### Sensus Fidelium: Listening For The Echo, 5-8<sup>th</sup> September, The Hayes
Parallel Paper Schedule – Tuesday September 6<sup>th</sup>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Room: TBD</th>
<th>Room: TBD</th>
<th>Room: TBD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.30</td>
<td>Nicholas King</td>
<td>Shaun Blanchard</td>
<td>Gregory Murphy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Listening for the Echo: Acts 15 and an issue that could have torn the Church apart</em></td>
<td><em>The Minority Report: Listening to the ‘Echo’ of Dissenting Voices at Trent and the Vatican Councils</em></td>
<td><em>The Dominicans and the Pope</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>Jos Moons</td>
<td>Joe Inguanez</td>
<td>Nicholas Healy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Lumen Gentium’s broadened conception of the Holy Spirit</em></td>
<td><em>Sensus Infidelium or Stifling the Spirit?</em></td>
<td><em>Sensus Fidelium: Some Critical and Constructive Questions</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.30</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>Michael Canaris</td>
<td>Jordan Pullicino</td>
<td>John Sullivan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><em>Reimaging Soundings and Echoes: Francis A. Sullivan, S.J. and the Teaching, Learning, and Believing Church</em></td>
<td><em>What contribution to an understanding of the <em>sensus fidelium</em> is made by a theology of the charisms?</em></td>
<td><em>Voice Matters</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>Gregory Ryan</td>
<td>Stephen D'Evelyn</td>
<td>Beáta Tóth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Echo and Equilibrium: Seeking the <em>Sensus Fidelium</em> in F.S. Fiorenza’s “Communities of Discourse and Faith”</em></td>
<td><em>The <em>Sensus Fidelium</em>, the Body of Christ, and Disability</em></td>
<td><em>“Knowledge of the Heart” – Notes on the Definition of the <em>Sensus Fidei</em> in the Personal Life of the Believer</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shaun Blanchard

The Minority Report: Listening to the ‘Echo’ of Dissenting Voices at Trent and the Vatican Councils

In this paper, I argue that the record of theological dissent at Trent and Vatican I are positive and fruitful sources of theological reflection on the sensus fidelium. Not only do these “minority” voices (minority in the literal sense of opposing a majority group or opinion) help us to accurately interpret the drafts and final documents of these councils, but these minority figures can sometimes preserve the sensus fidelium through their calls for various concessions from the majority.

First, I revisit Trent’s decree on Scripture (1546). Due to the interventions of two idiosyncratic Italians (Nacchianti, the Bishop of Chioggia, and Bonuccio, the General of the Servites), the question of the relationship between scripture and tradition was left open – that is, the “two-source” partim-partim theory was not dogmatically enshrined, even though the great majority of council fathers found it either obviously true or at least unproblematic. Arguably, the “two-source” theory (which was rejected centuries later in the re-drafting of Dei verbum) was a departure from the sensus fidelium of the ages. This was an important episode wherein a tiny minority gained a critical concession. I argue that this minority intervention bore fruit not only in a final Tridentine document that better echoed the faith of the ages, but also bore fruit centuries later at Vatican II in Dei verbum.

Second, I argue that the minority at Vatican I (the “swan-song of Gallicanism,” according to Francis Oakley) protected the Church from extreme ultramontanism. The comparably large and intellectually powerful minority played a fortuitous role in tempering a dogmatic proclamation that was further balanced and interpreted a century later in Lumen gentium and Christus Dominus.

I conclude by tentatively suggesting theologians should look for ways in which the minority at Vatican II could serve future generations of Catholics in unforeseen ways.

Michael Canaris

Reimaging Soundings and Echoes: Francis A. Sullivan, S.J. and the Teaching, Learning, and Believing Church

Neither Pope Francis’s frequent allusions to the “santo pueblo fiel de Dios” (widely understood to be influenced by the Argentinian teología del pueblo of Juan Carlos Scannone, S.J. and others) nor the recent International Theological Commission text Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church can be argued to be self-interpreting ecclesiological realities. The Aparacida document and Rahnerian theology can and have served as some lenses through which to read these important statements and their relationship to the sensus fidelium, and the healthy life of the church as a whole. However, I posit that an even richer interpretive methodology can be found in the writings of Francis A. Sullivan, S.J. His thought
provides a conceptual framework for discerning the contours of magisterial, papal, and dicasterial writings, as well as practical tools for translating a contemporary understanding for “all the faithful,” as a recent book by Peter Phan and Bradford Hinze has put it.

Sullivan’s numerous contributions to questions surrounding the “echo” of church teaching among the triad of voices (bishops, theologians, and wider laity) that constitute the “people of God” resonate strongly with a shifting approach toward popular piety and local ecclesiological devotions coming from the Vatican during the current pontificate. Deeply inspired by the Newmanian project, Sullivan refers repeatedly to the relationship between the *fides quae creditur* and the church as both the community in which we believe and the one collectively doing the believing.

In this paper, I will draw from my forthcoming monograph on Sullivan to demonstrate the applicability of his ecclesiological method to a more robust understanding of Lumen Gentium #12 and the thorny questions surrounding criteria for determining legitimate articulations of the *sensus fidelium*, as well as a fuller vision of the *ecclesia docens et discens* (the teaching and learning church), roles in which all members participate “from bishops down to the last of the lay faithful.”

**Stephen D’Evelyn**

*The Sensus Fidelium, the Body of Christ, and Disability*

The sensus fidelium has been described in terms of the teaching Church and the learning Church -- a dichotomy between laity and hierarchy, the former to be taught by the latter above them.

Yet there are other views: ‘the faithful are not merely passive recipients of what the hierarchy teaches and theologians explain; rather, they are living and active subjects within the Church.’

This paper argues the sensus fidelium would thus be most fruitfully seen as a social and mystical divine embodying given the Church, the Body of Christ, by divine self-giving in the Eucharist, the Body of Christ.

The Eucharist reconfigures hierarchy conceived in purely static terms of higher and lower. It puts Christ broken and glorified at the centre of reality; this leads to a re-valuing of humanity and of society viewed in hierarchical terms. We then see how the human being marginalized by such society becomes most central to the Eucharistic way of re-ordering the world through transofrmative mystical-social communication.

We echo the divine self-gift in liturgy. This paper explores Aquinas' Corpus Christi hymn 'Ave verum corpus' from the viewpoint of social-mystical Eucharistic transformative order. It offers a Eucharistic revaluation of the 'social model of disability' in which society’s organization is
seen as the force that creates disability. In the spirit of ‘Living Fully 2016’, the international conference and symposium on Catholic disability theology, this paper converses with Reinders, Gavaenta, DeLubac, as well as William Desmond, Nancy Eiesland, and others and considers how the Eucharist—Christ’s broken-glorified and shared body—as experience of disability—brokenness as openness to unifying glory creating community through difference—gives true perspective on the sensus fidelium as the embodied communal assent of the people of God and so enables a re-evaluation of the disabled person in the Church.

Nicholas Healy

Sensus Fidelium: Some Critical and Constructive Questions

This 'short paper' will discuss the concept (or, as it may be, the concepts) of the sensus fidelium. Some of the questions addressed include: Can we find it at work in a significant way in Scripture, for example in the Pauline communities? Can it be relied upon, and how, or not? Does it really exist, and if so is its existence empirically verifiable or at least locatable, and/or does it have a more directly theological or pastoral or other function? How could or should we construe the relation between it and the doctrine of the Trinity? Is it ongoing or does it have only occasional relevance or existence? Can we learn something about it from non-Roman Catholic theology and polity? Are there more appropriate or helpful ways to discuss or describe this phenomenon? Some of the suggested answers to these questions will draw upon the relation between truth and truthfulness, and their related virtues, and upon the Pro-Nicene patristic understanding of the Christian life and of the form and function of theology.

Joe Inguanez

Sensus Infidelium or Stifling the Spirit?

Sensus fidelium, although in practice not always really bothered much about, is a very important concept in Christian theology. It referred to the unwritten “credo” of the faithful which takes its authority by the fact that it is held by the simple Christians who try to understand the Gospel and apply it to their own life.

In this paper I, as a sociologist, intend to look on the sensus infidelium. Infideles is the antonym of fideles. Originally, term “infidel” was used to describe a person who practiced a religion other than one's own. Thus Muslims are considered an infidel to a Christian and vice-versa. In Christianity and ecclesiastical circles the term took a pejorative sense. Here however I am using it in a neutral sense meaning simply those who do not hold a Christian faith.
However, the influence of “infidel” on the Judeo-Christian tradition is very old. Its starts with the distinction between what is sacred and what is profane. We find the influence of the “infidel” on Old Testament literature, “infidel Philosophers and their philosophy on Christian theology, Roman Law on Canon Law, and Social theorists on the Social doctrine of the Church, e.g., Marx, pacifist movement etc.

The basic question: What is God telling the His People by the voice of these “outsiders” or anonymous Christians?

Nicholas King SJ

*Listening for the Echo: Acts 15 and an issue that could have torn the Church apart*.  
There are several apparently insoluble pastoral issues that the Church is currently struggling to solve, with a tension between respect for the tradition and the demands of the moment. This paper will offer a fresh reading of Acts 15, which is placed significantly almost exactly in the middle of the narrative of Acts, and offers a way of dealing with such issues. Here there is tension between those who (quite rightly) say, "This is what the Bible says" and those who realise that the present situation demands a fresh look at the question. Watching the successive stages in which the episode unfolds may offer some clues about how to arrive at a solution. This comes mainly by talking and by listening, and above all by paying attention to the Holy Spirit, of whom Acts may be said to be "the gospel".

Jos Moons SJ

*Lumen Gentium’s broadened conception of the Holy Spirit*

The topic of sensus fidelium seems to draw theologians naturally towards Scripture, history, fundamental theology and ecclesiology. Yet it is also, and perhaps principally, a pneumatological topic. Therefore, when in Lumen gentium 12 the magisterium for the first time spoke on sensus fidelium, this was not only a matter of conceiving the Church differently, but also of conceiving the Holy Spirit differently. In this paper I will delve into that different conception of the Holy Spirit. What pneumatological renewal became manifest in the doctrine on sensus fidelium in LG 12?

In order to answer that question I will first broaden the horizon and highlight various aspects of the conciliar pneumatological renewal, limiting myself to Lumen gentium. Its new conception of the Spirit is apparent in the trinitarian opening reflection in LG 2-4, which replaced an earlier binary introduction. Further during the drafting process the number of references to the Spirit, for example in chapter VII, namely from one reference to eight in the final text. Moreover the scope of the Spirit’s involvement was stretched beyond the typical preconciliar distinction between a visible role in the hierarchy (for truth), an invisible one in the laity (for sanctification), and the Spirit as soul of the Church. After that
we will turn to the conciliar doctrine on sensus fidelium in LG 12 and delve into its pneumatological renewal. We will see that the number of references to Spirit grew (from one to two), and that the scope of the Spirit’s activity was stretched, e.g. insofar as what was attributed to the hierarchy’s was transferred to the Holy Spirit. However the pneumatological renewal remained limited insofar as the Spirit was in both cases mentioned in a subordinate clause. If the Spirit’s role was brought to the front more, would that help to see that fundamentally sensus fidelium is not about figuring out various roles in the Church but about following the Spirit?

**Gregory Murphy OP**

**The Dominicans and the Pope**

At the first Vatican council the Dominican cardinal Filippo Maria Guidi tried to defend the earlier Dominican tradition that the pope must first properly consult before defining: in other words, while the church is infallible, the pope might not be. Guidi’s intervention was intended to rule out any notion of a personally infallible pope and safeguard the tradition that the pope teaches as a bishop among bishops, albeit primus inter pares. While always supporting the jurisdictional primacy of the papacy upon which their own faculties to preach, teach and offer pastoral care depended, Dominican theologians initially held that the Roman Church, rather than the pope personally, was infallible. Only in response to the Protestant challenge in the sixteenth century did some members of the Dominican School of Salamanca teach that the pope cannot err – if, and only if, appropriate preparation (consultations, discussions and even councils) had taken place. These were seen as essential to a proper papal definition. In contrast, Jesuit theologians such as Robert Bellarmine importantly modified this stance as in their view the pope had only a moral obligation to prepare properly – which was not indispensable to the validity of his decisions. One notable feature of the Dominican stance was that the reception of a judgement or of a pope represents an important and even decisive criterion for the truth. This means that there are situations and times in which it is not yet certain whether a decision of the teaching office has become obligatory. This view will be considered in light of the considerations of the development of doctrine and discernment of truth in the International Theological Commission’s 2014 document *Sensus Fidei in the life of the Church.*

**Jordan Pullicino**

*What contribution to an understanding of the sensus fidelium is made by a theology of the charisms?*

Integral to the sensus fidelium is the exercise of discernment. Taking the recent letter from the CDF, *Iuvenescit Ecclesiam,* regarding the relationship between the hierarchical and charismatic gifts in the life and mission of the Church, this paper will examine some key papal
teaching of the last century on this topic, in order to examine what distinguishes the lay practice of discernment from that exercised by the hierarchy.

Iuvenescit Ecclesiam lays emphasis on the distinction of the hierarchic and charismatic gifts in the use of discernment. The document (in line with a succession of papal teachings) attributes the exercise of the gift of discernment especially to the hierarchy. However, it also acknowledges a part played by those of ‘the faithful’, which term would include the laity, possessing a ‘penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience’ and thereby contributing to an increased ecclesial ‘understanding of the Apostolic Tradition’.

The distinction of ‘powers’, in this case applied to the use of discernment, in the context of a correlating distinction of state (lay or clerical) is problematic, as Congar and Lakeland have shown, and as my examination of the above document reveals.

Drawing upon my doctoral research on the lay experience of charisms, this paper will suggest that a theology of charisms can enrich the understanding of the sensus fidelium, and shed some light upon lay and clerical ministry.

Gregory Ryan

*Echo and Equilibrium: Seeking the Sensus Fidelium in F.S. Fiorenza’s “Communities of Discourse and Faith”*

Following the publication of the International Theological Commission paper *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church*, Francis Schüssler Fiorenza remarked that this document failed to acknowledge adequately “the difficult issue” of widespread disagreements held by Catholics regarding Church teaching. Surprisingly, Fiorenza’s own foundational theology does not refer directly to the *sensus fidelium* as a source for theological reflection, although his method of “broad reflective equilibrium” explicitly recognises the value of diverse ecclesial communities of discourse and interpretation. In contrast, Ormond Rush, who develops the significance of hermeneutical reception introduced in Fiorenza’s *Foundational Theology* (1984), gives a major role to the sense of faith which he associates with reception as an ecclesial reality. In two important books, *The Reception of Doctrine* (1997) and *The Eyes of Faith* (2009), and in numerous essays, Rush provides a rich multi-dimensional view of reception and both individual and ecclesial senses of faith.

In this paper I revisit Fiorenza’s notion of the interpreting community in the light of Rush’s work, in order to locate an appropriate role for the *sensus fidei fidelis* and *sensus fidei fidelium* within Fiorenza’s broad reflective equilibrium. Is there a place for the instinct of faith in Fiorenza’s theological method, and does that method cast any light on the practicalities of realizing the potential of the *sensus fidelium* as a source for theological reflection in the contemporary church?
**John Sullivan**

**Voice Matters**

Voice matters, for example, in politics, in music, in writing, and in education. It matters in everyday conversation, where we learn identity, belonging, commonality and difference. Voice builds bridges: between body and spirit; between the tangible and the intelligible; between memory and hope; between current realities and latent possibilities. Voice also builds bridges between persons, both reducing and enhancing their ‘otherness’, both binding them together and yet also distinguishing them from one another. Voice is particularly important for the development of the sensus fidelium and the fostering of horizontal accountability within the Church. To facilitate a healthy communicative climate within the Church we need to enable the voices of all the faithful to be heard and engaged. This paper offers a few reflections on why we need to speak and to be heard in the Church and why we need to hear the voices of others as they articulate their experience of faith. First, I underline the uniqueness of each faith story at the same time as emphasising our need to hear the stories of others. Then, drawing upon insights from George Dennis O’Brien, James Keenan and Ormond Rush, I explain why we need to be heard and to speak, why each person’s voice matters in the Church. Finally, I focus on how we should speak. Five essential qualities should be present in giving voice to our faith: conviction, clarity, courage, humility and compassion.

**Beáta Tóth**

**“Knowledge of the Heart” – Notes on the Definition of the Sensus Fidei in the Personal Life of the Believer**

The 2014 document of the ITC makes a distinction between the communal and the personal aspects of the sensus fidei, terming the latter sensus fidei fidelis and defining it as knowledge “by empathy, or a knowledge of the heart” (no. 50.). Such knowledge is claimed to be differing from objective knowledge which emerges by way of conceptualisation and reasoning. Knowledge of the heart, by contrast, is regarded as pre-reflective, instinctive and spontaneous and is seen as being closely bound up with the theological virtue of faith (no. 56.).

This paper seeks to explore some reasons for the employment of the symbol of the heart in this context. Does ‘heart’ correspond here to the biblical theological anthropological notion? What relationship does it have to the dichotomy which is usually detected back to the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries between the head and the heart: an unfortunate dissociation between intellect and sensibility? Why did such a dissociation set in? Could one say that the definition of sensus fidei fidelis as a knowledge of the heart is heir to an inherited vision which implicitly reckons with a dichotomy between head and heart? Would there be an alternative framework for conceptualising the role of the sensus fidei in the personal life of the individual believer?