

September 5th. 6.15p.m.

ARCIC 211/Jus Divinum/3

Further Revision of ARCIC 204 III, commentary on
Venice 24 (b)

While koinonia will be expressed at the local level, it should also be fulfilled at the universal level if the Church is to be fully as God intends. That is why it is asserted (cf. Venice 23 and 24b) that the will of God for his church includes such a ministry of unity as the one borne by a universal primate. If this office is willed by God, then it may rightly be described in western theological language as jure divino, (by divine right).

by Vatican I
This term was used of the primacy of the ~~Bishop of Rome, the~~ *which the Council recognised in the bishop of Rome.* "Successor of Peter", ~~by Vatican I.~~ The term has various meanings in various contexts, and the meaning intended by Vatican I was that this primacy is of divine institution: in other words, it corresponds to the will of God. This description did not necessarily imply that the universal primacy as a permanent institution was explicitly founded by Jesus in his lifetime. Neither did it imply that the universal primate is a source of the church as if Christ's salvation had to be channelled through him. Rather he was to be the focus of the full koinonia God wills for the church and an instrument through which unity in diversity is realised. It is a universal primate thus envisaged within the collegiality of the bishops and the koinonia of the whole church to whom the qualification jure divino can be applied. If this interpretation of Vatican I is correct, we can agree that the phrase jure divino need not be a matter of disagreement between us. (Venice 24b)

The claim that a universal primacy is willed by God does not imply that, if a christian community is not in communion with the see of Rome, it does not belong to the church of God. For instance, it is important to note that, in spite of the division concerning the primacy, the Roman Catholic Church has continued to recognize the Orthodox truly as churches. It should also be realised that Vatican II rejected the extreme statement that the church of God was identical with the churches united with the Bishop of Rome and was exclusively embodied in them. The conciliar statements of Vatican II imply that other communions do not necessarily suffer from any defect except that of not being in communion with the Roman Catholic Church; the one thing which all these communions lack, according to Vatican II, is that they do not belong to this visible manifestation of christian communion.

The unity in truth and love of all christian communions, which must express itself visibly if it is to be fully realised, both glorifies God and promotes the recognition by the world of the Lordship of Christ among and through his people. The church exists for the glory of God and a disunited church is not fully faithful to this vocation - that is why a universal primacy is needed.