

Arca Foederis

The Theotokos, Lambert Beauduin and the Church's Prayer for Unity

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A Charismatic Succession

WHILE the Church's life is visibly structured in the apostolic succession, it also relies on an inner, often unofficial, "charismatic succession" of "Spirit-bearers". Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia reminds us that those who embody it leave a lasting mark on the Church that produced them for this very purpose. Thus the apostolic and charismatic successions interpenetrate each other and "both ... are essential for the true functioning of the Body of Christ."¹ Nothing could be more apt for describing the Belgian Benedictine monk, Lambert Beauduin (1873-1960).

He only briefly held a position of authority. He did not belong to the hierarchy; indeed it sent him into exile for nineteen years. But his lasting impact on the Catholic Church's liturgical life, its ecumenical orientation and even the shape of its monasticism, make him one of the most significant figures in the twentieth century.

His conception of the Church as the living Body of Christ, so much more than a hierarchical institution, drove him on a joyous quest from 1909 to restore the liturgy to the people, as the true source and heart of their piety. This in turn meant a new evaluation of how the members of the Body of Christ relate to each other in their living communion, through recovering the active involvement of a spiritually informed laity and re-conceiving the ministry of bishops, teaching and leading the believers at their Liturgy, as successors to the apostles alongside the Pope. Furthermore, Beauduin realised that, integral to the life of the liturgy, its psalms and Scriptures, its doctrine and celebration of the saving works of Christ, there is an urgent impulse towards the unity of all Christians intrinsic to Catholicism. And in each strand of his enduring endeavours, time and again, it is the figure of the Mother of God that comes to the fore.

We can begin by tracing the succession of people and ideas that formed him and where he in turn would pass the tradition on.

¹ Bishop Kallistos Ware, *The Spiritual Guide in Orthodox Christianity*, chapter 9 in *The Inner Kingdom*, Volume 1 of the Collected Works, SVS Press, Crestwood New York, 2004, p.131.

- After the French Revolution, Abbot Prosper Guéranger re-founds Benedictine monasticism at Solesmes in 1833. The careful celebration of the Roman liturgy and its music – by internalising outward participation as the heart of Christian living – was his life’s work
- In 1863, Maurus and Placidus Wolter, monks of St Paul’s in Rome, restore German monasticism at Beuron in Württemberg, influenced by Guéranger and Solesmes
- The Abbey of Maredsous is founded from Beuron near Namur, Belgium, in 1872
- In 1888 Maredsous opens a house of studies at the Catholic University of Louvain (nowadays Leuven), Belgium
- Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* impresses the seminarian Octave Beauduin with the social and pastoral dimension to priesthood and Church life – the seed of his ideas about the restoration of the liturgy to the faithful
- Dom Gérard van Caloen, founder of Belgian monastic missionary work and a future bishop for Brazil, denounces proselytism among Orthodox Christians as a barrier to unity at the Catholic Congress of 1891 at Malines (nowadays Mechelen). This strikes a chord with the young Beauduin
- The Benedictines at Louvain form the Abbey of Mont-César (nowadays Keizersberg) in 1899. Blessed Columba Marmion, the great spiritual guide and writer on the Church’s liturgical and sacramental life, is the first prior
- Pius X issues *Tra le sollecitudini*, his 1903 *Motu Proprio* on sacred music. With Gregorian chant as restored by the monks of Solesmes in mind, he promotes the “active participation in the sacred mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the church” by the faithful
- After 7 years in the diocese of Liège’s congregation of *Aumôniers du travail* (workers’ chaplains), Beauduin becomes a monk at Mont-César in 1906, taking the name Lambert, patron saint of the diocese of Liège
- Désiré Mercier, a former professor at Louvain and an old friend of Marmion’s, becomes Archbishop of Malines, also in 1906
- Marmion is spiritual director to both Mercier and Beauduin
- In 1907, Beauduin researches the background papers of the First Vatican Council and lights upon its “lost teaching” on the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ
- The resulting lectures on the Church as living communion in Christ take Pius X’s idea of “active participation” in music to apply to the liturgy as a whole
- Mercier asks Beauduin to present his ideas, with their implications for parish life and mission, at the 8th Belgian national Congress of Catholic Organisations in 1909 – the start of the Liturgical Movement
- Marmion encourages Beauduin to make Mont-César the Liturgical Movement’s centre. Teaching resources for parish clergy and texts with translations for the laity of the mass and office begin to flood out
- Beauduin publishes his “manifesto” in 1914, *Liturgy the Life of the Church*²
- Service as an army chaplain during the First World War brings Beauduin into contact with Anglican liturgy and parish work in England

² Lambert Beauduin OSB (LB), *La piété de l’Église: Principes et Faits*, Abbaye de Mont-César et Abbaye de Maredsous, Louvain 1914, translated into English by Virgil Michel OSB: *Liturgy the Life of the Church*, 3rd edition, St Michael’s Abbey, Farnborough UK, 2003.

Beauduin was without doubt the towering figure in the Liturgical Movement³ when it took concrete form in the twentieth century. From its roots in monastic renewal, it was a drive to recover the full and worthy celebration of the Mass and the Divine Office as the cornerstone of all Church life and personal spirituality. Beauduin realised that in the liturgy lay the potential to transform pastoral and sacramental life in parishes. Thus could they be effective tools for evangelisation in a rapidly evolving society with which the Church in Belgium steadily risked losing touch. The principles were formed not just out of learning and the daily worship of the monastery, but also from years of working with people beyond the reach of most pastors as a workers' mission priest and wartime chaplain. Without him, the Liturgical Movement may have remained a mainly monastic and academic movement, however influential. Instead, his zeal for the spiritual nourishment of ordinary Church people, coupled with his sheer personal warmth, rendered the Movement infectious. It stimulated a process that pervaded the entire Roman Catholic world, opening the liturgy to "full and active participation by all the people"⁴, evoking the desire for worship in their own language and frequent general communion.

Liturgical Ecumenism

From the outset, Beauduin understood the Liturgical Movement to be inescapably ecumenical. In a retreat he gave at Cormeilles-en-Parisis in 1944, he reflected:

Whenever you open your Book of Hours, the private person disappears: from that moment on your voice is but that of the Church. Furthermore, praying the psalms binds us together with every generation, as well as with the Jews and Protestants.⁵

The significance of Beauduin's unforeseen role in developing a new form of monasticism, designed to promote Christian unity, is perhaps less appreciated than his liturgical work, but it was integral to it. In 1925 he became the founder of the "Monks of Unity". Their monastery, originally at Amay-sur-Meuse near Liège, is now famously established not far

³ See *The Liturgical Movement*, eds. The Sacerdotal Communities of Saint Séverin of Paris and Saint Joseph of Nice, trans. Lancelot Sheppard, Hawthorn Books, New York 1964, pp. 34-35.

⁴ Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §14, Rome 1963: Beauduin quotes this phrase, originating in the introduction to Pius X's *Tra le Sollecitudini* on the Church's liturgical music, six times in his essay *Liturgy the Life of the Church* (see note 2 above), relating it irrevocably to the whole of the Liturgy. Beauduin's essay would form the basis of Pius XI's *Mediator Dei*, and thence the phrase entered the Church's collective consciousness as one of the most famous from the Second Vatican Council.

⁵ Jacques Mortiau & Raymond Loonbeek, *Dom Lambert Beauduin, visionnaire et précurseur*, Éditions du Cerf, Paris 2005 (*DLB visionnaire*), p. 33.

away at Chevetogne. The community worships both in the Latin rite (now in the vernacular of the ordinary form) and in the Byzantine rite (in Greek and Church Slavonic). The intention was that the monks, immersed in the liturgy of the Church in the major traditions of East and West, could live the reunion of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches within themselves, and thus anticipate its realisation. This work continues to this day and, moreover, puts into practice the founder's understanding of ecumenism that embraces not only the East, but the whole of Christianity.

In the rule he devised, he included an obligation to read the Bible in its entirety – not forgetting the Old Testament, lest nothing of the New Testament be understood. Thus the monks would be immersed in the Scriptures just like the patriarchs, King David, John the Baptist, the Mother of Jesus and Christ himself. This was unusual enough for its day, but it meant that, from the beginning, there was an openness in the community to the churches of the Protestant Reformation.⁶ In other words, for Beauduin the unity of Christians is in the very structure of the Church's liturgical prayer.

But without such a well-formed piety based solidly on the liturgy and the Scriptures, the wider Catholic Church's conception of itself – then almost exclusively in juridical terms – was an obstacle to unity. It was obscuring its prime dimension as communion in the Body of Christ. This dawned on him when, almost as soon as his novitiate at Mont-César at Louvain ended in 1907, he was asked to teach a course on the Church. He found the available manuals were too flavoured by years of controversy with Protestants. They focused on the Catholic Church as an institution, the "*societas perfecta*". Prompted by one of his old teachers, he researched the proceedings of the First Vatican Council and found its unfinished business: a proposed chapter on the Mystical Body of Christ. The resulting lectures, drawing out the fuller implications of St Paul's vision of the Church as a living entity whose members participate in the very life of the Risen Christ and the Trinity, had an electrifying effect on the students and the community at Mont-César alike. They provided the fuel for the Liturgical Movement, to be launched two years later. They also paved the way for Pius XII to set out this recovered teaching of St Paul in his encyclical *Mystici Corporis* thirty years later, which was to form in turn the basis of Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*.⁷

So within this fresh awareness of the mystery of the Church as communion, Beauduin set the intrinsic connection between liturgy and ecumenism: "One ends up in

⁶ Mortiau-Loonbeek, *DLB visionnaire*, p. 116.

⁷ See Mortiau-Loonbeek, *DLB visionnaire*, p. 20f.

the other,” he later wrote in 1937 to Paul Couturier, the priest from Lyon who re-founded the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 1933.

The Theotokos and the Monks of Unity

Within this understanding of the nature and purpose of the Church, its worship and its unity, Beauduin was perceiving that the approach of Christians to the Blessed Virgin Mary can present the focus for division, even if it is not the cause. In the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, while the faith concerning her role in the Incarnation, her veneration and her intercession is shared, he sensed that a thousand years of separation had led to such different ways to express it, both in popular devotion and dogmatic formulation, that divergence was a serious risk.

To counter this divergence, he intended that his community at Amay should possess a primarily liturgical awareness of the place of the Blessed Virgin Mary, formed out of both sides to the tradition taken together. This inter-penetration of Orthodox East and Catholic West was not merely to be mutually enriching; at times it would need to be corrective too. The community’s witness to the need for the West to believe, worship and pray in conformity with the faith recognisable to both liturgical traditions may even have preserved the Catholic Church from defining dogma about Mary in future years beyond the bounds of what Orthodoxy could accept as being in accord with the Tradition. Here again Beauduin foresaw that entering fully into the spirit of the liturgy was intimately connected with Christian Unity.

Over the years of the community’s existence, there have been only a few writings specifically on the Mother of God. Because of its founding spirituality of liturgical ecumenism, the tendency has been not to go beyond the liturgy, mainly because there is no need. Dom Michel van Parijs, prior and then abbot, 1971-1997, speaks more of a “*sensibilité*”, a sensitivity about Mary, more than a distinctive tradition of devotion to her at the monastery.⁸ A recent reflection by Dom Nicolas Egender articulates this approach:

The Biblical images referring to Mary in the Orthodox tradition are beyond counting, especially in the liturgy ...Much more than with other truths in the Christian faith, speaking of Mary demands a spiritual sensitivity of the finest subtlety, characterised with discretion and poetic awareness.⁹

⁸ Interview with Père Lambert Vos OSB, archivist and librarian, Chevetogne, September 2008.

⁹ Père Nicolas Egender OSB, *The Figure of Mary from Israel to the Church in the Orthodox Tradition*, in *One in Christ*, Volume 43, No. 1, Summer 2009, p. 136

Perhaps the best illustration of Chevetogne's *sensibilité* towards the Mother of God is shown in the first picture accompanying this address [reproduced as the Frontispiece to this volume], the statue of Mary as *Arca Fœderis* – “Mary the Ark of the Covenant”, or “Mary the Ark of Reconciliation”. It graces the west wall of the monastery's Latin church, a gift from Canterbury Cathedral carved by Mother Concordia Scott OSB of St Mildred's Priory, Minster Abbey. It shows Mary as Seat of Wisdom, a throne for her Son who gives the New Law, in whom the fullness of God is pleased to dwell and who reconciles all things to himself. Above all, Mary shows that our attention, like hers, is to be upon Christ. All that she is, she is for him. She is Mother for no other reason than that she is Mother of God. She is blessed because she is the setting for our salvation in the person of the Saviour, her Son. In this way, the community's devotion to Mary, she who is centred on the redemption worked by Christ, because it draws deep on the Byzantine and Latin liturgies that it celebrates, has helped to shape a desire for convergence between East and West that it has imparted to the Roman Catholic world more widely. This also attuned it over time to the sensitivities of Reformation Christians in the expression of an authentically Catholic doctrine of the Mother of God.

The Liturgical Movement and Private Devotion

But first, something was needed to prepare the ground for what Beauduin would term an “authentic Mariology”. Centring popular Marian devotion once more on Christ, the Scriptures and the Church's year and liturgy (not to mention other forms of personal piety) was not only fundamental to the pastoral and evangelistic renewal of the Roman Catholic Church he desired; it was also going to be essential to a re-evaluation of what the Church itself is and the inevitable impulse in its liturgy towards unity and redemption comprehending all humanity.

The journey to an ecumenically-aware faith concerning the Virgin Mary originates with the launch of the Liturgical Movement in 1909, fifteen years before Lambert Beauduin founded the community. This was the time when, from his pastoral and mission experience, he began to speak out against any devotions that stood in the way of the faithful's access to authentic sources for their spirituality, especially Holy Scripture and the liturgy. He felt that popular devotions lacked sufficient content and that they created a highly subjective climate that favoured the individual's piety at the expense of prayer in common. He was in good company. Even in 1841 Guéranger complained of the “empty nourishment” in many devotional books. And Dom Eugène Vandeur, the renowned spiritual guide and monk of Maredsous, addressing the 1909

Eucharistic Congress in Cologne declared, “False devotion has killed true devotion”¹⁰. Beauduin cites the example of a woman who, at the age of 72 years, was still reciting every day the prayer for “a happy choice in life”¹¹.

Accommodating ill-formed popular devotion in the church itself also had a distorting effect on the design and appointment of the buildings. To Beauduin and his contemporaries, churches had been invaded by statues, banners, fussy decoration and ostentatious architectural pieces, the collective impact of which was constantly to draw attention away from the altar. Yet a church was supposed to be the case for displaying the altar in its pre-eminence. The effect was circular, as the interior life of the believers, rather than being nourished by the Eucharistic liturgy, the psalms and the Scriptures at church, was cluttered with prayers of all kinds that distracted from the mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection.

Monseigneur Raoul Harscouët (Beauduin’s friend and collaborator, and later his protector as bishop of Chartres, 1926-54) wrote in the Mont-César Liturgical Office’s review for 1910-11 of how deep seated the attachment to “false devotion” was, even among those aspiring to the priesthood:

One day a seminarian consumed with devotionism put down in writing, on the advice of his spiritual director, all the acts of devotion that he had to accomplish as a member of various confraternities he belonged to. The director remonstrated with him that there was not enough time to complete them all in one day. He passed for pious, but he was not following the mass.¹²

When Beauduin explained his ambitions for the Liturgical Movement office at Mont-César to the general chapter of the Beuron Benedictine Congregation in 1909, he astonished his brethren by telling them that, by virtue of the Rule of St Benedict, non-liturgical spiritual exercises should be seen as accessories and from henceforth take place outside of the Church’s choir.¹³ It did not go down well. But, by and by, he was successful in getting abolished – because they had assumed a higher eminence than the Mass and Office – “Benediction with lights and organ on the afternoons of Lent, the recitation of the Rosary in choir during the month of October ... and so many other things whose

¹⁰ Raymond Loonbeek & Jacques Mortiau, *Un pionnier. Dom Lambert Beauduin (1872-1960): Liturgie et Unité des Chrétiens*, Éditions de Chevetogne, 2001 (*Pionnier*). Tome 1, p. 135

¹¹ Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, Tome 1, p. 138

¹² Raoul Harscouët, *Dévotions traditionnelles*, in *Questions liturgiques et paroissiales*, Tome 1, 1910-11, p. 472. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, Tome 1, p. 137.

¹³ Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, Tome 1, p. 135

absence today appears natural and which have been abolished since throughout the Congregation”¹⁴, as one of his supporters observed twenty years later.

Nevertheless, even as he strove to restore the central place of Mass and the Hours celebrated in common as the true fount of spirituality, he was convinced that private devotions had their value. He himself had constant recourse to the Rosary – yet never during services, or in choir. In 1912 alone, the Liturgical Movement’s office churned out 150,000 copies of masses of the Sacred Heart for the First Friday and 120,000 manuals for commemorations and feasts of the Virgin and other saints. It was to be a delicate task to wean the lay faithful off the sentimental, individualistic fare they were accustomed to, to deconstruct popular piety and rebuild it on sound foundations. But Beauduin and his followers made a start with richer, more nourishing material drawn from the Scriptures, the Gospel and the liturgy.

It would take decades for the Liturgical Movement to affect personal piety in the seminaries, parishes and prayer life of the faithful; indeed several generations needed to pass. Even in 1932, Beauduin found himself indignant on a visit to Strasbourg to see the Mass, the Hours and the purpose of church buildings still obscured:

It’s a triumph for Benediction, sentimental confraternities, insipid and babyish parish bulletinsAnd “St Joseph, friend of the Sacred Heart” etc. etc. Everywhere cotton wool instead of beautiful damask. It’s counterfeit – inflating and devaluing the currency. It’s the fickleness of fashion and change, despite everything the Roman tradition has to offer.¹⁵

So, as far as the renewal of piety is concerned, the starting and ending points for Beauduin is recovering “true devotion”. Certainly there is no discouragement of popular devotion to Mary, the saints or the Blessed Sacrament. But there is unwavering insistence that it must never detract from the public prayer of the Church. And extra-liturgical services must be kept in proportion and in their place as accessory to the liturgical rites of the Church. They must clearly derive from the Liturgy’s use of the Scriptures and the psalms, not supplant or outshine it. For Beauduin, none of this was a matter of liturgical *élitisme*, imposing only one way of praying to the exclusion of an individual’s spiritual instincts. It was just a case of putting each practice to appropriate service and ensuring the individual had the right nourishment. For the liturgy and prayer are complementary:

¹⁴ Dom Gommaire Laporta to Dom Bernard Capelle, letter of 8 April, 1929, Archives of Amay-Chevetogne, cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, Tome 1, p. 136.

¹⁵ LB to Dom Olivier Rousseau, Strasbourg, 16 January 1932, Archives of Amay-Chevetogne. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, Tome 1, p. 139

The Church by her liturgical prayer ... teaches her children how to pray in the interior recesses of their hearts... After the Liturgy has held its disciples in a vivifying and intimate contact with the priesthood of Jesus Christ ... it has a further salutary influence to exercise on this interior activity of the soul that in the silence of mental prayer strives for a more intimate union with its God.¹⁶

The Month of Mary

Popular “false devotion” had not only invaded the churches and cluttered up the private prayer of the faithful, it had even encrusted the very liturgy that was its antidote. Beauduin went into battle to restore the integrity of the Liturgical Year. He became an implacable opponent of novenas that take no account of liturgical time and ignore the principal feasts, Sundays and seasons. And firmly in his sights were those “months” which took up more than half the year:

Lent was eclipsed by the month of St Joseph and Eastertide by the Month of Mary. June was dedicated to the Sacred Heart, October to the Rosary.¹⁷

Beauduin realised the implications for unity, which added to his impatience with “Mary’s Month of May”:

Among our separated Orthodox brothers, no devotion at all diverts the faithful from the contemplation of the glorious mysteries, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the descent of the Holy Spirit.¹⁸

And when Pius XII in May 1948 consecrated the human family to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary, with special intention for peace and a just solution to what turned into Israel’s War of Independence, Beauduin was amazed that the Pope ignored the Holy Spirit in the season of Pentecost in favour of prayer to Mary in May:

Was this not the moment to awaken in Christian souls the great reality of the Spirit of God? The liturgy is full of it at the moment. A great idea like this and we would have been in step with the Orthodox and the Protestants But instead it’s the May devotion that has to save us. I am heartbroken about it. I am getting my own back by preaching more and more about the mission of the Third Person.¹⁹

¹⁶ LB, *La piété de l’Église: Principes et Faits*, Abbaye de Mont-César et Abbaye de Maredsous, Louvain 1914, translated into English by Virgil Michel OSB: *Liturgy the Life of the Church*, 3rd edition, St Michael’s Abbey, Farnborough UK, 2003, part 2, chapter 7.2.3, p. 74f.

¹⁷ LB to Dom Bernard Botte in 1913; see *Le Mouvement Liturgique*, Desclée, 1973, p. 34. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, Tome 1, p. 141

¹⁸ LB writing in around 1929. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, Tome 1, p. 141.

¹⁹ LB to Dom Olivier Rousseau, Chatou, 15 May 1948, Archives of Amay-Chevetogne. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, Tome 1, p. 141

To Beauduin, the richness of the Liturgy of the Season stands in contrast to the poverty of the devotional calendar months. Ironically, they had been invented to foster spirituality. But they had been shown to afford thin fare beside the Liturgy, which they did not even correspond to. If people could be weaned off such outmoded and sentimental prayers, Beauduin thought they would find better nourishment in the texts of the Church's services. Repeating these instead, day by day and then year by year, the faithful would become immersed in them and find themselves contemporary with Christ, listening as he teaches the apostles. Furthermore, keeping to the liturgy of the feasts and seasons, the faithful and their spiritual guides do not have to fall back on their own resources. So they are protected from deviations and sentimental flights of fancy. Thus the liturgy preserves us from praying nonsense and feeds us with faith and doctrine.²⁰

To Beauduin, Advent is the true month of Mary, not May:

By the operation of the Holy Spirit, through faith and love we too ought to conceive Jesus Christ within us. So that this communion is assured, the Liturgy never once loses sight of the Most Holy Virgin.²¹

In September 1921 Beauduin was asked to give a paper on *The liturgical origins of the devotion to Our Lady* to the Marian Congress in Brussels. You will gain an impression of the spirit of some Mariological studies in those pre-ecumenical times from the title of one of the preceding papers, by the Abbé François Verhelst: "The emptiness of Protestant objections to devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin". Beauduin, however, formed as a monk in the principle that the Fathers of East and West are a patrimony held in common, not an occasion for disputation and proselytism, and aware that the recovery of the Church's liturgy is intrinsically ecumenical, adopted an approach that would become the methodology for ecumenical dialogue after the Second Vatican Council (not least ARCIC's): to go behind entrenched positions or formulae that have originated in controversy and proved divisive; to discover instead what is held in common. Beauduin marks out the path with how the Church prays and celebrates its faith in its worship. And now we can see his thinking about the veneration of the Virgin Mary as it distils, not just in terms of his own Latin tradition, but in what the Latin West shares with the Byzantine East because of what it owes to it:

In Rome as in the East after the Council [of Ephesus, AD 431] the veneration of Our Lady underwent a rapid expansion. The confession of the Divine Motherhood of Mary (as *Theotokos*) arose as a concrete synthesis of Christological truths and

²⁰ LB's thinking around 1912-13. See Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, Tome 1, p. 141

²¹ LB, *Avent*, p. 41. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, Tome 1, p. 242

as the negation of the Nestorian and Arian heresies which had spread throughout Christianity at that time. It is in this context that Cyril said, “You have destroyed all the heresies in the whole world.”

Sixtus III (432-440), immediately after the Council, undertook the reconstruction of the basilica erected on the Esquiline by Liberius and dedicated that sumptuous temple to the Mother of God, in commemoration of the dogmatic victory at Ephesus. The mosaics on the triumphal arch date from this period: they represent the apotheosis of the Divine Motherhood of Mary...

So we must place after 431 and up to about 690 the institution of the principal feasts of Mary ...:

1. The East anticipated the West, and quite conclusive evidence of its Marian festivals can be traced going back to the 5th and 6th centuries
2. The consensus seems to be that at Rome, St Gregory (590-604) had no knowledge of these feasts [of the Annunciation and the Assumption]. It would be during the course of the 7th century that the Roman Church adopted them, while they had been kept for a long time in the Eastern Church.²²

Beauduin located the origin of true veneration of the Virgin Mother in its mature form at the decisive turning point of the Council of Ephesus and its swift effect on liturgical worship. He regarded the popular devotion of his Catholic contemporaries in the West to have lost sight of this. It has even been forgotten, he reckoned, that the principal Marian feasts in the Latin tradition, and the dogma they celebrate, owe their origin to the Church’s declaration of faith in the Incarnation of the Christ, an awareness (even a *sensibilité*) safeguarded by the East. So the Latin tradition to be true to itself must once more recover its focus on the Blessed Virgin Mary wholly through her Motherhood of the Divine Son. Beauduin pleads:

That the time *par excellence* for Christian people’s Marian devotion be the cycle of Advent and Christmas. For it is in the expectation of God’s ancient people, at the manger, at Nazareth, in short in all the mysteries of the hidden life, that Our Lady appears to us in all the exaltation of her providential mission and in the shining light of her Divine Motherhood, in all her glories.²³

The indissoluble link between right veneration and right belief, framed in the doctrinal-liturgical debt of the West to the East, as we shall see, will prove decisive in the

²² LB, *Données sur les origines liturgiques du culte de Notre Dame*, in *Mémoires et Rapports du Congrès Marial, 8-11 Septembre 1921*, L’Action Catholique, Bruxelles 1921, p. 228.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 230

influential witness of Beauduin and the community in the pontificate of Pius XII and at the Second Vatican Council.

Light from the East

Around the time Beauduin delivered this paper, he began to come into sustained, direct contact with Eastern Christianity. Perhaps his view of the Orthodox Church at first had been romantic. But now his learning about the Fathers, the Councils and the Byzantine liturgical and theological tradition was struck by new light from encounters face to face.

First, following the collapse of Imperial Russia and the resulting Civil War, western cities saw large camps of Russian refugees around its cities, not least in France and Belgium. With them came Orthodoxy and a first experience for many of its worship and its vigorous intellectual tradition. Ukraine was also resurgent from beneath its repression by the vanished Orthodox Russia on one side and by the disintegrated Catholic Austria-Hungary on the other. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church recovered its independence, identity and purpose under the great Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky. This Church was the remnant of the Kyivan Church that had entered into full ecclesial communion with the Roman See in the 16th century, while retaining its autonomy and its Byzantine Rite.²⁴ Whatever the past controversies between the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches about the standing and purpose of this Church, here was a living example of the positive possibilities of the Western Church in living communion with the Christianity of the East – and with integrity. Sheptytsky himself was deeply concerned for recovering unity with the Orthodox in Russia and Ukraine. He won respect for his efforts to relieve their suffering and demonstrate his solidarity under Soviet persecution.²⁵ So, awareness of the life and belief of the Russian Orthodox and the surprising discovery that there existed Eastern Catholics had an effect on the self-understanding and outlook of Roman Catholics in the west, especially in the monasteries.²⁶

²⁴ See Borys A. Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform: The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1998.

²⁵ See Peter Galadza, *Unité en Division: Les Lettres de Lev Gillet, ("un moine de l'église d'Orient") à Andrei Cheptytsky – 1921-1929*, (Parole et Silence, Paris 2009), doc. 66, p. 239.

²⁶ Paul Couturier, re-founder of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 1933, attributed the seeds of his vocation to the cause of ecumenism to his relief work among the thousands of refugees from the former Russian empire in the camps around Lyon in the 1920s.

Secondly, from 1921 Beauduin was meeting Eastern Catholics and scholars of Oriental Christianity when he was posted to Rome. They were to have a profound influence on him and an enduring effect on the community he was to found. So now is a good point to return to our chart of the Charismatic Succession in which Lambert Beauduin stood.

- 1921-25, Beauduin is teaching at Sant'Anselmo (founded like Mont-César from Maredsous) in Rome. Here he renews his friendship with the young oriental scholar Dom Olivier Rousseau, a monk of Maredsous, who introduces him to Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky and Father Lev Gillet
- Cardinal Mercier involves Beauduin in the Malines Conversations (1921, 1923, 1925). The title of his imaginative paper, *The Anglican Church, united not absorbed*, somewhat unrealistically using the unity of Eastern Catholics with the Holy See as a model, will build the trust and aspiration for future Anglican-Roman Catholic relations
- Beauduin and Msgr Angelo Roncalli, the future John XXIII, meet by chance in 1924 as they take shelter from a heavy downpour. They become friends
- In contact with Father Michel d'Herbigny SJ at the Gregorian University, Beauduin develops a proposal for a monastic foundation dedicated to the work of Christian Unity in 1924

Ecumenical Monasticism

When Beauduin got to Rome and Dom Olivier Rousseau revealed to him the world of Eastern Christianity at first hand (so Père Thaddée Barnas, a present day monk at Chevetogne, observes),

it was a sort of “love at first sight”. Dom Lambert discovered in the Christian East an expression of Christianity which was very close to its biblical and patristic roots, a form of Christianity whose liturgical splendour was both the source and the expression of the “piety” of the faithful. Father Lambert grew more and more convinced that the Christian West had to learn from Eastern Christianity, in order to become aware of its own roots, and to become more fully itself. Little by little, Beauduin realised that the unity of all the Christians was a priority imperative if the Christian Church was ever really to go back to its source. The idea of a monastic foundation dedicated to drawing Christians together slowly took shape in his mind.²⁷

Beauduin also had in mind his encounters with Anglicans during the First World War in England, now renewed at the Malines Conversations. His liturgical work had already convinced him that a piety rooted in psalms and the Scriptures fundamentally connected Catholic and Reformed Christians.

²⁷ Thaddée Barnas OSB, *Paul Couturier and the Monastery of Amay-Chevetogne*, in *The Unity of Christians: The Vision of Paul Couturier*, ed. Mark Woodruff, Messenger of the Catholic League, No, 280, October 2003, London, p. 97.

So he submitted a memorandum to the Pope, with the help of the influential Russian scholar, Michel d'Herbigny, proposing the foundation of a monastery for the work of Christian Unity. This formed the basis for Pius XI's 1924 Apostolic Letter *Equidem Verba*, addressed to the Benedictine Abbot Primate, Fidelis von Stotzingen. Pius observed that Benedictine monks were particularly qualified for working with the East, because of their sensitivity to the Fathers of the Church and to the monastic Fathers, and because of a potential affinity which could be explored through the importance Benedictines placed upon the celebration of the Liturgy.

But when *Equidem Verba* was made public, it turned out to be not exactly as Beauduin had proposed: Michel d'Herbigny had submitted ideas of his own. So the aim of the new monastery was not to be Christian Unity in general, but to draw Russian Orthodox Christians into the Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, a new monastery opened at Amay-sur-Meuse in 1925 and Beauduin considered his fuller understanding of the work for unity, not simply the focus on Russia, was thereby confirmed. Sheptytsky actively encouraged the initiative. Joining Beauduin were the former Benedictine of Farnborough, Louis Gillet, who had entered Sheptytsky's new foundation of Ukrainian Studite monks with the name Lev, and Dom Ildefonse Dirks, who had just spent a year with Sheptytsky. Dom Olivier Rousseau was eventually allowed to join the community in 1930.

Beauduin's *A Monastic Initiative for the Unity of Churches*²⁸, his commentary on *Equidem Verba*, sets out the ideal for the monastery. The community was to be "all things to all men", Greek to the Greeks and Latin to the Latins. The monks would appear as Benedictines to the Roman Catholic world outside, but, through celebrating the Byzantine liturgy, they would be schooled in Eastern spirituality, "indispensable to the inward development of our ecumenical ideal"²⁹. Nowadays the members of the monastery celebrate the worship of the Church in one of two rites – the Roman and Byzantine – as a way of realising the essential unity of the Church in East and West in one community. But the purpose remains the same as Beauduin's at the beginning: by the liturgy to pray daily for unity, so that Western Christians can embrace the treasures and tradition of the East that they need in order to be more truly themselves and, by the same token, so that Eastern Christians are afforded the understanding, perspectives, friendship and gifts

²⁸ LB, *Une oeuvre monastique pour l'union des Églises*, Mont-César, 1925

²⁹ LB, *Mémoire sur l'Oeuvre d'Amay*, report to Dom Théodore Nève, Archives of St-Andriesabdij, Loppem-Brugge 1940, p. 11, quoted in Mortiau-Loonbeek, *DLB visionnaire*, p. 114.

belonging to their fellow Christians in the Latin West (including, as we would say nowadays, communion with Peter).

Beauduin's own theological horizons had been broadened through exposure to Byzantine Christianity. Encountering the option to maintain the old boundaries and rivalries, or to reconcile two ways of being Christian, he was looking for a way towards reintegration. We would nowadays call this an exercise in "receptive ecumenism"³⁰. Add to that the disposition of the Church in Belgium between the World Wars, notably under Cardinal Mercier with regard to Anglican and Reformation Christians as they developed the modern Ecumenical Movement around unity in mission, in faith and order, and in life and work. Evidently Beauduin found himself at a critical moment³¹ in the history of Christianity, and a crossroads for Christian unity.

Holy Russia dawns on the West

Very soon the influence of Eastern Christianity through members of the Amay community made it a vessel for conveying new movements in Russian theological thinking, previously little appreciated in the west. The resettlement of Russian theologians in Western Europe led to an explosion of publishing, but also controversy. This was especially true of Russian thinking on the Blessed Virgin Mary – and the progressive development of identifying the Mother of God with the Divine Wisdom.

Perhaps the prime mediator and interpreter of Eastern Christian habits of belief and thinking to Beauduin's nascent community was Gillet. Right at the beginning of its life we find him forming its Catholic Benedictinism in the Eastern tradition he himself had received. Writing in 1927, he presents a treatise on the Mother of God as *Sedes Sapientiae*, Seat of Wisdom (see again the first photograph of the later image of Mary as *Arca Foederis*). He identifies the common faith of East and West, but takes the community further into the Byzantine tradition in which it worships, into the relatively uncharted waters of recent developments:

³⁰ A development of 'spiritual ecumenism' which asks not 'If we are to be one, how can the others be more like us?', but 'what riches, treasures and gifts that other Christians have can we, with integrity, receive from another traditions and make our own, as together we seek our visible unity?' A fresh approach encouraged by Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, it is promoted by the Centre for Catholic Studies at the University of Durham.

³¹ The unofficial Malines Conversations between Catholics and Anglicans took place in 1921, 1923 and 1925. 1908 saw the launch of a Rome-focussed Church Unity Octave in Anglican and then Catholic circles. In 1910 many Protestant churches had gathered in Edinburgh for a World Missionary Conference to promote unity and collaboration to avoid division and scandal in proclaiming the Gospel. And the first Faith and Order Conference, delayed by the Great War, met in 1927 in Lausanne (although Catholics were forbidden to take part).

In Russia, the central icon in the old Cathedral at Novgorod represents Wisdom, seated upon a throne. And modern Russian religious thought has applied itself ... to deepen this notion of Wisdom-Sophia. In particular, it has brought to the fore those slender links which unite Sophia and the *Bogoroditsa* (*Theotokos*, Mother of God). To these Russian endeavours, which are not very well known in the West, we owe an indisputable enrichment of our theology of the Virgin and, consequently, our devotion to Mary....

... Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944) has just published a new work on the Virgin Mary, *The Burning Bush* (Paris, 1927, in Russian³²), in which “sophiology” and “Mariology” intermingle ... The initial intention of the author was to write a critique of the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception; but this negative aim was soon superseded by a positive one – to compose a theological tract on the Mother of God... A Catholic might not be able to embrace everything it contains, but every Catholic will be happy frequently to encounter truth and depth in it, and always sincerity and piety. The book also highlights the “sophiological” aspect of Marian theology beautifully³³.

So can the Russian “sophiologists” teach us – or remind us – about the subject of the Mother of God? ...

First of all, the person and role of Mary are, as it were, “cosmic”. Wisdom ... is the first of things to be created ... If she is not eternal like God, at least she existed before the ages ... So she constitutes the invisible unity of the created world; she is the “guardian angel of creation” (Florensky). This Sophia, which numerous patristic and liturgical texts seem to identify with the Mother of God, is manifested in history under many forms; but the Virgin Mary is its central manifestation ... consequently she synthesises, she summarises the cosmos. Not only is she the Mother of the human race, being Mother of Christ of whom we are members, but, being the spiritual vessel in which all the treasures of Wisdom are contained in their fullness, somehow she contains within her the universe which this Wisdom has formed.

Thus ... a “sophiological” relationship unites Mary to the Church. For the Church, the mystical body of Christ, is the expression of Sophia in totality...

It belongs to the Russian theologians to have thought along these lines earlier than the western theologians. So let our opinion be that they have opened up new

³² English translation, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, by Thomas Allan Smith, Grand Rapids, Wm B. Eerdmans, 2009

³³ In 1935 the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia on the analysis of St John Maximovitch accused Bulgakov of the heresy of Sophianism, like Solovyov, as he appeared to deify the Theotokos. Georges Florovsky and Vladimir Lossky were also strong critics. In 1937 Metropolitan Evlogy of the Russian Orthodox Church in Western Europe convened a bishops’ conference which decided that accusations of heresy were unfounded, but that the respected Bulgakov’s theological opinions showed flaws and needed correction.

horizons in our piety towards the Mother of God. We are under no obligation, but we are permitted to follow them....³⁴

This analysis—linking Mary, the Church, worship and Wisdom—obviously struck a chord with Beauduin, given his concern to shape personal piety as “true devotion”, rooted in the Church’s life of worship and right believing. The *sensibilité* has endured in the community. Writing in 2000, Dom Nicolas Egender gives us a view of this still powerful current that burst forth through Amay, as it were, all in one go in the late 1920s:

Thanks to this tradition, we can speak of a “Wisdom Mariology”.

Thus Mary is called “the heart of the Church”, Christ being the head. Bulgakov writes:

The Wisdom of God is the pillar and foundation of truth, of which the accomplishment is the Mother of God. In that sense, the Theotokos is like the personified expression of Wisdom in creation, the personified image of the Church on earth.

And Father Florensky writes:

... she who intercedes for creation and protects it ... , the Mother of God, “Purifier of the world”, is ... Wisdom par excellence...

...She who bears purity, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, ... is no longer one among others in the Church; even within the Church of the saints; she is not *prima inter pares*. She is set apart; exclusively she is the centre of ecclesial life. She is the Church.

... It is also necessary to recognise in the Virgin Mary a special relationship with Heaven, a particular heavenly quality ... The Church, Heaven, the Virgin Mary – these names are not synonyms, but they are almost interchangeable ontologically.

Whatever weight we give to these speculations, their intention is to place in evidence the intimate relationship between the Divine Wisdom, the Church on earth and in heaven, and the Virgin Mary.³⁵

So the *sensibilité* of which the community still speaks is a sense of identity and union, with Mary as Mother of God at the heart of the worshipping Church. Just as for Beauduin devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary has to be grounded in the liturgy and the Scriptures, so the community would bear witness that, if something was not to be found in the way the Church prayed, then it could not be said to be believed by the Church, nor

³⁴ Hieromonk Lev Gillet, *Sedes Sapientiae: Contributions Russes à la Théologie Mariale*, in *Irénikon*, Tome III, no. 5, Août-Septembre 1927, pp. 259-263

³⁵ Egenger, op. cit., p. 147-8, with full references

could such belief be asked of the Church. In time, imparting this critical principle would prove decisive in the theological development of the whole Catholic Church in the second half of the 20th century.

With such influences at play in his young community, Beauvuin himself became a more confident expositor of the relationship between Eastern and Western Christianity, not least the need of the West for the East in appreciating the whole doctrine of the Incarnation and Mary's role in it. Understanding this properly at the outset determines her place in the Church at worship and consequently the place she occupies in the heart of the individual at prayer. Thus, in 1931 he wrote in *Les Questions Liturgiques et Paroissiales*, the journal of his Liturgical Movement:

The Council of Ephesus, as is known, inculcated the doctrine of the Divine-Motherhood (Mary's Motherhood of God)...

Thanks to the repercussion for dogma and apostolicity made by the title Theotokos like a rallying cry against Nestorius, the eastern Churches, more penetrated by the spirit of Ephesus, gave considerable importance to the veneration of the Mother of God and made her into a sort of popular antidote to the poison of heresy.

And over time the Marian liturgy became much richer than in the West; and above all it is susceptible to a more Christocentric veneration of the Mother of God...

How can the Mother be separate from the Son, above all in veneration of her Motherhood of God? In invocations and proper chants, Mary is intimately associated with the great feast of Christ; the Christmas and Epiphany cycles in particular celebrate the mystery of the Mother as much as the mystery of the Son.

In the course of the eucharistic Mysteries and the divine Office, the litanies, the antiphons, the hymns glorifying Our Lady abound: she who stood at the foot of the Cross is also close to the Altar at the renewal of the Sacrifice.

In all truth, the dogma of the Divine-Motherhood is the sure foundation on which the East has established a Marian liturgy of a richness and a scale that ought to serve as the model.³⁶

These reflections show he had travelled some way from being a renovator of the Latin Rite with an instinct for mere illustration from the East. Instead, his contacts with real Eastern Christians like Sheptytsky and Dom Clément Lialine (a Russian Orthodox exile whose contemplative vocation led him to join Amay as the best viable option), as well as

³⁶ LB, *La liturgie et les Conciles d'Éphèse et de Chalcedonie* in *Les Questions Liturgiques et Paroissiales*, 1931, pp.197-198

Westerners who had become steeped in the East like Olivier Rousseau and Lev Gillet, bathed matters in new light. Beauduin's assimilation of the East, just as he had intended would happen in his community, had become wholehearted and instinctive. Like Gillet, he too became an interpreter of the East to the West – not because it was attractive, or even illustrative, but because he had internalised the West's need for help to recalibrate its tradition, so that it could be more truly itself. He found his tools in the ancient common tradition, the unity of the first millennium that was formative for both East and West, and above all in the communion of both in their liturgy as he had lived it:

The liturgical books in their ancient formulae faithfully preserve the precious remains of the life, doctrine, traditions of the Church. They are a sumptuous case, perfectly fitting the treasures it holds. Here in these books we find the witness of all the Churches, set down in ancient times, perpetuated and enriched in the succession of each passing age. Here the Church's theologians and historians are stimulated in documents that come from its Head himself.

But as they bear witness to these supreme teachings, so they enshrine the germ of doctrine and spiritual life, which may be forgotten for the moment, but which could once again become fruitful. Indeed, as ancient as they are, these documents are not dead: still to this day they furnish the theme of fervent prayers for the whole of Christianity and could from *now on prepare a renaissance for certain approaches to Christian thought and life that, far too much, we have unlearned*.³⁷

He anticipated Pope John Paul II who echoed this Roman Catholic “nostalgia” for the undivided Church in his 1995 Encyclical, *Orientalis Lumen*, and the underpowered experience of a body breathing on but one lung.

The Pontifical Commission *Pro Russia*

Unfortunately for Beauduin, Rome in the 1920s did not see things this way. The whole Amay project was quickly under threat, with alarming potential consequences for its hopes of Christian rapprochement. The generous ecumenism of Beauduin's monastic ideal was now confronted by the need to resolve the ambiguity over the objective of his foundation that he had so far relied on. Was it to be an instrument for conversions of “separated brethren”, Russians or otherwise, to Roman Catholicism? Or was it to draw the different traditions together patiently through prayer and dialogue? While Beauduin worked on the latter assumption for three years, Michel d'Herbigny used the same room to manoeuvre a huge concept for bringing Russia's Christians under the control of the See of Rome at the expense of the Orthodox Church.³⁸

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Barnas, op. cit., p. 98.

History would later demonstrate how tragic this conception was, not only for relations between the two Churches, but even for the very survival of Christianity in Russia during the Communist era... The Catholic Church would certainly have done better to be loyal and compassionate towards the suffering Orthodox Church in its time of humiliation and persecution. Surely that would have been a more genuinely Christian attitude to take! ... We must, no doubt, evaluate d'Herbigny's point of view in the context of the pre-ecumenical mentality of the time. But even then, it is devastating to think of this squandered opportunity of showing solidarity and Christian charity towards a persecuted Sister Church.³⁹

In 1925 Pius XI entrusted this exploit to a Pontifical Commission *Pro Russia*, independent of the normal workings of the Congregation for the Oriental Catholic Churches, with d'Herbigny, now a bishop, at its head from 1926.

The monks at Amay saw the *Pro Russia* commission, far from furthering the genuine, mutual reintegration for which they had been preparing the ground, as the return of the harmful and futile method of a one-sided unity imposed on exclusively Roman Catholic terms.⁴⁰ D'Herbigny simply saw the community as a handy, ready-made tool to train Western monks in Eastern ways. Thus they could serve as his Trojan horse among Russian Christians, whose outward Church structure had all but collapsed, to give them little option but to look to Rome.⁴¹

Behind all this lay Pius XI's changing mind. His imaginative appeal in 1924 to the Benedictines to be at the service of Christian Unity with the Orthodox had been coming under sustained conservative criticism. The Catholic bishops of England, too, were vigorous critics of the apparent sanction to Beauvain's continued dealings with Anglicans.

In 1928, while Pope Pius signalled strong support to the Liturgical Movement by encouraging lay participation in singing at mass and the office in his Encyclical, *Divini Cultus*, he finally settled the ambiguity in *Equidem Verba* in d'Herbigny's favour. His encyclical, *Mortalium Animos*, forbade the involvement of Catholics in ecumenical encounters with non-Catholics, other than to secure their "return" to Roman Catholicism.⁴² Sanctions were also applied to Sheptytsky's labours with the Orthodox. As a direct result, Lev Gillet was moved to become Orthodox on principle. He thus left the

³⁹ Barnas, op. cit., p. 99.

⁴⁰ Letter of Gillet to Sheptytsky, Valence, 1 February 1927: in Galadza, op. cit., doc. 44, p. 149.

⁴¹ D'Herbigny was titular bishop of Ilium – Troy!

⁴² Letter of Gillet to Sheptytsky, Marseilles, 3 March 1928: in Galadza, op. cit., doc. 71, p. 267.

Monks of Unity, insisting that nevertheless he remained the Catholic he had always been.⁴³

Others followed him. Beauduin came under heavy criticism from Rome because of this, as he tried to maintain the community's focus on its founding principle, even if that meant Amay must confine all work for the moment to Russia. Yet his antipathy to the new *Ostpolitik* was clear. At the behest of d'Herbigny, in December 1928 Beauduin was removed as superior of the monastery he had founded only three years earlier. In 1931 he was forbidden to conduct further work on Christian unity at all and in 1932 his indefinite exile from the monastery was confirmed.⁴⁴ He would wander for 19 years. Meanwhile the community continued to work for unity according to the vision of their founder, as far as they could within the limits imposed. D'Herbigny left the *Pro Russia* commission in mysterious disgrace in 1934 and the pressure on Amay was eased.⁴⁵

Spiritual Ecumenism

Despite Beauduin's ban from ecumenical work, there were two more decisive encounters to come, both relating to the interior life and the unity of Christians. Let us briefly return to our chart of the Charismatic Succession for the first of them:

- Father Paul Couturier, a priest from Lyon who would imminently re-found the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, visits the Monks of Union at Amay in 1932, not long after Beauduin is sent into exile
- Couturier and Beauduin meet in 1937 and become mutual supporters

Couturier's central idea of spiritual ecumenism was strongly suggested by Beauduin⁴⁶. On his first month-long visit to Amay, he pored over Beauduin's *A Monastic Initiative for Unity* and decided to become an oblate united to that "Initiative" in 1932. So he came to envisage the ecumenical movement, praying every Thursday and in the Week of Prayer

⁴³ Archive of the Oriental Congregation, *Pro Russia*, pos. 618/28, f. 7, Letter of Gillet to d'Herbigny, Valence, 10 December 1928.

⁴⁴ The deciding factor was the indiscreet revelation by Lord Halifax that Beauduin had tabled the paper, *The Anglican Church: United not Absorbed*. Its content was a generous but unrealistic flight of fancy (even Anglican bishop Walter Frere CR said in his memoirs, 'It took our breath away'), but it was arguably designed to stimulate discussion. This was misunderstood or misrepresented in Rome.

⁴⁵ D'Herbigny died in 1957, never rehabilitated. His ecclesiastical policy proved counterproductive and irrelevant during World War II and then the Cold War. Pius XII finally established the principle of the equality and integrity of the Eastern Churches in their communion with the Roman Catholic Church in a series of reforms to Canon Law culminating in 1957. Thus d'Herbigny's policy of proselytism was repudiated and Abbot van Caloen's call for an end to confrontation with the Orthodox prevailed. Following the collapse of Soviet atheism, the *Pro Russia* Commission was suppressed in 1993, its remaining foreign relations functions passing to the Secretariat of State.

⁴⁶ Paul Couturier Archive at the Abbaye de Notre-Dame des Dombes, carton 64, dossier 12. Cited in Mortiau-Loonbeek, *DLB visionnaire*, p.146.

every year, as an “Invisible Monastery”, united above “the walls of separation [that] do not rise as far as heaven”⁴⁷. And Couturier’s ecumenical method of “spiritual emulation” – holy competition to outdo one another in prayer and the exchange of gifts, towards mutual sanctification along the converging path to perfect communion in Christ, is typically Benedictine⁴⁸. So it was Beauduin’s ecumenism, integral to the Liturgical Movement and lived out in the “supra-ritual” monasticism at Amay, rejecting controversy and promoting devotional renewal, that inspired Couturier to re-conceive Catholic prayer for Christian Unity. No longer would it frame the expectation for others to return, but it would aspire to a recomposition of Christians on all sides, through ever greater holiness, converging into unity in Christ with the Father, “according to his will, according to his means”⁴⁹.

Thus Couturier’s and Beauduin’s spiritual ecumenism, rooted in prayer and liturgical piety, was to be the designated method for the “reintegration of unity”⁵⁰ among Christians in the one Church envisaged at the Second Vatican Council.

The Liturgical Movement comes of age

During his exile, Beauduin’s involvement in the Liturgical Movement, even though it was plucked with him from its roots in the monastery, enjoyed a kind of liberation. Whether encouraged tacitly or openly, it would have an irreversible effect on the liturgical temperament of the entire Latin tradition. It would provide the terms for reshaping the understanding of the mystery of the Church at the Second Vatican Council, and create the conditions for the comprehensive revision of the Roman rite. One more decisive encounter to make this happen lay ahead. So let us return for the last time to the Charismatic Succession in which Beauduin stood:

- Beauduin is involved at the foundation of the Centre for Pastoral Liturgy in Paris in 1944, editing its review. Others include Aimé-Georges Martimort (first director), Yves Congar OP, Henri de Lubac SJ and Louis Bouyer Cong. Orat.
- Pius XII unites the mystery of the Church to that of the liturgy in *Mystici Corporis*, his Encyclical of 1943, “re-receiving” the teaching based on St Paul and Vatican I by Beauduin in his influential course at Mont-César
- Msgr Angelo Roncalli, Beauduin’s old friend from the storm in Rome in 1924 and the future Pope John XXIII, becomes Apostolic Nuncio to France in 1945. Beauduin convinces him that an ecumenical council is needed for reform, in order

⁴⁷ Metropolitan Platon (Gorodetsky) of Kiev, 1882-1891.

⁴⁸ See the Rule of St Benedict, chapter 72

⁴⁹ Paul Couturier, *Tract*, Lyon, 1947, cited in Geoffrey Curtis CR, *Paul Couturier and Unity in Christ*, SCM Press, London 1964, pp. 103 and 338.

⁵⁰ See the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*

to translate into practice their refreshed liturgical vision of lay people and the apostolic ministry of bishops in the Body of Christ

- Pius XII's 1947 Encyclical, *Mediator Dei*, drawing on Beauduin's 1914 book, *Liturgy the Life of the Church*, encourages greater 'active' lay participation in worship, even opening the way for the use of the vernacular. A liturgical reform commission is established.

The Theotokos in the new liturgical piety

For Beauduin, a liturgically faithful Marian theology was crucial in this new age of designing people's active participation in the Church's worship to the cultivation of a "true devotion" that could nourish their faith, discipleship, proclamation and mission. Ecumenically, too, there was no alternative to the restoration of the central assertion of Catholic faith that Christ is the only Mediator: Catholic Mariology can never pose an obstacle to this.

In the liturgy we find that we have but one way – none other than Jesus Christ.⁵¹

Whether in our liturgy or our personal devotions, we must never allow the priesthood of Christ to get too far away:

He is our *chargé d'affaires* ... every thing to be done we leave to him.⁵²

Otherwise, the temptation is to seek an advocate elsewhere. Beauduin believed that, lacking receptivity to the dogmatic balance of the East, which ensured a Christocentric devotion to Mary, pre-eminently in its liturgy as the fount of popular piety, the thinking of nineteenth century Latin Christianity possessed no counterweight to an exaggerated view concerning God the Son. This left the humanity of Christ in the shade of his divinity, and it had caused people to let Jesus slip away from them. The reaction in both theological circles and popular devotion was a disproportionate recourse to Mary. Beauduin's work on the Liturgical Movement directly confronted such "false devotion" because it was harmful to the faith of the people and the proclamation of the Gospel that the world could accept:

No creature at all can intervene to add any efficacy whatever to the Redemption of the Eternal Priest alone.⁵³

⁵¹ LB to Paquot, Chatou, 1st December 1941, Archives of Amay-Chevetogne, LB 11. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1386

⁵² Retreat to Sisters at Maredret, 3rd Conference 1920. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1386

⁵³ LB to Jean (later Archbishop) Jadot, Strasbourg, 9 July 1932, Archives of Amay-Chevetogne, LB 11. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1387

But he had his work cut out. A theologically ambiguous devotion – the Universal Mediation of Mary – enjoyed wide popular appeal. A whole generation of priests, religious and theologians had been formed by it and there was now a movement to have it recognised it as a necessary dogma of the Faith. Even Cardinal Mercier viewed it favourably. But it was not in the liturgy; it was not in the Scriptures; it was not in the common tradition – these were the grounds on which Beauduin with all his strength tried in vain to prevent the zealous petitions going off to Rome.⁵⁴

Rome kept to the tradition, of course, not least because successive popes had now committed the Church to the direction set by the Liturgical Movement. But the devotion had got under the skin and it has continued to surface in various forms from time to time. The year after the 1950 dogmatic definition of the Assumption Beauduin reflected:

To assign “an essential role to Mary – the role par excellence – in God’s work of redemption – co-redeemer, co-mediator (where will it end?) – it may be pious, but it is dangerous. It risks modifying the Christian mystery to its depths.”⁵⁵

And he lays the blame firmly at the feet of those whose responsibility it is more than anyone else’s to ensure that the people’s faith and prayer is orthodox – the bishops:

“The Word incarnate is still so far from us because he is God. But Mary, being human, is much nearer to us.” That is a phrase from a bishop’s pastoral letter! ... And yesterday I read this phrase: “The best way to be children of the Father is to be children of Mary.” This is a blasphemy to the Sole Mediator.⁵⁶

He did not spare his friends and supporters. In 1951, Léon-Joseph Suenens, auxiliary of Malines and his keen disciple, published *The Theology of the Apostolate of the Legion of Mary*. Beauduin wrote him a severe letter, singling out this phrase:

“Through her are distributed for us all gifts, all virtues, all graces, to whom she wishes, as much as she wishes and the way she wishes.”

He makes it clear to Suenens that, in abandoning the Catholic Church’s fidelity to the tradition it has received, he is distorting the faith it is bound to hand on. He reminds him that it is necessary always to distinguish the mediation of redemption – to know that the

⁵⁴ Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1387: Mercier could be given to theological romanticism, in this case under pressure from the Redemptorists in 1921. The faculty of theology at Louvain had even written to Rome in November 1915 supporting the dogmatic definition of the universal mediation of Mary.

⁵⁵ LB to Moeller, Chatou, 20 April 1951. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1389

⁵⁶ LB to Dom Boniface del Marmol, Chevetogne, 5 September 1952, Archives of Maredsous 1.1.15. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1388

priesthood of Christ is what unites humanity to the Father – on one side from the mediation of intercession on the other. And thus in the whole of the ancient tradition:

Mary is *always* in the first rank of the mediation of intercession. By placing her firmly within the mediation of redemption, Suenens was accused by Beauduin of insinuating an invisible new priesthood above the visible ministerial priesthood of the Church.⁵⁷

Our second picture (page 50) illustrates how vital establishing “true devotion” to Our Lady in place of these pious but unbalanced distortions was for Beauduin. It shows Our Lady of Beauraing, a sanctuary not far from Chevetogne, where the Virgin Mary appeared to local children before an arch of the railway viaduct in the 1930s. It shows the Mother of God as she appeared – alone. In the visions she speaks of her Son, but the statue conveys nothing of this. Beauduin objected strongly to the way such “deviant Mariology” was everywhere:

It produces no more than isolated Madonnas, who have handed the Child over to Joseph.⁵⁸

And his objections were not only aesthetic and theological. One day Beauduin and his nephew Édouard went into a church, which was dominated by a single, huge statue of Mary over the altar, without the Child in her arms. Beauduin declared,

As long as Protestants see that...they will never stop protesting.⁵⁹

The common tradition between East and West and the centrality of the Scriptures shared with Reformation Christians entailed in Beauduin’s *sensibilité* towards the Mother of God mean that her distinctive dignity, “the flash of brilliance surrounding the manger”, is for veneration towards her to lead straight on to Jesus Christ.⁶⁰ The Church emphasises and safeguards this truth at Advent and Christmas, as it were on behalf of the rest of the year:

For two months, the Church blends the Son and the Mother into the same praise.⁶¹

⁵⁷ LB to Léon-Joseph Suenens, April 1951. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1388

⁵⁸ August Croegaert, *Pensée*, p. 115. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1389

⁵⁹ Édouard Beauduin, *Dom Lambert Beauduin. Témoignage personnel* in *Unité des Chrétiens*, no 29, 1978, p.23. Conseil d'Églises chrétiennes en France, Paris. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1389

⁶⁰ LB, *Un plus grand Noël* in *Questions Liturgiques et Pastorales*, tome 3, 1912-1913, p. 51. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1390

⁶¹ LB, *Le Cycle de Noël* in *Questions Liturgiques et Pastorales*, tome 7, 1922, p.243. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1390

What was at stake was not just liturgical and doctrinal correctness, nor ecumenical concerns: it was the whole habit of believing by Catholic people and thus the account they gave of their faith before God and the world. Beauduin's own personal devotion to Mary was profound. Thus other people's devotion to her mattered to him, because all theological deviation is precisely a deviation: it leads people the other way from God, with harmful consequences for their spiritual life. With what Beauduin's biographers describe as his "visceral attachment to doctrinal rigour"⁶², he wanted devotion to Our Lady to be theological, evangelical, and before all else to be about entrusting to Mary the Christian's desire to comprehend and live the "great mystery" of Christ⁶³:

Most Holy Virgin, I love you very much, but I love your Son much more.⁶⁴

So he was fond of inverting the famous saying of St Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, "Come to Jesus through Mary". He would correct it, saying, "Come to Mary through Jesus".

I pray to Christ and ask, "Grant that I may love her like you love her," adding, "and receive Mary as mother *from Jesus*." That is what happened to St John at the foot of the Cross.⁶⁵

As for Beauraing and another Belgian sanctuary where the Virgin Mary had appeared, Banneux, Beauduin felt the devotion was lacking its true heart. A friend and collaborator, Fr Roger Poelman, once questioned him, "Father, if someone said that the Virgin Mary was appearing on the other side of the road, would you not go and have a look?" He replied,

No, I would not go and have a look. I would say, "Holy Virgin, you had no need to bother – I believed in you already."⁶⁶

And he told another friend, Canon André Rose, who asked a similar question,

I would not stir from my office: I have got the Gospel, the Church and the Tradition.⁶⁷

As he remarked, admiring a statue of the Virgin Mary with the Child seated on her knees in the Cathedral at Evreux, "That's how she should always be represented: *Our Lady is*

⁶² Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1391

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ S.A. Quitslund, in *Les idées fondamentales de l'Éclésiologie de dom Lambert Beauduin*. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1390

⁶⁵ Roger Poelman, *Apophtegmes*, pp. 232-233. Cited in Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1392

⁶⁶ See Loonbeek-Mortiau's interview with Fr Roger Poelman in 1994, *Pionnier*, p. 1390

⁶⁷ See Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1390, n. 264.

*the monstrance that exposes Christ.*⁶⁸ Where popular devotion and theological thinking consider her without her Son, she actually shows nothing and is thus rendered nothing.

The definition of the dogma of the Assumption

Beauduin's doctrinal vigilance concerning the Universal Mediation of Mary, not to mention his implacable resistance to "false devotion", revived in the late 1940s, when it was proposed that the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary be defined as a necessary dogma of the Catholic Church. Again, he looked east for a balancing re-affirmation of the Latin tradition. Dom Nicolas Egender, a monk of Chevetogne with long experience working for Catholic-Orthodox unity while he was abbot of the Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem, 1979-95, writing in 2000, illuminates the perspective of Beauduin's community on dogma concerning the Mother of God all along:

In approaching this inexpressible mystery, Orthodoxy prefers just to move within the context provided by the wealth of Biblical imagery. It has never seen the need to proclaim Marian doctrines, being content with the Council of Ephesus in 431. The reactions of Orthodox theologians towards defining the Immaculate Conception (in 1854)⁶⁹ and also the Assumption (in 1950) as necessary dogmas are well known. They criticised them for being superfluous, since in the first place people had always believed them and in the second it was the West that adopted the observance of both feasts from the East to begin with.

Orthodoxy is no less reticent and critical about some of the titles accorded to Mary in the West, such as *Co-Redemptrix* (deliberately avoided at Vatican II) or *Mother of the Church*. Yet at the same time it makes use of others that are actually more startling.⁷⁰

The early 1951 edition of *Irenikon*, the ecumenical review of the monastery of Chevetogne (where the growing Amay community had moved in 1939), was significant. It was the first issue following the dogmatic and infallible definition of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, on November 1st 1950. It contained an article by a member of the community, Fr Pierre Dumont, on *The Assumption and the Greek Orthodox* and concluded with a searching analysis from Beauduin as founder of the community, worried at the effect on ecumenical relations with Protestants, especially in terms of the reaction from a leading member of the Reformed religious community at Taizé. Pastor Max Thurian had observed that the definition was not conceived in the popular mind in terms of Christ's resurrection, let

⁶⁸ Loonbeek-Mortiau, *Pionnier*, p. 1392 f.

⁶⁹ Sergei Bulgakov's book, *Le Buisson Ardent*, is an answer to the definition of the Immaculate Conception as a dogma.

⁷⁰ Nicolas Egender, *op.cit.*, p. 137

alone his physical incarnation from the flesh of the Virgin Mary which had reached its risen and glorified consummation through his ascension into heaven. Instead people saw it as the pinnacle of a self-contained movement in ever greater devotion towards Mary; she had thus been so sacralised that she ceased to bear much relation to human nature, let alone life and motherhood.

While Beauduin defends the new definition as an expression of the already existing faith of the Church enshrined in the liturgy and the teaching of the Fathers – and the rightness of the Pope’s action in proclaiming it – he permits himself still to warm to an old theme. For he fears that, without “true devotion” rooted in the Scriptures and the liturgy, an exaggerated view of Mary’s Assumption, and her person and significance in the scheme of salvation by Christ, leads to monophysitism, the misunderstanding that Christ, being God, has taken human flesh but superseded being a Person with a human nature. It is a constant temptation in spirituality likewise to disregard the whole Christ and regard only his divine nature. But where is the humanity to the flesh he wears? What becomes of the humanity of Mary who gave him her flesh, if it seems to be discarded as she is exalted to heavenly union with her Son? And what is the point of our salvation by the Man, Jesus Christ, the sole mediator between God and humanity, if that salvation ultimately discards and surpasses the physical creation? The dogma must be taught and understood carefully to avoid spiritual monophysitism:

to the uninformed spirit the idea of incarnation does not represent anything of any substance; ... it is merely a kind of adjective to them. Devotions that are badly watched over by the Church could still lead on to this disastrous and uncontrollable heresy ... all the Christian realism will have evaporated. It would mean a religion with neither power nor originality. Unfortunately, it is a subtle microbe and ... it has spread far and wide among our faithful, so it is quite difficult to diagnose, combat and exorcise.

So the observations on this matter by Pastor Thurian have been quite pertinent. The most disastrous consequence of this cast of mind has been for many the forgetting of the *unus Mediator, Homo Christus Jesus*. So we end up with Christians who give no place to the mediation of Christ, who often becomes just a term used in worship, a title, the same as the Father’s. But has forgetting Christ the mediator not caused the losing sight of the true role of Our Lady alongside her Son?⁷¹

Once again, Beauduin demands a “true devotion” to Mary that appreciates, as at the Council of Ephesus, the fullness of what renders her Mother of God. Authentic Mariology is thus the antidote to the poison of heresy. And while the definition may have seemed

⁷¹ LB, *À propos de la définition de l’Assomption*, in *Irenikon*, tome XXIV, Ier semestre 1951, p. 398

unnecessary to Orthodox eyes, its authoritative assertion, grounded in the historic faith and liturgy of the Church in both East and West, arguably represented a re-balancing of the tradition in the West, and its culture of popular piety, towards the Blessed Virgin. So it favoured the reconstruction of personal devotion to Mary in fresh forms, from first principles, more generally. As the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy would come to put it at the Second Vatican Council:

... devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them.⁷²

So for Beauduin devotion to the Mother of God serves as a touchstone for right belief, right worship and right devotion within the life of the Church. Furthermore, going beyond what is in the Liturgy, and its careful equilibrium of East and West handing on the Tradition in concert, remains the source not only of “false devotion” but also error and Christian disunity.

Later that year in July 1951, Dom Thomas Becquet, prior of the monastery at Chevetogne, invited its founder home.

The Theotokos - Mother of the Church?

Lambert Beauduin died in January 1960, but he lived to see Pope John XXIII publicly acknowledge the contribution of his old friend in 1959 at the time of his announcement of the Second Vatican Council to which they had both dedicated themselves back in 1945 in Paris. He was also able to witness the Benedictine abbots of the world respond at last to Pius XI’s *Equidem Verba*, as they consecrated a monastery in each land to the work of Christian Unity. His own foundation at Chevetogne was designated for Belgium. Thus ecumenical monasticism was finally and fully embraced by his fellow Benedictines, the long injustice of his exile was put right and his pioneering initiative for ecumenical monasticism was vindicated.

Within a few years, Pope John consolidated half a century’s work of renewal in the Latin rite under his predecessors, thanks to the influence of the Liturgical Movement, with an interim reform of the Roman Mass in 1962. In December the following year Beauduin’s Liturgical Movement achieved consummation with the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, as the first major act of the Second Vatican Council.

⁷² *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §13, Rome 1963

But it is perhaps most in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, promulgated in November 1964, that we can appreciate the pinnacle of Beauduin's comprehensive effort towards the restoration of the liturgy to the people for their "full and active participation", ecumenical monasticism, a reconfiguration of how the Church understands itself and furthers its purposes, the cause of Christian Unity and indeed an authentic *sensibilité* concerning the Mother of God across each of these concerns. It was the definitive re-reception from Scripture and Tradition of the principle of the Mystical Body as the People of God, a living communion in Christ, that he had first championed in those lectures in 1907 and which were the foundation for everything that followed.

Beauduin's friend, a fellow Monk of Unity and his collaborator from the early days in 1920s Rome all the way through, is our witness. Dom Olivier Rousseau helped to prepare for Vatican II and during its sessions was a theological adviser for the bishops of the Melchite Greek Catholic Church. As such, he not only saw developments unfold, he was influential in shaping them. To this disciple of Lambert Beauduin, vigilant in safeguarding and promoting his mentor's principles (along with many others', too), issues crystallised in a controversy over a proposed dogmatic declaration of the Virgin Mary as Co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix of all Graces (something encountered before, as we have seen) and whether the role of the Mother of God would occupy a conciliar document in its own right, or be considered in relation to her place in the history of salvation as part of the Church.⁷³ Once again we recognise the marks of Beauduin's teaching in the decisive importance Rousseau attaches to "light from the East" and the need to consider matters of faith and devotion firmly in terms of the way the Church prays together and worships. In November 1963, he sent this report back to Belgium from Rome:

The question to be voted on concerning the Schema about Mariology, which will be presented to the conciliar assembly next Tuesday, was announced thus: "Is the Schema on the Virgin going to be attached to that on the Church, or will it be treated separately?" Noises reaching us from Eastern bishops, whose liturgies, as is well known, allow great space for the veneration of the Virgin, indicate to us that they have not arrived at an understanding as to why it is necessary in the course of the Council to make special provision for a schema on the Virgin. The reason for this is that, even before the Council opened, a significant number of bishops from other continents asked that a new Marian definition be made. With the majority being opposed to any definition, the Marian question dropped down a

⁷³ For a fascinating account of the proceedings, see Alberic Stacpoole OSB, *Mary's Place in Lumen Gentium*, pp. 85-97 in *Mary and the Churches*, Columba Press, Dublin, 1987

gear and was eventually condensed in the editorial office into one of the schemas – or several. It will be a quite prickly debate.⁷⁴

A week later, he reports again:

During this week's three days of congregation, there were several important occurrences to note. The first was the vote on the schema concerning the Virgin Mary ... It has been well known for quite a number of years that Marian theology – indeed the best – insisted on the extremely traditional doctrine of “Mary, type of the Church,” as antiquity and the Middle Ages loved to put it. The summing up of the whole of humanity, the new Eve, joined through her Assumption to the new Adam, she is there in heaven, forming the foundations of the Church. This very profound doctrine has still not penetrated every corner of the globe, and a quite large number of bishops believed that the proposal was a way of diminishing the cult of the Virgin. To ward off this drawback, the schema was given the new title “Mary, Mother of the Church”, a title that has by now aroused many reservations, being open to misinterpretation and in the end bringing more confusion than illumination. Nevertheless, the vote was in favour and the absolute majority needed for attaching the schema on the Virgin to that on the Church was achieved. The fact remains that, given this clause as it is, it should now be sensitively recast and return for further discussion at a later date.⁷⁵

On learning this, the community back at Chevetogne prayed that the Council would not go with “Mary, Mother of the Church” in the finally approved Constitution on the Church. The straightforward reason was that “Mother of the Church” is nowhere to be found in the Liturgy and therefore posed an additional obstacle to rapprochement with the Orthodox Church. In any case it was open to significant doctrinal misconception.⁷⁶ The Orthodox theologian Alexis Kniazeff outlines the reservations, while constructively examining how the new title, drawing from his own inventive tradition, could be understood positively:

This formula seems to place the Mother of God above the Church. But she is in the Church and not above the Church, considered as a distinct entity. One could even say that she is the Church in that, by dint of her role as Mother towards all the redeemed, she bears within her the mystery of the Incarnation, which is also that of the Church. So she is the mystical centre of the Church, its archetype, its personification, the Mother of the living people called to be the Church, but not the Mother of the Church.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Olivier Rousseau, OSB (but unsigned), *Blocage et Débloquage*, in *La Relève, Concile: IIe Session, IVe Semaine*, Bruxelles, 2 November 1963 (mistakenly given as the VIth week)

⁷⁵ Rousseau (unsigned), *La Vierge et L'Église*, in *La Relève, Concile: IIe Session, Ve Semaine*, Bruxelles, 9 November 1963

⁷⁶ Interview with Père Thaddée Barnas, Chevetogne, September 2008.

⁷⁷ Alexis Kniazeff, *La Mère de Dieu dans l'Église orthodoxe*, Paris, Cerf, 1990, p. 215. Cited in Egender, op.cit. p. 137. And see the quotations from Florensky noted above following note 33.

A few years later Rousseau reflects on what took place in that momentous week:

In the end it was 15 years of attention focussed on the Virgin's Assumption that had contributed to fresh awareness of the value of the physical resurrection, too. The New Eve, raised up to heaven with her body beside the risen New Adam, symbolised the Church, the Bride somehow already eternally united to Christ her Spouse in his glory.

The whole Mariological movement that applied itself to transferring the chapter concerning the Virgin to the end of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* was driven by this vision. Those who believed that this was a matter of reducing the veneration of the Virgin in this case were completely mistaken. On the contrary, it was a matter of presenting Mariology to fit in alongside all the movements in dogmatic and spiritual renewal we have come to know in this period, and which are all converging upon each other.

It is true that it was the subject of devotion to Mary that caused the opposition to make itself felt all the more. On the whole many bishops at the Council in any case had been pressed by their faithful to obtain a new definition, as this appeared to them to be the only effective means to honour the Virgin worthily. But it must be recognised that they were in two minds on this. In the confluence of currents that contributed to making Christian thought go back to its sources, the rich idea of "Mary, type of the Church" is one of the most fruitful and harmonious.

If we want to speak of a Mariological movement, tied in with the other renewing movements addressing the same concern, we have to note the liberating introduction of the idea of the Church into the Marian surge ... The two are absolutely not to be confused; instead, the Church dimension played the role of guide and beneficial brake to this zealous Marian movement, following the discretion recommended by John XXIII. The fact is that in cleaving to the title of the definition of Ephesus – De Beata Maria Virgine DEIPARA (Theotokos) – the Fathers agreed with what is an authentic Mariological movement. And by continuing in this direction we will best follow the spirit of the Council.⁷⁸

So it was that, thanks to the powerful influence of Lambert Beauduin over nearly three generations of church leaders, and his insistence that popular devotion can never be individual, but must always derive from the corporate devotion which is the liturgy of the Church, which in turn needs constantly to look for light from the East and necessarily entails an ecumenical dimension with regard to Christians beyond the bounds of the Catholic Church itself, the fathers of the Second Vatican Council finally designated the

⁷⁸ Rousseau, *Présumptions historiques et théologiques dans le cadre des mouvements rénovateurs*, in *L'Église de Vatican II, Études autour de la Constitution conciliaire sur l'Église*, eds. Guilherme Baraúna OFM and Yves Congar OP, Tome II, *Unam Sanctam* 51b, Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1966, pp. 53-55

Blessed Virgin Mary not as Co-Redeemer and Co-Mediatrix, but as ‘Mother of the Church’ – within and not above the People of God in 1964.

And it is no accident that simultaneously on November 21st 1964, Pope Paul VI also promulgated *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Council’s Decree on Ecumenism that enshrines Paul Couturier’s principle of spiritual ecumenism, founded on Beauduin’s principles of mutual reception or exchange of riches, spirituality rooted in the liturgy and the Scriptures and an ecumenical understanding of worship.

Conclusion

Could it be said that, almost more than anyone, Lambert Beauduin was the one responsible for stimulating the Catholic ecumenical movement with its original liturgical spirituality and thus setting it on the course of spiritual ecumenism and mutually receptive learning that we know today?

And can it even be said that, by his *sensibilité* towards the place of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the work of Christ, in a vision of the Church that he shared with Blessed John XXIII, grounded in the “*Liturgy the Life of the Church*”, Beauduin and his followers equipped the Latin Church with the common knowledge to preserve itself from a doctrinal rupture from its own tradition that would have rendered the reconciliation of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, not to mention the Christians of the Reformation tradition, all but inconceivable?

Thus his work to restore authentic devotion to the Virgin Mary, Theotokos, was integral to the Catholic Church’s rediscovery of her desire for the Unity of Christians and her prayer for the re-integration of the wholeness of the Body of Christ.

We leave the last word to his friend and follower, the much loved Abbé Paul Couturier, who profoundly re-oriented Catholic prayer for unity and ecumenical attitudes, thanks in no small part to the influence of Beauduin and Amay-Chevetogne. As he launched the Week of Prayer for 1953 on the eve of his death, Couturier proposed as the pattern for all who would love to be united with Christ the Virgin Mary, at the moment of hearing the call to embrace her Creator in her womb.

Here is his beautiful meditation on Mary, the Mother of Unity in Christ – Mother of the Church, because Mother in the Church and Mother of God:

Let all Christians come to their Saviour with an open soul,
attentive to the divine call, in humble abandonment,
the attitude of the humble Virgin Mary.

Her answer to the angel is the archetype
of the creature's response to the Creator:
I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you have said.

When the disposition of Christian souls is that of the Virgin,
when the answer of the Virgin Mary resounds silently in our souls,
the souls of all Christians,
this immense, silent cry, guided and dominated by the voice of the Virgin,
will be unfurled before the throne of the Eternal
in a single irresistible supplication.

And once again, by the action of the Holy Spirit, unity will come to pass.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Paul-Irenée Couturier, *Tract for the Week of Universal Prayer for the Unity of Christians*, Lyon, 1953.