

Eucharistic Ecclesiologies of Locality and Universality in John Zizioulas and Joseph Ratzinger

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THE ASPIRATION for full ecclesial communion between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches has been growing in recent decades. Both sides are working to strengthen the Catholic-Orthodox relationship. Particularly noteworthy are the efforts of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, which officially commenced in 1980. Despite some difficult setbacks, including a six-year break in dialogue between 2000 and 2006, the Commission's membership continues to work diligently, and their labor is bearing fruit. To date, the Commission has held twelve plenary sessions and produced at least five joint documents. This level of cooperation is encouraging other theologians to engage in the process as well, and a large number of articles, books, and collections of essays have been published as a result.¹ All of these factors help to advance

¹ An exhaustive list is not possible here, but a select sample of books and essay collections include: James F. Puglisi, ed., *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church: 'Toward a Patient and Fraternal Dialogue'* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999); Olivier Clément, *You are Peter: An Orthodox Theologian's Reflection on the Exercise of Papal Primacy* (New York: New City Press, 2003); Adriano Garuti, *Primacy of the Bishop of Rome and the Ecumenical Dialogue*, trans. and ed. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), esp. 12–86; Cardinal Walter Kasper, ed., *The Petrine Ministry: Catholics and Orthodox in Dialogue* (Mahwah, NJ: The Newman Press, 2006); Aidan Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches*, 2d ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010); James F. Puglisi, ed., *How Can the Petrine Ministry Be a Service to the Unity of the Universal Church?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010); Adam A. J. DeVille, *Orthodoxy and the Roman Papacy: Ut Unum Sint and the Prospects of East-West Unity* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011).

authentic dialogue in mutual respect and familial charity. In addition to an increase in fraternal spirit, there are also substantial theological agreements that are coming to the fore.

Among the most encouraging points of convergence within Catholic-Orthodox dialogue is the shared acceptance of, and growing emphasis on, the intrinsic connection between the Church and the Eucharist. This understanding of the Church-Eucharist relation finds its most direct and explicit scriptural foundation in 1 Corinthians 10. In a letter thoroughly concerned with the unity of the Church at Corinth, St. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the sacramental source of their ecclesial union, which ought to be reflected more purely in the interactions among the faithful in that city. St. Paul writes: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a [communion] in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a [communion] in the body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."² Here, St. Paul declares that common reception of the Eucharist is the basis of ecclesial unity. The Eucharist effects the communion of believers. Those who receive the one Body of Christ in the Eucharist (the one loaf) are united as the one body of Christ (the Church). The view that the Church receives her life from the Eucharist has led many theologians to develop what is often called "eucharistic ecclesiology," which is prominent in both Catholic and Orthodox thought.

As a common vision, eucharistic ecclesiology provides a solid framework for addressing the major issues still facing Catholic-Orthodox dialogue. One central ecumenical concern is the relationship between the local church and the universal Church. The precise points of agreement and disagreement on this issue are not always clear, and subtle nuances often carry profound implications.

There is need for a better understanding of what continues to unite versus what continues to divide if the remaining obstacles to Catholic-Orthodox unity are to be overcome. This article intends to clarify and delineate important similarities and differences between Catholic and Orthodox perspectives by directly comparing and contrasting the eucharistic ecclesiologies of John Zizioulas (the Orthodox Metropolitan

² 1 Corinthians 10:16–17. The text is quoted from: *The New American Bible*, St. Joseph Edition (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1992), henceforth NAB. The Greek word, *koinonia*, translated in the NAB as "participation," has been replaced (indicated with brackets) by the present author, who prefers the translation "communion," especially within this context. The meaning of *koinonia* as communion has become very significant in contemporary ecclesiology.

of Pergamon) and Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI)³ on the question of the local and universal aspects of the Church. The aim is to acquire not only greater knowledge of where they agree and disagree but also a better understanding of why.

In this presentation, the Church's locality and universality are explored in relation to the celebration of the Eucharist according to John Zizioulas and according to Joseph Ratzinger. In that connection, several related issues are discussed, including: the full ecclesial quality of the local church, the necessity of unity between local churches, the Church as one and universal, and the eucharistic structure of the Church. One particularly important aspect of the local/universal Church mystery, universal primacy, is also considered, again from a eucharistic perspective. Treating the above topics will lead to the formulation of succinct summary lists of similarities and differences between Zizioulas and Ratzinger's eucharistic ecclesiologies of the local and universal Church in an effort to reveal both assets and obstacles in current ecumenical dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

³ It is recognized that Zizioulas and Ratzinger do not represent every theologian from their respective Churches, from whom they have both received negative criticism. Nevertheless, they stand as two influential figures who contribute significantly to the advance of theology and ecumenical concerns. Additionally, Zizioulas holds the position of co-chair (alongside Cardinal Kurt Koch) on the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. Thus, they are aptly fit for a direct comparison. For a presentation of—and response to—Orthodox criticisms of Zizioulas, cf. Alan Brown, "On the Criticism of 'Being as Communion' in Anglophone Orthodox Theology," in *The Theology of John Zizioulas: Personhood and the Church*, ed. Douglas Knight (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2006), 35–78. Cf. also, John Behr, *The Way to Nicea* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 2001); idem, *The Nicene Faith* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 2004); and Andrew Louth, *John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Perhaps the most well-known criticism of Ratzinger—and his response thereto—is found in what has been called the Ratzinger-Kasper debate. The component documents of this debate are listed here in chronological order: (1) Walter Kasper, "Zur Theologie und Praxis des bischöflichen Amtes," *Auf neue Art Kirche Sein: Wirklichkeiten—Herausforderungen—Wandlungen* (Munich: Bernward bei Don Bosco, 1999), 32–48. (2) Joseph Ratzinger, "On the Relation of the Universal and the Local Church in Vatican II," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 22, 2000, p. 46 [English version: "The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, 'Lumen Gentium,'" *L'Osservatore Romano*, September 19, 2001, pp. 5–8]. (3) Walter Kasper, "On the Church: A Friendly Reply to Cardinal Ratzinger," *America* 184 (April 23–30, 2001), 8–14. (4) Joseph Ratzinger, "The Local Church and the Universal Church: A Response to Walter Kasper," *America* 185 (November 19, 2001), 7–11. (5) Walter Kasper, "From the President of the Council for Promoting Christian Unity," *America* 185 (November 19, 2001), 7–11.

The Full Ecclesial Quality of the Local Church

Zizioulas's study of the original meaning of the term *ekklesia* provides a good starting point for this section. According to Zizioulas, the term *ekklesia* is used approximately 80 times in the New Testament. More than 70 percent of the time, the term is used in reference to an "assembly in a particular place."⁴ Mere locality, however, is not the most important aspect to such usage. As Zizioulas argues, "The point of altogether special importance is that it was not just any assembly, but strictly speaking, the *eucharistic assembly* that was called *ekklesia* of 'Church.'"⁵ The dominant use of *ekklesia* to signify the Christian faithful gathering together to celebrate the Eucharist demonstrates the intrinsic connection between the Divine Liturgy and the church as community, as already intimated in the earlier reference to 1 Corinthians 10.

The identification of the church with the eucharistic assembly, as found in the New Testament, continues to find expression in the early Patristic period. St. Ignatius of Antioch's ecclesiology is a prime example. St. Ignatius does not just borrow the New Testament terminology, however; he further develops the theology expressed therein. As Zizioulas notes, "What characterizes Ignatius in particular is that for him the Eucharist does not simply make the local community into the Church, but that it makes it the catholic Church . . . i.e. *the full and integral body of Christ*."⁶

⁴ John D. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop in the First Three Centuries*, trans. Elizabeth Theokritoff (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), 45. Without debating the veracity of Zizioulas's statistic that 70 percent of New Testament uses of *ekklesia* refer to the local community, one may question the significance of this statistic and explore possible reasons behind it. The more frequent use of the local sense does not necessarily indicate a priority for the local church vis-à-vis the universal Church. It could simply be a factor of the situations in which the term is used. Since a large portion of the New Testament consists of letters about and to local churches, it is no surprise that the term would often be used in that sense, simply out of contextual necessity.

⁵ Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 46. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the universal sense is emphasized. The well-known biblical scholar Raymond Brown admits that "in the period between 35–65 the most frequent use of *ekklesia* was for a local church. . . . Yet a passage like 1 Cor 12:28 indicates that there was a more universal usage as well. In the last third of the cent., this universal usage becomes very frequent; see Acts 9:31; Matth 16:18," and "Nowhere is it more apparent than in Col and Eph, where it dominates completely." Quoted from: Raymond E. Brown, S.S. et al., "Early Church," *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 80:29 (p. 1345).

⁶ John Zizioulas, "The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist," *Nicholaus* 10 (1982): 335 (emphasis in original unless otherwise noted). For patristic references to *ekklesia* in the universal sense, cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian*

Here, Zizioulas defines the term “catholic” as something other than “universal.” Zizioulas sees the Aristotelian meaning of *katholou* behind the Greek patristic use of “catholic.” “It is notable,” writes Zizioulas, “that whenever [Aristotle] defines it he gives it a *qualitative* sense denoting what is *full, whole, general, or common*.”⁷ Taken in the larger context of St. Ignatius’s ecclesiology, then, “Catholicity . . . does not mean anything else but the *wholeness* and *fullness* and *totality* of the body of Christ ‘exactly as’ . . . it is portrayed in the eucharistic community.”⁸ As Zizioulas soundly points out in defense of his position, “Even the context in which the term [catholic church] appears is a eucharistic one, in which Ignatius’ main concern was the unity of the eucharistic community.”⁹

“Orthodox ecclesiology,” affirms Zizioulas, “is based on the idea that wherever there is the Eucharist there is the Church in its fullness as the Body of Christ.”¹⁰ The following passage is particularly helpful for expressing Zizioulas’s major position with regard to the catholicity of the local church:

Inasmuch as the eucharistic assembly incarnates and reveals in history not a part of the one Christ but the one Lord Himself in His entirety, who takes up the “many” in Himself in perpetuity in order to make them One and bring them back through His sacrifice before the throne of the Father, what we have in the Eucharist is not a part of the Church, but the whole Church herself, the whole body of Christ. Thus the ecclesiological fullness and “catholicity” of the Church sojourning

Doctrines, revised edition (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1978), 189: “Looked at from the outside, primitive Christianity has the appearance of a vast diffusion of local congregations, each leading its separate life with its own constitutional structure and officers and each called a ‘church’. In a deeper sense, however, all these communities are conscious of being parts of one universal Church, which Ignatius [Eph. 17, 1] implies is related to Christ as the body is to its head. It extends, we are informed, [cf. *Didache* 9, 4] to the ends of the earth, and God gathers it together from the four winds. . . . As he faces his death, Polycarp himself prays [*Dialogue with Trypho* 8, 1] ‘for the entire Catholic Church throughout the world’. . . . So for Hermas [*Sim.* 9, 17] the Church collects its members from the whole world, forming them into one body in unity of understanding, mind, faith and love. Justin speaks [*Dial.* 63, 5] of all those who believe in Christ as being united ‘in one soul, one synagogue, one Church, which is brought into being through His name and shares in His name; for we are all called Christians.’ ”

⁷ Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 109.

⁸ John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002), 149.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ John Zizioulas, “The Local Church in a Eucharistic Perspective: An Orthodox Contribution,” *Midstream* 33 (January 1994): 421.

in each place formed the first and the basic consequence of the unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist. "Each single Church, gathered around the Bishop and culminating in his person, is not simply a part of the whole within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church; but inasmuch as she communes in the whole in the unity of the Holy Spirit, she is herself one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, i.e., the 'fullness' and the 'body of Christ'."¹¹

The notion of "the one and the many," alluded to in the above quote, is a common Zizioulan theme. He holds that it is one of the many that makes the many one. This theme appears here with regard to Christ and the Church. As the head of the body, Jesus Christ is the one who makes the many (the faithful) one (the Church). Moreover, in Zizioulas's view, "the one and the many are *mutually constitutive*."¹² Therefore, in regard to the relation between Christ and the Church, Zizioulas notes that "the existence of the body is a necessary condition for the head to be a head."¹³ Christ is head of *the body*, the Church.

Furthermore, Zizioulas asserts that the Church's relationship to Christ is so strong that "the Church is described as Christ Himself, *the whole Christ* in Augustine's apt phrase," and thus, "ecclesiology ceases to be a separate chapter for theology and becomes an organic *chapter of Christology*."¹⁴ According to Zizioulas, then, Christ and the Church constitute one corporate personality.¹⁵ This radical unity with and in Christ is realized in the eucharistic synaxis. Therefore, each local church, as the eucharistic assembly, possesses the fullness of ecclesial reality by virtue of the very fullness of the Lord's presence in the Eucharist. If Christ is fully present in the Eucharist, and Christ and the Church are one, then the Church is also fully present in the Eucharist.

¹¹ Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 248. Here, Zizioulas quotes from Metr. Dionysios of Servies and Kozani, "Encyclical for the Inauguration of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Church of Greece," in *Oikodomi, Ecclesiastical and Literary Bulletin* 2 (1959): 126.

¹² Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue*, 2d ed. (Fairfax, VA: Eastern Christian Publications, 2006), 179. Cf. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 41.

¹³ John Zizioulas, "The Mystery of the Church in the Orthodox Tradition," *One in Christ* 24, no. 4 (1988): 299.

¹⁴ Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 15. Cf. Georges Florovsky, "Le corps du Christ vivant: une interpretation orthodoxe de l'église," in *La sainte Église universelle. Confrontation oecuménique* (Neuchâtel-Paris: Delachaux et Niestl, 1948), 124; also, McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 212–13.

¹⁵ Cf. John Zizioulas, "The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist," *Nicholaus* 10 (1982): 342; also, Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 145–47.

Ratzinger also affirms the full ecclesial quality of the local church (that is, the episcopal diocese).¹⁶ Like Zizioulas, Ratzinger acknowledges that “for the early Christians the word *ecclesia* meant first of all and most conspicuously the local Church. In other words, the Church is realized immediately and primarily in the individual local Churches which are not separate parts of a larger administrative organization but rather embody the totality of the reality which is ‘the Church.’”¹⁷ Ratzinger’s words closely resemble Zizioulas’s own vocabulary with regard to the qualitative character of the local church, which concretely contains within it the fullness of the Church’s essence.

Additionally, Ratzinger agrees with Zizioulas that the Eucharist is the basis for the full ecclesial reality of the local church. The Church is inseparable from the Eucharist. As he writes: “According to the Fathers, Eucharist and Church do not stand as two different things next to one another, but fall thoroughly into one another [*durchaus ineinander-fallen*].”¹⁸ Ratzinger even goes so far as to say quite succinctly, “The Church is Eucharist.”¹⁹ As with Zizioulas, Christ is at the center of this great mystery. It is communion with Christ as celebrated and received in the Eucharist that gives rise to the Church as communion: “The Eucharist joins men together, not only with one another but also with Christ thus making them Church. . . . [the] Church lives in eucharistic communities.”²⁰

¹⁶ Zizioulas and Ratzinger both understand the local/particular church as an episcopocentric reality. The development of the parish system in the third century and its expansion over the course of the fourth century did not render each parish “church” in the full sense. The eucharistic synaxis as celebrated in a parish community is seen as a participation in the bishop’s celebration, even when the bishop is not physically present. Thus, unity under the presidency of the bishop is still viewed as a necessary component of the full ecclesial reality of the local church.

¹⁷ Joseph Ratzinger, “The Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality,” *Concilium* in *Dogma*, vol. 1, *The Church and Mankind* (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press, 1965), 44.

¹⁸ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, “Gemeinde aus der Eucharistie,” in *800 Jahre St. Martini Münster*, ed. Werner Hülsbusch (Münster: Verlag Regensburg, 1980): 32. Where English editions of texts are not indicated in the notes, the translation is that of the present author.

¹⁹ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 75.

²⁰ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, “The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council,” trans. Stephen W. Arndt, *Communio* 13 (1986): 242–43. One difference between Zizioulas and Ratzinger regarding the Christological aspect of this mystery is Zizioulas’s avoidance of “bride of Christ” language and his insistence that the Church has no *hypostasis* of her own (cf. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church,” 302). Ratzinger holds, to the contrary, that “the Church is the Body of Christ in the way in which the woman is one body . . . with the man. Put in other terms,

These statements sound compatible—if not identical—with Zizioulas’s own ecclesiology of the local church. What is more, Ratzinger and Zizioulas draw the same conclusion for the same reason, a significant factor in dialogue. For both of them, the concrete celebration of the Eucharist is the basis for affirming the full ecclesial quality of the local church. Both theologians emphasize that the local church cannot be seen as a mere “part” of the universal Church. Rather, in each church of a particular place, the Church is present in her fullness and with all her essential elements.

Thus, it is important to reaffirm, as a point of agreement between Ratzinger and Zizioulas, the full ecclesial character of the local church. Participants in the international Catholic-Orthodox dialogue have also reaffirmed this position as an important consensus between Catholic and Orthodox thought.²¹

The Unity of the Churches and the One Universal Church

The full ecclesial reality of the local church does not mean that each can stand in isolation. On the contrary, Ratzinger and Zizioulas both insist on the need for communion among the local churches as a constitutive element of the very ecclesial fullness of each church. “For,” writes Zizioulas about the local church, “her wholeness and fullness *are not her exclusive and private possession*. It is the one Christ who Himself, however, lives and is incarnate *identically* in the other Churches, too.”²² Since each local church embodies the whole Christ, each local church is intrinsically united to every other such embodiment of Christ. In like manner, Ratzinger insists that each local church—while fully church—must maintain unity with the whole Church precisely because of the nature of the Eucharist. “Christ is wholly present everywhere, that is the one very important thing the Council formulated in common with our Orthodox brethren. But he is only one everywhere, and therefore I can have the one

the Church is the Body, *not by virtue of an identity without distinction* . . . in their indissoluble spiritual-bodily union, they nonetheless remain unconfused and unmingled” (Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 39; emphasis added). For an excellent treatment of the “bride of Christ” issue, cf. Paul McPartlan, “Who is the Church? Zizioulas and von Balthasar on the Church’s Identity,” *Ecclesiology* 4 (2008): 271–88, especially 284–85, where McPartlan directly compares Zizioulas and Pope Benedict XVI on this question.

²¹ Cf. Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, “The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in Light of the Mystery of the Trinity” (Munich: June 30–July 6, 1982): III.1; available on the Vatican website.

²² Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 260.

Lord only in the unity that he himself is, in the unity with the others who also are his body and are to become it ever anew in the Eucharist.”²³ Elsewhere, this viewpoint is stated quite forcefully: “The Eucharist is celebrated with the one Christ, and thus with the whole Church, or it is not being celebrated at all.”²⁴ The need for unity between local churches is a necessary condition for the fullness of their ecclesial character. This is an important point of concurrence between the thought of Zizioulas and that of Ratzinger.

Drawing similar conclusions from the above statements, Ratzinger and Zizioulas both affirm that there are *simultaneously* one Church in the world and many churches in and through which the one Church exists. Again, there is a eucharistic basis for this position. As Zizioulas states: “There is one Eucharist in the whole universal Church and yet this one Eucharist is at the same time many Eucharists.”²⁵ Elsewhere, he writes: “I have always believed that the nature of the Eucharist points to the simultaneity of locality and universality in ecclesiology.”²⁶ Zizioulas has coined an apt phrase to express such simultaneity of the local and universal Church, that is, the communion of all churches as one Church: “The unity of the Church throughout the world is a unity *in identity*.”²⁷ “Unity in identity” indicates that each local church is united to every other local church precisely because they are identical in Christ through their respective episcopocentric eucharistic communities. It is one and the same reality that is made present in each instance.

Zizioulas thinks that this concept of “unity in identity” is necessary to redirect theological discussion about the relationship between the local and universal Church. As he writes:

The fundamental and crucial problem of the relationship between the “local” and the “universal” catholic Church must be solved apart from any notion of a *unity in collectivity*, and in the direction of a *unity in identity*. Schematically speaking, in the first case the various local Churches form *parts* which are added to one another in order to make up a whole, whereas in the latter, the local Churches are *full circles* which cannot be

²³ Ratzinger, “The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council,” trans. Stephen W. Arndt, *Communio* 13 (1986): 244.

²⁴ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 106.

²⁵ John Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” in *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, ed. James F. Puglisi (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 118.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 119.

²⁷ Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 260.

added to one another but *coincide* with one another and finally with the Body of Christ and the original apostolic Church.²⁸

Once again, Zizioulas strongly defends the integrity of the local church's ecclesial status without negating the inherent necessity of universal communion. Zizioulas also believes that his approach can preclude the tendency towards localism or isolationism. The mystery of *universal* communion of all in Christ is maintained. "What each eucharistic community . . . was meant to reveal, was not part of Christ but the whole Christ and not a partial or local unity but the full eschatological unity of all in Christ."²⁹ Thus, via the concept of "unity in identity," Zizioulas conveys—in an impressively nuanced way—that the Church is both one and many at the same time.

Ratzinger makes similar remarks about the simultaneity of multiplicity and unicity within the Church, rooted in the mystery of the Eucharist:

Church arises and exists [*entsteht und besteht*] through this, that the Lord communicated himself to men, walks in communion with them and thus brings them into communion with one another. The Church is the communicating [*Kommunizieren*] of the Lord with us, which at the same time creates the true communing of men with one another. Hence, Church arises each time around one altar. Therefore, it is built up in local Churches—"communities," since only a "community" can be the location of communication. Hence, it is, at the same time however, still only one in the multiplicity [*Vielheit*] of communities, since there are not many bodies of the Lord but one single Christ, who is everywhere whole but also everywhere is only one.³⁰

The Church, like the Eucharist, is simultaneously local and universal. Each instance of the Eucharist found in various places is the whole Christ. Similarly, the Church is wholly present everywhere she is found. The agreement between Zizioulas and Ratzinger on this point is profound.

Yet, differences remain. The main point of disparity between Ratzinger and Zizioulas on the relationship between the local and universal Church stems, not from different assessments of the ecclesial quality of the local church, but from their different estimations of the ontology of the universal Church. Ratzinger attributes greater ontological weight to the universal Church than does Zizioulas. For Ratzinger, "the one Church is a theological entity, and not the subsequent empirical uniting of many

²⁸ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 158n66.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

³⁰ Ratzinger, "Gemeinde aus der Eucharistie," 32.

churches.”³¹ In other words, the universal Church is a real “*ens*,” a concrete reality that exists substantially as one. Furthermore, Ratzinger professes that the universal Church enjoys a certain precedence vis-à-vis the local churches. He insists that “what *first* exists is the one Church, the Church that speaks in all tongues—the *ecclesia universalis*; she then generates Church in the most diverse locales, which nonetheless are all always embodiments of the one and only Church. The temporal and ontological priority lies with the universal Church.”³² The one, universal Church makes herself present in a given location, and this constitutes the local church. As that which now becomes present in a particular place, the universal Church must exist prior to—ontologically and temporally—the individual local church. To Ratzinger, this seems self-evident, and he finds it difficult to entertain any other perspective: “The ontological precedence of the Church as a whole, of the one Church and the one body, of the one bride, over the empirical and concrete realizations in the various individual parts³³ of the Church seems to me so obvious that I find it difficult to understand the objections raised against it.”³⁴

Zizioulas has a different view of the universal Church. One may affirm that there is one Church in the world in some sense. However, in his view, the term “Church” does not have the same level of significance when it is used in the worldwide sense as it does when predicated of the local church. For Zizioulas, the latter carries the most ontological weight as that which incarnates full ecclesial reality. The former is predicated analogously as a means of expressing the communion between the individually concrete realities of the local churches. In other words, it is the local church that is an “*ens*,” according to Zizioulas, while the universal Church is the communion of each “*ens*” with every other “*ens*.” In Zizioulas’s own words:

In a eucharistic view of the Church this means that the local Church . . . is the only form of ecclesial existence which can be properly called

³¹ Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship*, 249.

³² Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 44.

³³ In a previous quote, Ratzinger declares that local churches are *not* “parts” of the Church. Here, he refers to them as “individual parts of the Church.” This discrepancy is due to different senses of the word “part” in each instance. On the one hand, local churches are called “parts” of the Church in a *quantitative* sense, insofar as one local church is neither every local church nor the entire Church throughout the world. On the other hand, they cannot be called “parts of the Church” in a *qualitative* sense, since they possess all the essential ecclesial qualities. This distinction is also compatible with Zizioulas’s contention that the catholicity of the local church is a *qualitative* characteristic, as discussed earlier.

³⁴ Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship*, 135.

Church. All structures aiming at facilitating the universality of the Church create a *network of communion of Churches, not a new form of Church*. . . . Any structural universalization of the Church to the point of creating an ecclesial entity called “universal Church” as something parallel to or above that of the local Church would inevitably introduce into the concept of the Church cultural and other dimensions which are foreign to a particular local context.³⁵

As the last quote indicates, Zizioulas insists that the local church is the only entity deserving the title “church” in the full sense. His position rests on the close association of *ekklesia* with the concrete eucharistic assembly under the presidency of the one bishop. Since, according to Zizioulas, the church is the eucharistic assembly, and there is no universal eucharistic celebration, then there are no supra-diocesan structures that can be called “Church” in the original and full sense of the word. As Zizioulas states: “There was not in practice one universal Eucharist, so there was not one universal Bishop in the early Church. . . . Therefore, on the universal level we do not have a fixed and permanent center for the expression of ecclesial unity in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop, and it is in this that Roman Catholic ecclesiology since the First Vatican Council has deviated from the early Church.”³⁶ For Zizioulas, ecclesial structure is identical with the structure of the Eucharist, which is always a concrete, local reality.

It is clear, then, how their differently articulated understandings of the relationship of the local and universal Church are derived from divergent understandings of the ecclesial character of the universal Church. On the one hand, Zizioulas, stressing the catholicity of each local church, tends to view local churches as separate realities first (even if identical realities), which then, on account of their identity, establish and maintain communion with one another. On the other hand, Ratzinger, without denying the full ecclesial quality of each local church, emphasizes the fact that each local church does not create itself, but rather receives its being from without, that is, from the universal Church, which is therefore prior to (temporally and ontologically) these local churches.

For Ratzinger, “reception from without” is fundamental: “The element of receiving belongs essentially to the Church. . . . We call this structure of receiving and encountering ‘sacrament.’”³⁷ He says elsewhere that this reception applies to the Eucharist: “The fact that the sacrament of priestly service is requisite for the Eucharist is founded upon the fact that the congregation cannot give itself the Eucharist; it has to receive it from the

³⁵ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 258.

³⁶ Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 253.

³⁷ Ratzinger, “The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council,” 244.

Lord by the mediation of the one Church.”³⁸ Since the local church does not give itself its bishop (that is, it cannot ordain him without other bishops from other churches), it cannot give itself the Eucharist; it must first receive the sacraments and church structure from without, before it can be established as a local (even catholic) church. In other words, from Ratzinger’s perspective, there are not first many local churches each springing up independently, which then establish communion with one another in recognition of their mutual identity as churches. There is first the one Church (quite real and concrete) established by Christ, which then goes forth into the world and makes herself present in various places in and through local churches, which are fully churches only because they have received from the one Church all the necessary ecclesial elements (including baptism, holy orders, and most especially the Eucharist).

The Eucharistic Structure of the Church

In light of the above statements, it is clear that the relationship between ecclesial structure and the Eucharist is another point about which Zizioulas and Ratzinger share some fundamental principles yet diverge in their elaborations. They both see a profound connection between ecclesial structure and the Eucharist, but they do not interpret this relationship in the same way.

As indicated earlier, Zizioulas identifies the church with the eucharistic assembly, and he therefore attributes all truly ecclesial structures to the Eucharist, especially those of bishop, presbyter, and deacon. “The identification of the eucharistic assembly with the ‘Church of God’ led naturally to the coincidence of the structure of the Church with that of the Eucharist.”³⁹ Zizioulas claims that the Church’s “organization . . . was not borrowed or copied from the world around her . . . but arose naturally out of the eucharistic assembly through which canonical unity is connected with the essence of the Church.”⁴⁰

Here, Zizioulas’s insights offer an important reminder that ecclesial structure is not primarily pragmatic. Zizioulas believes that the structure of the church finds its ultimate expression in and through the Eucharist, where the assembly gathers in a way that reflects the eschatological Church. Explaining St. Ignatius of Antioch’s understanding, Zizioulas writes:

The association of *episkopé* with the ultimate authority and fullness of the local church and with the eucharist implied that whenever the local

³⁸ Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship*, 143.

³⁹ Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 59.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

community was gathered together to celebrate the eucharist, the eschatological community was there present in its fullness. This inevitably meant that the structure which this community had at that moment is to be regarded as an image of the “heavenly” or ultimate structure of the world in which God reigns. Ignatius draws his view of the episcopacy from the belief that in the local eucharistic gathering *one* figure is central and exercises final authority: God who gives to the world eternal life through communion in the Body of his Son—or, in terms of the Church structure which represents this, the president of the eucharistic community who “sits in the place of God” and surrounded by the presbyters (who represent the apostles sitting on their eschatological thrones) passes ultimate judgment on every other matter pertaining to the Church.⁴¹

The value of Zizioulas’s presentation is that it shows how ecclesial structure in general must be understood in light of the eschaton, which is expressed and present in the eucharistic synaxis. This view helps to root one’s understanding of ecclesial structure in a theological principle and in the Kingdom of God, rather than too narrowly in pragmatism. It is worth affirming the great value that such a view has for understanding the Church as a real mystery of faith and not simply as a human organization structured for the sake of expediency. For Zizioulas, the structure of the Church that is manifest in the structure of the eucharistic assembly is the result of God’s own providential handiwork and not simply the contingent choice of Christians themselves. Church structure itself is revelatory.

Though Ratzinger also sees a connection between the structure of the Eucharist and the structure of the Church, he nuances the relationship differently. On this point, Aidan Nichols expresses the disparity between Ratzinger and many Orthodox theologians, like Zizioulas: “Ratzinger’s own theology of ministerial office does not take its rise from reflection on the Eucharistic assembly, as with the pure eucharistic ecclesiologies of the Orthodox tradition, but from a wider, if more diffused, picture of the Gospel community.”⁴²

Nevertheless, Ratzinger perceives a relationship between ecclesial structures and the Eucharist. As Maximilian Heim explains, “Every celebration of the Eucharist inherently presupposes ‘a visible, concrete [*nennbare*, identifiable] . . . unity’ as an essential structural element.”⁴³ Perhaps the key differ-

⁴¹ John Zizioulas, “Episkopé and Episkopos in the Early Church: A Brief Survey of the Evidence,” *Episkopé and Episcopate in Ecumenical Perspective* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1980), 33.

⁴² Aidan Nichols, *The Thought of Benedict XVI: An Introduction to the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger* (New York: Burns & Oates, 2005), 139.

⁴³ Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger: Life in the Church and Living Theology*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007), 275.

ence vis-à-vis Zizioulas lies in Ratzinger's insistence that the Eucharist's intrinsically universal dimension necessitates universal structure as a corollary to—and perhaps even a precondition for—local church structure, in such a way that this universal structure must also be called Church in the full sense. “Accordingly, the commemoration of the pope and the bishop in the Eucharistic Prayer during the Mass is not something incidental; rather, it is an expression of this unity, for it means, in Ratzinger's opinion, ‘that we are truly celebrating the *one* Eucharist of Jesus Christ, which we can receive only in the *one* Church.’”⁴⁴

Thus, the unity of the Church—not only on the local but also on the universal level—is expressed in the structure of the Eucharist. “This, however, has repercussions for the eucharistic understanding of the Church, for an essential part of the eucharistic structure of the local community is the horizontal relation of its bishop to the college of bishops.”⁴⁵ The main point here is that the bishop's role as the center of unity within his local church is intrinsically tied to his unity with the other bishops. In other words, the bishop cannot stand in isolation, as a principle of unity simply in himself. A major function of his role *within* the local church is precisely to keep it united to the other local churches and with the whole Church. He does this, Ratzinger believes, precisely through his union with the other bishops as a member of the college of bishops. Thus, the local bishop serves as part of the universal structure of the Church.

Of course, episcopal unity is not only synchronic but also diachronic. Unity among the bishops of today is necessary, but not sufficient. Unity with bishops from every age is also essential. This is the role of apostolic succession. Without apostolic succession, one could not be a true bishop, for one would not serve as a point of historical and sacramental continuity with the apostles and with the Church of all times. Since apostolic succession is required for the authenticity of the episcopal office, which in turn is essential to the proper celebration of the Eucharist, “Ratzinger sees apostolic succession as the guarantee for the *legitimacy* of the Eucharist, which is necessary for the fulfillment of its life-giving purpose.”⁴⁶ In a similar way, Zizioulas directly connects the significance and necessity of apostolic succession with the Eucharist. He writes: “Apostolic succession as an historical fact stemmed from the Divine Eucharist, in the offering of which the Bishops succeeded the Apostles. This becomes clear from studying 1 Clement where the meaning of succession from the Apostles revolves

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 278.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 282.

exclusively around the ministry of ‘offering the Gifts.’”⁴⁷ Therefore, the ministry of unity that the bishop serves is tied directly to the Eucharist’s own internal essence and purpose. As Ratzinger states: “A Church understood Eucharistically is a Church constituted episcopally.”⁴⁸ The office of bishop, through collegiality (synchronic unity) and apostolic succession (diachronic unity), supplies the structural, visible component to spacio-temporal universality.

Indeed, the structure of the Church is connected with the structure of the Eucharist, but precisely because the Eucharist (and the unity it effects) is simultaneously a local and a universal reality, structures of unity in the Church are required on both levels. Thus, as Heim explains, “Even though the ecclesiology of the local Church (led by the bishop), as set forth by the Second Vatican Council, follows from the intrinsic connection between Eucharist and community, this unity always has, according to Ratzinger, a *universal* structure.”⁴⁹ Of course, a bishop is a point of unity on both levels. He is simultaneously the one who makes visible the unity of the assembly within the local church as well as the unity of his eucharistic assembly with all other eucharistic assemblies through his communion with the college of bishops as a whole.

Interestingly enough, this corresponds to Zizioulas’s own words when he says, “*The bishop is both a local and a universal ministry*. The bishop is ordained for a particular Church in order to be its head and center,” but “he is at the same time a bishop of the church universal.”⁵⁰ If the structure of the Church is related intrinsically to the structure of the Eucharist, which is episcopocentric, and the bishop serves both a local and a universal ministry, then there is no reason to conclude that an understanding of ecclesial structures based on the Eucharist is limited to local structures alone. This affirmation is precisely why the bishop—in order to be an authentic leader of the local eucharistic community—must be in union with the whole Church. If he is cut off from the other local churches, then he is no longer a point of unity between the local church and the universal Church, and therefore, he cannot be a legitimate point of unity within the local church. So closely tied are the unity within a local church and the unity between local churches that one is inconceivable without the other.

But, in order to avoid the danger perceived by Zizioulas that a universal structure would challenge the ecclesial fullness of the local church and

⁴⁷ Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 65–66.

⁴⁸ Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 79.

⁴⁹ Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger*, 283.

⁵⁰ Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” 119.

its structure, one can point out that the universal structure is constituted precisely by the communion between the centers of local church structure: the bishops. Zizioulas and Ratzinger agree on this point. The difference between them is based on whether or not this universal structure is itself “Church” in the full sense, as discussed earlier.

A further point regarding universal ecclesial structure revolves around the ministry of the apostles and itinerant preachers exercised in the early Church. Ratzinger reminds the reader that “In the apostolic period, the catholic [universal] element in the Church’s structure is obvious. . . . One can even say that the ministry concerned with the universal Church enjoys such a clear precedence over local offices.”⁵¹ Additionally, Ratzinger points out that the apostles “were not bishops of particular local Churches but simply ‘apostles’ and were commissioned as such for work in the whole world and in the whole of the Church to be built up in the world.”⁵² No one claims that the apostles, who did not belong solely to any given local church, were not full members in the body of Christ, or that their office was not really an ecclesial structure because it was universal and not local. They were members and leaders of the Church universal. Furthermore, a connection between universal offices and the Eucharist is seen in the fact that when apostles or itinerant preachers were present in the local community during their travels, it was they who presided over the Eucharist. As Ratzinger highlights, “The prophetic rank, invested with an equally *supra-local* mission, was active alongside the apostles. Still, these prophets are always designated in the *Didache* as ‘your high priests’ (13, 3).”⁵³

The fact that holders of supra-local offices were allowed to preside over local celebrations of the Eucharist is significant for pointing out the universal character of both the Church and the Eucharist. The fact that the episcopal office took on a universal dimension in the post-apostolic era⁵⁴ only further links the universal and the local dimensions of the Eucharist.

Zizioulas acknowledges the presence of supra-local ministries in the early Church, but once again there is a difference in emphasis and interpretation. Examining the works of Ignatius of Antioch and his contemporaries, Zizioulas notices a shift from the apostolic to the post-apostolic period. “A careful study of . . . three sources . . . (Ignatius, 1 Clement, *Didache*) reveals that in all of these the problem of transition from the apostolic to the post-apostolic period is faced with the help of the function of episkopé,

⁵¹ Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 85.

⁵² Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship*, 187–88.

⁵³ Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 85.

⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

and that all of these sources attach *the same content* to this function.”⁵⁵ According to Zizioulas, bishops and deacons replaced prophets, itinerant preachers, and apostles in their liturgical roles. He explains, however, that the offices of bishop and deacon were not new to those early communities: “They are simply made now the focal ministry in the transition to the expense of the traveling ministers who no longer constitute the link between the apostolic and the post-apostolic churches.”⁵⁶ He grants that in the apostolic period there were universal offices or ministries that linked the various communities with the apostles and the apostolic churches. He denies, however, that any supra-diocesan structures functioned as the link to apostolic churches in the post-apostolic period. It is the local church communities that are now the bearers of apostolic succession, not offices and ministries above or parallel to them.

Again, the difference is interpretive. Ratzinger and Zizioulas both agree that, in the post-apostolic period, the bishops took on a universal role of maintaining Church unity, diachronically and synchronically. However, Ratzinger sees this as guaranteeing the continuation of the one universal Church as a true ecclesial reality, while Zizioulas sees this as the era of local churches, each catholic and apostolic, without the need of universal structures above the local structures. In Zizioulas’s view, then, universal structures are not truly Church in the full sense. For Zizioulas, episcopal unity constitutes the structure of communion *between* churches, not a self-subsisting entity called the universal Church.

Universal Primacy within a Eucharistic Ecclesiology

As one would expect, differences in thought regarding the ontological weight of the universal Church lead to disparate evaluations of the nature and role of universal primacy. Nevertheless, it is highly significant that Zizioulas affirms both that universal primacy is of divine right and that it properly resides with Rome. Against a common Orthodox position that universal primacy is only of ecclesial right, as opposed to the divine right of synods, Zizioulas argues: “The main weakness of this position lies in that it seems to overlook the simple and obvious fact that *synodality cannot exist without primacy*. There has never been and there can never be a synod or a council without a *prôtos*. If, therefore, synodality exists *jure divino* . . . primacy also must exist by the same right.”⁵⁷ If synodality (a.k.a., conciliarity) is a

⁵⁵ Zizioulas, “Episkopé and Episkopos,” 31.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 32.

⁵⁷ John Zizioulas, “Recent Discussion on Primacy in Orthodox Theology,” in *The Petrine Ministry: Catholics and Orthodox in Dialogue*, ed. Cardinal Walter Kasper (New York: Newman, 2006), 237.

“‘*sine qua non conditio*’ for the catholicity of the Church,”⁵⁸ as Zizioulas argues, then, “Primacy is also a ‘*sine qua non conditio*’ for the catholicity of the Church,”⁵⁹ precisely because primacy is a “*sine qua non conditio*” for synodality. This perspective excludes any attempt to present conciliarity as a substitute for—or in opposition to—primacy. “There must, therefore, be a way of incorporating primacy into conciliarity.”⁶⁰

While Zizioulas readily admits the divine right of universal primacy, he does not think the universal primate possesses any direct authority over the intra-ecclesial affairs of another episcopal see. This conviction is closely linked with the notion of the full ecclesial quality of each local church. As Zizioulas insists, “The primacy should not be *primacy* of jurisdiction,” understood as “interference with the affairs of a local church,” because “this means the destruction or negation of its catholicity and ecclesial integrity.”⁶¹ Zizioulas’s view is also related to his insistence that every diocesan bishop succeeds to the entire college of apostles, including Peter, and thus has full and sole authority over intra-diocesan affairs. Through Zizioulas’s interpretation of the documents of the first three centuries, he concludes that “the college of the Twelve and the ‘throne of Peter’ which was preeminent within it formed the foundation, not of one Church, but of *every* episcopal Church because *every* Bishop was understood as being a successor to *all* the Apostles—and to Peter,” and thus, “Every one of the Bishops sat on the throne of Peter; his Church being regarded as fully apostolic and based on the foundation of *all* the Apostles.”⁶² Each bishop succeeds to the apostolic college not as part of the college but as a successor to the entire apostolic college. Just as in Zizioulas’s ecclesiology of the relationship between the local and universal Church, the unity of bishops is more akin to the notion of “unity in identity” than it is to the relation of “part to whole.”

Zizioulas claims to draw this view from Cyprian. In the third century, Cyprian’s writings indicate a shift away from the christological conception of the episcopacy towards a more explicitly apostolic understanding of the bishop’s role. Zizioulas maintains that Cyprian “is . . . too ancient to abandon the idea of the local church as being the ‘catholic Church’ and for this reason he regards *each* bishop as the successor of Peter.”⁶³

⁵⁸ Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” 120.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 121.

⁶⁰ Zizioulas, “Recent Discussion on Primacy,” 238.

⁶¹ Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” 124.

⁶² Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 263.

⁶³ Zizioulas, “Episkopé and Episkopos,” 35.

Ratzinger sees the matter differently. Although he concurs that a particular bishop does not succeed to a specific apostle⁶⁴ (except, perhaps, in the case of bishops of apostolic sees, including the bishop of Rome), he would not agree that each bishop succeeds to the entire college in such a way that the entire college is now complete in each bishop. Rather, Ratzinger insists that each bishop succeeds to the apostles as a member of the college of bishops, who together succeed to the apostolic college.⁶⁵

Of course, all this points to a fundamental difference between the Catholic approach and that of Zizioulas and other Orthodox theologians. The office of universal primacy, in the Orthodox view, is not based upon Petrine succession. Universal primacy is not, for them, *Petrine* primacy. While Zizioulas supports seeking universal primacy in the bishop of Rome, he understands its Petrine character differently than Ratzinger. McPartlan expertly explains the complicated issue as follows: "We have seen Zizioulas approvingly interpreting Cyprian as teaching that Peter and the apostles constitute one leadership which presides in each of the many local churches. Thus the pope would stand among the bishops not as Peter among the apostles, but as a definitive Peter in his own local church, constituting and enabling their manifold presence as Peter in their own local churches, with each local presbyterium representing the apostolic college."⁶⁶

In the concrete, the major question in dispute with respect to universal primacy is the extent of its authoritative range. Zizioulas wants to set strict boundaries around universal primacy. He would like to apply Apostolic Canon 34 to the role of the universal primate:

The bishops of each province (*ethnos*) must recognize the one who is first (*protos*) amongst them, and consider him to be their head (*kephale*), and not do anything important without his consent (*gnome*); each bishop may only do what concerns his own diocese (*paroikia*) and its dependent territories. But the first (*protos*) cannot do anything without the consent of all. For in this way concord (*homonoia*) will prevail, and God will be praised through the Lord in the Holy Spirit.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, "La collégialité, développement théologique," in *L'Église de Vatican II: Études autour de la Constitution conciliaire sur l'Église*, vol. 3, ed. Guilhaume Baraúna (Paris: Cerf, 1966), 774.

⁶⁵ For a presentation on Ratzinger's understanding of apostolic and petrine succession, cf. Richard G. DeClue, "Primacy and Collegiality in the Works of Joseph Ratzinger," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 651–61.

⁶⁶ McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 208–9.

⁶⁷ Apostolic Canon 34, quoted from: Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, "Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental

If this were to be applied to the pope, then bishops could do nothing concerning the universal Church without him, but neither could the pope do anything without them. He could not act in the name of the universal Church unilaterally. Zizioulas explains his idea of how universal primacy would work as follows: “The Bishop of Rome will be in cooperation on all matters pertaining to the Church as a whole with the existing patriarchs and other heads of autocephalous churches,” and “he would be the President of all heads of churches and the spokesman of the entire Church once the decisions announced are the result of consensus.”⁶⁸ Universal primacy exercised in this way is not only “‘useful’ to the Church but an ecclesiological necessity in a unified Church.”⁶⁹ Again, this is based on the application of Apostolic Canon 34 to the universal level. It ought to be noted, however, that Apostolic Canon 34 itself quite explicitly refers to relations between bishops on the regional—not the universal—level. It directs the relational conduct of the bishops within “each province.”

Interestingly enough, Ratzinger does not see the need for much change regarding the structure of the Orthodox Church, at least administratively, in a reunified Church. As he states: “It becomes additionally clear that an extensive patriarchal ‘autonomy’ is compatible with the true essence of primacy, and perhaps the Eastern Churches would hardly need to change anything in terms of concrete juridical structure.”⁷⁰ This statement corresponds nicely with the rather emphatic language of *Unitatis Redintegratio*:

This holy synod solemnly declares that the churches of the east, while keeping in mind the necessary unity of the whole church, have the power to govern themselves according to their own disciplines, since these are better suited to the character of their faithful and better adapted to foster the good of souls. The perfect observance of this traditional principle—which however has not always been observed—is a prerequisite for any restoration of union.⁷¹

Of course, this statement does not nullify Vatican I’s doctrine, which clearly asserts that the pope possesses universal and immediate jurisdiction

Nature of the Church: Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority” (Ravenna: October 13, 2007): §24.

⁶⁸ Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” 125.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Joseph Ratzinger, “Primat,” in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2d ed., vol. 8., ed. Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner (Freiburg: Herder, 1963), 763.

⁷¹ Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio* §16.

over the whole Church.⁷² Nevertheless, it does suggest a principle of self-restraint on the part of the Roman Pontiff, who should generally favor the principle of subsidiarity whenever possible. Generally speaking, local churches should govern themselves unless some grave reason requires papal intervention, and even then only after regional efforts have proven insufficient. Obviously, the question of direct, immediate, and universal jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff, especially in the exercise of papal infallibility, remains a major point of contention. Eventually, Catholic-Orthodox dialogue will be faced with that question directly.⁷³

Presently, the catholicity of each local church needs to be raised once more, this time in relation to universal primacy. Zizioulas is apprehensive about the possibility of supra-diocesan structures impinging upon the full ecclesial (and thus catholic) character of each local church. The office of universal primate can seem to be just such an external structure threatening the integrity of the local church. This is precisely why Zizioulas sets those limits to universal primacy outlined above.

However, it is not necessary to view the universal primate as purely external to the local church. Perhaps the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's document *Communio in Notio*—issued under Ratzinger's name as Cardinal Prefect—can provide an understanding of the Petrine office's relation to the local church that helps pacify Zizioulas's apprehension, at least to a degree. The following quote illuminates the issue:

But for each particular Church to be fully Church, that is, the particular presence of the universal Church with all its essential elements, and hence constituted *after the model of the universal Church*, there must be present in it, as a proper element, the supreme authority of the Church: the Episcopal College "*together with their head, the Supreme Pontiff, and*

⁷² Cf. Vatican Council I, *Pastor Aeternus* (1870) in *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, ed. Jacques Dupuis, S.J., 7th ed., rev. and exp. (NY: Alba House, 2001), §826.

⁷³ Cf. Walter Kasper, "Introduction to the Theme and Catholic Hermeneutics of the Dogmas of the First Vatican Council," in *The Petrine Ministry: Catholics and Orthodox in Dialogue*, ed. Cardinal Walter Kasper, trans. The Staff of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (New York: Newman, 2006), 7–23. Kasper offers a good summary of the issues surrounding the dogma of papal infallibility and the need for careful interpretation of the text. He offers four hermeneutical principles that should be followed in interpreting Vatican I's dogmatic statement on infallibility. This shows that more work should be done to make sure the dogma is understood correctly. There is hope that a correct interpretation and explication of the dogma could be reached that, while remaining faithful to Vatican I, would make it more understandable and acceptable to the East.

never apart from him." The Primacy of the Bishop of Rome and the episcopal College are proper elements of the universal Church that are "*not derived from the particularity of the Churches*", but are nevertheless interior to each particular Church. Consequently "*we must see the ministry of the Successor of Peter, not only as a 'global' service, reaching each particular Church from 'outside', as it were, but as belonging already to the essence of each particular Church from 'within'*". . . . The ministry of the Successor of Peter as something *interior* to each particular Church is a necessary expression of that fundamental *mutual interiority* between universal Church and particular Church.⁷⁴

This perspective, which affirms that the entire episcopal college, including the Successor of Peter as its head, is somehow interior to each local church, approximates Zizioulas's assertion that each bishop succeeds to the entire apostolic college, including Peter. Both Zizioulas and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, then, maintain that somehow the supreme authority deriving from the entire apostolic college persists interiorly in each local church and not as something entirely foreign to it.

The major difference, not insignificantly, is that for Zizioulas *each* bishop is the bearer of this supreme authority and is the means by which this supreme authority is present in the particular church, while the Congregation wants to keep universal primacy clearly in the hands of the "bishop of Rome" and speak of *his* interiority within each particular Church. The pope, in a way, belongs to each local church as part of what makes it catholic in Zizioulas's sense of the term, meaning integral and whole. Much potential lies in the Congregation's vision. However, more elaboration is needed to explain precisely *how* the pope and the entire episcopal college are interior to each local church, if not via the diocesan bishop. Exploring and explaining more fully the Congregation's view may very well be an important task for Catholic theologians going forward.

In our current context, the most important question is how the view of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which is arguably that of Ratzinger, relates the role of the Supreme Pontiff to the eucharistic character of the Church. It will be shown in what follows that the universal primate's role of fostering communion between local churches is crucial for the proper celebration of the Eucharist by those churches. If the universal ministry is essential to the Eucharist, which is the source of a church's catholicity, then the universal ministry is also essential to the catholicity of each local church. Thus, universal primacy can be seen, not as an external

⁷⁴ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [henceforth, CDF], *Communio in Notio*, in *Origins* (June 15, 1992): §13.

addition to the fullness of the local church, but as a principle that supports and promotes the catholicity of the local church, making it possible at all.

Regarding the relationship between the local and the universal Church from a eucharistic perspective, *Communio* asserts:

It is precisely the Eucharist that renders all self-sufficiency on the part of the particular Churches impossible. Indeed, the unicity and indivisibility of the eucharistic Body of the Lord implies the unicity of his mystical Body, which is the one and indivisible Church. From the eucharistic centre arises the necessary openness of every celebrating community, of every particular Church; by allowing itself to be drawn into the open arms of the Lord, it achieves insertion into his one and undivided Body.⁷⁵

With this in mind, the document also asserts that the office of Peter fits into this eucharistic dimension of the Church as both local and universal: “For this reason too, the existence of the Petrine ministry, which is a foundation of the unity of the Episcopate and of the universal Church, bears a profound correspondence to the eucharistic character of the Church.”⁷⁶ Paul McPartlan explains the significance of these statements as follows:

The pope, in short, is here being understood as *eucharistic guardian and guarantor*, as one who primarily strengthens his brother bishops not juridically but eucharistically. He supports the eucharistic presidency of each local bishop, with whom he is named in the eucharistic prayer, and exercises a ministry of vigilance . . . to ensure that the eucharistic lives of the many local churches are in harmony with one another in their witness to the world of today and in harmony, also, with the witness of past ages, because the fact that all are striving to live out the same mystery in their own local-ity, means that the witness of each affects all, for good or ill.⁷⁷

The importance of seeing the papacy as a eucharistic ministry is of undoubted importance for Catholic-Orthodox dialogue, and it certainly corresponds to Ratzinger’s own position. In fact, McPartlan makes an important remark in this regard when he writes: “Long before he became Prefect for the Congregation, Joseph Ratzinger already held, as Battista Mondin neatly summarises, that ‘the primacy of the pope does not primarily concern either orthodoxy or orthopraxy, but rather ortho-Eucharist.’ ”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ CDF, *Communio* Notio §11.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Paul McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation* (London: T&T Clark, 1995), 70.

⁷⁸ McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation*, 70n7. Cf., Battista Mondin, *Le nuove ecclesiologie* (Rome: Paoline, 1980), 171.

Since ecclesial communion, both within and between each local church, corresponds to the very essence of the Eucharist, it follows quite reasonably that universal primacy, whose function it is to maintain and promote universal communion, fosters the intrinsic character of the Eucharist for each church. In short, the universal primate helps to ensure that the universal communion at the heart of the eucharistic mystery remains a concrete, visible reality, not just in principle but in fact.

Zizioulas's writings, too, may serve to bolster the view that universal primacy is a eucharistic office, if one links together a number of his insights. First, Zizioulas holds that universal communion relates directly to the Eucharist. Zizioulas maintains that "in each eucharistic celebration the Gifts are offered in the name of and for the 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church' which exists in the whole world."⁷⁹ Thus, unity between local churches is necessary to express the oneness of the Eucharist celebrated in each local church. Since this oneness is intrinsic to the Eucharist itself, lack of unity either within a local church or between local churches constitutes a defective situation. "If two or more Churches are in schism, the eucharistic life (and perhaps also validity) of *all* local Churches is upset. Conciliarity as an expression of unity of the local Churches in *one* Church, constitutes a fundamental condition for the Eucharist."⁸⁰ It has already been explained that, for Zizioulas, primacy is a *sine qua non conditio* for conciliarity. If conciliarity constitutes a fundamental condition for the Eucharist, and primacy is a necessary condition for conciliarity, then universal primacy must also be a necessary condition for the Eucharist. As Zizioulas insists, "Ecclesial unity on a universal level is essential for the Eucharist."⁸¹ Universal primacy is required to serve universal unity, and it thereby serves the Eucharist.

Concluding Summary of Similarities and Differences

At this point, summary lists of the points of agreement and disagreement between Ratzinger and Zizioulas would be beneficial. It is not at all easy, however, to separate the two lists, since Zizioulas and Ratzinger often both agree and disagree on one and the same issue.

First, Ratzinger and Zizioulas agree on many ecclesiological issues. They each strongly affirm the full ecclesial quality of the local church. Similarly, this full ecclesial quality of the local church is connected with the celebration of the Eucharist in both of their writings. Likewise, the two theologians emphasize the need for communion between local

⁷⁹ Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," 347.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

churches as something necessary for them to maintain their own ecclesial reality to the fullest degree, and they both insist on the *simultaneity* of locality and universality in the Church. The structure of the Eucharist and the structure of the Church are viewed as essentially interconnected in each of their works. The episcopacy is central to this structure, and Zizioulas and Ratzinger both view apostolic succession as directly tied to the Eucharist. Fundamentally important to current Catholic-Orthodox dialogue is the fact that Ratzinger and Zizioulas each affirm the need for universal primacy and view this primacy as a matter of divine constitution. Furthermore, there is evidence that both sides agree that universal primacy is fundamentally related to the integrity of each local church's ecclesial reality precisely insofar as it helps manifest the intrinsic and universal communion received in the eucharistic synaxis. In short, they both supply the means by which universal primacy can be understood as a eucharistic office.

Despite these tremendous points of similarity, differences remain. Ratzinger perceives the universal Church as ontologically and temporally prior to each local church. Conversely, Zizioulas conceives of the local church as that which is truly church, not seeing the universal Church as a real, self-subsistent entity the way Ratzinger does. Thus, while Ratzinger sees the Church first as one and then making itself present in the many local churches, Zizioulas first sees the local churches as complete entities in such a way that the universal Church is understood principally as the communion between these churches, and perhaps even a reality consequent (logically, not temporally) upon such communion. With regard to apostolic succession, Ratzinger views each bishop as a member of the episcopal college, which *as a college* succeeds to the college of apostles. Zizioulas, on the other hand, views each bishop as successor to the entire apostolic college, including Peter. Thus, while Ratzinger views the bishop of Rome as the successor of Peter, Zizioulas sees all bishops as Peter's successors.

In conclusion, it is proposed that even though all the differences in nuance between Ratzinger and Zizioulas have not yet been settled, it is clear from this study that their similarities are so profound—and their basic principles and concerns so close—that profitable dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church can be legitimately hoped for if other theologians study and follow their example, especially since both sides benefit so clearly from the insights of the other.

In particular, to help advance Catholic-Orthodox relations, further exploration and collaboration is needed on the question of the relationship between the Eucharist and universal primacy. In a reunited Church,

universal primacy must be viewed as a eucharistic office, that is, an office in service to the Eucharist. Only then could both the multiplicity and the unicity of the Church—in their mutual relation—be safeguarded in a completely Orthodox and Catholic way. **N.V**