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The Ecclesiology of Saint Maximos the Confessor

The late Henri Cardinal de Lubac's remark that there is no treatise *de ecclesia* in Latin theology until the High Middle Ages applies *a fortiori* to the Greek Fathers; there is not even an equivalent to Cyprian's *De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate*, nor is there any late medieval interest in the notion of the Church. To write about the ecclesiology of St Maximos the Confessor, therefore, is to attempt to draw out from his multitudinous writings something that he only discusses in connexion with other matters, or quite allusively.¹ This is a potentially formidable task, as Maximos' theological method is essentially allusive, and traces relevant to a consideration of his understanding of the Church could be found in very many places. For the purposes of this paper, I shall concentrate mainly on three places where the question of the nature of the Church seems more directly to be raised: first, his commentary on the Divine Liturgy, the *Mystagogia*,² secondly, fragments from a couple of letters—one preserved only in the Latin translation of Anastasius the Librarian—generally referred to as *Opuscula theologica et polemica* 11 and 12 which bear more on the institutional nature of the Church,³ and finally the discussions of the nature and authority of the Church to be found in the dossier of documents connected with his trial and condemnation for opposing the imperial will over Christology.⁴

It might be useful, first of all, to sketch the circumstances of Maximos' life. Born in 580, he was most likely brought up in Constantinople, though little is known for certain about his early years. On the accession of the Emperor Herakleios in 610, he seems to have been appointed *protoasecretis*, that is, head of the imperial chancellery, but after a very few years, he left the imperial service and became a monk, initially just over the Bosphoros from Constantinople and a little later in a monastery at Kyzikos, at the foot of what is now the Erdek peninsula on the Asia coast of the Bay of Marmara. In 626, the Persian army occupied the Asian coast opposite Constantinople, and Maximos, with many other monks, fled, finally reaching North Africa about 630, where he joined a monastery of émigré monks, probably under the leadership of Sophronios, who later, as Patriarch of Jerusalem, surrendered the Holy City to the Arabs. Many of Maximos' earlier works, including the *Mystagogia*, belong to his first years in Africa. From 633 onwards Maximos gradually came to be drawn into the Christological controversy that, on the one hand, culminated in the Lateran Synod of 649 and the Sixth Œcumenical Synod held at

Constantinople in 680-1 and, on the other, in his own arrest for incurring the displeasure of the Emperor, trials, condemnation and death in exile in 662.

The *Mystagogia* could be regarded as being explicitly a work on the nature of the Church, for the commentary on the Divine Liturgy is set in the context of reflections by Maximos on the various images of the Church, both as a community and as a building. In these initial chapters, which are recapitulated at the end of the treatise after the exposition of the events of the Liturgy, Maximos presents an understanding of the Church as the central element in a series of ways of understanding the relationship of God to the cosmos and to human kind. He begins by discussing in chapter 1 how the Church may be seen as ‘an image and type of God’ by imitating and representing God’s activity (*energeia*). God has brought everything into being, ‘contains, gathers and limits them and in his providence binds both intelligible and sensible beings to himself and one another’.

It is in this way that the holy Church of God will be shown to be active among us in the same way as God, as an image reflects its archetype. For many and of nearly boundless number are the men, women and children who are distinct from one another and vastly different by birth and appearance, by race and language, by way of life and age, by opinions and skills, by manners and customs, by pursuits and studies, and still again by reputation, fortune, characteristics and habits: all are born into the Church and through it are reborn and recreated in the Spirit. To all in equal measures it gives and bestows one divine form and designation, to be Christ’s and to carry his name. In accordance with faith it gives to all a single, simple, whole and indivisible condition which does not allow us to bring to mind the existence of the myriads of differences among them, even if they do exist, through the universal relationship and union of all things with it. It is through it that absolutely no one at all is in himself separated from the community since everyone converges with all the rest and joins together with them by the one, simple, and indivisible grace and power of faith. ‘For all,’ it is said, ‘had but one heart and one mind.’ Thus to be and to appear as one body formed of different members is really worthy of Christ himself, our true head, in whom says the divine Apostle, ‘there is neither male nor female, neither Jew nor Greek, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, neither barbarian nor Scythian, neither slave nor free, but he is all and in all.’ It is he who encloses in himself all beings by the unique, simple and infinitely wise power of his goodness.

Maximos goes on to apply the analogy of the radii of a circle converging on the centre to both God's relationship to the created order and the Church's relationship to its members, and concludes that, in both cases, there is achieved a union that, though profound, does not confuse the beings joined, but preserves their integrity.

Maximos goes on in the succeeding chapters to show how the union of differences found in the Church is also reflected throughout the created order. To begin with, in chapter 2, he suggests that the Church may be seen as an image of the cosmos, regarded as made up of visible and invisible beings. It is from this point on that he thinks of the church as a building, and more precisely as a building divided into two: the area for 'the priests and ministers alone', that is, the sanctuary (in Greek: *hierateion*), and the area for the 'all the faithful people', which is called the nave (*naon*).⁵ This distinction he finds echoed in the cosmos, in the distinction there between the invisible part of the cosmos and the visible part. These two parts are closely related; indeed, Maximos says, the church is not properly speaking divided by the differences between the two parts, but rather by the relationship between the two parts, so that, 'the nave is potentially the sanctuary since it is a holy place by reason of its relationship to the goal of sacred initiation (or: mystagogy), and the sanctuary is actually the nave, since it is there that the process of its own sacred initiation begins'. So, too, with the cosmos: 'for the whole intelligible cosmos is imprinted in a hidden way on the whole sensible cosmos through the symbolic forms, while the whole sensible cosmos can be understood to be present to the intelligible cosmos through its principles (*logoi*) that reveal its simplicity to the intellect'. The distinction found in cosmos and Church that is the reason for one being an image of the other is matter of relationship rather than separation; it is a matter of connexion, and not division, and it is an ordered connexion, the visible pointing to the invisible realm, so that the visible finds its meaning in the invisible, and the invisible finds its expression in the visible, and in this way reflecting the close relationship between sanctuary and nave in the church.

The following chapters suggest further images of the church: in the visible world itself, consisting as it does of heaven and earth (chapter 3), and then in the human person, consisting of body and soul (chapter 4), and the soul, consisting of soul and intellect (chapter 5). Chapters 4 and 5 develop a fairly detailed understanding of the spiritual life, moving from the level of body, which is the level of ascetic struggle, in which we learn moral wisdom, to the level of soul, which is the level of natural contemplation, that is

contemplation of the principles (*logoi*) of the cosmos, which are all summed up in the Logos himself, Christ, and finally to the level of intellect, the level of mystical theology, that is contemplation of God himself (Maximos, while still using the image of the twofold church to interpret the passage from one level to another, also combines them in a threefold image of the church with nave, sanctuary and altar, *thusiasterion*). Chapter 6 introduces a further image of the Church:

just as, in accordance with contemplation that brings about ascent, he [the 'old man', or *geronta*, to whom Maximos attributes his *Mystagogia*] called the Church a spiritual human being and human kind a mystical Church, so he said that the whole of holy Scripture is, in short, a human being, the Old Testament having the body, and the New Testament soul and spirit and intellect, or again, taking the whole of holy Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, its body is the historical letter, while the meaning of what is written and its purpose, towards which the intellect strives, is the soul.

The purpose of all these interlinking images seems to be manifold. It means that anything that takes place in one context has its counterpart in another, so that the meaning of everything that takes place in any of these contexts both borrows from and contributes to the others. There are then profound interconnexions between Church, cosmos (understood both as embracing the spiritual and material realm and as embracing the visible heavens and the earth), the inward life of the human person, and even the Scriptures themselves. Spelling this out in terms of ecclesiology, this means that the significance of the Church has cosmic dimensions, but also that its significance reaches into the heart of each individual Christian and his or her own pilgrimage towards union with God; it also means that the Church, like Scripture, is a place where God has made himself known, and this being made known is not just, or even, a matter of information, but rather a matter of participation in God himself through his activities or energies. This has implications both for the nature of the Church as a community, and for the Church's liturgical activity, in which the Church is made manifest at its deepest and clearest. It is this latter that Maximos pursues in the *Mystagogia*, but a word might be said first about the former.

It is evident from the way Maximos develops his understanding of the way in which the Church is reflected as an image of God, cosmos, the human, the soul, and the Bible, that

Maximos conceives of the Church as a community that, on the one hand, is a place where diversity contributes to a deep and rich unity. It is in this drawing everything together into unity that the Church manifests itself as an image of God, a God who creates beings in their extraordinary variety, but draws them together into a wonderful harmony. Within this unity, everything—everyone—counts, but this happens without everything being reduced to the same level. For, on the other hand, Maximos' vision of the Church is profoundly hierarchical. That word, 'hierarchy', has been corrupted for us, and now carries almost inevitable overtones of suppression and subordination, but for Maximos it was a word, newly coined by the Christian known as 'Dionysios the Areopagite', who flourished at the beginning of the century—the sixth—in which Maximos was born. For Maximos, the etymological overtones of the word—a compound of 'sacred' and 'source' or 'beginning'—would presumably have registered, but even more significant would have been the definition given this word by the one who had invented it, Dionysios himself, who said, 'by hierarchy I mean a sacred order ad knowledge and activity that is being assimilated, as far as is possible, to the Godlike, and being raised up analogously by the illuminations given it from God to imitation of God'.⁶ Hierarchy does mean order but, like the structure of the church building as Maximos explains it, it is an order drawing and being drawn up to union with God, and more than that it is a matter of knowledge and activity. It is in this sense that the Church, for Maximos, is hierarchical; there is order and structure, manifest not least in the ranks of the ministers, that enables the church as a community to be ordered towards God, to be an instrument of God's outreach towards those that do not know him or misunderstand him, to be a place where God's activity is encountered and knowledge of God is shared.

It is, however, the liturgical activities of the Church, pre-eminently in the Divine Liturgy of the Eucharist, that capture Maximos' attention in the *Mystagogia*. Chapters 8 to 21 are devoted to explaining the meaning of the various ceremonies of the Divine Liturgy. These begin with the entrance of the bishop into the Church, accompanied by the people (in Maximos' day, the Sunday liturgy was evidently still preceded by a procession to the church). The entry of the bishop into the church symbolizes Christ's first coming into the world in the Incarnation; the entry of the people symbolizes conversion—from unbelief to faith, from vice and ignorance to virtue and knowledge. In the readings, we encounter God's desires and intentions for us; the singing symbolizes the joy of our turning towards God; the bishop's acclamations of peace before the readings ('Peace to all—And to your spirit') symbolize the help of the angels in our struggle to live a godlike

life. Then Maximos comes to the Gospel—and everything that follows it, for chapter 13 discusses not just the meaning of the reading of the Gospel, but continues with a brief account of everything that follows it, even though he is going to discuss these one by one in the next eight chapters. The gospel reading itself ‘proposes to those who are zealous some suffering on behalf of the Word’; a true hearing of the Gospel always entails the bearing of the Cross in some practical way—as St Maximos’ own life exemplifies. The purpose of this suffering is to detach us from worldly matters and draw us more closely to participation in the secret wisdom of God. All of this is brought out in the ceremonies that follow the Gospel reading: the closing of the doors, the exchange of the kiss of peace, the recitation of the creed of faith, the singing of the thrice-holy (the *sanctus*),⁷ together with the holy angels, the uttering with our lips the words of the *Our Father* in which we lay claim to communion with God, and then, beyond that, the chant *One is holy*, leading beyond knowledge to the unknowable unity, ‘now that we are deified by grace, and assimilated to him by participation in an indivisible identity, so far as this is possible’. After the Gospel, the bishop descends from his throne, and dismisses the catechumens; this symbolizes the Second Coming of Christ and the final judgment. Everything that follows—the whole of the liturgy of the faithful—is then understood by Maximos to take place after the Second Coming. The closing of the doors means our passing, after the judgment, into the nuptial chamber of Christ, the entrance into the mysteries our entrance into the final revelation of the divine wisdom. The meaning of the kiss of peace, the recitation of the creed, the singing of the *sanctus*, the saying of the *Our Father*, the singing of the *One is Holy*, and communion itself in the divine gifts: all this Maximos has already explained, and his further explanations all underline their eschatological significance, with the coming together of heaven and earth, and the deification of the human as the fulfilment of the Incarnation of the Divine.

The proclamation of the Gospel is then, for Maximos, indeed the ‘end of history’; to hear the Gospel is truly to pass beyond the *eschaton*. Maximos’ understanding of the celebration of the Divine Liturgy is thoroughly eschatological; the ceremonies after the reading of the Gospel all take place in the age to come. Maximos does not mention the eucharistic anaphora; by this time it was probably said silently, and perhaps Maximos only commented on what a layman, such as he seems to have been, would have heard—but the way in which the events remembered in the *anamnesis* in the Byzantine rite include the ‘glorious and dread Second Coming’ would have seemed not at all puzzling to him. The way in which the early Church celebrated the Eucharist on the brink of the age to

come (cf. the fragments of the eucharistic anaphora of the *Didache*) is fully preserved in Maximos' understanding of the Divine Liturgy. Alain Riou sees a deeper significance in Maximos' omission of any mention of the eucharistic anaphora, which is worth mentioning here: "The true anaphora (the configuring *anamnesis* and the eschatological *epiclesis*) of Christ is only consummated in the martyr himself: in that apophatic anaphora, the Christian and the Church receive in communion and consummate in silence their transparency to the paschal mystery".⁸ Riou's words remind one of the eucharistic echoes of St Polycarp's prayer as the fires were lit; they also remind us that Maximos' words are the words of one who was to confess the faith to the point of death.

Maximos' eucharistic ecclesiology is an eschatological ecclesiology. The full significance of the words quoted earlier from the first chapter of the *Mystagogia*, in which the Church was defined as an image of God, now become apparent: 'all are born into the Church and through it are reborn and recreated in the Spirit. To all in equal measures it gives and bestows one divine form and designation, to be Christ's and to carry his name. In accordance with faith it gives to all a single, simple, whole and indivisible condition...?'—which is ultimately that of the martyr, the witness for Christ, the witness to the truth about Christ. And this eschatological ecclesiology has ramifications, through the multiple images that the Church bears, for the cosmos, for the inner life of the soul, even for our understanding of Holy Scripture. We can see something of what this means in a series of chapters from the *Second Century on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation*.⁹ This group of chapters (51-70) form a series of meditations on the sixth, seventh and eighth days; Riou suggests, rightly, that they are a meditation on the Triduum—Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. They provide a paschal interpretation of the Christian life, the three stages of which—ascetic struggle, natural contemplation, and mystical theology or deification—correspond to the three days (cf. *Cent.* I.55). This rooting of the stages of the Christian life in the paschal mystery brings to light what one might call the ecclesial dimension of asceticism. The cosmic dimension is manifest in the way the *transitus* through these days leads to, and beyond, knowledge of created things (ibid. 66). The different chapters illumine different aspects of this mystery, but characteristic is the sixty-seventh, which reads:

All visible realities need the cross, that is, the state in which they are cut off from things acting upon them through the senses. All intelligible realities need burial, that is, the total quiescence of the things which act upon them through the intellect.

When all relationship with such things is severed, and their natural activity and stimulus is cut off, then the Logos, who exists alone in himself, appears as if risen from the dead. He encompasses all that comes from him, but nothing enjoys kinship with him by virtue of natural relationship. For the salvation of the saved is by grace and not by nature.

This vision of the Church entering into the Paschal mystery highlights its eschatological nature, something also manifest in the way in which the Church is conceived of as coming into being through the power of the Spirit. This understanding of the Church—cosmic, eschatological, eucharistic, epicletic—gathers together the central themes of Maximos’ theology.

For Maximos, however, the Church is not just a vision, it is a reality in which the eschatological breaks into history, and that reality takes a specific historical form, even one might say, a political form. So we turn to look at those texts in which Maximos expresses his ideas on the presence of the Church and its structures in the political realm. The texts we shall be concerned with from now on belong to a much later period in Maximos’ life than the *Mystagogia*. The 630s constituted a watershed, not only in Maximos’ life, but also in the history of Mediterranean civilization within the bosom of which Christianity and the Christian Church were born and developed. In that decade, there emerged on the stage of world history a new religion, Islam, which in the course of that decade established itself firmly in the Middle East, and by the middle of the next decade had destroyed the Persian Empire and robbed the Byzantine or Roman Empire of its eastern provinces, including Egypt, for good. All this was to have profound repercussions, still palpable today. But in Maximos’ immediate circles, it provoked in the Byzantine Empire an attempt to heal the divisions in the Church, caused by the Synod of Chalcedon of 451, that had been exploited by the Arabs (and before them by the Persians). This attempt at what might be regarded in current language as premature ecumenism—a Christological compromise, intended to bridge the divide between those who accepted Chalcedon and those who rejected it—was called monothelitism (which was presaged by another compromise called monenergism). Monothelitism saw itself as refining the position reached at Chalcedon, that Christ was a single divine person uniting in himself a divine and human nature, by clarifying that he had only one will, a divine one. For Maximos, this position was fundamentally unacceptable, for it meant that, lacking a human will, Christ’s humanity was imperfect. Maximos was not alone in his

opposition to monothelism; indeed, the controversy was such that, in the so-called *Typos* of 648, the Emperor tried to put an end to controversy by forbidding any discussion at all of the number of wills in Christ. This was not acceptable to Maximos either, for he was convinced that monothelism was wrong and heretical. Most of the eastern Church, at least that part still under imperial authority, acquiesced in the Emperor's will, and Maximos sought support in the West. In 649 a synod was held at St John Lateran, called and presided over by Pope Martin I, that condemned monothelism and the hierarchs who had supported it (including a pope, Honorius I). The emperor was furious at such insurgency and quickly had Pope Martin arrested, and later on Maximos, too, whom he rightly suspected of being behind the Lateran synod. Martin was tried for sedition and exiled to the Crimea, where he died in 655; Maximos was tried for heresy, and after having his right hand and tongue cut off, was finally exiled to Lazica, in Georgia, where he died in 662. Both came to be regarded as martyrs for the Orthodox faith.

Our next texts are two fragments of letters that constitute *opuscula* 11 and 12. Both of these speak in glowing terms of the central importance of the church of Rome. The first fragment, written shortly after the Lateran Synod, asserts

All the ends of the inhabited world, and those who anywhere on earth confess the Lord with a pure and orthodox faith, look directly to the most holy Church of the Romans and her confession and faith as to a sun of eternal light, receiving from her the radiant beam of the patristic and holy doctrines, just as the holy six synods,¹⁰ inspired and sacred, purely and with all devotion set them forth, uttering most clearly the symbol of faith. For, from the time of the descent to us of the incarnate Word of God, all the Churches of the Christians everywhere have held and possess this most great Church as the sole base and foundation, since, according to the very promise of the Saviour, it will never be overpowered by the gates of hell, but rather has the keys of the orthodox faith and confession in him, and to those who approach it with reverence it opens the genuine and unique piety, but shuts and stops every heretical mouth that speaks utter wickedness. For that which the creator of everything himself, our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, established and built up—together with his disciples and apostles, and the holy fathers and teachers and martyrs who came after—have been consecrated by their own works and words, by their sufferings and sweat, by their labours and blood, and finally by their

remarkable deaths for the sake of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of us who believe in him, they, through two words,¹¹ uttered without pain or death—O the long-suffering and forbearance of God!—are eager to dissolve and to set at naught the great, all-illuminating and all-praised mystery of the orthodox worship of the Christians.

Roman Catholic scholars are eager to see in these words proleptic support for Papal primacy. They are certainly strong words, proclaiming the faithfulness of the church of Rome to orthodoxy, and linking this to the words of our Lord in Matthew 16.18f. They are, however, words about the *church* of Rome, not the papacy as such, and they are also words written by Maximus in the glow of gratitude he must have felt, following the Lateran synod, for the support he had found in Rome. The faith signally endorsed by Rome is founded on the apostles and their successors—the fathers and the synods where they declared their faith—and something that has been tried in the suffering of their own lives, both the suffering of those who suffered persecution and martyrdom, and also those who shone forth in the ascetic life. They cannot be claimed as support for any notion of papal authority that seeks to detach the pope from the faithful experience of the Church.¹² But these words make it clear that the institutional structures of the Church, expressed in the priesthood and synodical convocations, were important for Maximus.

Opusc. 12, which only exists in the fragments Anastasius the Librarian gathered and translated into Latin in the ninth century, speaks in similar terms of ‘the apostolic see, which, from the incarnate Word of God himself, as well as, in accordance with the holy canons and definitions, from all the holy synods of all the holy Churches of God, which are in all the world, has derived and possesses dominion (*imperium*), authority and power to bind and loose’. This letter was written a few years earlier, and is concerned with what process must be adopted by the one-time monothelite Patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhos, if he wishes to be received as Orthodox. Maximus insists that he needs to convince the Pope of Rome, doubtless because in the hierarchy of the Byzantine Church, it was only the Pope who was senior to the Patriarch. It is for this reason that, in contrast with *opusc.* 11, *opusc.* 12 speaks directly of the *sanctissimae Romanorum Ecclesiae beatissimum papam*. Nevertheless, these two fragmentary letters make it clear that his eschatological and eucharistic vision of the Church had quite precise institutional implications.

It is, however, in the events that followed on the Lateran Synod—Maximos’ arrest, his two trials, his exiles and his death (which could well be described in the terms he used of the deaths of the fathers in *opusc.* 11: ‘finally... their remarkable deaths’)—that we see how Maximos’ ecclesiology was worked out in practice. The Church is founded on the confession of Christ: to be a member of the Church is ‘to be Christ’s and to bear his name’, as we have quoted above. For Maximos, such confession is crucial, and entails accepting the confession of Christ that we have received from the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church. So in his trial, Maximos responds to the accusation that he has split the Church by his stubbornness by saying: ‘if the one who states what is in Scripture and the holy Fathers splits the Church, what does someone do to the Church who annuls the teachings of the saints, without which the Church’s very existence is impossible?’¹³ Later on, when asked about his own teaching, he retorts: ‘I don’t have a teaching of my own, but the common one of the Catholic Church. I mean that I haven’t initiated any expression at all that could be called my own teaching.’¹⁴ At his trial he was pressed on the fact that he was not in communion with the throne of Constantinople, something of utmost importance to Maximos, as his ecclesiology, as we have seen, is defined in terms of eucharistic communion. But communion, for Maximos, is only genuine communion if it is communion in the truth, so he explains his not being in communion with Constantinople by reciting the ways in which the Patriarch has rejected the faith defined by the ‘holy synods’: by accepting the initial compromise at Alexandria in 633, and then accepting, indeed formulating, the imperial compromises of the *Ektthesis* and the *Typos*.¹⁵

Another important issue raised at his trial was the claim on the Emperor’s behalf that he was a priest, a claim again made by the iconoclast emperors in the next century.

Maximos’ rejection of this claim is outright; in response to the claim that ‘every Christian emperor [is] also a priest’, he declares;

No, he isn’t. because he neither stands beside the altar, and after the consecration of the bread elevates it with the words, *Holy things for the holy*; nor does he baptize, nor perform the rite of anointing, nor does he ordain and make bishops and presbyters and deacons; nor does he anoint churches, nor does he bear the symbols of the priesthood, the *omophorion* and the Gospel book, [as he bears the symbols] of imperial office, the crown and the purple.¹⁶

It is interesting, in view of the *Mystagogia*, that the argument is in terms of liturgical function, though the consequences are political. In the dispute that took place during his first exile, at Bizya, with a Bishop Theodosios, whose task was to work a change of mind in Maximos, Maximos spells out one implication of the emperor's not sharing in the priestly office: namely, that the calling of a synod does not need the Emperor (although all the synods accepted as œcumenical in the Orthodox Church have been called by emperors). The confessor lists seven synods, called by emperors, which proved heretical.¹⁷

Clearly, for Maximos, the Church, as defined by the true confession of faith, celebrated in the Divine Liturgy of the Eucharist, is a sovereign body, with its own institutions. However, deeply bound up with the Christian Empire it might be, it may not be confused with it. A precious document for Maximos' doctrine of the Church is the last writing we have from his hand, a short letter written on 19 April 658 to Anastasios, his disciple and spiritual child of by then forty years' standing, who was exiled apart from his master.¹⁸ By then, Maximos and his few followers were on their own, Rome, in the person of Pope Vitalian, having succumbed to imperial pressure and entered into communion with the other patriarchal sees. In reply to the question—or taunt—'What Church do you belong to? Constantinople? Rome? Antioch? Alexandria? Jerusalem? See, all of them are united, together with the provinces subject to them.' Maximos says he had replied, 'The God of all pronounced that the Catholic Church was the correct and saving confession of the faith in him when he called Peter blessed because of the terms in which he had made proper confession of him.' The Petrine foundation of the Church is Peter's faith, which even his successor can abandon, as Maximos had just learnt. At the end of the letter, there is a postscript from Anastasios himself, saying that this letter, and the rest of the dossier, had been transcribed

to make them known to you most holy people, in order that, when you have found out about the trial from these, you might all bring a common prayer to the Lord on behalf of our common mother, that is the Catholic Church, and on behalf of us your unworthy servants, for strengthening everyone and us also, persevering with you in it, according to the orthodox faith rightly preached in it by the holy Fathers.

Like the rest of the theology of St Maximos the Confessor, his ecclesiology combines an inspiring vision with ramifications as broad as the cosmos and as deep as the soul with practical implications that are uncompromising. We have much to learn from him.

¹ There is, therefore, little on Maximos' ecclesiology in the secondary literature. The chapter on ecclesiology in Jean-Claude Larchet, *Saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2003), 198-210, is limited in scope and is largely a summary of his discussion of the more polemical issue of the Roman primacy in Maximos' writings found in idem, *Maxime le Confesseur, médiateur entre l'Orient et l'Occident* (Paris: Éditions de Cerf, 1998), 125-201. There are useful discussions in the following: Alain Riou, *Le Monde et l'Église selon Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1973), esp. 123-200; Nikos Matsoukas, *Kosmos, Anthropos, Koinonia kata ton Maximo Homologiti* (Athens: Ekdoseis Grigori, 1980), esp. 219-52 (largely expository); Nikolaos Loudovikos, *He Eucharistiaki Ontologia* (Athens: Ekdoseis Domos, 1992), 251-72 (a sophisticated development of 'eucharistic ecclesiology'). An older, but still useful, discussion of the *Mystagogia* (largely concerned with the information it gives about the celebration of the liturgy) can be found in René Bornert, *Les commentaires byzantins de la divine liturgie du VII^e au XV^e siècle* (Paris, 1966), pp. 83-124.

² For a critical text, see *He Mystagogia tou Hagiou Maximou tou Homologitou*, ed. Charalambos G. Sotiropoulos (rev. edn., Athens, 1993); English trans. (not always satisfactory) in *Maximus Confessor: Selected Writings*, trans. George C. Berthold (London: SPCK, 1985), 181-225.

³ Text in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 91: 137C-140B, 141A-146A. French translations from these, together with some other relevant passages, may be found in Appendix II in Riou, op. cit., 206-12.

⁴ Now conveniently available in a critical text, with English translation, in *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions. Documents from Exile*, ed. and trans. Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁵ It is worth noting that, in speaking of the Church, first, Maximos does not use any technical term for the unordained laity (such as the already well-established term, *laïkos*), but instead refers to 'all the faithful people', and secondly, *naos* means a temple, that is the whole building (and is still used in that sense), so that the distinction is really between the building as a whole and a special part of it, and analogously for the community.

⁶ Dionysios the Areopagite, *Celestial Hierarchy* 3.1.

⁷ Berthold is wrong in asserting (op. cit. 222, n. 107) that this means the *trisagion*, which is sung in the Byzantine rite before the readings.

⁸ Riou, op. cit., 165.

⁹ The two *Centuries on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation* can be found in *Patrologia Graeca* 90.1083A-1173A; II.51-70 are in columns 1143-56. There is a translation in Berthold, op. cit. 129-70, but I have used the translation in *The Philokalia. The Complete Text*, trans. and ed. G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, Kallistos Ware, vol. 2 (London: Faber & Faber, 1981), 114-63.

¹⁰ The first five œcumenical synods, together with the Lateran synod; the same list of six synods it to be found in Theodore Spoudaios' *Hypomnesticon*, his summary of the sufferings of Martin and Maximos (*Hypomnesticon* 8, in Allen and Neil, op. cit., 160).

¹¹ These 'two words' must refer in some way to the imperial edicts (the *Ektthesis* of 638 and the *Typos* of 648) that promoted monothelitism and forbade any discussion of Orthodox dyothelitism.

¹² For more detail, see the article of Larchet's referred to above.

¹³ *Relatio motionis* 4 (Allen-Neil, 58).

¹⁴ Ibid. 6 (Allen-Neil, 60).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. 4 (Allen-Neil, 56).

¹⁷ *Disputatio* 4 (Allen-Neil, 88).

¹⁸ The letter can be found in Allen-Neil, 120-3.