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THE ORGANIC STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH DURING THE DRAFTING OF *LUMEN GENTIUM*

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Summary

The constitution *Lumen gentium* was meant to reflect on the mystery of the Church. The text describes how the formula ‘*organice exstructa*’ (LG 11/a) shows the intention that guided the conciliar fathers in drafting the constitution. We argue that despite the diversity of approaches during the debates and the numerous amendments made to the *schemas*, the idea of organicity can be identified as a central concept that guided the conciliar work. Moreover, we think that throughout the conciliar sessions there was a consensus on describing the Church as an organically structured reality, despite the tensions between various ecclesiologies.

Following the approach outlined by Professors Pedro Rodríguez and the late José Ramón Villar from the Faculty of Theology at the University of Navarre, we focus on the fundamental structure of the Church. This is what the Council, with great effort, sought to explain in the first two chapters of *Lumen gentium*.

It emphasizes that the Church is seen as a unified body with diverse and complementary functions among its members. Monsignor Granados, for example, emphasized the interrelated functions of the Church's members. The idea of “organic unity” suggests that the Church is not merely a social structure but a living entity where every member plays a vital role in its overall function. The document also explores the complexities of defining the roles of different Church members —laity, clergy, and religious— without oversimplifying or dividing them into rigid categories. The overall argument is that the Church is both a sacred and an organic community, built up by the cooperative efforts of all its members, not just the hierarchy, and that this unity is essential to understanding the Church's true nature.

We base our exposition on the drafts that led to *Lumen Gentium*. Starting with the *De Ecclesia* summary, it can be said that the idea of an organic body was present from the very beginning of the work. Rather than a contrast between the juridical or communal vision of the Church, there was an effort to show the organically structured composition of the Church as a whole. This organic nature encompasses both the divine and invisible aspects as well as the human and visible ones. It also includes the composition and function of its members and the relationship between the portions or communities within the Church.

To explain this, we present in three sections some significant passages from the *schemas* and the comments of the fathers. Finally, general considerations are made to support our assessment.