I thank Loyola School of Theology for inviting me to deliver this year’s convocation address and for giving me a venue to share some of the ideas contained in my doctoral dissertation entitled “Episcopal Collegiality in the Teaching and Practice of Paul VI (1959-1967).” As the time period indicates, the Second Vatican Council was at the core of my investigations.

Aspects of the theology of Vatican II are often presented and transmitted in the form of caricatures and slogans. Unfortunately many believe that there is nothing more to Vatican II than is contained in those impressionistic evaluations of the council. This approach can lead not only to minimalism or reductionism, but also to a failure in creative and dynamic reception of the council.

For this talk I will dwell on episcopal collegiality in Vatican II not so much as a doctrinal content but as one of the turning points in the drama that characterized the council. I will try to present the confusion, the hesitation, the uncertainties and the quarrels involved in giving birth to an ecclesiology. We will end not with a neat formulation of the ecclesiology of Vatican II but with an emerging ecclesiological project which has not been completed and in which we are all invited to engage.

There are three parts to this address: (1) an introduction to the conciliar debate on collegiality, (2) examples of how collegiality can affect aspects of Church life, and (3) the emerging ecclesiological project of Vatican II as gleaned from the drama surround-

1. Text of an address delivered during the General Convocation to inaugurate the new academic year, Loyola School of Theology, June 26, 1992.
ing collegiality.

The question of the existence and role of an episcopal college or body was not raised, even before the opening of Vatican II, as an isolated issue but always within the wider search for a new ecclesiological equilibrium and synthesis. This search often appeared under the rubric of the completion or expansion of Vatican I. In such an expansion the following elements entered: the need to complete the one-sided doctrine of Vatican I on papal primacy of jurisdiction and infallible magisterium by a doctrine on the episcopate and other components of the Church; to break away from the homogeneous Church that ecclesial practice built up after Vatican I in order to accommodate various peoples and cultures; and finally to evolve a more holistic ecclesiological approach than that provided by a highly juridical model. It is not true, therefore, that episcopal collegiality, as debated upon by Vatican II, simply concerned bishops. From the time of the council down to the present, the doctrinal and institutional controversies surrounding the search for appropriate expressions of the collegial principle have revealed that collegiality concerns the very nature of the Church as communion and as the subject of its self-definition and self-determination. Episcopal collegiality serves as a door through which one enters on the way to a much bigger ecclesiological project.

In the history of the conciliar debates, collegiality came to the fore during the discussions on the proposed texts of De Ecclesia and De Episcopis.\(^2\) The questions asked and deliberated upon were manifold: (1) What is the most appropriate term to use — collegium, corpus or ordo? (2) Does the college have a sacramental basis? (3) How does one enter into the college? (4) What are the effects of episcopal consecration? Are the powers to sanctify,

2. For historical accounts with solid theological interpretations, see Antonio Acerbi, Due ecclesiologie, ecclesiologia giuridica ed ecclesiologia di comunione nella 'lumen gentium' (Bologna: Dehoniane, 1975); Umberto Betti, La dottrina sull'episcopato del concilio Vaticano II (Roma: Antonianum, 1984); and Gérard Philips, L'Église et son mystère au deuxième concile du Vatican, Tomes I et II (Paris: Déclee, 1967).
to teach and to govern given as a unity at episcopal consecration? What is the place of canonical mission and determination in the reception and exercise of episcopal power? (5) What is the role of the college in the Universal Church? By what right does it possess this role? How is it exercised? (6) What is an adequate understanding of apostolic succession? (7) With papal primacy and infallibility securely set in place by Vatican I, how are collegial jurisdiction and infallibility to be explained? What is the source of collegial jurisdiction and infallibility? (8) How do we explain the relation within the college between bishops and the pope who is both a member and the head of the college? How does the pope's headship of the Church relate to headship of the college? (9) How does a bishop's headship of a local Church relate to his membership in the college? (10) What are valid institutional expressions of collegiality? Do ecumenical councils constitute the only instance of a truly collegial act? (11) How does the relation between the Universal Church and local Churches affect the understanding of the bishops' role within the college? (12) What does the mission of the Church have to say about collegiality?

These are a few of the issues touching episcopal collegiality. During the council, each of these questions, as it was being addressed, became a stage on which differing theological frameworks presented their respective cases and challenged each other's merits and in the process brought questions into sharper focus. We must realize that this was a real drama, often causing deep and bitter divisions among the conciliar Fathers. All this was happening during an ecumenical council, the collegial act par excellence. It fell especially on Pope Paul VI, the head of the college and of the council, to show to the Church and to the world how a collegial act of bishops is achievable in the first council after Pastor Aeternus, Vatican I's dogmatic constitution which provided a reflex and canonized consciousness of papal supremacy.³ As the fierce collisions between groups of bishops constantly shifted from the high visibility of the conciliar aula to the privacy of papal arbitration, the council was constantly being challenged to show in practice that it was indeed a college that

could operate as one and that the gathering of the college in
council was not made superfluous by the definition of papal
primacy.

Let us briefly describe the two predominant theological models
and methods operative during the debates on collegiality. For
the so-called minority group, paramount in the episcopal office is
jurisdiction over local Churches. Every form of jurisdiction comes
from one source, the papacy, which alone has been willed by
Christ to perform a function of universal scope in the Church.
Bishops indeed succeed to the apostles but not in the extraordi-
nary powers that accrued to the latter as founders of the Church,
and certainly not in the form of a college of equals who co-govern
with their head. There is no permanently existing episcopal col-
lege which exercises full jurisdiction over the Universal Church
by divine right. Such existence iure divino of the college is ten-
able only if it is brought about by the pope’s convocation; other-
wise, the college must be held as a mere institution of ecclesias-
tical law. Episcopal consecration, which confers a higher jurisdic-
tion than that possessed by a presbyter and not a new order,
gives bishops the capacity (not the power or right) to be called by
the pope to participate in his exercise of universal power.

As the council approached the final vote on lumen gentium
and its promulgation, the minority camp intensified its dissent. It
disputed the sacramentality of the episcopate and the sacra-
mental origin of the powers of teaching and governing. They saw
in the argument favoring the sacramental origin of the powers to
teach and to govern a desire on the part of some bishops to
affirm the transmission of power independently of the pope. They
considered dangerous to the papacy the teaching that incorpora-
tion to the college happens at sacramental consecration. The most
serious fault was found in the teaching on the college as subject
of supreme and full power in the Universal Church for it would
compel the pope to always act collegially and would change the

4. See Acerbi, Due ecclesiologie, 267-94; Betti, Dottrina, 117-83; Philips, L’Église,
25-29.

5. See the documentation offered by Giovanni Caprile, “Contributo alla storia
della ‘nota explicativa praevia’, ” Paolo VI e problemi ecclesiologici, 587-697; Betti,
Dottrina, 442-539; Primauté et collégialité, le dossier de Gérard Philips sur la nota
Church's structure from monarchical to episcopal-collegial. This amounts to an admission of the infidelity of the Church to its divine constitution. Thus, the juridical independence and discretionary freedom of the pope within the college and the Church universal became the over-arching concern of the minority.

The so-called majority position generally rested on the sacramental nature of the Church and of the episcopacy. Of major concern is not jurisdiction but the mission which Christ entrusted to the apostles and to their successors, for the fulfillment of which, powers are given. Since the apostolic mission covers the pastoral government of the whole Church, apostolic powers are received as a unity (sanctifying, teaching and governing). Episcopal consecration is the sacrament of succession to the apostolic mission and powers through incorporation into the episcopal college. The episcopal college, always existing with and under its head, does not exist transitorily and occasionally. It rather participates permanently as one body in the common mission and responsibility of guiding the Church. Together with its head, the college is the subject of supreme and full power in the Church, which belongs to it by divine right and not by derivation from papal power.

Although it would be an over-simplification to claim that the minority and majority groups were always unanimous in their respective positions, we can safely say that our description is faithful to their general orientations. Part of the drama of the council is the attempt to clear a path towards consensus among these diverse theological positions or a communion of minds and judgments among people who all loved the Church and desired to be faithful to the will of Christ. In other words, the council was not waiting only for the outcome of the doctrinal debate on collegiality but also for the success or failure of the exercise of collegiality within the council. The conciliar Fathers were not only talking about collegiality; they were trying to find their way into a collegial act.

While some of the conciliar Fathers resorted to activities worthy of being called outright fraud, deception, propaganda and blackmail just to win votes for their positions, still many other efforts were expended towards achieving compromises and eventual unanimity befitting a collegial act. For example, a vote of orientation on key points of the doctrine on the episcopacy as
contained in the earlier schema of *De Ecclesia* was proposed and held on October 30, 1963, after much controversy. Many conciliar Fathers and experts sought doctrinal formulations that would be acceptable to all. (Yves Congar, Gérard Philips, Cardinals Frings and Suenens easily come to mind in this regard.) Some issues were deliberately left unsettled in order to allow opinions to mature, e.g., the question of whether there is one or two subjects of supreme power; whether the pope is head of the Church because he is head of the college or vice-versa; the connection between canonical mission and incorporation into the college. In May 1964 Paul VI proposed changes to some parts of the text in order to respond to the fears of the minority regarding the dangers posed by collegiality to papal primacy. In the promulgation of conciliar documents, he also used a formula that captured the communion of judgments and of powers involved in a conciliar act, i.e., *una cum patribus* instead of the usual *sacro approbante concilio.* He listened to all sides, studied their arguments, consulted with experts and at the risk of losing personal popularity even among the conciliar Fathers, made decisions that slowed down the restless and made it less difficult for the fearful to accept the doctrine contained in the document. The famous *nota explicativa praevia* falls under this category. His principle was: no one defeated; all convinced.

The overall end product of all these compromises was the lack of synthesis in the formulation of the doctrine. Statements supportive of diverse frameworks followed each other often without any organic development. The title of a famous book on the ecclesiology of the council aptly describes it: *due ecclesiologie: ecclesiologia giuridica ed ecclesiologia di comunione nella 'lumen gentium'* (Two ecclesiologies: juridical ecclesiology and ecclesiology of communion in *lumen gentium*.)

II

All these attempts to achieve a common doctrinal and pastoral ground with regard to collegiality through compromise did not

totally succeed in ending all controversy and tension even up to now. Let us indicate three areas that were shaken by the conciliar debate and continue to experience the unsettling effects of collegiality.

First, there has been a continuing battle over the very notion of collegiality itself especially alive when the collegial nature of structures like the synod of bishops, national and regional episcopal conferences is being discussed. Three major lines of interpretation are discernible: (a) the papal line, namely that it is the presence and authority of the pope that makes the college what it is;\(^7\) (b) the ontological line that sees episcopal collegiality as rooted in the communion, the conciliarity, the synodality that is an immutable element of the theological nature of the Church. This view allows for multifarious historical forms of coresponsibility and varying degrees of actualizing collegiality;\(^8\) (c) the strictly episcopal line which sees collegial acts happening when bishops are truly granted a deliberative voice in matters affecting their regions and the Universal Church.\(^9\)

Second, the notion of the identity and mission of bishops who form the college has not been freed of tensions. During the council, and to a lesser degree nowadays, bishops were fighting for the universal dimension of their mission. They were longing for an unmediated union with the head of the college in exercising responsibility over the whole Church. This thrust gave birth to the synod of bishops and the reform of the Roman Curia. As will be noticed, this universalist dimension has a centralist movement because the bishops' awareness of their universal responsibility led to structural changes in the center of government. The universalist direction moves towards the center. It is intensive.

As the universal-centralist dynamic operated, a definite localist and decentralist movement was also at work. If the bishops were to be considered true pastors, co-responsible for the Church and not sheer vicars of the pope, then in their local Churches, they

7. Some representatives of this interpretation are Wilhelm Bertrams and Vincenzo Fagiolo.
8. The following persons follow this general pattern: Yves Congar, Angel Antón, Edward Schillebeeckx, René Laurentin, Eugenio Corecco, Joseph Ratzinger, and Gian Piero Milano.
9. Giuseppe Alberigo and Johannes Neumann follow this line.
should be accorded such dignity. The clamor was for subsidiarity and decentralization, all in the name of the demands of mission among varying cultures and peoples. National and regional episcopal conferences respond to this aspect. Note however that this localist direction moves away from the center. It is more extensive.

It is quite obvious that the deeper theological question is the relationship of local Churches within the Universal Church as the context for understanding the dual thrust of the bishops' role. The universalist pole that tends towards the center and the localist pole that pulls away from the center simply reveal the dynamic tension in the very Church that bishops serve: it is truly universal only in its concrete localness. But other questions remain. For example, how far does mission, where Church and world intersect, influence the theological understanding of collegiality? Is mission simply a stimulus for collegial structures which are purely functional? Quite recently, the effects of sacramental consecration have been questioned in view of keeping the offices of teaching and governing dependent on the pope, not only for their exercise, but for their origin.

Third, the papacy itself needed re-thinking on account of collegiality. One barometer indicating the influence of collegiality in one's thinking is one's conception of the papacy. Let us take Paul VI's own journey. In the beginning of his pontificate, Paul VI wrote a meditation which was revealing of the understanding of the papacy that he brought with him as he inaugurated his Petrine ministry:

I need to take account of the position and the function which are mine from now on, which characterize me and which, of necessity, render me responsible to God, to the Church, to humanity. The position is unique. Meaning to say that it constitutes me in extreme solitude. It was already great before, now it is total and tremendous. It makes one feel dizzy. Like a statue on top of a pinnacle, indeed even like a living person, such as I am, on top of a pinnacle. Jesus also was alone on the cross . . . Even so I must emphasize this solitude: (Anzi io devo accentuare questa solitudine): I should not fear, I should not seek external support which would exonerate me from my duty which is that of willing, of deciding, of assuming every responsibility, of guiding others even if this would seem illogical or maybe absurd. And to
suffer alone. The consoling intimacies cannot be but scarce and discreet: the depth of the spirit remains with me. I and God. The dialogue with God becomes full and without measure. 10

This solitariness, in the form of "assuming every responsibility" and being accountable only to God (uni Domino devinctus) is being challenged by collegiality and communion among bishops. Furthermore the ministry of Peter as center of communion is also being critiqued by the actual state of Christian disunity. In a later document (Ecclesiam suam 206), Paul VI brought a new style of papal self-reflection:

A thought, in this regard, distresses Us. And it is that which makes us see how We, promoter of such reconciliation, are actually considered by many separated brethren the obstacle to it because of the primacy of honor and jurisdiction that Christ has conferred on the apostle Peter and that We have inherited from him.

The pope of the council, Paul VI, opened himself to a new manner of leadership and became aware of the ironic quality of his ministry. But he also lived through the constant tension between fidelity to the definition of Vatican I regarding the papal prerogatives and promptness to respond to the call of collegiality, coreponsibility, Christian unity. If one, especially the pope himself, takes collegiality seriously, the theology and exercise of the Petrine office cannot be left unchanged.

III

Having seen three sample areas that have been and continue to be challenged by the council's teaching on episcopal collegiality, we ask a final question: what do we learn about the ecclesiology of Vatican II from the drama of collegiality?

First, from the final product as contained primarily in Lumen gentium and Christus Dominus, we can say that the ecclesiology of Vatican II is a transitional ecclesiology, just as the council itself

10. Notiziario dell'Istituto Paolo VI, 1, 53.
is transitional.\textsuperscript{11} It provided a passage from one phase of ecclesial self-definition, dominated by the social form called "modern Roman Catholicism" centered on the pope, to a new phase of testimony and proclamation.\textsuperscript{12} This transitional character is characterized by both fidelity to Tradition and critical distancing from the relative values of preceding ecclesial forms in view of the needs of the time. But continuity and renewal did not always blend well in Vatican II, as seen in the doctrine on the episcopacy. The method of juxtaposition is the major proof of this. Language and statements supportive of a pre-conciliar tendency were made to stand alongside those open to new orientations. Though often taken pejoratively as a sign of the two-sided character of the council, the compromise can also speak of the relativization of the old aspects of a teaching achieved by new insights. Juxtaposition spells less a failure than a limitation of a transitional council which could not have succeeded in presenting a new synthesis. It indicates a modest advance in the acceptance of the incompleteness of Vatican I. But it also cries out for a new synthesis.

Second, as shown in the long painful journey into collegiality undertaken by the conciliar Fathers, the assimilation of what the council offered by way ecclesiology requires time, for it involves re-thinking, conversion, and acceptance of the breakdown of the logic that gave coherent form to "Roman Catholicism," thought by many for so long to be sacrosanct. But interior renewal must be coupled with structural reform. Without structural reform the inner dynamism of renewal is not given the opportunity to influence laws, procedures and institutions. It became clear after the council that the institutional reforms initiated by the council and Paul VI were also transitional in character. Praxis in history has been a good teacher. It has opened up insights into the reality of collegiality and its proper working.


Third, ecclesiological issues other than those directly concerned with the episcopacy arose due to the debate on collegiality. Some of them are the relation between the Universal Church and the local Churches; the role of the bishop especially in the Eucharist of the local Church, the place of mission in determining the Church's being and self-understanding; and the components of an ecclesiology of communion.

Regarding the ecclesiology of communion which is at the heart of collegiality, one main weakness of the approach of Vatican II to collegiality was the lack of a solid pneumatology. All discussions about bishops focused on Jesus Christ and his direct and explicit will to establish offices. Hence the key word becomes institution. The path leading to preoccupation with ecclesiastical power is wide and clear. Whereas pneumatology brought closer to ecclesiology would dwell upon constitution, the dynamic self-realization of the Church as the total Christ in the Spirit. For us to achieve this, Christology also needs to be informed by pneumatology. The debates on collegiality at Vatican II exposed this underdeveloped aspect of Latin ecclesiology.

Fourth, in connection with the papacy, it became clear that the continuity of Vatican II with Vatican I is not necessarily promoted by mere repetition of the latter's honored formulae. Continuity can be located more in the integration of papal primacy within the enlarged subject of ecclesial identity. The liberty of the pope will not be restricted but rather will be more engaged as the Church expands its self-consciousness through collegiality, through the participation of all in local Churches and through structures of communion.

IV

Vatican II is not the ultimate point of arrival for the doctrine and practice of episcopal collegiality and for the doctrine on the Church. But in refraining from uttering (or failing to utter!) the final word, Vatican II has preserved collegiality as a reality that must be ever discovered by the Church as it actualizes itself in history. In making

13. See John Zizioulas, Being as Communion (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1985) 22.
known its hesitations and doubts, the council deepened its fidelity to Tradition. Collegiality is one aspect of the Church’s process of self-definition, already undertaken by Vatican I and continued by Vatican II. It is but part of the dynamic by which the Church broadens its self-understanding as a historical subject, a fruit of a living Tradition to be appropriated at every new moment and in every singular situation. And the Church’s growth in self-understanding is promoted by people who love the Church and who are willing to suffer on account of that love, for love expands one’s person towards full communion, towards ecclesial collegiality. Collegiality is love. Let us close by listening to Paul VI’s confession of love for the Church as he approached the end of his ministry and life:

I could say that I always loved the Church; it was love of the Church that took me out of my narrow and fierce egoism and set me to its service; and for the Church, not for any other, I seem to have lived. But I would like the Church to know it; and I would like to have the strength to tell it to the Church, like a secret of the heart, which only at the final moment of life one has the courage to do.14