text on the Church. This draft received the comments of the council fathers in a first written round, and this gives the text a certain doctrinal authority, so that it is more than simply a draft written by one or more conciliar theologians.[39]

The schema on the Church *De ecclesia Christi* that was distributed among the council fathers on 21 January 1870 consists of a preface, a first part on the essence of the Church (chapters 1-10), two chapters on the primacy of the pope and his secular power (chapters 11 and 12), and a final part on the relationship between Church and state (chapters 13-15). The first, on the essence of the Church, is particularly relevant to the current study.

The first chapter characterises the Church as the mystical Body of Christ.[40] This metaphor is used to emphasise that the Church is a supernatural reality. Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, is the founder (*fundare*) of the Church. Through his death and resurrection, He has reconciled humankind with God. He joins the new humanity, "created on God's principles, in the uprightness and holiness of the truth" (Ep 4:24), together into a *corpus mysticum*. A person can become a member of the body through the sacramental laver of regeneration. In this way, the people are united in faith, hope, and charity with Christ, the Head of the body, and with each other. The body is animated by the Holy Spirit. This mystical Body of Christ is the Church.[41]

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[39] For the history of the drafting of the schema and its main theologian-authors, see: Van der Horst, *Das Schema über die Kirche*, 44-64. The draft emphasised important ecclesiological doctrines of the Church derived from previous Church documents. Moreover, the text, together with the first responses of the Council Fathers, would clearly influence thinking about the Church after the First Vatican Council. "The schema must therefore be regarded as a particularly important theological locus" ("Das Schema ist darum als ein theologischer Ort hohen Ranges zu betrachten"), according to Van der Horst, who refers to a number of other authors who have expressed the same view. Cf. ibid., 63-64.

[40] The title of chapter 1 is: "Ecclesiam esse corpus Christi mysticum." *De ecclesia Christi*, Caput I.

[41] Cf. *De ecclesia Christi*, Caput I. Cf. also Van der Horst, *Das Schema über die Kirche*, 78-86. Van der Horst has shown in an analysis that the image of the mystical Body of Christ was inserted into the draft text by the council theologian Clemens Schrader. Schrader in his turn was most probably inspired by Johann Adam Möhler. In Schrader's ecclesiology, the image of the *societas* is the more important image for the Church, but

The second chapter describes the Church as a *societas, community*.[42] The metaphor of the Church as a *societas* must be regarded as the draft text's dominant and proper image of the Church.[43] Christ, in the words of chapter two of *De ecclesia Christi*, founded the Church with his own blood. He gave his apostles and their successors the commission to gather together all people from the ends of the earth, to teach them, and to lead them, so as to acquire a holy people. The purpose is not that each person should individually worship the Father in spirit and in truth, but that all should live together in union with Him in the community, *societas*, that He founded.[44] This chapter more or less identifies the Christian religion with the Church, or at least it emphasises that Christ has joined the Christian religion with the concrete community of the Church, so that no true Christian religion can exist outside this community.[45]

The following chapters then describe the various characteristics of the Church: the Church is a true, perfect, spiritual, and supernatural community;[46] it is visible,[47] one,[48] necessary for salvation,[49] imperishable,[50] infallible,[51] and it is a community of members who are unequal.[52] All these characteristics ascribed to the Church primarily emphasise the visible and juridical side of the Church.[53] This kind of language about the Church is also strongly apologetic.

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that of the mystical Body of Christ is more suited to explain the essence of the Church. We will discuss the background of the image of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ at greater length in the next section of this chapter.

[42] The title of chapter 2 is: "Christianam religionem nonnisi in ecclesia et per ecclesiam a Christo fundatam excoli posse," *De ecclesia Christi*, Caput II. This title does not contain the word *societas*, but the text of the chapter deals with the Church as a visible community. Cf. Van der Horst, *Das Schema über die Kirche*, 88-90.

[43] Cf. Patrick Granfield, "The Church as *Societas Perfecta* in the Schemata of Vatican I," *CH* 48 (1979): 431-446, at 434-435.

[44] Cf. *De ecclesia Christi*, Caput II.

[45] Cf. Van der Horst, *Das Schema über die Kirche*, 86-88.

[46] Cf. *De ecclesia Christi*, Caput III.

[47] Cf. ibid., Caput IV.

[48] Cf. ibid., Caput V.

[49] Cf. ibid., Caput VI-VII.

[50] Cf. ibid., Caput VIII.

[51] Cf. ibid., Caput IX.

[52] Cf. ibid., Caput X.

[53] For a substantial study that discusses all of the characteristics of the Church that have been mentioned in the context of the dominant views of the time, see: Van der Horst, *Das Schema über die Kirche*, 143-318.

> The schema's position must be seen in the perspective of relations between the Church and the state. The Church appears in the schema as a legally constituted corporation, as a spiritual state with its own laws and its own power, as if it were a modern constitutional state.[54]

Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) further elaborated this basic notion of the Church as a *societas perfecta*. His encyclical *Immortale Dei* (1 November 1885) can be regarded as a kind of culminating point of the thinking of Leo XIII and his predecessors on the relations between Church and state.[55] He wrote: "In like manner it is to be understood that the Church no less than the State itself is a society perfect in its own nature and its own right."[56] The sovereign state still functions here as the source domain for speaking about the essence and life of the Church, which is the target domain.

Almost eleven years later, on 29 June 1896, Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical
Satis cognitum on the unity of the Church.[57] The metaphor of the Church as a *societas* perfecta appears again, although this time the pope no longer makes any explicit comparisons with the state, as he had done in the encyclical *Immortale Dei*. He states only that the Church far surpasses any

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[54] "Die Stellungnahme des Schemas steht in der Perspektive des Verhältnisses von Kirche und Staat. Die Kirche erscheint im Schema als eine rechtlich verfaßte Körperschaft, als ein geistlicher Staat mit eigenen Gesetzen und eigener Gewalt, gleichsam als Abbild des modernen Rechtstaates." Ibid., 321.

[55] For a short summary of the encyclical see: D.L. Lowery, "Immortale Dei," *NCE* 7: 390-391.

[56] "Similiter intelligi debet, Ecclesiam societatem esse, non minus quam ipsum civitatem, genere et iure perfectam." Pope Leo XIII, "Immortale Dei," *ASS* 18 (1885): 161-180, at 174. The English translation used is the Holy See's official translation, published on the website of the Holy See.

[57] Unity and the activity of the Holy Spirit occupy a central place in Pope Leo XIII's ecclesiology. Cf. Yves Congar, *Die Lehre von der Kirche: Von Abendländischen Schisma bis zur Gegenwart* (HDG 3d; Freiburg: Herder, 1941), 107-108. Pope Leo XIII also dedicated an encyclical to the activity of the Holy Spirit, *Divinum illud munus* (9 May 1897). He does speak about the Church in this encyclical, but not in terms of a *societas perfecta*. However, on the basis of a quote from Augustine, he mentions the image of the Holy Spirit as the soul of the Church: "Let it suffice to state that, as Christ is the Head of the Church, so is the Holy Ghost her soul. 'What the soul is in our body, that is the Holy Ghost in Christ's body, the Church.'" (Atque hoc affirmare sufficiat, quod quum Christus caput sit Ecclesiae, Spiritus Sanctus sit eius anima: *Quod est in corpore nostro anima, id est Spiritus Sanctus in corpore Christi, quod est Ecclesia* (S. Aug serm. CLXXXVII *de temp*)). Leo XIII, "Divinum illud munus" *ASS* 29 (1896-97): 644-658, at 650. The English translation used is the Holy See's official translation, published on the website of the Holy See.

other human society: "Therefore the Church is a society divine in its origin."[58] He refers to Scripture to illustrate the Church's perfection. Scripture contains the words (*vocabula*) that call to mind a perfect society,

> It is spoken of as *the House of God, the city placed upon the mountain* to which all nations must come. But it is also the *fold* presided over by one Shepherd, and into which all Christ's sheep must betake themselves. Yea, it is called *the kingdom which God has raised up* and which *will stand for ever*. Finally it is the *body of Christ* – that is, of course, His *mystical* body, but a body living and duly organized and composed of many members.[59]

Unlike the encyclical *Immortale Dei*, the encyclical *Satis cognitum* does refer to various biblical metaphors for the Church.[60] It mentions the bride metaphor three times in relation to the Church. The first time, in the introduction, discusses the Church as bride: Christ has redeemed the Church through his blood and has chosen her as His bride.[61] The image of the bride is used to illustrate that the Church is born of election. In the chapter on the unity of government, the image of Jesus as the bridegroom is used to illustrate that Jesus guides the Church: "Christ is the one head and the one shepherd, the one spouse of the one Church".[62] The third and last time the bride metaphor is used is in the concluding reflection. The Church is once again described as a bride, who is one with the bridegroom. The bride metaphor is used here to underline the intimate union between Christ and the faithful community: "the bridegroom and the bride, two in one flesh."[63] Despite the fact that it uses several biblical metaphors, and quotes many early Church Fathers, the encyclical *Satis cognitum*'s approach to the phenomenon of the Church is ultimately limited to its external and juridical

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[58] "Ergo ecclesia societas est ortu divina." Leo XIII, "Satis cognitum," *ASS* 28 (1895-96): 708-739, at 724. The English translation used is the Holy See's official translation, published on the website of the Holy See.

[59] "Nominatur enim non modo Domus Dei, Civitas supra montem posita, quo convenire gentes omnes necesse est: sed etiam Ovile, cui praesit pastor unus, et quo recipere se oves Christi omnes debent: imo Regnum quod suscitavit Deus, quodque stabit in aeternum: denique Corpus Christi, mysticum illud quidem sed tamen vivum apteque compositum, multisque conflatum membris." Ibid., 724.

[60] The images mentioned are: vine, mountain, shepherd with sheep, edifice, house of God, and rock.

[61] "Qua Iesus Christus eam sibi sponsam, divino cruore redemptam, optavit." Ibid., 708.

[62] "Unum caput et unus pastor est Christus, qui est unus unius Ecclesiae sponsus." Ibid., 725.

[63] "Sponsus et sponsa, duo in carne una." Ibid., 738.

structure, with an emphasis on the primacy of the See of Peter. This image of the Church would continue to be the dominant one for some time.

To sum up, we could say that the metaphor of the Church as a *societas perfecta* emerged at a time in which the Church had largely lost its secular power, and was forced to define itself anew vis-à-vis the modern world. The urgency was all the greater because various governments were attempting to gain influence over the life of the Church. The Church tried, by using the metaphor of the *societas perfecta*, to assure its autonomous existence *ad intra* and *ad extra*. "The adjective *perfecta* gave them the tool to do so."[64] In addition to its emphasis on organisation and its juridical angle, the metaphor also has a strongly apologetic dimension. And it lacks a strong biblical foundation. Certain biblical notions, such as the Church's own inalienable mission, and the mandate with which Christ has endowed her, do admittedly point in the direction of a *societas perfecta*. The biblical metaphor of the bride hardly plays any role within the metaphor of the *societas perfecta*. The encyclical *Satis cognitum* does mention the bride metaphor, but very briefly, and only to underline the organisational and juridical notions of unity and the primacy of Peter.

Turning a metaphor into something absolute means risking conceptual blindness, as Brümmer has remarked. "When this happens we need new 'iconoclastic' metaphors which make us experience the shock of recognition needed to break down our mental set and thus enable us to see those features of the world which we have been conditioned to overlook."[65] In the era of rising modern states, the metaphor of the societas perfecta was a clear answer to the questions of the time. At the same time, however, there is much more to be said about the Church. It was not long, therefore, before other voices began to be heard within the Church. The metaphor of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ, which also played an important, though not decisive, role at the First Vatican Council, began to attract greater attention and to gain traction.

3.2.2. THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST

The *Body of Christ* metaphor originated with the Apostle Paul: "Now Christ's body is yourselves, each of you with a part to play in the whole" (1 Co 12:27). Paulus uses this metaphor to explain to the faithful of Corinth that the community is a living organism. In a lengthy description, Paul

[64] Witte, "Ecclesia, quid dicis," 124. Witte's italics. Cf. also Heinrich Fries, "Wandel des Kirchenbildes und dogmengeschichtliche Entfaltung," in: *MySal* 4/1, 261-272.
[65] Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 10. Brümmer puts the word 'iconoclastic' in inverted commas.

shows that the community, as a body, has different members that are all different, but that need each other and are expected to serve each other (cf. 1 Co 12:14-26). Similarly, in his letter to the Romans, Paul speaks of the community as "one body in Christ (Rm 12:5). In this passage, Paul interprets the community in a Christological way: the Church is something *of Christ*, a presence, an action, a manifestation.[66] In his letters to the Romans and the Corinthians, Paul's first concern is the local community. At the same time, Paul widens the perspective by writing in 1 Co 12:13 that we all have become "one body" through baptism.

The situation is different in the Deutero-Pauline letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians. These letters thematise the relationship between the heavenly Christ and the whole cosmos. In Greek philosophy, the cosmos is frequently represented as a body.[67] The author of the letter to the Colossians describes Christ as the head of the cosmos to whom all powers and authorities are subject (cf. Col 2:10), but it is not the cosmos, but the Church which is the Body of Christ (cf. Col. 1:18). The metaphor, which strictly speaking is a head-body metaphor, is used mainly to introduce an ordering principle: to emphasise that Christ is the head of the body that is the Church.[68] As the Body of Christ, the Church has a place and a mission in the world. The world must be won for Christ, and this happens through the proclamation of the Gospel (cf. Col 1:6). As the head, it is Christ Himself who keeps the body together and who gives it his divine growth (cf. Col 2:19). In Ep 5:23, Christ is not only the head of the Church, but also the redeemer of his body.

The early Church Fathers adopted this image of the body and developed it further. Two strands can be distinguished. One builds on the body metaphor of Romans and Corinthians, and uses it whenever discord arises in the community and the community is at risk of falling apart. Thus Clement (35-99) warns the Corinthians in his first letter: "Why do we tear and rip apart the members of Christ, and rebel against our own body, and reach such a level of insanity that we forget that we are members of one another?"[69]

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[66] Cf. Congar, who writes in response of Paul: "l'Église est quelque chose *du Christ*, une présence, une action, une manifestation." Yves Congar, *Sainte Église: Etudes et approches ecclésiologiques* (UnSa 41; Paris: Cerf, 1963), 29. Congar's italics.

[67] For examples in Plato, the Stoa, and Philo of Alexandria, see: Joachim Gnilka, *Der Kolosserbrief* (HThKNT 10/1; Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 68. Cf. also Ernst Dassmann, *Die eine Kirche in vielen Bildern: Zur Ekklesiologie der Kirchenväter* (STAC 1; Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2010), 1-4.

[68] Cf. also Col 1:24; 2:19; 3:15; Ep 1:22-23; 2:16; 4:1-6; 5:23.

[69] "Ἰνατί διέλκομεν καὶ διασπῶμεν τὰ μέλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ στασιάζομεν πρὸς τὸ σῶμα τὸ ἴδιον καὶ εἰς τοσαύτην ἀπόνοιαν ἐρχόμεθα, ὥστε ἐπιλαθέσθαι ἡμᾶς, ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων." Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (SChr 167; Paris: Cerf,

The other builds on the head-body metaphor from Colossians and Ephesians, and uses it for instance to attempt a more profound understanding of the mystery of the resurrection. Thus Irenaeus of Lyon (c. 130-202) writes in *Adversus Haereses* that Christ was the first of humankind to rise from the dead, so that, "as the Head rose from the dead, so also (…) the rest of the body [made up] of every human being who is found in life might rise."[70] Other writers from the Early Church also frequently use the metaphor of the Body of Christ.[71]

The term *mystical* in relation to the Church as the Body of Christ emerged in the eleventh century. Prior to this period, it was the Eucharist that was referred to as the *corpus mysticum*, and the Church as the *corpus verum*. The Eucharistic controversy of the tenth and eleventh century caused a stronger emphasis to be placed on Christ's real presence in the Eucharist.[72] As a result, the Eucharist became the *corpus verum*, and the Church became the *corpus mysticum*.[73]

1971), 176. English translation: Holmes M.W. ed. and rev, *The Apostolic Fathers: Second Edition* (J.B. Lightfoot, and J.R. Harmer, trans.; Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 54.

[70] "Ut quemadmodum caput resurrexit a mortuis, sic et reliquum corpus omnis hominis qui invenitur in vita." Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus Haereses* (FC 8/3; Freiburg: Herder, 1995), 242. English translation: Dominique J. Unger, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies: Book 3* (ACW 64. New York: Newman Press, 2012), 94.

[71] For a brief overview, see Dassmann, *Die eine Kirche*, 7-23.

[72] The first controversy was between Paschasius Radbertus (785-865) and Ratramnus of Corbie (died c. 870). Both men were monks of the Abbey of Corbie, but they were opponents as far as their views on the Eucharist were concerned. Ratramnus rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation; because the transformation cannot be observed physically (*corporaliter*), but only spiritually (*spiritualiter*), the only proper term for the Eucharist is image, figure (*figura*). The second controversy was between Berengar of Tours (999-1088) and Lanfranc of Bec (1005-1089). Berengar believed the Eucharist merely referred to the Body of Christ, and he denied the essential transformation of bread and wine. The sacrament of the Eucharist is merely a *symbol*. Cf. for an overview of the Eucharistic controversy of the tenth and eleventh centuries: Burkhard Neunheuser, *Eucharistie in Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (HDG 4b; Freiburg: Herder, 1963), 11-24.

[73] Cf. Karl-Heinz Menke, *Sakramentalität: Wesen und Wunde des Katholizismus* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2012), 138-141; Hahnenberg, "The Mystical Body of Christ," 7, with references to Henri de Lubac and Yves Congar. Over the course of time, the adjective *mystical* took on different meanings. During the Eucharistic controversy, *mystice*, *hidden*, as image was regarded as the antonym of *reapse*, *real*. In the early Middle Ages, the adjective *mystical* meant *invisible*. Cf. Menke, *Sakramentalität*, 138,140. The encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943) distinguishes between a *physical*, a *moral*, and a *mystical* Body. The physical body stands for Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, now seated at the right hand of the Father, who is concealed under the veil of the Eucharist. A moral body is any assembly of people who strive for the same end under the guidance of the authority of society. The principle of unity in the social body

This notion of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ receded into the background at the time of the Reformation and remained there during the following centuries. As we have seen, the emphasis in this period was on the visible and juridical side of the Church, and the metaphor of the *societas perfecta* came to predominate. In the nineteenth century, the theologians of the Tübingen School rediscovered the idea that the Church is the mystical Body of Christ.[74] It was primarily Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838), who in his classic work *Die Einheit der Kirche oder das Prinzip des Katholizismus* ('The Unity of the Church or the Principle of Catholicism') (1825),[75] influenced by Romanticism and by his study of the Church Fathers, rejected the concept of the Church as a community in which the external and juridical dimensions are the most important. The visible Church is certainly very important, but it is the expression of an inner life principle, the Holy Spirit, which constantly fills the Christian community as a whole, and every individual member separately, with faith and love. At the very beginning of *Die Einheit der Kirche*, Möhler formulates the pneumatological approach that was so characteristic of his ecclesiology.[76] Like the spirit animates the human body so that the body ceases to exist as soon as the spirit leaves it, so the visible Church cannot exist without the working of the Holy Spirit in all its organs and members.[77]

In his later work *Symbolik* ('Symbolism') (1832), Möhler formulated an important Christological emphasis: the Church is the community of all the faithful, founded by Christ, in which his redeeming work is continued. The visibility of the Church is therefore no longer seen as the work of the Holy Spirit, who animates the community from inside and brings it to external

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is the common goal. The mystical body transcends this. Other than in a social body, it is held together by an inner principle: the Holy Spirit. Cf. Pius XII, "Mystici Corporis Christi," *AAS* 35 (1943): 193-248, at no. 59-61. Henceforth MC with article number used in the English translation. The English translation used is the Holy See's official translation, published on the website of the Holy See.

[74] Cf. for a brief characterisation of the Tübingen School and its most important representatives: Max Seckler, "Tübinger Schule," *LThK Special edition 2009* 10:287-290.

[75] Johann Adam Möhler, *Die Einheit in der Kirche oder das Prinzip des Katholizismus* (ed. Josef Rupert Geiselmann; Köln: Jakob Hegner, 1957).

[76] Thus the opening sentence of *Die Einheit in der Kirche* is: "Jesus betrachtete das Bekenntnis Petri Mt 16,16-17 nicht als das Werk des sich selbst überlassenen menschlichen Geistes, sondern leitet es von göttlichen Tätigkeiten, die auf den Schüler einwirkten, ab; und Paulus beschreibt öfters den Glauben an Christus als die Wirkung des Heiligen Geistes. Ebenso stand die Überzeugung in der unmittelbar auf die Apostel folgende Periode fest, daß der Glaube an Christus und das damit Zusammenhängende durch Einwirkung des Heiligen Geistes bedingt sei." Ibid., 5.

[77] Cf. ibid., 170-171.

growth, but is founded on the incarnation of Christ Himself. If the Word of God, Möhler argued, had descended into the hearts of men without assuming the visible form of a servant (cf. Ph 2:7), then He would also have founded an invisible Church. As it is, however, the Word became flesh and communicated itself in a way that corresponds to human nature. He also founded a visible community, of which He is the enduring life principle. Guided by his Spirit, the community of the faithful continues his work in history, just like He brought salvation during his earthly life: "there they are, there is his Church, his institution wherein he continueth to live, his Spirit continueth to work, and the word uttered by him eternally resounds."[78] For Möhler there is a continuity between the work of the earthly Jesus and the work of the Church. Without wishing to deny the differences between the earthly Jesus and the Church, Möhler does accept the premise of unity, so that it is possible to speak of the Church as the *Body of Christ*: "Thus the visible Church is (…) the Son of God as He continuously appears in human form, always renewing itself, always rejuvenating Himself, His constant incarnation, just like the faithful are called the Body of Christ in Sacred Scripture".[79]

Möhler's work did not initially find much of a response. The metaphor of the Church as the *mystical Body of Christ* did not yet affect the life of the

[78] "Da und da sind sie, da ist seine Kirche, seine Anstalt, in der er fortlebe, sein Geist fortwirkt, und das von ihm gesprochene Wort ewig fortertönt." Johann Adam Möhler, *Symbolik oder Darstellung der dogmatischen Gegensatze der Katholiken und Protestanten nach ihren öffentlichen Bekenntnisschriften* (based on the 5th increased and improved edition 1838; Kulmbach: Verlagsbuchhandlung Sabat, 2011-2012), 175. English translation: Johan Adam Möhler, *Symbolism: Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences between Catholics and Protestants as Evidenced by Their Symbolical Writings* (trans. Michael J. Himes; New York: Crossroad Herder, 1997), 258-259.

[79] "So ist denn die sichtbare Kirche (…) der unter den Menschen in menschlicher Form fortwährend erscheinende, stets sich erneuernde, ewig sich verjüngende Sohn Gottes, die andauernde Fleischwerdung desselben, so wie denn auch die Gläubigen in der Heiligen Schrift der Leib Christi genannt werden". Möhler, *Symbolik*, 175. Cf. for the whole of this paragraph: ibid., 173-176. The unity between the earthly Jesus and the Church also includes the divine and human nature of both bodies: just as the divine and human nature in Christ can be distinguished, but not separated, so the divine and the human form an inseparable unity in the Church. Christ Himself works invisibly in the earthly and human forms of the visible Church. This means the Church has a divine and a human side which must not be separated from each other. This in turn has certain consequences, among other things for the authority of the Church: "ist das Göttliche, der lebendige Christus und sein Geist in ihr allerdings das Unfehlbare, das ewig Untrügliche, so ist doch auch das Menschliche unfehlbar und untrüglich, weil das Göttliche ohne das Menschliche gar nicht existiert; das Menschliche ist es nicht an sich, aber wohl als das Organ und als die Erscheinung des Göttlichen." Ibid., 175.

Church. But the number of publications on the Church by Catholic theologians did increase substantially at the beginning of the twentieth century.[80] Particularly Romano Guardini's work *Vom Sinn der Kirche* ('On the Meaning of the Church') (1933), with its now famous opening words: "The Church is coming to life in the souls of men"[81], caused a breakthrough of sorts.[82] Guardini argued that the religious life had increasingly become part of the private domain as a result of the growth of individualism since the waning of the Middle Ages. Of course the believer lives in the Church and is guided by her, but the community is no longer experienced and lived as a value in itself.[83] Moreover, the spirit of rationalism strengthens the tendency that everything must be understood and calculated. Nothing that transcends the things that can be experienced is accepted without first having been convincingly proven. This spirit of the times, Guardini says, has inevitably also influenced the image of the Church. The Church is seen primarily as a religious organisation. Anything beyond the tangible and visible is not immediately experienced. Guardini observed that a development was underfoot in which human beings were once again becoming sensitive to the larger whole ('Welt'), and this also brought the community back in view again: "the community is just as primary a fact as individual existence. And the task of building up the community is just as primary and fundamental as that of perfecting personality."[84] Seen in this way, humankind is not a rational category, but a living unity of the human race. The Church, in its turn, is not just an organisation or a gathering of individuals, but a reality that transcends the individual and is permeated by supernatural life. In the Church, everything is connected to God: angels,

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[80] Cf. Joseph J. Bluett, "The Mystical Body of Christ: 1890-1940," *TS* 3 (1942): 261-289.

[81] "Die Kirche erwacht in den Seelen." Romano Guardini, *Vom Sinn der Kirche* (3rd ed.; Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 1933), 11. English Translation: Romano Guardini, *The Church and the Catholic and The Spirit of the Liturgy* (trans. Ada Lane; New York: Sheed & Ward, 1953), 11.

[82] Cf. Hahnenberg, "The Mystical Body of Christ," 10. In addition to Guardini, we must also mention the work of Karl Adam: *Das Wesen des Katholizismus* (Augsburg: Haas und Grabherr, 1924). It was in this period that the Catholic movements such as the liturgical movement, the biblical movement, and the ecumenical movement began. These movements later greatly influenced theology, in particular the way theologians thought and spoke about the Church. Cf also: Fries, "Wandel des Kirchenbildes," 273.

[83] Cf. Guardini, *Vom Sinn der Kirche*, 11.

[84] "Die Gemeinschaft ist ebenso erstlich, wie das Für-Sich-Sein. Ebenso ursprünglich und grundlegend wie die Aufgabe, seine Persönlichkeit zu vollenden, ist jene, die Gemeinschaft aufzubauen." Guardini, *Vom Sinn der Kirche*, 20. English translation: Guardini, *The Church and the Catholic*, 19.

people, and things. This requires a new image, a new metaphor to speak about the Church, and Guardini proposed the metaphor of the *Corpus Christi mysticum*.[85] In 1943, Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) published the encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*.[86] The pope pointed out that much had been written about this with great piety, but that there were also a number of errors.[87] His purpose in writing this encyclical was to undertake a deeper study of the doctrine of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ, a study that would bear the right fruit (cf. MC 10). Before giving an exposition of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ, Pius immediately contended:

> If we would define and describe this true Church of Jesus Christ – which is the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church - we shall find nothing more noble, more sublime, or more divine than the expression 'the Mystical Body of Christ' – an expression which springs from and is, as it were, the fair flowering of the repeated teaching of the Sacred Scriptures and the Holy Fathers.[88]

If we examine the way in which Pius XII develops the metaphor, then it becomes clear that he speaks successively about the Church as a *Body* in the first part of the encyclical, then about the Church as the Body *of Christ*, and finally about the Church as the *Mystical* Body of Christ. This structure itself already shows that Pius XII started from the visible dimension of the Church. Quoting Col 1:18, the pope states that the Church is a *Body*. On the basis of the characteristics of a body – the source domain that the pope uses to speak about the Church as the target domain – he then lists a number of characteristics of the Church: a body is one and undivided, but it is first and foremost visible. This is also true of the Church: just as the members of a natural body are not randomly connected to each other, the members of the Church are connected to each other organically and hierarchically; moreover, the human body has its own means to provide for its life, and this

[85] Cf. Guardini, *Vom Sinn der Kirche*, 24. Cf. for the entire argument: ibid., 11-33.
[86] For the quotation and translation of MC see footnote 486.
[87] The pope mentions "those outside the true Church, and that among the faithful." Specifically, the pope refers to "a false *rationalism* ... the so-called *popular naturalism* ...a false *mysticism*." MC 8-9. Pius' italics.
[88] "Iamvero ad definiendam describendamque hanc veracem Christi Ecclesiam - quae sanctā, catholica, apostolica, Romana Ecclesia est - (cfr. ibidem *Const. de fid. cath*. cap. i) nihil nobilius, nihil praestantius, nihil denique divinius invenitur sententia illa, qua eadem nuncupatur « mysticum Iesu Christi Corpus »; quae quidem sententia ex iis effluit ac veluti efflorescit, quae et in Sacris Litteris et in sanctorum Patrum scriptis crebro proponuntur." MC 13.

is reflected in the sacraments as the Church's principle of life; etc. (cf. MC 14-24).

The Pope then discusses the modifier *of Christ*. The Church is not just any kind of body, it is the Body of Christ, because Christ is the Founder (*Conditor*), Head (*Caput*), Support (*Sustentator*), and Saviour (*Servator*) of the Church. In this part, too, the visible side of the Church is discussed. The part on Christ the Head in particular reflects at great length on the office of the pope and the bishops. At the same time, however, this part emphatically expands on the notion that it is Christ Himself who, in a hidden and extraordinary way, guides and governs the Church. In a reference to Bellarmine, Pius XII argues that Christ lives in his Church in such a manner that she is, "as it were, another Christ".[89] This Spirit is called the invisible principle. The Spirit is present everywhere, helps everything and everyone, and keeps the members of the body together. Pius XII then quotes Leo XIII: "Let it suffice to say that, as Christ is the Head of the Church, so is the Holy Spirit her soul."[90]

The Church is, finally, called the *mystical* Body of Christ, first and foremost to distinguish her from the physical body of Christ, which was born of the Virgin Mary and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father, and which is hidden under the veil of the Eucharist, and also to distinguish it from any other natural body, be it physical or moral. Interestingly, the explanation of the mystical aspect of the Body of Christ returns to the metaphor of the Church as the *societas perfecta* and unfolds and confirms this metaphor one last time. It also states, however, that the Church does not consist only of social and juridical elements, but is more exalted than all other human associations, because she transcends every natural order through the Spirit of the Redeemer, who works in her as a source of grace and gifts.[91]

We may conclude on the basis of these observations that Pius XII wished to retain the image of the Church as a *societas perfecta*, but that he gave this metaphor a more profound meaning by complementing it with the metaphor of the mystical Body of Christ.

> For Pius XII the invisible and the visible dimensions of Church are one and the same; the spiritual community of Christ's body *is* the institutional, hierarchically-ordered society (…) in *Mystici Corporis*, the

[89] "Quasi altera Christi persona." MC 53.

[90] "Hoc affirmare sufficiat, quod cum Christus Caput sit Ecclesiae, Spiritus Sanctus sit eius anima." MC 57. Cf. for the whole of the addition *of Christ*: MC 25-59.

[91] Cf. MC 62. Cf. for the whole on the mystical Body of Christ: MC 60-66.

pliable image of the mystical body serves to justify prevailing patterns of authority and power.[92]

The encyclical *Mystici Corporis* uses the bride metaphor a number of times. In most cases, it does this simply by calling the Church a Bride, sometimes adding *of Christ* (cf. MC 88, 89, 92, 96), or adorned with an adjective such as *spotless* for the Church which has been redeemed by Christ (cf. MC 39, 44, 106), or with an adjective such as *beloved* to express the intimate relationship between Christ and the Church (cf. MC 89).

In one passage, the encyclical speaks very explicitly about the Bridegroom and Bride in their separateness and distinctness. This happens in the part that addresses errors on the spiritual life.[93] If proper distinctions are not made between a physical and moral body on the one hand, and the mystical Body that is the Church on the other, this is likely to lead to wrong conclusions. The unity between Christ and his Church does not mean that they coalesce into a single physical person, so that divine attributes could be ascribed to human beings, and Christ would be subject to human error. Christ and the Church are marvellously brought together into a mystical Body, but they remain distinct: "he nevertheless distinguishes one from the other as Bridegroom from Bride."[94]

The encyclical *Mystici Corporis* dedicates a special section to loving the Church. The Church, as the Bride, is loved by Christ the Bridegroom, but the encyclical also calls on the faithful to love the Church: "let this be the supreme law of our love: to love the Spouse of Christ as Christ willed her to be, and as He purchased her with His blood."[95] This love expresses itself through participation in the sacramental life of the Church, but also by

[92] Hahnenberg, "The Mystical Body of Christ," 11. Hahnenberg's italics. Cf. also Witte, "Ecclesia, quid dicis," 129, who has reached the same conclusion. LG 7 confirms the doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ, but adjusts it in two respects compared to the encyclical MC. First a distinction is made between the Church as a hierarchical community and the Church as the Body of Christ. LG 8 states that these two form a single complex reality, and that they relate to each other in a way comparable to that of Christ's human and divine nature. LG 8 also says that the Church of Christ is not identical to the Catholic Church, but that the Church subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church. Cf. on this also Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 52.

[93] One example that is mentioned is the view that frequent confession of venial sins is of little value. Another is an unhealthy quietism, which contends that all progress must be ascribed to the Spirit of God, and that humans do not need to cooperate with grace. Cf. for this and other errors: MC 86-91.

[94] "Alterum tamen alteri, ut Sponsum Sponsae, opponit." MC 86.

[95] "Haec sit amoris nostri suprema lex ut nempe Christi Sponsam, qualem eam Christus voluit suoque sanguine acquisivit, diligamus." MC 92.

submitting obediently to the authority and the moral laws of the Church. The pope grounded this call in the fact that it is Christ Himself who lives in the Church and teaches, governs, and sanctifies her (cf. MC 91-92).

Finally, the bride metaphor is used one last time in the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* in a section that states that "every individual must be aroused to this supernatural charity."[96] The charity in question is Christ's love which extends to all people. Christ the Bridegroom has only one Bride, the Church, but the Bridegroom's love excludes no one. In the Bride, according to the encyclical, the whole human race is embraced (*amplecti*). True love for the Church is not limited therefore to the care that the members of the Church have for each other, but also extends to those who do not belong to the Church or are even her enemies (cf. MC 96-97). The Church as the Bride thus becomes a Sacrament in the manner that would be described later in *Lumen gentium*, "sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (LG 1), where the Church as the Bride is first and foremost the Sacrament of God's love.

In sum, we can say that the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* very extensively develops the Body of Christ metaphor. The bride metaphor is used a number of times to come to a more profound understanding of the metaphor of the Body. This is done, among other reasons, to prevent the erroneous interpretation of the union between Christ and the Body that is the Church by emphasising the separateness and distinctness of Christ as the Bridegroom. In the sections that deal with love of the Church, the bride metaphor is used to underline the fact that the Church as the Bride is the object of the faithful's love, and also that the Church as the Bride is the sacrament of God's love in the world.

The reception of the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* was rather mixed. Its strong identification of the mystical Body of Christ with the visible Catholic Church leaves a number of ecumenical questions unanswered, including that of the place of those who have been baptised in Christ but are not within the Catholic Church, like the Protestants and the Orthodox. Those who wish to adhere to the model of the *societas perfecta* persist in regarding the metaphor of the mystical Body of Christ as too vague. Others, on the other hand, do see possibilities for using the metaphor of the mystical Body of Christ to clarify the relationship between the visible and the invisible Church.[97] The great achievement of the Body of Christ metaphor is that it emphasises the "vivid and mystical bond of the ecclesial community with Christ and its celebration in the sacraments, in particular, the Eucharist."[98]

[96] "Ad hanc supernam caritatem excitari omnes oportet." MC 97.
[97] See: Hahnenberg, "The Mystical Body of Christ," 12-13.
[98] Witte, "Ecclesia, quid dicis," 129.

The very fact, however, that no real consensus has emerged about the metaphor of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ, does indicate that the metaphor has obvious limitations. These limitations have naturally stimulated attempts to find a new model.

3.2.3. THE CHURCH IS THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The People of God metaphor for the Church emerged after the Second World War. The rise of *ressourcement* in theology led to the rediscovery of this metaphor. Mannes Dominicus Koster published his book *Ekklesiologie im Werden* ('Ecclesiology in Progress') in 1940; the first of a series of publications on the Church as the People of God.[99] The word people is currently likely to evoke primarily the sociological and political meaning that predominates in modern times: a group of people with a shared language, culture, and history. It is important, however, to investigate the original use of the phrase the People of God, in order to speak intelligibly about it with regard to the Church. We will begin by looking at the use of the People of God in the Old Testament.

Two words for people occur in the Old Testament: עָם and גּוֹי. Although both words are used interchangeably, there is nevertheless a tendency for עָם to be used for the people of Israel, and גּוֹי more generally for the other peoples. Nothing can be said with certainty about the original meaning of the word גּוֹי. The original meaning of the word עָם is probably *brother of the father*. The word refers to blood relationship and thus to a collective sense. A somewhat later meaning of עָם is *tribe*.[100]

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[99] Koster believes the People of God is more firmly rooted in Scripture than the image of the Body of Christ. He does admit the value of using images and metaphors to speak about the Church, but thinks they are ultimately inadequate to describe the Church. Cf. Mannes Dominikus Koster, *Ekklesiologie im Werden* (Paderborn: Bonifatius-Druckerei, 1940), 146. Eva-Maria Faber has discussed Koster's view and has concluded that the designation the People of God was initially a honorific for the people of Israel, because the people of Israel was once a real people among other peoples of the earth, albeit a special one, because of its religion and because it originated in divine election, and its metaphoric quality only became distinct when this title began to be used for the Church. Cf. Eva-Maria Faber, "Volk Gottes," in *Die großen Metaphern des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils: Ihre Bedeutung für heute* (eds. M. Delgado and M. Sievernich; Freiburg: Herder, 2013), 168-185. What is important for the current study is that the People of God is a metaphor when used in relation to the Church.

[100] The word גּוֹי appears more than 555 times in the Old Testament, and עָם more than 1,800 times. Unlike עָם, גּוֹי hardly occurs in Semitic languages other than Hebrew. The word גּוֹי usually appears in the plural, while עָם by contrast is almost always singular. עָם and גּוֹי occur in a parallelism in places such as Dt 32:21; Jos 3:14.16.17. Cf. for an

The promise of a great nation was first made to Abraham (Gn 12:1-3).[101] He was called by God to leave his country, his tribe and his father's house. For a nomad like Abraham, the call to depart is not in itself new. But the fact that it comes from God means that it is intertwined with a promise of salvation.[102] The call to depart is associated with the blessing which will come through Abraham to all generations on earth, and with a great nation. This promise is the beginning of the history of the patriarchs, but it also points forward to the history of the people of Israel.[103]

The promise of a great people is repeated to Jacob (Gn 46:3), Ishmael (Gn 17:20; 21:18), and Moses (Ex 32:10). The exodus out of Egypt, with the passage through the Red Sea and the sealing of the covenant on Mount Sinai, are regarded as the birth of the people of Israel.[104] At the sealing of the covenant, God eventually adopts the people as *His* people:

> You have seen for yourselves what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you away on eagle's wings and brought you to me. So now, if you are really prepared to obey me and keep my covenant, you, out of all peoples, shall by my personal possession, for the whole world is mine. For me you shall be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (Ex 19:4-6a).

This election takes place not on the basis of the people's merit or number, but "YHWH set his hart on you and chose you (…) because he loved you and meant to keep the oath which he swore to your ancestors" (Dt 7:7-8).

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extensive description of the use of עָם and גוֹי in the Old Testament: A.R. Hulst, "עָם/גוֹי, 'am/goy, Volk," *THAT* II:290-325.

[101] Abraham is still called Abram here. He receives the new name of Abraham in Gn 17:5. The new name marks a new phase of life, but even more so the fact that he has a new task. Through the covenant that God establishes with Abraham and that is confirmed in circumcision, Abraham is made the father of a multitude of nations (Gn 17:4). He is given the name Abraham, thus as it were bestowing upon him the office of father of the People of Israel. Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (BKAT 1/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 314.

[102] Cf. ibid., 170-171, who has observed that many authors mistakenly view the command to depart on the basis of the assumption that Abraham had a fixed dwelling place. This then implies that the departure was something difficult for Abraham, or even a test of his faith.

[103] Cf. Ibid., 171-176.

[104] Cf. Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Das Volk Gottes: Eine Untersuchung zum Kirchenbewusstsein des Urchristentums* (Reprint of the first edition, 1941; Darmstadt: WBG, 1963), 12-17. We have seen in the previous chapter that the period from the exodus to the sealing of the covenant was metaphorically described as the bridal days, and the sealing of the covenant itself as the marriage between YHWH and his people.

On the one hand, the people chosen by God has all the attributes of an ordinary people: it has its own identity as descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; it has its own unifying history; it has its own laws and traditions, such as circumcision; it has a single language, etc. On the other hand, this people is essentially different from all other peoples, because it is the people *of God*: "The people is not a whole that is closed in on itself and characterised by itself, but it belongs to YHWH's 'wholeness.'"[105] As God's possession, the people does not belong to itself. It is consecrated to God (cf. for instance Dt 7:6; 14:2), is animated by Him, and is permeated in everything by Him.

The history of God with his chosen people is not a smooth one. God's faithfulness is continually betrayed by the people's infidelity. Time and again, particularly the prophets denounce this infidelity. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the prophets preferably use the metaphor of the unfaithful wife to do this. Despite the people's unfaithfulness, God promises to restore the Old Covenant. We have already encountered this notion in our analysis of Hosea 2:21-22 in the previous chapter, more specifically in the metaphor YHWH RESTORES THE VIRGINITY OF HIS PEOPLE. God will clothe the people with his gifts of *righteousness*, *justice*, *covenant loyalty, compassion* and *faithfulness.* The bride will be adorned with these gifts as an ornament. Bridegroom and bride will be one.[106] In the other prophets, God also speaks of *His* people when he speaks about restoring it: "Look, I shall gather them in from all the countries where I have driven them in my anger, my fury and great wrath. I shall bring them back to the place and make them live in safety. Then they will be my people, and I shall be their God" (Jr 32:37-38). This promise gives the People of God an eschatological connotation.[107]

The promise "Then they will be my people, and I shall be their God" is quoted a number of times in the New Testament, and it is applied there as a matter of course to the New Testament community (cf. 2 Co 6:16; Heb 8:10; Rv 21:3). The New Testament community, the Church, regards itself as the renewed people of Israel:

> But you are *a chosen race, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a people to be a personal possession* to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into the wonderful light. Once you were *a non-people* and

[105] "Das Volk ist keine in sich geschlossene und geprägte Ganzheit, sondern gehört der 'Ganzheit' JHWH's." Ibid., 5.
[106] Cf. Chapter 2.2.1.2. of this study.
[107] Cf. Schnackenburg, *Die Kirche im Neuen Testament* (Freiburg: Herder, 1961), 134.

now you are the People of God; once you were *outside his pity*; now you *have received pity* (1 P 2:9-10).[108]

The notions of election, royal priesthood, holy nation, and possession of the Lord are all Old Testament predicates, or in the terminology of modern metaphor theory, 'maps', for the people of Israel, which are now transferred to the renewed people and characterise the renewed people. Like under the Old Covenant, the election is based purely on grace (cf. Ep 1:4). Further evidence that the New Testament community regards itself as the true heir of the *one* People of God comes from Paul's reflections on the faithful community as the ancestry of Abraham (cf. Rm 4: Ga 3:6-29).[109]

However, the formation of this renewed people springs from a different source: Christ. Christ purchased this new people with his own blood (cf. Ac 20:28).[110] It is striking that the New Testament nowhere mentions a *new* people, but does mention a *new* Covenant.[111] This shows that although Christ's work of salvation is a new beginning, it is also the fulfilment of the Old Testament promise. In this sense, the renewal occurs in the context of continuity in the history of salvation.[112] The community of the New Testament's Covenant, the Church, is equally the recipient of an eschatological promise. Jesus sent out his disciples into the world to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19). Only at the end of time will all creatures in the heavens and all creates on earth be brought together in Christ (cf. Ep 1:10; Col 1:20): "As a whole it [the eschatological People of God] possesses the certainty of perfect fulfilment, victory and future blessedness within it; but earthly care, suffering and trials are not yet taken away."[113]

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[108] Passages in italics are quotations from the Old Testament.

[109] Kasper, *Catholic Church*, 121-122.

[110] Cf. also Schnackenburg, *Die Kirche*, 136, who has pointed out that the Greek expression for περιποιέω, *to acquire*, is reminiscent of Is 43:21 (LXX): λαόν μου, ὃν περιεποιησάμην τὰς ἀρετάς μου διηγεῖσθαι, *the people I have shaped for myself will broadcast my praises*.

[111] Cf. for instance the reports of the Last Supper: Lk 22:20; 1 Co 11:25; and cf. also Heb 8:6-12.

[112] Cf. for the relationship between the Church and the synagogue: Gerhard Lohfrink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt? Kirche im Kontrast* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2015), 113-120.

[113] "Als ganzes trägt es [das eschatologischen Gottesvolkes] die Gewißheit der Vollendung, des Sieges, der künftigen Seligkeit in sich; aber die irdische Mühe, das Leid, die Bewährung sind noch nicht van ihm genommen." Schnackenburg, *Die Kirche*, 140. English translation: Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament* (trans. W.J. O'Hara; London: Burns & Oates, 1965), 157.

The image of the People of God was still used frequently in the Early Church to designate the Church.[114] This metaphor receded into the background from the fourth century onwards, only to reappear in theological works after the Second World War. In the years before the Second Vatican Council and certainly during the council itself, the People of God metaphor began to play an increasingly important role. The first draft on the Church that was presented to the Council Fathers, the *Schema Constitutionis dogmatica de ecclesia*, still describes the Church in terms fully consistent with the encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, primarily as the mystical Body of Christ with strong emphasis on the juridical and institutional side of the Church. There was strident criticism of the schema on the floor of the council: it was too juridical, too triumphalist, too clerical, not sufficiently grounded in the Bible, contained too few references to the Patristic tradition, etc. The schema on the Church was debated during three sessions, and the dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium* in its current form was put to the vote on 19 November 1964. The constitution was adopted with an overwhelming majority of the votes, and promulgated on the same day by Pope Paul VI. The People of God metaphor became the title of the second chapter of the constitution.[115]

When we look at the constitution itself, we see that the council fathers used the People of God metaphor to highlight a number of important notions of being Church. The first and most important notion is surely that the People of God metaphor, unlike *Societas perfecta* or the Body of Christ makes it possible to place the Church in the context of the whole of salvation history. Thus LG 9 begins with the election of the people of Israel, to whom God made known the decree of his will, and with whom He made a Covenant. Christ instituted the promise of a New Covenant in his Blood, thus bringing it to fulfilment. Out of the Jews and the Gentiles, Christ called the multitude, "making them one, not according to the flesh but in the Spirit.

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[114] Cf. for instance Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 146-148, no. 29. For an extensive overview of the use of the People of God metaphor by the Church Fathers, and particularly by Augustine, see: Michael Schmaus, *Die Lehre von der Kirche* (KD 3/1; 5th ed.; Munich: Max Heuber Verlag, 1958), 219-231; and Lohfrink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt*, 210-212.

[115] For the history of the dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, see: Gérard Philips, "Die Geschichte der dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche 'Lumen gentium,'" in *LThK: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil* 1 (eds. Heinrich Suso Brechter, et.al.; 2nd ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1966), 139-155; Peter Hünermann, "Theologischer Kommentar zur dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche Lumen gentium" in *HThK-ZVK* 2 (eds. Peter Hünermann and Bern Jochen Hilberath; Freiburg: Herder, 2004), 269-351; Richard R. Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 8-27.

This was to be the new People of God." (LG 9,1). The text also draws a comparison with the journey through the desert made by "Israel according to the flesh" (LG 9,3). As the people of Israel once wandered in the desert, so now the Church is a pilgrim through the ages, encountering all manner of trials "in search of a future and abiding city" (LG 9,3), as it journeys to the city which is yet to be (cf. Heb 13:14), the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:2).

A second important notion that the People of God metaphor evokes is that of the community as a constitutive reality for the Church. To put it differently, there is no salvation outside the community. Countering tendencies to view salvation as something individual, the People of God metaphor clarifies that God sanctifies and saves people not as individuals, but as a community.[116] Further to this point, the People of God metaphor also says something about the equality and dignity of all members of this people. The people of Israel is invested with priestly dignity: "For me you shall be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" (Ex 19:6). So too the new people of God has been made into a royal nation of priests (cf. Rv 1:6). All members share in Christ's one priesthood. All also participate in Christ's prophetic task, and all are endowed with special gifts to cooperate in the building up of the Church.[117]

A third and last notion that cannot perhaps be inferred immediately from the People of God metaphor, but that was important to the council fathers, is that of membership of the Church. Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici corporis*, where the mystical Body of Christ is the primary metaphor, and which equates the mystical Body of Christ with the Roman Catholic Church, excludes non-Catholics entirely from membership of the Church. Developments such as the work of the ecumenical movement gradually caused this view to be regarded as increasingly problematic, even within the Catholic Church. The question was posed whether the image of the mystical Body of Christ was not too restrictive. If the Church is the Body of Christ, you are either a member or not. There is no middle ground. The People of God metaphor is much more spacious in this respect, as well as more flexible. This is reflected in the constitution in the way the council fathers speak about the relations between Catholic and non-Catholic Christians and with non-Christians in the chapter on the People of God. As to the former,

[116] Cf. LG 9,1.

[117] Cf. LG 10-12. In a previous draft schema, the chapter on the hierarchical structure of the Church preceded that on the People of God. The fact that this sequence was reversed has a fundamental significance: the People of God of all the baptised, who all share in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal ministry is the primary reality. The People of God is comprised of hierarchy (LG 18-29), laity (LG 30-38), and religious (LG 43-47). Cf. Kasper, *Catholic Church*, 123 and 197-198.

the Council recognises that there are many kinds of "links".[118] As to the latter, the constitution speaks of "being related" to the People of God, with the Old Testament People of God occupying the first place, followed by the Muslims, the members of all other religions, and finally all who, through no fault of their own, have remained ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and the Church.[119]

When we look, finally, at the People of God metaphor in relation to the Bride of Christ metaphor, we see that the dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium* does not refer even once to the Bride of Christ metaphor in the entire chapter on the People of God. Other metaphors, such as *head*, *flock*, *Israel according to the flesh*, *spiritual house*, *king*, *city* are used, to provide a more profound understanding of the People of God metaphor or to clarify it. The bride metaphor is mentioned once in LG 6, in a series of representations of the Church, without any attempt to relate these metaphors or representations to each other.

Two early monographs on the People of God, Anscar Vonier's *The People of God* (1937),[120] and Mannes Dominikus Koster's *Ekklesiologie im Werden* (1940), which has already been mentioned, do discuss the bride metaphor in relation to the People of God. Vonier pointed out that the transition from the People of God to the Bride of the Lamb is quite a natural one in the language of Scripture, but that the People of God metaphor is the more comprehensive metaphor for understanding the relationship between God and the baptised. Vonier concentrated in particular on the bride metaphor in the book of Revelation. In Revelation, the Bride primarily represents victory. The people also represents victory, but not without struggle, and this is a better image for the Church: "The vicissitudes of Christianity, its triumphs and its failures, its endless variety of gifts and opportunities, its position in the world, its contact with the human race, are best understood if we recognise in Christians the People of God."[121] Koster also believed that the People of God is the most appropriate description of the Church.[122] For him the name the People of God was "concentrated

[118] Cf. LG 15: "The Church recognizes that in many ways she is linked with those who, being baptized, are honored with the name of Christian."

[119] Cf. LG 16: "Finally, those who have not yet received the Gospel are related in various ways to the people of God." Cf. on this paragraph: Joseph Ratzinger, *Kirche - Zeichen unter den Völkern: Schriften zur Ekklesiologie und Ökumene* (JRGS 8/1; ed. Gerhard Ludwig Müller; Freiburg: Herder, 2010), 269-270.

[120] Anscar Vonier, "The People of God," in *The Collected Works of Abbot Vonier, Vol 2: The Church and the Sacraments* (originally published in 1937; London: Burns & Oates, 1952), 135-225.

[121] Ibid., 155.

[122] See footnote 512.

abundance,"[123] and all other images and metaphors were "partial abundance."[124] The images and metaphors are there for the benefit of the People of God. Additionally, the bride metaphor also articulates the personal relationship between Christ and the Church. Christ and the Church can be distinguished from each other, but they are also united.[125]

When we look at more recent publications on the Church as the People of God, the first author we encounter is Walter Kasper. In his work *The Catholic Church* (2011), Kasper has argued first and foremost that there are no abstract concepts or images/metaphors that adequately express the essence of the Church, but the Second Vatican Council foregrounded the People of God metaphor as a metaphor for the Church. According to Kasper, this metaphor can only be understood from the perspective of Christ, and in this way he arrives at the following description of the essence of the Church: "We are the People of God in and through Jesus Christ".[126] The People of God metaphor needs other metaphors to allow a more profound understanding and to interpret the "in and through Christ" properly. Kasper has mentioned the Body of Christ metaphor and the Bride of Christ metaphor in particular.

As far as the bride metaphor is concerned, Kasper has mentioned the feminine dimension of the bride metaphor as a first clarification and element that can help to achieve a deeper understanding. Kasper has linked the feminine dimension to the question what role women have in the Church and how the feminine dimension could be better served.[127] Kasper's focus on the role of women disregards the fact that this is a metaphor. The Bride represents the community that is the Church, and not just women. The feminine dimension of the Church is, however, a significant issue. Kasper himself has pointed out that there is a more important aspect than the one just mentioned: the fundamental relationship between Christ and the Church that is coloured by the bride metaphor. The relationship between Christ and the Church can be characterised as bridal love. Just as the original love between man and woman is simultaneously equality (cf. Gn 1:27), mutuality (cf. Gn 2:23), and unity (cf. Gn 2:24), so that husband and wife are more or

[123] "Geballte Fülle." Koster, *Ekklesiologie im Werden*, 147.
[124] "Geteilte Fülle." Ibid., 147.
[125] Cf. ibid., 150-151.
[126] Kasper, *Catholic Church*, 122. Cf. also Yves Congar: "On ne peut définir l'Eglise du Nouveau Testament comme Peuple de Dieu, qu'en ajoutant aussitôt 'et Corps du Christ.'" Congar, *Sainte Église*, 26. Kurt Koch has defined the Church as "Volk Gottes vom Leib Christi her." Cf. Kurt Koch, *Die Kirche Gottes: Gemeinschaft im Geheimnis des Glaubens* (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich Verlag, 2007), 29-33.
[127] Cf. Kasper, *Catholic Church*, 131-132.

less one person, so the relationship between Christ and the Church as Bridegroom and Bride can be seen as unity in difference.[128] Kasper then gives a bird's eye view of almost all passages in the Old and New Testament that mention the bride metaphor. He has focused particularly on the unfaithfulness of the people, which means that the image of the bride is time and again associated with the image of the unfaithful spouse or whore. The Church, too, is unfaithful in many respects, but she is always assured of Christ her Bridegroom's love for her. The parables of the bridesmaids and of the royal wedding banquet evoke the eschatological dimension. The parables call for vigilance, so that we will not miss the coming of the Bridegroom. Finally, the Church anticipates the eschatological wedding banquet in the celebration of the Eucharist. Kasper has called the Church the sacrament of Bridegroom and Bride.[129] In conclusion, we can say that Kasper has connected the bride metaphor with the People of God very compactly but also in a very profound way. In the last part of this chapter we will return extensively to a number of ideas that Kasper has proposed here.

The metaphor of the Church as the People of God was widely adopted and received in the years following the Second Vatican Council.[130] And yet criticism quickly surfaced on account of one-sided interpretations. Joseph Ratzinger has identified two correlated tendencies that detract from the People of God metaphor: on the one hand a reductionist tendency that limits the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council to the People of God, and on the other hand the tendency to interpret the concept of people in a sociological and political way, thus reducing the Church to a sociological and political entity. The concept of people thus became a vehicle for an anti-hierarchical and anti-sacral conception of being Church. Ratzinger has pointed out in this context that the chapter on the People of God forms a diptych with the first chapter, which speaks about the Church as a Mystery.[131] The following section will examine this latter metaphor of the Church as a *Mystery* or a *Sacrament*.

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[128] Cf. ibid., 132.
[129] Cf. for the whole of this paragraph: ibid., 131-135.
[130] Cf. Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 88.
[131] Cf. Ratzinger, *Kirche - Zeichen unter den Völkern*, 275. Kasper has pointed out that the People of God ecclesiology has led throughout history to misunderstandings. He has mentioned the example of Eusebius of Caesarea (+339/340), who after the Constantinian shift attempted to equate the People of God with the Roman Byzantine Empire, but Kasper has also referred to the numerous contemporary misconceptions that do not speak of the People of God in the biblical sense as a *λαός*, but in the profane sense as a δῆμος, inferring from this that the Church must be democratised. Cf. Kasper, *Catholic Church* 124.

3.2.4. THE CHURCH IS A SACRAMENT

"The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race."[132] This now famous sentence is the opening line of the dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium*'s section on the Church as a Sacrament. LG 48 further defines this sacramental quality as "the universal sacrament of salvation."[133] This characterisation of the Church as the Sacrament of salvation precedes the extensive discussion of all kinds of other images and metaphors for the Church in *Lumen gentium*. Like the notion that the Church can be described as the People of God, the idea of the Church as the Sacrament emerged from the process of *ressourcement* that took place in theology from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards. It was the first time in a long time that a recent Church document referred to the Church as a Sacrament.[134]

Jan-Heiner Tück has argued that the concept of a sacrament is not strictly speaking a metaphor, but a theological technical term which has mainly been applied to the seven sacraments of the Church since the twelfth century.[135] The hallmark of a metaphor is that a known and concrete reality, the so-called source domain, is used to speak about an as yet unknown reality that must still be defined, the so-called target domain. There is no doubt that the concepts of body and people discussed above are metaphors, but this is admittedly not immediately evident for the concept of sacrament in relation to the Church. The concept of sacrament as such does not belong to everyday speech, but to religious speech, and is generally difficult to

[132] "Cum autem Ecclesia sit in Christo veluti sacramentum seu signum et instrumentum intimae cum Deo unionis totiusque generis humani unitatis." LG 1.

[133] "Quod est Ecclesia ut universale salutis sacramentum constituit." LG 48.

[134] There was apparently only one author who used the concept of sacrament for the Church between the fifth and the nineteenth centuries: Louis Thomassin (1619-1695). Cf. Matthäus Bernards, "Zur Lehre von der Kirche als Sakrament: Beobachtungen aus der Theologie des 19. Und 20. Jahrhunderts," in *MTZ* 20 (1969), 29-54, at 35. The constitution on the liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963), adopted by the council a year before *Lumen gentium*, already calls the Church a sacrament: *mirabile sacramentum*, *wondrous sacrament* (SC 5) and *unitatis sacramentum*, *sacrament of unity* (SC 26).

[135] Jan-Heiner Tück, "Sakrament des Heils für die Welt: Annäherungen an einen ekklesiologischen Leitbegriff des Konzils" in: *Die großen Metaphern des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils: Ihre Bedeutung für heute* (ed. M. Delgado and M. Sievernich; Freiburg: Herder, 2013), 141-167, at 146.

understand even for people who belong to the Church.[136] The first thing we must investigate here is, therefore, whether the concept of a sacrament is actually a metaphor.

In the first, methodological, chapter of this study, we quoted Avery Dulles, who has pointed out that models of the Church, or, to use Lakoff and Johnson's terminology, conceptual metaphors, are not always images that can be easily imagined: "Some models are also images – that is, those can be readily imagined. Other models are of a more abstract nature, and are not precisely images. In the former class one might put temple, vine, and flock; in the latter, institution, society, community."[137] The important thing for Dulles is whether a certain image or more abstract concept can be used for a critical reflection on a reality, in this case the Church. In his work *Models of the Church*, Dulles then without further explanation mentions Sacrament as one of his five models of the Church.[138] In the introductory article to the book *Die großen Metaphern des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils* ('The Great Metaphors of the Second Vatican Council'), Mariano Delgado and Michael Sievernich have similarly contended that there are concepts in the Church which function as metaphors. They have spoken in this context of a *conceptual metaphor*, which they have described as somewhat of a square circle: "their distinguishing feature is that they work like metaphors, because they create an attractive semantic setting, and evince a reception history that shapes and widens experience of and speech about the Church."[139] We will investigate here whether sacrament can be understood in this way as a metaphor, and will begin again by looking at the origins and subsequent development of the word sacrament.

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[136] The website Lexico.com gives the following meanings of sacrament: "1) (in the Christian Church) a religious ceremony or ritual regarded as imparting divine grace, such as baptism, the Eucharist and (in the Roman Catholic and many Orthodox Churches) penance and the anointing of the sick; 2) (in Roman Catholic use) the consecrated elements of the Eucharist, especially the bread or Host; 3) a thing of mysterious and sacred significance; a religious symbol." Lexico.com, "Sacrament," n.p. [cited 20 November 2017]. Online: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sacrament.

[137] Cf. Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 23.

[138] Cf. ibid., 63-75.

[139] "Sie zeichnen sich jedoch dadurch aus, dass sie wie Metaphern wirken, weil sie ein attraktives semantisches Umfeld aufladen und eine Wirkungsgeschichte aufweisen, die den Erfahrungs- und Sprachraum der Kirche prägt und erweitert." Mariano Delgado and Michael Sievernich, "Zur Rezeption und Interpretation des Konzils der Metaphern" in *Die großen Metaphern des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils* (ed. M. Delgado and M. Sievernich; Freiburg: Herder, 2013), 15-32, at 25. They have mentioned the following concepts as examples: *dialogue*, *collegiality*, *poverty*, *mission*, and *common priesthood*. Cf. ibid. 25.

Sacramentum is derived from *sacrare*, to consecrate. The original profane meaning of the word *sacramentum* stems from the military and legal world. As a military term in the Roman Empire, *sacramentum* meant an oath to the banner. Accession to military service was marked by a ritual that also involved making a *sacramentum*, an oath. Soldiers who broke the oath they had taken called down a curse upon themselves, were forfeit to the gods, and could be killed by anyone. As a legal term, *sacramentum* means a security bond. In court cases, both parties would give the pontifex (*ad pontifex*) a *sacramentum*, a bond, or would place this near the bridge (*ad pontem*). The winning party would retrieve his *sacramentum*, while the losing party's *sacramentum* would be deposited in the state treasury (*aerarium*), which stood in the temple of Saturnus. Both meanings of *sacramentum* are very old, and neither can be derived from the other. The two meanings can both be explained, however, on the basis of the central concept of *consecration*, and both cases involved an obligation contracted before the gods.[140]

Around the year 200, the standard Latin versions of the New Testament in use in North Africa used the word *sacramentum* to translate the New Testament's μυστήριον, whereas European translations (Itala) used the words *mysterium/mysteria* and *arcana*.[141] Although various authors tried to derive the use of the word *sacramentum* from the concept of the military oath, including Tertullian (155-240),[142] it is clear that *sacramentum* gradually became the equivalent of μυστήριον and also acquired all of the meanings of the biblical word μυστήριον.[143] It is important therefore, in

[140] Cf. for the whole of this paragraph: Paul Hensels, *Sacramentum en zijn synoniemen in de mystagogische katechesen van Ambrosius* (Utrecht: Druk Elinkwijk, 1995), 15-28.

[141] The reason that μυστήριον was not translated as *mysterium/mysteria* in North Africa, was probably that translators avoided words that could be associated in some way with pagan cultures. Words like *sacra*, *arcana* and *initia* were similarly avoided. Cf. ibid., 35-37.

[142] The Church Father Tertullian (c. 160 – c. 230) uses the term *sacramentum* for baptism. In his attempt to give a substantive justification for his use of this word, he compares it with the oath that was taken by Roman soldiers. The person who took the oath was aware of the religious significance of the oath. The oath was called *sacramentum*; the act of consecrating oneself to a divine authority. All this was accompanied by a kind of initiation ritual that included the making of vows. Tertullian uses this well-known pre-Christian custom of Roman soldiers to apply it to baptism. The candidate who asks for baptism wants to place himself at the service of the Lord. He does this by freely pledging his faithfulness to the Lord and to dedicate all his powers to Him, even to the point of martyrdom. Cf. Alexandre Ganoczy, *Einführung in die katholische Sakramentenlehre* (2nd ed.; Darmstadt: WBG, 1984), 12-13.

[143] Cf. for an overview of the various theories regarding the origins and meaning of *sacramentum* in relation to μυστήριον: Hensels, *Sacramentum*, 29-38.

order to understand *sacramentum*, to look also at the origins and meaning of the biblical word μυστήριον.

The original meaning of the word μυστήριον is obscure. It is probably derived from μύειν, *to close.*[144] The suffix τήριον does not shed much further light on the issue. The original meaning of μυστήριον was most probably something about which one should not speak.[145] As far as can be established, μυστήριον had a religious meaning from a very early stage, if not from the start. In the Hellenistic world, this word denoted the mystery cults, which, for all their diversity, had many common features: they were cultic actions through which initiates could partake in the fate of the deity involved; persons could only participate in the ritual after undergoing an initiation ceremony; a promise of salvation was made to the initiates in the form of cosmic life; and, finally, the initiates had a strict duty of silence towards outsiders. This last feature was probably so essential that it became the characteristic of the entire cult, thus giving rise to the name μυστήριον, *mystery*.[146]

The concept of mystery also occurred in Hellenistic Judaism. On the one hand it was used there for the mystery cults,[147] or to speak of some profane secret that could not be revealed.[148] On the other hand, it similarly began to acquire a new meaning which would later prove to be important in the era of the New Testament: that of a concealed announcement of a future event determined by God. In this sense, mystery had come to mean divine revelation that could also be perceived by divine grace. Mystery therefore acquired the meaning of a divine ordinance, and also obtained an eschatological connotation.[149] This meaning can be found for instance in the Prophet Daniel. When Daniel explains Nebuchadnezzar's dream to the king, he says, "None of the sages, soothsayers, magicians or exorcists has been able to tell the king the truth of the mystery which the king has propounded; but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries and who has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what is to take place in the final days" (Dn 2:27-28). Jewish apocalyptic literature similarly uses mystery to denote a revelation of

[144] To close the mouth or the lips. Not to be confused with μυεῖν, *to consecrate*. Cf. G. Bornkamm, "μυστήριον," in *TWNT* 4:809-834, at 810.
[145] Cf. ibid., 810.
[146] Cf. ibid., 810-814. Cf. also M. Hutter, "Mysterienreligionen," in *LThK* 7 (special edition 2009): 572-575. Incidentally, the word was usually used in the plural, μυστήρια.
[147] Cf. for instance Ws 14:15. 23.
[148] For instance a king's secret plan (cf. for instance Tb 12:7), or a friend's secret (cf. for instance Si 22:22; 27:16-17), or a secret strategy for war (cf. for instance 2 M 13:21).
[149] Cf. Bornkamm, "μυστήριον," 821

divine secrets that are communicated to certain chosen people through visions, or journeys to the heavens or the underworld.[150]

In the New Testament writings, and particularly in the works of Paul and Deutero-Paul, the mystery is the crucified Christ in whom God the Father has revealed his will to save all people so that it is visible and can be experienced: "Now when I came to you, brothers, I did not come with any brilliance of oratory or wise argument to announce to you the mystery of God [τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ].[151] I was resolved that the only knowledge I would have while I was with you was knowledge of Jesus, and of him as the crucified Christ" (1 Co 2:1-2).[152] Tt 3:4 speaks of the revelation of "the kindness and love of God our Saviour for mankind." The letter to the Colossians also speaks about Jesus Christ as the mystery that was hidden before all ages and generations, but has now been revealed to the saints (cf. Col 1:26). The mystery is further defined here as Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς δόξης, *Christ in you, the hope of glory* (Col 1:27). The letter to the Ephesians addresses the cosmological and eschatological dimension of the mystery. The mystery is God's will "to bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth" (Ep 1:10). The fundamental difference between the mystery cults and the mystery of the Christ is that there is no obligation to keep the mystery of Christ secret; on the contrary, the mystery of the crucified Christ must be proclaimed (cf. for instance 1 Co 4:1; Ep 6:19; 1 Tm 3:16).[153]

There is only one passage in the whole of Scripture in which the word *mystery* is used in relation to the Church (Ep. 5:32).[154] We have already discussed Ep 5:31-33 in the last chapter, when we looked particularly at the bride metaphor in this passage from the Bible. For the purposes of our current investigation of the Church as a *Sacrament*, it suffices to recall once more that Ep 5:21-33 speaks of the intimate relationship between Christ and the Church in the context of a household code. In Ep 5:31, this intimate

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[150] Cf. ibid., 821-823.

[151] Nestle-Aland 28th ed. (2013) has chosen τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ on the basis of the following manuscripts: P^{46vid} $\aleph^{*}$ A C ar r sy^{p} bo. Other manuscripts have τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Θεοῦ; for instance ℵ B D F G L P Ψ 33. 81. 104. 365. 630.

[152] In the Synoptic Gospels, μυστήριον occurs once, in the parabolic discourse (Mt 13:11; and par. Mk 4:11; Lk 8:10), in Paul's letters it appears mainly in 1 Co, and in Deutero-Paul in Ep and Col.

[153] Cf. for the whole of this paragraph: M. Theobald, "Mysterium," in *LThK* 7 (Sonderausgabe 2009): 577-579; and Bornkamm, "μυστήριον," 825-828.

[154] The word μυστήριον occurs six times in the letter to the Ephesians. In five cases it refers to the mystery of Christ (Ep 1:9; 3:3.4.9; 6:19), and once to Christ and the Church (Ep 5:32). Mystery is never used in relation to any liturgical act either in Ephesians or anywhere else in the New Testament.

relationship receives metaphorical depth through a quotation from Gn 2:24: "and the two become one flesh." Paul calls all this a mystery, which means it is about a divine ordinance, about revelation. The intimate union between man and wife which is inscribed in the order of creation, is a prefiguration willed by God of the union between Christ and the Church. The Church itself thus becomes an expression of God's plan of salvation, a mystery. This passage in Scripture highlights the connection between the mystery of Christ and the mystery of the Church.

In general, it can be said that there were many developments in the Early Church in which the concept of mystery did not play a prominent role. The apologists used mystery to denote and distance themselves from the mystery cults, although the word is also used to describe certain decisive moments in the history of salvation, both from the Old Testament and, primarily, from the New. Important events that are prefigurations of the mystery of Christ, such as for instance the passage through the Red Sea, and important events from the life of Jesus himself, such as his birth and crucifixion, are called μυστήρια, *mysteries*. Augustine would write: "for there is no other mystery of God but Christ."[155]

As we have seen, in the transition from Greek to Latin, μυστήριον was translated as *sacramentum* in North African Bible translations. But μυστήριον/*mysterium* and *sacramentum* were also used as synonyms for a long time. On a few occasions, *mysterium/sacramentum* was used in reference to the Church. In his work *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate*, Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200-258) spoke about the Church as a "sacrament of unity."[156] From the fourth century, ritual acts such as baptism and the Lord's Supper were also called *sacramentum*, so that the concept of sacrament gradually became the name for the seven sacraments of the Church fixed in the Middle Ages. *Mysterium* increasingly acquired the meaning of mystery of the faith.[157]

The rise of the *ressourcement* movement at the beginning of the twentieth century also meant the return of the notion that the Church could be described as a Sacrament.[158] In his *Méditation sur l'église* ('The Splendor

[155] "Non est enim aliud Dei mysterium, nisi Christus." Augustine, *Epist*. 187,34. English translation: Roland Teske, *Letters 156-210 (Epistulae)* (New York: New City Press, 2004), 246-247.

[156] "Sacramentum unitatis." Cyprian of Carthago, *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate*, 7. SC 26 refers to this quotation by Cyprian.

[157] Cf. for a brief overview of the development of the concept of sacrament: Herbert Vorgrimler, Sakramententheologie (2nd ed.; Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1990), 58-85.

[158] For an extensive overview of the development of the concept of sacrament for the Church from the nineteenth century onwards, see Bernards, "Zur Lehre von der Kirche," 35-54.

of the Church') (1953) Henri de Lubac, who can be regarded as one of the forerunners of talking about the Church as a Sacrament, wrote, "The Church is a mystery; that is to say that she is also a sacrament. (…) In this world she is a sacrament of Christ, as Christ Himself, in His humanity, is for us the sacrament of God."[159] De Lubac referred to the double aspect of any sacramental reality. On the one hand it is a sign of something else, which is made fully present in the sign itself. On the other, the sacramental sign is never random or provisional. It is necessary to reach the reality of which it is a sign. In order to describe what it means that Christ is a sacrament of God, De Lubac quoted Jn 14:9 by way of illustration: "Anyone who has seen me has seen the father" and Col 1:15: "He is the image of the unseen God." These things can also be said of the Church as a Sacrament: the only purpose of the Church is to reveal Christ to the people and to mediate his grace.[160]

In the German-speaking world, the main stimulus to talk about the Church as a Sacrament came from Karl Rahner and Otto Semmelroth.[161] In line with the meaning of μυστήριον in the New Testament, Rahner characterised the Church as "the continuance, the contemporary presence, of that real, eschatologically triumphant and irrevocably established presence in the world, in Christ, of God's salvific will."[162]

During the Second Vatican Council, the council fathers ultimately decided to speak about the Church as a Sacrament. This was a gradual development that occurred during the council. The first schema was still very much indebted to the encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, but many council fathers regarded it as too juridical, too clerical, and too triumphalist. In addition, the schema was criticised for being too scholastic and lacking in coherence. The characterisation of the Church as a Sacrament did not appear in this draft text. The council fathers wanted a pastorally-oriented discourse that would also take into account the wider perspectives of contemporary theology and adopt an open attitude towards ecumenism. The text that was

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[159] "l'Eglise est un mystère, c'est-à-dire, aussi bien, un sacrement. (…) Elle est ici-bas le sacrement de Jésus-Christ, comme Jésus-Christ lui-même est pour nous, dans son humanité, le sacrement de Dieu." Henri De Lubac, *Méditation sur l'église* (Paris: Aubier, 1953), 175. English edition: *The Splendor of the Church* (trans. M. Mason; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 202. References to this work will be to the French original, with the page numbers of the English edition between brackets.

[160] Cf. ibid., 175-176 (202-203).

[161] An early work by Karl Rahner on the Church as a *Sacrament* is *Kirche und Sakramente* (QD 10; Freiburg: Herder, 1960); and by Otto Semmelroth *Die Kirche als Ursakrament* (3rd ed.; Frankfurt: Josef Knecht, 1963 (1953).

[162] Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments* (trans. W.J. O'Hara; 6th ed.; New York: Herder and Herder 1967), 18.

eventually adopted gives pride of place to the Church as a *mysterium/sacramentum*; this can be regarded as a key to the new consciousness of the Church.[163]

The constitution on the Church begins with Christ and opens with the words, "Because Christ is the Light of nations."[164] Immediately afterwards, it describes the Church's mission and essence in relation to Christ in a metaphorical way: "to bring the light of Christ to all men, a light brightly visible on the countenance of the Church."[165] This is to say that the Church is a sign: it reflects. This *resplendere*, *to shine back*, *to cast back*, *to reflect*, makes a Sacrament of the Church. The Church's function is referential. She is a sign. The following sentence spells this out explicitly: "the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race."[166]

The formulation of the Church as a Sacrament is rather circumspect. In the first place because of the term *veluti*, and second because of the modifier *in Christo*. The term *veluti*, *as it were*, *like*, is used to prevent the reader from thinking that there is an eighth sacrament in addition to the seven instituted by Christ and defined by the Council of Trent. Instead, a *Sacrament*, when used in relation to the Church, has the biblical meaning of *mysterium/sacramentum*, and it refers to God's eternal ordinance "to bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth" (Ep 1:10).[167] The addition *in Christo* wholly anchors the Church in Christ. Christ himself is the sacrament of God[168] and can

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[163] Cf. Philips, "Die Geschichte der dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche," 141-142 and 150.

[164] "Lumen gentium cum sit Christus." LG 1. In a radio message to the faithful on the eve of the council, Pope John XXIII already spoke of *Lumen Christi* as *Lumen Ecclesiae* and *Lumen gentium*. Cf. Johannes XIII, "Nuntius Radiophonicus," *AAS* 54 (1962): 678-685, at 680 and 685. The alternative draft written by the German-speaking bishops also started with the words *Lumen gentium*. Cf. Hünermann, "Theologischer Kommentar," 355.

[165] "Omnes homines claritate Eius, super faciem Ecclesiae resplendente." LG 1.

[166] "Cum autem Ecclesia sit in Christo veluti sacramentum seu signum et instrumentum intimae cum Deo unionis totiusque generis humani unitatis." LG 1.

[167] LG later describes the Church less circumspectly as *sacramentum visibile huius salutiferae unitatis, the visible sacrament of this saving unity* (LG 9) and *universale salutis sacramentum, the universal sacrament of salvation* (LG 48). Cf. for the whole of this paragraph: Aloys Grillmeier, "Dogmatische Konstitution über die Kirche: Kommentar zum I. Kapitel," in *LThK Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil* 1, 156-176, at 157-158.

[168] Cf. Augustine: footnote 568.

therefore be regarded as the *Primary Sacrament*.[169] The Church sprang forth from the pierced side of the crucified Christ: "This inauguration and this growth are both symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of a crucified Jesus (cf. Jn. 19:34)."[170] The Church as a sacramental reality therefore does not exist outside Christ, or, as Jesus says in John's Gospel: "for cut off from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5).[171]

As a Sacrament, the Church is the sign and instrument "both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (LG 1). As a sign, the Church represents the intimate union with God and the unity of the whole human race. As an instrument, she simultaneously effects this intimate union with God and the unity of the entire human race. As a sign, the Church must be viewed as a conceptual metaphor: in the Church that is visible on earth, with all her structures, sacraments, liturgy, etc., "the kingdom of Christ now [becomes] present in mystery."[172] When we look specifically for instance at ministry in the Church, the Council Fathers can state on the basis of the Church's sacramental character that "in the bishops, therefore, for whom priests are assistants, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Supreme High Priest, is present in the midst of those who believe."[173] And as regards the faithful, the Council Fathers can say that all who believe in Christ and have been brought together in the Church through the sacrament of baptism are united with God and with each other, and are therefore "the visible sacrament of this saving unity".[174] At various levels

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[169] The term *Primary Sacrament* is also applied to the Church by some authors, including Otto Semmelroth. Cf. Semmelroth, *Die Kirche als Ursakrament*. Rahner also uses the term *Primary Sacrament* for the Church. Later he used terms such as *Wurzelsakrament* ('Root Sacrament'), *Gesamtsakrament* ('Total Sacrament'), *Grundsakrament* ('Fundamental Sacrament') and *Sakrament des Heiles der Welt* ('Sacrament of the Salvation of the World'), before returning to *Primary Sacrament*. Other authors have also searched for alternatives so as to avoid *Primary Sacrament*, which they wished to reserve for the incarnate Christ. Terms proposed are *Rahmensakrament* ('Framework Sacrament'), *Großsakrament* ('Great Sacrament'), *Vollsakrament* ('Full Sacrament'), *Universalsakrament* ('Universal Sacrament') etc. For an overview, see Bernards, "Zur Lehre von der Kirche," 36-38. The council documents use *sacrament* and *universal sacrament of salvation* in reference to the Church.

[170] "Quod exordium et incrementum significantur sanguine et aqua ex aperto latere Iesu crucifixi exeuntibus (cf. Io 19,34)." LG 3.

[171] Cf. for the whole of this paragraph: Kasper, *Catholic Church*, 126-127.

[172] "Seu regnum Christi iam praesens in mysterio." LG 3.

[173] "In Episcopis igitur, quibus presbyteri assistunt, adest in medio credentium Dominus Iesus Christus, Pontifex Summus." LG 21.

[174] "Sacramentum visibile huius salutiferae unitatis." LG 9.

and in very diverse ways, this is what might be called "reality depicting"[175], and therefore metaphorical language to denote a reality that is accepted in faith.

The Council Fathers chose to speak of the Church as a Sacrament, on the one hand to designate the complex reality of the Church, which is composed of a human, visible element and a divine, and invisible element (cf. LG 8),[176] and on the other to express her relationship with and relevance to the world, which corresponds to the Second Vatican Council's pastoral intention. "The Council was well aware that the mediating role of the Church between the mystery of the triune God and the human race is articulated in this formula."[177]

Finally, we will look once more – like we did for the metaphors discussed above – at the use of the bride metaphor by authors who favour speaking of the Church as a Sacrament. By way of example, we will first investigate the way in which Henri de Lubac uses the bride metaphor to

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[175] The term "reality depicting" is derived from Janet Martin Soskice, who in her turn has referred to the philosopher and historian of science Mary Tiles, who suggested this term to Soskice. Soskice has compared the use of models in the sciences and in religion. Against the view of many authors who think that theistic models can say something about human experiences but not about any transcendent reality or relationship, Soskice has argued that models can also say something about a transcendent reality or relationship, even if we know that this reality will never be fully understood. Models in science are used to explain phenomena that can be observed, and to schematise theories (cf. the kinetic energy of gasses that can be explained using the movement of billiard balls). Religious models on the contrary are used to express religious experiences that are shared within certain communities and within certain traditions. Thus a mystic will use images, metaphors, to describe his mystical experiences (for instance *the dark night of the soul* or *the spiritual espousal*), and in doing so he is generally influenced by a certain tradition of representing experiences. Thus Christians may speak of the *beatific vision*, so Soskice, without ever having had this experience themselves, because they belong to a community and a faith tradition, authoritative members of which have had this experience and have spoken about it. Cf. Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 97-117, 142-161.

[176] LG 8 compares the Church in her complex, composite reality to the mystery of the divine Word itself: "As the assumed nature inseparably united to Him, serves the divine Word as a living organ of salvation, so, in a similar way, does the visible social structure of the Church serve the Spirit of Christ, who vivifies it, in the building up of the body." "Sicut enim natura assumpta Verbo divino ut vivum organum salutis, Ei indissolubiliter unitum, inservit, non dissimili modo socialis compago Ecclesiae Spiritui Christi, eam vivificanti, ad augmentum corporis inservit (cf. Eph 4,16)." Cf. for the choice of the Church as Sacrament see also: Hünermann, "Theologischer Kommentar," 281, 324.

[177] Witte, "Ecclesia, quid dicis," 137.

speak about the Church as a Sacrament, and then how the bride metaphor is used in the dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*.

In his *Méditation sur l'église* (1953), De Lubac uses the bride metaphor to demonstrate for instance that the Church is not itself God, but that she is the Church *of* God, and that the Church is oriented to Him: "She [the Church] is his inseparable Bride, serving him in faith and justice."[178] De Lubac also uses the bride metaphor to further define Christ's relationship to the Church. Following the example of the Apostle Paul, De Lubac uses the body metaphor to describe the union between Christ, the head, and the Church, his body, and then the bride metaphor to further characterise their mutual relationship: "the Bridegroom and the Bride are one flesh. Although he is the Head of his Church, Christ does not rule her from without; there is, certainly, subjection and dependence between her and him, but at the same time she is his fulfilment and 'fullness' (Ep 1:22)."[179] In a reference to Gregory of Nazianzus, De Lubac also uses the bride metaphor to show that the Church is able to reflect the beauty of Christ, thus becoming a kind of portal that gives access to Christ: "When the Christian community is faithful to him who gathers together in order to dwell in its midst, each man can see the beauty of the Bridegroom through the Bride, and thus all can marvel at what no creature can fathom."[180] Finally, we must mention an exposé about the ministry, and particularly about the papacy. De Lubac begins this by saying that criticism of the papacy has been advanced, to the effect that it is absolutist and alike to tyrannical secular rulers. De Lubac counters this by stating that Christ Himself wanted the Petrine ministry, and that Catholics understand it in this way: "he [the Catholic] considers her head as 'the head of the episcopate' and 'the father of the Christian people'"[181] After using this metaphor of the Father to describe the office of the pope, he then also applies the metaphor of the Bridegroom to the papacy: "and that just as each bishop is the bridegroom of his own particular Church, so Peter, the Bishop of Rome, may be said to be the bridegroom of the Universal Church, the

[178] "Elle est son Épouse inséparable, qui le sert dans la foi et dans la justice." De Lubac, *Méditation*, 29 (38).

[179] "L'Époux et l'Épouse sont une seule chair. Chef de son Église, le Christ ne la gouverne pourtant pas du dehors: d'elle à Lui, il y a sujétion, dépendance, mais elle est un même temps son achèvement et sa 'plénitude.'" Ibid., 181 (209).

[180] "Quand la communauté chrétienne est fidèle à Celui qui la rassemble pour habiter au milieu d'elle, chacun peut contempler à travers l'Épouse la beauté de l'Époux. Chacun peut admirer ainsi ce qui demeure impénétrable à toute créature." Ibid., 198 (229-230).

[181] "Il tient son chef pour 'le chef de l'épiscopat' et pour 'le père de tout le peuple chrétien.'" Ibid. 231 (267). The "Father of all Christians" quotation is from Augustine.

whole of which has in him its visible foundation."[182] As the visible foundation, Peter does not obscure the one Foundation, Christ Himself: "In his successors – the bishop of the See of Rome, which was founded by him and consecrated by his blood – he lives, presides, and judges perpetually."[183]

The dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* in its first article speaks about the Church as a Sacrament. As a Sacrament, it is the Church's specific calling to reflect the Light of the world, Christ the Lord, in the world. The Church herself is "the kingdom of Christ now present in mystery,"[184] to which all people without exception are called. The constitution does not give a definition of the Church. It does list various images or metaphors in LG 6, in order to clarify the Church's inner essence. In addition to metaphors such as sheepfold, tillage, and building, this article also mentions the metaphor of "the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride dressed for her husband" (Rv 21:2) and the metaphor of "the spotless spouse of the spotless Lamb" (Rv 19:7; 21:2 and 9; 22:17).[185] In direct reference to the two bride metaphors, the constitution quotes extensively from Ep 5:23-29 to mention the various notions that the bride metaphor expresses, such as Christ's love for his Church, his gift of self to the Church to make her holy, the insoluble union between Christ and the Church, in which Christ "nourishes and cherishes"[186] the Church, and the Church's fidelity, which involves the Church submitting to Christ (cf. LG 6). LG 6 finally also says that the Church here on earth is still journeying to God, and that her life is hidden with Christ in God "until it appears in glory with its Spouse."[187] LG 4, 44, and 65 use the bride metaphor to interpret the union/conformity between Christ and his Church. The rest of the constitution also refers on a few occasions to Christ's love for the Church by using the bride metaphor (cf. LG 7, 38, 41).

We may conclude by way of summary that the dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium*, to understand of the Church as a Sacrament, returned to the

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[182] "Comme chaque évêque est l'époux de son Église particulière, Pierre, évêque de Rome, peut être dit aussi l'Époux de l'Église universelle, qui a tout entière en lui son fondement visible." Ibid., 231-232 (268). Otto Semmelroth also sees Christ the Bridegroom reflected in the bishop. The bishop is united with his diocese as with a bride. The episcopal ring is a reference to this bridal union. Cf. Semmelroth, *Die Kirche als Ursakrament*, 181-182.

[183] "Il vit toujours, préside, juge dans ses successeurs, les évêques du Siège de Rome, fondé par lui et consacré par son sang." De Lubac, *Méditation*, 233 (270).

[184] "Ecclesia, seu regnum Christi iam praesens in mysterio." LG 3.

[185] "Sponsa immaculata Agni immaculati." LG 6.

[186] "Nutrit et fovet." LG 6.

[187] "Donec cum Sponso suo appareat in gloria." LG 6.

concept of μυστήριον/*sacramentum* as it was used at the time of the New Testament and of the Early Church: the Church stands in the wider context of God's universal economy of salvation, and in the Church, God reveals his eternal ordinance "to bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth" (Ep 1:10). The Church is *like* (*veluti*) a sacrament. This cautious formulation prevents us from thinking that there might be an eighth sacrament in addition to the Church's seven sacraments. Just like the seven sacraments, however, the Church is actually a visible sign of invisible grace, or as *Lumen gentium* says, "sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (LG 1). As a "sign and instrument", the Church, in the terminology of modern metaphor theory, is a metaphor. The visible Church in her structures and her historical occurrence (source domain) refers to a hidden reality: the unity between God and humankind, and the mutual unity between all human beings (target domain). This hidden reality has already been realised to a certain extent in time, and yet it still awaits fulfilment at the end of time.

More than a decade after the approval of *Lumen gentium*, Joseph Ratzinger argued in his article *Kirche als Heilssakrament* ('The Church as the Sacrament of Salvation') (1977) that the idea that the Church could be seen as a Sacrament had not become mainstream either in the general ecclesial consciousness or in theology, even though it touched on the Church's core essential destiny.[188] This conclusion seems unjustified when it comes to theology.[189] But it is true that Sacrament has not become "a metaphor we live by" in the consciousness of the faithful. Dulles concluded that the Church as a Sacrament is very technical, difficult to popularise, and therefore not easy to communicate.[190] In the years after the Second Vatican Council, it was primarily the People of God metaphor that was widely

[188] Joseph Ratzinger, "*Kirche als Heilssakrament,*" in *Zeit des Geistes: Zur heilsgeschichtlichen Herkunft der Kirche* (ed. J. Reikerstorfer; Vienna: Wiener Dom Verlag, 1977), 59-70 (consulted in JRGS 8:244-257, at 245-246).

[189] Contemporary comprehensive ecclesiologies continue to give ample attention to the Church as the *Sacrament of salvation*. Cf. for instance Kasper, *Catholic Church*, 61-82; Andrzej A. Napiórkowski, *The Divine-Human Communion: An Outline of Catholic Integral Ecclesiology* (trans. J. Warakomski; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015), 229-239.

[190] Cf. Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 75. Walter Kasper has similarly concluded that the notion of the Church as a Sacrament is difficult to understand for Christians today. Kasper has called it "language of academic theologians" ("theologische Gelehrtensprache"). Cf. Kasper, *Catholic Church*, 78-81. Henk Witte has observed that the model of the Church as Sacrament is unusual for Protestants, and is therefore less fruitful for ecumenical dialogue. Cf. Witte, "Ecclesia, quid dicis," 137.

supported and experienced. But this gradually gave rise to a development that places one-sided emphasis on the Church as a people. It is not the biblical notion of people that has been sufficiently received, but the emphasis has come to rest upon an understanding of people in the modern sociological and political sense.[191] When an Extraordinary Synod was called in 1985 to mark the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Vatican II, a closing document was published that argued that the ecclesiology of κοινωνία, *communio* was "the central and fundamental idea of the Council's documents."[192] The last section of this brief historical survey will look more closely at the metaphor THE CHURCH IS COMMUNIO.

3.2.5. THE CHURCH IS COMMUNIO

When the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops called the *communio* model "the central and fundamental idea of the Council's documents" in 1985, this initially raised a number of questions. Although the notion of *communio* is certainly not absent from the conciliar documents, it hardly played any role at all in the reception of Vatican II during the first twenty years.[193] It was primarily the metaphor of the Church as the People of God that had wide appeal. Yet the *communio* model was not a new invention. It was rediscovered as a model of the Church as a result of *ressourcement* at the beginning of the twentieth century and in the run-up to the Second Vatican Council.

Communio, with its Greek equivalent κοινωνία, is rooted in the New Testament.[194] Κοινωνία, *communion, fellowship*, appears nineteen times in

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[191] Cf. Koch, *Die Kirche Gottes*, 29-30. The final report of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops to mark the twentieth anniversary of Vatican II said the following about this: "We cannot replace a false unilateral vision of the Church as purely hierarchical with a new sociological conception which is also unilateral." 1985 Extraordinary Synod, "The Church, in the Word of God, Celebrates the Mysteries of Christ for the Salvation of The World: The Final Report," n.p. [cited 28 November 2017]. Online: https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/final-report-of-the-1985-extraordinary-synod-2561, II,A,3.

[192] Ibid., II,C,1.

[193] Cf. Adelbert Denaux, "Kerk als gemeenschap: Overwegingen bij het eindrapport van de Buitengewone Bisschoppensynode 1985," *Collationes* 16 (1986): 169-215, at 183.

[194] Κοινωνία occurs only once in LXX, Lv 5:21, and there means a good for which several people together bear responsibility. Other forms of κοινός do occur in the LXX, although not frequently. Thus in Ml 2:14 for spouse: κοινωνός σου καὶ γυνή διαθήκης σου. Friedrich Hauck, "κοινός," in *TWNT* 3:789-810, at 801. The assembly of the Jewish community is usually called συναγωγή or ἐκκλησία in the LXX.

the New Testament.[195] In its secular meaning, κοινωνία meant *to participate in*, *community*, and this primarily in the sense of having a strong bond, an intimate fellowship. The fellowship in question could have any of a wide range of meanings: from participating in the same business, to undertaking something together, to marriage as the full community of life between two persons (κοινωνία παντὸς τοῦ βίου). In the religious field, communion with the deity in question could be realised through ritual meals.[196]

In the Acts of the Apostles, κοινωνία is used to characterise the actually lived fellowship of the faithful as a feature of the first Christian community. The κοινωνία in Ac 2:42 goes hand in hand with the study of the teaching of the apostles, the breaking of bread, and prayer. Ac 4:32 confirms once more that it is referring to mutual unity, both spiritual and material: those who had accepted the faith were καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία, *of one heart and of one soul*, and ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτοῖς πάντα κοινά, *but they had all things common*.[197]

Just as in Acts, Paul uses κοινωνία to denote the mutual unity of the faithful, but Paul's use of κοινωνία is more layered. He uses the profane word κοινωνία in a metaphorical sense to indicate first and foremost communion with Christ. Thus Paul speaks of being called by God εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ Υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν, *into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord* (1 Co 1:9).[198] That his main focus is on communion with Christ becomes clear especially when Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper in 1 Co 10:14-22. Using rhetorical questions, Paul explains that the cup of blessing gives κοινωνία τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *a sharing in the blood of Christ*, and the broken bread κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *a sharing in the body of Christ* (1 Co 10:16). The communion with Christ comprises a sacramental union with the crucified

[195] The Nova Vulgata translates κοινωνία on twelve occasions as *communio* (1 Co 1:9; 2 Co 9:13; Ga 2:9; Ph 1:5; 2:1; 3:10; Phm 1:6; Heb 13:16; 1 Jn 1:3.6.7), six times as *communicatio* (Ac 2:42; Rm 15:26; 1 Co 10:16; 2 Co 8:4; 13:14) and once as *societas* (2 Co 6:14).

[196] Cf. for the whole of this paragraph: Hauck, "κοινός," 790, 798-801.

[197] Cf. Michael McDermott, "The Biblical Doctrine of KOINΩNIA," in *BZ* 19 (1975): 64-77, 219-233, at 231.

[198] Several translations, including the King James Version, have chosen the subjective genitive, *unto the fellowship of his Son*, but most translators have preferred the objective genitive. Cf. also Bart Koet, who has demonstrated that κοινωνία here stands in the context of καλέω, *to call*: God calls the disciples to communion with his Son Jesus, and the community in its turn responds to this call by calling on God (1 Co 1:2), but also by remaining faithful to the mutual unity and by avoiding schism (1 Co 1:10). Cf. Bart Koet, "'Roepen' als sleutel tot de dynamiek van de *communio* volgens Paulus," *Communio* 37 (2012): 413-425, at 422-423.

and risen Lord, and implies salvation.[199] Moreover, this union realises mutual unity: ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἓν σῶμα, οἱ πολλοί ἐσμεν; οἱ γὰρ πάντες, ἐκ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἄρτου, μετέχομεν, *and as there is one loaf, so we, although there are many of us, are one single body, for we all share in the one loaf* (1 Co 10:17). Paul incidentally does not use the word κοινωνία here, but the image of the one body.[200]

Taking part in the communion with Christ also gives the faithful a share in the various aspects of Christ's life. Thus Paul speaks in the letter to the Philippians about κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, *partnership in the gospel* (Ph 1:5), κοινωνία Πνεύματος, *fellowship in the Spirit* (Ph 2:1) and κοινωνία τῶν παθημάτων, *partaking of the sufferings* (Ph 3:10). These partial aspects reveal the dynamic and therefore also eschatological aspect of κοινωνία. Let us take κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον *partnership in the gospel* (Ph 1:5) as an example. On the one hand, partaking of the Gospel presupposes a receptive attitude. The group of people who have accepted the Gospel could be characterised in this case as the community of the Gospel. But there is more to it than receiving alone. Partaking of the Gospel also means partaking of the life and proclamation of the Gospel.[201] This is confirmed in Ph 1:7 where Paul addresses the Philippians as having a share (συγκοινωνός) ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, *in the defence and confirmation of*

[199] Cf. Klauck, *Erster Korintherbrief* (NEB; 2nd ed.; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1987), 73.

[200] Various scholars have given different interpretations of Paul's comparison with the sacrifices in Judaism (1 Co 10:18). Friedrich Hauck regards θυσιαστήριον in the phrase κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, *sharers in the altar*, as a code word for God: "The altar represents and safeguards the presence of God" ("Der Altar stellt der Gegenwart Gottes dar und verbürgt sie.") Hauck, "κοινός," 805. Earlier in the same article, he contends: "There is no doubt that ancient Israel widely conceived sacrifice or the sacrificial meal as sacred communion between God and man" ("Denn es ist ja kein Zweifel dass das alte Israel das Opfer bzw. die Opfermahlzeit weithin als sakrale Gemeinschaft zwischen Gott und Mensch gedacht hat.") Hauck, "κοινός," 802. However, Michael McDermott has contended that there is an unbridgeable gap between God and his people throughout the entire Old Testament, unlike in the surrounding religions where participation in sacred meals led to communion with the deity in question. "The sacrificial meal binding Israel to God, described in Deut 12 and Ex 24, never considered establishing a community between Israel and YHWH. … As most a legal bond, the covenant, is what established the relationship." McDermott, "The Biblical Doctrine of ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ," 66.

[201] The construction of κοινωνία with εἰς makes this clear. Similarly, Paul's other statements about κοινωνία in combination with εἰς (Rm 15:26; 2 Co 8:4; 9:13) all refer to actual help given to others.

the gospel.[202] Communion with Christ is a lived reality in the present, which is open to full fulfilment in the future.[203]

By contrast with Paul, the first letter of John speaks very directly of the κοινωνία ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς, *our fellowship with the Father* (1 Jn 1:3). It is the only place in the New Testament that mentions fellowship with the Father. Very succinctly, 1 Jn 1:3 links the mutual fellowship of the faithful and the fellowship with the Father and the Son. "This verse could serve as a just conclusion to what Paul and Acts offer. The vertical and horizontal dimensions meet in the person of the Son; any move in any direction will have to focus on Him as the central point."[204]

In the Early Church, *koinonia/communio* is primarily a lived reality that is strongly linked to the Eucharist.[205] For Augustine (354-430), *communio* can be the Church,[206] and for many Church Fathers, the *communio sanctorum* usually means the visible Church.[207] Although the word *communio* initially meant attitude and behaviour, it soon became a term to describe the bond of unity between the Christian communities. This unity was realised and experienced in the communal celebration of the Eucharist. Christians who went on a journey would receive a letter from their bishop, a

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[202] Cf. McDermott, "The Biblical Doctrine of ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ," 226.

[203] Cf. ibid., 65.

[204] Georg Panikulam, *Koinonia in the New Testament: A Dynamic Expression of Christian Life* (AnBib 85; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 6.

[205] This passage on communion in the Early Church is largely based on Jérôme Hamer, *L'Église est une communion* (UnSa 40; Paris 1962), 197-183.

[206] Jérôme Hamer has referred in this context to two works by Augustine: *De unitate Ecclesiae contra Donatistas*, 20,56 and *Ad Cresconium grammaticum,* book III, 35,39. Cf. ibid., 179, footnote 2.

[207] From the fourth century onwards, the *communio sanctorum* also appeared in various symbols of the faith in the West. Cf. for instance the creed of Bishop Nicetas of Remesiana (+414), cf. DH 19; an old Gallican creed, cf. DH 26; and in the Apostles' Creed that is still used in the liturgy today, and whose temporal and geographical origins are no longer very clear, but which must be dated to the first centuries. The meaning of *sanctorum* can refer both to persons and to holy things. In the former case, it means the other Christians who can be called holy through the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism, although probably this initially included only the martyrs and the saints. In the latter case, *sanctorum* refers primarily to the sacraments and specifically to the Eucharist. In the West, the emphasis gradually came to lie on the community, and in the East on the Eucharist. The precise origins and meaning of *communio sanctorum* cannot be uncovered anymore. Cf. for an overview of the possible interpretations, with many references to both Western and Eastern Church Fathers: Werner Elert, *Abendmahl und Kirchengemenschaft in der alten Kirche hauptsächlich des Ostens* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1954), 10-16, 170-181.

so-called *litterae communicatoriae, letter of communion*.[208] Every bishop, or at least every Church, had a list of Churches with which *communio* was maintained. The letter functioned as a kind of passport. If both communities maintained *communio* with each other, the traveller was received hospitably in the community and was permitted to participate in the Eucharist.[209]

The Church of Rome occupied a very special position in the Early Church as regards *communio*. It topped the list of Churches and did not have to prove its position as such. In a letter to the Emperors Gratian and Valentinian, Ambrose (340-397) warned against harming the Church of Rome, because the Church of Rome stands at the head of all Churches in the world: "The Roman Church, head of the whole Roman world, (…) whence flow all the rights of venerable communion."[210]

In sum, we can say in relation to *communio* in the Ancient Church that there was not yet any considered ecclesiology of *communio*, but that the *communio* between the Churches was a lived exchange of fraternity. It was established by the bishops and realised in the celebration of the Eucharist, with a particular place for the Church of Rome. "At the forefront of the notion of communion, we find the sacramental aspect. Excommunication excludes from participation in the Eucharist."[211]

The beginning of the twentieth century saw a renewed interest in the Church as *Communio*. For Catholic ecclesiology, the start of this new interest reached back to the nineteenth-century theologians of the Tübingen School, especially to Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838).[212] In the section on

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[208] Other names are *litterae commendatitiae* and *litterae pacis*. Cf. Hamer, *L'Église*, 180.

[209] A breach in mutual relations had significant consequences for the *communio*, and therefore also for participation in the Eucharist. This was true both for relations between the communities, and for relations within the community. Sinners who were excommunicated were excluded from participation in the Eucharist. This did not necessarily mean, however, that they were also excluded from the prayer life of the community. Cf. ibid., 181.

[210] "Totius orbis Romani caput Romanam Ecclesiam … inde enim in omnes venerandae communionis jura dimanant." Ambrose, *Epist*., 11,4. English translation: Saint Ambrose, *Letters* (FaCh 26; trans. Mary Melchior Beyenka; Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1954), 215.

[211] "Au premier plan de la notion de communion nous découvrons l'élément sacramental. L'excommunication exclut de la participation à l'eucharistie." Hamer, *L'Église*, 182.

[212] A renewed interest in the concept of *koinonia/communio* can also be observed in the ecumenical movement and the Orthodox Church from the beginning of the twentieth century. The concept of *communio* is useful within the ecumenical movement in relation to issues such as unity and diversity. For a brief overview of developments within the ecumenical movement, see: Brian Flanagan, *Communion, Diversity, and Salvation: The*

the Church as the mystical Body of Christ we have already observed that Möhler's study of the Church Fathers led him to reject an all too institutional and all too juridical approach to the Church, and to see the Church instead as a living organism. Although he does not speak anywhere of the Church as *Communio*, his work contained the building blocks for a *communio* ecclesiology, and it greatly influenced theologians like Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner, and Walter Kasper.[213] We will refer to Dennis Doyle's description to give a characterisation of *communio* ecclesiology: "To say that the Church is a 'communion' is to emphasize that, although certain of its institutional structures remain essential, it finds its ultimate basis in relationships among human beings with God through Christ and in the Holy Spirit."[214]

Let us look now at the work of Yves Congar (1904-1995) as an example. His first programmatic work on the Church, *Chrétiens désunis: Principes d'un 'oecuménisme' catholique* ('Divided Christendom'), appeared in 1937.[215] As the title indicates, this work was about the unity of the Church and ecumenism. Congar broke with the juridical and institutional approach to the Church that was the norm at his time, and took a theological view. The Church is the product of the *communio* of the Triune God and receives her life from this. This means the Church is first and foremost *Ecclesia de Trinitate*:

> The oneness of the Church is a communication and extension of the oneness of God Himself. (…) The Church is not merely *a* Society, men

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Contribution of Jean-Marie Tillard to Systematic Ecclesiologie (London: Hart Publishing, 2011), 27-32. In the Orthodox Church, the concept of *koinonia/communio* was developed further in relation to the Eucharist and the Trinity. For an important Orthodox work on *communio*, see: *John D. Zizioulas*, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985). We will limit ourself in this study to developments within the Roman Catholic Church.

[213] Cf. Dennis Doyle, "Möhler, Schleiermacher, and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology," in *TS* 57 (1996): 467-480, at 468.

[214] Dennis Doyle, "Henri de Lubac and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology," in *TS* 60 (1999): 209-227, at 211.

[215] Yves Congar, *Chrétiens désunis: Principes d'un 'oecuménisme' catholique* (UnSa 1; Paris: Cerf, 1937). English edition: *Divided Christendom, A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion* (trans. M. A. Bousfield; London: G. Bles, 1939). References to this work will be to the French original, with the page numbers of the English edition between brackets.

> associated with God, but the divine *Societas* itself, the life of the Godhead reaching out to humanity and taking up humanity into itself.[216]

This participation in life with God occurs uniquely through and in Christ.[217] For Congar, this means the Church is also *Ecclesia in Christo*, in which men and women take part by receiving the sacraments.[218] This Ecclesia Trinitate and Ecclesia in Christo is, finally, also *Ecclesia ex hominibus*. Congar refers here to the principle of the Incarnation. Through the Incarnation, the invisible God has assumed a human form, without giving up the fullness of his divinity.[219] The Incarnation of God was not a one-off event, but it reveals the logic and structure of the order of salvation: God comes to us in human form. "Thus the Church on earth follows this law of incarnation, human and corporeal from one and to the other, and divine from one end to the other, theandric, as is Christ."[220] By taking this approach to speaking about the Church, Congar gives primacy to the divine life. He does not downplay the importance of the earthly Church with her visible structures; quite the contrary, but he does transcend the one-sided perspective on the Church as an institution and a juridical organisation that was customary at his time.[221]

Congar's second important ecclesiological contribution was published in 1950, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église* ('True and False Reform in the Church').[222] In the first part of this study, Congar offered a meditation on the Church. He began by pointing to the divine dimension of the Church,[223] then to its earthly appearance as the *congregatio fidelium*,[224] and the hierarchy of the Church,[225] before joining these three dimensions of the Church together

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[216] "L'unité de l'Église est une communication et une extension de l'unité même de Dieu. … Non pas proprement une société des hommes avec Dieu; mais la société divine elle-même, la vie de famille *de Dieu* étendues à l'humanité, assumant l'humanité en soi." Ibid., 59-60 (48-49). Congar's italics.
[217] Cf. ibid., 74 (61).
[218] Cf. ibid., 73-78 (60-63).
[219] Cf. also Council of Chalcedon: DH 301.
[220] "Aussi l'Église (de la terre) suit-elle toute entière cette logique de l'Incarnation: sensible et humaine d'un bout à l'autre, et divine d'un bout à l'autre, théandrique comme le Christ." Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 86 (69).
[221] Cf. also Cees van Vliet, *Communio sacramentalis: Das Kirchenverständnis von Yves Congar* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1995), 68-70.
[222] Yves Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église* (UnSa 20; Paris 1950). English edition: *True and False Reform in the Church* (trans. P. Philibert; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2011). References to this work will be to the French original, with the page numbers of the English edition between brackets.
[223] Cf. ibid., 103-107 (92-95).
[224] Cf. ibid., 106-114 (95-101).
[225] Cf. ibid., 114-127 (101-111).

in a fourth and final part, where he speaks of the Church in its totality, as a simultaneously divine and human reality.[226] Congar defined the Church in this part as "the human community to which the divine energies communicated by Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son, are entrusted, and in which they become active so as to bring human beings together in communion with the life of the Father."[227] This definition clearly brings together the two aspects that are characteristic of any ecclesiology of *communio*, the joining together of the divine and the human, of inner life (*la vie*) and external structure (*la structure*), of community and institution.[228]

1953 saw the publication of Congar's third programmatic work on the Church, *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat* ('Lay People in the Church').[229] This book was the last great work on the Church before the beginning of the Second Vatican Council. As the title indicates, its focus was on the lay faithful. His many contacts with priests, religious, and also with lay believers caused Congar to be greatly concerned about the place and mission of the laity in the Church. In relation to the position of laypeople, Congar stated at the very start of this book that his intention was to come to a comprehensive ecclesiology, in which the mystery of the Church is described in all its dimensions, "including fully the ecclesial reality of laity."[230] Congar called this a "total ecclesiology."[231] He then repeated and

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[226] Cf. ibid., 127-230 (111-114).

[227] "L'Église est la communauté des hommes dans laquelle reposent et agissent les énergies divines communiquées par Jésus-Christ, le Fils incarné, en vue de faire communier ces hommes tous ensemble à la vie du Père." Ibid., 127 (112).

[228] The dual concepts of *la vie* and *la structure* play an important role in Congar's work. For an extensive reflection on these dual concepts, see: Van Vliet, *Communio sacramentalis*, 110-117. In this context, Congar also used a different set of dual concepts that he found in the work of the German philosopher and theologian Arnold Rademacher (1873-1939): *Gemeinschaft* ('community') and *Gesellschaft* ('society'). *Gemeinschaft* describes the spiritual life of the community, the community as an organism, whereas *Gesellschaft* denotes the visible communion between the individuals. Both concepts refer to a certain dimension of the Church, but they cannot be seen separately from each other. Cf. Rose Beal, *Mystery of the Church, People of God: Yves Congar's Total Ecclesiology as a Path to Vatican II* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 35-36.

[229] Yves Congar, *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat* (UnSa 23; Paris: Cerf, 1953). English edition: *Lay People in the Church* (trans. D. Attwater; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985). References to this work will be to the French original, with the page numbers of the English edition between brackets.

[230] "Jusqu'à inclure pleinement la réalité ecclésiale du laïcat." Ibid., 13 (xvi).

[231] "Une ecclésiologie totale." Ibid., 13: (xvi). Congar contrasts total ecclesiology with what he calls *hierarchology*: "Le *De Ecclesia* fut principalement, parfois presque exclusivement, une défense et une affirmation de la réalité de l'Église comme appareil

further elaborated what he had written before: that the Church is an amalgam of community and institution; the Church "is both communion with God in Christ *and* the means for attaining this fellowship."[232]

An important point for Congar is that the building up of the Church is not just a concern of the hierarchy, but also of the laity. Each group builds up the church in its own inalienable way. The hierarchy of the Church, through the work of its ministers, mediates Christ's grace and forms the faithful through its teaching.[233] The faithful, in their turn, are initially receivers of grace, but once they have been incorporated into the Body of Christ, they also cooperate in God's plan to ultimately bring everything under one head (cf. Ep 1:10): "it is in and through the life of the faithful (and of the clergy as members of the faithful) that Christ's saving powers are made manifest within the dimensions of history and of the world."[234] Congar then elaborates on the contribution of the faithful according to the three offices of Christ: that of priest, king, and prophet. At the end of this work he offers a summarising vision in which he describes the Church as *Communio*, as nothing other than a communication and an extension of the unity of God Himself:

> As in the whole of creation, so in the Church, God goes from the singular to the singular through the multiple; he distributes his grace by communicating it to many individuals and he brings the many to unity in communion, in a kind of concelebration of the mystery of the same life. In so doing, God is only reflecting his own mystery in the Church, for

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de méditation hiérarchique, des pouvoirs et de la primauté du Siège romain, bref une 'hiérarchiologie.'" ("The *de Ecclesia* was principally, sometimes almost exclusively, a defence and affirmation of the reality of the Church as machinery of hierarchical mediation, of the powers and primacy of the Roman See, in a word, a 'hierarchology'") Ibid., 68 (45). For Congar, *hierarchology* is an ecclesiology that unduly emphasises the structure of the Church. Congar has shown that this one-sided approach is a response to tendencies within and outside the Church that questioned the hierarchical structure of the Church. Cf. ibid., 64-71 (42-47).

[232] "Est à la fois communion avec Dieu dans le Christ *et* moyen de procurer cette communion." Ibid., 148 (110). Congar's italics. Congar developed this idea in many of his early works. For an extensive description of this development, see: Beal, *Mystery of the Church*, 16-43.

[233] Cf. Congar, *Jalons*, 148-154 (110-115).

[234] "C'est dans et par la vie des fidèles (des prêtres aussi en tant qu'ils sont des fidèles) que les énergies salutaires du Christ se déploient à la dimension de l'Histoire et du Monde." Ibid., 155 (116).

> everything in him is proceeding from one Principle, a communication to several, and a perfect communion in unity. *O beata Trinitas!*[235]

Congar had already offered a solid foundation for the concept of the Church as *Communio* in his earliest works, but a further development of this concept can be discerned in his later works. This involved a shift from a more theological-Christological view of the Church to a more Christological-pneumatological one. Jesus is the founder of the Church, who lives and works in her, but the Holy Spirit animates the Church:

> The Church, then, is historical and visible and its 'founder' is Jesus, who is always living and active in it and is its lasting foundation. The Spirit gives life to the Church and enables it to grow as the Body of Christ. Both in its life and in its origin, the Church is the fruit of the two 'divine missions.'[236]

The Holy Spirit bestows his gifts upon the individual believer, and simultaneously brings the community together into unity, sanctifying her, and making her Catholic and apostolic.[237]

We may conclude that the notion of *communio* is strongly present in Congar's work. Starting from the Triune God, who is Himself *communio*, Congar then describes how men and women can participate in this

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[235] "Dans l'Église comme dans le plan total de sa création, Dieu va de l'un à l'un par le multiple; il se communique en beaucoup pour y déployer sa grâce et il ramène le nombre à l'unité dans la communion, dans une espèce de concélébration du mystère de la même vie. En quoi Dieu ne fait que refléter dans l'Église son propre secret puisqu'en lui tout est procession à partir d'un seul Principe, communication à plusieurs et parfaite communion dans l'unité. *O beata Trinitas!*" Ibid., 643 (456). Congar's italics. Translation slightly adapted.

[236] "Il s'agit bien de l'Église historique et visible, celle dont Jésus est le 'fondeur' (mais, toujours vivant et actif, il en est le fondement permanent). L'Esprit lui donne vie et la fait croître en tant même qu'elle est Corps *du Christ*. L'Église, en sa vie même en sa source, est le fruit de deux 'missions divines.'" Yves Congar, *Je crois en l'Esprit Saint II: Il est Seigneur et Il donne la vie* (Paris: Cerf, 1979) 16. English edition: *I believe in the Holy Spirit II: He is Lord and Giver of Live* (trans. D. Smith; New York: Crossroad Herder, 2016), 7. References to this work will be to the French original, with the page numbers of the English edition between brackets.

[237] Cf. Ibid., 25-87 (15-64), where Congar develops the four *notae Ecclesiae* and the role of the Holy Spirit, and cf. ibid., 91-183 (67-141), where Congar develops the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of each believer personally. Cf. for a brief overview of the development in Congar's thought in his last period: Cees van Vliet, "Sentire cum Ecclesia: Krachtlijnen in de theologie en de spiritualiteit van Yves Congar," *Communio* 30 (2005): 145-160, at 148-152.

communio through the work of Christ, becoming a *communio cum Deo in Christo* and a *communio fidelium*. The community is a spiritual reality and can as such be called a *communio spiritualis*, but it is also visible and has a certain order, so that it is also a *communio structurata*. Cees van Vliet has characterised Congar's concept, the model of his ecclesiology as a *communio sacramentalis*.[238]

The word *communio* appears regularly in the documents of the Second Vatican Council,[239] but unlike for instance the People of God, which has its own chapter in *Lumen gentium*, it was not regarded as a key concept for understanding the council's view of the Church. *Communio* only became a key concept when it was identified as such in the final report of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops of 1985. From that moment on, the Church as *Communio* came to occupy centre stage both in the pronouncements of the magisterium and in theological contributions.[240]

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[238] Cf. van Vliet, *Communio sacramentalis*, 240-244 and 275-281. Van Vliet has observed that Congar nowhere actually mentions the characterisation *communio sacramentalis* himself. There are other dimensions that can be distinguished. Thus Van Vliet has mentioned *communio ecclesiarium* and the *communio cum Deo in statu vitae*. These do not, however, require further attention for the purposes of our own study.

[239] Approximately 80 times in total. If we limit ourselves to the dogmatic constitution on the Church, including the *Nota explicativa praevia,* the word *communio* appears thirty-three times: it is used in a neutral sense for the communion of the faithful (e.g. LG 13, 14, 15); on a few occasions it refers to fraternal communion, for instance between priests (LG 28) or deacons (LG 29); there is the *communio hierarchica/apostolica* (LG 8, 21, 22, 24), which the *Nota explicativa praevia* addresses at length; once it refers to Holy Communion (LG 11); it is used for communion with the dead (LG 50), and for the communion of saints (LG 51). LG 7 uses *communio* as it is understood within the ecclesiology of *communio*: "In fractione panis eucharistici de Corpore Domini realiter participantes, ad communionem cum Eo ac inter nos elevamur." The formula "A Christo in communionem vitae, caritatis et veritatis constitutus" (LG 9) also reflects the substance of *communio* ecclesiology.

[240] In the years before the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, the *communio* metaphor gained wide popularity. In the German- and French-speaking world, the foundation of the *International Catholic Journal Communio* marks this trend in particular. The instigator of this journal was Hans Urs von Balthasar, who eventually shaped the new initiative together with Henri de Lubac, Louis Bouyer, Jorge Medina and Marie-Joseph Le Guillou. In a speech to the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the journal Communio on 28 May 1992, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger described the origins of the journal. The founders wanted not just to publish a journal, but also wanted it to become an international communio, and continuously to grow into a communio. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, "Communio – ein Programm," pages1-9 [cited 17 January 2018]. Online: http://www.communio.de/pdf/-ueber_communio/ratzinger.pdf.

The final report of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops called the ecclesiology of *communio* "the central and fundamental idea of the Council's documents."[241] The final report begins by emphasising that the Church is a mystery. It mentions a number of images for the Church, including the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Bride of Christ, adding that these descriptions of the Church are complementary.[242] *Communio* is described as "Fundamentally it is a matter of communion with God through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. This communion is in the Word of God and in the sacraments."[243] The sacrament of baptism gives access to the community, and the sacrament of the Eucharist "signifies and produces, that is, builds up, the intimate communion of all the faithful in the Body of Christ which is the Church (1 Co 10:16)."[244] This description of *communio* can also be found in the first chapter of *Lumen gentium* (LG 2-4) and is succinctly and tersely summarised in a quotation by Cyprian: the Church is "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."[245] This vertical dimension of *communio* is continuously realised in the sacrament of the Eucharist, and it is constitutive of the ecclesial *communio*, the horizontal dimension of *communio*: "Really partaking of the body of the Lord in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with Him and with one another."[246] The metaphor of *communio* thus encompasses both the visible and the invisible Church at the same time.

The remainder of the report discusses subjects that can be further developed using the metaphor of *communio*, for instance unity and

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[241] 1985 Extraordinary Synod, "The Church," II,C,1. The texts on the magisterium refer to the ecclesiology of *communio* and to *communio* as a concept, but nowhere is *communio* discussed as a metaphor. Incidentally, *communio* was already a key term in the documents of the Special Synod of the Bishops of the Netherlands in 1980. Cardinal Danneels was the relator of this Special Synod, and was at the time a close collaborator of Kasper's. Cf. Jürgen Mettepenningen and Karim Schelkens, *Godfried Danneels: Biografie* (Kalmthout: Polis, 2015), 223-232. As I regard *communio* as a metaphor, I will henceforth speak about the metaphor of *communio*.

[242] This corresponds with modern metaphor theory which posits that every metaphor is partial, and that no metaphor must be absolutized.

[243] Ibid., II,C,1.

[244] Ibid., II,C,1.

[245] "De unitate Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti plebs adunata." Cyprian, *De Oratione Dominica* 23. Quoted from LG 4.

[246] "In fractione panis eucharistici de Corpore Domini realiter participantes, ad communionem cum Eo ac inter nos elevamur." LG 7. Cf. for a more extensive description of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of *communio*: Denaux, "Kerk als gemeenschap," 189-196.

plurality,[247] the relations with the Eastern Churches, collegiality between the bishops, episcopal conferences as concrete application of the spirit of collegiality, participation and co-responsibility at all levels,[248] and finally ecumenism.[249] What is striking about this list is that these developments of *communio* all refer to the visible side of the Church, whereas the same report criticises the reception of the Second Vatican Council in the following terms: "Have we not perhaps favoured this opinion [the Church as a pure institution] in them [the young] by speaking too much of the renewal of the Church's external structures and too little of God and of Christ?"[250]

As has been seen, a great number of publications about the Church as *Communio* followed this synod of bishops.[251] We will conclude this section by looking at a contribution by Dennis Doyle: *Communio Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (2001).[252] As the title indicates, Doyle has brought

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[247] Cf. 1985 Extraordinary Synod, "The Church," II,C,2. The issue in question is that of the relationship between the one and universal Church and the particular Churches. It must be noted that plurality is not the same thing as pluralism.

[248] Cf. ibid., II,C,3-6. As the Church is *Communio*, there must be collaboration between bishops, priests, deacons, and lay Christians, and between the various groups among themselves. Women, young people, and new Catholic movements are mentioned as separate groups.

[249] Cf. ibid., II,C,7. Cf. for an extensive reflection on these issues in the light of the *communio* model: Denaux, "Kerk als gemeenschap," 196-214.

[250] 1985 Extraordinary Synod, "The Church," I,4.

[251] An important theological work on *Communio* from this period is: Jean-Marie Roger Tillard, *Église d'Églises*: *L'ecclésiologie de communion* (Paris: Cerf, 1987). English edition: *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion* (trans. R.C. De Peaux; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992). An important work by the magisterium is a letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: "Litterae ad Catholicae Ecclesiae episcopos de aliquibus aspectibus Ecclesiae prout est communio – Communionis notio," *AAS* 85 (1993): 838-850. Henceforth CN with article number used in the English translation. The English translation used is the Holy See's official translation, published on the website of the Holy See. In line with the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops' final report, this document confirms that *communio* is a key concept, "which provides ample latitude for theological reflection on the mystery of the Church" (CN 1). As not all ecclesiological approaches were equally cognizant of the fact that the Church must be understood as a "mystery of communion" (CN1), the letter's purpose was "to recall briefly and to clarify, where necessary, some of the fundamental elements that are to be considered already settled" (CN 2). This explanation itself already shows that *Communionis notio* did not intend to present a finished ecclesiology of *communio*, but rather wanted to set a number of goalposts within which Catholic theology would have to operate. This is followed by a description of the layered nature of the Church as *Communio*.

[252] Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (New York: Orbis Book, 2001).

together a number of versions of *communio* ecclesiology, and has also defined a number of criteria which a theology must meet in order to qualify as *communio* ecclesiology; criteria based on the documents of the Second Vatican Council. It is mainly this vision that makes Doyle's work important for the current study.

In the first chapter of *Communio Ecclesiology*, Doyle articulates the main theme of *communio* ecclesiology: "it focuses on relationship."[253] He immediately adds that it can cover a very wide range:

> Whether among the persons of the Trinity, among human beings and God, among the members of the Communion of Saints, among members of the parish, or among the bishops dispersed throughout the world. It emphasizes the dynamic interplay between the Church universal and the local churches.[254]

All in all, it deals with "a web of interwoven relationships."[255] Doyle calls the relational aspect of the Church the heart of the Church, as "love, acceptance, forgiveness, commitment, and intimacy constitute the Church's very fabric."[256] Doyle does not give any justification for his choice of precisely these notions as constitutive of the Church's fabric, other than to mention that the Church shares in the life of the Triune God. In the second part of this chapter we will see that it is precisely the bride metaphor that places these aspects of the Church in the limelight.

At the end of his work, Doyle reflects further on five relationships, or as he calls them, dimensions, that any *communio* ecclesiology must contain if it wishes to be an ecclesiology that is in conformity with the documents of Vatican II: the *divine, mystical, sacramental, historical*, and *social dimensions*. The divine dimension keeps the focus fixed on the fact that the Church is first and foremost *communio* with the Triune God. The mystical dimension does the same for the realisation that the Church is not a normal community, but one that transcends time and place. The sacramental dimension concentrates on the life of the community itself, with the members and their communities united with each other in the sacrament of the Eucharist, and the bishops as symbols of the mutual unity. The historical dimension focuses on the Church's aspect of a pilgrim, her growth in charity, but also her sinfulness and the fact that she is still journeying towards fullness in the Kingdom of God. And the social dimension, finally,

[253] Ibid., 12.
[254] Ibid., 12.
[255] Ibid., 13.
[256] Ibid., 13.

concentrates on the missionary aspect of the Church, her solidarity ultimately with all peoples across the whole world.[257]

Certain dimensions may be stressed unduly, and Doyle thinks this is detrimental to other dimensions, as it distorts the essence of the Church; Doyle has called these *reductive distortions*.[258] He has identified five in particular: *individualism, the mere human, juridicism, mystification, and exclusivism*. Any undue emphasis on any of these dimensions can be corrected by confronting them with contrasting images: individualism by the image of the Trinity; the mere human by the image of the Body of Christ and Communion of saints; juridicism by the image of the Communion of communions; mystification by the image of the People of God and the Pilgrim Church; and, finally, exclusivism by the image of Leaven in the world. Doyle has linked these images in their turn with the five dimensions: the divine to the Trinity; the mystical to the Body of Christ / Communion of Saints; the sacramental to Communion of communions; the historical to the People of God / Pilgrim Church; and the social to Leaven in the World.[259]

Doyle has rejected the idea that his proposals for a *communio* ecclesiology could be called a model according to Dulles' example. At a symposium on his book, Doyle explained his view on the difference between models and dimensions: "Models name positions which may be complementary but which are still distinct. Dimensions label elements that all models and methods should take into account."[260] In his book, he says the following about *communio* ecclesiology itself: "Communio ecclesiology is a content and a process, a vision and a summons to higher ground."[261] We will not attempt to answer the question here whether this description of *communio* ecclesiology does not after all tend to a kind of overall model. As far as the difference between models and dimensions is concerned, it must be noted that Dulles in his *Models of the Church* clearly indicates that although the various models he discusses might conflict with each other in certain respects, so that they are distinct, they must ultimately all be seen in conjunction with each other, which means that they are complementary: "taken in isolation, each of the ecclesiological types could lead to serious

[257] Cf. ibid., 175-178.
[258] Cf. ibid., 14. As we have seen in the first chapter of this study, Vincent Brümmer has spoken of conceptual blindness: a certain concept is turned into an absolute, obscuring other aspects of the same reality. Cf. Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 8-9.
[259] Cf. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 14-17.
[260] Dennis M. Doyle, "Review Symposium: Author's Response," in: *Horizons* 29 (2002): 337-343, at 341.
[261] Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 9.

imbalance and distortions."[262] Finally, we must observe that Doyle does not mention the bride metaphor explicitly in his *communio* ecclesiology.

In conclusion we can say that the Church as *Communio* has become the predominant and comprehensive model of the Church in Catholic ecclesiology certainly since 1985. This model foregrounds the relational character of the Church in all its aspects. "It has great spiritual wealth, because it harmoniously joins the sacramental dimension and the mystical dimension (communion with God) with ecclesiology."[263] One disadvantage of speaking about the Church as *Communio* is that it is gradually becoming an umbrella concept. Doyle's book *Communio Ecclesiology*, in which he brings together all important theologians from Johann Adam Möhler up to and including Hans Küng and Leonardo Boff under the umbrella of *communio* ecclesiology, is one indication of this. Or, as Susan Wood has formulated: "Communio ecclesiology has been accused of being so loose a term that it can mean anything and everything and thus be useless."[264]

Communio is such an essential characteristic of the Church that it is bound to feature in any discourse on the Church. At the same time, it is clear that current ecclesiology is also looking for new images. On the basis of the documents of Vatican II, the missionary character of the Church is currently receiving a lot of attention.[265] Pope Francis in particular has warned against a Church that is closed in on itself.[266] By way of contrast, he has used

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[262] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 194.

[263] "Het bezit een grote spirituele rijkdom doordat het de sacramentele dimensie en de mystieke dimensie (gemeenschap met God) harmonisch verbindt met de ecclesiologie." Denaux, "Kerk als gemeenschap," 214.

[264] Susan Wood, "Review Symposium: Four Perspectives I," *Hor* 29 (2002): 326-329, at 329.

[265] Pope John Paul II was the first to explicitly address the New Evangelisation, although its roots can be found in Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975). It is similarly an important issue for Pope Benedict XVI, who established the *Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation* in 2010, and who convoked a Synod of Bishops in 2012 to consider the theme of New Evangelisation. For a very brief overview, see: Stephen Bevans, "Beyond the New Evangelization: Toward a Missionary Ecclesiology for the Twenty-First Century," in *A Church with Open Doors: Catholic Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium* (ed. Richard R. Gaillardetz and Edward P. Hahnenberg; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2015), 3-22, at 5-8.

[266] "A Church that is closed in on herself and in the past, a Church that only sees the little rules of behaviour, of attitude, is a Church that betrays her own identity; a closed Church betrays her own identity!" Pope Francis: "General audience: Wednesday, 16 October 2013," n.p. [cited 22 January 2018]. Online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/-francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20131016_udienza-generale.html.

metaphors like that of a "*hospitable home* with its doors open."[267] And we have already mentioned the metaphor of the field hospital at the beginning of this chapter. After an analysis of *communio* ecclesiology, Edward Hahnenberg has concluded in the light of important contemporary issues such as religious pluralism, inculturation, and structures of collegiality, that the *communio* model must be supplemented by other models. He has pointed in particular to *missio* and the image of *baptism*.[268]

3.2.6. Summary

At the end of this brief historical overview of the various metaphors that have been used in Catholic ecclesiology since the beginning of the twentieth century, we may conclude that these various metaphors each shed light on one particular aspect of reality, often in response to certain developments in the Church, society, or scholarship.

If we look at the five metaphors again and try to summarise them, somewhat one-dimensionally, by identifying their defining characteristic, this produces the following summary: in the metaphor of the *Societas perfecta*, the emphasis is on the institutional, juridical, and visible side of the Church; the metaphor of the Mystical Body of Christ stresses that the Church is more than simply a visible organisation, but is a community founded by Christ, of which He Himself is the head, which He guides in a hidden way, and through which He continues his redemptive work in time; the metaphor of the People of God focuses on the Church's context in salvation history, that she is a community of equals, chosen by God and belonging to God, in continuity with the Jewish people, but made into a new Covenant through Christ's work of redemption, journeying through the ages on a pilgrimage towards its eschatological fulfilment; the Sacrament metaphor foregrounds the character of the Church as sign and instrument in this world, as well as the fact that the Church in its visible and historical reality is the bearer of an invisible reality; and the metaphor of *Communio*, finally, stresses the relational aspect of the Church in all her dimensions.

In addition to the great metaphors discussed here, new metaphors are constantly invented to speak about the Church. We have already briefly mentioned the Church as a *Field Hospital*, and that of a *Hospitable Home with its Doors Open*. New metaphors will continue to be proposed in accordance with the changing times. In the last part of this chapter we will

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[267] Pope Francis, "General audience: Wednesday, 9 September 2015," n.p. [cited 22 January 2018]. Online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/-documents/papa-francesco_20150909_udienza-generale.html. Francis' italics.
[268] Cf. Hahnenberg, "The Mystical Body of Christ," 27-30.

look at the possible contribution that the bride metaphor, which is rooted in Scripture and which has been used before to speak about the Church, could make to contemporary understanding of and discourse about the Church.

3.3 THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST in the Early Church and in contemporary ecclesiology

Among the various images it uses for the Church, *Lumen gentium* also calls the Church "the spotless spouse of the spotless Lamb."[269] The underlying metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST is the object of the final part of this study. In the first part of this third chapter we have seen how in Apostolic times the metaphor Ecclesia was used to describe the essence of the Church (section 3.1.). We have also investigated how various metaphors were used over the past century to speak about the essence and the life of the Church (section 3.2.). We have seen that the metaphors alternate and that the introduction of a new metaphor can lead to a deeper understanding of an existing one. The last question this study addresses is: what can speaking about the Church as Bride contribute to contemporary thinking about the Church?

We will attempt to answer this question in two steps. The first consists of enquiring how the metaphor was used in the Early Church and how it is used by contemporary theologians (section 3.3.). At the end of this section we will summarise the most important conclusions and evaluate whether the way in which the metaphor was used in the Early Church and by contemporary theologians can help to gain a better understanding of the essence and the life of the Church for believers today. The second step will ask whether this metaphor also has heuristic value: can the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST yield any insights about the essence and the life of the Church that are not immediately evident in the New Testament, but that the metaphor evokes and that could be important for the Church of

[269] "Sponsa immaculata Agni immaculati." LG 6. *Spouse* has the connotation of 'wife' but does not exclude the specific meaning of 'bride.' The *Oxford Dictionary of English* includes among its definitions of 'spouse': "Used of God or Christ in relation to the Church or to Christian souls, or to members of a female religious order" and "The Church, or a person (esp. a member of a female religious order) or soul, regarded as being symbolically married to God or Christ." It is customary in English to use the expression 'spouse of Christ' in relation to the Church.

our times (section 3.4.).[270] We will conclude this chapter with a short summary of the insights acquired, and with an attempt to assess what aspects of the bride metaphor continue to speak to us today and what aspects should not or cannot be used any longer (section 3.5.).

Our point of departure for the first step is the New Testament metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST (section 3.3.). Our analysis of the bride metaphor in the New Testament has produced a number of derived metaphors, which can be grouped into four categories. The first consists of metaphors that describe the relationship between bridegroom and bride, the second addresses the essence of the bride, the third category revolves around joy, and the fourth deals with the marriage feast, or, to be more precise metaphorically, the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. These four categories also provide us with a first division of the current section (sections 3.3.2. up to and including 3.3.5.). Before we begin our systematic investigation of the derived metaphors, we will look simply at the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST itself in a first section (section 3.3.1.): who or what does this metaphor denote? We will conclude this section with a brief summary (section 3.3.6.).

In developing the argument of subsections 3.3.1. up to and including 3.3.5. we will proceed as follows: first we will briefly recapitulate what the analysis of the derived metaphor in question in the Old and the New Testament has yielded; then we will look at examples of how the Church Fathers used the metaphor.[271] Our attention will then shift to our own age and focus on how the bride metaphor appears in the teaching of the magisterium of the Church and in the work of contemporary theologians.[272] Each section will be concluded with a brief summary. In these concluding observations we will also look at the bride metaphor in connection with the

[270] As we have seen in chapter 1, Avery Dulles distinguishes between explanatory and exploratory models or metaphors. We are concerned here with the exploratory, or heuristic, use of models. For Dulles, see Chapter 1.2.9.

[271] A systematic study of the use of the bride metaphor by the Church Fathers would take us too far afield in this enquiry. We have limited ourselves to the writings of a small number of Church Fathers, particularly Augustine, and have looked specifically at sermons, catechetical works and biblical commentaries to see how the bride metaphor was communicated to the faithful.

[272] We will limit our enquiry to Catholic theologians from the French-, German-, and English-speaking worlds from the years before the Second Vatican Council to the present. Our main, but not exclusive, focus has been on the ecclesiological works of Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, Josef Ratzinger, Walter Kasper, Kurt Koch, Richard McBrien, and Dennis Doyle, and on a number of contributions by feminist theologians, including Natalie Watson, Natalie Knödel, Michele Schumacher, and Monica Miller.

five great metaphors that were discussed in the first part of this chapter, i.e. the Church as a *Societas Perfecta*, the Body of Christ, the People of God, a Mystery, and *Communio*, to see what the bride metaphor might bring to what these metaphors have to say about the essence and life of the Church.

Three further comments are in order before we begin. The first is about the considerable chronological leap that we will be taking. There is good reason to go from New Testament times and the era of the Early Church straight to our current age, because the bride metaphor lost much currency in the period after the Early Church.[273] It was only during the twentieth century that the bride metaphor made somewhat of a comeback due to the process of *ressourcement*. This was specifically the case for the use of the bride metaphor as a metaphor for the Church in systematic theology; by contrast, the bride metaphor has always continued to play a role in the history of the spiritual life and in the liturgy of the Church. But in the spiritual life the bride was and is still viewed primarily as a metaphor for the individual soul who lives in longing expectation of the coming of her bridegroom.[274]

The second comment is about the use of the word *Church*. In our analysis of the bride metaphor in the New Testament, whenever the community of the faithful was designated metaphorically as Bride, we avoided speaking of Church, preferring instead to speak of Community (2 Co and Rv) or Ecclesia (Ep). We did this because in the writings of the New Testament, such a community first and foremost denoted a specific local Church. In the current part of our study, however, we will apply the bride metaphor of the New Testament to the contemporary Church as a whole as the community of people who believe in Christ, seen from a Roman Catholic perspective. From this point on we will therefore no longer speak of Community or Ecclesia in the derived metaphors, but of Church.

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[273] Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Sponsa Verbi* (Skizzen zur Thologie II; Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1960), 154.

[274] See for one protagonist of this spiritual school Jan van Ruusbroec, *The Spiritual Espousals* (trans. from the Dutch by Eric Colledge; London: Faber and Faber, 1952); but also: Bonaventura. *De triplici via: Über den dreifachen Weg* (ed. Marianne Schlosser; FC 14; Freiburg: Herder, 1993). For an extensive study that describes the genesis and development of consecrated virgins in relation to the idea of the Bride of Christ: Elizabeth Clark, "The Celibate Bridegroom and His Virginal Brides: Metaphor and the Marriage of Jesus in Early Christian Ascetic Exegesis," *CH* 77 (2008): 1-25; Dyan Elliot, *The Bride of Christ Goes to Hell: Metaphor and Embodiment in the Lives of Pious Women, 200-1500* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012). For a concise overview of how virgins experienced the ideal of being the Bride of Christ throughout the centuries: Susanna Elm and Barbara Vinken, "Braut Christi: Familienformen im Spiegel der *sponsa*," in *Braut Christi: Familienformen in Europa im Spiegel der sponsa* (red. S. Elm and B. Vinken; Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2016), 7-23.

The third comment concerns the phenomenon of love. The bride metaphor automatically places the notion of love at the forefront. People have spoken, written, and sung about love since the dawn of humanity. A classic work on love is Anders Nygren's monograph *Agape and Eros* (1930, 1936).[275] He portrays *eros* and *agape* as two forms of love that are irreconcilable opposites that also exclude each other. According to Nygren, the *eros* motif derives from the Hellenistic world, and the agape motif from the Christian world. *Eros* involves an ascending movement, it seeks self-consummation, is demanding and conditional. *Agape*, on the other hand, stands for a descending movement, gives of its own fullness, and is unconditional. *Eros* loves an object because it recognises the value of an object. *Agape*, by contrast, affords value to an object by loving it; this gives *agape* a creative force. Ultimately, Nygren argues that God's love alone is pure *agape*: "God is Agape."[276] The strict division that Nygren postulates has been qualified by many subsequent authors.[277] In his first encyclical *Deus caritas est* (2006), Pope Benedict XVI equally endeavoured to fathom the phenomenon of love. Unlike Nygren, Benedict did not contrast *eros* and *agape* with each other, but instead described *eros* and *agape* as two sides of the same coin. They can admittedly be distinguished from each other, but they can never be totally separated, at least if the love in question is not to become a caricature or an impoverished form of love. According to Benedict, God's love is both *eros*, elective and passionate, and *agape*, freely granted and forgiving.[278] The current enquiry will accept the premise that love is a phenomenon with various dimensions, of which the ascending movement, *eros* (elective, filled with desire), and the descending movement, *agape* (giving of itself, forgiving), are the most characteristic features. Whenever we mention love, we will specify how love is to be understood in the context in question.

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[275] Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (trans. Philip S. Watson; New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

[276] Ibid., 212. On the differences between eros and agape: cf. ibid., 200-219.

[277] One of the criticisms has been that the image that Scripture paints of love is much richer than Nygren suggests. Cf. for instance Irving Singer, *Plato to Luther* (The Nature of Love I; 2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 296-299. Cf. also Paul Moyaert, "Eros en Agape: Gods liefde worden," in *In het spoor van Plato's Symposium: Eros in de westerse cultuur* (ed. Rudi te Velde; Valkhof Pers, 2010), 156-177.

[278] Cf. DC 1-11. In addition to the *eros* and *agape* distinction, many other conceptions of the phenomenon of love are possible. Cf. for instance the monograph by Vincent Brümmer, *Models of Love* (1993), in which he investigates the unique nature of God's love. Brümmer looks at Romantic love with exclusive attention, ecstatic union (from Christian mysticism) and passionate suffering (from mysticism and courtly love) as its distinguishing features, and charity with the aspects of *eros* and *agape*.

3.3.1. THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

The metaphorical designation of a community as a person is a common feature in Scripture, and audiences at the time would have been familiar with it; as we have seen in the previous chapter, it was a conventional practice.[279] In the Old Testament, the metaphors of *adulterous wife* and *bride* for the people of Israel in relation to YHWH the *husband* and the *bridegroom* are important.[280] The metaphor of the adulterous wife for the people of Israel also occurs in the New Testament (cf. Mt 16:4; Mk 8:38), but the bride metaphor is used in the various writings of the New Testament to speak about the Christian community.

The analysis of the bride metaphor in the New Testament has shown that the community is called bride particularly in the *Corpus Paulinum* and in Revelation. Bride also occurs in John's Gospel, and it is possible that this is in reference to the community, but the bride metaphor is used there mainly to clarify the relationship between John the Baptist and Christ. There is no mention of a bride in the Synoptic Gospels, although wedding guests (Mt 22:1-14) and virgins (Mt 25:1-13) do occur. The analysis has shown that, although these were individual persons, they are more or less treated in these passages as a group, so that there is also a reference to the community. Although for contemporary believers the metaphor of bridegroom and bride may primarily evoke the image of a personal relationship between the individual believer and Christ, for audiences in New Testament times bride had associations with the community as a whole.

The bride metaphor in relation to the Church features regularly in the writings of the Apostolic Age and of the Church Fathers; it appears to have been an obvious use of the metaphor. The so-called *Second Epistle of*

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[279] Cities and communities were metaphorically personified as men or women from as early as antiquity. Cf. Christina Lledo Gomez, *The Church as Woman and Mother: Historical and Theological Foundations* (New York: Paulist Press, 2018), 8-9, with extensive bibliographical references. The phenomenon still continues today. Thus Juventus, one of the oldest and most legendary football clubs in Italy, is called *la Vecchia Signora*, *the old lady*. In the Netherlands, the government is sometimes referred to metaphorically as *Vadertje staat*, *Little Father State*, and in the English-speaking world there is of course *Uncle Sam*.

[280] A different and less frequently used personal metaphor for the people of the Old Testament is that of children/son in relation to YHWH the father: cf. for children/son for instance: Ex 4:23; Dt 32:5; Is 1:2; 30:1.9; Jr 31:9; cf. for father for instance: Dt 32:6; Is 63:16; Jr 31:9; Ps 103:13. This pair of metaphors indicates that there is a connection between YHWH and the people of Israel, and that the origin of the people lies in YHWH. Cf. for this issue as a whole Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12*, 70.

Clement, a work from the Apostolic Age, contains a brief reflection on the Church in its fourteenth chapter.[281] The author postulates that people who do the will of the Father belong to the Church. The letter then speaks of the pre-existence of the Church and uses two metaphors for the Church that often occur together in later writings: the first metaphor is that of the Body of Christ, "the living church is the body of Christ,"[282] and the second is that of the relationship between men and women: "'God made man male and female.' The male is Christ, and the female is the church."[283] Without further interpretation or explanation, the Church is metaphorically designated as female/bride.

The bride as a metaphor for the Church also occurs very frequently in the works of many Church Fathers.[284] The development in Tertullian's (155-240) work is particularly interesting. He uses the bride metaphor not only for the Church, but he is probably the first to apply it to individual persons, and specifically to young girls and virgins in relation to Christ the Bridegroom. The issue that is at stake is whether only married women must be veiled during the celebrations. Tertullian believes young girls and virgins, too, should cover their heads. In *De oratione* he offers the following argument in support of this view:

> Wear the veil, O virgin, since you are a virgin: it is your duty to be shamefaced. Since you are a virgin, avoid the glances of many eyes: let no one gaze at your face: let no one be aware of your pretence. It is a good pretence of being married, if you veil your head: nay rather, it appears that it is no pretence, for you are married to Christ. To him you have surrendered your body: act according to your husband's instruction:

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[281] This epistle was long attributed to Clement of Rome (pope from 88 to 97). Ultimately, however, nothing can be said with certainty about its author, time, and place. It was probably an admonitory discourse that was read immediately after the Scriptural readings during services. Cf. Hubertus R. Drobner, *Lehrbuch der Patrologie* (3rd ed.; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 104-105.

[282] "Εκκλησια ζωσα σωμα εστιν Χριστου." *2 Clement* 14,2. Original text and English translation: Christopher Tuckett, *2 Clement: Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 110-111.

[283] "Εποιησεν ο θεος τον ανθρωπον αρσεν και θηλυ το αρσεν εστιν ο Χριστος, το θηλυ η εκκλησια." *2 Clement* 14,2. Ibid., 110-111.

[284] An exhaustive overview cannot be given here. For a relatively extensive inventory of the use of the bride metaphor by various Church Fathers see: Claude Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ: An Enquiry into the Nuptial Element in Early Christianity* (London: Faber and Faber, 1940), 110-160; Alois Müller, *Ecclesia - Maria: Die Einheit Marias und der Kirche* (2nd ed.; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1955); Clark, "The Celibate Bridegroom," 13, footnote 66.

if he commands other men's brides to be veiled, surely much more his own.[285]

Claude Chavasse has given a negative assessment of this application of the bride metaphor to individual persons, because it set in train a development in history which increasingly eclipsed the original New Testament notion of the Church as Bride: "a strain, which was destined in later centuries to obscure the whole Nuptial Idea as held in the New Testament."[286]

The limiting of the bride metaphor to a certain group within the Church also affected the way other Church Fathers used it,[287] but on the whole the bride metaphor as a metaphor for the Church remained commonplace. John Chrysostom's (345-407) baptismal instructions may serve here as an example of this latter point.[288] He uses the bride metaphor on several occasions in his baptismal instructions. When addressing the catechumens, he speaks of the joy there is because the day of baptism has come: "The days of your spiritual marriage."[289] He then quotes Paul's words in 2 Co 11:2 and describes how the soul (ψῡχή) will be joined to Christ as a pure virgin (παρθένος ἁγνός). It would seem here that Chrysostom favours the individual interpretation. Unlike Tertullian, however, Chrysostom is not speaking of any particular group within the community of the faithful, but he is addressing all the catechumens, both men and women, and calls all of

[285] "Velare, virgo, si virgo es: debes enim erubescere. Si virgo es, plures oculos pati noli. Nemo miretur in tuam faciem; nemo mendacium tuum sentiat. Bene mentiris nuptam, si caput veles. Immo mentiri non videris; nupsisti enim Christo. Illi carnem tuam tradidisti: age pro mariti tui disciplina. Si nuptas alienas velari iubet, suas utique multo magis." Tertullian, *De oratione* 22,9. English translation: Ernest Evans, *Terullian's Tract on The Prayer: The Latin text with critical notes, an English translation, an introduction, and exploratory observations* (London: SPCK, 1953), 31.

[286] Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ*, 133.

[287] Chavasse mentions Cyprian, a student of Tertullian's, as an example. Cyprian said of virgins that they have Christ as their head like a husband is the head in a marriage. Cf. ibid., 134.

[288] Twelve baptismal instructions by John Chrysostom are extant. A number of these are catechetical instructions in preparation for baptism during the vigil of Easter, and a number are mystagogical instructions for the octave of Easter. Cf. for an overview and a brief discussion of the content of John Chrysostom's baptismal instructions, see: Rainer Kaczynski, *Johannes Chrysostomus: Catecheses baptismales: Taufkatechesen* (FC 6/1; Freiburg: Herder, 1992), 30-72.

[289] "Τῶν πνευματικῶν γάμων ἡμέραι." Chrysostom, *Catecheses baptismales* 3/1,1. English translation: Paul W. Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom: Baptismal Instructions* (New York: Paul Press, 1963), 23. NB Harkins uses a different division of the instructions than Kaczynski.

them 'bride', in the singular. Chrysostom does not speak of many individual brides and the one Bridegroom. Where Paul says "we are baptised into one body" (1 Co 12:13), Chrysostom's words could be paraphrased as "we are baptised into one bride." Chrysostom also speaks about the Church as bride on a number of other occasions in his baptismal instructions.[290]

We can summarise developments in the Apostolic Age and the patristic era by saying that the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST is a conventional metaphor to discuss the community in relation to Christ. Although the bride metaphor is also applied to certain individuals within the Church, specifically young women and consecrated virgins, this is a development that runs parallel to the custom of speaking of the Church as bride.

When we jump to our own time, and look at the documents of the Second Vatican Council as a point of reference, we see that the bride metaphor occurs in all four of the Second Vatican Council's constitutions, and is used there in relation to the Church as a whole. *Lumen gentium* mentions the bride nine times, on each occasion in reference to the Church.[291] *Dei Verbum* also speaks metaphorically of the Church as Bride: "God, who spoke of old, uninterruptedly converses with the bride of His beloved Son;"[292] and "the bride of the incarnate Word, the Church."[293] *Sacrosanctum Concilium* speaks three times about a bride: once non-metaphorically in a passage on the liturgy of the sacrament of matrimony (cf. SC 78), and twice about the Church as Bride; on one of these occasions the context is that of the liturgy of the hours: where the faithful pray together with the priests "it is truly the voice of the bride addressed to her bridegroom."[294] In *Gaudium et spes*, finally, the bride metaphor occurs twice, on both occasions in relation to the Church: in GS 43 the Church is called "the faithful spouse of her Lord"[295]; and GS 48 speaks of the love that Christ has for his Church;

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[290] Cf. for instance Chrysostom, *Catecheses baptismales* 2/3,1. John Chrysostom incidentally wrote a treatise on virginity in which he does apply the figure of the bride to individuals. He quotes 2 Co 11:2 at the beginning of this treatise and then says: "Even if this [2 Co 11:2] was said about the entire assembly of the Church, nevertheless, the phrase has relevance for the virgins too." Sally Rieger Shore, *John Chrysostom - On Virginity; Against Remarriage* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1983), 1.

[291] Cf. LG 4, 6 (twice), 7, 9, 39, 41, 44 and 46.

[292] "Deus, qui olim locutus est, sine intermissione cum dilecti Filii sui Sponsa colloquitur." DV 8.

[293] "Verbi incarnati Sponsa, Ecclesia." DV 23.

[294] "Tunc vere vox est ipsius Sponsae, quae Sponsum alloquitur." SC 84. In addition the bride metaphor also occurs in SC 7.

[295] "Fidelis sponsa Domini." GS 43.

there is mention in this context of Christ as "the Savior of men and the Spouse of the Church."[296] We can conclude that in the great constitutions of Vatican II, the metaphor is used exclusively for the Church, so that THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.

Several authors used the bride metaphor to speak about the Church in the run-up to the Second Vatican Council. One particularly interesting contribution was that of Hans Urs von Balthasar. In the foreword to his work *Sponsa Verbi: Skizzen zur Theologie II* (1961), published on the eve of the Second Vatican Council, he pointed to the bride metaphor as the core metaphor of his theology of the Church: "The Church insofar as she is the bride of Christ, remains enshrouded in mystery."[297] Other metaphors, like People of God, may be easier to understand, but in Balthasar's view they are not distinctive enough when speaking about the Church in relation to the synagogue, for instance. The bride metaphor, on the other hand, touches on and indicates the mystery of the center, a "mystery of love, to be approached only with reverence."[298]

In the years following the Second Vatican Council, the bride metaphor made a comeback in the great ecclesiological works of the German-, English-, and French-speaking world. Thus Joseph Ratzinger in *Das neue Volk Gottes: Entwürfe zur Ekklesiologie* (1969) discussed a number of core questions in ecclesiology.[299] Despite the title of the book, Ratzinger's main metaphor for the Church is not so much the People of God but the Body of Christ. He describes the new dimension of the People of God on a number of occasions as "the People of God from the Body of Christ."[300] Ratzinger uses the bride metaphor to show that the Old Testament concept of the People of God is used in a different sense for the New Testament People of God: "the community is the People of *God* because it is the Bride of *Christ*, and is thus fused with Him, the Son, into the unity of a single life of the

[296] "Hominum Salvator Ecclesiaeque Sponsus." GS 48.

[297] "Kirche, sofern sie Braut Christi ist, bleibt verhüllt im bräutlichen Geheimnis." Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Sponsa Verbi*, 7. English edition: *Spouse of the Word* (Explorations in Theology 2; trans. John Saward; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 7.

[298] "Liebesgeheimnis, das wir nur ehrführchtig umkreisen können." Ibid., 7. NB: The image of *sponsa Verbi* is derived from the image of *sponsa Christi*. Late antiquity saw the rise of the notion of the *dormitio Mariae*, which made of Mary Christ's heavenly bride. A reinterpretation of the Song of Songs identified Mary as the bride from Song of Songs. The Bridegroom was the Word of God. This development turned the *sponsa Christi* into the *sponsa Verbi*. Cf. Elm, "Braut Christi," 10-12.

[299] Joseph Ratzinger, *Das neue Volk Gottes: Entwürfe zur Ekklesiologie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1969). This work is a volume of essays published over the course of fifteen years; some of these were therefore published in the run-up to the Council.

[300] "Volk Gottes vom Leib Christi her." Ibid., 82, 97, 108, 241.

Spirit ('Pneuma')."[301] On another occasion Ratzinger uses the bride metaphor to gain a more profound understanding of the unity between Christ and the Church.[302] We will discuss this at greater length in the next section.

The same year saw the publication in the English-speaking world of a book by Richard P. McBrien called *Do We Need the Church?* (1969).[303] This book did not offer an extensive meditation on the phenomenon of the Church, but was, according to the author, "essentially a critique of the *traditional* theology of the Church, and I include the Second Vatican Council."[304] We will not here address his critique of the theology of the time, but will instead look at his observations on the Church in relation to the bride metaphor. In his chapter on the *Theology of the Church at the Second Vatican Council* McBrien deals with the various metaphors mentioned in LG 6. McBrien offers two observations on the metaphor of the bride.

LG 6 quotes Ep 5:24.26.29 in relation to the bride metaphor. McBrien remarks first that Paul's primary interest in the first part of the household code of Ephesians (Ep 5:21-33) is not the Church, but the relationship between husband and wife. In this household code, Paul uses the love that Christ has for the Church as the theological basis for the love that a husband has for his wife. McBrien believes that Christ's love for the Church is an appeal to the community of the faithful:

> The spouse-image is only an analogy. Christ is equally concerned about the nonchurched majority of mankind. He is the bridegroom for all mankind, and all mankind is the object of his compassion, favor, and tender mercy. But the Church alone has the task of publicity proclaiming this reality, that Christ does, indeed, love all mankind with the solicitude and protective concern of a husband, that in Christ all men have been accepted and reconciled to God and Father of us all.[305]

McBrien confirms that the Church is the Bride of Christ, but he also contends that Christ's capacity of Bridegroom does not limit itself to the Church, but extends to all of humankind.

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[301] "Die Gemeinde ist Volk *Gottes* dadurch, daß sie Braut *Christi* ist und so mit ihm, dem Sohn, zur Einheit eines einigen Geistesleben ('Pneuma') verschmolzen ist." Ibid., 81. Ratzinger's italics.
[302] Cf. ibid., 237-240.
[303] Richard P. McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).
[304] Ibid., 1. McBrien's italics.
[305] Ibid., 140.

McBrien returns again to the bride metaphor in a section in which he addresses *The Church as the Body of Christ*. Despite the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* of 1943, in which the metaphor of the Body of Christ is described as the only and decisive metaphor for the Church, McBrien observes that although the Body of Christ is the predominant metaphor in *Lumen gentium*, it is not the only one. Other metaphors, and particularly the bride metaphor, are used to understand the essence of the Church. Christ is the Head of the Body that is the Church. All members are ultimately formed by Him "until Christ be formed in them" (LG 7). The relationship between Christ and the members of the Church is "one of intimate communion."[306] It is precisely the image of the bride, according to McBrien, that facilitates this deeper understanding:

> The Church is, indeed, the Body of Christ. The community is identified with the Lord in a mysterious and mystical union. And yet, in another equally real sense, she is not identified with him. As Spouse of Christ, the Church is set apart from him, under his continual judgment. She cannot rest content that she *is* already his Body; she must become more fully his Body, for she is subject to him as his Spouse.[307]

Another English-language work is Avery Dulles' *Models of the Church* (1987, expanded edition). In this book that has since become a classic, Dulles argues that models or metaphors are extremely important for the life of the Church. "In religious education a constant effort must be made to find images that faithfully communicate the Christian experience of God."[308] As far as ecclesiology is concerned, Dulles shows that various images for the Church have alternated throughout the centuries. He identifies six models based on Scripture and Tradition that can be used to speak of the Church today: the Church as *institution*, *mystical communion*, *sacrament*, *herald*, *servant* and *community of disciples*. Dulles does not mention the bride metaphor as an independent model for the Church in its own right; he rarely uses this metaphor. Once, Dulles uses the bride metaphor to refer to the future: the Church is currently still imperfect, but "at the end of the time the Church will be 'without spot or wrinkle' (Ep 5:27); it will be the Bride fully adorned to meet her Husband."[309] On another occasion, Dulles uses the bride metaphor to speak about the Catholic Church in relation to the many other Christian denominations. The bride metaphor tells us, Dulles argues, that

[306] Ibid., 143.
[307] Ibid., 144. McBrien's italics.
[308] Dulles, *Models*, 22.
[309] Ibid., 137.

there can ultimately only be one single Church of Christ: "there is and can only be one Body of Christ, one Bride, one flock, one new Temple, one new Israel, one new People of God."[310]

In his *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church* (2006),[311] Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole discusses the bride metaphor in the context of the Church as the Body of Christ. Like McBrien, La Soujeole believes there is a connection between the two metaphors, and that the bride metaphor can clarify the Body of Christ metaphor.[312] Although there is only one single body, there is a real distinction between Christ the Head and the Body that is the Church. Whereas husband and wife form a moral union, which leaves intact the separateness of the two persons, between Christ and the Church there is a union in the sense that both Christ and the Church are animated by the same Spirit.[313]

In his ecclesiological work *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission* (2011), Walter Kasper discusses a number of metaphors to clarify the essence of the Church, which he calls a "multifaceted reality"[314]. He begins with the metaphor of the People of God, and argues that the metaphor of the People of God must be viewed in the context of salvation history and not just sociologically. For a Christian, being People of God has a Christological foundation: "we are people of God in and through Jesus Christ."[315] A People-of-God ecclesiology cannot therefore exist without a Body-of-Christ ecclesiology, according to Kasper. He contends that the two metaphors are closely connected to each other and complement each other in the New Testament.[316] In his discussion of the bride metaphor Kasper shows that the metaphor refers to the whole Church and not just to specific groups within the Church. Kasper also comments that the bride metaphor highlights the Church's feminine dimension, and thus the role of women, but that the

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[310] Ibid., 140.

[311] Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church* (trans. M.J. Miller; Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014). The original French edition is called *Introduction au mystère de l'Église* and was published in 2006.

[312] In fact La Soujeole speaks of a "comparison of husband and wife to Christ and the Church," that has to be handled "with care". It is not, we must conclude, a comparison in the strict sense of the term. In his exposition, La Soujeole treats the bride motif with care, i.e. as a metaphor. Cf. ibid., 76-77. Earlier in his book, La Soujeole observes that metaphoric language is required when speaking about the Church, and one of the metaphors he uses is the bride. Cf. ibid., 45-48.

[313] Cf. ibid., 76-77.

[314] Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 119.

[315] Ibid., 122.

[316] Cf. ibid., 131. Kasper incidentally speaks not of metaphor but of *image*.

bride metaphor is ultimately about more than that. Kasper identifies the following aspects as dimensions that the bride metaphor underlines: love as the heart of the Church; a call to conversion, purification, and watchfulness to all within the Church; and the eschatological perspective of living in anticipation of an eschatological wedding feast, in which the Church participates even now in the sacrament of the Eucharist.[317]

This first broad chronological survey leads us to conclude that in the New Testament the bride metaphor refers to the Church and not to individual persons. The bride metaphor as a metaphor for the Church continued to be used also in the subsequent Apostolic Age and in the era of the Early Church. At the same time, however, a process of the individualisation of the bride metaphor can be discerned: virgins became the brides of Christ. This development has continued up to the present day. Yet the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ has never disappeared, even if it was obscured for many centuries following the period of the Early Church. Since the *ressourcement* that has been taking place since the start of the twentieth century, the bride metaphor as used for the Church has returned to the scene. The constitutions of the Second Vatican Council mention the bride metaphor as a metaphor for the Church, but without emphasising it very strongly. In the post-conciliar period the metaphor returned in many ecclesiological works. Within ecclesiology, the bride metaphor is often discussed in relation to the Body of Christ metaphor.

If we consider the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST in relation to the other great metaphors, we can observe that the one Church of Christ is also at stake in the metaphors of the *Societas perfecta*, the Body of Christ, the People of God, the Mysterium and *Communio*. On balance, the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST stands in a broad tradition of metaphors that demonstrate that community is a core notion in Christianity. God addresses human beings individually, but at the same time He brings them together in a community of salvation, or, as we have articulated it in metaphorical language: "we are baptised into one bride." *Lumen gentium* says about this: "God, however, does not make men holy and save them merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather has it pleased Him to bring men together as one people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness."[318] Although for contemporary readers the metaphor of the bride is likely to evoke

[317] Cf. ibid., 131-135.

[318] "Placuit tamen Deo homines non singulatim, quavis mutua connexione seclusa, sanctificare et salvare, sed eos in populum constituere, qui in veritate Ipsum agnosceret Ipsique sancte serviret." LG 9.

associations with individual persons, the metaphor in fact refers to the community.

We have established in this first step that the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST is anchored both in Scripture and Tradition, and we will now examine the derived metaphors.

3.3.2. The Church is a Bridal Relationship

The idea of a relationship between YHWH and his chosen people is an important feature already in the Old Testament. The prophets mainly use the image of the matrimonial bond to describe the relationship between YHWH and the people He has chosen. This bond has been disrupted because the people have started to worship idols. Idolatry is described metaphorically in terms of the adulterous wife and of fornication. But YHWH does not resign Himself to this infidelity, but undertakes to restore the virginity of his people, i.e. their renewed exclusive faithfulness to the one God. In doing so, YHWH points to the first bridal days (cf. Jr 2:2). Faithfulness and love were the basis of this relationship and YHWH is going to restore this relationship of love and faithfulness. This will be a permanent love relationship and a permanent covenant. The whole of salvation history is ultimately oriented to the restoration of this relationship.

The bride metaphor returns in the New Testament, but this time to speak about the relationship between Christ and the community of His disciples. In 2 Co 11:2 Paul reminds the community that he has betrothed it "as a pure virgin" (παρθένον ἁγνὴν) to "one husband" (εἷς ἀνήρ). Paul emphasises the unity and exclusiveness of this relationship by introducing the image of Eve and the serpent by way of contrast (2 Co 11:3) and by beginning his comments on this relationship with the word "jealousy" (ζῆλος). He uses this word both for God and for himself (2 Co 11:2), and it inherently includes the connotations of election and exclusiveness. Paul wants to demonstrate to the community of Corinth that there is no room for any third party in the relationship between the community and Christ.

Our analysis has further shown that there are a number of other derived metaphors that concern the mutual relationship between the bridegroom and the bride. In contemporary Western society, the mutual relationship between spouses can usually be characterised as equal. In the Bible this is not always the case. Both Genesis (cf. Gn 1:27; 2:23) and Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians (cf. Ga 3:28) speak of the fundamental equality between man and

woman.[319] However, Ep 5:23 uses the view, current at the time, that the husband is the head of his wife (source domain) to discuss the relationship between Christ and the Church (target domain). Within the context of the time, this inequality was meaningful when applied to the Church. The derived metaphors present two aspects that characterise this inequality: first, there is the orientation of Christ to the Church, his Bride, an orientation that is marked by the Bridegroom's care for his Bride; and second, there is a dependence of the Church on Christ the Bridegroom.

In the remainder of the current section we will examine these aspects in three subsections. First we will look at the unity and exclusiveness of the relationship between Christ and the Church and at what the bride metaphor says about the nature of this relationship (section 3.3.2.1.) Then we will enquire into the relationship between Christ and the Church and the formative role of Christ the Bridegroom (section 3.3.2.2.). The third subsection, finally, will investigate the orientation of the community as the Bride to Christ her Bridegroom (section 3.3.2.3.). Each subsection will conclude with a brief summary, followed by a survey of how the bride metaphor relates to the other great metaphors for the Church. In a fourth and last subsection, we will recapitulate the most important conclusions of the first three subsections and evaluate whether the bride metaphor can possibly facilitate a more profound understanding of the essence and life of the Church (section 3.3.2.4.).

3.3.2.1. Unity and exclusiveness in the relationship between Bridegroom and Bride

The relationship between bridegroom and bride is an exclusive relationship. In the Old Testament the prophets use the bride metaphor to stress the original and exclusive relationship between YHWH and his chosen people. We have found one expression of this in the metaphor THE PEOPLE OF GOD IS

[319] Both creation narratives evince a fundamental equality between man and woman (cf. Gn 1:27; 2:23), which was therefore originally part of God's plan. This equality can also be found in the Decalogue (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16) and in Wisdom literature (Si 3:1-11). However, the Fall has caused relations between man and woman to break down, and this has resulted in the domination of women by men (cf. Gn 3:16). The historical manifestation of this is the fact that many cultures have patriarchal structures and that women are often regarded as inferior in many cultures. Christianity has fundamentally overcome this inequality (cf. Ga 3:28), though patriarchal structures continue to be prominently present in the Church up to the present day and the Church still has some way to go when it comes to treating men and women equally. Cf. for instance Pope Francis on the position of women in the Church in an interview with Spadaro, "Interview with Pope Francis," n.p.

UNDIVIDEDLY ONE WITH THE BRIDEGROOM. Paul returns to this theme of the exclusiveness of the relationship between Christ and the Christian community. Following the pattern set by the Old Testament prophets, he uses the bride metaphor to address this exclusive bond. Paul not only uses the bride metaphor and the word jealousy to express his concern for the faith and fidelity of the community, but he also uses the unambiguously clear image of Eve who is misled by the serpent. Paul contrasts Eve, the "mother of all those who live" (Gn 3:20), whose disobedience brought death into the world, with the Church as bride (2 Co 11:3).[320] He calls on the community to remain faithful to Christ, the Bridegroom, unlike Eve, who was disobedient and therefore unfaithful in her relationship with God. In 2 Co 11:2-3, the Church and Eve are juxtaposed; in 1 Co 15:45-47, Christ and Adam are juxtaposed. Paul characterises Christ there as the *New Adam*, "a life-giving spirit" (πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν) (1 Co 15:45).[321]

To underline the exclusive relationship between Christ and the Church, the Church Fathers use the metaphor of the Church as betrothed to "one husband". Thus Augustine (354-430) in a sermon on the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11-16) points to the difference between the good shepherds, leaders in the Church who have shed their blood out of love for the sheep, and the hirelings or heretics. Augustine then gives a deeper meaning to the metaphor of the Good Shepherd by introducing the bride metaphor:

> Rightly does the beloved of this shepherd of shepherds, his bride, his beauty, but made beautiful by him, previously so ugly with sin, later so comely by his pardon and grace, rightly does she address him in her burning love for him, and say: *Where do you graze your flock?* (Sg 1:7).[322]

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[320] Gn 3:1-6 describes how the woman was deceived by the serpent into eating of the forbidden fruit and how she, having eaten of the fruit, also gave of it to her husband. But Paul does not place responsibility for the Fall solely with Eve, but says in the Epistle to the Romans that "it was through one man (δι' ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου) that sin came into the world" (Rm 5:12) and speaks of "breaking off a command, as Adam's was" (Rm 5:15). In general it can be said that all human beings have sinned in Adam; this is a transmission through descent in which Eve also participates. Through Adam and Eve, sin, and thus death, is transmitted to all generations. In sum: Eve's sin cannot be separated from Adam's.

[321] Cf. Rm 5:12-18; 1 Co 15:45-49.

[322] "Merito huic pastori pastorum, amata eius, sponsa eius, pulchra eius, sed ab ipso pulchra facta, prius peccatis foeda, post indulgentia et gratia Formosa, loquitur amans et ardens in eum, et dicit ei, Ubi pascis?" Augustine, *Sermo,* 138,6. English translation: Edmund Hill, *Sermons III/4 (94A-147A) on the New Testament* (The Works of Saint Augustin; New York: New City Press, 1992), 388.

Later in the sermon, Augustine warns the Bride to remain faithful to her beloved Shepherd. In doing so, Augustine refers to 2 Co 11:2:

> that you were duly betrothed to me by that man, to be presented to Christ as a chaste virgin, and that you should duly present yourself to me, lest your understanding also should be led astray by evil conversations from chaste fidelity to me, in the way that the serpent seduced Eve by his cunning.[323]

In other sermons and writings, Augustine similarly stresses the exclusiveness of the relationship and the danger of being led astray by the serpent, evil.[324]

The Church Fathers use Eve and the serpent as a warning to remain faithful to Christ, but, like Paul who characterises Christ as the *new Adam*, they characterise the Church as the *new Eve*. In the tradition of the Church, Mary has been the main bearer of this title of New Eve,[325] but the Church Fathers also apply this image to the Church. Thus Tertullian (c. 160-230) calls the Church the "true mother of all the living."[326] This is a clear allusion to Eve who is called the "mother of all those who live" (Gn 3:20) in Genesis.

Tertullian extends the Adam-Christ nexus to Eve and the Church. Just as Eve was taken and formed from the sleeping Adam's side, and is one with Adam, thus the Church sprang from Christ's pierced and wounded side.[327] The Church that is born from Christ's side is a widespread image in the Early Church. The sacrifice of the cross is thus also the moment of the birth

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[323] "Quia recte te mihi desponsavit ille virginem castam exhibere Christo; recteque mihi te ipsam exhibeas, ne malis colloquiis, sicut serpens Evam seduxit astutia sua, sic et tui sensus corrumpantur a castitate mea." Augustine, *Sermo*, 138,8. English translation: ibid., 390.

[324] Cf. for instance Augustine: *Sermo,* 93,4; *Sermo,* 105,6; *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* 147,10.

[325] The title *Mary, the new Eve* is very old and probably originates with Justin Martyr. For an extensive study of *Mary, the new Eve* see: Markus Hofmann, *Maria, die neue Eva: Geschichtlicher Ursprung einer Typologie mit theologischem Potential* (Regensburg, Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2011).

[326] "Vera mater viventium." Tertullian, *De anima*, 43:10. English translation: Edwin A. Quain, "Tertullian: On the Soul," in *Tertullian: Apologetical Works and Minucius Felix: Octavius* (FaCh 10; New York, 1950), 163- 309, at 277. The image of Mary as the New Eve also occurs in Tertullian, but he does not draw a connection between this image and the image of the Church as the New Eve. Cf. also Hofmann, *Maria, die neue Eva*, 347-349.

[327] Cf. Tertullian, *De anima*, 43:10.

of the Church, or, to speak metaphorically, the betrothal is effected on the cross. Contemporary theologians often regard Pentecost as the moment of the birth of the Church.[328] A view that is also current today is that there was a chain of events that led to the emergence of the Church.[329] The Church Fathers, however, point to Calvary. Thus Augustine also draws a parallel with the second creation narrative:

> When he [Christ] slept on the cross, his sleep was a sign; or, rather, a fulfillment of the sign given in Adam. When Adam slept, a rib was withdrawn from him and Eve was created; so it was with the Lord also when he slept on the cross, for his side was struck with a lance and there flowed out the saving mysteries from which the Church was born. The Church is the bride of the Lord, made from his side, as Eve was made from Adam's.[330]

In the modern Western world, the betrothal or engagement of a bride and bridegroom normally is an act between two existing persons who wish to dedicate their lives to each other in all freedom. In the act of engagement, a new union is established, which is oriented to exclusive love and enduring faithfulness, but which does not erase the difference between the persons. In the way the Church Fathers speak about the betrothal between Christ and the

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[328] Cf. for instance Kurt Koch, *Die Kirche Gottes*, 21-24.

[329] Representatives of this view regard the entire Christ event as the foundation of the emergence of the Church. They usually take Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God as the point of departure. Jesus calls disciples as a sign of the coming Kingdom, and his choice of the Twelve is a sign of the new eschatological Israel. The first Christians regarded the signs that Jesus did, especially the sign of the New Covenant during the Last Supper, in the light of the Easter faith as 'prefigurations' of the nascent Church, and they were developed further as such. Cf. for instance Medard Kehl, *Die Kirche: Eine katholische Ekklesiologie* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1992), 267-277; and Georg Kraus, *Die Kirche – Gemeinschaft des Heils: Ekklesiologie im Geist des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2012), 39-59. La Soujeole hardly addresses the question of the foundation of the Church at all in his voluminous *Introduction to the mystery of the Church*. As the title indicates, La Soujeole's interest is primarily in the mystery of the Church, and he begins his ecclesiological study with a lengthy discussion of a number of major images of the Church.

[330] "Quando dormivit in cruce, signum gestabat, immo implebat quod significatum est in Adam: quia cum dormiret Adam, costa illi detracta est, et Eva facta est; sic et domino, cum dormiret in cruce, latus eius lancea percussum est, et sacramenta profluxerunt, unde facta est Ecclesia. Ecclesia enim coniux domini facta est de latere, quomodo illa facta est de latere." Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* 126,7. English translation: Maria Boulding, *Expositions of the Psalms 121-150.* (The Works of Saint Augustine III/20; New York: New City Press, 2004), 90.

Church, there is no engagement between two existing persons; in fact, one of the two parties does not appear to exist at all before the betrothal. Augustine speaks of *to make* (*facta est*) in relation to the Bride: he appears to mean a new creation. This means it is premature to regard the Bride as an existing group of disciples, betrothed to the Lord at the moment of his death on the cross, thus effecting the birth of the Church.

Contemporary authors have also observed that the betrothal in question is not like a traditional human betrothal, and nor is the Bride a traditional bride. In the previous chapter, our analysis of the bride metaphor in Rv 21:2 has shown that Ruben Zimmermann has argued that the metaphor of Holy City, the New Jerusalem which precedes the bride metaphor cannot simply be equated with the citizens or with the people of God. Zimmermann has concluded that the personified city is an entity *sui generis*, and has then compared the city to mediator figures such as Wisdom and the Messiah.[331] Moreover, the analyses of Rv 21:2 and Rv 21:9 have demonstrated that the metaphor City is turned into the metaphor of the Bride (Rv 21:2) and, vice versa, the Bride into the City (Rv 2:9-10), thus blurring the line between City and Bride. Both refer to the same community of salvation, and what is said of the City can also be said of the Bride: she is an entity *sui generis*, "coming down out of heaven" (Rv 21:2). This means that the thing that is unique to the Bride, the Church, is that she stems fully from the Bridegroom and is thus of divine origin.

Yves Congar, in *Chrétiens désunis* (1937), also concluded that the Church was of divine origin and stemmed fully from Christ, and alludes in doing so to Adam's exclamation in the second creation narrative,

> This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gn 2:23), without referring to it explicitly: "The Church is the visible reality of the Lord, his σωμα, a 'Christophany.' She is his body, his flesh, which he animates; the body that belongs to him and that he renders fertile, his Bride.[332]

As regards the origins of the Church, Henri de Lubac follows the Church Fathers, who saw in the union between Adam and Eve a prefiguration of the bond between Christ and the Church. De Lubac observes in *Méditation sur*

[331] Cf. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik,* 430-434.

[332] "l'Église est la réalité visible du Seigneur, son σωμα, une 'christophanie'. Elle est son corps, sa chair, qu'il anime; le corps qui lui appartient et qu'il féconde, son épouse." Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 75 (61). For Congar, the main metaphor for the Church is the Body of Christ animated by the Holy Spirit. Apart from this passage, the bride metaphor does not occur elsewhere in *Chrétiens désunis* in relation to the Church.

l'église (1953) that the idea of a prefiguration leaves many things unresolved. Appealing to several Church Fathers, De Lubac contends that the Bride or the Church does not exist only from the advent of the Redeemer in the flesh, but, just like Christ, existed from before the world began: "She [the Church] must be recognized in the mysterious Wisdom which, with the Creator, presides over the first creation itself."[333]

De Lubac also points to the close connection between the metaphor of the Body of Christ and the bride metaphor. The metaphor of the Body refers to a certain organism, whose members differ from each other and yet are one. Despite the differences and the diversity of tasks, the body also has an interior life: "in all these is one and the same Spirit" (1 Co 12:11). To illustrate this, De Lubac uses the image of the vine, whose stem and branches live off the same sap, and also the image of Christ the Bridegroom, who is one with the Church and exercises his authority, "one of sanctification and love".[334] On the one hand, De Lubac says, there is the unity of the body, but on the other, that same body has a head, which governs the body. The Church is subject to Christ; He governs and leads her.[335]

The notion of Christ's death on the cross as the moment of betrothal and therefore as the moment of the birth of the Church from Christ, the new Adam, plays a much less prominent role in the work of post-Vatican II theologians.[336] The bride metaphor is used to highlight the unity of Christ and his Church, and also to show that this is something entirely new. Joseph Ratzinger, in *Das neue Volk Gottes* (1969) shows the unicity of the union between Christ and the Church by comparing the use of the bride metaphor in the Old and the New Testaments with each other. The prophets in the Old Testament use metaphors to explain to the People of God what its essence is, THE PEOPLE IS THE BRIDE OF YHWH, and what its behaviour is, IDOLATRY IS ADULTERY. On the one hand, God and the People of God stand in an intimate relationship to each other, but on the other, they are also two

[333] "Il faut la reconnaître, elle aussi, dans cette mystérieuse Sagesse qui préside avec le Créateur à la création elle-même." De Lubac, *Méditation*, 51 (39). See for the issue as a whole and for references to various Church Fathers: ibid., 49-53 (37-40).
[334] "De sanctification et d'amour." Ibid., 103 (71).
[335] Cf. ibid., 101-106 (70-73).
[336] The magisterium of the Church does allude regularly to this notion. Cf. for instance LG 2: "This inauguration [of the Church] and this growth are both symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of a crucified Jesus." See also Pope Benedict XVI's exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis* (2007): "Indeed, in the sacrifice of the Cross, Christ gave birth to the Church as his Bride and his body." Pope Benedict XVI, "Sacramentum caritatis," *AAS* 99 (2007): 105-180, at no. 14. English translation from the Vatican website.

independent entities: God has chosen his people from among many people. When the bride metaphor is used again in the New Testament (2 Co 11:2; Ep 5:22-33), then this involves first and foremost the claim by the Christian community of being the new People of God, but at the same time, according to Ratzinger, it involves a correction of the nuptial concept of the Old Testament: "The community is the People of *God* because it is the Bride of *Christ*."[337] The Church, according to Ratzinger, is really united to Christ. They are no longer two entities that stand in relation to each other, but could theoretically function separately from each other. Unlike in the marital union between husband and wife, who become "one flesh" (Gn 2:24), Christ and his Church become "one Pneuma, that is: one single new 'spiritual' existence."[338]

Medard Kehl, in his ecclesiological study *Die Kirche Gottes: Eine katholische Ekklesiologie* (1992), discusses three models for the Church: *the symbolically personified Church, the 'petrified' Church*, and *the communicating Church*. The model of the *symbolically personified Church* encompasses metaphors for the Church such as Virgin, Bride, Spouse, and Mother. All these metaphors interpret the Church in some way or other as a person, and specifically as a woman. According to Kehl, being Church is about having a relationship with Christ as the male partner. The bride metaphor inflects this relationship as a relationship of love, and at the same time the metaphor also expresses unity: "and they two become one flesh" (Gn 2:24; Ep 5:31) and "one spirit with him" (1 Co 6:17). The personal relationship also ensures that the distinction between Christ and the Church remains intact.[339]

In *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church* (2006), Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole also uses the bride metaphor to speak about the union between Christ and the Church. He does this not in the context of the Church as the People of God, but of the Church as the Body of Christ. Although this metaphor implies one body and therefore union, La Soujeole thinks that there is at the same time a real distinction between Christ the Head and the Body that is the Church. The bride metaphor expresses this real distinction, but explanation is immediately required to prevent a misunderstanding: where husband and wife form a *moral union*, which leaves intact the distinction between the persons, by contrast between Christ and the Church there is a full union, in the sense that both Christ and the Church are animated by the same Spirit: "because one and the same life

[337] "Die Gemeinde ist Volk *Gottes* dadurch, dass sie Braut *Christi* ist." Ratzinger, *Das neue Volk Gottes*, 81. Ratzinger's italics.
[338] "Ein Pneuma, d h. eine einzige neue 'geistliche' Existenz." Ibid., 81.
[339] Cf. Kehl, *Die Kirche*, 24-25.

animates Christ and the Church, and because some of the most decisive acts for salvation (the preaching of the Gospel and the celebration of the sacraments) truly are conjoined acts of Christ and the Church."[340] La Soujeole shares Ratzinger's view that the bride metaphor indicates an actual, new union between Christ and the Church. He also observes, finally, that the bride metaphor stresses that Christ's domination as Head is "a domination of love."[341]

In summary we can conclude that the bride metaphor has pointed throughout the ages to the exclusiveness of the personal relationship of love between Christ and his Church. Paul used the metaphor to emphasise the exclusiveness of the relationship and to call for faithfulness. He used the metaphor of Eve and the serpent to warn his readers not to revert to infidelity. The Church Fathers similarly pointed to the exclusiveness of the relationship on the basis to the bride metaphor of 2 Co 11:2 and also regarded the metaphor of Eve and the serpent as a warning. They also used the figure of Eve – without the serpent – in another metaphorical sense: just as the first Eve was taken from Adam's side, so the Church as the New Eve sprang from the side of the pierced Christ. This metaphorically makes the Church into the New Eve, and a new creation *from* Christ.

Contemporary theologians use the bride metaphor to stress the aspect of the union between Christ and the Church. They point to the alterity of bridegroom and bride, and therefore to the enduring alterity of Christ and the Church. The Church is of divine origin and is immersed in one Spirit (1 Co 12:11), but the Church is not God. Most contemporary theologians see the bride metaphor as a complement to thinking about the Church as the People of God (including Ratzinger), or the Body of Christ (including De Lubac, La Soujeole, and Kasper). Thus the People of God metaphor for the Church can be misunderstood if it is interpreted as it was in the Old Testament, as one people among many other people. The Body of Christ metaphor can be misunderstood if the unity is regarded too much as an organic union, without a sense of alterity.

The above summary to some extent already shows how the bride metaphor relates to the other great metaphors in relation to the themes of

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[340] La Soujeole, *Introduction,* 77. Cf. also Willem Eijk, *Waarom priesters?: Brief bij gelegenheid van Witte Donderdag 2010* (Utrecht, 2010), 8.

[341] Ibid., 76-77. Cf. for this paragraph as a whole: ibid.: 76-77. Similarly, Walter Kasper in his ecclesiological study *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission* (2011) uses the bride metaphor to discuss the union between Christ and the Church. He describes the relationship between Christ and the Church as complementary to the Body of Christ metaphor and characterises it as "a unity in differentness." He calls love the heart of the Church. Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 132.

union and exclusiveness. We will examine this more closely in the last step of this subsection.

The *Societas perfecta* metaphor intrinsically includes the notion of unity: that of a community that is self-sufficient and requires nothing and no one else to function. However, *Societas perfecta* does not have much to say at all about the relationship with Christ, and even less about the exclusiveness of this relationship. It is perfectly possible to be a *Societas perfecta* without having a relationship with Christ. The *Societas perfecta* metaphor needs the bride metaphor to know to what end it exists: to realise the exclusive relationship between Christ and all who believe in Him. The aspects of union and exclusiveness do appear in the People of God and the Body of Christ metaphors. It is one People and one Body, while the modifiers "of God" and "of Christ" point to the aspect of exclusiveness. In both cases, the bride metaphor adds a deeper dimension: with regard to the People of God, that the new People is truly united to Christ and is animated by one and the same Spirit; and with regard to the Body of Christ that there is an enduring alterity in the relationship between Christ and the Church. Moreover, unlike the People of God, the bride metaphor expresses greater intimacy in the exclusive relationship. *Lumen gentium* describes the Sacrament metaphor as follows: "the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (LG 1). If this description in *Lumen gentium* can serve as authoritative, union and exclusiveness are also inherent in the Sacrament metaphor. The *Communio* metaphor, finally, does refer to union, but less so to exclusiveness. The Church itself can be called a community of communities. In this metaphor, the relational aspect is clearly to the fore in all its facets, but just as with a *Societas perfecta*, the dimension of exclusiveness in the relationship with Christ is not something automatically evident in this metaphor.

3.3.2.2. The Bridegroom forms the Bride

In Ep 5:21-33, the bride metaphor is juxtaposed with the head and body metaphors. For readers in New Testament times, this as a matter of course implied a hierarchical relationship. The analysis of Ep 5:21-33 therefore produced as its own metaphor CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH; head as in: a body has a head, but also as in: the husband is the head of the wife. Within Judaism, and at the time of the New Testament communities, wives were subordinate to their husbands. What applied to wives in the context of

Ephesians (ὑποτάσσεται ἐν παντί), applies enduringly to the Church: the Church will never be able to place itself above her Lord.[342]

The first association that many people have with this headship is that of domination and power. In Ephesians, however, headship is not associated with notions such as leadership, rule, or even domination (cf. Gn 3:16), but to love. Ep 5:25 offers a reflection on Christ's ultimate act of love: "just as Christ loved the Church and delivered himself up for her." Our analysis has shown that this *delivered himself up* (παραδίδωμι) follows the core statement of Ep 5:2 that what is at stake is a Christ's total gift of self, and this gift of self, this love is set as an example: "follow Christ by loving as he loved you" (Ep 5:2). Christ the Bridegroom, we may conclude, is Head in the order of love.

Christ the Bridegroom is Head in the order of love, as regards both time and quality. In relation to time, we can say that Christ loved humankind first, even before human beings learned to love Him. Paul reflects on this in his epistle to the Romans: "So it is proof of God's own love for us, that Christ died for us while we were still sinners" (Rm 5:8) and so does John: "Let us love, then, because he first loves us" (1 Jn 4:19). This alludes to the theme of election. Christ is also head in the order of love as regards the quality of this love. Scripture speaks of "having loved those who were his in the world, loved them to the end" (Jn 13:1). We have already seen that, within the bride metaphor, Christ's gift of his own life can be regarded as the bride price.

Another aspect of formation by the Bridegroom is the cleansing in the washing of water. And, as our examination of Ep has demonstrated, the Bridegroom's love for his Bride also manifests itself in the Word that the Bridegroom speaks. This refers not to any particular single moment, but to a process of gradual sanctification of the bride; of her transformation and of being drawn into the bridegroom's love. The formative aspect, finally, is also present in the passage in Ep that refers to Christ who "feeds" and "looks after" the Church as his Body (Ep 5:29).

The early Church Fathers also emphasise that the initiative in salvation history lies with God, and that Christ the Bridegroom has delivered Himself up for his Bride. John Chrysostom points to this in his baptismal instructions. Referring to Christ's death on the cross, he explains what is marvellous about this: "Nor did He suffer and endure these torments because He marveled at her [the bride] beauty. Heretofore nothing was more

[342] Cf. Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 446-447; McBrien, *Do we Need the Church*, 144.

shameful, nothing less pleasing, then she."[343] In another catechesis, John Chrysostom rhetorically wonders whether any bridegroom has ever laid down his life for his bride, and he gives the answer himself: "Surely, no bridegroom lays down his life for his bride."[344]

In the previous subsection we have seen that the Church Fathers regarded Christ's death on the cross as the moment of the birth of the Church. They interpreted the water and blood that flowed from the side of Christ (Jn 19:34) as the lifeblood of the Church: the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.[345] Our analysis of Ep 5:26 may not have established that the bridal bath of Ep refers to baptism, but it is clear that the tradition of the Church from a very early stage on equated this bath with baptism.[346] On the basis of this tradition, baptism can be characterised as a bridal bath. Unlike in classical antiquity and in Judaism, where the bride washed herself, in Ep the Bride is cleansed by the Bridegroom.[347] In the bridal bath, the individual believer is cleansed of sin by Christ, but he or she is also drawn into the nuptial mystery of Christ and his Church.[348]

The Church Fathers, finally, also address the theme of formation by the Word. In one of his homilies, John Chrysostom says the following about John the Baptist: (Jn 3:29):

> But what meaneth, 'He which standeth and heareth Him rejoiceth greatly, because of the Bridegroom's voice?' … for after mentioning the bridegroom and the bride, he shows how the bride is brought home, that is, by a 'Voice' and teaching. For thus the Church is wedded to God; and

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[343] John Chrysostom, *Catecheses baptismales,* 2/3, 2. English translation: Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom: Baptismal Instructions*, 162.

[344] John Chrysostom, *Catecheses baptismales,* 2/3, 2. English translation: Ibid., 162.

[345] Cf. for instance Augustine, *Sermo* 218,14; Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* 138,2; John Chrysostom, *Catecheses baptismales* 2/4, 16-19.

[346] Cf. Osiek, "The Bride of Christ," 32.

[347] The use of a bridal bath was part of the wider rite of marriage in both classical antiquity and Judaism. The bridal bath primarily had a cleansing function, but it also had connotations of fertility: water was a life-giving thing. Cf. John H. Oakley and Rebecca H. Sinos, *The wedding in Ancient Athens* (2nd ed.; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 15-16.

[348] Cf. also CCC 1617. See also Pope John Paul II: "The one who receives Baptism becomes at the same time - by virtue of the redemptive love of Christ - a participant in his [Christ's] spousal love for the Church." John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (trans. Michael Waldstein; Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 482.

> therefore Paul saith, 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' (Rom 10:17).[349]

For Chrysostom, the betrothal is effected by hearing the Word.

Contemporary theologians have similarly contended that the Bridegroom forms the Bride. Bride and Bridegroom are one flesh, says De Lubac in his *Méditation sur l'église* (1953), and although Christ is the head, "Christ does not rule her from without; there is, certainly, subjection and dependence between her and Him, but at the same time she is His fulfilment and 'fullness' (Ep 1:22)."[350] De Lubac does not comment on it specifically, but the word *subjection* appears to allude to ὑποτάσσω in Ep 5:21 and the word *dependence* to ἐκτρέφω, *to feed*, and θάλπω, *to look after*, in Ep 5:29. De Lubac argues that the descent of the Holy Spirit at the first Pentecost has fulfilled the foundation of the Church and marks the beginning of the era of the Spirit. He quotes Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* in this context: "the communicating of Christ - that is, the Holy Spirit."[351] The *feeding* and *looking after* consist of the Holy Spirit teaching us all truth and calling to mind all truth without adding anything: "There is no other Spirit than this Spirit of Jesus, and the Spirit of Jesus is the soul which animates His Body."[352] We can conclude that for De Lubac, it is the Holy Spirit who forms and creates the Bride.

As we have seen, Josef Ratzinger argues in *Das neue Volk Gottes* (1969) that the Church is truly united with Christ. Christ the Bridegroom and his Church the Bride become "one Pneuma, i.e. one single new 'spiritual' existence."[353] Ratzinger then asks how this union with Christ is established. Unlike the first Adam, the man from whose physical matter all human beings are formed and with whom every human being is connected through bodily descent - the so-called ancestor motif - we are transformed into a new organism, a new body, by being grafted into Christ. Ratzinger refers in relation to this to Rm 11:16-19. The metaphor of the wild offshoot (the Church) grafted among the branches and permitted to share in the fertility of

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[349] Philip Schaff, *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of St. John and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (NPNF 1-14; 1889; Repr. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1978), 102.

[350] "Le Christ ne la gouverne pourtant pas du dehors: d'elle à Lui, il y a sujétion, dépendance, mais elle est en même temps son achèvement et sa 'plénitude' (Eph 1:22)." De Lubac, *Méditation*, 181 (124).

[351] "Communicatio Christi, id est Spiritus sanctus." Ibid., 179 (123).

[352] "Or il n'y a pas d'autre Esprit que cet Esprit de Jésus, et l'Esprit de Jésus est l'âme qui anime son corps." Ibid., 180 (124). Cf. for this paragraph as a whole: ibid.: 179-182 (123-125).

[353] "Ein Pneuma, d.h. eine einzige neue 'geistliche' Existenz." Ratzinger, *Das neue Volk Gottes*, 81.

the root (Christ) also indicates the Church's complete dependence on Christ. Being grafted into Christ occurs through baptism (cf. Rm 6:1-11; 1 Co 12,13a); every individual in this way is reborn, as it were, and made to participate in the Body of Christ. The question then remains how the Church continues to be one with Christ, how she 'performs' being Church. To answer this, Ratzinger points to the cup and the bread (cf. 1 Co 10:16) and to "we were all given the same Spirit to drink" (1 Co 12:13b). In the Eucharist, we all eat the same Bread that is Christ. The one Bread that is Christ is not incorporated by the human body, but, conversely, the one Bread that is Christ incorporates the human body into his Body in order to make out of all the one Christ. "What the ancestor motif expresses ideally, is fulfilled really in baptism: our new birth into Christ; and what the bride image means intellectually is realised in the Eucharist: our unity in love with Christ, who makes of us one body (Pneuma body) with him."[354] For Ratzinger, we can conclude, the Church as the Bride is formed in the sacrament of the Eucharist: she is drawn into his community of love and made into the one Christ.[355]

Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole has characterised the way in which Christ the Bridegroom and the Bride, the Church, are oriented to each other as an intimate union, and, in line with this, as a close form of cooperation. Joan of Arc's dictum *c'est tout un, they are just one thing,* is not accurate, according to La Soujeole, because not every action of the Church can be equated with the work of Christ. What is true, however, is that the life of Christ and the life of the Church are both animated by the Holy Spirit and that the Church's two great works of salvation, the proclamation of the Gospel and the ministration of the sacraments, are "truly conjoined acts of Christ and the Church"[356]. La Soujeole does not develop how this cooperation must be conceived and who is fed or formed by whom. However, in a brief section preceding the section on the Bride of Christ, La Soujeole speaks of *the plērōma, the fullness*. He regards both themes, the *plērōma* and the Church's quality of bride, as complementary. Speaking of

[354] "Was das Stammvaterbild ideell aussagt, das wird in der Taufe real vollzogen: unsere neue Geburt in Christus hinein; und was das Brautbild gedanklich meint, das wird in die Eucharistie verwirklicht: unsere Liebeseinheit mit Christus, die uns ein Leib (Pneuma-Leib) werden lässt mit ihm." Ibid., 83. Cf. for this paragraph as a whole: ibid., 82-85. Ratzinger also included this idea in his first encyclical as Pope Benedict XVI: cf. DC 13.

[355] Like Ratzinger, Kehl also contends that the sacrament of baptism incorporates the individual believer into the Body of Christ, while the sacrament of the Eucharist draws the gathered community into the Lord's gift of self, in order thus to participate in the love of Christ. Cf. Kehl, *Die Kirche*, 89.

[356] La Soujeole, *Introduction*, 77.

the *plērōma*, La Soujeole says that Christ is the first *plērōma*; all fullness of grace is in Him (cf. Col 1:19). The second "subordinate plērōma," La Soujeole believes, is the Church; she shares in the fullness of Christ (cf. Ep 1:22-23) and can therefore participate in Christ's saving work. If the themes of the *plērōma* and the bridal identity of the Church are complementary, we can say that for La Soujeole, the Church as the Bride is wholly dependent on Christ the Bridegroom, and that she receives from him the fullness of his grace, through which she is formed.[357]

In conclusion we can say that the ecclesiologies of various contemporary theologians also use the bride metaphor to express the notion that Christ gives his gifts to the Bride and thus feeds the Church. Generally these theologians speak of the grace that the Church receives or of the Holy Spirit who animates the Church. Various authors explicitly mention the Eucharist in this context. Furthermore, one of the metaphors derived from the bride metaphor is: THE CHURCH IS FORMED BY THE WORD OF THE BRIDEGROOM. Our analysis of Ep 5:26 has demonstrated that this refers not to a single moment, but to a process in which the Church as the Bride is gradually sanctified, transformed, and drawn into the Bridegroom's love. It is a "process of Christian edification which is *subsequent* to the initial act of commitment in baptism (…) and is completed only at the final consummation."[358] None of the modern theologians explicitly mentions this aspect of the bride metaphor.[359]

Unlike the contemporary theologians, the magisterium of the Church does strongly emphasise the importance of the Word. The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* places the Church in a subordinate position vis-à-vis the Word of God by opening with the following passage: "Hearing the word of God with reverence and proclaiming it with faith."[360] This opening passage of *Dei Verbum* contains a fundamental statement about the essence of the Church: the Church is a Church that hears and is therefore a Church that receives. The Word, the

[357] Cf. for the paragraph as a whole: ibid., 73-77.
[358] Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians,* 265. Muddiman's italics.
[359] It is not likely that any of the modern theologians would deny the importance of the Word for the Church and its formative dimension, but they do not develop this on the basis of the bride metaphor. For an extensive theology of the Word, see Paul-Werner Scheele, *Wort des Lebens: Eine Theologie des Wortes* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2007). This work does not mention the bride metaphor at any length. On one occasion there is a reference to Rv 21:2 and 22:12 and on two occasions to Rv 22:17. The reference to Rv 21:2 is in order to speak about the end times, and there is an analysis about the metaphor of the Holy City, but there is no mention of the Bride. Nor is the bride metaphor discussed in the other instances.
[360] "Dei Verbum religiose audiens et fideliter proclamans." DV 1.

Logos, speaks first, and it is only once the Word has been heard that the Church can speak and act herself. It is not a matter of listening passively, but of dialogue. A glimpse of this dialogue has already been seen in the concluding chapter of Revelation: Jesus three times announces that He will come soon, and the Bride and the Spirit respond with the exclamation "Come!" (Rv 22:17). In the chapter on the transmission of divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum* uses the bride metaphor to paint a fuller picture of this dialogue:

> and thus God, who spoke of old, uninterruptedly converses with the bride of His beloved Son; and the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel resounds in the Church, and through her, in the world, leads unto all truth those who believe and makes the word of Christ dwell abundantly in them (see Col. 3:16).[361]

This is a dialogue of love, a nuptial dialogue, which is ultimately oriented to the union of Christ with his Church and, ultimately, with the whole of humanity. This passage affirms that it is a continuing process of being led into the fullness of Truth. The Holy Spirit has a role of her own to play in this process. The Spirit constantly deepens and completes the faith of the Church through her spiritual gifts, thus bringing the faithful to the full truth.[362]

To conclude this subsection, we can say that both in Holy Scripture and in the work of the Church Fathers, the bride metaphor is used to explain that Christ forms the Church. Christ the Bridegroom is the Head of the Body and the Head of the Bride. Christ exercises this headship in the order of love: He has delivered Himself up for his Bride so as to sanctify and cleanse her. The Bridegroom's love includes election, as well as permanent transformation through the Word. Contemporary theologians also use the bride metaphor to make the point that the Church cannot live without Christ. This is expressed in various ways. De Lubac speaks of the Spirit of Jesus who animates the Body, Ratzinger points to the Eucharist in which the one Bread that is Christ gifts Himself, and through which Christ the Bridegroom time and again consummates the union with his Bride. La Soujeole speaks of the fullness of Christ's grace in which the Bride is permitted to share. The contemporary theologians rarely or never refer to the idea that the Word of the Bridegroom

[361] "Sicque Deus, qui olim locutus est, sine intermissione cum dilecti Filii sui Sponsa colloquitur, et Spiritus Sanctus, per quem viva vox Evangelii in Ecclesia, et per ipsam in mundo resonat, credentes in omnem veritatem inducit, verbumque Christi in eis abundanter inhabitare facit (cf. Col 3,16)." DV 8.
[362] Cf. DV 5 and 8.

forms the Bride. The magisterium of the Church does mention this idea in the constitution *Dei Verbum* and uses the bride metaphor to further clarify the concept of a dialogue between Christ and his Church: this is a nuptial dialogue, a dialogue of love.

On the basis of this summary we will now look at how the bride metaphor relates to the other great ecclesiological metaphors. The *Societas perfecta* metaphor strongly stresses the institutional side and is interested mainly in the legal and organisational aspects. This strong emphasis on the institutional dimension is liable to obscure Christ or the Holy Spirit as the soul of the Church. Another metaphor is required to ensure that the soul of the society in question is not overlooked. Nor does the *Societas perfecta* metaphor point to the aspects of election and of formation by the Word. In the People of God and the Body of Christ metaphors, the modifiers "of God" and "of Christ" more or less imply that this is no ordinary people and no ordinary body. These metaphors express that the community in question is guided or governed by God/Christ. We have also seen, however, that these two metaphors need the bride metaphor to maintain the correct perspective on the right relationship with God/Christ and the corresponding dependence upon God/Christ. Because these two metaphors through their modifiers explicitly refer to a relationship with God/Christ, the dimensions of election and formation by the Word are also included. The Sacrament metaphor is difficult to understand, also in this case. A Sacrament has a semiotic function: it is a sign and instrument of the intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole of humankind. It does not *a priori* say anything about the relationship between Christ and the Church, nor does this metaphor show that Christ leads and feeds the Church. The aspects of election and of formation by the Word also remain obscure in a Sacrament.[363] The *Communio* metaphor, finally, primarily points to the community and its many mutual relationships. Perhaps it could be argued that this metaphor implies that these relationships are somehow ordered, but the idea that the *Communio* is fed and maintained by Christ is surely not much to the fore. The bride metaphor can bring a more profound sense both to the Sacrament metaphor and to the *Communio* metaphor: that there is a Head who leads the Church and who animates her.

[363] Avery Dulles in his *Models of the Church* concludes that the model *The Church as Sacrament* is difficult to communicate. The notion of sacramentality is not very biblical and rather technical, and it is not easy to find concrete examples. Cf. Dulles, *Models*, 75. The current study has so far shown that the Sacrament metaphor as such is not very successful either in facilitating understanding of the essence and the life of the Church.

3.3.2.3. The Bride follows the Bridegroom

In Judaism, the initiative in a betrothal lies with the bridegroom, and the bride is the party who follows and receives. The analysis of the bride metaphor in the Old Testament has similarly observed this: THE BRIDE FOLLOWS THE BRIDEGROOM. The Epistle to the Ephesians uses the word ὑποτάσσω, *to subject,* to describe the relationship between husband and wife. Our analysis of Ep 5:21-33 has shown that this is a hierarchical principle: the Church is subject to Christ, just as within Judaism and at the time of the New Testament wives were subject to their husbands. What was true for wives in the context of the New Testament (ὑποτάσσεται ἐν παντί), is true permanently for the Church: the Church will never be able to place itself above her Lord.[364]

When discussing the bride's orientation to the bridegroom, the Gospel of John speaks not of being subject, but of hearing: DISCIPLES LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM. The Epistle to the Ephesians and the Second Epistle to the Corinthians also have this derived metaphor: THE CHURCH LISTENS TO THE WORD OF THE BRIDEGROOM.

In the Apostolic Age, Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35 – c. 107) similarly spoke of the hierarchical order of the community. Ignatius called on his readers to be subject to the bishop and to each other. He did not use the bride metaphor to illustrate this, however, but the relationship that Jesus has with his Father and the apostles with the Triune God: "Submit to the bishop and to each other's right, just as did Jesus Christ in the flesh to the Father, and the Apostles did to Christ and the Father and the Spirit, so that there may be oneness both of flesh and of spirit."[365]

The theme of the hierarchical order within the community occurs frequently in the works of the Church Fathers, but rarely in connection with the bride metaphor. In a sermon about Christ, Augustine does mention the bride metaphor on one occasion. Augustine explains that Scripture speaks in three different ways about Christ: sometimes it speaks about Christ as the Word that is equal to the Father (cf. for instance Jn 1:1-5); sometimes it speaks about Christ as the Mediator (cf. for instance Jn 1:14; Ph 2:6); and on

[364] Cf. Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 446-447.

[365] Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Magnesians* 13,2. English translation: James A. Kleist, *The Epistles of St. Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch* (ACW 1; Westminster, Md.: The Newman Bookshop, 1946) 73. The theme also occurs in other letters by Ignatius. Cf. for instance *Epistle to the Ephesians* 2,2; *Epistle to the Trallians* 2,1-2. Other Apostolic Fathers also speak about the hierarchical order within the community, like Ignatius without mentioning the bride metaphor. Cf. for instance the First Epistle of Clement: 1 Clem 1:3.

other occasions it speaks about Christ as the Head of the Body. Augustine uses the bride metaphor in reference to this third way, describing how the bride is oriented to the bridegroom: "So present yourselves to such a head as a body worthy of him, to such a bridegroom as a worthy bride."[366] Generally, however, the Church Fathers do not use the bride metaphor very frequently to speak of the ordering of the community in relation to Christ. The metaphor of the Head is much more common.

When it comes to the Church's loyalty as Bride to Christ the Bridegroom, most contemporary theologians discuss what happens when this loyalty is incomplete or totally absent. Thus Joseph Ratzinger in *Das neue Volk Gottes* (1969) contends that there is an unequal relationship between Christ and the Church. Christ's loyalty to the Church is "final and indestructible,"[367] whereas the Church's loyalty to Christ is "contested, fragmentary, overshadowed by the mystery of infidelity."[368] We will now look specifically at the tension between holiness and sinfulness in the Church, and we will return to this theme in the following section on bridal attire. Usually when the positive aspect of the Church's duty of loyalty to Christ is discussed, this is done through a reference to Mary. She is regarded as the exemplary bride, wholly attentive to the Word of the Bridegroom. This is the case for instance in the work of Henri de Lubac.

In his chapter on the Church and Mary in his *Méditation sur l'église* (1953), Henri De Lubac begins with the close bond that exists between the Church and Mary. This can be seen, according to De Lubac, in the fact that Mary and the Church have many titles in common. Earlier on in this chapter we have already encountered one of these: the *New Eve*. Another common title is "the Bride arrayed for her husband."[369] In his further reflections on Mary and the Church, De Lubac elaborates on the close and manifold connections between the Church and Mary, with Mary being "the mirror in which the whole Church is reflected."[370] The first thing De Lubac mentions

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[366] "Exhibete ergo vos dignum corpus tali capite, dignam sponsam tali sponso." Augustine, *Sermo* 341,13. English translation: Edmund Hill, *Augustin, Sermons III/10 (341-400) on Various Subjects* (The Works of Saint Augustine III/10; New York: New City Press, 1995), 27.

[367] "Endgültig und unzerstörbar." Ratzinger, *Das neue Volk Gottes*, 239.

[368] "Angefochten, bruchstückhaft, vom Geheimnis der Treulosigkeit überschattet." Ibid., 239.

[369] "L'Épouse ornée pour paraître devant son Époux." De Lubac, *Méditation*, 277 (200). Other shared titles that De Lubac mentions are: *le Paradis, l'Arche d'alliance, la Porte du ciel, le Tabernacle du Très-Haut, le Trône de Salomon*. For all titles mentioned by De Lubac, see ibid., 275-278 (200-201).

[370] "Elle est 'le miroir où se reflète l'Église entire.'" Ibid., 278 (200). Quotation within the quotation is from P. Ganne, *Dialoque sur la Vierge* (1950), 152.

is the fact that Mary is both mother and virgin, which is thus also true of the Church. The Church is a mother, because time and again she gives God new children through the sacrament of baptism. The Church is a virgin, because, like Mary, she keeps intact the flawlessness of the faith.[371] However, whereas Mary was all fair from the beginning of her existence - "there is no spot in thee" (Sg 4:7) - the Church will be such only at the end of time.[372] According to De Lubac, in her loyalty to Christ, the task of the Church as Bride is to keep the faith entrusted to her.[373]

Feminist theologians of the Women-Church movement in particular have criticised the close connection between the Church and Mary, because Mary is idealised and represents an ideal that all women ultimately cannot attain. The feminist theologians regard the ideal Mary as an instrument of male power over women, as a way to discipline women.[374] For representatives of the New Feminism, also called Catholic Feminism, on the other hand, Mary is a role model:

> If we look at Mary, we see that the mystery of feminine authority lies precisely, not in the Prometheian lust to take power for oneself, but in the power to receive and be filled; to be the absolute antithesis of the modern curse of man's refusal to receive help from above.[375]

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[371] Cf. ibid,, 280 (201).

[372] Cf. ibid., 296-297 (213).

[373] Kurt Koch also emphasises the perfect reply that Mary gives to the Word of God, and speaks of a "bräutliches Verhältnis" between Christ and Mary: "Maria ist 'nicht das Wort, aber sie ist die adäquate Antwort, wie sie von Gott aus dem geschöpflichen Raum erwartet und in seiner Gnade durch sein Wort darin hervorgebracht wird.'" Koch, *Die Kirche Gottes*, 236. The quotation within the quotation is from Hans Urs von Balthasar. Later in the same chapter, Koch clarifies this dynamism by using the metaphor of *the sun and the moon*, which he applies to the Church: just like the moon receives all its light from the sun and illuminates the night with this light, so it is the mission of the Church to reflect the Light of Christ the Sun into the darkness of the world. Koch argues here for a *lunar ecclesiology*. Cf. ibid.: 239-241.

[374] Cf. Natalie K. Watson, *Introducing Feminist Ecclesiology* (Introductions in Feminist Theology 10; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 37-42.

[375] Monica M. Miller, *Sexuality and Authority in the Catholic Church* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1995), 221. The term New Feminism is of early twentieth-century origin and was coined in England. It is an advocacy movement for mothers, that argues for instance that child allowance should be paid directly to mothers. Pope John Paul II more or less breathed new life into this movement. In his apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem: On the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the Occasion of the Marian Year* (1988), henceforth MD, the pope wrote about "the fundamental truth" (MD 6) of male and female identity. Created in God's image and likeness, men and women are "essential equal (…) from the point of view of their humanity. (…) Both

Joseph Ratzinger in his book *Das neue Volk Gottes* (1969) has also expressed, in an entirely different way, that the Church as the Bride follows Christ and is formed by Him. In a reflection on the relationship between a council and the primacy of the pope, Ratzinger concludes that when it comes to definitive doctrinal pronouncements of the extraordinary magisterium, no council could make binding definitions without the pope, but the pope could make such pronouncements without the council. The college of bishops is not complete without the pope, and decisions of councils without the pope's approval are therefore not binding or valid. A definitive pronouncement by the pope is valid and legitimate, however, because, in Ratzinger's words: "it expresses the true 'consensus fidelium', the unadulterated voice of Christ's Bride, who returns the Word of the Lord [to Him] from whom she received it."[376] Ratzinger here uses the bride metaphor to express the close bond between Christ and the Church. The Church has received the Word from Christ, and has been formed in such manner by the Word that she expresses the sense of the faithful as Bride. Or, to put it differently: because the Church as Bride has been formed by the Word, the Bride's answer can be regarded as reliable. Ratzinger does make the further specification that mature doctrinal knowledge can only be called that if the doctrines in question are also taught in the various local Churches in accordance with the local bishops as being part of the faith. Only then can it be taught by the pope as an extraordinary definition of the magisterium.

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are persons, unlike the other living beings in the world about them. The woman is another 'I' in a common humanity" (MD 6). Men and women complement each other and are called to unity and community. In his letter, the pope attributes gender-specific characteristics to women, such as "special openness to the new person," "a sincere gift of self," "unique intuition" (all MD 18), and "moral and spiritual strength (…) in a special way" (MD 30). New Feminism reflects on the relationship between men and women and on the role of women in the Church on the basis of complementarity between men and women. For a survey of the views proposed in this feminist movement see: Michele M. Schumacher, ed., *Women in Christ: Toward a New Feminism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004). For an overview of other strands of feminism, see: Natalie K. Watson, *Feminist Ecclesiology*, in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church* (eds. Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge; N.Y./London: Routledge, 2008), 461-475; Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu, eds., *New Feminist Christianiy: Many Voices, Many Views* (Woodstock, Vt.: SkyLight Paths, 2010). The current study cannot systematically discuss the various schools of feminist thought. It will, however, more generally include in the discussion the views of feminist theology on the bride metaphor.

[376] "Es den wahren 'consensus fidelium' ausdrückt, die unverfälschte Stimme von Christi Braut, die das Wort des Herrn zurückträgt, von dem sie es empfangen hat." Ratzinger, *Das neue Volk*, 168.

What is important in the context of the current study is that the bride metaphor is used to express the idea that the Church as Bride is formed by Christ the Bridegroom, and that this enables the Church as a whole, in the person of the pope, to make doctrinal definitions.[377]

Kurt Koch has highlighted yet another aspect of the Bride who turns to Christ. In the first part of his ecclesiological study *Die Kirche Gottes* (2007) he introduces the bride metaphor only once, in the context of the Eucharist. The Eucharist makes Christ's sacrifice on the cross sacramentally present; Christ's sacrifice is also the Church's sacrifice. Koch argues that the Church as the Body of Christ is included in Christ's sacrifice. To elucidate this participation further, Koch has recourse to the bride metaphor: the Bride of Christ does this "in obedient submission".[378] Koch illustrates this attitude by referring to a passage from the third Eucharistic Prayer: "May he make of us an eternal offering to you." By referring to this passage from the Eucharistic Prayer, Koch indicates that the Church also becomes an offering herself, in imitation of Christ. The Bride follows the Bridegroom in the sacrifice of the cross. She cannot do this on her own, however, and this is why it is succeeded by the petition: "may he make of us an eternal offering to you." The Bride's gift of self is a gift that the Bride is given.[379]

In his *Die Kirche Gottes: Eine katholische Ekklesiologie* (1992), Medard Kehl points to a potential danger of the bride metaphor when it is taken out of its context and applied to a different time and a different situation. This can lead ultimately to erroneous conclusions being drawn.[380] In this case, Kehl refers to the position of women. The female metaphors for the Church, expressed in the historical, cultural, and social context of the New Testament era are expressive for the Church at the time and, if the right hermeneutical procedure is followed, also for the Church today. For the bride metaphor this concerns among other things the motif of the hearing and receptive bride, the motif of being subject. Thus the bride metaphor articulates something about the Church. It could lead to unwarranted conclusions if the metaphor of the receptive and subordinate woman, a familiar image for the first readers of the Epistle to the Ephesians, were to be applied not only to the relationship between Christ and the Church, but also to the position of women in general and at all times. This is what has in fact happened throughout most of the history of the Church, and it has led to a structural devaluation of women both within and outside the Church. Kehl

[377] Cf. for the paragraph as a whole: ibid., 163-170.
[378] "In gehorsamer Unterordnung." Koch, *Die Kirche Gottes*, 125.
[379] Cf. for the paragraph as a whole: ibid., 125-129.
[380] This was also mentioned in the first chapter of this study: *Metaphors and culture*. See chapter 1.1.2.2.

first argues that it is necessary to reject the prevailing androcentric image of God and the world. This will then lead automatically to a new perception of the position of women in the Church. As far as the bride metaphor is concerned in relation to Christ and the Church, Kehl believes the core of this statement for our time is no longer the aspect of being subject, but mutual friendship.[381]

Like Kehl, a number of feminist theologians, including Natalie Watson and Natalie Knödel, have criticised the generally androcentric image of God and the world that is dominant in theology. Metaphors and models used for the Church have generally been developed by men, while women themselves never spoke of these models, according to these theologians. They have observed in this context that the bride metaphor does says something about Christ and the Church, but is also used to justify and perpetuate the hetero-patriarchal structure of oppression and exclusion of women.[382] They have argued that it is necessary to reread the old texts from a female perspective.[383]

In her analysis of Ep 5:22-33, Carolyn Osiek has pointed out that even if the bride metaphor is not consciously used or abused to perpetuate inequality between men and women, specifically the subjection of women to men, gender symbolism nevertheless runs the risk of almost automatically fixing role patterns. She says the following about the bride metaphor:

> Both men and women do, however, make the connection that the ecclesial marriage metaphor means that women as members of the church should be submissive, however troublesome that realization may be, and whether they accept or reject it. Men certainly do identify not with the church in the metaphor, as members of it, but with Christ, because such identifications suit male interests. Herein lies the great danger posed by this ecclesiological metaphor: it encourages men to identify with Christ, women with the church.[384]

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[381] Cf. Kehl, *Die Kirche*, 28-29.

[382] Cf. Watson, *Feminist Ecclesiology*, 464-466; Natalie Knödel, "The Church as a Woman or Women being Church? Ecclesiology and Theology Anthropology in Feminist Dialogue," *T&S* 7 (1997): 103-119.

[383] In their analysis of models, practically all strands of feminism follow three steps: 1) analysis of the model, demonstrating how the issue of gender has so far been ignored and how culturally determined assumptions have been used explicitly and implicitly; 2) deconstruction of what the results of the analysis; and 3) reconstruction by rereading the text in an alternative way that is constructive for women, and investigation of the possibilities that this opens for ecclesiology. Cf. Watson, *Introducing Feminist Ecclesiology*, 33.

[384] Osiek, "The Bride of Christ," 38.

Osiek then concludes that if it is clear that a metaphor is detrimental to a certain group, in this case women, and that it impedes their theological and spiritual development, this metaphor should be "downplayed or abandoned."[385] Metaphors should instead contribute to the dignity of every human being as the image of God, and should affirm the equality of men and women.[386] Osiek points here to an implicit danger of the use of the bride metaphor. We have already quoted the dictum that "the price of the employment of models is eternal vigilance" a number of times in this study."[387] This comment has so far been quoted in reference to the danger of affording absolute value to any metaphor, thus creating a kind of conceptual blind spot. This vigilance must also be applied to the use of a metaphor itself: does a metaphor contribute to the building up of the Church community, and does it contribute to the dignity and development of every member of the community or not? If the latter is true, the metaphor must not be used, or as Osiek says: "Like all life, metaphors need to grow and expand in order to be viable and survive."[388]

In summary we can say that the Old Testament's derived metaphor THE BRIDE FOLLOWS THE BRIDEGROOM recurs in the writings of the New Testament and is applied there to the Church as Bride. Just as brides at the time were subject to their husbands, so the Church is permanently subject to Christ the Bridegroom, and she listens to the Word of the Bridegroom. The metaphor therefore expresses that the Church is oriented in everything to Christ. The theme of hierarchical order and of subjection also occurs in the Early Church, but the bride metaphor does not play much of a role in this context. As to the contemporary theologians, it is clear that they focus especially on the sinfulness of the Bride in relation to Christ, and much less on what the positive meanings of being the Bride of Christ could be. If there

[385] Ibid., 38.
[386] Cf. ibid., 38-39.
[387] Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 12.
[388] Osiek, "The Bride of Christ," 38. Incidentally, the magisterium of the Church agrees that the exegesis of Ep 5:22 must never lead to subjection or oppression of women. On the basis of previous statements by Pope John Paul II, Pope Francis writes the following about this in the exhortation *Amoris laetitia*: "This passage [Ep 5:22] mirrors the cultural categories of the time, but our concern is not with its cultural matrix but with the revealed message that it conveys. As Saint John Paul II wisely observed: 'Love excludes every kind of subjection whereby the wife might become a servant or a slave of the husband... The community or unity which they should establish through marriage is constituted by a reciprocal donation of self, which is also a mutual subjection'". Francis, "Amoris laetitia," *AAS* 108/4 (2016): 311-446, henceforth AL with article number used in the English translation, at 156.

is positive mention of the Bride in relation to the Bridegroom, it is usually in the context of a reference to Mary. She is the image of how the Church could experience its identity as Bride in its fullness. Mary's attitude of receptiveness and obedience to the Word of the Bridegroom are characteristic of the Church's identity as Bride. Several feminist theologians, including Watson, have criticised this idealisation of Mary, because it involves creating an ideal picture of Mary that is unattainable for women. Other feminist theologians, such as Miller, believe that Mary can function as a positive ideal. Ratzinger concludes that the Church as Bride expresses the sense of the faithful, because her words are a response to the Word of Christ the Bridegroom that she received. Koch stresses that the Bride also follows the Bridegroom on the way of the Cross.

Finally we must mention Kehl's warning that a female metaphor for the Church should not be translated unreflectively to the position of women in today's Church. Given the danger of erroneous interpretations of the bride's subjection to the bridegroom, the core message of the bride metaphor today can no longer be this notion of subjection, but must be that of mutual friendship. Theologians such as Watson, Knödel and Osiek have also pointed to the dangers that use of the bride metaphor entails for the position of women. They have observed that the bride metaphor is not just used to address the relationship between Christ and his Church, but is especially abused to justify and perpetuate the hetero-patriarchal structure of oppression and exclusion of women. In our final assessment of whether the bride metaphor can still be meaningful today, we will have to inquire to what extent the metaphor contributes to the building up of the community and whether the metaphor contributes to the dignity and development of every member of the community.

This summary is also the place to look once again to the other great metaphors for the Church. The *Societas perfecta* metaphor expresses that a community is autonomous and can meet all its needs itself. The metaphor provides no clues about how the community in question is structured, or about who leads it and who the followers are. A *societas perfecta* might have a monarchical structure, or a democratic one, or indeed any other kind of structure. When it comes to the Church, the *Societas perfecta* metaphor does not immediately indicate that its members stand under the Word of Christ and must, for instance, be prepared to go the way of the cross. The metaphor needs other metaphors to express these ideas. The metaphors of the People of God and the Body of Christ can once again be discussed here together. Both metaphors almost automatically point to a hierarchy. Here, too, the modifiers "of God" and "of Christ" immediately indicate who the Head is. Both metaphors include the connotation of *standing under the*

Word, but that of *being prepared to go the way of the cross* is more clearly present in the Body of Christ than in the People of God metaphor. The Sacrament metaphor does say something about being a sign in the world and about the Church's mission in the world. This metaphor can also point to the idea that members of the community, in view of this mission, stand under the Word, and that they may encounter the cross. The *Communio* metaphor, as we have seen, is rather unspecific, and this means there is much leeway in interpreting this metaphor. The relational aspect does form part of *communio*, but because the relationships are not further defined, it is unclear how the members within the community relate to each other and who might possibly have a leadership or animating role. The bride metaphor could help in this respect to emphasise that there is an alterity within the community, and that the community stands under the Word of this other One, and that the imitation of the cross is a reality for the community.

3.3.2.4. Summary

In this section we have looked at the *Church is Bridal relationship*. In three subsections we have successively discussed: 1) unity and exclusiveness in the relationship between Bridegroom and Bride; 2) the way in which the Bridegroom forms the Bride; and finally 3) the way in which the Bride follows the Bridegroom. Having come to the end of this section, we will briefly recapitulate the most important results of the research and try to discover what the deeper significance is that the bride metaphor can bring to discourse about the essence and the life of the Church today.

The first subsection, *Unity and exclusiveness in the relationship between Bridegroom and Bride* (section 3.3.2.1.) allows us to conclude, first of all, that the bride metaphor has over the centuries highlighted the relationship of love between Christ and his Church. This relationship of love is one, exclusive, personal, and is characterised by faithfulness. The notions of exclusiveness and faithfulness were emphasised particularly in the New Testament: one man is betrothed to one woman (2 Co 11:2). Contemporary theologians focus mainly on the aspect of union between Christ and his Church.

These contemporary theologians use the bride metaphor in various different ways to explain the union between Christ and his Church. On the one hand the union between Christ and his Church encompasses much more than the union between the people of the Old Testament and God. This latter union came to be after God chose a people for Himself, and it consisted, so to speak, of two parties who were joined together without losing their own respective identities. The union between Christ and his Church resulted from

the Church's divine origin and from the fact that Christ and the Church are animated by one and the same Spirit: "one Pneuma, that is: one single new 'spiritual' existence." The idea that the Church is of divine origin is also emphasised by the Church Fathers, who use the image of Eve who came from Adam's side to illustrate this. For the Church Fathers, the Church is the New Eve. On the other hand, the Church is not an organic whole like a body with its many members, because there is always the presence of an alterity. This alterity also ensures that the Bride is free in relation to the Bridegroom. This freedom is necessary to be able to return the Bridegroom's love.

In comparison to the other great metaphors for the Church, the bride metaphor expresses most clearly that the core of being a Christian and of being Church is to live a personal and exclusive relationship of love with Christ. All great metaphors highlight the unity of the Church, but it is really only the bride metaphor that directly expresses that this unity is a lived, exclusive relationship of love with Christ.

In the second subsection, *the Bridegroom forms the Bride* (section 3.3.2.2.), we have looked at Christ the Bridegroom, who has the initiative in the relationship with the Bride. Christ is the Head in the order of love. Christ the Bridegroom's love consists of this, that He has delivered Himself up, that He gave His life "while we were still sinners" (Rm 5:8). In the context of the bride metaphor, Christ's gift of self can be called a bride price. John Chrysostom stresses that this is an unprecedented bride price, because "no bridegroom lays down his life for his bride." In this sense, the bride metaphor teaches us that ultimately everything that comes from Christ in relation to the Church is a gift and is thus pure grace.

Contemporary theologians have shown on the basis of the bride metaphor that the Church cannot live without Christ. They have pointed to the Holy Spirit, who animates the Body, but also to the sacrament of the Eucharist, in which Christ abidingly gives Himself and in which the union between Bridegroom and Bride is made present anew so that it can be experienced. The idea of formation by the Word as expressed through the bride metaphor is used primarily by the magisterium of the Church, which characterises the dialogue between Christ and the Church as a nuptial dialogue. The aspect of sanctification and the image of the bridal bath do not appear in contemporary ecclesiological works.

When we compare the bride metaphor to the other great metaphors for the Church, it is clear that the People of God metaphor and the Body of Christ metaphor also include aspects such as election and being led and/or formed by God/Christ. This is much less clearly the case for the other great metaphors.

In the third subsection, *The Bride follows the Bridegroom* (section 3.3.2.3.), we investigated the Bride's orientation to the Bridegroom. One of the aspects here is the hierarchical position of the community. Just as in New Testament times women were subject to men, so the Church is subject to Christ. In the Early Church, the hierarchical position of the community was expressed mainly through the body metaphor. By contrast, the Church Fathers rarely or never use the bride metaphor to speak of the hierarchical position of the community. Contemporary theologians similarly very rarely discuss the aspect of subjection to the Bridegroom. Kurt Koch does mention "in obedient submission" and interprets this as relating specifically to Christ's sacrifice on the cross. In imitation of Christ, the Church, too, must be prepared to go the way of the cross. Other theologians point out that the Bride's loyalty to her Bridegroom is imperfect and will remain so. When theologians speak of perfect loyalty, they point to Mary. Mary is the image, as it were, of how the Church is able to experience its bridal quality in its fullness. The theologians who emphasise this are mainly men. Certain feminist theologians have criticised the idealisation of Mary, which they think fails to do justice to the womanhood of all women. For other feminist theologians, by contrast, Mary is an ideal role model.

Medard Kehl has pointed to the risk of cutting the bride metaphor off from its original context and uncritically using the metaphoric language in a different time and situation. The symbolic language of the receptive and subordinate woman, which was meaningful with regard to the relationship between Christ and his Church in the New Testament era, is then applied to the position of women in contemporary culture and in today's Church. This has happened throughout history and it is still happening today, resulting in the structural undervaluation of women within the Church. It is for this reason that feminist theologians prefer no longer to use the bride metaphor, searching instead for new, contemporary metaphors. In any case they also advocate a reinterpretation of this old metaphor from a female perspective. We will have to assess at the end of this study whether the bride metaphor can still speak to us today. An important criterion in doing so is that the metaphor must contribute to the building up of the community and to the dignity and development of each member of the community.

In comparison to the other great metaphors for the Church, the aspect of hierarchical position requires further elaboration particularly in the case of the *Societas perfecta* and *Communio* metaphors. The Church's orientation to Christ and the Church's position under Christ, the Head, are not immediate connotations of these two metaphors. We have seen that the bride metaphor is better not used to address the hierarchical position of the community. The

aspect of "in obedient submission" can, however, be used to discuss the sacrifice of the cross.

3.3.3. The Church's Wedding Garment

The wedding garment is one aspect of the bride metaphor. Both the Old and the New Testament pay much attention to the bride's garment and attire. In the Old Testament, the bride's attire plays an important role in the books both of the Prophet Hosea and of the Prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah. Our analysis has yielded two points: that bridal attire says something about the qualities that must characterise the new community, and that the bridal attire indicates who will belong to the new community.

As regards the qualities of the new community, God gives the gifts of *righteousness*, *justice*, *loyalty*, *compassion* and *faithfulness* as a kind of ornament (cf. Hos 2:21-22). These gifts permit the Bride to *know* (יָדַע, *yâda)* the Bridegroom. This knowing, as the analysis has shown, means knowing the essence of God, and that is love. The aspect of love has also been found in Isaiah in the derived metaphor THE LOVE OF YHWH IS THE JEWEL OF THE BRIDE. Is 61:10 speaks of clothing "in garments of salvation" and "in a cloak of righteousness."

The jewels of the bride are also used in the Old Testament to describe the return of the exiles to Sion and the repopulation of the city. Not only the tribes of Israel will return to Sion, but all those who recognise the Lord as God: THE RETURNING EXILES AND ALL THOSE WHO RECOGNISE YHWH AS THE ONLY GOD ARE THE JEWELS OF THE BRIDE. We have also seen that all members of the people of God are like precious bridal ornaments.

In the New Testament, the wedding garment is used to address the essence of the Church, to say that she is pure, "with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that" (Ep 5:27). Just as in the Old Testament, the bride is clothed by the bridegroom. Unlike in the Old Testament, however, the bride in the New Testament also bears responsibility herself for the wedding garment. This is a kind of *pre-wedding toilette* (cf. Rv 19:7). By her clothes and jewels, a bride shows that she is preparing for her new role as spouse: "the bride is a figure who is in the process of moving into a new role or identity."[389] Clothes make this transformation visible. In the parable of the unwilling guests and the wedding feast (Mt 22:1-14), wedding clothes are a metaphor for doing justice. In this parable, the wedding garment determines whether or not someone will participate in the wedding feast. On the whole

[389] Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 150-151.

it can be seen that in the New Testament the wedding garment and the bride's jewels point to very diverse aspects of being Church.

The Church Fathers regularly use the metaphor of the wedding garment. For Ambrose (339-397), the garment of the wedding guests in Mt 22:1-14 stands for the "wedding garment of the Faith."[390] He who is not wearing this garment will not be saved: "He will cast him into outer darkness, if he keep not the Faith and peace."[391] In his commentary on Matthew's Gospel, Jerome (347-420) regards the man in Mt 22:1-14 who is found without a wedding garment as a representative of all evildoers. "The wedding garments are the Lord's commands and the works that are fulfilled from the Law and the Gospel."[392] They who do not do what is good, have once again put on the old man, and this will ultimately lead to their rejection at the judgement.[393]

In a sermon on Mt 22:1-14 Augustine (354-430) similarly addresses the significance of the bridal garment. First of all he observes that the passage is not literally about the wedding garment that the guests are wearing, but about the heart: "the garment, in fact, was being observed on the heart, not on the body."[394] He then continues by outlining what the wedding garment does *not* represent: the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, church attendance, or miracles. All these things happen to both the good and the bad. Instead, the wedding garment signifies "love from a pure heart, and from a good conscience and from an unfeigned faith (…) It's only such love that is the wedding garment."[395] Augustine refers for this to 1 Co 13:3: "If I distribute all my goods for the use of the poor, and if I hand over my body to be burned, but do not have love, it is of no use to me at all."[396] And then he

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[390] "Nuptialem vestimentum fidei." Ambrose, *De fide* 4,2,15. English translation: Philip Schaff, *Ambrose: Select Works and Letters* (NPNF 2/10; first ed. 1896; repr. Paebody: Hendrickson Publeshers, 1995), 264.

[391] "Proiciet eum in tenebras exteriores, (…) si fidem pacemque non servet." Ambrose, *De fide* 4,2,15. English translation, ibid. 264.

[392] "Vestis autem nuptialis, praecepta sunt Domini, et opera quæ complentur ex lege et Evangelio." Jerome, *Commentariorum in Matheum* IV,22,12. English translation: Thomas P. Scheck, *St. Jerome: Commentary on Matthew* (FaCh 117; Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 250.

[393] Cf. Saint Jerome, *Commentariorum in Matheum* IV,22,13.

[394] "Vestis quippe illa in corde, non in carne inspiciebatur." Augustine, *Sermo* 90,4. English translation: Edmund Hill, *Sermons III (51-94) on the New Testament* (The Works of Saint Augustine; New York: New City Press, 1991), 449.

[395] "Caritas de corde puro, et conscientia bona, et fide non ficta. … Talis caritas vestis est nuptialis." Augustine, *Sermo* 90,6. English translation: Ibid.: 451.

[396] "Si distribuero omnia mea in usum pauperum, et si tradidero corpus meum ut ardeam, caritatem non habeam, nihil mihi prodest." Augustine, *Sermo* 90,6. English translation: Ibid.: 451.

admonishes his audience to put on the wedding garment: not to seek their own interests, but those of Jesus Christ.[397] At the conclusion of his sermon, Augustine connects the wedding garment with the first creation story and humankind's original destiny: "that's the way charity should be nourished, and eventually brought to perfection. That's how the wedding garment should be put on. That's how the image of God to which we were created should be progressively sculpted afresh."[398]

Finally, we will also mention John Chrysostom (345-407). In his baptismal instruction he does not refer explicitly to a wedding garment, but more generally to the garment that the newly baptised put on after their baptism. Chrysostom describes the whole event of baptism using the metaphor of bridegroom and bride, which means we can call the baptismal gown a wedding garment even if he does not do so himself. For Chrysostom, the wedding garment is a metaphor for Christ himself: "We put off the old garment, which has been made filthy with the abundance of our sins; we put on the new one, which is free from every stain. What am I saying? We put on Christ Himself. *For all you*, says St. Paul, *who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*."[399]

It is striking in the explanation given by the Church Fathers that they generally apply the wedding garment to the individual believer and not to the Church as a whole. This is, of course, understandable in the case of the exegesis of Mt 22:1-14. In Revelation, however, the passage is not about the individual believer, but about the Church as a whole: the Bride has made herself ready (Rv 19:7; 21:2) and is clothed in "dazzling white linen" (Rv 19:8). How do contemporary theologians interpret this?

Henri de Lubac in his *Méditation sur l'église* (1953) does not mention the Church's wedding garment very frequently. He does, however, speak on several occasions of the beauty of the Bride. De Lubac does this for instance when he addresses the *vir ecclesiasticus*, *the man of the Church*. The *vir ecclesiasticus*, a priest or layperson, is a man or woman who embraces all aspects of being Church in Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium. The *vir ecclesiasticus* does not accentuate apparent discrepancies and contradictions, but knows that they complement each other and are eventually merged in the "bond of love": "If he [the *vir ecclesiasticus*] were to take it upon himself to reduce everything to uniformity, he would consider himself as marring the

[397] Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 90,6.

[398] "Sic caritas nutriatur, ut nutrita perficiatur: sic uestis nuptialis induatur: sic imago dei, ad quam creati sumus, proficiendo resculpatur." Augustine, *Sermo* 90,10. English translation: Ibid.: 455.

[399] John Chrysostom, *Catecheses baptismales* 3,2,11. English translation: Harkins, *St. John Chrystostom*, 47.

beauty of Christ's Bride."[400] De Lubac regards the plurality of the Church as an essential treasure for the Church.[401] This treasure would be diminished if the Bride were to be laced too tightly into a corset, to stay in the linguistic field of the bride metaphor. De Lubac does not give examples. The beauty of the Church will not be fully evident until the end of time. Only in Mary, according to De Lubac, can this beauty already be seen now: "for her response to the divine forestalling is total and immediate and her Beloved can say to her at once: 'There is no spot in thee' (Cant 4:7)."[402] We see that De Lubac here equates Mary's beauty with completely and unconditionally responding to the Word of the Lord.

Another aspect is not just the beauty of the Bride, but also the beauty of the Bridegroom. De Lubac points out on the basis of a reference to Gregory of Nyssa (335-394), that it is very important that any Christian community be faithful to Christ, because, "each man can see the beauty of the Bridegroom through the Bride. (…) He puts a reflection of His own beauty on the face of the Church; and thus those who love the Bridegroom rise, through her, to the invisible God."[403] Ultimately, Christ Himself is the beauty of the Church. De Lubac does not use the metaphor of the Bride who is clothed by the Bridegroom to express this, but there are clear echoes of this metaphor.

In *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission* (2011), Walter Kasper discusses the wedding garment very briefly. He observes that the bride metaphor is used in the Old Testament on the one hand to recall the bride days of old, and on the other to make the promise of new bride days. This promise, Kasper says, still provides us with orientation: "It is to illustrate the necessity of repentance, cleansing and penance and to instruct us to be vigilant and prepared and beautifully dressed for the bridegroom coming to the wedding, so that when he comes we can meet him with burning lamps of love."[404] The Bride's preparations, metaphorically

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[400] "En voulant de son propre chef tout réduire à l'uniformité, il se jugerait ennemi de la beauté de l'Épouse." De Lubac, *Méditation*, 218 (153). Cf. for the wider description of the vir ecclesiasticus: idem: 209-222 (146-156).

[401] To express the immaculate beauty of the Church, De Lubac elsewhere in *Méditation sur l'église* quotes the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (1943), and then mentions the following aspects: the sacraments, the faith guarded intact, the laws of the Church, the evangelical counsels, and the charisms. Cf. ibid., 249-250 (178).

[402] "Sa réponse aux prévenances divines est immédiate et totale, et son Bien-Aimé peut aussitôt lui dire: 'Il n'y a pas de tache en toi' (Cant 4:7)." Ibid., 296 (213).

[403] "Chacun peut contempler à travers l'Épouse la beauté de l'Époux. … Sur le visage de cette Église Il met un reflet de sa propre beauté, de sorte que les amis de l'Époux s'élèvent par elle jusqu'à l'Invisible." Ibid., 198 (139).

[404] Kasper, *The Catholic Church,* 134.

speaking her pre-wedding toilette, consist therefore of constant conversion, metanoia, and of burning lamps, which represent love.[405]

In conclusion we can say that the wedding garment is a frequently-used theme both in the Old and in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Bride is clothed "in garments of salvation" and "in a cloak of righteousness" (Is 61:10). These gifts permit the Bride to become acquainted with the Bridegroom. Similarly, in the New Testament, the Bride is clothed, but here the Bride also clothes herself and prepares for her new role as a spouse. This is particularly the case in the two parables in Matthew's Gospel, which show that being prepared or not for the coming of the Bridegroom affects whether or not one will be admitted to the wedding feast. The Church Fathers especially emphasise this latter aspect and warn their audience that it is important to be prepared. The wedding garment is interpreted as the faith (Ambrose), good works (Jerome), the love of a pure heart (Augustine), and as Christ Himself (Chrysostom).

Contemporary theologians say little about the wedding garment and the Bride being clothed in relation to the Church. This is remarkable, because the clothing of the Bride is a theme that is addressed extensively in the Old Testament. Her clothes, so to speak, allow the Bride to reflect the light of God and they draw the bride "into the intimate relationship with him [God] that he has initiated."[406] The bride, in her turn, through her clothes and her jewels shows that she is preparing for her new role as a spouse: "the bride is a figure who is in the process of moving into a new role or identity."[407] We will return to the question what the wedding garment could mean today for the essence and the life of the Church at the end of this chapter.

We must now look, finally, at the great metaphors for the Church to see what the wedding garment can add to discourse about the Church in relation to these metaphors. The *Societas perfecta* metaphor is particularly expressive about the Church's autonomy and its institutional aspects. *Societas perfecta* as such says nothing about the values that the community lives and proclaims. The bride metaphor and the aspect of the wedding garment can therefore contribute to a deeper understanding: values such as *righteousness*, *justice*, *loyalty*, *compassion* and *faithfulness* are the Church's own values; and love is a kind of bond that joins together the whole Church and functions as a kind of guideline for action at all levels of the Church.

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[405] The ecclesiological works mentioned and cited in this study do not contain any further development of the theme of the wedding garment: Ratzinger, *Das Volk Gottes*; McBrien, *Do We Need the Church*; Dulles, *Models of the Church*; Medard Kehl, *Die Kirche*; La Soujeole, *Introduction*; Koch, *Die Kirche Gottes*.

[406] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 940.

[407] Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 150-151.

The People of God and the Body of Christ metaphors, because of the modifiers "of God" and "of Christ", already contain clear indications of the values of the community. Both metaphors highlight the fact that the community should be imbued with core values such as those that have just been mentioned, with love as the highest value. The Sacrament metaphor points to the Church's semiotic character and her mission in the world. The same applies to the Sacrament metaphor as to the *Societas perfecta* metaphor. The metaphor itself says nothing about its substance. The wedding garment can help to emphasise the aspect of love, of doing good works, so as to become a sign and instrument of God's love. The *Communio* metaphor, finally, says much about the relational aspects with God and within the community, but it is not immediately clear what the tenor of these relationships is. Just as with the *Societas perfecta* metaphor and the Sacrament metaphor, the bride metaphor and the aspect of the wedding garment can contribute to a deeper understanding: love is the distinguishing feature of ecclesial communities and of relationships within them.

3.3.4. The Church is Bridal joy

Another aspect of the Old Testament bride metaphor is joy. There is joy when the voice of bridegroom and bride is heard, and whenever bridegroom and bride are together. The wedding garment itself, as the analysis has shown, represents joy in the Old Testament. Our analysis has furthermore demonstrated that bridal joy is the ultimate joy. Joy is also associated in the Old Testament with the Messianic time: there will be overwhelming joy when the new era of redemption comes. This gives joy an eschatological connotation in the Old Testament. Joy will be a characteristic mark of the new community.

There is a clear connection in the New Testament between the presence of the bridegroom and joy. The coming of Jesus the Bridegroom heralds the coming of the Messianic time. This is not a time of fasting and sadness, but of joy. There is joy wherever the bridegroom is (Mk 2:19) or wherever the bridegroom's voice is heard (Jn 3:29). In Rv, joy is associated with the marriage of the Lamb: when the Marriage of the Lamb is mentioned in a vision, this is followed by the exclamation "let us be glad and joyful" (Rv 19:7). Unlike John's Gospel, Rv contains a call to joy; by contrast, joy in John's Gospel is the joy that fulfils. In John's Gospel, joy is not just an

eschatological notion, but a reality in the present, which is dependent on whether or not Christ the Bridegroom is present.[408]

Joy is also a frequently recurring theme in the Early Church. Here, too, the true joy is linked to Christ. In a reflection on joy, John Chrysostom contends that all human beings carry within them a longing for joy, and that all human activities have joy as their end. Many people think, according to Chrysostom, that joy can be found in wealth, but he makes the observation that many wealthy people are sad, and that wealth therefore is no guarantee for joy. All human joy is ultimately fleeting and ephemeral. By contrast, in a reference to Ph 4:5, Chrysostom argues that "he who rejoices *in the Lord*, cannot be deprived of the pleasure by anything that may happen."[409] The fear of God is a precondition for being able to participate in joy in the Lord. The person who fears God and places their trust in Him "gathers from the very root of pleasure, and has possession of the whole fountain of joy."[410]

The Church Fathers do not develop the idea of bridal joy as a specific kind of joy. But they do speak of joy in the context of the bride metaphor. Thus Augustine in a sermon on Jn 3:29 comments that John the Baptist was filled with joy upon hearing the voice of the bridegroom. This is no joy that John the Baptist created himself, according to Augustine, "for who wishes to rejoice in himself will be sad; but who wishes to rejoice in God will always rejoice because God is eternal."[411] For Augustine the true joy is of divine origin. This is why he can say: "Do you wish to have eternal joy? Adhere to

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[408] Joy is a recurring *topo*s particularly in the farewell discourse in the Gospel of John. There, too, joy is linked to the person of Jesus: ἡ χαρὰ ἡ ἐμὴ ἐν ὑμῖν, *my own joy in you* (Jn 15:11) and ἵνα ἔχωσιν τὴν χαρὰν τὴν ἐμὴν πεπληρωμένην ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, *that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves* (Joh 17:13). It is unique to John that he speaks of a joy that πληρωθῇ, *may be full* (Jn 15:11) and πεπληρωμένη, *may be, having been full* (Jn 16:24; 1 Jn 1:4; 2 Jn 1:12). By contrast with Jn 3:29, which mentions a joy that has been fulfilled (πεπλήρωται) in John the Baptist and that has therefore reached its completion, the Johannine community is conscious of the fact that the fullness of joy is ultimately an eschatological concept. This is why, except in Jn 3:29, joy is always discussed in ἵνα sentences. Cf. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium 13-21*, 117-118.

[409] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues*, 18,6. Translated by Members of the English Church, *The Homilies of Saint Chrysostom on the Statues or to the People of Antioch* (Library of Fathers 9; Oxford: H.J Parker, 1842), 298.

[410] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues*, 18,6. Cf. for the issue as a whole: Idem, 18,1-6. Other Church Fathers similarly remark that true joy can only be found in God. Human beings will receive their share of this joy at the end of time. Cf. for instance Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus haereses*, V,34-35.

[411] Augustine, *Io. eu. tr.*, 14,2,2. English translation: John W. Rettig, *St. Augustine: Tractates on the Gospel of John* (FaCh 79; Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 64.

him who is eternal."[412] Augustine writes similarly about joy in his work *De sancta virginitate*, where he gives a wholly Christological interpretation of joy: "These are the joys of Christ's virgins, issuing from Christ, in Christ, with Christ, following Christ, through Christ, because of Christ."[413]

If we look at the contemporary theologians, we see that they scarcely refer to this theme of (bridal) joy in their ecclesiological works. In his *Méditation sur l'église* (1953), De Lubac links joy to the Mother metaphor: the Church rejoices at the birth of her children.[414] In *Die Kirche Gottes* (2007), Kurt Koch very briefly touches on joy when he discusses the mystery of Mary and the Church. The Angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary, Χαῖρε, *Rejoice* (Lk 1:28), is more than just a greeting, according to Koch. The Messianic joy of the Old Testament resonates in this greeting. The subsequent word used to address Mary, κεχαριτωμένη, *favoured one* (Lk 1:28), contains the word χάρις, *grace*, which is derived from the same root as the word χαρά, *joy*. Koch argues that according to the Bible, grace is the source of all joy, and joy originates in grace. But Koch does not pursue this insight further by inquiring what it might mean for being Church today.[415] The other contemporary theologians rarely discuss the notion of joy in their ecclesiological works either.

By contrast with these contemporary ecclesiological works, the magisterium of the Church has taken an interest in joy as a characteristic of being Church. In the four constitutions of the Second Vatican Council, the notion of joy is infrequent and is rarely mentioned as a specific feature of being Church. *Lumen gentium* mentions the joy of the Church only once, when it speaks of our Mother the Church, who rejoices at all her members who imitate Christ with great dedication in a life of poverty and obedience.[416] *Sacrosanctum Concilium* speaks once of the Church that

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[412] Augustine, *Io. eu. tr.*, 14,2,3. English translation: Ibid.: 64.

[413] "Gaudium virginum Christi, de Christo, in Christo, cum Christo, post Christum, per Christum, propter Christum." Augustine, *De sancta virginitate* 27. English translation: P.G. Walsh, *Augustine: De bono coniugali; De sancta virginitate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 101.

[414] Cf. De Lubac, *Méditation*, 282 (203).

[415] Cf. Koch, *Die Kirche Gottes*, 234-235.

[416] Cf. LG 42. The word *gaudium*, *joy*, occurs only twice in *Lumen gentium*. On both occasions, the joy in question is earthly: the joy that the pastors of the Church experience in the exercise of their duties (LG 37), and the joy of the council (LG 69). The word *gaudere, to rejoice*, occurs slightly more frequently, referring primarily to the earthly form of rejoicing. Cf. for instance LG 18, 23. There is also a single reference to *spes gaudentes, joyous hope* (LG 41) and to *spiritu gaudentes*, *spiritually rejoicing* (LG 43). This latter *spiritually rejoicing* is ascribed to religious. There is no further

"joyfully contemplates"[417] Mary; Mary who is indissolubly connected to the salvific work of her Son. Despite bearing the word joy in its title, *Gaudium et spes* does not address joy as a specific topic in its own right. "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age," the Constitution's opening words say, "these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ."[418] Only GS 45, the last article of the first part, returns to joy to interpret it Christologically: "For God's Word (…) [is] the joy of every heart and the answer to all its yearnings."[419] Joy is mentioned on two other occasions in the rest of *Gaudium et spes*, but on both occasions this is a reference to earthly joy.[420] Finally, there is no mention at all of joy in *Dei verbum*.

On 9 May 1974, Paul VI issued an apostolic letter called *Gaudete in Domino,* which was entirely dedicated to joy.[421] It was written on the occasion of the Holy Year. True joy, Paul VI wrote, is the spiritual joy that springs from the Triune God and is founded in divine love. Love and joy are thus inseparably linked. All people who believe in Christ are called to participate in this joy and to bear the fullness of the joy of Jesus within them (cf. Jn 17:13). Human beings are not able to manufacture this joy themselves, but it is a gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rm 14:17; Ga 5:22). The joy of being in God's love already begins on earth, but ultimately for earthly human beings, true joy is an eschatological reality.[422]

Paul VI nowhere specifically mentions bridal joy, but he does quote a number of passages from the Old and New Testaments that discuss joy in the context of the bride metaphor. Joy in the Old Testament is joy at the salvation that the people of God is time and time again allowed to experience, a joy that has grown despite so many tribulations and ruptures, and that is oriented to fulfilment. Paul VI quotes Isaiah to describe this fulfilled joy:

> Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age. (...) For as a

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explanation as to what this joy means, but the adjective *spiritual* indicates that this joy is clearly different than earthly joy.

[417] "Cum gaudio contemplatur." SC 103. Moreover, there is also a reference in SC to Sunday as *dies laetitiae*, *day of joy* (SC 106) and to the joy of Easter morning (SC 110).

[418] "Gaudium et spes, luctus et angor hominum huius temporis, (…) gaudium sunt et spes, luctus et angor etiam Christi discipulorum." GS 1.

[419] "Verbum enim Dei (…) omnium cordium gaudium eorumque appetitionum plenitude." SC 45.

[420] Cf. SC 52 and 62.

[421] Paul VI, "Gaudete in Domino," *AAS* 67 (1975): 289-322.

[422] Cf. Paul VI, "Gaudete in Domino," 297-300.

young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you" (Is 60:15; 62:3; Ga 4:27; Rv 21:1-4.).[423]

As regards the New Testament, Paul VI refers to John the Baptist who rejoices at the Bridegroom's voice.[424] Finally, when speaking about eschatological joy, Paul VI refers twice to the Marriage of the Lamb (Rv 19:7). To take part in the wedding feast of the Lamb is an invitation from which no human being is excluded and which will bring joy to its fulfilment.[425] The whole history of salvation, it might be said, even though Paul VI does not say this in so many words, culminates in bridal joy.

It seems that Pope Francis has placed joy at the very heart of his teaching. Three of the four post-synodal exhortations that have so far seen the light bear the word joy in their title: *Evangelii Gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World* (2013);[426] *Amoris Laetitia: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family* (2016);[427] and *Gaudete et exsultate: Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to*

[423] "Pro eo quod fuisti derelicta et odio habita et non erat qui per te transiret, ponam te in superbiam saeculorum, gaudium in generationem et generationem. (...) Habitabit enim iuvenis cum virgine, et habitabunt in te filii tui. Et gaudebit sponsus super sponsam, et gaudebit super te Deus tuus." Paul VI, "Gaudete in Domino," 296. English translation from the Vatican website. Paul VI also quotes the bride metaphor in Is 61:10 and applies the Old Testament exclamation of joy "I will rejoice, rejoice in YHWH, my soul will be joyful in my God" to Mary as the primal image of the earthly Church and of the Church in heavenly glory. Cf. ibid., 305.

[424] Cf. ibid., 297.

[425] Cf. ibid., 308, 309.

[426] Pope Francis, "Evangelii gaudium" *AAS* 105/12 (2013): 1019-1137. Henceforth EG with article number used in the English translation from the Vatican website.

[427] Unlike for Pope Francis's other exhortations, there is a Latin version for *Amoris Laetitia*. The word *gaudium/gaudere* occurs on almost 25 occasions, and the word *laetitia/laetare* twice as often, more than 50 times. The meaning of *laetitia* is explained once with a reference to Thomas Aquinas. Thomas uses *laetitia* in the sense of "an expansion of the heart" (AL 126). *Gaudium* is explained in one place as joy that "fills hearts and lives" (AL 200). Laetitia appears to represent inner joy. Thus Francis speaks of the *laetitia matrimonialis*, *marital joy,* which can even be experienced amid sorrow (AL 126). In his explanation of this, the pope indicates that marriage is a combination of, among other things, *gaudiorum et laborum, enjoyment and troubles.* He appears to use *gaudium* here for earthly joy. On other occasions, however, *laetitia* and *gaudium* are used as synonyms. Thus in relation to the joy of love and of family life, Francis speaks both of *Amoris laetitia quae in familiis*, *the Joy of Love experienced by families* (AL 1), and of *in gaudiis eorum amoris et eorum vitae familiaris*, *in the joys of their love and family life* (AL 73). This latter *gaudium* must also be more than simply earthly joy, because it is a "foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb" (AL 73). The two words are

Holiness in Today's World (2018).[428] And he regularly discusses the theme of joy on other occasions, for instance in sermons or speeches.[429] For the purposes of the current study we will limit ourselves to a closer examination of the post-synodal exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* and the way this relates joy to the Church.[430]

The post-synodal exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* was one fruit of the 13th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops held in 2012 on the theme of *The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*. The exhortation therefore deals with the subject of the New Evangelisation. The pope says that all Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel to all people. Sharing the joy of the faith is a very eloquent means of doing this:

> Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, they [Christians] should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of

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used interchangeably in several passages without any obvious difference in meaning. See for instance AL 109, 130, 200 and 315. On the whole there does not appear to be much difference in meaning. Generally speaking, the words *gaudium/gaudere*, *laetitia/laetare* and *exsultatio/exsultare* are more or less synonyms: *gaudium* stands more for inner joy; *exsultatio* for exuberant and visible joy; and *laetitia* similarly mainly for visible joy. The New Vulgate overwhelmingly uses *gaudium/gaudere* for joy, particularly in Luke's and John's Gospels, and in Paul in 2 Co and Ph. *Laetitia/laetare* rarely appears in the New Testament and not at all in the four Gospels. *Exsultatio/exsultare* occurs on a number of occasions in the New Testament, sometimes in combination with *gaudere*. Cf. for the latter case: Mt 5:12; Lk 1:4; Rv 19:7.

[428] Pope Francis, "Gaudete et exsultate," *AAS* 110 (2018).

[429] Cf. for other occasions, for instance the Angelus speech of 15 December 2013, in which Pope Francis called the Church "a joyful home": Pope Francis, "Angelus 3rd Sunday of Advent 2013," n.p. [cited 31 May 2019]. Online http://w2.vatican.va/-content/francesco/en/angelus/2013/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20131215.html. Cf. also his daily homily in the chapel of Domus Sanctae Marthae on 18 May 2017, in which the pope explains that love and joy are gifts from God and that all Christians are called to give joy to the people. Cf. Pope Francis, "Give joy to the people," n.p [cited 31 May 2019]. Online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2017/-documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20170518_give-joy-to-the-people html.

[430] The two other exhortations both have the word joy in their title, but do not contain any further systematic development of the phenomenon of joy in relation to the Church. *Amoris Laetitia* mentions joy in relation to the Church on three occasions, each time only briefly. At the very opening of the exhortation, Francis says that "the Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church" (AL 1). The other references are to the Church which looks "with inner joy and deep comfort" to the families that are faithful to the Gospel (AL 86) and to large families that are a joy for the Church (cf. AL 167). *Gaudete et exsultate* does not contain any references to joy in relation to the Church.

> beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet. It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but 'by attraction.' (EG 15).

Christian joy flows from Christ's own heart.[431] This joy fills the disciples (cf. Jn 20:20), but, according to Francis, also the community as a whole.[432] It is the joy of the Gospel, of "the God who revealed his immense love in the crucified and risen Christ" (EG 11), that must be shared with all people, and that ensures that the disciples "[go] forth" (EG 20). Thus joy is a characteristic mark of the Christian community and its mission.

Pope Francis does not speak of bridal joy as a specific kind of joy in its own right. He does speak of the "joy of the gospel" (EG 1, 23, 84, 287, 288), the "joy of salvation" (EG 4, 113), the "joy of faith" (EG 6, 15, 86), the "joy of evangelizing" (EG 10, 13, 83, 117), the "joy of Christ" (EG 10), and the "missionary joy" (EG 21, 79, 271). In a survey of passages from the New Testament that mention joy, Francis refers once to the joy that filled John the Baptist upon hearing the Bridegroom's voice (cf. Jn 3:29), but he does not elaborate it.[433] On the whole, the magisterium of the Church, and Pope Francis in particular, provide an impetus to regarding joy as an eschatological notion. There is no mention, however, of bridal joy as a characteristic of the Church.

Finally, if we look at the notion of joy in relation to the great metaphors for the Church, it is clear that joy is not or scarcely a spontaneous theme in any of these metaphors. The *Societas perfecta* metaphor has no connotation of joy at all. As we have concluded, the *Societas perfecta* metaphor says something about the organisation and the institution, but leaves the purpose of the organisation and the leading ideas within the organisation to be defined. Nor do the Body of Christ and the People of God metaphor spontaneously point to joy. But the faithful are very likely to experience belonging to Christ or being the People of God as sources of joy. The

[431] Cf. EG 5.
[432] Cf. EG 21.
[433] The bride metaphor is mentioned twice in the exhortation. The bride metaphor is used for the first time when Francis speaks of the importance of missionary renewal in the Church. Quoting Paul VI, Francis says that the Church's current countenance does not reflect the ideal image of the Church as Christ saw it as the holy and immaculate bride of Ep 5:27. Cf. EG 26. The second time the bride metaphor is referenced is when Francis addresses the topic of inculturation. Inculturation involves the induction of peoples by the Church into her own community, but also the adoption of their cultures' positive values by the Church. To illustrate the value of this, Francis quotes Pope John Paul II: "In this way, the Church takes up the values of different cultures and becomes *sponsa ornata monilibus suis*, 'the bride bedecked with her jewels' (cf. Is 61:10)." EG 116.

Sacrament metaphor in many ways requires further specification. Generally speaking, the phenomenon of a sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible reality. It is not necessarily a given that this will be a joyous one, but the faithful are very likely to experience it as such. The *Communio* metaphor, finally, does not spontaneously point to joy either. The *Communio* metaphor points primarily to the aspect of community and mutual relationships. The fact that the basic tenor of the community and of the relational aspect is possibly joy, is not something that can be deduced from the metaphor itself. In conclusion we can say that the bride metaphor can contribute to a deeper understanding by comparison with the great metaphors for the Church through the aspect of joy.

3.3.5. The Church and the Marriage of the Lamb

The bride days say something about the present, but also about the future: bridegroom and bride look forward to the wedding. In the Old Testament, it is YHWH the bridegroom who looks forward to the time that the people will once again be unconditionally faithful to Him and that there will be an undivided and definitive communion with Him. The bride metaphor is used together with a recollection of the past to speak about this future. The bride metaphor thus introduces eschatological notions: virginity will be restored; the bride will be clothed in righteousness, justice, loyalty, compassion and faithfulness; and the people will be one with its bridegroom.

In the New Testament, the bride metaphor is used both for the present and for the future. The union between Christ and his Church is already a reality. However, the bride metaphor also points to the future and describes the attitude of looking forward to the wedding in this intermediate time. Revelation uses the image of the Marriage of the Lamb mainly to describe the future. The expression Marriage of the Lamb may occur only once in Scripture, but it is ultimately a very crucial notion. The entire book of Revelation and ultimately all of salvation history culminate in the Marriage of the Lamb. The Marriage of the Lamb represents the eschatological community united in its fullness with the Lord, and that is forever unconditionally faithful to Him.

Matthew's Gospel contains two parables that speak of the end time as a wedding or a wedding feast. In these parables, the emphasis lies on the attitude that befits a bride who awaits the coming of her bridegroom. We have seen in the discussion of the wedding garment that the wedding garment stands among other things for doing good works (cf. Mt 22:1-14), and that this doing of good works determines whether or not a person will be permitted to take part in the wedding feast. The parable of the foolish and

wise virgins (Mt 25:1-13) also shows that actions in the present determine the future. The judgement, the analysis has shown, will be pronounced by God, the King (Mt 22:13), or by Jesus, the Bridegroom (Mt 25:12). The wedding itself is oriented to complete union.

The marriage of the Lamb in relation to the Church is not a theme that the Church Fathers develop at any great length. For the Church Fathers, the Marriage of the Lamb is primarily an eschatological image. Thus Augustine uses it in his work *De sancta virginitate*. This work was written specifically for women who lived in the state of consecrated virginity, but is also addressed to all those who remain unmarried for the sake of the Kingdom. Augustine calls on these persons to persevere until the end:

> Praise the Lord in tones sweeter as your thoughts centre on him more fruitfully. Hope in him more blessedly as you serve him more urgently; love him more glowingly as you please him more diligently. With loins girt and lamps alight await the Lord's arrival from the wedding. You will bring to the marriage of the Lamb a new song to play on your harps.[434]

Augustine calls on his readers to follow the Lamb wherever it goes to the "pasture of joy."[435]

For contemporary theologians who have written about ecclesiology the Marriage of the Lamb is not a common topic. In his *Méditation sur l'église* (1953), De Lubac mentions the marriage of the Lamb only once. In a passage about the dimensions of the mystery of the Church, he says, as we have seen, that the Church is of divine origin and existed from before the beginning of the world. However, it can also be said of the Church that her Reign will have no end, "for the 'nuptials of the Lamb' are eternal."[436] De Lubac refers here to Christ who has delivered Himself up for the Church and who has purchased her with his blood (cf. Ep 5:25). Human beings are saved by sharing in this mystery of love. De Lubac moreover distinguishes three eras of the Church: the first is the Israel of the flesh; this first era has given way to the second, the Israel of the spirit; this Israel of the spirit is awaiting fulfilment and glorification at the end of time. The Church on earth will then

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[434] "Laudate Dominum dulcius, quem cogitatis uberius. Sperate felicius, cui servitis instantius. Amate ardentius, cui placetis attentius. Lumbis accinctis et lucernis ardentibus expectate Dominum, quando veniat a nuptiis. Vos afferetis ad nuptias Agni canticum novum, quod cantabitis in citharis." Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, 27. English translation: Walsh, *Augustine: De sancta virginitate*, 101.

[435] "Gramina gaudia." Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, 27. English translation: Ibid., 101.

[436] "Les 'Noces de l'Agneau' seront éternelles." De Lubac, *Méditation*, 53 (41).

come to a conclusion and the reign of the Kingdom of heaven will commence.[437] The whole of salvation history, according to De Lubac, culminates in the Marriage of the Lamb: "That is the wedding of the Lamb, when the Church shall be united with the Lord in the bridal chamber of the heavenly kingdom."[438]

Joseph Ratzinger does not use the image of the Marriage of the Lamb in his ecclesiological work *Das neue Volk Gottes* (1969). He does use the image of the foolish virgins (Mt 25:3) to speak about the eschatological future of the Church.[439] Like Ratzinger, Walter Kasper in his *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission* (2015) does not mention the Marriage of the Lamb explicitly. He does, however, observe more generally that the nuptial image is an eschatological image. The parables of the unwilling guests (Mt 222-14) and of the foolish and wise virgins (Mt 25:1-13) are parables about the Kingdom of God. They are meant to keep us watchful, so that we will be prepared on the day of the wedding and so that the arrival of the Bridegroom will not pass us by. Kasper also speaks very briefly about the eschatological wedding feast and the eschatological wedding feast for which we may long and of which the sacrament of the Eucharist gives us a foretaste. The Eucharist, Kasper says, can therefore be regarded as the sacrament of Bridegroom and Bride, "a bridal feast celebrated in deep bridal love and expectation."[440]

There is no mention or discussion of the Marriage of the Lamb in any of the other ecclesiological works examined for this study. Nor does the magisterium of the Church have much to say about the Marriage of the Lamb. If we limit our research to Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis, we see that the image of the Marriage of the Lamb is mainly discussed in relation to the Eucharist. Thus Pope Benedict in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis* wrote:

> Every eucharistic celebration sacramentally accomplishes the eschatological gathering of the People of God. For us, the eucharistic banquet is a real foretaste of the final banquet foretold by the prophets (cf. Is 25:6-9) and described in the New Testament as 'the marriage-feast of the Lamb' (Rev 19:7-9), to be celebrated in the joy of the communion of saints.[441]

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[437] Cf. ibid., 34-36 (40-42).
[438] De Lubac refers here to Bede the Venerable: Ibid., 42 (49).
[439] Cf. Ratzinger, *Das neue Volk Gottes,* 240-241.
[440] Kasper, *Catholic Church*, 135. Cf. for the paragraph as a whole: ibid., 132-135.
[441] "In unaquaque Celebratione eucharistica sacramentaliter congregatio efficitur eschatologica Populi Dei. Convivium eucharisticum constituit pro nobis veram convivii

In the same exhortation, Benedict also uses the image of the Marriage of the Lamb to summarise the object of salvation history as a whole: "Finally, by its specific witness, consecrated life becomes an objective sign and foreshadowing of the 'wedding- feast of the Lamb' (Rev 19:7-9) which is the goal of all salvation history."[442]

As far as the magisterium of the Church is concerned, Pope Francis speaks once about the nuptial motif, not as an image or a metaphor, but as a reality. During a general audience he mentioned the Church who awaits the encounter with her Bridegroom:

> That is what awaits us! This, then, is who the Church is: she is the People of God who follows the Lord Jesus and who prepares herself day by day for the meeting with Him, as a bride with her bridegroom. And this is not just an expression: there will be actual nuptials! Yes, because Christ, by becoming a man like us and making us all one with him, with his death and his Resurrection, truly wedded us and constituted us, as a people, his bride. This is none other than the fulfilment of the plan of communion and of love woven by God throughout history, the history of the People of God and also the very history of each one of us. It is the Lord who is in the lead.[443]

Francis deals here with what awaits the Church: the final fulfilment of God's plan of salvation. Francis's way of expressing himself does appear somewhat unfortunate. First of all he seems to contradict himself: he speaks of a day when the Church will meet Christ "as a bride with her bridegroom." This "as" implies that it is a comparison or a metaphor. But Francis then continues to say that "this is not just an expression." The "expression", it turns out, is true. Does a true wedding ceremony really await the Church at the end of time, and if so, how must we imagine this? Moreover, Francis

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finalis anticipationem, a Prophetis praenuntiati (cfr Is 25, 69) atque in Novo Testamento veluti « nuptiae Agni » descripti (Ap 19, 7-9), in gaudio celebrandi sanctorum communionis." SacrCar 31.

[442] "Suam denique per propriam testificationem appellatio reapse fit consecrata vita atque anticipatio illarum 'nuptiarum Agni' (Apc 19,9), ubi meta est totius salutis historiae reposita." SacrCar 81.

[443] Francis, "In the Tent of God," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Weekly Edition in English: 17 October 2014), 3. Speeches made during a general audience do not have the same authority as encyclicals, post-synodal exhortations, or official magisterial documents. The fact that this speech, made at a general audience, was later published in *L'Osservatore Romano,* the Vatican's official weekly, means that it can more or less be regarded as a magisterial document.

also says "there will be actual nuptials,"[444] in the plural. This is problematic if we wish to retain the image of a monogamous marriage between one bridegroom and one bride. Francis endeavours to emphasise here that every individual is redeemed by Christ, and every individual is drawn into the bridal relationship with Christ. But it is better to anchor this moment of redemption in the sacrament of baptism. Within the bride metaphor, baptism can be characterised as the bridal bath. It is better for instance to speak within the context of the bride metaphor of being "baptised into one bride", as we have done earlier in this study. This obviates any suggestion of polygamy in relation to Christ.

In summary we can conclude that the Marriage of the Lamb is a core notion in the whole of Scripture. Although the expression occurs only once in Scripture, we can argue that all of Scripture and all of salvation history culminates in the marriage of the Lamb. In Matthew's Gospel, two nuptial parables are used to speak about the end time. These parables call for watchfulness: the way we act in the present will determine whether or not we may participate in the wedding feast. The Marriage of the Lamb is not a major theme in the works of the Church Fathers, of contemporary theologians who have written about ecclesiology, or of the magisterium of the Church. De Lubac is the only author to say explicitly that all of salvation history culminates in the Marriage of the Lamb. Other theologians do mention the marriage and the wedding banquet as eschatological concepts. Some use the parables from Matthew's Gospel to call for watchfulness. There is also a clear nexus in the works of contemporary theologians and in the magisterium of the Church between the wedding banquet and the Eucharist. In the sacrament of the Eucharist, the Church is united with her Bridegroom and the Church is given a foretaste of the ultimate heavenly wedding banquet and the Marriage of the Lamb.

At the end of this section we must look again at the other great metaphors. We have concluded that the Marriage of the Lamb is primarily an eschatological concept. The *Societas perfecta*, the Body of Christ and the *Communio* metaphors do not directly point to any future reality. These metaphors primarily evoke associations with being Church in the here and now. The People of God metaphor with the addition *on the journey* does clearly indicate that the people is on its way to something that lies in the future. The Sacrament metaphor also contains a reference; it is sign and instrument of a reality that is yet to happen. On the whole we can conclude that the Marriage of the Lamb can contribute to a deeper understanding in

[444] "Saranno delle vere e proprie nozze!" This is how the pope said it in Italian: YouTube, "L'udienza di Papa Francesco: 15 October 2014," accessed on 3 October 2019. Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gY0EmA_vJ4M.

respect of most of the great metaphors: being Church in the here and now is oriented to fulfilment in the future.

3.3.6. Summary and conclusions

We have looked in this section at how the bride metaphor was used in the Early Church and in contemporary ecclesiology. We will now summarise the main conclusions and evaluate which aspects can still speak to us to day and which aspects cannot.

In the first section THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST (section 3.3.1.), we concluded that in the New Testament the bride metaphor is used exclusively for the Church. In the Apostolic Age and the Early Church it was also used for the Church, but we have equally found a development in which the bride metaphor was applied to individuals, specifically for virgins in the community. The virgins became brides of Christ, the one Bridegroom. This latter development is still ongoing. Over the course of the centuries, the Church as Bride was relegated to the background. The *ressourcement* movement of the twentieth century has rediscovered the bride metaphor as applied to the Church as a whole. In the four great constitutions of the Second Vatican Council, the Church is unequivocally called Bride. There is no mention in the constitutions of virgins who are brides of Christ. The bride metaphor is regularly discussed in ecclesiological works from the Vatican II preconciliar period up to the present, and this usually in combination with the Body of Christ metaphor.

There is only one Bride of Christ. Like the other great metaphors for the Church, the bride metaphor emphasises the aspect of the one Church of Christ. This is and continues to be an important concept, both in contemporary Western society which is strongly individualised, and in ecumenical discourse. The metaphor expresses that salvation is not an individual issue, but a communal issue. In respect of all baptised Christians, the bride metaphor can add a more profound layer to ecumenical dialogue because it explicitly expresses that unity in love is the ultimate objective.

In the second section we looked at *The Church is Bridal relationship* (section 3.3.2.). This has uncovered various aspects of being Church. First, the bride metaphor highlights the relationship of love between Christ and his Church. This relationship of love is characterised by unity and exclusiveness, it is personal and enduringly faithful. Exclusiveness and faithfulness are concepts associated with the use of the metaphor in the New Testament. Contemporary theologians use the bride metaphor to acquire deeper understanding of the union between Christ and his Church. This union is not the joining of two independent parties each of whom retain their

own identity within the new union. Rather, it is a union that originates in God and is animated by one and the same Spirit. It must not be conceived either as the organic unity of a body. The alterity between Bridegroom and Bride is not dissolved by their union. The Bride remains free in the relationship; without this freedom she would not be able to respond to the Bridegroom's love. The aspect of love is mentioned in contemporary ecclesiological works, but only briefly.

The bride metaphor's most fundamental and powerful message, including for the contemporary Church, continues to be that being Church means living a relationship of love. The notions of unity, exclusiveness, personal and faithfulness retain their significance for the Church today. They do require some further explanation, however, to make them intelligible for contemporary Western society, because they are no longer self-evident in respect of human relationships. The ways in which people currently shape their relationships in Western society are very diverse, ranging from the classical monogamous and enduring relationship between husband and wife to open relationships, same-sex relationships, one-night stands, serial monogamy, unmarried cohabitation, living apart together and so on.[445] The degree to which the various relationships are regarded as exclusive and enduring over time differs per relationship type. For this reason the bride metaphor, which would have been intelligible to practically everyone at the time of the New Testament, today requires explanation both as regards form (an enduring relationship between a man and a woman) and as regards exclusiveness. This once again underlines what we established in the first chapter of the study, that the Catholic Church and its views must currently be seen as a subculture in parts of Western society, and that its metaphors are no longer comprehensible to society at large or indeed often enough to its own adherents; they are no longer conventional.[446] If it is not explained,

[445] It would take us too far afield to attempt a thorough characterisation of contemporary Western society in this study. As regards relationship types, we can observe that the number of marriages has decreased over the past decades and the rate of divorces is up. Many people are still getting married, but a growing group are living a single life. In the Netherlands, the number of single people has increased from 5% in 1947 to 22% in 2017. The expectation is that this trend will continue over the coming years. Cf. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, "Honderd jaar alleenstaanden," n.p. [cited 25 February 2020]. Online: https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/achtergrond/2018/26/honderd-jaar-alleenstaanden. In the Netherlands the number of weddings in the Catholic Church has fallen steeply over the past few years. There were 7,700 church weddings in 2003, but in the 2013-2017 period, the number of church weddings fell from 2,350 in 2013 to 1,510 in 2017. Just 2 % of people who marry in the Netherlands have a Catholic wedding. Cf. Kaski, *Kerncijfers Rooms-Katholieke Kerk 2017* (report no. 653), 17-18.
[446] Cf. section 1.1.2.2. of this study.

the metaphor is unlikely to be able to speak to many people anymore. The notion of love, on the other hand, will probably find greater resonance. Contemporary Western relationships are primarily based on mutual love. In the last part of this chapter we will investigate further which concepts of being Church can be communicated through love.

There is a clearly hierarchical order in the relationship between Bridegroom and Bride, as the second section has shown. Christ the Bridegroom is the Head, and has the initiative in all things. The Bride, for her part, follows the Bridegroom in everything. In New Testament times, this hierarchical order between bridegroom and bride was conventional and spoke eloquently to the way the essence of the Church should be understood, and by consequence, also to the life of the Church. We have found that if the symbolic language of the New Testament about the receptiveness and subordination of women is taken out of its context, this can lead, has actually led, and continues even today to lead to a systematic undervaluation of women in the Church and in society. Although contemporary theologians rarely if ever refer to the bride metaphor to explain the hierarchical position of the Church in relation to Christ, the bride metaphor almost inherently includes this inequality. Certain feminist theologians would therefore prefer to see the bride metaphor abandoned, or they have at least set themselves the task of rereading the texts from a female perspective and thus to obtain new insights. The fact that the bride metaphor is so strongly rooted in Scripture means that we cannot simply ignore this metaphor. Because of the possibilities for misunderstanding, the bride metaphor can no longer be used to speak about the hierarchical order within the Church, where Christ is the head of the Church and the Church is subject to Christ. We will examine in the last part of this chapter what aspects of the bride metaphor as applied to the Church have positive meanings for women and for the Church.

In the third section, we looked at *The Church's wedding garment* (section 3.3.3.). Both in the Old and in the New Testament, the wedding garment is an aspect of the bride metaphor that is extensively discussed. The Bridegroom clothes his Bride with his gifts, and it is thus that the Bride learns of the Bridegroom's love. This process of being clothed on the one hand draws the bride "into the intimate relationship with him [God] that he has initiated"[447] and on the other, the bride shows in her attire and the jewels she wears that she is preparing for her new role as a spouse: "the bride is a figure who is in the process of moving into a new role or identity."[448] The

[447] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 940.
[448] Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 150-151.

Church Fathers have emphasised particularly this latter aspect. Referring to the two parables in Matthew's Gospel, they warn their readers to be prepared. Whether a person is wearing the wedding garment or not determines whether they will be admitted to the final wedding feast. The Church Fathers frequently use the image of the wedding garment, mainly applied to individual believers rather than to the Church as a whole. Contemporary ecclesiology has had relatively little attention for the wedding garment. In the last part of this study we will evaluate what concepts of being Church could be communicated using the image of the wedding garment.

In the fourth section we looked at *The Church is bridal joy* (section 3.3.4.). Joy is a recurring theme in Scripture. In the Old Testament, bridal joy is the height of all joy. The time of the coming of the Messiah will be a time of overwhelming joy. In the New Testament, there is joy at the presence of the Bridegroom. In the book of Revelation, joy is connected to the Marriage of the Lamb. This joy can already be experienced today and is oriented to its fulfilment. This means that joy is also an eschatological concept. For the Church Fathers, joy is an important notion, even if they do not speak specifically of bridal joy. Contemporary theologians who have written about ecclesiology have not made much of the theme of joy. Once or twice they mention joy, for instance in relation to the Mother metaphor for the Church: the Church rejoices at the birth of new children. The magisterium of the Church has had a keener sense of the importance of joy. Pope Paul VI dedicated an apostolic letter to this subject. He reminds its readers that joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit and that love and joy are inseparably linked. It is possible to taste the true joy here on earth, but ultimately it is an eschatological concept. Pope Francis has associated joy with the mission of the Church. Sharing the joy of the faith is an eloquent way of proclaiming the Gospel. He has turned joy into a characteristic sign of the Christian community and its mission.

Perhaps joy is not very much to the fore in contemporary Western society. What is important for many people is to have *fun*, or *to like* things, or to feel good about things. Facebook has even designed a special button for people to indicate that they like certain content. This like button long had the monopoly when it came to user interaction, but it was later complemented by icons that could convey the user's emotional state: *love*, *haha*, *wow*, *sad* or *angry*.[449] Within modern metaphor theory, the phenomenon of *fun* or *to like something* falls not so much under the

[449] Facebook launched the like button in 2009. In 2016 it added the option of indicating an emotional state through icons.

structural metaphor, but under the orientational metaphor HAPPY IS UP and SAD IS DOWN; MORE IS UP and LESS IS DOWN. When you click the like button, you give the content in question a thumbs up. Joy is more enduring and more profound than having fun or liking something. What we must investigate is whether the notion of the joy of the faith can be communicated by making use of categories such as fun and liking content that are currently familiar to people. We will attempt to do this in the last section.

In the fifth and last section, finally, we studied *The Church and the Marriage of the Lamb* (section 3.3.5.). The Marriage of the Lamb occurs explicitly only once in Scripture, but nonetheless constitutes a core notion in Scripture. Scripture as a whole, and ultimately salvation history as a whole culminate in the Marriage of the Lamb. The Marriage of the Lamb is not a strongly developed theme either in the works of the Church Fathers or in contemporary ecclesiological writing. It is mentioned occasionally to invite readers to be watchful and to be prepared for the second coming of the Lord. In these instances the authors often also point to the two nuptial parables. The Marriage of the Lamb is equally associated with the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, the Bridegroom and the Bride are already united with each other, and the Church is given a foretaste of the wedding banquet as it will be.

The Marriage of the Lamb addresses the relationship between Christ and the faithful at the end of time. It is not easy to communicate this eschatological concept to contemporary Western audiences, given the fact that belief in life after death is declining in Western society.[450] Even apart from the degree to which modern Westerners believe in life after death, the

[450] Research of the development of faith in Europe has shown that people's religious convictions (not yet differentiated per religion or denomination in this research) have clearly declined over the 1981-2008 period, particularly in Western Europe. Whereas in 1981 on average 86% of people answered in the affirmative when asked whether they had any religious convictions, this number had fallen to 66% by 2008. In France and the Netherlands in 2008 more than 50% of the people stated they no longer had any religious convictions. The same trend is visible in relation to religious practice; 59% in 1981 versus 42% in 2008. As regards the beliefs of young people between 18 and 29 years of age: in 2008 an average of 52% of European young people said they believed in a personal God, as opposed to 61% in 1981. In 2008, 43% stated that they believed in a life after death, as opposed to 38% in 1981. This is an increase, but the figure represents an average, which also includes young people from countries where living in accordance with a religious conviction has been on the rise, such as the Baltic states and Bulgaria. Cf. Claude Dargent, "Religious Change, Public Space and Beliefs in Europe" in *European Values: Trends and Divides Over Thirty Years* (ed. P. Bréchon and Frédéric Gonthier; Leiden: Brill, 2017), 104-122. A study carried out in the Netherlands shows that 57% of people believed in life after death in 1966, 46 % in 2006, and 34% in 2015. Cf. Ton Bernts and Joantine Berghuijs, *God in Nederland: 1966-2015* (Baarn: ten Have, 2016), 82.

metaphor of the Marriage of the Lamb as such is not used for the Church, but for the end time, the time that the Kingdom of God will finally break through, which is precisely the time that the Church will cease to exist. This means that the Marriage of the Lamb is primarily an eschatological metaphor rather than an ecclesiological one. We can therefore set aside the Marriage of the Lamb for the purposes of the current study, except for the idea that the Church in the Sacrament of the Eucharist receives a foretaste of what awaits it at the end of time: the full, undivided, exclusive and enduring union with God in Christ.[451]

3.4. THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST in today's Church

In the previous sections we have examined how the Church Fathers and contemporary theologians use the bride metaphor to speak of the Church. We have seen what aspects of the bride metaphor continue to speak to us today and what aspects can no longer do this or are best no longer used. In the first methodological chapter of this study we have seen that, according to modern metaphor theory, metaphors are open to further development. Unlike analogies, for instance, the process of mapping from source domain to target domain is an open process. This ensures that metaphors can under new circumstances yield new insights. In this last section we investigate these possible new applications of the bride metaphor. We will ask whether this metaphor also has a heuristic value: does the Bride of Christ metaphor generate insights on the essence and the life of the Church that could possibly be significant for Christians today? Any new found insights will, however, have to pass the muster of Scripture and Tradition to judge

[451] A cursory glance at a number of eschatological works shows that the image of the Marriage of the Lamb is not used very frequently. In his *Eschatologie - Tod und ewiges Leben* (1990), Ratzinger does not mention the Marriage of the Lamb. He describes heaven as a relational reality, as being with Christ. Images that Ratzinger does use are "zusammen den einen Leib Christi bilden," "Lohn," "Krone," "der neue 'Raum' des Leibes Christi." Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatologie - Tod und ewiges Leben* (KKD 9; Regensburg: Pustet, 1990), 190-193. Gerhard Lohfink in a recent book called *Is This All There Is: On Resurrection and Eternal Life* (2018) has used the metaphor of the city from Revelation to speak about the end time. Although he does mention the bride metaphor as a complement to the city metaphor, to show "that the incomprehensible reality to be described in what follows is altogether 'personal'," and although Lohfink places the Lamb in the centre of the city, he does not mention the Marriage of the Lamb as such. Cf. Gerhard Lohfink, *Is This All There Is: On Resurrection and Eternal Life* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2018), 194-202.

whether they can lead to conclusions that are acceptable for Catholic ecclesiology.

If we were to begin, not with Scripture and Tradition, but by asking what the first associations are that contemporary Western persons are most likely to have when they hear the bride metaphor, the notions of love and happiness will probably be mentioned first.[452] We have also encountered the notion of love in our analysis of the bride metaphor in the Old Testament: THE LOVE OF YHWH IS THE JEWEL OF THE BRIDE. Jr 2:2 speaks of "the love of your bridal days." The notion of love is mentioned in the New Testament only once in relation to the bride metaphor: THE ECCLESIA IS SANCTIFIED AND LOVED BY THE BRIDEGROOM. The word happiness as such does not occur at all in Scripture but it can, to a certain extent and for present purposes, be equated with the biblical notion of joy. As we have observed in the first part of this chapter, the aspects of love and joy have received short shrift in contemporary ecclesiology. These two aspects will be further examined here in two subsections, called *The Church is Community of Eros* (section 3.4.1.) and *The Church is Community of Joy* (section 3.4.2.) respectively.

The wedding garment plays an important role in the Old Testament. For contemporary Western people, too, the wedding dress and the whole décor of the wedding are momentous subjects. We have seen that contemporary ecclesiologists rarely or not at all use the aspect of the wedding garment in their reflections. The Bride is clothed, as both the Old and the New Testament tell us. And in the bride metaphor in the Book of Revelation, the Bride is preparing herself for the wedding (cf. Rv 19:7): a reference to the pre-wedding toilette. The bride prepares herself for her new role as spouse. This aspect is rarely addressed in contemporary ecclesiologies and it demands further investigation. This will be done in the subsection *The Church's Wedding Garment* (section 3.4.3.).

In a fourth and final section we will look more closely at the fact that the bride metaphor conceptualises the Church as a woman. In this last subsection we will ask what this could mean for the Church today: *The Church is a Woman* (section 3.4.4.).

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[452] We have not conducted our own research of this. But a glance at contemporary websites on marriage preparation shows that, in addition to advice about weddings, they offer many examples of texts that can be used to congratulate newlywed couples. The wish of "a lifetime of love and happiness" is the most frequent. Cf. for instance The Knot: Wedding Planning For Everyone, "Wedding Wishes: What to Write in a Wedding Card," n.p. [cited 28 December 2018]. Online: https://www.theknot.com/content/-wedding-wishes-what-to-write-in-a-wedding-card; Greetz nl, "Huwelijkswensen," n.p. [cited 28 December 2018]. Online: https://www.greetz nl/kaart-teksten/-huwelijksteksten.

3.4.1. The Church is a Community of Eros

In comparison with the other great metaphors, the notion of love is the most characteristic and distinguishing feature of the bride metaphor. None of the other great metaphors for the Church discussed in this study spontaneously point to the notion of love, and this despite the fact that love is the core of the Christian faith: "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8). The bride metaphor teaches us that being Church of Christ above all means living a relationship of love.

We have seen that contemporary theologians refer to the notion of love only in passing: for Hans Urs von Balthasar, the bride metaphor brings us to the heart of the Church; Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole speaks of "a domination of love" in reference to Christ as the Head and Bridegroom of the Church; and Walter Kasper has concluded that love is the heart of the Church.[453] Kurt Koch, in his ecclesiological study *Die Kirche Gottes* (2007), argues that love is also the core of the Church. He defines the Church as "the People called together by God and his love."[454] Love, according to Koch, is the determining moment of the Church and the whole Church must witness to this. First and foremost in Christians' everyday lives among each other, but also in their hospitality towards others. Hospitals, soup kitchens and other charitable institutions are in themselves a form of proclamation of the Gospel.[455] All theologians mentioned here place love at the heart of the life of the Church, but their development of this reality is generally cursory at best. What consequences does it have for the Church if love is placed at its heart, and more precisely: if *bridal love* is placed at its heart?

The bride metaphor points us to the love between bridegroom and bride. Other metaphors for the Church are conceivable in which the love relationship with Christ can be expressed, for instance the parent-child relationship: THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S BELOVED CHILD; or friendship: THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S FRIEND;[456] or the love of objects such as patriotism or philately: THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S BELOVED OBJECT. This latter form of love, the love of objects, is a wholly one-sided kind of love. It springs from a person and is directed to an object without any reciprocity or *mutual fellowship*.[457] The object in question cannot love the person back. The love

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[453] Cf. Chapter 3.3.1.

[454] "Das von Gott und seiner Liebe zusammengerufene Volk." Koch, *Kirche Gottes*, 85.

[455] Cf. ibid., 84-86.

[456] This metaphor can also be found in the New Testament. In this study, we have found the derived metaphor JOHN THE BAPTIST IS THE FRIEND OF THE BRIDEGROOM. Jn 15:15 also contains the metaphor DISCIPLES ARE FRIENDS OF CHRIST.

[457] The term *mutual fellowship* is derived from Vincent Brümmer. He distinguishes three types of relationship between people: *manipulative relations*, *agreements of rights*

between parents and children does to a certain extent involve mutual fellowship, but is primarily marked by a great measure of inequality in the love relationship. Children, especially during the first years of their lives, are strongly dependent on their parents and cannot in this sense act freely and responsibly. Parental love, for its part, consists to a large extent of care and is not always free either. The metaphor of the parent is a powerful one, particularly with regard to love and care, but to a large degree it involves a lasting inequality in the relationship. Friendship does have the connotation of mutual fellowship and equality in the relationship, but it does not necessarily encompass the friends' whole lives. Friendship can limit itself to the weekends or to certain parts of a person's life, such as sport. There is a higher form of mutual fellowship: this brings us to the bridal relationship, and by extension, the spousal relationship. Both bridal and spousal relationships involve mutual fellowship as well as a high degree of equality between the partners: both partners are able to act freely and responsibly. Moreover, the mutual fellowship between bridegroom and bride, between husband and wife, extends to all aspects of life.

What does it mean for the essence and life of the Church if *bridal love* is placed at its heart? In comparison with matrimonial love, bridal love can be characterised as *first love*. Bridal love literally precedes matrimonial love, but bridal love also has the connotation of *original*. The unique nature of this first love is evident when we look at YHWH in relation to the Old Testament people that He chose for Himself. Whenever the chosen people became unfaithful, YHWH looked back longingly, not to the good years of marriage, but to the love of the beginning. Through the words of the Prophet Jeremiah, YHWH remembered "the loyalty of your youth, the love of your bridal days" (Jr 2:2). This is a strong memory, our analysis has shown, "of pure love, before the religious and the political perversions of love had arisen in later times to spoil the continuing relationship."[458]

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and duties and *mutual fellowship*. In the first type, one person uses the other for his own purposes. For Brümmer this type of relationship is ultimately impersonal. The other two types of relationship are marked by symmetry and allow the parties to act freely and responsibly. In agreements of rights and duties, by mutual consent agreements are made from which rights can be derived, such as for instance an employment contract or a marriage contract. In mutual fellowship, the two partners choose to place the other person's interests before their own. To characterise this type of relationship, Brümmer quotes Emile Brunner: "Love is not the recognition of the other person as an equal, but it is identification with the other person. Love not only recognizes the claim of the other, but makes that claim her own; the truly loving person loves her neighbour as herself." Love relationships ultimately belong to the mutual fellowship category. Cf. Brümmer, *Models of Love*, 156-173.

[458] Craigie, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 24.

Bridal love is love with specific connotations. What makes this love unique? At the beginning of the current chapter we briefly addressed the distinction between *agape* and *eros*. In his publication *Pure Love* (1987),[459] Robert Adams contends that *agape* is usually equated with *benevolence*, the altruistic desire for the good of the other, and *eros* with a selfish desire for a relationship with the other. Adams believes that the distinction between altruism and egotism in love is legitimate. But when it comes to personal relationships and desire, there is often a tendency to think in terms of either/or: "that what is desired is desired either for one's own good or for another person's good."[460] *Eros* has suffered as a consequence of this dichotomy, Adams argues, because *eros* is equated with selfish desire. Yet *eros* is not necessarily selfish: "The central case of Eros is passionate desire for a personal relationship."[461] This desire, if acted upon, can be bad for the other, and in that case it is a destructive kind of *eros*. It is not common, however, that someone desires a personal relationship because this is good for one partner. In most personal relationships, the two partners will regard their desire for the other as something that is good for both:

> Eros is not based on calculations or judgments of utility or benefit, and must therefore at least partly escape classifications as self-interested or altruistic. The mistake, in trying to force love into a dichotomy of self-interest and altruism, is a failure to recognize a desire for a relationship for its own sake as a third type of desire that is not just a combination or consequence of desire for one's own good and desire for another person's good. It is indeed this third type of desire (…) that is most characteristic of Eros.[462]

Just like eros must not be equated with the selfish desire for a relationship, so agape, Adams says, must not be equated with benevolence. The ideal of Christian love, agape, is not mere benevolence, but also includes the desire for a personal relationship for the sake of the relationship itself. He has pointed in this context to God's love for human beings. God is not just good to people, benevolent, but He is also a jealous husband (Jr 2:1-3:5; Hos 2), who has created human beings in such a way that they will seek Him and are capable of finding Him (Ac 17:26-27). And Jesus has given

[459] Robert M. Adams, *The Virtue of Faith and Other Essays in Philosophical Theology* (New York: Oxford Press, 1987), 174-192. "Pure Love" was published previously as an article in *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 8 (1980): 83-99.
[460] Ibid., 187.
[461] Ibid., 187.
[462] Ibid., 188.

Himself up out of love to lead the Church to Him in glory, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that (cf. Ep 5:25-27). Eros and agape, Adams contends, when seen in this perspective, are not each other's opposites. Instead, he regards eros and benevolence as two strands in love. Both forms can manifest themselves in love in various ways and with various intensities. Adams thinks that agape stands for what we normally call love, and that it includes eros and benevolence.[463]

The idea that love is a phenomenon that can be expressed in various different ways that can be distinguished and that may or may not reinforce each other, but that do form a unity, can also be found in Craig Boyd's work. In his article *The Perichoretic Nature of Love: Beyond the Perfection Model* (2008)[464] he inquires into the nature of love. He first consults the works of Thomas Aquinas and C.S. Lewis. Both Aquinas and Lewis distinguish between natural love, which is affection, friendship, and *eros*, and divine love, *agape* or charity. Natural love needs charity to be perfected in the way that God intended, both Aquinas and Lewis ultimately argue.[465] However, Boyd does not distinguish between natural love and divine love, but argues that the various forms of the love we know can manifest different aspects of God's love. He illustrates this with examples from Scripture and then concludes:

> Affection demonstrates the comforting love God has for humanity and *eros* demonstrates God's desire for intimate union with humanity. In friendship we see the possibility for mature love between persons who choose one another as subjects of benevolence and in charity we see the self-giving love of God who is poured out on behalf of others.[466]

Boyd then demonstrates that each form of love needs the other to reach fulfilment: affection, friendship and *eros* cannot exist without the gift of self; self-giving love, friendship and *eros* in their turn must also contain affection; et cetera. Each form of love is more a way of loving than a distinct form that is entirely separate from the other forms: "each of the loves need the guiding influence of the other."[467] Boyd uses the concept of *perichoresis*

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[463] Cf. ibid., 188-191.
[464] Craig Boyd, "The Perichoretic Nature of Love: Beyond the Perfection Model," in *Visions of Agapé: Problems and Possibilities in Human and Divine Love* (ed. by Craig A. Boyd; Hamshire: Ashgate, 2008), 15-30.
[465] Cf. ibid., 17-25. This idea can also be found in Pope Benedict's encyclical *Deus caritas est*. Cf. DC 5-8.
[466] Boyd, "The Perichoretic Nature of Love," 29. Boyd's italics.
[467] Ibid., 30.

for this, a concept from Trinitarian theology. God has revealed Himself as a person-in-relationship. The divine life, Boyd quotes Jürgen Moltmann, "is community in communication."[468] Each divine Person's gift of self to the Other glorifies the Other in an eternal exchange of divine empathy and friendship. This divine *perichoresis* permeates not only the divine life, but also every created reality. Traces of the divine love can thus be found in creation, and particularly in the love that God has given to human beings. "These insights pave the way for our understanding of how the various manifestations of love can be understood perichoretically."[469]

After this brief meditation on love we must return to the bride metaphor and specifically to the love between bridegroom and bride. If we consider the four forms of love – affection, friendship, *eros*, and agape – then *eros* is the one that uniquely characterises bridal love. In a perichoretic understanding of love, affection, friendship, and the gift of self also play a role in bridal love, but *eros* is the distinct type of bridal love; the feature that is most to the fore in bridal love. We will use Adams's definition for the moment to characterise the distinguishing feature of *eros*: "the central case of Eros is passionate desire for a personal relationship." There is thus a passionate desire for a relationship with the other for the sake of the relationship, and the aim of this relationship is union. If we describe *eros* as the unique and essential element of love in a bridal relationship and if we use the bridal relationship as a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and the Church, then the relationship between Christ and the Church is characterised and inflected by *eros*.

The word *eros* does not occur in the New Testament in relation to Christian love, much less to the relationship between Christ and the Church. The fact that this word does not appear in the text does not automatically mean that this kind of love is absent from the New Testament. In our general meditation on love we have seen that *eros* is also an aspect of the divine love. At the time of the New Testament, the word *eros* was avoided because it was the name of a Greek deity and Christian authors were eager not to lead Christians into the temptation of falling back into polytheism or idolatry by using this word.[470] In his reflections on *eros*, Lewis says that *eros* is the most powerful form of love and that it is at the same time easily misunderstood and confused with or reduced to human sexuality in its

[468] Ibid., 26.
[469] Ibid., 27. Cf. for perichoresis in general: ibid., 25-27.
[470] Ibid., 28, footnote 25. Pope Benedict makes the same point in his encyclical *Deus caritas est*: Cf. DC, 4.

physical expression, which is in fact only one element of *eros*.[471] In today's culture, too, *eros* is easily associated with eroticism, leading to an exaggerated emphasis on the physical aspect of *eros*.

As Holy Scripture and the Tradition of the Church rarely use *eros* to denote love, and as this word can be understood ambiguously in our own culture, it is necessary to tread cautiously applying it to bridal love and, by extension, to the relationship between Christ and the Church. A more specific description of what *eros* means is required here to avoid misunderstanding.

"The central case of Eros is passionate desire for a personal relationship." We have already used this description by Adams to characterise *eros*. Pamela Dickey Young has described *eros* as "the passionate feeling that connects us to one another and to the whole."[472] According to Young, the meaning of *eros* is not confined to human relationships. It is an embodied and creative force that causes us to desire the other, but also such things as knowledge and understanding, and, ultimately, God. Both Adams's and Young's description include the word passion. Passion involves fervour, enthusiasm, drive, and impetuosity, but passion equally refers to suffering. Young also speaks of the disinterested nature of *eros*, the desire for the other for the sake of the other: "in eros I am not interested in the other as servant of my interests. (…) I am moved by the other. What the other enjoys brings enjoyment to me, and what the other suffers brings suffering."[473] Adams, too, emphasises that *eros* is not calculating, nor does it judge on the basis of utility or benefit. It is a pure and passionate desire for the other for the sake of the other. The person who is the object of this desire is not a random object. C.S. Lewis has said in relation to this: "Eros wants the Beloved. (…) Eros makes a man really want, not a woman, but a particular woman."[474] Conversely this is of course also true for women. Election thus plays a prominent role in *eros*; the person who is the object of desire is not a random figure. The desire for the other, finally, is oriented to union. Whenever we use the word *eros* in the following pages, all these layers are included. The aspects of disinterested desire for the other, and of not

[471] C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1960), 131-132.
[472] Pamela Dickey Young, *Re-creating the Church: Communities of Eros* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000), 33.
[473] Ibid., 34-35.
[474] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 134-135. Lewis writes *Beloved* with a capital B, but he does not mean God. In the context of the quoted passage he discusses the relationship between men and women. He probably capitalised this word to emphasise that it is the one beloved and no one else.

wanting to instrumentalise the other in any way for one's own purposes, ensure that pure *eros* is not abused for personal gain or the abuse of the other.

Now we have given a more precise description of *eros*, and in view of our earlier conclusion that *eros* is the form of love that is proper to bridal love, we can characterise the Church on the basis of the bride metaphor as a *Community of Eros*.[475] This means that in the Church as the Bride of Christ, notions such as love, passion, enthusiasm, drive, connection, desire, disinterestedness, and, above all, relationship with the Other and the other purely for the sake of the relationship itself, are central. A priori, the desire of the Bride, the community of the faithful, is directed entirely and exclusively at Christ the Bridegroom. Christ the bridegroom in his turn gives Himself fully to his community: "a chosen race, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a people to be a personal possession" (1 P 2:9). On the whole, the bride metaphor places Christ at the heart of the Church and this not as an abstract entity, as someone we must not forget amid our other busy activities, but as He Who is loved by the Church and with Whom the Church even now forms an intimate union, a union that is oriented to fulfilment in the Marriage of the Lamb. None of the other great metaphors for the Church is in its essence so filled with Christ, and none places passion, desire, and love at the heart of the Church in the same way that the bride metaphor does.

Passionate love is a familiar concept of love for contemporary Western people, and it is usually regarded as romantic love. Sentiment and individual choice play an important role in this form of love. In the Western world, romantic love is usually an important basis for marriage.[476] It is good to realise that other conceptions of marriage are current in other parts of the world. Thus families often play a prominent role in arranging marriages in Asian cultures. In these cultures, the individual and sentiments of love are much less important when it comes to arranging a marriage. Two people will get married only if certain conditions are met for both families.[477] The

[475] I have so far come across the description *Churches as Communities of Eros* only in Pamela Young's work. She is a member of the United Church of Canada and is looking from her feminist background for new ways for the Church. In reflecting on the Church as Eros, her book *Re-creating the Church: Communities of Eros* has been one of my sources of inspiration.

[476] For an extensive description of romantic love, see: Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 39-106.

[477] In recent years there has been a clear shift in patterns of marriage in Asia. Strong urbanisation and better education, especially for women, have reduced the number of teenage marriages and transformed patterns of marriage. Cf. for Southeast Asia the extensive study by: Gavin W. Jones, Terrence H. Hull, and Maznah Mohamad, eds., *Changing Marriage Patterns in Southeast Asia: Economic and Socio-cultural*

Church as a Community of Eros, with concomitant notions such as passion and desire for union, closely matches the concept of romantic love and is therefore likely to appeal primarily to the experience of a Western audience.

Now that we have characterised the essence of the Church as a Community of Eros, the question arises what this means for the life of the Church. What concrete form will the Church take if it understands itself as a Community of Eros? Where can the importance of *eros* in the life of the Church be seen and experienced? We will first describe in general terms what the characteristics are of a life that is guided by *eros* (section 3.4.1.1.), and then look at the various relationships: the relationship of the Church with Christ (section 3.4.1.2.), the mutual relationships between Christians (section 3.4.1.3.), and the relationships between Christians and people who do not belong to the Christian community (section 3.4.1.4.).[478]

3.4.1.1. Characteristics of eros

As we have seen, the principal characteristic of *eros* is desire for a relationship for its own sake, desire for a personal relationship for the sake of the relationship. Paul can help us to define the characteristics of this relationship. In 1 Co 13, Paul speaks about love. He begins by listing a number of gifts of the Spirit, such as the gift of speaking, the gift of prophecy, and the gift of knowledge (cf. 1 Co 13:1-3), but, Paul says, "if I am without love, I am nothing" (1 Co 13:2).[479] He then describes the unique nature of love. Readers might expect something here along the lines of 'love means using your gifts and talents for the well-being of the other', or 'love

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Dimensions (London: Routledge, 2011); Cf. for countries with a Confucian culture: James M. Raymo, Hyunjoon Park, Yu Xie, and Wei-jun Jean Yeung, "Marriage and Family in East Asia: Continuity and Change," *ARS* 41 (2015): 471-492.

[478] These three relationships coincide with the three essential aspects of the Church: the Church is Mystery, the Church is *Communio*, and the Church has a *Missio*. Cf. Humphrey C. Anameje, *The Laity as Participants in the Mission of the Church: A Theological Reflection in the Light of Vatican II Ecclesiology* (Leuven 2008), 203. Anameje refers for this ecclesiological triad to Dionigi Tettamanzi, who regards it as the foundation for the ecclesiology of the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici: On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World* (1988).

[479] Ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐθέν εἰμι. Like everywhere in the New Testament, Paul uses the Greek agape for love. We have seen in this section that agape in the New Testament is more a collective name for the phenomenon of love and that the word agape covers several different forms of love, like the four that we have mentioned in this study: affection, *eros*, friendship, and charity.

means using your gifts and talents for the building up of the community'. But Paul's list is totally different:

> Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited, it is never rude, never seeks its own advantage, it does not take offence or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth. It is always to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes (1 Co 13:4-7).

Notions such as caring for the other person, or giving up one's life for others (cf. Jn 15:12) are not included in this list. The notions it does mention focus on mutual relationships and therefore on the domain of *eros*.

It is striking that the enumeration of 1 Co 13:4-7 mainly says what love is *not*, or what it does *not* do. If we complement this by taking Paul's example in Ga 5:19-23 where he contrasts the fruits of the Spirit with expressions of selfishness, and if we - a little intuitively - draw up two lists, one with notions of a life according to *eros* described in positive terms, and the other with the reverse, this results in the following: a life according to *eros* is oriented to the other and is marked by desire, love, passion, connection, intimacy, union, enthusiasm, tenderness, knowing the other, purity, disinterestedness, receptiveness and joy; notions that are incompatible with a life according to *eros* are utility, selfishness, calculation, gain, fear, benefit, discord and conflict. Life according to *eros* is like an attitude, a frame of mind, an undercurrent that, when it comes to the Church, permeates all levels and situations of the life of the Church. If this is not the case, the Bridal character of the Church is compromised. The two lists can serve as a kind of mirror to discover to what extent the Church truly lives her identity as Bride of Christ. We will now examine more closely the three different relationships in the life of the Church.

3.4.1.2. Eros and Mystery

The Church's first and primary relationship as Bride is her relationship with Christ her Bridegroom. The Church's entire life is oriented to Him. Specifically, this orientation is lived in the Church's liturgical life. As we have seen, the magisterium calls the liturgy of the hours a nuptial dialogue.[480] This dialogue is more important than any of the Church's other activities. This can be seen in the encounter between Jesus and the two

[480] Cf. SC 84.

women Martha and Mary, who receive Jesus in their home (cf. Lk 10:38-42). When Martha, who is actively providing hospitality, complains about Mary's attitude, who is content to sit at the Lord's feet and to listen to Him, Jesus replies by saying "Martha, Martha, you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better part, and it is not to be taken from her" (Lk 10:41-42). The Church as Community of Eros primarily lives her relationship with Christ her Bridegroom, and this relationship is expressed concretely in the Church's liturgical life.

The sacrament of the Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life, and therefore also of liturgical life.[481] From the perspective of the bride metaphor, the Eucharist can be regarded as a bridal feast or wedding banquet. All of salvation history culminates in this banquet (cf. Rv 19:7). *Sacrosanctum Concilium* calls the Eucharist "a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us."[482] This quotation includes a number of concepts associated with eros, such as union and the bond of charity. On the Bridegroom's part, this union is accompanied by great desire, because at the beginning of the Last Supper, Jesus says: "I have ardently longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Lk 22:15). The original text has ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἐπεθύμησα: "With desire I have desired." This duplication of desire greatly enhances it. Jesus has longed to eat this Meal, which is a prefiguration of the sacrifice on the cross through which Jesus reconciles humankind to God. Jesus faces his passion passionately, it might be said. His passion is oriented to restoring the relationship between God and human beings. This is so much more than the benevolence of charity: Jesus who is about to do good to humankind. Jesus does indeed do good to humankind, but first and foremost He is passionate and full of desire for the restoration of the relationship between God and humankind.[483] Thus the Eucharist manifests the divine *eros*.

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[481] Cf. LG 11.

[482] "Sacramentum pietatis, signum unitatis, vinculum caritatis, convivium paschale, in quo Christus sumitur, mens impletur gratia et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur." SC 47.

[483] In the sacrament of the Eucharist this restoration is permanently present to the people and is constantly renewed. Pope Francis also witnesses to the elements of encounter and restoration of the relationship in the Eucharist when he says in a catechesis: "In truth, the Lord surprises us by showing us that he loves us even in our weaknesses. 'Jesus Christ (...) is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world' (1 Jn 2:2). This gift, the source of true consolation - but the Lord always forgives us - this consoles; it is a true consolation; it is a gift that we are given through the Eucharist, that wedding feast at which the Bridegroom encounters our frailty. Can I

What response does the Church, the Bride of Christ, give? Pamela Young contends that "the appropriate response [to God's love] is one of 'passion for God, the passion of a little flock which perseveres faithfully and unshakably' in God's love."[484] The Church's passion, the desire for union and intimacy, is focused primarily on Christ. He is the only Beloved Bridegroom. If the frequency with which the faithful attend Sunday celebrations of the Eucharist is a measure of the desire for Christ the Bridegroom, then this desire cannot be called very great in most of Europe.[485] Moreover, the way the Church speaks about the Eucharist is still often dominated by the *Societas perfecta* paradigm, which focuses on doctrine, on the liturgical and canonical rules, and much less on the experience of the Eucharist.[486] The emphasis on doctrine and rules is unlikely to appeal to contemporary modern human beings, for whom notions such as authenticity, feeling and experience have become increasingly important.[487] If *eros* were to be given a greater place in the way the Church

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say that when I receive communion during Mass, the Lord encounters my frailty? Yes! We can say so because this is true! The Lord encounters our frailty so as to lead us back to our first call: that of being in the image and likeness of God. This is the environment of the Eucharist. This is prayer." Pope Francis, "General Audience Wednesday: 15 November 2017," n.p. [cited 21 May 2019]. Online: http://m.vatican.va/content/-francescomobile/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20171115_udienza-generale.html.

[484] Young, *Re-creating the Church*, 32. The quotation within the quotation is from Ethelbert Staufer.

[485] Recent research by the American *Pew Research Center*, presented in the report *Being Christian in Western Europe* (2018), has shown that on average eighteen percent of Christians in Europe regularly attend church. In a strongly secularised country such as the Netherlands this percentage is lower, fifteen percent, and in Denmark it is even lower at nine percent. Cf. Pew Research Center, "Being Christian in Western Europe," n.p. [cited 21 May 2019]. Online: https://www.pewforum.org/2018/05/29/being-christian-in-western-europe/. A Dutch study by the *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* (Statistics Netherlands) carried out in 2017 shows that no more than six percent of Dutch Catholics attend church on a weekly basis. Cf. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, "Meer dan de helft Nederlanders niet religieus," n.p. [cited 21 May 2019]. Online https://www.cbs nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2018/43/meer-dan-de-helft-nederlanders-niet-religieus.

[486] Cf. for instance the instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* issued in 2004 by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament. This instruction addresses at length the norms that must be respected for the celebration of the Eucharist and denounces a wide range of abuses. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, "Instructio: De quibusdam observandis et vitandis circa sanctissimam Eucharistiam." *AAS* 96 (2004): 549–601.

[487] Cf. also Godfried Cardinal Danneels's analysis in a contribution on contemporary sacramental ministry: "Rituelen in, sacramenten out?" *TvL* 86 (2002): 306-322.

speaks about the Eucharist and liturgical celebrations, this might enable the Church to connect more easily with contemporary culture.

Allowing greater scope for *eros* in liturgical celebrations means giving space to personal feelings, intimacy, desire, purity et cetera. These celebrations will be separate from the current celebrations of the sacraments, which are generally fixed by rubrics, both as regards form and content, and which provide little scope for *eros*-based elements. This does not mean that the sacraments can be discarded, on the contrary: the sacraments remain "the continuation of the salvific acts that Christ has instituted during his life. They are a force that flows from Him to the church, to heal people there of their sins and wounds,"[488] but the celebration of the sacraments can be preceded by other kinds of celebration whose freer form permits people to experience their relationship with Jesus in a more personal way, or the current sacramental celebrations can be offered in a different setting which gives greater scope to eros. We will give an example of both possibilities.

One way of celebrating that includes many elements of *eros* (perhaps somewhat unintentionally) are Taizé prayer services.[489] Even the space where the service is held reflects this, and specifically with the way the space is used. Everything is arranged so as to allow the participants to experience intimacy: in the centre there is the altar with the cross, and often

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Danneels argues that the subject has almost absolute primacy in today's culture, and that this has led to far-reaching subjectivism. Feeling, self-expression, focus on one's own forms, both literary and musical, have become important elements for rituals in human existence. In this context, the official liturgy appears as ossified symbolism. Danneels has concisely summarised the chasm that sacramental ministers experience between what contemporary people want and what they are able to provide in the Church's name as: "de vrager wenst een ritus, de gever een sacrament." Ibid., 315. A recent study of young people and religion in the Netherlands reached the same conclusion: that unchurched Catholic young people are suspicious of the official Catholic Church, but still wish to celebrate important events in life, such as marriage, in church. They want to use the religious rituals and symbols, but give the celebration an individual meaning that is different from the meaning that the Church affords it. Cf. Toke Elshof, "Religieuze erfenissen," in *Handboek Jongeren en Religie: Katholieke, protestantse en islamitische jongeren in Nederland* (ed. Monique van Dijk-Groeneboer; Almere: Parthenon, 2010), 121-140, at 130-131. An extensive description of contemporary culture cannot be attempted in the context of this study, which takes as its premise that there is a general tendency that subject and subjectivity are important in contemporary culture, including such notions as feeling, experience, authenticity etc.

[488] "De voortzetting van de heilsdaden die Christus in zijn leven heeft ingesteld. Zij zijn een kracht die van Hem uit-vloeit in de kerk om er de mens te genezen van zijn zonden en wonden." Danneels, "Rituelen in," 309. Cf. also CCC, 1115-1116.

[489] The Eucharist is also celebrated in Taizé communities, but we will limit ourselves in the context of this study to prayer services.

there are familiar icons of Christ or Mother Mary near the altar; the lights are dimmed and there are many candles; kneelers and cushions have been provided on the floor.[490] By sitting on the floor, the participants place themselves, like Mary, at the Lord's feet (Lk 10:38). This whole setting itself affects the way people pray: it is literally more earthed and, as a consequence, less formal. This less formal aspect automatically invites the participants to engage at a more personal level. The form and content of the prayer service are very simple. Short verses from the Bible are its core feature, and these are accompanied by meditative song. These songs have biblical words, and consist usually of only a few lines that are easy to apprehend and memorise, even if they are in a foreign language. For the average outside observer, the repetition of these songs seems endless. The Taizé Community itself has the following to say about these songs and the way they are sung: "Meditative singing thus becomes a way of listening to God. It allows everyone to take part in a time of prayer together and to remain together in attentive waiting on God, without having to fix the length of time too exactly."[491] This brief interpretation already includes a number of elements of *eros*: the community listens by singing, and the meditative style ensures that it can become a kind of intimate dialogue with God; everyone can take part, it is personal but not individual, because the prayer takes place in the community, in a communal setting, which is also important if the service is to be a liturgical celebration, a celebration of the Church; it is a form of "attentive waiting on God", an attitude in which openness, receptiveness, and possibly also desire are evident; and finally, it escapes from the current all-pervasive metaphor TIME IS MONEY. It is like an encounter between two lovers, who spend their time together enjoying each other's company rather than looking at their watches. On the whole, Taizé prayer services are focused very strongly on the relationship with Christ the Bridegroom. The relational aspect is enhanced through simple means and forms derived from the domain of *eros*.

A form of celebration that involves both the sacraments and elements from the domain of *eros* is that of the *Night of Mercy*. These celebrations are held by young people, for instance in the run-up to or during World Youth Days. The name Night of Mercy already indicates the relational aspect. Reconciliation with God is the core focus of this celebration. The time it is held, in the evening, is not insignificant. The evening is the time when

[490] If a Taizé service is held in an ordinary parish church, it is usually held in the sanctuary or in some place in the church where it is possible to sit on the floor, and usually not in the pews.

[491] Taizé, "Meditative singing," n.p. [cited 8 July 2019]. Online: http://www.taize.fr/-en_article338 html.

people usually finish working or studying, and enter a different mode. They have more time for other, more informal occupations, and particularly for engaging in social contacts. The evening is *eros's* preferred time. The celebration begins with a Service of the Word. The biblical texts are chosen to accord with the theme of reconciliation and mercy, for instance in the parable of the prodigal son, also called the parable of the merciful father (Lk 15:11-32). After the homily, which can be held in the form of a dialogue with young people to allow them to feel personally addressed and seen, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed. Meditative songs are sung during exposition, alternating with short readings from the Bible and with periods of silence. During exposition, the participants can come forward to affix notes with their personal intentions to a large wooden cross. The priests present in and around the church make themselves available for personal conversations and for the sacrament of penance and reconciliation. Like during a Taizé service, the lights in the church are dimmed and there are many candles. The atmosphere is intimate. There is no fixed end time for the celebration. This kind of celebration again includes many elements of *eros*, such as intimacy, connection, relationship, personal, loving, experience et cetera.

In celebrations like Taizé prayer services or the Night of Mercy, the Church, as Community of Eros, lives her relationship with Christ the Lord. They are not rigid rituals in which every word and gesture is choreographed, but spaces of intimacy, security and authenticity, in which every participant personally but also communally is oriented to Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church. He is the central object of the Church's liturgical life. It is up to the Church to develop various formats of this kind of liturgical celebration.[492]

3.4.1.3. Eros and Communio

The second relationship is the mutual relationship which exists between the members of the Church. What might a community guided by *eros* look like? The *Societas Perfecta* metaphor and probably also the Body of Christ metaphor are likely to prioritise tasks, offices, and hierarchical order. In the Community of Eros, tasks, offices and order play a secondary role. The unique feature of *eros* is that it gravitates towards the other, desires to be with the other, not to derive any benefit from this, but for the sake of the other and for the sake of the relationship. Community life around Christ, and the mutual relationships themselves thus become aims in their own right. The community is not about competencies, rights, responsibilities,

[492] See for a number of other forms: Lode Aerts, *Nieuwkomers bij de Bron: Als de Kerk naar jongeren luistert* (Antwerp: Halewijn, 2003), 13-15, 93-134.

strategies, rules et cetera, but about true encounter with the other, and about knowing/loving the other.

The guiding principle in this mutual encounter is love as it is described in 1 Co 13:4-7 and as we have complemented it with notions such as desire, passion, connection, intimacy, enthusiasm, union, disinterestedness, joy, and receptiveness. We have already seen that life according to *eros* is more an attitude, a frame of mind, an undercurrent than some clearly defined category. *Eros* is more a matter of the heart than of the head. The biblical example can be found in the first Christian communities: "The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, as everything they owned was held in common" (Ac 4:32). The structures and accompanying offices in the Church developed over the course of the centuries, but before there even was any mention of structures, there was this early witness to the unity of heart and soul, and of great communality.[493]

For an idea of what a Community of Eros might look like, we must look to Pope Francis. In his post-synodal exhortation *Amoris Laetitia: On Love in the Family*, he offers a kind of meditation on love in marriage and in the family on the basis of 1 Co 13:4-7.[494] Marriage and the family are described by the Church as the domestic church (cf. LG 11). What is true for the domestic church on a small scale, is also true for the large Church community as it assembles. We can test this on the basis of the description of love as being "never rude" (1 Co 13:5).

Love is *never rude,* ἀσχημονεῖ. Pope Francis explains: "It indicates that love is not rude or impolite; it is not harsh. Its actions, words and gestures are pleasing and not abrasive or rigid. Love abhors making others suffer" (AL 99). He speaks of "a school of sensitivity and disinterestedness" (AL 99). Francis thus reformulates "never rude" positively as "a kind look" (AL 100). He contrasts this with attitudes that emphasise the shortcomings of others or dwell on other people's limitations. A kind look, by contrast, "builds bonds, cultivates relationships, creates new networks of integration and knits a firm social fabric" (AL 100). A person who sees others with a kind look, and who interacts with the members of the community in this

[493] The development of ministry in the Church was not a rectilinear process. It was also strongly characterised by non-simultaneity and geographical diversity. For the development of ministry at the time of the New Testament, see: Archibald van Wieringen, and Herwi Rikhof, *De zeven Sacramenten: Een Bijbeltheologische en Systematisch-theologische studie* (ThP Sup 6; Bergambacht: 2VM, 2013), 38-90. The development of ministry is not in itself relevant for the current study, except to observe that the concrete life of the community preceded the development of ministry.
[494] AL 89-119.

way, will not speak words of humiliation, scorn, or annoyance, but words of encouragement. Francis points in this respect to Jesus, who time and again encouraged people He encountered: "Take heart, my son!" (Mt 9:2); "Great is your faith!" (Mt 15:28); "Arise!" (Mk 5:41); "Go in peace" (Lk 7:50); "Be not afraid" (Mt 14:27). Francis concludes by saying, "In our families, we must learn to imitate Jesus' own gentleness in our way of speaking to one another" (AL 100). What is true for the family is also true for the Church community as a whole: its members must learn to imitate Jesus' own gentleness in their way of speaking to one another.

It would take us too far afield in this study to discuss at length each notion of the love as it is described in 1 Co 13:4-7 and as we complemented it with notions such as intimacy, passion, connection, et cetera. It is also a task of the community to find its way in dialogue in this respect. The local community can thus become a school in which Christian love in all its aspects can be experienced and practised. Every local community can thus become a community of love. All these communities together form a *network of love*.

The term network of love was coined by Bishop Hans van den Hende. He strongly associates this term with the many diaconal activities that make the Church into a network of expressions of love. Van den Hende points to Paul VI who characterised the Church in this sense by its mission to contribute to a civilisation of love. The core is the connection with Christ, who calls on his disciples to remain in his love (Jn 15:9-17). Although Van den Hende's emphasis is primarily on specific acts of love, he argues that the network of love is inspired by the Holy Spirit "whose activity becomes manifest wherever there is harmony, where there is forgiveness, wherever people are able to bow before each other and to serve each other."[495] This means that everything begins in the lives of Christians and the life of the Christian community itself. The more successful Christians are in living together in unity as Christians, the easier it will be for them to serve others. This brings us to the third relationship that we must examine here: that between the Church and the world that surrounds it.

3.4.1.4. Eros and Missio

The Church does not exist for its own sake, but it has a mission: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the

[495] "Wiens werkzaamheid zichtbaar wordt waar eensgezindheid is, waar vergeving tot stand komt, waar mensen voor elkaar kunnen buigen en elkaar kunnen dienen." Hans van den Hende, *Bouwen aan een netwerk van liefde* (Baarn: Adveniat, 2019), 185. Cf. for the argument as a whole: ibid., 183-187.

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you" (Mt 28:19-20). This verse has four verbs in a row: *go*, *make*, *baptise* and *teach*, and all of them are in the imperative. This is the route, so to speak, that the Church must follow to make disciples of those who do not know Christ yet. The first step, to go, is an activity that must be undertaken by the faithful members of the community themselves. Once people have developed the desire to become followers of Jesus, the baptising and the teaching will flow automatically from this. But how can Christians make people into disciples? The mission of the 72 disciples (Lk 10:1-12) can shed light on this.

When Jesus sends the 72 disciples, their mission is to begin every encounter they have with people by offering them peace. It does not matter who they meet. "Whatever house you enter, let your first word be, peace to this house!" (Lk 10:5). Once this peace has been accepted, the following step is to share these people's lives: "Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer" (Lk 10:7). Only then should issues such as healing and proclamation be considered: "Cure those in it who are sick, and say: 'The kingdom of God is very near to you'" (Lk 10:9). If peace is not accepted, and if people's lives cannot be shared, there will be no cures and the Kingdom of God cannot be proclaimed.

The first step of *missio* therefore is to offer peace and to establish a relationship. If this step is not to be a crude form of proselytism, and it should not be, because the other is entirely free to accept or reject the peace that is offered, then it is important that this step is guided by *eros*. The basis of *eros* is passionate desire for a personal relationship with the other for the sake of the other. We will quote Pamela Young once again here: "in eros I am not interested in the other as servant of my interests. … I am moved by the other. What the other enjoys brings enjoyment to me, and what the other suffers brings suffering."[496] This shared life can then be the basis for witness and for the conversion of people to the faith.

Previously in this chapter we discussed Richard P. McBrien's work *Do We Need the Church?* (1969). He regards the bride image of Ep 5 primarily as an appeal to the Church to proclaim the compassion, favour, and tender mercy of Christ the Bridegroom. It is the task of the Church to manifest to all humanity "that in Christ all men have been accepted and reconciled to God and Father of us all."[497] For McBrien this means that notions such as being accepted the way you are and restoration of relationships are crucial aspects of being Church. These notions are part of the domain of *eros*.

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[496] Young, *Re-creating the Church*, 34-35.
[497] Cf. McBrien, *Do We Need the Church*, 140.

One new movement in the Church that is strongly influenced by *eros* is Sant'Egidio. Sant'Egidio was founded in the Trastevere neighbourhood in Rome in 1968 by Andrea Riccardi. As a student, Riccardi and a group of fellow students heard the Gospel's call to be close to the poor. They founded the *Scuola Popolare*: a free school for children from the slums of Rome. This was the start of a movement that is currently active in more than 70 countries worldwide. Their dedication to prayer and to listening to the Word of God inspires the members of Sant'Egidio to attend to people in the periphery, like the poor, the homeless, the elderly, refugees, prisoners and street children. But Sant'Egidio is interested not only in giving aid, but primarily in friendship: "The poor are brothers and sisters, friends of the Community. Friendship with whoever is in a moment of need (…) is the distinctive trait of the lives of whom is part of Sant'Egidio in the different continents."[498] The love that is central here is not the love that seeks the other's good, benevolence, but is elective love that enters into a relationship with the other for the sake of the relationship. When visiting Sant'Egidio in 2014, Pope Francis described the true character of the encounter between the people of Sant'Egidio and the poor:

> I hope you live what Professor Riccardi said, that you don't distinguish between who is helping and who is being helped. The tension slowly ceases being tension and becomes an encounter, an embrace: it becomes unclear who helps and who is being helped. Who leads the action? Both of them, or, to say it better, the embrace leads.[499]

This image of the embrace again belongs to the domain of *eros*.

3.4.2. The Church is a House of Joy

In contemporary Western society, people normally wish newlyweds "love and happiness", as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter. The pursuit of happiness is a prime occupation in the lives not just of newlyweds, but ultimately of every human being. Typing the word happiness into Google's search box can provide good illustration of the importance of happiness as a theme for contemporary human beings. Within half a second, this query

[498] Sant'Egidio, "Community," n.p. [cited 16 September 2019]. Online: https://www.santegidio.org/pageID/30008/langID/en/THE-COMMUNITY html.
[499] Pope Francis, "Address of Pope Francis to the Sant'Egidio Community: Basilica of 'Santa Maria in Trastevere': Sunday, 15 June 2014," n.p. [cited 16 September 2019]. Online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/june/documents/papa-francesco_20140615_comunita-sant-egidio html.

generates almost 8 billion hits.[500] The positive value of happiness is also evident from the orientational metaphor HAPPY IS UP, as well as from such metaphoric expressions as "she is in seventh heaven", by contrast with SAD IS DOWN, and a metaphoric expression such as "he was very depressed by the sad news."

Thinking about happiness and definitions of happiness have developed strongly throughout history. The Greek philosophers already reflected on the phenomenon of happiness. In his Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle concluded that for most people, *eudaimonia* equals pleasure, or can be realised through prestige, excellence, or wealth.[501] However, true *eudaimonia* according to Aristotle could not be found in these ephemeral things, but *eudaimonia* is the final goal of all human striving. He described *eudaimonia* as "something complete and self-sufficient, in that it is the end of what is done."[502] Happy is he or she who acts according to complete excellence, and for Aristotle this is the same thing as leading a good life.

Much has been written about happiness throughout history. It would take us too far afield here to attempt to describe this entire development.[503] For the contemporary Western world, it suffices to say that happiness is primarily a feeling or an emotion. Thus the *Oxford Dictionary of English* describes happiness mainly as "The quality or condition of being happy;"[504] and the description of happy in relation to contentment is: "Feeling or showing a deep sense of pleasure or contentment, esp. arising from satisfaction with one's circumstances or condition; (also) marked by or expressive of such a feeling. More generally in weakened use: glad, pleased; satisfied, content."[505] Happy or happiness are about a positive feeling, contentment, a state of subjective well-being. Happiness in this sense has been embraced by positive psychology.[506] Unlike the more traditional schools of psychology, which focus primarily on mental problems and

[500] Googled on 24 August 2019.
[501] Cf. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1095b15-1096a10.
[502] Ibid., 1097b20-21. English translation: Roger Crisp, *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 11.
[503] Cf. for a brief history of the development of thinking about happiness: Josef Weismayer, "Glück," *NLchM*, 300-304; E. Kos, "Geluk," *Lexicon van de Ethiek*, 132-135. Cf. for Happiness and Eudaimonism by Thomas Aquinas: Anton ten Klooster, *Thomas Aquinas on the Beatitudes: Reading Matthew, Disputing Grace and Virtue, Preaching Happiness* (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 74-95.
[504] *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd ed. 2013.
[505] Ibid.
[506] Positive psychology is a relatively recent form of psychology that emerged in the late 1990s. Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi are regarded as its founders.

healing, positive psychology concentrates more on what can contribute to the growth and well-being of people: "The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present)."[507] Viewed from the perspective of positive psychology, happiness is something you can work on.

Given the importance that many Western people attach to happiness, the Church can respond to this by speaking about joy. Just like happiness, joy is a positive value. Both are about fullness of life. They appear synonymous and modern dictionaries therefore closely associate happiness and joy. Thus the *Oxford Dictionary of English* defines joy as "A vivid emotion of pleasure arising from a sense of well-being or satisfaction; the feeling or state of being highly pleased or delighted; exultation of spirit; gladness, delight" and "a pleasurable state or condition; a state of happiness or felicity."[508] The great difference, however, is that happiness can be pursued, but that true joy happens to people and ultimately comes from God. This aspect of joy that happens can also be seen in expressions such as "to be filled with joy". Just as Paul used the altar of the unknown God on the Areopagus as an occasion to speak about Jesus and about the resurrection of life (cf. Ac 17:16-33), so today's concern with happiness can be the occasion for the Church to speak about the joy that comes from God.[509]

Unlike happiness, joy is a term that belongs to the Christian faith. In the New Testament, the word χαρά, *joy*, occurs frequently.[510] The word εὐδαιμονία, *happiness, well-being*, by contrast does not occur even once. Joy runs like a thread through the New Testament. To give only a brief compilation of the many passages that mention joy: in the Gospels, it starts with the annunciation of the Good News to Mary, where the angel Gabriel says to Mary: χαῖρε, *rejoice* (Lk 1:28); Mary has reason to be joyful, because the Lord has looked down on her humility (cf. Lk 1:48), because she will literally bear the Son of God in her womb; John the Baptist is filled with joy when he hears the voice of the Bridegroom (cf. Jn 3:29); the crowd

[507] Martin E.P. Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, "Positive Psychology: An Introduction," *Am Psychol* 55 (2000): 5-14, at 5.
[508] *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd ed. 2013.
[509] The Catechism of the Catholic Church actually does this. First it states that every human being has a "natural desire for happiness", and that ultimately only God can fulfil this desire. The fulfilment to which human beings are called is then no longer described as happiness but with other words and images, including to "enter into the divine joy." Cf. CCC 1718-1720.
[510] Χαρά occurs almost sixty times in the New Testament and χαίρω more than seventy times.

rejoices when Jesus performs miracles (cf. Lk 13:17); in a parable, Jesus says that there will be more rejoicing in heaven at one sinner who repents than at ninety-nine upright people who have no need of repentance (cf. Lk 15:7); at the Last Supper, Jesus instructs his disciples to remain connected with Him: "that my own joy may be in you and your joy may be complete" (Jn 15:11); after the resurrection of the Lord and during his apparitions to the disciples, finally, the disciples are filled with joy (cf. for instance Lk 24:52; Jn 20:20). In the Gospels, joy is often linked with Jesus or with God the Father. Everywhere He goes, there is joy. Overlooking these passages in the New Testament, we can say that Jesus embodies divine joy, and that He constantly makes people share in divine joy.

There was also joy in the first Christian communities. In Paul's writings, joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rm 14:17 and Ga 5:22). As a gift of the Holy Spirit, joy is of divine origin. Paul also instructs the faithful to be joyful: "Always be joyful in the Lord; I repeat, be joyful" (Ph 4:4). This is not just gladness in general, but joy *in the Lord*. For Paul, too, joy has a Christological connotation. Bridal joy is not a form of joy in its own right in the New Testament, but there is a double summons to rejoice at the Marriage of the Lamb χαίρωμεν καὶ ἀγαλλιῶμεν, *let us be glad and joyful* (Rv 19:7). The history of salvation, it could be said, ultimately culminates in bridal joy, and this means that bridal joy can be characterised as the culmination of all joys.[511]

In sum, we can say that joy accompanies the works of Jesus: wherever Christ is, there is joy. There was also joy in the first Christian communities. The life of a believer is accompanied by joy, and joy is a characteristic feature of the Church. Many ecclesiologies address the four classical *notae ecclesiae*: unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity.[512] Given that joy occupies such a prominent role in the life of the Church and that it belongs to the essence of the Church, joy can be seen as a kind of fifth note of the Church.

Previously in this chapter we observed that joy has received little attention in ecclesiology. The magisterium of the Church, and Pope Francis in particular, have had more to say about joy as a feature of faith. Francis has metaphorically characterised the Church as "a joyful home."[513] The Church is a house of joy simply because Christ Himself is present in it.

[511] We have concluded previously in this study that in the Old Testament, bridal joy is the culmination of all joy.
[512] Cf. for instance Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 151-196; La Soujeole, *Introduction*, 515-624; Kehl, *Die Kirche*, 388-459.
[513] Pope Francis, "Angelus: 3rd Sunday of Advent 2013," n.p.

What does this metaphoric language mean for the life of the Church, if we place the metaphor THE CHURCH IS A HOUSE OF JOY centre stage?

To gain a share in the joy of this house, it is important first and foremost to enter it. This happens in the sacrament of baptism. From the perspective of *entering into the house of joy*, reception into the Church is not primarily about the fruits of baptism that are customarily mentioned: remission of original sin and of all personal sins; adoption as a child of the Father, a member of Christ, and temple of the Holy Spirit; and incorporation into the Church.[514] Incorporation into the Church seen from this perspective primarily means being filled with the joy of the Lord, or, in the image of the classical mode of baptism in Antiquity, through full immersion: to be baptised is to be immersed in the joy of the Lord. Joy thus becomes the keynote of the Christian existence, and the keynote of the entire life of the Church. This joy is a lasting joy, even if the believer or the Church as a whole is exposed to great adversity, to some ordeal, or to suffering. Paul's words "we are subjected to every kind of hardship, but never distressed; we see no way out but we never despair; we are pursued but never cut off; knocked down, but still have some live in us" (2 Co 4:8-9) could be complemented by *the suffering and the ordeals are great, but we remain full of joy*.

With joy as its keynote, every aspect of the life of the Church can be described from the perspective of joy. If we look at the sacramental life of the Church, we can say: human beings are immersed in the joy of the Lord through the sacrament of baptism, and thus baptism is also joy at new life in the Lord; being confirmed means to be equipped with the gift of the Holy Spirit to be sent as a messenger of joy to proclaim the Good News everywhere; the sacrament of the Eucharist is the nuptial banquet where the eschatological joy of the union between Bridegroom and Bride is already celebrated and tasted; the sacrament of penance and reconciliation is joy at the healing of an existence broken through one's own fault, and joy at the true restoration of this relationship; in the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, the sick experience joy at the presence of the Lord and at being able to share in the Lord's suffering; in the sacrament of matrimony, the communal life of husband and wife is a joyful image of the love that Christ has for the Church and the Church has for Christ; the ordained minister, finally, may interpret himself in his service of God and the people as a servant of joy.[515]

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[514] Cf. CCC 1279.

[515] On the occasion of his 50th ordination anniversary, Cardinal Kasper published a book on the priesthood. He places his own priesthood in the light of joy and the title reflects this core aspect: "Diener der Freude." Cf. Walter Kasper, *Diener der Freude: Priesterliche Existenz - priesterlicher Dienst* (Freiburg: Herder, 2007).

The sacramental life of the Church also points the focus at the liturgy. As far as the liturgical year is concerned, Sunday is the day of the Bride and the Bridegroom. It is the day that the wedding feast is celebrated and the wedding banquet is consumed. This means that Sunday can be called the *day of joy*. The liturgical texts frequently mention joy. If we limit ourselves here to the celebration of the Eucharist, the preface especially is the fixed part of the Mass in which the Church sings out its praise and joy. Several prefaces contain the phrases "therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise,"[516] or "we praise you, and with joy we proclaim."[517] The whole Church then affirms this in the *Sanctus, sanctus*. The singing of the Alleluia before the proclamation of the Gospel is equally a clear expression of joy.[518]

Joy is fully present in the Church's sacramental life. The question is whether every believer will experience it as such. An old liturgical adage is: *mens concordat voci, let the mind be in accord with the voice*.[519] In everyday life, feelings and thoughts usually precede words, and experiences are shared in words and metaphors. The liturgy, however, works the other way round. It gives us the words to help us enter the reality that is being celebrated. This is also true for the joy that comes from God. We have called joy the keynote of Christian existence. Joy is thus a reality in the life of every believer and of the Church. The cares of everyday life (cf. Mt 6:25-24) will often obscure this joy. Speaking about joy is at risk therefore of becoming hollow. But the words of the liturgy, and more broadly speaking, the entire ritual life of the Church, attempt to awaken within the faithful the state of joy, or to put it differently, to bring them in touch with the keynote of joy. This is the context in which the Council Fathers of the Second Vatican Council placed great stress on active participation. In the Constitution on the Liturgy, the adage of *mens concordat voci* and the call to *participatio actuosa* are mentioned in the same breath.[520] By participating actively in word, song, and accompanying gesture like standing, sitting, walking, kneeling, it is possible to touch the keynote of joy and to interiorise

[516] Quapropter, profusis paschalibus gaudiis, totus in orbe terrarum mundus exultat," Missale Romanum 2008 (Editio typica tertia; Vatican City: Typis Vaticanis, 2002): the five prefaces of Easter, the two prefaces of the Ascension of the Lord, and the preface of Pentecost. English translation: *The Roman Missal: New English Translation 2010* (ICEL).
[517] "Te laudamus in gaudio confitentes." Missale Romanum: eighth preface for the Sundays in Ordinary Time.
[518] Cf. Augustine, *Epist.* 55,28.
[519] Saint Benedict included this adage in his rule in the section on praying the Psalms. It is also quoted in SC 11 and 90.
[520] Cf. SC 11.

this. A lot of progress is still to be made in this regard in large parts of North-western Europe. In celebrations in the Netherlands it is often striking that the faithful remain passively seated throughout large parts of the Mass, and let choirs do all the singing. The notion of joy often seems rather remote. As regards the accompanying gestures, a greater place could possibly be reserved in the liturgy for dance as an expression of joy. The figure of King David, who danced before the Ark (cf. 2 S 6:12-14), provides the Church with a good example to be followed.

We must also look beyond the Church's sacramental life and the liturgy, to the Church's mission in the world. Joy as keynote also affects the mission of the Church. If "the Church (…) in Christ [is] like a sacrament or (...) a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (LG 1), then this quality of being a sign and an instrument will gain in clarity if the joy is visible and tangible to outside observers. This begins in the details of the lives of every individual believer. On the basis of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, every believer is called to proclaim the Gospel. The Gospel itself is joyful (cf. Lk 2:10-11) and its proclamation therefore stands to benefit if this joy is visible. Joy can of course be something interior which does not necessarily have to be visible on the outside, but yet Pope Francis has emphasised that the Gospel must not be proclaimed without external joy:

> Consequently, an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral! Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that 'delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow… And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ.'[521]

The exterior should be a reflection, we could say, of an inner reality: partaking in the joy of the Lord. External joy in its turn serves the mission of the Church. Ecclesial communities such as parishes, but also families, religious communities and new movements that radiate joy will be attractive to outsiders.

[521] EG 10. The quotation in the quotation is from Pope Paul VI, "Evangelii Nuntiandi," 80.

In sum we can say that joy is an essential note of the Church: the Church is a House of Joy. Joy in the Lord is thus a keynote of all areas of the life of the Church: it permeates all aspects and activities of the Church. In the sacrament of baptism, the believer is immersed in the joy of the Lord, in which he or she acquires a lasting share. The Church's liturgical life especially attempts to assist every believer in growing in this joy. It is a joy that can also be felt in difficult times. It is not necessarily visible on the outside, but the Church's mission is strengthened if it is. The joy that can already be experienced on earth is oriented to completion. In the New Testament, this perfect joy is expressed metaphorically as bridal joy.

3.4.3. The Wedding Garment of the Church

In contemporary Western society, clothes are an important way of showing who you are. Covering the body was long the only function of clothing, but there is currently a large variety of styles that allow people to express who they are. "The clothing of a person is a means of communication with the outside world. It is the way of telling people about the 'state' and the 'status' of it owner."[522] A bride's wedding dress and jewels equally reflect her personality. Choosing a wedding gown is a procedure that is often shrouded in secrecy and is one of the highpoints of the preparations for a wedding. The bride's wedding dress is also the centre of attention at the wedding itself. A wedding dress is therefore a familiar and interesting object to people of today.

Clothes show who you are. The exterior reflects the interior, and the interior is manifested in the exterior. This ensures that clothes themselves are a kind of structural metaphor: clothes are the source domain that says something about the identity of a person, and the values that he or she represents, or aims to represent, are the target domain. Let us take young people's clothing as an example. In their quest for their own identity, young people often reject the established order. They more or less distance themselves from the values and norms espoused by society and make their own choices. They communicate through language, attitude, and particularly through clothes that they refuse to conform on the one hand, and what they do wish to stand for on the other. To highlight their choices, the clothes they wear are often eye-catching and extreme. It is in part because of their clothes that young people form a group of their own, a subculture, with shared

[522] UKEssays, "Relationship between Fashion and Identity Cultural Studies Essay," n.p. [Cited 21 August 2019]. Online: https://www.ukessays.com/essays/cultural-studies/relationship-between-fashion-and-identity-cultural-studies-essay.php.

values and norms. Their clothes reflect their identity, and in addition they are a reminder to act according to their identity.[523]

Religious habits function in the same way for religious as young people's clothes do. They, too, express their identity through their clothes, and communicate through their clothes with each other and with the outside world. The sisters of the Institute of Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará may serve as an example. They wear a grey habit with a blue scapular. These two colours represent the mystery of the incarnation: blue refers to the divine nature of Christ and grey to his human nature:

> In that way the blue scapular, which represents the Divine Word, put over the grey habit, which symbolizes the humanity, is an eloquent statement about the great mystery of the Incarnation, in which the Word was united with our nature and dressed in our flesh (…) In each Servant there should be a love for her Habit, it should be like her skin, so that united to the Incarnate Word, who united Heaven and Earth, she may flower into all kinds of good works and be for all the good scent of Christ (2 Cor 2:15).[524]

This confirms what we said in the first chapter about the function of metaphor in religion: 1) to understand the life of the faithful; and 2) to offer the faithful tools so as to be able to act in the world. We can also look at the Church's wedding garment in this twofold way. The first question is then what the wedding garment represents, and then guidelines can be given about what this means for the life of the Church and of the faithful today. Let us start with the wedding garment itself. What does this garment communicate?

The unique feature of wedding gowns in Western culture is that they are white and long, often with a train, and are of fine material. The wedding dress is often worn with a veil and special jewels. The contemporary Western world offers many wedding dresses in all shapes and sizes, but long and white remain the dominant form. The colour white has a relatively short history. In the Middle Ages, brides often wore black or dark red. The dress and the jewels were a way of showing the family's wealth. In the eighteenth century, yellow and gold were the favourite colours in Europe. Approximately 150 years ago, the favourite colour became white. White was

[523] See for an overview of young people's sartorial styles for the 1950-2000 period: Kitty de Leeuw et al (ed.), *Jong! Jongerencultuur en stijl in Nederland 1950-2000* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000).

[524] Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará, "Our Religious Habit," n.p. [cited 9 September 2019]. Online: http://www.ssvmne.org/en/who-we-are/our-religious-habit/.

the colour of fashion at the time. Since Queen Victoria's wedding in 1840, the colour white has become more or less the standard colour in the Western world. A priori the colour white does not therefore have any more profound connotations.[525]

For contemporary Western people, the colour white generally represents innocence, spotlessness, and purity. In combination with the jewellery, the white wedding dress also signifies festiveness and gladness. In religious circles, white is a symbol of virginity. An older generation may still be aware of this notion of virginity in relation to the white wedding dress, but this is no longer the case for many young people; the white wedding dress as a symbol of virginity is no longer a reality for them. For people who have already been married and who wear white (again) at their second marriage, the colour white often represents a fresh start and a new beginning.[526]

3.4.3.1. The wedding garment as a metaphor for a process of transformation

Before we look at the Church's wedding garment, we should remember the following aspect: getting married is a process in which a woman goes from one social status to another, from single woman to married woman.[527] This transition begins as soon as a woman is asked to marry someone, or as soon as she decides to get married. The positive answer, or her decision to get married immediately sets in motion the phase of leaving the familiar group of single women. The woman becomes a bride, but is not yet married, and is therefore not yet part of the group of married women. She is in an "in-between stage, a bride-to-be."[528] During this period, preparations for the wedding are undertaken and the wedding dress in particular is "an effective

[525] For an overview of the development of the wedding gown, see Edwina Ehrman, *The Wedding Dress: 300 Years of Bridal Fashion* (London: V&A publishing, 2011); Susanne Friese, "The Wedding Dress: From Use Value to Sacred Object," in *Through the Wardrobe: Women's Relationships with Their Clothes* (ed. Ali Guy, Eileen Green, and Maura Banim; Oxford: Berg, 2001), 61.

[526] A study of how contemporary women choose their wedding dress shows that most women prefer white and that they try to express themselves and their own identity in their choice of dress. One interviewee, Mavis Christie, was quoted as saying: "Joel and I wanted a traditional wedding. Even though we were divorced, we were making a deep commitment to each other before God. It was a fresh start. *I wanted this dress to express the woman I have become since my first wedding.* I am more confident and independent, able to face things head on. To me, the off-white satin with lace that I chose reflect both my maturity and elegance." Friese, "The Wedding Dress," 63. Friese's italics.

[527] This also applies to the man, but we only describe here the process for the woman.

[528] Friese, "The Wedding Dress," 56.

medium to move people to act in culturally appropriate manners."[529] Women describe how even entering a bridal shop brings about a change in them. In the bridal shop, the bride is taught wedding gown-specific language, and she is acquainted with the competencies and skills that are expected of a bride. Bystanders, like bridal shop staff, mothers, friends, and others play an important role in the transition. They help the bride to assume her new role by initiating her into the world of the bride. The whole process of choosing a wedding gown helps the bride to become comfortable with the role of bride, it is "a process of meaning transfer whereby the cultural meaning that is encoded within the dress is moved into the personal lived experience of the bride."[530]

The choosing of a wedding dress itself sets in motion a process of transformation and permits the bride to grow in her role as bride. It often takes a while before the right wedding dress is found. The choice of wedding dress, research has shown, is ultimately determined more by emotion and feeling than by reason. Also, the wedding gown that a bride chooses often turns out to be entirely different from what she had in mind beforehand: the wedding gown "had *revealed* itself to the bride as being 'the one'."[531] The day of the wedding itself, finally, is the climax of the entire process of transition. It is the day the bride is accepted into the group of married women. The in-between stage, and particularly the process of choosing a wedding dress, so women testify, is a decisive period in preparing for the important day of the wedding. Because of their preparations, and especially because of the process of choosing a wedding dress, they have little trouble assuming their role as bride on the day of the wedding itself.[532]

It may be concluded from this description that a wedding dress is not a static, ready-made object that can just be bought somewhere and then worn. Instead, buying a wedding gown is a process of transformation. The bride sets out to find the wedding dress that suits her. During this process of searching, she gradually learns what it means to be a bride, and she trains the skills that belong to being a bride. Although it is the bride who chooses, it is many women's experience that the wedding dress revealed itself to them as *being 'the one.'* The wedding dress is thus a metaphor for a process of growth, in which the bride is transformed so that she can assume the role of bride on the day of the wedding.

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[529] Ibid., 57.
[530] Ibid., 60.
[531] Ibid., 63. Friese's italics.
[532] Cf. for this section as a whole: ibid., 75-68.

After these general reflections on the colour white and on choosing a wedding dress, we will return to ecclesiology. What message can a white wedding dress have for contemporary believers (understanding), and what tools can a white wedding garment offer to the faithful to act (tools to act in the world)?

For contemporary Western society, as we have observed, white stands for innocence, spotlessness, and purity. These notions sound fine, but they are not very specific. What specific aspects can innocence, spotlessness, and purity be related to? As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the spotlessness and purity of the wedding garment can be explained as signifying the purity of the faith (Ambrose), good works (Jerome), and love from a pure heart (Augustine). For John Chrysostom, we have also seen, the baptismal gown/wedding garment is a metaphor for Christ Himself: "We put off the old garment, which has been made filthy with the abundance of our sins; we put on the new one, which is free from every stain. What am I saying? We put on Christ Himself. *For all you*, says St. Paul, *who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*."[533] This last significance is the broadest one, and it encompasses the meanings of purity of the faith, good works, and love from a pure heart. The white wedding garment stands for Christ Himself and therefore for his innocence and purity.

The notions of innocence, spotlessness and purity can also be found in the New Testament, as Ephesians says that Christ led his Bride, the Church, to Himself "with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that" (Ep 5:27). In the Epistle to the Ephesians, innocence, spotlessness and purity are qualities that are given to the Church. In the everyday life of the Church these qualities are not always visible. In recent history, many cases of sexual abuse by ministers of the Church have come to light. Not only were innocence, spotlessness and purity entirely lacking in the case of the perpetrators, but also in the case of the Church as a whole. From the perspective of the bride metaphor, we must speak of a soiled wedding garment. The wedding garment can also help in moving forward. What tools does the wedding garment give to the Church to act?

A wedding dress, as we have seen, is not a static object, but a metaphor for a process of transformation; a process in which the bride grows into her role as bride and learns to respond to the bridegroom's love. The process begins with the bride renouncing her old life (single woman) and starts to prepare for her new life as a spouse (married woman). The process of choosing a wedding dress in the in-between stage is "a process of meaning

[533] John Chrysostom, *Catecheses baptismales* 3,2,11. English translation Harkins, *St. John Chrystostom*, 47.

transfer whereby the cultural meaning that is encoded within the dress is moved into the personal lived experience of the bride."[534] In this process, the wedding gown *reveals* itself to the bride as *being 'the one'*.

If we consider first what this process of transformation means for individual believers, we can anchor the starting point of the Christian life in the sacrament of baptism. The decision to be baptised and the preparation for baptism precede baptism, but like entering a bridal shop and fitting on a first wedding dress are conscious moments in which a bride begins the in-between stage, the phase of being a bride to be, so baptism, by clothing baptizands in a baptismal gown, makes them conscious of the fact that they have renounced their old lives and that their new lives have already started, but that this new life is yet to reach fulfilment. In the sacrament of baptism, individuals are baptised into one Bride, and they begin the in-between stage, the phase of being a bride to be.

In the Early Church the renunciation of the old life was visualised by the fact that the baptizands removed all their clothes and ornaments before descending into the font. Once they had been baptised and arose from the water, they were clothed in a baptismal gown. Within the bride metaphor this robe can be called not the baptismal gown but the wedding garment. The wedding garment in which the baptised person is clothed after baptism can be regarded as the first wedding garment that the believer in question wears. He or she is clothed with Jesus Christ, but this is only a first step, or, in Paul's words, spoken in a different context, but equally applicable to this case: "Now we see only reflections in a mirror, mere riddles" (1 Co 13:12). Just as a woman is only truly initiated into the bridal world after fitting on her first wedding gown, so baptism truly initiates the baptizand into the world of Bridegroom and Bride. The nuptial language, which is a metaphor for the language of faith, can now be learned from the inside. The acts of the bride, metaphors for the acts that belong to the faith, can be practised. The believer has a whole life to experience this process of transformation. It is a process of meaning transfer, in which the believer becomes ever more alike to the garment of Christ, and interiorises the values of the faith. In growing into the true wedding garment, the wedding garment, Christ Himself, will eventually reveal Himself as being 'the one'. In this entire process of transformation, the possibility must be left open that a person will not be properly dressed for the wedding at the end of time, and will therefore be cast outside (cf. Mt 22:11-13).

What is true for the individual believer is also true for the Church as a whole: she undergoes a process of transformation as Bride that lasts up to

[534] Friese, "The Wedding Dress," 60.

the moment that the Bridegroom will appear in the fullness of time. What the sacrament of baptism is for the individual believer, Christ's death on the cross is for the Church as a whole. In our analysis of Ep 5:26-27 we have seen that Christ gave Himself up for the Church and led the Church to Himself "with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that" (Ep 5:27). These words 'with no speck or wrinkle' are an aesthetic element, the beautiful white wedding garment, but ultimately they represent the interior, the Church's full dedication to Christ the Bridegroom. The birth of the Church on the cross is the start of the in-between stage, the phase of being a bride to be. As long as the Church is still in this phase, the Church must continue to look for the true wedding garment. For the Church, too, this is a process of meaning transfer. The metaphor of the wedding garment can help to understand the essence of the Church, but also provides tools which can be used to live this process of meaning transfer. The example we will be looking at is the unity of the Church, or, metaphorically, the one wedding garment of the Church.

3.4.3.2. The soiled and torn wedding garment

The Church is one – this has been the profession of the Church from its very earliest days.[535] At the same time, this unity has been under threat from the start. In John's Gospel, Jesus' last prayer at the end of the Last Supper is offered for the entire Christian community: "May they all be one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you" (Jn 17:21). This prayer suggests that the unity that Jesus desires cannot be taken for granted. This unity was contested even in the time of the New Testament. Paul warned against this (cf. Rm. 15:5; Ph 2:2-3) and some of the communities he founded already appear to have been affected by discord (cf. 1 Corinth, notably 1:10-17). Internal divisions have led throughout history to a number of great schisms, with the Eastern Schism (1054), the Western Schism (1378-1417), and the Reformation (1517) being only the most noteworthy. Without attempting to investigate the emergence and course of these schisms in great detail here, it can be said that the Western Schism was to a certain extent caused by

[535] Sanctity is the oldest predicate attributed to the Church. Cf. for an early witness the *Traditio apostolica* from the early third century: DH 10. The confession of the one Church emerged in the early fourth century, for instance in the works of Eusebius of Caesarea (325) and Cyril of Jerusalem (348), and was eventually included in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed (381). Cf. DH 40, 41 and 150.

church politics; a schism which was ultimately overcome.[536] In the Eastern Schism and in the Reformation, church politics were supplemented by theological differences. These theological differences touch upon the essence of the Church. In the case of the Eastern Schism, the differences can be characterised by the keyword *filioque*, and in that of the Reformation by the theme of *justification by faith*.[537]

Metaphorically speaking, disharmony and division on the grounds of conflict and church political difficulties can be described as the *soiling* of the wedding garment. This kind of situation arises in particular when people attempt to exercise power and are prepared to impose their own views at all cost. The wedding garment is cleansed whenever people or parties repent and are willing to go the way of reconciliation. In the case of the Western Schism, this is more or less what happened. After many years of strife and several councils, the various parties found each other again. The situation is different when there are theological divisions. From the perspective of the bride metaphor, people, in their zeal for Christ and the Truth, have fought each other so fiercely that the wedding garment of the Church, the undivided garment of Christ, has been *torn*, and that parts of it possibly have become separated from it and are lying on the ground. All-too-human issues such as large egos or the desire to wield blunt power do not necessarily play a dominant role when there are theological differences.[538] After the schism has been effected, what is required is that the one wedding garment of Christ is restored. Because conflicts and church political divisions are often mingled with theological differences, restoration is commonly a lengthy process, and it may take generations before any progress is made. Restoring a schism is a process of raising consciousness and of transformation, a process of meaning transfer in which authentic Christian doctrines are rediscovered and shared, a process that is oriented towards finding anew the unity that Christ

[536] See for an overview of the emergence and course of the Western Schism: Paul Ourliac, "Das Schisma und die Konzilien (1387-1449)" (Sonderausgabe; *Die Geschichte des Christentums* 6; Freiburg: Herder, 2010), 75-103.

[537] As for the Western Schism, it is impossible here to give an extensive account of the emergence, course and backgrounds of the Eastern Schism and the Reformation, For a concise overview of the various schisms see Franz Xaver Bischof et al., *Einführung in die Geschichte des Christentums* (Freiburg: Herder, 2012), 404-417.

[538] It is known that Luther's conflict with the Church led to a crisis of conscience for him. At the Imperial Diet of Worms, April 1521, according to the Spalatin tradition he said at the end of his interrogation: "Ich bin überwunden durch die Schriften, so von mir geführt, und gefangen im Gewissen an dem Wort Gottes. Derhalben ich nichts mag noch will widerrufen. Weil wider das Gewissen zu handeln beschwerlich, unheilsam und gefährlich ist. Gott helf mir. Amen." Martin Luther, *Werke* (Kritische Gesammtausgabe 7; Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1897), 877.

intended (cf. Jn 17:21), or, to put it differently and in metaphoric terms, it is about undergoing a process in which the true wedding garment is ultimately revealed as being 'the one'.

As far as the Eastern Schism is concerned, the differences about the *filioque* have been resolved, and the mutual decrees of excommunication were lifted by both Churches in 1965.[539] In this sense, the wedding garment has been restored. The fact that unity between the East and the West has nonetheless not yet been achieved is due not to theological differences, but to church politics. The tear in the wedding garment has been mended, but the garment is still soiled.[540] As far as the Reformation is concerned, the opposite has happened. The parties that became adversaries during the Reformation have been engaged in dialogue now for many decades. There is generally a strong desire to come to unity.[541] In this sense, it is much less a case of a soiled wedding garment, but there is no unity yet on essential points of doctrine. This means that the tear in the wedding garment is still visible.[542]

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[539] This occurred during a meeting between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople.

[540] There are admittedly other doctrinal issues that divine the Eastern and Western Church, such as the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the Assumption of Mary and the infallibility of the pope, but these were not instrumental in causing the schism. They do impede unification, however, as do church politics, including the erection of Catholic dioceses and parishes in the East. For the development of dialogue with the Eastern Churches, see: Ronald G. Roberson, "Eastern Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue," in *Celebrating a Century of Ecumenism: Exploring the Achievements of International Dialogue* (ed. John A. Radano; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012), 249-263; Edward Idris Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue: Unitatis Redintegratio, Nostra Aetate* (Rediscovering Vatican II; New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 112-118

[541] From a Roman Catholic perspective the view is that there are many contacts with various Churches and Ecclesial Communities. For an overview, see the website of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity with an extensive list of mutual relationships, meetings, documents et cetera. Cf. Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "Homepage," n.p. [cited 21 September 2019]. Online: http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en html. Cf. also John A. Radano, ed., *Celebrating a Century of Ecumenism: Exploring the Achievements of International Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012).

[542] In 1999, the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation reached agreement about the doctrine of justification. Cf. The Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church, "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification," n.p. [cited 25 February 2020]. Online: http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/-dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/luterani/dialogo/documenti-di-dialogo/1999-dichiarazione-congiunta-sulla-dottrina-della-giustificazion/en.html. The Methodists also subscribed to this agreement in 2006, the Anglicans in 2016, and the World Communion of Reformed

3.4.3.3. Flaws in the texture of the wedding garment

The abuse scandals in the Church are of a different calibre. These are scandals that have come into the open in the recent past and which we may not assume have been fully surmounted everywhere. The problem is too large and too all-encompassing to be able to discuss it fully here, but a brief reflection can show that the metaphor of the wedding garment can in principle offer new insights. In this study we have taken modern metaphor theory as a framework, and this theory tells us that human thought and actions are determined by the metaphors that we use. What alternative thought patterns and insights for action can the bride metaphor offer us, and specifically the wedding garment, for an issue like sexual abuse in the Church?

Sexual abuse in the Church is regarded by many as one of the greatest crises in the entire history of the Church. Some are tempted to lay responsibility for abuse with the individual offenders, and to insist that it is they who have caused great harm to their victims and to the Church. In response, to prevent further abuse from taking place, measures are demanded such as thorough screening for potential candidates for ministry, good formation of candidates, codes of conduct, preventive measures and such like. We can see that the Church is in fact responding in this way.[543] This response arises from thinking in terms of a *Societas perfecta*: the members of the organisation have committed grave crimes and measures must be taken to ensure that these crimes cannot occur again in the future. The institution itself is thus largely spared and everything can stay the way it

Churches (WCRC) in 2017. This means that a major point of contention between Rome and the Reformation has now been solved. Other differences remain that still require resolution before full church communion can be realised. The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification mentions the relationship between the Word of God and church doctrine, as well as ecclesiology, ecclesial authority, church unity, ministry, the sacraments, and the relation between justification and social ethics. Cf. ibid., no. 43.

[543] The Dutch bishops for example, in conjunction with the Conference of Dutch Religious (KNR), have drawn up a Code of Conduct for Ministry, which came into effect on 13 April 2018 and applies to the entire Dutch Church Province. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is "om de sociale veiligheid binnen de R.-K. Kerkprovincie in Nederland te bevorderen en te waarborgen." Dutch Bishops' Conference, *Gedragscode Pastoraat* (Utrecht, 2018), 3. In response to the abuse scandals, Pope Francis has changed the portions of canon law that regulate the way complaints of sexual abuse are handled. Thus the Motu Proprio *Vos estis lux mundi* adopted a reporting obligation, but also describes how bishops and major superiors can be charged if they cover up sexual abuse. Cf. Pope Francis, "Vos estis lux mundi," n.p. [cited 21 September 2019]. Online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20190507_vos-estis-lux-mundi.html.

was. But the abuse took place on a large scale, for a long period of time, in many countries across the globe, and in all layers of the Church. Given the dimensions of the problem, huge in all respects, the conclusion cannot be avoided that this was not due simply to failures or weaknesses of individuals. There is in fact a lot more to this issue for the Church.

Research of sexual abuse has demonstrated that there were three factors that contributed to abuse: the (almost absolute) power of the perpetrators vis-à-vis the victim, the fact that the victims were dependent on the perpetrators, and thirdly the isolation in which the victims found themselves: they had nowhere to go to tell their stories.[544] These three ingredients are a kind of cocktail that considerably increase the chance of abuse. This is not only true for the Church, but for any organisation.[545] The strongly hierarchical structure and (sometimes absolute) power of authorities in the Church entail a structurally high risk of various forms of abuse, not only sexual abuse. The Church certainly bears responsibility for this. It is not enough to point to the sins of individual members, and to take a number of possibly appropriate measures. The metaphor of the wedding garment, which concerns us here, shows a different way. Whereas the *Societas perfecta* metaphor encourages reflection on the changes that must be made to the organisation to prevent abuse from happening again, the bride metaphor says: there is a flaw in the texture of the Church's wedding garment. This flaw has enabled systematic abuse, and will enable more abuse in the future. It must therefore be remedied. How can this be done?

First we must look carefully at the flaw itself (understanding). We must start for this with the Church's hierarchical character. The Church as a hierarchical institution has developed into a rigidly structured organisation with many offices and services. Some of these, including the papacy, the office of bishop, and the office of parish priest, have more or less absolute power within the limits of canon law: the pope in respect of the universal

[544] Cf. Thomas P. Doyle, "Roman Catholic Clericalism, Religious Duress, and Clergy Sexual Abuse," *Pspy* 51 (2003): 189-231, at 209-215 and 222-227.

[545] There are many other aspects that increase the risk of sexual abuse, such as for example a background of neglect, the offender's history of abuse, low self-esteem, little or no social network. In many cases, there was a convergence of risk factors. My focus in this study is on institutional risk factors, and particularly power, dependency, and isolation. For a brief description of offender profiles in sexual abuse, see: Nelleke Nicolaï, "De consequenties van seksueel misbruik van minderjarigen: Ten behoeve van de commissie van onderzoek naar seksueel misbruik van minderjarigen in de Rooms-Katholieke Kerk," in *Seksueel misbruik van minderjarigen in de Rooms-Katholieke Kerk: Uitgebreide versie deel 2: De achtergrondstudies en essays* (Wim Deetman, ed.; Amsterdam: Balans, 2011), 243-246.

church; the bishop in his diocese; and the parish priest in his parish.[546] Before they accept any office, bishops and parish priests must take an oath of fidelity.[547] The oath of fidelity totally encapsulates the minister in question within the hierarchical structure of the Church. The faithful occupy a lower station than the ordained ministers in the hierarchy. They are strongly dependent in the Church on what the ordained ministers think or do. Thus ordained ministers determine who may be admitted to the sacraments and who may not. Naturally the ordained ministers cannot act randomly because they have bound themselves through the oath of fidelity to remain within the framework set by the Church, but there is nonetheless much room for interpretation and the ordained minister can ultimately decide. All in all there is inequality of power between the ministers and the faithful, and the faithful are strongly dependent on the ministers.[548] There is also isolation. The sexual abuse of children often took place in boarding schools, often literally far removed from the rest of the world. Isolation currently is due to the fact that the Church is becoming a small minority in the Western European context. The faithful live at a geographical remove

[546] The 1983 Codex Iuris Canonici states in can. 331 that the pope is the bishop of the Church of Rome, head of the Episcopal College, Vicar of Christ, and Shepherd of the universal Church, and therefore "possesses supreme, full, immediate, and universal ordinary power in the Church, which he is always able to exercise freely." ("qui ideo vi muneris sui suprema, plena, immediata et universali in Ecclesia gaudet ordinaria potestate, quam semper libere exercere valet"). Can. 381 § 1 stipulates that a bishop possesses ordinary, proper and immediate power ("potestas ordinaria, propria et immediata") in the diocese entrusted to his care. With regard to the parish priest, the Code speaks of "pastoral care" ("cura pastoralis"). Cf. for instance can. 515, 519, 527. The word power is not used in relation to the parish priest, but many canons show that the parish priest, under the authority of his diocesan bishop, ultimately controls everything in his parish. Thus can. 532 says that the parish priest represents the parish in all legal affairs: "in omnibus negotiis iuridicis parochus personam gerit paroeciae."

[547] In 1907, Pope Pius X introduced the oath against modernism, which was abolished by Pope Paul VI in 1967. The current oath of fidelity was introduced by Pope John Paul II in 1989 and made obligatory for anyone who accepts a ministry in the Church, as well as for example for professors of theology. For the text, see: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Professio fidei," *AAS* 90 (1998): 542-544.

[548] The inequality is evident already from looking simply at the number of canons dedicated to the various groups. Book II of the Code deals with the People of God in 542 canons. The first 27 canons are on the lay faithful (can. 204-231). The 340 following canons are on the pope, bishops, parish priests, and the fora in which they work (can. 232-572). The other 173 canons are about the religious life (can. 573-746). Only five percent of all legislative texts about the People of God deal with the laity. Can. 212 § 1 states in reference to the relationship between the ordained ministers that the Christian faithful must show "Christian obedience" ("christiana oboedientia") to their leaders.

from each other. Non-believers no longer have much knowledge of what happens in a Church. For this reason alone, negative experiences are more difficult to share. In practice, many believers will possibly not experience these things quite as strongly as this. Also, the great majority of ordained ministers will be at pains to guard their flocks according to the image of Christ the Good Shepherd and to avoid any abuse of power. The very fact, however, that the Church is a strongly hierarchical organisation in itself creates inequality of power and dependency. If we add to this the aspect of isolation, we have the recipe for structural abuse of various kinds. This is clearly a structural flaw, all the more so because all the faithful are fundamentally equal: "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither slave nor freeman, there can be neither male nor female – for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Ga 3:28).

There is a flaw in the wedding garment of the Church. The time of the wedding has not yet come, however. The Church is in the in-between stage, the phase of being the bride to be. The Church is still in the process of transformation, a process of meaning transfer in which it is constantly looking for the wedding garment that befits her essence. The Church will have to seek out a form of being Church that does justice to the fundamental equality of all the faithful (cf. Ga 3:28) and that effectively eradicates the possibility of the structural abuse of power (cf. Mk 10:42-45). Ultimately, the Church will have to seek out an organisational form that is worthy of donning the wedding garment that is Christ. We must now use this image of a flaw to see if it can give us tools to act.

A flaw is usually made during the weaving process. Some mistake could have been made in the design of the loom, but we will assume that the design of the loom, the process of the founding of the Church, happened correctly. What mistake could have been made during the process of weaving, and how can this flaw be remedied? Let us start again with the hierarchical character of the Church. We will not look here at the institution, but at the original meaning of the word hierarchy. Hierarchy means *of sacred origin*.[549] The Church, we have seen in this study, flows from the open side of Christ and is therefore truly of sacred origin.

If we look at the process of the foundation of the Church by the earthly Jesus, we see that He did *not* organise a strongly hierarchical institution during his earthly life. What Jesus did do is call disciples (cf. Mk 1:16-20; 13-17 and par.). The disciples are witnesses to Jesus' works and Jesus time

[549] Hierarchy is derived from *archein* of *to hieron* (the rule of the sacred). Wherever the sacred rules, hierarchy emerges as the structure of its mediation. Cf. Hans Dombois, *Hierarchie: Grund und Grenze einer umstrittenen Struktur* (Freiburg: Herder, 1971), 23-25.

and again teaches them.[550] From among the large group of followers, Jesus chose the Twelve (cf. Mk 3:13-19 and par.). Within the group of Twelve, Peter is given a position of his own, that of the rock upon which the Church will be built. Peter is also given the authority to bind and to loose (cf. Mt 16:18-19). The Twelve remain disciples and are nowhere appointed teachers or masters. After his resurrection and just before his Ascension, Jesus speaks his final words to the remaining eleven disciples (cf. Mt 28:16). He commands them to go out into the world and to make disciples of all peoples (cf. Mt 28:19). In the Gospels, discipleship is therefore an enduring topos.[551]

In the Apostolic Age and the Early Church, the institutions of the Church developed non-simultaneously in different places. An extensive description of this development cannot be attempted here, but the image arises of many small communities that regarded themselves as the newly chosen people of God, and that lived together fraternally.[552] The characteristic and distinguishing feature of the first Christian communities is their mutual *agape*, their care for each other, especially for the needy such as widows and orphans, the sick, the elderly and prisoners. The local communities also maintained links with each other, and Rome occupied a special position. In a letter to the Christians of Rome, Ignatius emphasises the special place of Rome. Ignatius speaks of the Church of Rome, "which also presides in the place of the districts of the Romans, worthy of God, worthy of honor, worthy of blessing, worthy of praise, worthy of success, worthy of sanctification, and presiding over love."[553] This presiding does not yet refer to the entire Roman Empire or the universal Church. The expression

[550] The passages in which Jesus teaches his disciples are countless. Especially Matthew's Gospel contains a number of long speeches by Jesus of which the Sermon on the Mount is the most famous.

[551] In John's Gospel friendship is also an important topos in relation to Jesus. John the Baptist calls himself a friend of the Bridegroom (Jn 3:29), and in his farewell discourse, Jesus calls his disciples his friends (cf. Jn 15:14-15). See also Lk 12:4. In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus in his turn is called the friend of tax collectors and sinners (cf. Mt 11:19 and par.).

[552] See for an overview of the development in the various New Testament communities: Daniel Harrington, *The Church According to the New Testament: What the Wisdom and Witness of Early Christianity Teach Us Today* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001). See for an overview of the developments in the Early Church: Bischof, *Einführung in die Geschichte des Christentums*, 385-397; Ernst Dassmann, *Die eine Kirche in vielen Bildern: Zur Ekklesiologie der Kirchenväter* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2010).

[553] Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Romans*, praescript. English translation: J.B. Lightfoot and J.R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers* (2nd ed.; ed. and rev. M.W. Holmes, Leicester: Apollos, 1989), 101-102.

"presiding over love" means that the Church of Rome is the leading and normative authority in respect of the essence of Christianity, the *agape*.[554] The bond is also manifested in mutual hospitality in participation in the Eucharist.[555] There was no strongly hierarchical organisation yet in the first centuries.

Only after the turn of Constantine (312 the battle of Milvian Bridge), and when Christianity became the state religion, did a strongly hierarchical structure emerge which was largely modelled on various secular structures. It must be asked whether this is the phase in Church history in which the flaw appeared. Gisbert Greshake has analysed this development and although he does not call the emergence of the established church a 'fall', he argues that the Jesus movement, which travelled lightly throughout the world, developed into a powerful institution. Instead of continuing to journey through the world, the Church established itself in the world.[556] If this is the flaw of the Church, it requires a reform of the Church according to the model of the Early Church: this must include raising consciousness of the fundamental equality of all the faithful, because all are one in Christ (cf. Ga 3:28); also of the fact that every believer, from the lowest to the highest rung, is a disciple of Christ and will never be greater than the Master (cf. Jn 13:13-15); a light organisation with structures that are less strongly hierarchical; abolition of such things as the oath of fidelity, as a profession of faith should suffice, and as for the rest "All you need say is 'Yes' if you mean yes, 'No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the Evil One" (Mt 5:37); and the development of a spirituality of ministry that is characterised in everything by true service and an attitude of discipleship and that is the opposite of every form of earthly domination (cf. Mk 10:42-45).[557]

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[554] Cf. Joseph A. Fischer, *Die Apostolischen Väter: Griechisch und Deutsch* (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1956), 129-130.

[555] Cf. Bischof, *Einführung in die Geschichte des Christentums*, 398-403

[556] Gisbert Greshake, *Kirche wohin? Ein real-utopischer Blick in die Zukunft* (Freiburg: Herder, 2020) 27-49.

[557] Machteld Reynaert has reflected on the way Jesus exercises power and has applied to this the term *kenosis*. She analyses how Jesus uses his power in a positive way to serve others, without forgetting that this does require the exercise of power. She has concluded that this is kenotic use of power: "afstand doen van zijn of haar (hiërarchische) macht in het bewustzijn dat hij of zij steeds over macht zal beschikken." ("Laying down (hierarchical) power in the consciousness that he or she will always enjoy power.') Cf. Machteld Reynaert, *Een kwestie van macht: Een pastoraaltheologisch onderzoek naar macht en machtsmisbruik in ouder-kindrelaties en in pastorale relaties*, (Antwerp: Halewijn, 2017), 318. Cf. for kenotic use of power in general: ibid., 281-311.

This discussion is only a sketch of how the wedding garment can help to look at the Church as an organisation in a different way. Like every believer, the Church as a whole is also subject, in her condition as bride, to a process of meaning transfer. Thus the Church continues to seek out the wedding garment that will suit her in respect of her external form.

In addition to the wedding garment, the bride has other nuptial garments. Thus it could be useful to look at the bridal veil, a sign of virginity. In Judaism, the veil, which the bridegroom places upon the bride's head during the wedding ceremony, stands for protection. What does this mean in relation to the Church? And then there is the ring as a symbol of faithfulness. The jewels, often made of precious metals and gemstones, are also striking. They express something of the preciousness of the Church as a whole, but also of the uniqueness of each of her members. Not least we must mention the beauty of the bride; a beauty that escapes no one and that draws everyone's attention. What is the beauty of the Church and how can this beauty help to proclaim the Good News? All these garments and attributes could be the subject of further study. For present purposes we will limit ourselves to the wedding garment. An important conclusion is that the wedding garment reminds us that being a bride, and therefore also being Church, is a process. The bride *prepares* for her new role as a spouse. This means that the bride, and thus the Church, is "a figure who is in the process of moving into a new role or identity."[558]

3.4.4. THE CHURCH IS A WOMAN

THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST points our attention to the feminine dimension of the Church. Both contemporary theologians and the magisterium of the Church through Pope Francis mention this aspect. Walter Kasper in his ecclesiological work says that the bride metaphor does raise the issue of the feminine dimension of the Church, but that the bride metaphor is essentially about the relationship between Christ and the Church. The bride metaphor is used to express something about this relationship: "Ultimately it is to highlight spousal love as the soul of the Church effected and permeated by the Spirit and holiness as the set purpose of the Church."[559] We can agree with Kasper that the bride is female and that this points to the feminine dimension of the Church, but that there is more to it than the idea that the Church can be metaphorically seen as a woman. In the context of metaphor theory, all too frequent and one-sided

[558] Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned*, 150-151.
[559] Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 131.

emphasis on the feminine identity of the Church can even lead to "conceptual blindness."[560] As we have seen, there are many other, including specifically non-feminine, metaphors for the Church, and each of these attempts to shed light on different aspects of what it means to be Church.

The magisterium has insisted on the importance of further study of the position of women and the feminine dimension of the Church. For Pope Francis this is a theme that is particularly close to his heart. In one of his first interviews after his election as pope, he said:

> The church cannot be herself without the woman and her role. The woman is essential for the church. Mary, a woman, is more important than the bishops. I say this because we must not confuse the function with the dignity. We must therefore investigate further the role of women in the church. (…) The challenge today is this: to think about the specific place of women also in those places where the authority of the church is exercised for various areas of the church.[561]

In a speech to participants in the February 2015 plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture, on the theme of "Feminine cultures: equality and difference," Francis points very explicitly to the female dimension of the Church: "The Church is woman, *she* the Church, not *he* the Church. This challenge can no longer be deferred."[562] Francis emphasises the equal dignity of men and women and says in relation to the position of women in Western societies: "the model of woman's *social subordination* to man has been surpassed; it is, however, an age-old model that has never completely exhausted its negative effect."[563] Referring to the relationship between men and women, Francis speaks of "an identical nature, but each with its own modality."[564] As modalities of women, Francis mentions such things as embodying the "tender face of God, his mercy, which is translated into a willingness to give time rather than to occupy space, to welcome rather than

[560] Cf. Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 8-9. Cf. the somewhat more extensive discussion in chapter 1.1.2.3: Partial structuring.
[561] Antonio Spadaro, "Interview with Pope Francis," n.p.
[562] "La Chiesa è donna, è la Chiesa, non il Chiesa. Questa è una sfida non più rinviabile." Pope Francis, "Ad Plenariam Sessionem Pontificii Consilii de Cultura," *AAS* 107/3 (2015): 264-266, at 264. English translation from the website of the Holy See. Francis' italics.
[563] "Il modello della subordinazione sociale della donna all'uomo, un modello secolare che, però, non ha mai esaurito del tutto i suoi effetti negative." Ibid., 265. Francis' italics.
[564] "Un'identica natura, ma con modalità proprie." Ibid., 265.

to exclude,"[565] and he continues: "In this sense, I like to describe the feminine dimension of the Church as the welcoming womb which regenerates life."[566] Francis speaks of "the beauty and harmony"[567] of the female body, which is a "symbol of life"[568]. Referring to the position of women in the Church, he says:

> I am convinced that it is urgent to offer places to women in the life of the Church and to welcome them, bearing in mind the particular and transformed cultural and social sensitivities. Therefore, a more widespread and incisive presence of women in communities is desirable, in order that we may see many women involved in pastoral responsibilities, in the accompaniment of people, families and groups, as well as in theological reflection.[569]

In Catholic ecclesiology, the feminine dimension is generally discussed together with the masculine dimension. This is done on the basis of two great figures from the New Testament: Mary and Peter. Mary represents the Marian and thus feminine dimension of the Church and Peter the Petrine and thus masculine dimension. By way of example, we will look more closely at the argument that Kurt Koch gives in his ecclesiological work *Die Kirche Gottes* to clarify the two positions.[570]

Koch contrasts the Marian dimension with the Petrine dimension. The Petrine dimension refers to the Apostle Peter and, by extension to the bishop, but Koch argues that the Petrine dimension can also be seen in Joseph. He is the guardian of the Holy Family and Mary stands under his protection. Just as Mary stands under the protection of Joseph, so the Church as Bride stands under the protection of the bishop. The Marian dimension stands for attitudes such as listening, receiving, contemplating, carrying the mystery within, giving life. The Petrine dimension represents the more

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[565] "Il volto tenero di Dio, la sua misericordia, che si traduce in disponibilità a donare tempo più che a occupare spazi, ad accogliere invece che ad escludere." Ibid. 265.
[566] "In questo senso, mi piace descrivere la dimensione femminile della Chiesa come grembo accogliente che rigenera alla vita." Ibid., 265.
[567] "La bellezza e l'armonia." Ibid., 265.
[568] "Simbolo di vita." Ibid., 265.
[569] "Sono convinto dell'urgenza di offrire spazi alle donne nella vita della Chiesa e di accoglierle, tenendo conto delle specifiche e mutate sensibilità culturali e sociali. È auspicabile, pertanto, una presenza femminile più capillare ed incisiva nelle Comunità, così che possiamo vedere molte donne coinvolte nelle responsabilità pastorali, nell'accompagnamento di persone, famiglie e gruppi, così come nella riflessione teologica." Ibid., 266.
[570] Cf. for the rest of the discussion: Koch, *Die Kirche Gottes*, 228-245.

institutional aspects and attitudes such as protecting and keeping. Both dimensions need each other. They are complementary. Koch refers in this context to the creation narrative. God created human beings as male and female, and together they form a unity: together they are the image of God. In this concept of opposite but complementary dimensions, the primacy of the Church lies in the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. The Marian dimension thus has precedence over the Petrine. Koch believes this greatly qualifies the importance of ministry in the Church. Koch illustrates this on the basis of a quotation by Hans Urs von Balthasar: "The Church is incarnate in Mary before it is organised in Peter".[571] In the contemporary situation of the Church, however, Koch contends, the emphasis lies on the masculine and institutional dimensions of the Church, and this is threatening to crush the mystery. He argues that the Marian dimension of the Church should be discovered anew.

Particularly first- and second-generation feminist theologians have rejected the concept of Mary as a description of the Church as woman. They view this concept as a confirmation of the subordinate position of women in the Church. They also argue that this brings out only one specific idea of women: that of "virgin and mother at the same time: female but non-sexual;"[572] an image that is alien to many women. Feminist theologians do not regard emphasis on the Marian dimension of the Church as an alternative for a concept of the Church that is dominated by structures as something that can enrich the Church, but instead see it as a way of protecting the current hegemony of patriarchal and hierarchical structures.[573]

Scripture does not explicitly identify Mary with the Church, and therefore the idea of a Marian dimension of the Church as a possible complement to a Petrine dimension is also absent. There is no mention of the name Mary at all in the entire *Corpus Paulinum*, which provides important information about developments in the Early Church. Paul only mentions that Jesus was "born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4) and also that Jesus "was born of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3; KJV). The idea that the Church can be identified with Mary is the fruit of later traditions.[574] The only explicitly feminine image of the Church in the New

[571] "In Maria ist die Kirche schon leibhaft bevor sie in Petrus organisiert ist." Ibid., 231.
[572] Watson, *Feminist Ecclesiology*, 466.
[573] Cf. for the paragraph as a whole: ibid., 465-466.
[574] Previously in this study we have seen that the equation between Mary and the Church is frequent. Cf. De Lubac, *Méditation*, 275-278 (200-201).

Testament is that of the Bride.[575] The only book that explicitly speaks of the Church as Bride is the Book of Revelation, specifically in Rv 19:7; 21:2 and 21:9.[576] In Rv 21:2 and 21:9, the bride is equated with the city, as we have seen. Rev 21:9 especially provides clues as to how the Church's identity as bride, and therefore as woman, can be understood. Rv 21:9 shows the bride, but immediately afterwards it describes the city, and this in great pluriformity. Not only is there mention of the beauty of the city (Rv 21:11), but also of its ramparts, the twelve gates (Rv 21:11-13) and the foundation stones upon which the city is built (Rv 21:14). This equation has inspired Klaus Berger to exclaim:

> And is not every woman a complex, multifaceted being, whom it is impossible to grasp in a nutshell? (…) A woman is like a city with houses and towers, gates, alleyways and drawbridges. Who would try to capture her under one denominator? This is also true for woman and for the People of God in general.[577]

From this perspective, woman cannot be conceptualised in a single model, not even the Marian model. This is also what many feminist theologians emphasise. There is no such thing as woman, but there are women in many cultures and from many different backgrounds. There are young women, virgins, spouses, mothers, sisters, religious and nuns, girlfriends, widows, working women, divorced women, public women, old women et cetera. This diversity also exists in the New Testament. Apart from Mary, there is the eighty-four years old widow and prophetess Anna (Lk 2:36-37), the sick mother in law (Mk 1:30), the women with a haemorrhage (Mk 5:25), a daughter believed to be dead (Mk 5:35), a poverty-stricken widow (Lk 21:2), an adulteress (Jn 8:3), a Samaritan woman who had five husbands and is living with a sixth man (Jn 4:18), a Canaanite woman of great faith (Mt 15:28), the sisters Martha and Mary (Lk 10:38-39), women cured of possession by evil spirits and of illnesses,

[575] The well-known metaphor the THE CHURCH IS A MOTHER is not a biblical metaphor. This metaphor was introduced by Tertullian and is rooted in the Roman family tradition. Cf. Gomez, *Church as Woman,* 29-46.

[576] In the Synoptic Gospels and in John's Gospel, the bride is present only implicitly. Paul does use words from the nuptial vocabulary in his epistles to the Corinthians and Ephesians, but he does not call the Church a bride.

[577] "Und ist nicht jede Frau ein Komplexes, vielschichtiges Wesen, das man unmöglich 'auf den Punkt' bringen kann? (…) Eine Frau ist wie eine Stadt mit Häusern und Türmen, Toren, Alleen und Zugbrücken. Wer wollte sie erfassen oder auf einen Nenner bringen? Das gilt auch von der Frau und vom Volk Gottes im Ganzen." Berger, *Die Apokalypse 11-22*, 1411.

and wealthy women, who were supporting Jesus und his disciples out of their own means (Lk 8:2-3; cf. also the rich women in Acts), a bride (Jn 2:1), a sinner (Lk 7:37), weeping women along the way (Lk 23:28), women under the cross (Jn 19:25), women at the tomb (Mk 16:1), the apostle Mary of Magdala (Jn 20:17), et cetera. When we speak of THE CHURCH IS A WOMAN, all these women resonate in their mutual great diversity, and we express the reality that the Church cannot be grasped in a single denominator. The feminine dimension of the Church in its turn cannot therefore be limited to a single dimension, not even the Marian dimension, and it is open to many aspects of the Church and forms of spirituality that the Church can assume in different times and in different cultures: forms that can also exist alongside each other.

Not only Mary, but many women can serve as metaphors for the Church. Just like in the Early Church the Church Fathers regarded the prostitute Rahab (cf. Jos 2:1-22; 6:17-25) and Gomer, the adulterous woman in Hosea (cf. Hos 1:2-3), as prefigurations of the Church,[578] so women from the New Testament can be regarded as metaphors for the Church. Mary and Martha (Lk 10:38-42) can be seen metaphorically as the two dimensions of the Church, the contemplative and the active, and Jesus teaches that contemplation precedes action, and that contemplation is ultimately the better part. The woman at the well (Jn 4:1-42) demonstrates that it is not just the individual believer who is on a journey of faith, but that the Church as a whole also continues to grow and that the faith of the Church is oriented to fulfilment. Mary Magdalene, who, as the first witness of the resurrection, received the commission to be an apostle to the apostles (Jn 20:11-18) refers to one of the essential characteristics of the Church: that she is a missionary Church. The anonymous adulterous woman, finally (Jn. 8:1-11) shows that though the Church may fall in sin, she nevertheless remains the Bride of the Lord and she will be absolved of her sins.[579] All these aspects of women in the Gospel also testify to the fact that the Church "without spot or wrinkle" (Ep 5:27) is ultimately an eschatological reality. The Church on earth is, like all women and men, a Church marked by time.

The metaphor THE CHURCH IS A WOMAN shows the diversity and pluriformity of the Church in all her dimensions. We must finally also consider whether there is such a thing as a specifically feminine dimension of the Church. One aspect in which all women are fundamentally different

[578] For an extensive overview of the Church Fathers who saw Rahab, Gomer, and other women from the Old Testament as prefigurations of the Church: Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word*, 211-238.

[579] Cf. Karl Rahner, "Kirche der Sünder," *StZ* 72 (1947): 163-177, repr. in Karl Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie* 6 (Einsiedeln: Benzinger Verlag, 1965): 301-320.

from men is motherhood or the possibility of motherhood. Pope Francis has associated "the welcoming womb which regenerates life" with motherhood.[580] For the Church, this aspect of being female means that the Church is open to all people, welcomes all people, and can also give new life to all people. We can return here to the aspect that the Church Fathers mentioned and that we have encountered before in this study: the Church is the new Eve, the "true mother of all the living."[581] The specifically feminine dimension of the Church consists in this, that the Church can give new and eternal life.

[580] "Come grembo accogliente che rigenera alla vita." Francis, "Ad Plenariam Sessionem," 265.
[581] Cf. section 3.3.2.1.

4. Summary and conclusions

The subject of this study is the metaphor THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. In this concluding chapter, we will summarise the most important results and draw a number of conclusions.

We began our investigation with a discussion of the methodology, which is based on modern metaphor theory as Lakoff and Johnson have developed it in their ground-breaking work *Metaphors We Live By* (chapter 1.1.). The main insight of modern metaphor theory is that metaphors are not just stylistic devices used to embellish language, but that they have a cognitive function and help to structure reality: a metaphor is "conceptual, conventional and part of the ordinary system of thought and language".[1] New thoughts and experiences (target domain) are expressed in terms of familiar thoughts and experiences (source domain). There is an extensive network with countless branches, in which metaphors together form a coherent and consistent system. Lakoff and Johnson have distinguished three types of metaphor: structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and ontological metaphors. THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST is a structural metaphor: one concept is structured metaphorically in terms of another concept.

A metaphor always only describes a part of reality. This means that favouring one particular metaphor risks diminishing or even completely obscuring other parts. In this study, we have briefly illustrated this with the example of language about God. If the concept of God the Judge becomes something absolute, this can cause people to lose sight of God as the merciful Father. This partial understanding of God the Judge then becomes a total understanding, and this in turn can have far-reaching consequences for the way people live. If a particular metaphor is emphasised too strongly, and if there is insufficient awareness of the existence of other metaphors for the same reality, this can be called conceptual blindness. New metaphors are then required, first of all to make people realise that they suffer from conceptual blindness. These new metaphors can then also shed light on a different part of reality which had been lost due to conceptual blindness.

Another important aspect of metaphors is that they not only help to understand reality, but also offer tools to act in reality. This last aspect does require that the metaphor in question is applied correctly. Metaphors are often culturally determined and they cannot always be transposed from one

[1] Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," 203.

culture to another. This is certainly true for the metaphors in Holy Scripture. They arose from and were used in a culture and a time that are far removed from contemporary Western culture. These metaphors spoke to people in their original context, but this does not necessarily mean that they can still be understood in the same way today. Moreover, the meaning of metaphors can change over time. Before old metaphors and metaphors from other cultures can be used today, it is necessary to subject them to a thorough investigation: how were they interpreted originally and can they still speak to us in our current time?

Another feature that has proven important for the current study is that metaphors not only help to understand reality and provide tools to act in reality, but that they also help to examine reality and to acquire new insights. Avery Dulles has distinguished in this respect between explanatory models and exploratory models. An explanatory model encapsulates what we already know and/or what we are expected to believe within a certain religion. An exploratory model, on the other hand, leads to new insights. This latter model must be applied with caution in theology, as theology is not an empirical and experimental science. Christianity is a revealed religion. The fullness of Revelation has come to us in the person of Jesus Christ, and this means that ostensibly new insights were in fact already implicitly contained in Revelation. Insights that appear new must therefore actually be viewed as facets that had not previously been discovered. In this sense, metaphors can have an exploratory function in theology as well. Lakoff and Johnson do not distinguish between explanatory and exploratory metaphors, but they do acknowledge that metaphors are open to further interpretation and deeper understanding.

A last feature that must be mentioned concerns the interpretation of metaphors. By contrast with definitions, whose primary task is to delineate and enshrine, metaphors offer greater scope for interpretation. They activate the recipient's imagination and engage his or her whole person in the process of understanding. The attendant risk, certainly in respect of the faith, is that metaphors are explained too much according to the recipient's own preferences. In this study we have mentioned Ruben Zimmermann, who argued 'Verstehenskorridore,' delimitations, within which metaphors must be interpreted. The community of the faithful as a whole has a task in this enterprise. Dulles has referred in this respect to the notions of connaturality and sense of Christ. Theologians also have a role to play, namely to inquire systematically into metaphors, as does the magisterium of the Church, which authoritatively interprets Scripture and Tradition.

On the basis of the premises outlined above we have then analysed the bride metaphor in the Bible (chapter 2.). First we looked at the passages

where the bride metaphor occurs in the Old and New Testaments, and how it was used: what did the authors attempt to express by using the bride metaphor. We will look first at the Old Testament (chapter 2.2.).

In the Old Testament, the bride metaphor occurs in the Prophets Hosea, Jeremiah, and Isaiah. These prophets use the bride metaphor during the time of the Exile and afterwards. The concept of the Jewish wedding of the time (source domain) is used to address the love and faithfulness between YHWH and his people (target domain). This by contrast with the marriage metaphor, which the prophets use to express the people of Israel's unfaithfulness to YHWH. Idolatry is discussed in terms of unfaithfulness, adultery, and harlotry. The bride metaphor is used to describe the past, but also the future. As a remembrance, the bride metaphor says something about the origin of the relationship between YHWH and his people and the undivided unity that once characterised this. The remembrance also carries a promise: YHWH will restore the virginity - a metaphor for undivided love and faithfulness - of his people.

The analysis of the bride metaphor in the Old Testament produced the structural metaphor YHWH IS THE BRIDEGROOM OF HIS PEOPLE. The first derived metaphor is about the people: THE PEOPLE IS THE BRIDE OF YHWH. The other derived metaphors that can be deduced from the bride metaphor can be clustered into three groups. The first group of derived metaphors says something about the relationship between YHWH and his people. In the future, there will once again be undivided unity. It is primarily YHWH who desires this unity and who will bring about this unity for his people. The second group of derived metaphors concerns the bride's garment and her ornaments. Clothes as such are a symbol of a person's state of mind. A change of clothes indicates a change of state of mind. This derived metaphor on the one hand indicates what gifts YHWH will give his people, and that the people, by being clothed, will come to know the Name of YHWH. On the other hand, the ornaments in particular express who will belong to YHWH's new people: not just the exiles, but all who recognise YHWH as the Lord. The third and last group of derived metaphors, finally, places joy at the heart of the language about the relationship between YHWH and his people; whenever YHWH and his people are united in undivided love, there is overwhelming joy.

In the New Testament, the bride metaphor is used to speak about the relationship between Christ and his Church (chapter 2.3.). Just as in the Old Testament, here too the concept of the Jewish wedding as it existed at the time is used to speak about Christ and his Church. This does not imply substitution, as if YHWH is replaced by Christ and the people of God by the Church. At the same time, a Messianic interpretation of the bride metaphor

in the Old Testament cannot be wholly excluded either. Our analysis of Psalm 45 has shown that a Messianic interpretation of the bride metaphor in the Old Testament is possible.

The bride metaphor appears in many books of the New Testament: in the Corpus Paulinum, in the Synoptic Gospels, in John's Gospel, and in the Book of Revelation. The bride metaphor is therefore firmly anchored in the New Testament. THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST is always about the community as a whole. Nowhere this metaphor is used for individual believers. Only in Matthew's nuptial parables are individual believers intended; but they are not the bride, but the wedding guests.

Just as in the Old Testament, the derived metaphors can be clustered in a number of groups. The first three categories correspond to what we have already seen in the Old Testament. The first group of derived metaphors addresses the relationship between Christ and his Church. They express aspects such as election, undivided unity and faithfulness. They also deal with the relationship between Christ and his Church: Christ is the head of the Church, as husbands were the head of their wives in the culture of the time. The second group is related to the wedding garment. The wedding garment refers to the bride's beauty, but also to the bride's actions. Other than in the Old Testament, the bride is not just clothed by the bridegroom, but the bride also clothes herself for her bridegroom; the Church who prepares herself through good works for her encounter with Christ. The third group is about joy. Wherever Christ the Bridegroom is, or wherever his voice is heard, there is perfect joy. A fourth and last group focuses on the wedding feast, or on the Marriage of the Lamb in the metaphor used in the Book of Revelation. These derived metaphors express something about the end time: the whole of salvation history culminates in a wedding feast. This is the future time in which Christ will be united in unity with all the faithful.

Having analysed the bride metaphor in its original context, we turned to our own time and asked whether, and if so, how, the bride metaphor can be used in modern ecclesiology, and what new insights the bride metaphor could generate (chapter 3.3.). In order to do this, we first examined the metaphors that have dominated ecclesiology since the beginning of the twentieth century (chapter 3.2.). We decided to do this because every age uses its own metaphors, often in response to the questions of the age. The choice of metaphor also determines how people think and speak about the Church, and what aspects are emphasised in the life of the Church.

The first metaphor we examined is that of the *societas perfecta*. This metaphor primarily stresses the Church's visible side, its institutional and legal aspects. The *societas perfecta* metaphor appears in Church documents from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, the period of the

rise of modern states. The metaphor helps to realise that the Church has its own autonomy and cannot be censured by any state. But the thinking underlying *societas perfecta* is much older. The topic of the relationship between Church and state was already addressed as such during the Counter-Reformation, among others by Bellarmine. The independence of the Church vis-à-vis the state was postulated at that time. It can be said that the idea of *societas perfecta* dominated the Church for at least four centuries. The research has shown that the bride metaphor played a minimal role - if any at all - within the *societas perfecta* metaphor.

The *societas perfecta* metaphor remained a dominant metaphor in Church documents until well into the first half of the twentieth century. Subsequently, various metaphors followed each other in rapid succession. Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943) gave prominence to the Body of Christ and concluded that when it comes to the Church, "we shall find nothing more noble, more sublime, or more divine than the expression 'the Mystical Body of Christ" (MC 13). The metaphor helps to see that the Church is more than just a visible organisation, but that it also has an invisible life and is animated by the Spirit of the Saviour. And yet the papal decision to put the image of the Church as the Body of Christ centre stage failed to elicit widespread imitation. Instead, the People of God gained favour during the years before and after the Second Vatican Council. The Council Fathers of the Second Vatican Council saw the metaphor of the Sacrament as the key to understanding the Church's unique nature. And the final document of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops contended that the metaphor of *Communio* was "the central and fundamental idea of the Council's documents."[2] The bride metaphor was at most mentioned in passing in the formulation of these various other metaphors to clarify them, but ultimately did not play any role of significance in them.

The speed with which the metaphors for the Church succeeded each other from the second half of the twentieth century onwards proves that theologians, after a long period in which the Church felt comfortable with the *societas perfecta* metaphor, were seeking to find a new and appealing metaphor for the Church's self-understanding and for external communication. Very recently, further new metaphors have been proposed. In this study we have pointed to those of the Church as a *Field Hospital* and as a *Hospitable Home with Open Doors*. Another possible explanation for the many changing metaphors is that thinking in terms of *societas perfecta* had become so deeply enshrined in the Church that it led to a conceptual blindness of which we have not yet been cured: we are almost unable to see,

[2] 1985 Extraordinary Synod, "The Church," II,C,1.

think, and act differently anymore. This latter aspect is at least one of the reasons why the metaphor of the Body of Christ failed to take root. As we have seen in this study, one of the criticisms of Pius XII's encyclical was that the mystical Body of Christ was identified too much with the visible Catholic Church, so that ultimately very little changed in the discourse about the Church. The way the Church has dealt and is dealing with the abuse scandals is further proof that she has not yet discarded the notion of the *societas perfecta*. First there was denial and an attempt to protect the institution and its ministers. Once the facts and the scale of the abuse could no longer be denied, attention was focused primarily on tightening legislation, drawing up protocols for cases where abuse had been established, introducing codes of conduct, working on prevention, et cetera. The legal approach has generally predominated. Few or no questions are asked about how the institution of the Church itself has functioned and about whether the way the Church and its ministers function might contribute to abuse. In the last part of the study, we have seen that a different metaphor, like the bride metaphor, can shed new light on the affair, and can thus lead to new ways of acting.

Having examined the various great metaphors in this study, we returned to the bride metaphor (chapter 3.3.). Our first question was: what is unique about the bride metaphor in Scripture, how did the Church Fathers use this metaphor, and what role does this metaphor play in contemporary ecclesiology? We looked again at the four groups of derived metaphors identified during the analysis of the bride metaphor in the New Testament. In short, we can conclude that the bride metaphor is primarily used in the New Testament, the Church Fathers and in contemporary ecclesiology to emphasise unity and exclusivity in the relationship between Christ and the Church. By contrast, love as a central aspect is scarcely mentioned. For contemporary Western readers, unity and exclusivity are no longer automatically part of their relationships. Communicating this aspect today therefore requires a good deal of explanation.

Hierarchical order is another aspect associated with the bride metaphor. At the time of the New Testament, the bridegroom was the head of the bride, and the bride followed the bridegroom. Especially in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the bride metaphor is used to explain the unequal relationship between Christ the Head and the Church as his Bride. The Church Fathers and contemporary theologians rarely - if at all - use the bride metaphor as a hierarchical principle. Nevertheless, the patriarchal image of wives who are subordinate to their husbands is still widespread across the Church and the world, and the use of the bride metaphor can help to perpetuate this situation. Feminist theologians in particular have pointed out this danger and

have argued that the bride metaphor should therefore be relegated to oblivion. Various popes have emphasised the essential equality between men and women from the perspective of anthropology. Although the Church will always be subordinate to Christ, the bride metaphor can no longer be used to clarify this point. There are other metaphors, like the head-body metaphor, that can express this aspect much more accessibly and unequivocally.

Subsequently, we looked at the wedding garment of the Church. Although the clothes of the bride are discussed at length in the Old as well as in the New Testament, and the analysis has shown that clothes express the fact that "the bride a figure [is] who is in the process of moving into a new role or identity,"[3] contemporary ecclesiology has not picked up this aspect at all or to any great extent. We examined both aspects more closely in the last chapter of this study.

Finally we looked at the Marriage of the Lamb. We concluded that all of Scripture and all of salvation history culminate in the Marriage of the Lamb. Neither the Church Fathers nor contemporary ecclesiology have made much of this metaphor. The metaphor of the wedding feast says something about the end time. We have concluded that the end time as such is a difficult notion to communicate to the contemporary Western world, because fewer and fewer people believe in life after death. In this study we have set this aspect of the bride metaphor aside, because both derived metaphors that deal with the end time must be regarded as eschatological metaphors that therefore belong more to the realm of eschatology.

In the final part of the study, we inquired whether the bride metaphor can yield new insights for contemporary believers, and for contemporary society (chapter 3.4.). First we looked at the aspect of love. Compared to the other metaphors, love is the most distinct and unique feature of the bride metaphor: bridegroom and bride are engaged in a relationship of love. We described the distinguishing feature of bridal love as *eros*, which we, in turn, characterised as "a passionate desire for a personal relationship"[4] and distinguished from agape, affection, and friendship. Notions such as passion, enthusiasm, and desire for unity are characteristic of *eros*. Eros is visible first and foremost in the way God relates to people. God not only wants the good for humankind, but He wants human beings themselves. In the Old Testament, He reveals Himself passionately as a jealous husband who will not rest until the people is faithful to Him again. Christ's work of redemption, too, is ultimately oriented to restoring the relationship between

[3] Huber, Like a Bride Adorned, 150-151.
[4] Adams, *The Virtue of Faith*, 187.

God and humankind and between human beings among themselves. On the basis of the bride metaphor, the Church can therefore be characterised in her essence as a *community of eros*. We have elaborated what it means for the Church if she understands herself as a community of *eros* by looking at the Church as a Mystery and as *Communio*, and at the Church's Missio. From the perspective of *eros*, these three fields all revolve around personal relationship.

We then looked at joy. We concluded that for the contemporary Western world, it is primarily happiness that is highly prized. This value which contemporary Western people regard as distinctly positive offers opportunities to speak about biblical joy. Joy appears very often in the New Testament and runs as a thread through almost every book. Joy is connected primarily with Jesus. Wherever He is, there is joy, and people are filled with joy. Joy is also a feature of the first Christian communities. Thus Paul calls on the faithful to be joyful always. Whereas contemporary ecclesiology rarely mentions joy, several popes, including Paul VI and Francis, have given a great deal of attention to this notion. Pope Francis speaks of the Church as the House of Joy. If joy is regarded as an essential note of the Church, and this is used as a perspective to look at the Church, then baptism for instance can be seen as immersion in the joy of the Lord. Thus joy can become the keynote of Christian existence. This joy can be experienced time and again in the sacramental life of the Church. As the keynote of Christian life, joy will also characterise the Church's mission and become a force that attracts persons who do not know Christ yet.

Our research has concluded that the wedding garment of the Church is a very powerful metaphor. Clothes in general allow their wearers to show who they are. Brides, too, express themselves through their wedding dress. Wedding garments represent not only identity, but also transition and transformation. As regards identity, the white wedding gown long symbolised virginity. For many contemporary young Western people, premarital virginity is no longer a reality, and the white wedding dress has therefore lost much of its significance. The aspect of transition and transformation has, however, retained its force. The study has shown that the wedding garment enables us to develop a wholly new perspective on complex problems such as the divisions in the Christian world, but also hierarchical church governance and (sexual) abuse in the Church. Until the end of time, the Church will continue to seek out a fitting wedding garment, both as regards her external form and her inner life. Ultimately, her true wedding dress will be revealed to the Church.

Finally we dedicated a concluding section to the feminine dimension of the Church. The metaphor of the Church as bride inevitably focuses

attention on this feminine dimension. We have seen that the tradition has especially emphasised the Marian features of the Church, but there is no firm scriptural basis for the Marian dimension of the Church. The New Testament does feature many women who could serve as metaphors for the Church. All these women can be seen as expressions of various ways of being Church: ways that can exist alongside each other and that can mutually clarify each other. One dimension was described as specifically feminine: "the welcoming womb which regenerates life."[5] The Church welcomes all people without reserve, whoever they may be, and she can offer new life to all.

To summarise the most important conclusions in a single closing paragraph: the bride metaphor is firmly rooted in both the Old and the New Testament. It sheds light on a number of essential aspects in the relationship between God and his People and between Christ and his Church. The most clearly distinguishing feature is that of exclusivity and faithfulness in the relationship of love. There is no other great metaphor for the Church that expresses this aspect quite as prominently. Given the fact that the notions of relationship, love, and faithfulness belong to the very core of the Christian faith, it is important that this metaphor is given greater attention. The metaphor also illuminates a number of other aspects that are important for the contemporary Church. The feature of joy, in particular, must be mentioned, as well as that of the wedding garment. Joy belongs to the essence of the Church to such a degree that it can be called the keynote of Christian life. And the wedding garment can teach us that the Church is still in a period of transition and transformation. This strongly qualifies and corrects current forms of being Church, especially the *societas perfecta* metaphor which continues to dominate the life of the Church. The bride metaphor runs the risk of being used consciously or subconsciously to perpetuate the prevailing patriarchal world view, and thus the subordination of women to men within and outside the Church. Caution is therefore in order. This danger does not, however, outweigh the many positive aspects that the bride metaphor can reveal. It brings us to the core of what we are as a Church in relation to Christ, and it helps us to act as Church in the world.

[5] Francis, "Ad Plenariam Sessionem," 265.

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