

## 4. The Ukrainian Catholic Church in the Light of Contemporary Ecclesiology.



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# The Ukrainian Catholic Church In The Light Of Contemporary Ecclesiology

The Church is a mystery which cannot be defined, it has been represented by many literary images and expressions. The best-known are "Body of Christ," "Mystical Body of Christ," "Kingdom of Heaven" or "Kingdom of God," "People of God," "Bride of Christ," etc. The multitude of terms proves only too well that the mystery of the Church is greater than any existing term or concept.<sup>1</sup> Pope Pius XII, in his famous encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*, clearly stated that the Church is the visible Mystical Body of Christ.<sup>2</sup> The organic and hierarchical constitution of the Mystical Body exhibits an external nature and visibility - for the Church uses visible means of sanctification, the Sacraments and sacramentals. Besides this the Mystical Body of Christ is composed of visible, individual members. The head of the Mystical Body was a visible God-man, Jesus Christ. Thus, all the theological currents which had been stressing the purely spiritual and invisible view of the Church were clearly rejected by Pius XII.

In the wake of this encyclical, many theologians and commentators started explaining the nature of the Church in juridical, strongly monarchical and hierarchical terms.<sup>3</sup> Neither Pope Pius XII

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- 1 cf. Petro B.T. Bilaniuk, *Theology and Economy of the Holy Spirit : An Eastern Approach*(Bangalore, India:Dharmaram Publications, 1980) pp.83-85
  - 2 *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 35 (Vatican, 1943) 193-248. For the English text, cf. Pius XII, *Foundations of Renewal : Four Great Encyclicals of Pope Pius XII* (Glen Rock, N.J. : Paulist Press, 1961).
  - 3 H. SCHLIER, *Christus und die Kirche in Epheserbrief* (Tubingen, 1930). M.GIERENS, "Eucharistie und Corpus Christi Mysticum" *Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift* 86 (1933), 536-550; 769-781. S. Tromp, *Corpus Christi quod est ecclesia*, 3 volumes : Vol. I : *Introductio generalis* (Romae) 1937, 2nd ed. 1946); *The Body of Christ which is the Church*, trans. A. Condit (New York, 1960); Vol. II : *De Christo capite mystici corpori*, (Romae, 1960) ; Vol. III : *De spiritu Christi anima* (Rome, 1960). L.Valpertz "Kirchliche Mitgliedschaft und Nichtkatholiken nach der Enzyklika *Mystici Corporis*" *Theologie und Glaube* (1944), 43-46. L. Malevez.

