

## **Summary of doctoral dissertation**

### ***The dialogical ecclesiology of Walter Kasper***

The Second Vatican Council presented a positive interpretation of the essence and mission of the Church. For sixty years, both popes and theologians have constantly referred to its teaching. Among the contemporary theologians whose works have attracted widespread recognition in the world is creative interpretation of Vatican II, Cardinal Walter Kasper holds a special place. He is probably one of the last and perhaps even the last living participant in the deliberations of Vatican II.

The fundamental purpose of this dissertation is to reconstruct and interpret the ecclesiology of this German theologian. The idea is not only to present Kasper's ecclesiological thought in a comprehensive and orderly way, but first of all to identify and define its foundations, and then show its specifics.

A critical analysis of the source material made it possible to formulate the following research hypothesis: the ecclesiology developed by the German cardinal is dialogical in nature. Dialogicity belongs to the very essence of the Church and is the sine qua non of its effective presence 'in the world' and 'for the world'.

The work consists of four chapters. The layout of the dissertation results from the analysis of the German cardinal's texts and constitutes a form of complex response to the research questions posed. The first chapter, 'Sources of Dialogical Thinking in Ecclesiology' undertakes a detailed analysis of the origins and methodological foundations of the dialogical approach in Kasper's ecclesiological reflection, situating it in the broad context of the theological and philosophical tradition. The aim of this chapter is to reveal the key intellectual inspirations and methodological foundations of Cardinal Kasper's reflection, which will allow a more precise understanding and interpretation of his ecclesiology.

The second chapter, 'The Dialogical Essence of the Church' presents an interpretation of the nature of the Church through the lens of the category of dialogue. It contains a

reconstruction and analysis of Kasper's views on the constitutive elements of the complex divine-human (theandric) ecclesial reality.

The third chapter, 'Vectors of Ecclesial Dialogue' discusses the content and logical consequence of defining the dialogical essence of the Church. The subject of this part of the work is the relationship of the ecclesial community to followers of other religions, to Christians of different denominations and to the modern world, as well as the question of the axiological dimension of ecclesial dialogue.

Finally, the fourth chapter, 'Dialogue and the Future of the Church' attempts both a reception and a critical evaluation of Walter Kasper's ecclesiology. It focuses on showing the fundamental importance of dialogue for the future of the Church, as well as for the realization of its mission in the face of the challenges of today's dynamically changing world.

In summary, Kasper's most original ideas are contained in his conception of God as a dialogical community, in which the Persons not only dialogue, but are a dialogue. The One Divine Life is realized in the (*communio*) dialogue of the three Persons. The German cardinal creatively and innovatively develops an ecclesiology based on the mystery of the Triune God. Its originality is also determined by a radical and consistent interpretation of the essence of the Church: the *communio* of the Triune God is the foundation of the *communio*-Church. Not merely theoretical nor even more eclectic, but holistic and consistent connection of the mystery and genesis of the Church with the mystery of the Trinity are the basic feature of Kasper's ecclesiology, which is its greatest virtue and value. The dialogical essence of the Church implies the conclusion to make dialogue the form and manner of the Church's realization in the world. The dialogical interpretation of ecclesial reality reminds us of the constant need for metanoia and the principle of *Ecclesia semper reformanda et purificanda*. Their realization is carried out "in" dialogue and "through" dialogue. Kasper's ecclesiology is an integral and comprehensive proposal for reflection on the Church based on the key question of God and the guiding category and idea of dialogue. These factors and the consistent personal-Trinitarian perspective determine its originality and value. The above results inspire and invite further research on the theological reflection of Cardinal Walter Kasper.

**Key words:** Walter Kasper, Church, ecclesiology, dialogue, world

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