

THE PROBLEM WITH VATICAN II

A Study of the Causes and Effects of the Second Vatican Council



Michael Baker

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Ad Majoriam Dei Gloriam



Our Lady of Perpetual Succour

Ave Regina Caelorum, Ave Domina Angelorum.
Salve Radix, Salve Porta, ex qua mundo Lux est orta ;
Gaude Virgo Gloriosa, super omnes speciosa :
Vale, O valde decora, et pro nobis Christum exora.

V. Ora pro nobis sancta Dei Genetrix.
R. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

THE PROBLEM WITH VATICAN II

Michael Baker

A study, in a series of essays, of the causes of the Second Vatican Council exposing their defects and the harmful consequences that have flowed in the teachings of popes, cardinals and bishops thereafter.

This publication is a work of the website superflumina.org

The author, Michael Baker, is a retired lawyer who spent some 35 years, first as a barrister and then as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. His authority to offer the commentary and criticism on the philosophical and theological issues embraced in the text lies in his having studied at the feet of Fr Austin M Woodbury S.M., Ph.D., S.T.D., foremost philosopher and theologian of the Catholic Church in Australia in the twentieth century, and his assistant teachers at Sydney's Aquinas Academy, John Ziegler, Geoffrey Deegan B.A., Ph.D. and Donald Boland LL.B, Ph.D., between 1964 and 1971.

This work is the fruit of cooperation between the author and Dr Mark Smith who has managed the website superflumina.org for the best part of twenty years.

It is our hope that the book will serve to assist the return of many among the episcopacy, clergy and faithful of Christ's Church to the fullness of understanding that she, a divine thing in the midst of the mundane, is the one thing in this world that is different from all other.

Cover—The high altar of Nôtre Dame de Paris after the great fire that broke out on 15th April 2019. The devastation portrayed reflects, in the physical order, the devastation that has beset Christ's Church in the theological and moral orders as a consequence of Vatican II.

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INTRODUCTION

This book consists of a series of essays published over the years 2005-2019 on the website superflumina.org addressing the incoherence with Catholic principle of various teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the consequences, flowing from such failure, in the teachings and conduct of popes, cardinals and bishops. It opens with a conversation, an imaginary exercise, between two of the Council's American bishops reflecting, in their old age, on that portentous gathering and the effects its determinations had produced in the Church and in the world.

The book offers a radical view, one that challenges the claim that Vatican II was a General or Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church. It provides an argument—two arguments, one *a priori*, one *a posteriori*—in support of this view.

The essays are presented in an order which departs from the chronology of their original publication. There is, perforce, some dated-ness in the reference to events but the reader should have little trouble in adjusting to the temporal discrepancies. There is some repetition in expression which I trust the reader will forgive. I have made some amendments to the text of the essays.

The views expressed are, of course, subject to the Church's formal ruling on the legitimacy of the Council—whenever that shall occur. Hasten the day!

My thanks are due to Dr Peter Kwasniewski and the principals of *The New Liturgical Movement* website for permission to reproduce his essay *The Ninefold Kyrie: An Example of Useless Repetition?* published there on 30th July 2018.

I have included as appendix to the essay *The Trouble with Dignitatis Humanae* an extensive extract from the splendid encyclical *Libertas praestantissimum* (June 20, 1888) of Pope Leo XIII to provide an antidote, as it were, to the facile understanding of human liberty which afflicts the vast majority of modern men. It was the wilful refusal, or the negligence, of a majority of the bishops who attended the Second Vatican Council to acknowledge the truths set forth there by the great pope that facilitated the follies in which they engaged. It is a blindness that continues to afflict the clergy throughout the world especially in the United States of America.

Michael Baker

December 8, 2019—*Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin*
& *Second Sunday of Advent*

PROLEGOMENON

Professor Solomon told this anecdote over a cup of tea after a recent symposium.

“There were these two bishops, you know, in a retirement home in the south of the US. This happened many years ago now. To protect the innocent, I’ll call them Bishop Ted and Bishop Bill. They were both long-livers. The two had been votaries at Vatican II. One had been a secretary or some such in one of the Roman Congregations before being appointed an Auxiliary. The other had been in charge of a diocese in the north. Retirement had brought them to the warmth and comforts of Florida. They had known each other distantly in the 1960s; their common residence had brought them closer.

“Bishop Bill had promoted Vatican II with enthusiasm, had endured the fallout that followed, the loss of fellow priests, bishops and religious, the wholesale abandonment of the faith by many. He had not doubted that the Council had achieved some great work. The disasters occurring almost weekly among the faithful had not affected his faith or his belief in the Council.

“Bishop Ted had been one of the dissenters to a number of Council documents, supporting those he did vote for only through a sense of fellowship with his fellow bishops. (‘Fellowship’, he used to say; ‘solidarity be damned!’) Ted had never doubted there was something wrongheaded about the Council. He had been on the end of some less than charitable (‘positively malicious’, he had said) criticism from German, Dutch, and his fellow American, bishops for his stands but the enduring influence of a sceptical father and a share in that parent’s obduracy had moved him to vote as he had thought fit despite the opposition. Bishop Bill told me of an interchange between them some time after Ted died. As best I recall, it went something like this—

‘I used to think your arguments in those committee meetings were plain damn silly, Ted,’ Bishop Bill said one evening after dinner. ‘Now, I’m not so sure.’ The two were sitting on the western promenade of their retirement home. The sun was setting behind the ridge across the bay. The light was easing. In ten minutes or so the mosquitoes would begin their nightly invasion. Something of the approaching closure of their own day seemed to affect them.

‘Post hoc ergo propter hoc they used to say, as if I was arguing a fallacy.’

‘What’s that?’

‘Those who complained long after, when I told them that the disasters that had followed the Council were inevitable. Just because these had happened *after* the

Council, they argued, it didn't follow the Council had caused them. Didn't it, hell! I told 'em. Here they were holding themselves out as experts in logic when they had participated in a gab-fest that was about as logical as a vote of confidence in Catholicism at a Communist convention.'

'But it all felt so right! There was so much promise that came out of it; so much to look forward to, as Paul VI said later.'

'And it all fell in a heap. But it was always going to fall in a heap.'

'How can you say that?'

'What was the Council in aid of? What was it going to do?'

'Bring the Church up to date. You know, *aggiornamento*.'

'An ecumenical council is supposed to be for the good of the Church. So where was the good? What was the benefit the Church was going to get?'

'More non-believers would join up. There'd be greater numbers, and the faithful would feel better about the Church, you know.'

'But there *weren't* greater numbers, and the faithful *didn't* feel better about the Church; in fact the very opposite. The faithful became disillusioned and they gave the Church away in droves, priests, religious and laity; 40,000 priests, for heaven's sake! If you ran a conference in a corporation, and the staff began to resign in bulk soon after the conference had closed, wouldn't you say the conference had had something to do with it?'

'But it's just something that happened. They got caught up in the world.'

'Why?'

'How the hell do I know? They just lost it.'

'So, why can't we say that they lost it *because of* the Council?'

'No. It was the world. It just happened. They would have lost it anyway.'

'So the claim it was the Council that caused it is just nonsense, eh?'

'Yeah. Hey, we better go in. These mosquitoes are starting to chew me up.'

'So where was the benefit for the Church?'

'There was the revival of the liturgy, the change into the vernacular, greater participation by the laity, simplification of the Office so it's not such a burden...'

'Well, a lot of that happened afterwards, and most of the Council fathers didn't have those changes in mind when they voted for *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. I damn well didn't think they'd abandon Latin when I voted for it. The document *says* Latin is to be retained, for heaven's sake.'

They were inside now, looking out on the gathering gloom, the sunset a thin band of light on the western horizon.

'What about the regularising of the Church's status? You can't say the concordats made sense, given the situation in the rest of the world?'

'How the hell was that for the Church's good? Or even for the good of the faithful in the countries that had them? The Church just seemed to run out on the faithful in those countries after '65. The Vatican functionaries couldn't wait to impose 'religious freedom'. Those silly gits didn't have the brains to see that 'religious freedom' meant that the faithful who were unsure about their faith—and there have always been loads of 'em!—could abandon the Church's teachings with a clear conscience. They were free to make their 'faith journey' as they chose, even to giving up the faith completely. Hadn't we, the Council's bishops, authorised them to do so? Hadn't the Pope endorsed the decision? The Council was a disaster for the faithful, Bill, but you're not allowed to say so.'

'The whole business,' he went on when Bishop Bill forbore to reply, 'reminds me of that tale of Hans Christian Andersen, *The Emperor's New Clothes*. You remember how it went?'

'Sure. There were these two frauds who pretended to be weavers.'

'That's right. They promise a silly Emperor a suit of clothes from a fabric invisible to all who aren't up to their jobs or who are hopelessly stupid.'

'When the non-existent clothes are 'fitted' to the emperor his ministers, not wanting to look like gooks, pretend they are real. And when the Emperor marches in procession the townsfolk, thinking the same way, pretend to admire them too.'

'Right. And the voice of sanity in the whole business is a little kid...'

'Who yells out: *He's not wearing anything at all!*'

'Well, that's how it was with the debates on religious freedom. Here were the ministers and townsfolk—the cardinals and bishops in the *Aula*—letting go these

admiring shouts about the Emperor's new clothes, this splendid new doctrine of 'religious freedom', and here's this small group yelling like that kid *There's nothing to it ; it's a load of codswallop*. But they wouldn't listen. Religious freedom might be alright as a political protocol where you got people of different views pulling a country every which way, but it's ridiculous as a theological principle. Didn't Christ say, *I am the way, the truth and the life*? The Apostles didn't concede rights to any other belief. What about St Paul: *Do not yoke yourself with unbelievers... What can light and darkness have in common?* How could the descendents of the Apostles allow equality to every tin-pot religion?

'So who were the two frauds?'

'Well, Courtney Murray and Emil de Smedt, for a start. But there were plenty of others.'

'Alright, forget religious freedom for the moment, why do you say the Council was always going to fall in a heap?'

'Come back to the two questions. *What was the Council in aid of?* And *What was the benefit for the Church?* You already answered the first—sort of. It was to bring the Church 'up to date'; *aggiornamento*, right?'

'Right.'

'Did the Church need bringing up to date?'

'Of course it did. There were all sorts of problems.'

'But was it the Church that had the problems? Or was it the bishops, the priests, the religious? Anyway, the Church *can't* have problems. The Church is the spotless bride of Christ. That's in *Ephesians* 5. And what did Christ say to Saul after he was knocked to the ground? You are persecuting *me!* He identifies the Church with Himself. The Church is Christ's creation and Christ is its head. All that *We are the Church* stuff after the Council was Protestant crap.'

'But there's a sense in which things had to be brought up to date.'

'So, the Church's ministers needed 'bringing up to date'. We might have had to adapt the way we taught the faith to deal with the great changes in the secular world, but that didn't mean we needed to try and reinvent the Church. Anyway, it's not possible. Think about it! If the Church is something of God it doesn't even exist in time. It's outside time.'

'Of course it exists in time. It's with us here and now.'

'And so is my soul; so is yours. But our souls don't get any older or any younger. Why? Because they aren't material. They are *in time*, but strictly speaking they are *outside* time: when I die, my soul doesn't die, it continues in existence. The Church is somewhat the same: it may need material instruments to achieve its ends; buildings, books, popes, bishops, priests and people. These can all disappear but the Church goes on.'

'I still think the Church needed bringing up to date.'

'All that razzamatazz was *sounding brass and tinkling cymbal*, a lot of clerics having a good time at the expense of the faithful, flocking the coffee shops around the Vatican, conducting themselves like schoolboys. It was a waste of time and money, money provided by the poor faithful for determinations which worked, in due course, to destroy the faith of their children.'

'But the Church did get *something* out of the Council. There's much more openness than there was before.'

'Yeah. Well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. But one thing the Church got that many of the Council fathers didn't bargain on. And it got it in spades.'

'Which was what?'

'*Secularism*. In their endeavours to make the Church 'relevant', to 'bring it up to date', the Council fathers allowed entry to any zany secular idea. Everything that has followed—re-inventing the liturgy in the vernacular, the smorgasbord liturgies, the facility for priests to fiddle with what is laid down, the systematic disobedience, the 'rock' Masses and the reduction of the Mass to a sort of entertainment with applause, the loss of faith of so many priests, has all resulted from the introduction of the secular. That's the real 'spirit of Vatican II'. It was like trying to mix water and oil. What do you get if you do that?'

'A gluggy mess.'

'Right! Think how the popes and bishops compromised the Church's standing. When John XXIII abandoned the exercise of discipline in his Opening Address he effectively abandoned the Church's authority. We've suffered ever since. No pope since has condemned a theologian who preached heresy.'

'What about Tissa Balasuriya?'

'Balasuriya was a soft target. And John Paul didn't go on with it anyway. Balasuriya was reinstated a year later and boasted he never had to withdraw a thing. Why, the other day Benedict XVI had a meal with that creep Küng, a

heretic JP II should have excommunicated 20 years before. Think about what Paul VI did in his address to the UN in October '65. He presented himself as supplicant to an organization dominated by Masons, deferring to their authority in secular matters. Read what he said there. He acknowledged the validity of the UN's claim that 'religious freedom' was a human right. He publicly rejected the Church's teaching laid down by Pius IX and Leo XIII two months *before* the bishops passed *Dignitatis Humanae*. God save us, there were just seventy of us who refused to endorse that silly document, seventy out of twenty four hundred bishops.'

Bishop Bill got up. 'I'm going to bed,' he said. 'It's all too much for me. The Church got *something* out of Vatican II. I can't believe it got nothing.'

'I'll tell you what it got, Bill. What it got was chaos!'

"That was the last conversation of any depth the two had. Bishop Ted was carted off to hospital the next week and he was dead within the month."

WHAT WENT WRONG WITH VATICAN II

In 1998, Dr Ralph McInerny, Professor of Mediaeval Studies and Director of the Jacques Maritain Center at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA, wrote a book bearing the above title.¹ In the Introduction he summarised the vigorous state of the Church before the Council then documented the decline that followed.

“It is estimated that in the wake of the council, ten million Catholics stopped attending Mass regularly, a decline of thirty per cent...

“Comparing the pre-Conciliar Church and the aspirations of Vatican II with events of the past thirty years forces us to ask: What went wrong? Can anyone pretend that things have improved? There are some bright spots, but it is undeniable that the faith of Catholics has been shaken... And sometimes it seems as if we are being told that this bad news is good news if only we can understand the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

“As we near the third millennium of the Christian era, it seems an apt time to reflect on Vatican II. It is the central event of Church history in our time. Clearly it was a providential occurrence. Its sixteen documents, although with varying force, are the measure of the Faith of Roman Catholics. Properly understood, it was a great blessing for the Church—properly understood.”²

This he put as his task, properly to understand the Council, adding a sentiment with which most of his readers would have agreed, “and a formidable one it is indeed.”

But the approach he took limited the scope for criticism—

“I take as a necessary premise the fact that we are bound by the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. Yes, I grant that many passages in the sixteen documents of Vatican II require careful study and interpretation, but study that begins with an animus against the council is bound to go astray...”³

He cited the then head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in support—

“What went wrong with Vatican II? Not its teachings, said Cardinal Ratzinger—not the documents that were promulgated, but the false interpretations of them in the postconciliar period...”⁴

What went wrong with Vatican II? According to Dr McInerny—*nothing*. It was impossible; for the truth of what the Council taught was guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. While the title of his book was catchy, then, it was misleading. Given the extent of concern among Catholics over various of the Council’s teachings, there must have been many who were unconvinced the book had fulfilled the claim in its subtitle—*The Catholic Crisis Explained*.

¹ Ralph M McInerny, *What Went Wrong With Vatican II, The Catholic Crisis Explained*, Manchester [New Hampshire] (Sophia Institute Press), 1998.

² *What Went Wrong With Vatican II*, op. cit., pp. 13, 14.

³ *What Went Wrong With Vatican II*, op. cit., p. 15.

⁴ *What Went Wrong With Vatican II*, op. cit., p. 114, reporting what was said in *The Ratzinger Report*, the results of a long interview between the Cardinal and Vittorio Messori.

*

*

The presupposition Dr McNerny adopts leads to curious results. If there was nothing wrong with Vatican II why were dissentients concerned in 1985, as he reports, that the publication of the results of a long interview with Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger by Vittorio Messori (published as *The Ratzinger Report*) and the convocation of the Second Synod of Bishops might amount to “efforts to roll back history, to repudiate the council, to effect a restoration”?⁵ If there *was* material in the Council documents to which the dissentients could appeal how could it be said that everything in the Council documents was guaranteed? The Holy Spirit would hardly guarantee material which provided scope for dissent from Catholic truth.

The first thing to be said about his approach is that one cannot arrive at the truth by working from a presupposition. That is the *modus operandi* of the subjectivist. The *modus* of the realist philosopher and theologian, in contrast, is to weigh assertions *against reality* for it is reality which is the measure of truth. Secondly, if, as Dr McNerny says, the Holy Spirit guaranteed the truth of the Council’s teachings, why should there be anything to fear? Is He not also the Author of reality? The truth of the teachings of the Council Fathers—each and every one of them—should be manifest in any objective study.

Let us, then, look at the realities, or sufficient of them for our purposes.

What impresses the reader of any of the histories of the Council is the disorder that frequently characterised its activities, a disorder that began at the top with John XXIII’s departure from laws he himself had laid down for the Council’s proceedings. Two years prior to the Council’s inception the Pope had established a Central Preparatory Commission to oversee the preparation of schemas for discussion. There were five of them: four of the five, the four over whose content it had exercised little influence, offended an influential body of bishops with a liberal bent, predominantly German, French and Dutch. The rules approved by the Pope required a two-thirds majority vote by the Council Fathers against the acceptance of a preparatory schema. Under the influence of this cadre some 60% of the bishops voted against these four. The cadre then put pressure on the Pope who overrode the law he had promulgated ruling that the four preparatory schemas in question should be abandoned. Two years of careful work involving hundreds of bishops and their advisers was rendered void at a stroke; and, it might reasonably be argued, years were added to the Council’s length.⁶

The Council Fathers often conducted themselves like squabbling children rather than adults. Neither John XXIII nor Paul VI, even when present at one or other of the

⁵ *What Went Wrong With Vatican II*, op. cit., p. 111.

⁶ This established a precedent making departure from principle itself a principle, a weakness which has continued to afflict the Church’s ministers ever since. A telling instance was Pope John Paul’s breach of the Church’s existing laws by personal *fiat* in permitting women and girls to serve on the sanctuary.

Council's sessions, appeared to exercise the discipline that his position demanded. Dr McNerny refers (as well he might) to the Council Fathers' scandalous treatment of Cardinal Ottaviani during the First Session on 30th October 1962 as he argued zealously against the refashioning of the Mass. The lack of charity exemplified there ought to have moved Pope John to bring the Council proceedings to a halt, if temporarily, to remind the Fathers of their obligations and to impose himself. But he did not. *Not to will is to will not*: the toleration of inappropriate behaviour grants it permission. And, indeed, the Pope had acknowledged the abandonment of the exercise of discipline as a principle in his Opening Address —

“Nowadays... the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations.”

Like his predecessor Paul VI failed adequately to discipline the Council Fathers or to impose himself. These failures indulged, indeed encouraged, the politicking tendency which permitted certain bodies of bishops to dominate much of the Council's proceedings. It was not charity at work among them but ambition.

Dr McNerny treats the frequent disorders of the Council dismissively:

“There is little doubt that in the minds of many observers... a struggle was going on... Even if this mirrored a struggle among the Fathers of the Council, when the dust settled, when the final vote was taken, when a document was approved and promulgated by the Pope, it was the product of the teaching Church.”⁷

No matter how vigorous or adversarial the process of debate may have been, no matter what breaches of charity, or rank injustices, may have been committed in the course of its conduct, the end result had to reflect Catholic truth because of the guarantee of the Holy Spirit.⁸ The objective reader of the Council's history would be unlikely to share his view. With what concern, for instance, would he not read the comment of Msgr Pavan on the debate preceding the vote on 22nd September 1965 on the fourth schema of the document that became the *Declaration on Religious Liberty*, as “perhaps the most violent ever to have taken place in the *aula*”.⁹

There is not space or time to address each of the areas of concern over the Council Fathers' ruminations, or determinations. Nor is it necessary. If the Council Fathers' teaching on just one topic was defective it is sufficient to show the falsity of the assertion that the Holy Spirit guaranteed all their teachings. We will confine ourselves to the issue that has caused the greatest concern, the *Declaration on Religious Liberty*.¹⁰ The Council Fathers pronounced formally in n. 2 of this document:

“This Vatican Synod declares that the human person has a right to religious liberty.”

⁷ *What Went Wrong With Vatican II*, op. cit., p. 31

⁸ This demonstrates the problem of working to a preconception. You go nowhere; or, better expressed, you end up where you started.

⁹ Reproduced in Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, Long Prairie, Minnesota (The Neumann Press), 1992, p. 153.

¹⁰ We set forth in summary form here the arguments elaborated in the chapter entitled *The Trouble With Dignitatis Humanae* pp. 43 et seq. below.

The balance of the document, fifteen sections in all, teases out the consequences of this statement of principle and endeavours to show that it may be read in conformity with the Church's previous teaching.

On 8th December 1864, in the *Syllabus of Errors* attached to his encyclical, *Quanta Cura*, Pius IX formally condemned (in n. 15) the following proposition:

"Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, led by the light of reason, he thinks to be the true religion."

Analysis of the terms in which Pius IX expressed himself, their formality and precision, shows that this condemnation constitutes infallible teaching of Christ's Church. Pius IX's expression conforms to each of the four requirements for infallible teaching set forth by the (first) Vatican Council in the decree *Pastor Aeternus* less than six years later. On 20th June 1888, Leo XIII expounded the reasons behind the condemnation in his encyclical *Libertas praestantissimum*, 'On Human Liberty'. In *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*¹¹, Michael Davies reports that Pius IX's formal condemnation of religious liberty was the initiative of his adviser, Gioacchino Cardinal Pecci, who succeeded him as Pope Leo XIII. *Libertas praestantissimum* can, therefore, be regarded as the authoritative exposition of the reasons for the Church's condemnation.

The statement of principle in *Dignitatis Humanae* contradicts this infallible teaching explicitly.

Now the Catholic Church does not contradict herself. It is impossible therefore that *Dignitatis Humanae* could constitute valid teaching of the Church. It follows that the claim that all of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council are guaranteed by the Holy Spirit is false.

In any age but the present where, as a result of the nostrums of subjectivists and materialists, men live in a state of intellectual confusion, the contradiction by *Dignitatis Humanae* of the Church's previous infallible teaching would be clear to all. As it is, there are theologians who have spent much of their energies, and thousands of pages of tortured reasoning, in an endeavour to reconcile *Dignitatis Humanae* with the Church's constant teaching—all of it in vain.

Despite the fact that the focus of his book is Vatican II Dr McNerny spends a great deal of time on the dissent to Pope Paul's encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*. "It is clear," he says,

"that 1968 marked the beginning of dissent in the Church. It would be impossible to find at any earlier time a claim that theologians had the professional task of appraising and assessing magisterial teachings of accepting or rejecting them. Now it was as if, when the Pope spoke, the theologians first scrutinized what he had said to see whether it was acceptable to them or not. This was utterly new, and it did not begin with Vatican II, but with *Humanae Vitae*."

¹¹ Long Prairie, Minnesota (The Neumann Press), 1992.

He is wrong. The revolution of the theologians against the Church's magisterium *did begin* with Vatican II. Indeed, in *Dignitatis Humanae* it achieved a victory never afterwards replicated, even with *Humanae Vitae*. For *Dignitatis Humanae* marked the triumph of the thinking of dissident theologians—the chief of them, the American Jesuit *peritus*, John Courtney Murray—over the Church's Magisterial teaching. This triumph provided, at the doctrinal level, the precedent for the rebellion that was precipitated with *Humanae Vitae* and has continued ever since.

Dr McNerny sets out the statement rejecting the authority of *Humanae Vitae* of Fr Charles Curran, Associate Professor of Theology at the Catholic University of America, subscribed by two hundred theologians and published in the *New York Times* on 30th June 1968. No one will be surprised to find among their reasons the claim that the “[p]ast authoritative statement on religious liberty... [had] been corrected at a later date”. *And with justice!* If the Church's bishops could ignore the Church's previous infallible teaching why should not her theologians?

That the dissent to *Humanae Vitae* had its origins in Vatican II may be seen, too, from another analysis. The *matter* of the dissent was the agitation by various members of the Catholic faithful: the *form* which made the agitation rebellious was a resurgent evil which had long afflicted the Church and to which excessive attention was given by the Council Fathers, Protestantism.¹² Protestantism's signal characteristic, as English historian Sir Maurice Powicke remarked in 1941, is the assertion of the supremacy of conscience.¹³ This was the refuge to which the dissentients appealed. It is the refuge to which they have appealed ever since. In his little book on the crises that followed Vatican II, Fr John McKee quotes the splendid words of William Philbin, Bishop of Down and Connor, to his flock rejecting the Protestant assertion:

“As Christians we have already exercised our conscience, that is, our moral judgement on the larger and more fundamental question of whether we accept Christ and His Church as holding authority from God to teach. Once we have made this acceptance we are obliged, and obliged by our conscience, to follow the authoritative guidance that comes from these sources.”¹⁴

Quite apart from the *theological* errors to which the dissentients appealed, the orchestrated objection to the encyclical followed inevitably upon the *disciplinary* errors in the conduct of the Council. If bishops and their *periti* could misbehave themselves in the Vatican's public forum, and their misconduct be tolerated by the Pope, why should renegade theologians be precluded the same liberty? Again there is a measure of justice in this attitude. As the failure of a father to exercise discipline over his children provides bad example and leads to disorder in his family, so did the failures of John XXIII and Paul VI lead to disorder in the family of the Church.

¹² The distinction of reality into *matter* and *form* is explained later in this article.

¹³ “The claim of conscience in the end took the place of Rome.” Sir Maurice Powicke, *The Reformation in England*, London, 1941

¹⁴ Fr John McKee, *The Enemy Within The Gate*, Houston (Lumen Christi Press), 1974, p. 227.

Dr McNerny criticises Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre's movement, the Society of St Pius X, for its internal incoherence—

“[Archbishop Lefebvre] sought to appeal to earlier councils in order to discredit Vatican II. But that which guarantees the truth of the teaching of one council guarantees the truth of them all...”¹⁵

But, once again, Dr McNerny is relying on his presupposition. Archbishop Lefebvre recognised the truth: God's Holy Church does not contradict herself. If Vatican II produced teachings that contradicted what the Church had previously taught, there had to be something wrong with it. While Archbishop Lefebvre committed objective error in consecrating bishops without a papal mandate, on this issue he was right.

Dr McNerny refers in the fifth chapter of his book to the dilatoriness of the Vatican in addressing the dissent that followed the Council—

“For twenty years [after *Humanae Vitae*], dissent was allowed to continue unabated. It became institutionalized. Catholic universities became the usual habitat of dissenting theologians, and many Catholic universities, in Msgr Kelly's phrase, essentially declared independence from the Catholic Church... The situation was aggravated by the fact that dissenters controlled the means of communication. It was dissenters whose opinion was sought whenever the Vatican spoke, the secular media knowing they could count on a negative reaction... In retrospect, it seems incredible that this situation went unaddressed until 1985, but so it was...”¹⁶

But he does not ask why this occurred, or why (in 1998) it was continuing. The very chapter title—*The Vatican Finally Responds To Dissent*—begs an answer but it is not forthcoming. The refusal to act, and the dilatoriness which has characterised any action since, was (and is) a manifestation of the problem. It has its source in John XXIII's abdication of the Church's authority, part of the platform on which Vatican II was constructed, and on which its implementation continues today. Dr McNerny refers to the publication of *The Ratzinger Report* in 1985 and the holding of the Second Extraordinary Synod of Bishops the same year, as marking some sort of watershed. Indeed good effects flowed, for seven years later there resulted the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. But the watershed that will enable the Church to return to her former vigour is still to be reached, let alone crossed.

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Pope John XXIII first decided to call an ecumenical council then set about determining the issues it should address.¹⁷ On Pentecost Sunday, 1959, he created an Ante-Preparatory Commission, presided over by his Secretary of State, Tardini—

“to assist him in determining the subject matter of the Council... Twelve days after... Cardinal Tardini invited the Sacred Congregations of the Roman Curia to make a

¹⁵ *What Went Wrong With Vatican II*, op. cit., p. 33.

¹⁶ *What Went Wrong With Vatican II*, op. cit., extracts on pp. 108, 110 and 113.

¹⁷ “He had been Pope for scarcely three months when he told seventeen astonished cardinals of his intention to call an ecumenical council, on January 25, 1959, in the Benedictine monastery adjoining the basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls.” Fr Ralph M Wiltgen, S.V.D., *The Rhine flows into the Tiber, A History of Vatican II*, New York, 1967; my copy Tan Books Reprint, Rockford (Illinois), 1985, p. 13.

comprehensive study of all matters under their authority, and to offer specific proposals on matters which they felt could usefully be presented to the future preparatory commissions. Three weeks later [Cardinal Tardini] sent out 2,593 copies of a letter to as many prelates around the world, informing them that Pope John XXIII desired their assistance in drawing up topics for discussion at the Council..."¹⁸

While such a course might have been appropriate for any other convocation of the Church's bishops it was inappropriate for, and misconceived the essence of, an ecumenical council. At the heart of the business is the charism of extraordinary infallibility attending such a council. There can be only one justification for the existence of such a *gratia gratis data* the need to determine some issue essential to the Catholic faith. *The end* in an ecumenical council comes first: it is the cause, not some incidental side effect. To understand this, we must first discuss infallibility.

Because she is of God, the Church is infallible. St Irenaeus wrote:

"Where the Church is, there is also the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace; but the Spirit is truth."¹⁹

She is also, for the same reason, indefectible; the spotless Bride of Christ. The Pope, or the Pope and bishops together in Council, are infallible not by nature, as is the Church, but by participation. They participate—for the moment—in the Church's infallibility and serve to manifest it. To put the matter in another way, the Church is infallible *by essence*, the Pope and the bishops *by accident*, the accident of their being called to serve the Church at this time and in this place. The critical issue to be grasped is that it is the Church's infallibility that Pope, or Pope and Council, exercise as occasion demands.²⁰

An ecumenical (or general) council of the Catholic Church is comprised, as is every other element of reality, of two principles one indeterminate, one determinate, called respectively matter and form. The *matter* is the gathering of all the bishops of the world at the Pope's instigation. The *form*, that which makes the gathering an ecumenical council (which constitutes its *essence*) is the end (or purpose) that the bishops should with the Pope address an issue, or issues, whose determination is essential to the Catholic faith. This end embraces the liberty and advancement of the Church founded by Jesus Christ in the exercise of its office to secure the salvation of all men.²¹ Thus, a council does not become ecumenical simply because the Pope

¹⁸ *The Rhine flows into the Tiber*, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

¹⁹ *Adv. haer.* III, 24, 1.

²⁰ The remarks of Pope Benedict XVI in his impromptu address to the priests of Aosta on July 29, 2005, shortly after his elevation to the Papacy are to the point: "The Pope is not an oracle; he is infallible in very rare situations, as we know..." Nor are the bishops oracles, unerring whenever they open their mouths, even when gathered in Rome with the Pope. Something more is required.

²¹ The relevant principle is the Principle of Indeterminacy—that which can be many from itself is not one of the many. Leo XIII illustrates it in his Apostolic Letter, *Apostolicae Curae* (13.9.1896), 'On the invalidity of Anglican ordinations': "[T]he *matter* of [the sacrament of Order] is by itself the indeterminate part which becomes determinate through the *form*... [T]he *matter* is the imposition of hands. This by itself does not signify anything definite, being used equally for the conferring of certain orders and administering Confirmation... [T]he *form* [of words uttered must] signify... the order of the priesthood." [nn. 24, 25] (*my emphases*). The Pope can summon the bishops of the world for any number of purposes as, for

elects to call it “ecumenical” but because some issue essential to the good of the faith arises for determination and the Pope moves to address it by summoning the Church’s bishops. The *end* comes first; the *means* to the end, the council, is determined by it: *finality determines formality*. Pope Pius IX in his address opening the (first) Vatican Council in 1869 included the following criteria among the issues which might precipitate the calling of an ecumenical council —

“to decide prudently and wisely on all that can help to define the dogmas of the faith; to unmask new errors; to defend, illustrate and develop Catholic doctrine; to preserve and tighten the bonds of ecclesiastical discipline; to strengthen the relaxed morals of peoples.”²²

Set out in the Appendix to this paper is a list of the twenty Ecumenical Councils of the Church prior to Vatican II with the reasons for their convocation showing that each of them conformed to this end.

It is manifest that neither Pope John XXIII nor his advisors understood this critical issue. In his Opening Address to the Council Fathers, the Pope said this.

“The salient point of this Council is not... a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church which has repeatedly been taught by the Fathers and by ancient and modern theologians, and which is presumed to be well known and familiar to all...”²³

Here is a clear admission that there was no issue essential to the Catholic faith for the bishops to determine. Indeed, the end of Vatican II was something else, *aggiornamento*—the asserted need “to bring the Church up to date”—a euphemism for adapting the Church’s teaching to the demands of the secular world. *But the Church had no such need*. Why? Because the Church is timeless: she exists that men, caught up in time, may be incorporated into eternity. It is not for the Church to adapt to the world but for the world to adapt to the Church founded for their salvation.

With Vatican II the ordination which had marked each of the previous twenty ecumenical councils was reversed: instead of the resolution of an issue giving legitimacy to a council, a council resolved to give legitimacy to an issue. Or, to put it more bluntly, instead of the resolution of a *doctrinal* issue giving legitimacy to the Second Vatican Council, the Second Vatican Council resolved to give legitimacy to a *secular* issue.²⁴ The *end* being absent the *form* which would ensure that the Council’s

instance, Pope John Paul summoned them in 1985 to attend the Synod that marked the Council’s 20th anniversary.

²² Quoted in Charles Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, London (Sheed & Ward), 1955, (transl. of *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, Desclee de Brouwer et Cie., Paris), p. 420.

²³ Opening Speech in *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M Abbott S J, General Editor; London, 1966, p.710 at p. 715.

²⁴ Even the best, and most faithful, of Catholic thinkers are influenced by the pervasive evils of modern philosophy. Part of its defective thinking is called *Nominalism* according to which there are no such realities as the natures of things, just *names* which, by convention, men give to blocks of reality that resemble each other. The obverse of this intellectual vice is that a man is free to give to some thing whatever name he chooses, whereupon the thing assumes the reality to which the name corresponds. Of such, we suggest, is the label “ecumenical” applied to the Second Vatican Council. The Popes, the

determinations were infallible was also absent. Notwithstanding the intentions and expressions of Pope John XXIII and of his successor, Paul VI; notwithstanding the expectations of the bishops who took part in it, and the belief of the Catholic faithful; the Second Vatican Council was not an ecumenical council of the Catholic Church.

What, then, is the authority of the Council's teachings? The fact that the Pope endorsed each of the Council's sixteen documents cannot operate to cure defects in them, for two reasons: first, because the Council was not an ecumenical council; and secondly, because the Pope's endorsement was made on the erroneous supposition that it *was* ecumenical, and nothing done in error can bind the faithful. Yet the bishops retained their *ordinary* infallibility when they taught in union with the Pope. It would seem, then, that the Council Fathers' authorisation was limited to matters within the ambit of the Church's constant teaching. It might properly be concluded that in none of the documents of Vatican II can it be said the Council Fathers spoke for the Church except where they dealt with the Church's constant teaching. In all other matters, they spoke only for themselves.

What went wrong with Vatican II? The Council was flawed in its very conception and that flaw has given rise to innumerable evils the chief of which is the disruption of the Church's unity. The effects may be seen in every Catholic community –

- religious life largely destroyed, thousands of vocations wasted;
- houses of religion abandoned and sold for profit;
- religious libraries ransacked, their contents dissipated;
- churches de-sanctified and despoiled of sacred images;
- the sense of the sacred lost;
- the Mass and the sacred liturgy de-sacralised;
- the priesthood emasculated, with innumerable priests ignorant of the infinite dignity to which they have been raised; and,
- thousands upon thousands lost to the faith.

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Towards the end of his book Dr McInerny makes a telling point.

"The Ratzinger Report called attention to this crisis of authority; the Vatican has attempted to resolve it with efforts such as the 1985 synod, the 1989 Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity, the 1992 Catechism, and, just recently, the 1998 apostolic letter *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, which makes dissent a violation of canon law and threatens dissenters with punishments. And there has been a flood of other documents and action intended to reverse the tide of dissent. None have worked."²⁵

bishops, the theologians, have all labelled it "ecumenical"; therefore, following this reasoning, *it must be ecumenical!* But whether it was, in truth, ecumenical is determined not by what men chose to call it, but by reality; for it is reality, not men's opinion, which is the measure of truth.

²⁵ *What went wrong with Vatican II*, op. cit., pp. 156-7.

None have worked because the root of the problem is yet to be addressed. Dr McNerny says the answer is prayer and fasting. He is right—up to a point. But this call addresses not the solution, i.e., the cause, but something in the nature of a condition (*removens prohibens*) to bring the cause into play. Almighty God has given us the means to solve the problems besetting the Church in the power of reason, and the wisdom (reason's right application) stored in the Church's archives. He will move the Church's ministers to apply these means if we pray diligently.

The Church will not return to her proper vigour until the Church's ministers—

-) acknowledge the shortcomings in the conduct of John XXIII and Paul VI, and the defects in the principles they applied in the Church's government;
-) reverse the application of those principles;
-) resume the exercise of the Church's executive power by punishing all breaches of the Church's laws; and
-) submit the question of the authority of Vatican II to the determination of an council which will be truly ecumenical because it will address an issue essential to the welfare of the Church and the faithful.

There is precedent for the *review* of the determinations of one ecumenical council by another. The *Second Council of Constantinople* (553) confirmed the first four Councils; the *Second Lateran Council* (1139) endorsed the decrees of the (first) *Lateran Council*. There is precedent for the *rejection* of a council as not being ecumenical, albeit for reasons other than a failure in form, in the following—

Council in Trullo or Quinisext Council (692) held in Constantinople, because it was not convoked by the Pope;

[The Eastern Orthodox] '*Fourth Council of Constantinople*' (879-880), because it was convoked, not by the Pope, but by Eastern Orthodox bishops.

Council of Pisa (1409), because it was convened by the Church's Cardinals out of necessity, as they thought, because of the difficulties in assessing the identity of the rightful Pope, to resolve the Great Western Schism.²⁶

A council called to consider whether Vatican II was an ecumenical council would, as an incident of its determinations, be in a position to declare the circumstances in which a council is ecumenical, thus resolving this issue for ever.²⁷

The Soul of the Catholic Church is the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity: the Church is His charge. The offence given to Almighty God in the evils precipitated during and after Vatican II may be said to have been aimed, then, primarily at the Holy Spirit, the gentle and creative love of the Father and the Son.

²⁶ Nor does the Church recognise the *Council of Siena* (1423) convened by Pope Martin V at Pavia in April but transferred almost immediately to Siena because of the plague. The Pope dissolved the Council in the February following without endorsing its determinations.

²⁷ While the Church has, in *Pastor Aeternus* (18.7.1870), spelt out the circumstances in which a pope is infallible, she has not as yet made the same determination in respect of a council.

“It is the Spirit of God who lifts up our hearts, takes the weak by the hand, makes perfect those who are progressing. He it is who forms in us through faith the image of God through the common union we have with Him.”²⁸

APPENDIX

The Twenty Ecumenical Councils Prior to Vatican II

1. Council of Nicaea (325) repudiated Arianism and adopted the Nicene Creed; fixed the date of Easter; recognized the primacy of the sees of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch and granted to the See of Jerusalem a position of honour.
2. Council of Constantinople (381) repudiated Arianism and Macedonianism; revised the Nicene Creed in regard to the Holy Spirit by adding *qui simul adoratur*.
3. Council of Ephesus (431) defined the true personal unity of Christ; proclaimed the Virgin Mary as the Theotokos (The Mother of God); repudiated Nestorianism; and repudiated Pelagianism.
4. Council of Chalcedon (451) defined the two natures of Christ against Eutyches and excommunicated him; deposed Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria; and elevated the bishoprics of Constantinople and Jerusalem to the status of patriarchates.
5. Second Council of Constantinople (553) repudiated certain propositions known as ‘The Three Chapters’ as Nestorian; condemned Origen of Alexandria, and certain writings of others; confirmed the first four Councils of the Church.
6. Third Council of Constantinople (680-681) defined the two wills of Christ as two distinct principles of operation, thus repudiating Monothelism.
7. Second Council of Nicaea (787) restored the veneration of icons (condemned at the iconoclast *Council of Hieria*) and repudiated iconoclasm.
8. Fourth Council of Constantinople (869-870) condemned the acts of a Council convoked by the Patriarch Photios of Constantinople against the Pope; deposed Photios as usurper and reinstated his predecessor, Ignatius. [The Photian schism triumphed in the Greek Church, however, and no further Councils were held in the East.]
9. Lateran Council (1123) abolished the right of lay princes to investiture of the Church’s bishops to benefices; dealt with Church discipline; and recovery of the Holy Land.
10. Second Lateran Council (1139) reaffirmed the determinations of the Lateran Council; addressed clerical discipline (including dress and marriage).

²⁸ St Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*.

11. Third Lateran Council (1179) restricted papal election to cardinals; condemned simony; introduced minimum ages for ordination (thirty for bishops); condemned the Albigensians and Waldensians.
12. Fourth Lateran Council (1215) defined transubstantiation; addressed papal primacy and clerical discipline.
13. First Council of Lyon (1245) deposed the Emperor Frederick II; introduced a levy to support the Holy Land; directed a new Crusade against the Saracens and Mongols under King Louis IX of France (St Louis) to the Holy Land.
14. Second Council of Lyon (1274) confirmed the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit—adding the word *filioque* to the Creed; approved the Franciscan and Dominican Orders; established the procedures for the conclave to elect the Pope.
15. Council of Vienne (1311-1312) addressed the errors of the Knights Templar, the Fraticelli, and others; addressed the reformation of the clergy;
16. Council of Constance (1414-1418) met to resolve the Great Western Schism. It did not become ecumenical until its confirmation by Gregory XI who endorsed only its last four sessions. It condemned the errors of Hus and Wycliffe.
17. Council of Florence [of Basel, Ferrara and Florence] (1431-1445) addressed church reform and reunion with the East. The Pope confirmed only its first 25 sessions.
18. Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1514) addressed church discipline.
19. Council of Trent (1545-1563) addressed church reform and repudiated Protestantism; redefined the role and the canon of Sacred Scripture and confirmed the seven sacraments; strengthened clerical discipline and education.
20. Vatican Council (1869-70) defined the primacy of the pope and the circumstances in which he spoke infallibly; repudiated rationalism, materialism and atheism; addressed the question of revelation and the interpretation of sacred scripture and the relationship of faith and reason.

In addition to these, the authority the Council of Orange II²⁹ (529), was given ecumenical authority by Pope Boniface II in 531 so that its various canons on original sin, grace and predestination are established as infallible.

²⁹ Orange in what is now France.

II

In March 2010, the Australian journal *AD2000* published an article by Melbourne Catholic writer John Young entitled *What the Second Vatican Council really said*.³⁰ In the July following, the editor published a response by English Catholic barrister, James Bogle—*Vatican II, infallibility and the Church today*—and a riposte by Young entitled *Infallibility and Vatican II*.³¹ In the August edition, Melbourne writer, Frank Mobbs, entered the fray with a letter; and in the September edition battle became general, as it were, with further contributions from Bogle and Young, and a contribution from theologian, Fr Brian Harrison. Anyone seeking to read the various contributions and the reasonings offered may peruse the journal's website.

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John Young

John Young sets out the traditional content of many of the Council documents as the platform for his thesis that, had its directives only been followed, there would have occurred that springtime in the Church for which Pope John Paul II had hoped. But he fails to deal with the reasons why its directives were not followed. Accurate statements of the Church's teaching were balanced by others ambivalently expressed and others again which were novel if not in conflict with that teaching. And *conduct* was to prove a more eloquent teacher than *words* as the media reported behavioural lapses by various of the Council Fathers. If bishops could ignore the demands of Church discipline, why should the faithful not do the same?

James Bogle

While supporting John's right to criticise those who challenge the legitimacy of the Council James Bogle differs in his approach with this telling observation.

"It is an erroneous kind of loyalty that pretends that there is no crisis when there is one, or which overlooks what is prologue to such a crisis."

Notwithstanding his agreement that the Council was ecumenical, James maintains that some of its documents are clearly fallible. It would be wrong, he says,

"to invest them with an infallibility that the popes and the fathers of the Council clearly did not intend or propose."

He goes on—

"It is common ground... that the [Second Vatican] Council issued no solemn definitions... That is not to say that its teachings are somehow optional. Far from it. Teachings of popes and councils, even when not infallible should be given "religious submission of mind and will" (*Lumen Gentium* 25 and *Can.* 752) unless, of course, they clearly conflict with hitherto established or infallible Catholic teaching."

But how, if Vatican II was an ecumenical council, *could* they conflict with such teaching? More than this; where is the authority for this qualification? There is

³⁰ Cf. http://www.ad2000.com.au/articles/2010/mar2010p10_3242.html

³¹ Cf. http://www.ad2000.com.au/articles/2010/jul2010p12_3325.html

nothing in *Lumen Gentium* 25 (which the Canon Law provision reiterates) to ground it nor anything elsewhere in the Council documents.

Dr Frank Mobbs

Dr Mobbs criticises John Young's assertion that the teaching of the Council Fathers in *Dignitatis Humanae* was infallible because the Church had previously issued disciplinary orders which implied that the Church denied a right to religious freedom. Yet he finds consolation in what he thinks to be true "that the [Church has] never *defined as a doctrine*" that those who deny the Catholic Faith have no rights to hold or propagate their beliefs or to act upon them (emphasis in the text).

John rightly corrects him for failing to distinguish the disciplinary from teaching provisions of an ecumenical council, but he omits to comment on the implication contained in this latter assertion.

Fr Brian Harrison

Fr Harrison says the "mainstream position" of theologians would place the Council's teaching in *Dignitatis Humanae* in the third of the three categories of Catholic doctrines in the Church's *Professio Fidei* (elaborated in the Doctrinal Commentary issued by the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* on 29th June 1998), a category of teaching requiring docility and assent (*Lumen Gentium* 25) but not that it be held definitively.

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Where does this leave the bemused faithful? Was Vatican II an ecumenical council? If so, why was the teaching in *Dignitatis Humanae* not infallible? If Fr Harrison is right, why is that teaching, as it were only qualifiedly binding? If James Bogle is right, are we entitled, before giving them our allegiance, to weigh the authority of each of the Council's teachings to see whether they "clearly conflict with hitherto established Catholic teaching"?

Each of the contributors assumes that the Council was an ecumenical council. This is understandable. Every pope since John XXIII has asserted that it was. And Pope Paul VI confirmed each of the Council's determinations. Surely, a pope cannot err.

But, if a pope cannot err why in his very first public utterance after elevation to the Papacy did Pope Benedict XVI say in an impromptu speech to the priests of Aosta:

"The Pope is not an oracle; he is infallible in very rare situations, as we know. Therefore, I share with you these questions, these problems. I also suffer..." [29 July 2005]

Indeed, it is precisely because a pope *can* err that the Vatican Council in 1870 (*Pastor Aeternus*) laid down with rigour the circumstances that must obtain to ensure that when he speaks he does not err. Melchior Cano, theologian of the Council of Trent, has expressed the principle at stake succinctly:

“Peter has no need of our lies or flattery. Those who blindly and indiscriminately defend every decision of the supreme Pontiff are the very ones who do most to undermine the authority of the Holy See—they destroy instead of strengthening its foundations.”³²

Did the four conditions laid down in *Pastor Aeternus* obtain when John XXIII pronounced the gathering of the world’s bishops an ecumenical council? They did not. It follows that *he might have been in error* in so labelling it. How can we know whether he was, or was not, in error? Only by weighing the Council against the reality to which each of the previous twenty Ecumenical Councils conformed. When this is done one sees real problems with Pope John’s pronouncement, and with Pope Paul VI’s subsequent endorsement, of Vatican II as an ecumenical council.

The following argument is subject to the Church’s ruling.

The *gratia gratis data* of infallibility is given to the college of bishops only for adequate reason. An ecumenical (or general) council is called by a pope to address some issue whose determination is essential to the welfare of the Church and the faithful. Their welfare provides the end, its finality. Now the form (*essence*) of anything follows its finality. Putting it somewhat clumsily, *why it is* determines *what it is*.

In his *Opening Speech* to the Council Fathers, John XXIII acknowledged that there was no issue of doctrine or discipline to be determined but that he had convoked the Council to make the Church relevant to the world a reason conveniently summarised in a word he had coined in an earlier speech—*aggiornamento*. The Council was “to bring the Church up to date”. But the Church had no such need: the Church is outside time. Since, therefore, there was nothing essential to the welfare of the Church and the faithful to justify its convoking, Vatican II was *not* an ecumenical council.

The chief objection to this thesis is that each of the Council’s documents was ratified by Pope Paul VI. James Bogle is right when he says that no teaching of an ecumenical council assumes any authority unless it is ratified by a pope. But in order that its teachings are apt *matter* for the *form* of a pope’s ratification, the council must first *be* an ecumenical council. If Vatican II was not such a council—if *Pope Paul only thought it was*—it is simply irrelevant that he should have ratified the Council’s teachings and determinations. He acted in error, and nothing done in error can bind the Church.

That John XXIII called Vatican II “ecumenical”, or that his successors and the bishops and priests of the world have done the same ever since, is with the greatest respect to each one of them, not to the point. Truth is not determined by assertion; it is

³² Quoted in George Weigel, *Witness To Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, London, 2005, p. 15.

determined by reality: for truth (logical truth) is the identity between what is asserted and what is.

With Vatican II Pope John XXIII reversed the protocol for the summoning of an ecumenical council. Instead of an issue giving legitimacy to a council, a council resolved to give legitimacy to an issue. What was the issue? That the secular should be permitted access to the realm of the sacred. The character of secularisation of the sacred has afflicted the Church ever since.

This proof *a priori* is confirmed *a posteriori* with the issue of 'religious freedom'. On December 8th, 1864, in the encyclical *Quanta cura*, Pope Pius IX condemned the following proposition:

"Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, led by the light of reason, he thinks to be the true religion." [n. 15]

The terms in which he did so do not admit of cavil or contradiction. They conformed precisely to the demands laid down six years later by the *Vatican Council* in *Pastor Aeternus*. In other words, when Pius IX pronounced this condemnation, the Church spoke infallibly. Twenty four years later, in his encyclical *Libertas praestantissimum* (20.6.1888), Leo XIII set out *in extenso* the reasons for the condemnation.

Since the Church does not contradict herself *it is therefore impossible* that the teaching of the Council's bishops in *Dignitatis Humanae* was uttered by the Church. Nor was it: it was uttered only by the Church's bishops.

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Consistent with this argument, each of the contributors to the debate in *AD2000* is partly right and partly wrong.

John Young is right in his endeavours to defend the teachings of Vatican II as infallible—for if that Council was in truth ecumenical, the bishops could not have erred. But his backing of *Dignitatis Humanae* as an instance of infallible teaching proves his position to be wrong.

James Bogle is right in saying that certain of the teachings of Vatican II were fallible, but wrong in his insistence that the Council could still be an ecumenical council. When he asserts that one may qualify the clear words of *Lumen Gentium* 25 with the suffix *unless, of course, they clearly conflict with hitherto established or infallible Catholic teaching* he has breached his own protocol; he has *himself* treated one of the more significant teachings of Vatican II as "somehow optional".

The slip is a significant one, for it recognises that the faithful are presented with real problems of docility when faced with teachings by a pope, or an allegedly ecumenical council, which are demonstrably defective. *And there are such teachings*. If James is correct in qualifying *Lumen Gentium's* statement of principle in this way, how on earth could the Council be said to have been ecumenical?

Frank Mobbs is right when he denies that the teaching in *Dignitatis Humanae* is infallible but wrong when he implies that the Church has never taught infallibly that those who deny the Catholic Faith have no rights to hold or propagate their beliefs. He errs in thinking that *Pastor Aeternus* requires formal definition of a doctrine of faith or morals in order for a pope to teach infallibly. It does not. It requires that the pope should *determine* or *delineate* the doctrine. This is the meaning of *definit* in the Latin text.

Romanum Pontificem, cum ex cathedra loquitur, id est, cum omnium Christianorum pastoris et doctoris munere fungens pro suprema sua Apostolica auctoritate doctrinam de fide vel moribus ab universa Ecclesia tenendam definit, per assistentiam divinam ipsi in beato Petro promissam, ea infallibilitate pollere, qua divinus Redemptor Ecclesiam suam in definienda doctrina de fide vel moribus instructam esse voluit; ideoque eiusmodi Romani Pontificis definitiones ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae, irreformabiles esse.

Thus the teachings of Paul VI in *Humanae Vitae* and of John Paul II in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* are infallible though in neither is there any formal definition.

Fr Harrison is right to draw attention to the different categories of commitment required of the Catholic faithful but he is wrong in neglecting to mention the dilemma that confronts them as they weigh the questionable authority of the teaching in *Dignitatis Humanae* against the infallible teaching of Pius IX and Leo XIII which it contradicts.

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One who realises that Vatican II *was not* an ecumenical council of the Church has the key to the solution of the manifold evils that have beset Christ's Church and her faithful people for more than forty years. He understands that its teachings were not necessarily infallible nor its determinations certain. He recognises it is open to the Church to review each of them.

The present author has been criticised as schismatic for his refusal to endorse what might be called 'the party line' about Vatican II within the body of the faithful. He denies the allegation. The arguments he has put here (and elsewhere) are advanced by one who is bound by his baptism to expose error and to seek the truth. They are advanced not in defiance of, but subject to, the ruling of the Catholic Church.

God, since He is supremely good, would in no wise allow something of evil to be in His works were He not good and omnipotent even up to this point, as to bring forth good even from evil. [St Augustine, *Enchiridion* xi] Almighty God will not long allow error to cast its pernicious shadow over His Church.

'RELIGIOUS LIBERTY' & THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

"Will there [then]... be no progress of religion in the Church of Christ? Certainly... But progress in truth; not a change of faith... [B]y 'progress' something is brought to an advancement within itself: by 'change', something is transformed from one thing into another... The progress of religion in souls is like the growth of bodies which in the course of years, evolve and develop, but still remain what they were... Our fathers ... sowed the... wheat of faith in this field which is the Church. It would be unjust indeed and incongruous if we, their descendents, were to gather, instead of the genuine truth of wheat, the noxious error of weeds..."

St Vincent of Lerins³³

"I do not consider it theologically legitimate, or even decent and honest, to contradict a doctrine and then disguise the contradiction under the rubric: growth and evolution."

American theologian, Fr John C. Ford S.J.³⁴

The most celebrated speech on the subject of religious liberty was delivered by the Belgian bishop of Bruges, Bishop Emile de Smedt, on 19th November 1963 in the course of the Second Session of the Second Vatican Council when, on behalf of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, he presented to the Council Fathers Chapter V of the draft schema *On Ecumenism*. The speech is set out in full in the Appendix to this paper. The reader should study it before considering the criticisms offered below. We have drawn on *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*³⁵, the fine analysis of the late Michael Davies.

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1. St Vincent of Lerins († 450) laid down the principle of the development of doctrine in his *Commonitoria* (notebooks). The Church has repeated it time without number. It appears in the *Office of Readings* for Friday of the 27th week of the Year (*in forma ordinaria*). Catholic doctrine develops as the natural body develops: it grows and matures: it does not change into something else.

2. On 8th December 1864, in the *Syllabus of Errors* attached to the encyclical *Quanta Cura*, Pope Pius IX formally condemned this proposition:

"Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, led by the light of reason, he thinks to be the true religion." [n. 15]

³³ *Commonitoria*, 23, 28; trans. by W A Jurgens in his *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Volume Three, Collegeville, Minnesota, (The Liturgical Press,) 1979, p. 265.

³⁴ Quoted by Paul Blanshard in *Paul Blanshard on Vatican II*, Boston, 1967, p. 88; reproduced by Michael Davies in *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, Collegeville, Minnesota (The Liturgical Press), 1979, at p. 210.

³⁵ The Neumann Press, Long Prairie, Minnesota, 1992

The terms in which he pronounced this (and other) condemnations in the *Syllabus* do not admit of cavil or contradiction. He said:

“We, truly mindful of Our Apostolic duty, and especially solicitous about our most holy religion, about sound doctrine and the salvation of souls divinely entrusted to Us, and about the good of human society itself, have decided to lift our voice again. And so all and each evil opinion and doctrine individually mentioned in this letter, by Our Apostolic authority We reject, proscribe and condemn; and We wish and command that they be considered as absolutely rejected, proscribed and condemned by all the sons of the Catholic Church.”³⁶

In condemning the proposition *that a man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, led by the light of reason, he thinks to be the true religion*, Pius IX addressed a matter of faith—because it concerned, by negation, what a man must believe. He also addressed a matter of morals—because morality has to do with human acts, each of which bears upon man’s last end, and the act whereby a man embraces and professes the one true religion is fundamental to the attainment of that end.

Six years after this condemnation, in the Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, the Vatican Council defined as dogma, that is, as revealed by God, that the Pope speaks infallibly when, 1) speaking *ex cathedra*, that is, carrying out his duty as pastor and teacher of all Christians; 2) in accordance with his supreme apostolic authority; 3) he explains a doctrine of faith or morals; 4) to be held by the universal Church. Each of these four conditions was fulfilled in *Quanta Cura*, as analysis of the words in which the Pope expressed himself shows:

1. [M]indful of Our Apostolic duty... solicitous about our most holy religion, about sound doctrine and the salvation of souls entrusted to us, and... the good of human society;
2. by Our Apostolic authority;
3. We reject, proscribe and condemn [all and each evil opinion and doctrine individually mentioned]; and... wish and command they be considered as absolutely rejected, proscribed and condemned;
4. by all the sons of the Catholic Church.

In other words, when Pius IX condemned this proposition he spoke for Christ’s Church, and he spoke infallibly.

Twenty four years after Pius IX’s formal condemnation of religious liberty, in his encyclical *Libertas praestantissimum* (20.6.1888) Pope Leo XIII set out in detail the reasons behind it.³⁷

3. Fast forward 100 years to 29th June 1998: contemporaneously with the promulgation of *Ad tuendam fidem* (Pope John Paul’s *motu proprio* enlarging the content and sanctions in the *Code of Canon Law* and in the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*) the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, under the presidency of Joseph

³⁶ *Quanta Cura*, n. 6

³⁷ These are reproduced in the chapter entitled *The Trouble With Dignitatis Humanae* at pp. 43 et seq. below.

Cardinal Ratzinger, provided a *Doctrinal Commentary* on the concluding formula of the new *Professio Fidei*, the oath required of any person appointed to an office in the Church. Among the issues requiring full and irrevocable assent—an assent based on faith in the Holy Spirit’s assistance to the Magisterium and on the Catholic doctrine of the infallibility of the Magisterium [n. 8]—the *Congregation* listed “each and every thing definitively proposed by the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals.” [n. 6]

Pursuant to this requirement, then, the jurant was bound to swear his allegiance to the formal teaching of Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII condemning the concept of religious liberty. This presented him with a dilemma. For later popes and bishops now assured him that he must reject this teaching of the Church because the Second Vatican Council (1962-5) had not only ignored it but had given formal approval to the concept condemned and to whatever reality, or realities, it comprehends.

Which of these teachings was he to follow to be consistent with his oath of fidelity?

4. On 7th December 1965, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council issued their Declaration on Religious Liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*. The Declaration had had a difficult and lengthy gestation, the subject of more debate and aggravation than any other document issued by the Council. When finally issued it did not depart in any significant matter from the draft introduced two years earlier by Bishop de Smedt.

In the Walter M. Abbott English edition of the Documents of the Second Vatican Council³⁸ the *peritus* primarily responsible for its content, the American Jesuit, John Courtney Murray, provided a commentary on *Dignitatis Humanae* in the course of which he said this:

“In no other conciliar document is it so explicitly stated that the intention of the Council is to ‘develop’ Catholic doctrine... In regard to the right of man to religious freedom, even *Pacem in terris* is unclear and ambiguous. What precisely does religious freedom mean? Does it find place among the inalienable rights of man? These are the questions to which for the first time, the Church gives an unmistakably clear and entirely unambiguous answer. The Council brings forth out of the treasury of truth a doctrine that is at once new and also in harmony with traditional teaching.”³⁹

This paragraph isolates the issues well—

- First: was the doctrine set out in *Dignitatis Humanae* “in harmony with traditional teaching”, i.e., a *development* of existing doctrine? Or was it an alteration of that doctrine? Was it ‘progress’? Or was it ‘change’? Was it ‘the genuine wheat of truth’, or ‘the noxious weeds of error’?
- Second, and of much greater moment, was it in truth *the Church* that had given this “unmistakably clear and entirely unambiguous answer”?

³⁸ *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M Abbott S J, General Editor, London, 1966.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 677, footnote.

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5. Let us now look at Bishop de Smedt's Speech on behalf of the Secretariat, in the drafting of which Fr Murray played a large hand, and see what there is of truth in it. Omitting persiflage, its argument (if such it may be termed) may be reduced to the following fourteen propositions.

- a. The expression 'religious liberty' represents a reality (or realities) whose desirability can hardly be questioned.
- b. The "pastoral" character of the Second Vatican Council must be set against "that world of abstractions... so dear to the nineteenth century".
- c. Each and every man who follows his conscience in religious matters has a natural right to a true and authentic religious liberty.
- d. The absolute demands of God's rights are to be reduced to "[conformity with one's] conscience in religious matters."
- e. The violation of religious liberty involves the interference with man's ordination to his supreme and ultimate end.
- f. No one should be hindered in the exercise of religion in accordance with his own conscience save where this would harm the common good.
- g. The principal document in which the doctrine of religious liberty is developed is John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in terris*.
- h. Man's human dignity is the ground of the right and duty to worship God according to the sincere dictate of his own conscience.
- i. Pius IX's condemnation of religious liberty and separation of Church and state was only to protect the Church against rationalism.
- j. Leo XIII taught against the same two doctrines because regimes then in power drew inspiration from laicist ideology and there was danger that their endorsement would lead to abuses to the dignity and true liberty of the human person.
- k. There is no longer any danger, as there was then, that the false concept of liberty might do violence to human dignity.
- l. Pius XI fought for religious liberty not only of the Catholic faithful but of all mankind.
- m. Pius XII developed and expanded the doctrine of Pius XI in favour of religious liberty.
- n. The whole world is awaiting a decree in favour of religious liberty with urgent expectancy.

6. We will address each proposition in turn.

A. The expression 'religious liberty' represents a reality (or realities) whose desirability could hardly be questioned...

The Secretariat gives a number of apparently cogent reasons for this assertion—it involves a matter of truth; it is necessary to avoid an appearance of hypocrisy on the part of the Church; what it represents is essential to peaceful coexistence in societies with differing religious affiliations; and so on...

Nowhere does the Secretariat consider the essence of human liberty, or make an attempt to distinguish it into its various subcategories to uncover the reality (or realities) the expression 'religious liberty' comprehends, as Leo XIII had in *Libertas praestantissimum* (20th June 1888). The Secretariat makes passing, and selective, reference to this encyclical but is silent about Leo's analyses which had, of course, confirmed Pius IX's condemnation of the concept whose validity the Secretariat was now asserting.

B. *The "pastoral" character of the Council must be set against "that world of abstraction... so dear to the nineteenth century"...*

In other words, the popes of that century must be taken to have addressed an ideal world rather than the real world the Council Fathers were now addressing. This is exactly the contrary of the truth. It was Pius IX and Leo XIII who confronted reality. It was the Secretariat and its members who assumed an ideal world, a naivety manifest in a claim made towards the close of the *relatio*—

"There is no longer any danger, as there was in the nineteenth century, that the false concept of liberty might do violence to human dignity."

We will return to this claim shortly.

C. *Each and every man who follows his conscience in religious matters has a natural right to a true and authentic 'religious liberty'...*

Protestantism's signal characteristic, as English historian Sir Maurice Powicke remarked in 1941, is the assertion of the supremacy of conscience.⁴⁰ Here the Secretariat adopts the Protestant principle.⁴¹ The dictate imposed by conscience is *eo ipso* something subjective. Now rights do not follow *subjective* inclinations—whether or not these are in accordance with the rule of morals—but *objective* reality. The comment of American theologian, Msgr John A Ryan, is to the point:

"The fact that an individual may in good faith think that his false religion is true gives no more right to propagate it than the sincerity of the alien anarchist entitles him to advocate his abominable political theories in the United States, or the perverted ethical notions of the dealer in obscene literature confers upon him the right to corrupt the morals of a community."⁴²

D. *The absolute demands of God's rights are to be reduced to [conformity with one's] conscience in religious matters...*

Here something remarkable is essayed in Catholic thinking: individual conscience is made determinative of objective reality. "The absolute demands of God's rights" require a man to embrace the religion which God founded and established, the

⁴⁰ "The claim of conscience in the end took the place of Rome." Sir Maurice Powicke, *The Reformation in England*, London, 1941.

⁴¹ It is a principle to which the Council Fathers were to give qualified support. 'Supremacy of conscience' has bedevilled the Catholic Church ever since.

⁴² *Catholic Principles of Politics*, New York, 1940, pp. 317-8; quoted in Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., p. 51.

Catholic religion.⁴³ That teaching was now, so the authors of the speech said, to be ignored in favour of the demands of individual conscience for, as they assured the Council Fathers, “the man who sincerely obeys his conscience intends to obey God Himself...” Fifty years on we, who must daily endure reports of the murderous conduct of Muslim extremists, each “sincerely obey[ing] his conscience”, can have little patience with the stupidity of this claim.

E. *The violation of religious liberty involves the interference with man’s ordination to his supreme and ultimate end...*

The constant teaching of the Catholic Church is that man’s supreme and ultimate end, union with God, can be achieved only through faith in Jesus Christ and adherence to the teachings and practice of His Church.⁴⁴ Only in so far as the expression ‘religious liberty’ is confined to the freedom to embrace *the one true faith*, then, is this proposition true.

F. *No one should be hindered in the exercise of religion in accordance with his own conscience save where this would harm the common good...*

This provision is self contradictory because the common good, by its very nature, precludes the notion of ‘religious liberty’.⁴⁵ The Secretariat felt itself constrained by this limiting principle because it purported to rely on John XXIII’s encyclical *Pacem in terris* which, so frequently does the Pope refer to that reality, might be called ‘the encyclical of the common good’. Inevitably, in their subsequent adoption of the alleged principle of ‘religious liberty’, the Council Fathers abandoned the need to comply with the common good in favour of what is no more than its material foundation, ‘the preservation of public order’ [Cf. *Dignitatis Humanae*, nn. 2, 4 and 8].

G. *The principal document in which is developed the doctrine of religious liberty is John XXIII’s encyclical Pacem in terris...*

In *Pacem in terris* Pope John XXIII said this—

“Every human being has the right to honour God according to the dictates of a rightly ordered conscience [*conscientia recta*], and therefore the right to worship God privately and publicly. For, as Lactantius so clearly taught: ‘We were created for the purpose of showing to the God who bore us the submission we owe Him, of recognising Him alone and of serving Him. We are obliged and bound by this duty to God; from this religion itself receives its name.’ [*Divinae Institutiones*, 1. IV, c. 28, 2: *Patrologia Latina* 6, 535.] And on this point Our predecessor of immortal memory, Leo XIII declared: ‘This genuine, this honourable freedom of the sons of God, which most nobly proclaims the dignity of the human person, is greater than any violence

⁴³ Cf. Leo XIII in *Libertas praestantissimum* (On Human Liberty) 20.6.1888, n. 19 et seq.; cf. also the same Pope’s *Immortale Dei* (On the Christian Constitution of States) 1.11.1885.

⁴⁴ That is, in the ordinary course of things. Almighty God is not constrained by His own laws. He may bring to heaven those who have not heard of His Son but who have yet believed in God as their Judge, and who have acted in charity or in perfect contrition for their sins. [Michael Sheehan, *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine*, revised and edited by Fr P. Joseph, London (St Austin Press), 2001, p. 288.]

⁴⁵ This is explained in the paper *The Trouble With Dignitatis Humanae—Error Masquerading As Right*, below under the sub-headings *A Problem of Expression* and *The Absence of Argumentation*.

or injustice; it has always been sought by the Church, and always most dear to her. This was the freedom which the Apostles claimed with intrepid constancy, which the apologists defended with their writings, and which the martyrs in such numbers consecrated with their blood.' [*Libertas praestantissimum: Acta Leonis XIII, VIII, 1888, pp. 237-238; EE 3.*]⁴⁶

It is a distortion of reality for the Secretariat to assert that the phrase *conscientia recta* may be translated as 'a sincere conscience'; or to contend that this passage was authority for the proposition advanced ["By the law of nature, the human person has the right to the free exercise of religion in society according to the dictates of a sincere conscience whether the conscience be true, or the captive either of error or of inadequate knowledge of truth and of sacred things."]. When the Pope cited Leo XIII—"this honourable freedom of the sons of God"—he endorsed Leo's postulate: the *freedom* to which he referred was that of those called to the life of grace, those baptised in the Catholic faith.

The Secretariat's subsequent assertion ["To this right corresponds the duty incumbent upon other men and the public authority to recognise etc..."] relies on a provision which appears later in the encyclical where Pope John confirmed the Church's teaching that not only are rights and duties correlative but there is a reciprocity of rights and duties between men.⁴⁷ But this latter provision was premised (in the immediately preceding paragraph) on the existence of "the natural rights with which we have been dealing..."⁴⁸ It cannot be used to buttress the rights gratuitously asserted by the Secretariat the falsity of whose claim appears clearly from the following two paragraphs which appear towards the close of *Pacem in terris*:

"The doctrinal principles outlined in this document derive from or are suggested by requirements inherent in human nature itself, and are, for the most part, dictates of the natural law. They provide Catholics, therefore, with a vast field in which they can meet and come to an understanding both with Christians separated from this Apostolic See, and with human beings not enlightened by faith in Jesus Christ, but endowed with the light of reason and with a natural and operative honesty.

⁴⁶ "In hominis iuribus hoc quoque numerandum est, ut et Deum, ad rectam conscientiae suae normam, venerari possit, et religionem privatim publice profiteri. Etenim, quemadmodum praeclare docet Lactantius, 'hac conditione gignimur, ut generanti nos Deo iusta et debita obsequia praebeamus, hunc solum noverimus, hunc sequamur. Hoc vinculo pietatis obstricti Deo et religati sumus, unde ipsa religio nomen accepit'. [*Divinae Institutiones*, 1. IV, c. 28, 2: Patrologia Latina 6, 535.] Qua de eadem re Decessor Noster imm. mem. Leo XIII haec asseverat: 'Haec quidem vera, haec digna filiis Dei libertas, quae humanae dignitatem personae honestissime tuetur, est omni vi iniuriaque maior: eademque Ecclesiae semper optata ac praecipue cara. Huius generis libertatem sibi constanter vindicare Apostoli, sanxere scriptis Apologetae, Martyres ingenti numero sanguine suo consecraverunt'. [*Libertas praestantissimum: Acta Leonis XIII, VIII, 1888, pp. 237-238; EE 3.*]"

⁴⁷ Quibus probatis, consequens est etiam, ut in hominum consortione unius hominis naturali cuidam iuri officium aliorum hominum respondeat: officium videlicet ius illud agnoscendi et colendi. Nam quodvis praecipuum hominis ius vim auctoritatemque suam a naturali lege repetit, quae illud tribuit, et conveniens iniungit officium. Qui igitur, dum iura sua vindicant, officia sua vel omnino obliviscuntur, vel aequo minus praestant, iidem sunt cum iis veluti comparandi, qui altera manu aedem exstruunt, altera evertunt.

⁴⁸ Quae hactenus commemoravimus iura, a natura profecta...

*“In such relations let the faithful be careful always to be consistent in their actions so that they may never come to any compromise in matters of religion and morals. At the same time, however, let them be—and show themselves to be—animated by a spirit of understanding and detachment, and disposed to work loyally in the pursuit of objectives which are of their nature good, or conducive to good.”*⁴⁹

The then Master General of the Dominicans, Fr Aniceto Fernandez, was scathing in his criticism of the Secretariat’s logic—

“The schema smacks of naturalism. It does not speak of the relationship between man and God... We are wrong to seek a new doctrine in *Pacem in terris*, which is being poorly interpreted.”⁵⁰

H. *Man’s human dignity is the ground of the right and duty to worship God according to the sincere dictate of his own conscience.*

Leo XIII explains, in the opening passage of *Libertas praestantissimum*, why this assertion is false—

“Liberty, the highest of natural endowments, being the portion only of intellectual or rational natures, confers on man this dignity—that he is “in the hand of his counsel” (*Ecclesiasticus* 15: 14)—and has power over his actions. But the manner in which such dignity is exercised is of the greatest moment, inasmuch as on the use that is made of liberty the highest good and the greatest evil alike depend. Man, indeed, is free to obey his reason, to seek moral good, and to strive unswervingly after his last end. Yet he is free also to turn aside to all other things; and in pursuing the empty semblance of good, to disturb rightful order and to fall headlong into the destruction he has voluntarily chosen...”

Liberty is, indeed, the mark of man’s human dignity, but he must exercise it in accordance with reality. It matters not how sincere a man may be in following the dictate of his conscience, if his choice is not conformed to the objectively good, he runs the grave risk of perdition. This principle applies in the highest degree in that matter which concerns his ultimate destiny, viz., religion.

I. *Pius IX’s condemnation of religious liberty and separation of Church and state in Quanta cura (1867) was to protect the Church against the doctrines of rationalism according to which the Church was to be incorporated into the monistic organism of the state and subjected to its supreme authority.*

The saintly Pope’s condemnation was not confined to an attempt to subvert the Church to the demands of a particular ideology. It condemned all assertions that the Church had no entitlement to involvement in the operations of the state. The Catholic Church was established by God Who also created society, the ground of every state.⁵¹ There could, then, be no more fitting influence upon the workings of a

⁴⁹ These two paragraphs bear the marginal numbers 184 and 185 in the *Australian Catholic Truth Society* edition of the English version of the encyclical. In the last paragraph (italicised) the Pope is quoting his own words from the earlier encyclical *Mater et Magistra*.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., at p. 134.

⁵¹ The Catholic Church is the only church that has that right: every other is but a human creation.

state than God's Church. The evils, *religious liberty* and *separation of Church and state*, are related: once accept one of them and you are bound to endorse the other.⁵²

J. *Leo XIII taught against 'religious liberty' (and other modern freedoms such as 'separation of Church and state') because conditions prevailing at the time brought a danger of abuses to the dignity and true liberty of the human person...*

Leo XIII taught against these evils not because they threatened the dignity and true liberty of man during the nineteenth century but because they threaten that dignity in every century!

K. *There is no longer any danger, as there was in the nineteenth century, that the false concept of liberty might do violence to human dignity.*

This claim, emulating the misplaced irenicism in certain remarks of Pope John XXIII in his *Opening Speech* to the Council Fathers, contains the seeds of a denial of the effects of Original Sin. The claim is fatuous as the recent past history (the Nazi regime in Germany; the Communist regime in Russia) showed to anyone of common sense. Subsequent history has only confirmed its folly.⁵³

L. *Pius XI fought for religious liberty not only of the Catholic faithful but of all mankind...*

The claim is false. It evidences a deliberate obtuseness, if not downright dishonesty, in respect of the teaching of Pius XI in three encyclicals. We deal with each in turn.

Maximam gravissimamque (18.1.1924) addressed certain effects of the instability precipitated by the unilateral action of the Masonic dominated French Government some twenty years previously on 9th December 1905 of abrogating the *Concordat* between the Church and the French State in the notorious 'law of separation'. Pius X, the pontiff at that time, had condemned certain associations and 'lay laws' proposed by the French government. Pope Pius XI's task was to weigh the licitness of proposed Diocesan Associations in the different circumstances then obtaining. He gave these latter his consent *ad experimentum*. Pius XI here opposed the evil of 'laicism' not against any man-made religion but, as the context makes clear, against the only true religion. His remarks condemning 'laicism' were made in defence of the Catholic religion and no other.

Non abbiamo bisogno (29.6.1931) protested against the banning by Mussolini's Fascist party government the same year of *Italian Catholic Action* and the Catholic Youth organisations. Pius XI demonstrated the underlying influence of Freemasonry upon the Fascists in the unconscionable conduct of compelling children to swear oaths of fidelity to their regime. The assertion that Pius XI's distinction between 'freedom of consciences' and 'freedom of conscience' assists the argument in favour of 'religious

⁵² As occurred once the doctrine of 'religious liberty' was adopted by the Church's bishops. The removal of the Church's influence over various states secured through *concordats* followed quickly.

⁵³ As to the naivety generally of Pope John's *Opening Address* see the paper *Failure of the Executive Power* below at p. 132.

freedom' is vacuous. Pius XI there defended the freedom of Catholics to engage in Catholic activities. Far from defending the freedom to engage in any religion he attacked a regime *which itself had urged 'religious freedom'*. In its very essence *Non abbiamo bisogno* contradicted the Secretariat's thesis.⁵⁴

Mit Brennender Sorge (14.3.1937), written to the Catholic bishops of Germany, dealt with the crisis precipitated by Hitler's Nazi Government. It voiced, with reason and control, Pope Pius XI's outrage at the unilateral breach by the National Socialist Government of the 1933 *Concordat* with the Holy See. The Pope said this *inter alia*—

“Beware, Venerable Brethren, of that growing abuse, in speech as in writing, of the name of God as though it were a meaningless label to be affixed to any creation, more or less arbitrary, of human speculation... Our God is the Personal God, supernatural, omnipotent, infinitely perfect, one in the Trinity of Persons, tri-personal in the unity of divine essence, the Creator of all existence. Lord, King and ultimate Consummator of the history of the world who will not, and cannot, tolerate a rival God by His side...

“No faith in God can for long survive pure and unalloyed without the support of faith in Christ... Nobody... can say: ‘I believe in God, and that is enough religion for me’ for the Saviour's words brook no evasion: *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. He that confesseth the Son hath the Father also.* (1 John ii. 23)...

“In Jesus Christ, Son of God made Man there shone the plenitude of divine revelation. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son. (*Heb. i. 1*)...

“The peak of revelation as reached in the Gospel of Christ is final and permanent. It admits of no retouching by human hand; it admits no substitutes or arbitrary alternatives... Since Christ, the Lord's Anointed, finished the task of Redemption, and by breaking the reign of sin deserved for us the grace of being the children God—since that day no other name under heaven has been given to men whereby we may be saved (*Acts iv. 12*). No man, were every science, power and worldly strength incarnated in him, could lay any other foundation but that which is laid: which is Christ Jesus (*1 Corinthians iii 11*)...

“To hand over the moral law to man's subjective opinion, which changes with the times, rather than anchoring it to the holy will of the eternal God and His commandments, is to open wide every door to the forces of destruction... [nn. 9, 14, 15, 17 and 30]

This is the context in which Pope Pius XI made the remarks relied upon by the Secretariat—“[M]an as a person possesses rights he holds from God, and... any collectivity must protect against denial, suppression or neglect... [n. 30]; and—“The believer has an absolute right to profess his Faith and live according to its dictates. Laws which impede this profession and practice of Faith are against natural law.” [n. 31] It is nonsense to suggest that the Pope was referring to any religion other than Catholicism or that he intended to defend, or promote, so-called ‘religious liberty’.

⁵⁴ That ‘religious liberty’ is a Masonic concept is amply demonstrated by Pope Leo XIII in *Humanum Genus* (20.4.1884), nn. 16, 21. Cf. also the author's *Life Under The Bane of Subjectivism* Part III, in particular nn. 31 et seq., at http://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/life_under_the_bane_conflated.pdf

M. *Pius XII developed and expanded Pius XI's doctrine in favour of religious liberty.*
The Secretariat appeals, in support of this proposition, to three documents of Pius XII, the radio messages of 1.6.1941 and 24.12.1942, and the address *Ci riesce* of 6.12.1953. Again, we deal with each in turn.

Radio Message of 1st June 1941

This Radio Message celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. The Secretariat relies on one line in the text in support of its thesis:

"The Chief duty of any public authority is to safeguard the inviolable rights that are proper to men and so to provide that each one might more easily fulfil his duties."

Let us put the line in context. Prefatory to the sentence quoted Pius XII says this—

"It is... the indisputable competence of the Church... to decide whether the bases of a given social system are in accordance with the unchangeable order which God our Creator and Redeemer has shown us through the natural Law and Revelation, that two-fold manifestation to which Leo XIII appeals in his encyclical... From the form given to society, whether this be in accordance with the Divine Law or not, depends and emerges the good or ill of souls; depends, in other words, the decision whether men, all of whom are called to be revived by the grace of Christ, will in the intricate course of life actually breathe the healthy, life-giving, atmosphere of truth and moral virtue, or the disease-ridden, and often fatal, air of error and corruption..."

The Pope is addressing the strife torn world and the false social principles whose influences are ravaging the societies of various nations. Far from providing support for 'religious freedom' he insists on the need to conform to the teachings of one religion only, that established by Christ, the Catholic religion.

Radio Message of 24th December 1942

The Pope's 1942 Christmas Message contrasted with the chaos of the war the peace attendant on the birth of the Saviour of mankind. He elaborates the elements of St Thomas's definition of peace—the *tranquillity of order*—laying down five points for the ordering of society which he introduces with the following:

"Anyone who considers in the light of reason and of faith the foundations and the aims of social life which we have traced in broad outline... cannot but be convinced of the powerful contribution... which efforts... could present—or better, could restore—to [the peoples of the] world... when once they had thrown down the intellectual and juridical barriers, created by prejudice, errors... and a long tradition of secularisation of thought... which has succeeded in detaching and subtracting the earthly city from the light and force of the City of God..."

The burden of his Message is the restoration of all things in Christ through the Church He has established. When, then, he goes on to cite the need to uphold respect for fundamental personal rights, "the right to religious formation and education; the right to worship God in private and public and to carry on religious works of charity..." he is referring to the *Catholic religion*. Nowhere does he refer to, or even hint at, a right to 'religious freedom'.

Ci Riesce—6th December 1953:

The Pope here addressed the *Union of Italian Catholic Jurists* meeting in their fifth national convention. After expounding on general principles he approaches a particular question, the co-existence of Catholic and non-Catholic states.

“[P]eoples and member states of the international community will be divided into those that are Christian, non-Christian, indifferent to religion or consciously without it... even professedly atheist. The interests of religion and morality will require... a well-defined rule which will apply to all the territory of the individual sovereign member state... According to probability and depending on circumstances, it can be foreseen that this ruling of positive law will be enunciated thus: within its own territory and for its own citizens, each state will regulate religious and moral affairs by its own laws. Nevertheless... the citizens of every member state will be allowed the exercise of their own beliefs and ethical and religious practices, in so far as these do not contravene the penal laws of the state in which they are residing.

“For the jurist, the statesman and the Catholic state there arises the question: can they give their consent to such a ruling when there is question of entering, and remaining in, an international community? ... A twofold question arises: the first deals with objective truth and the obligation of conscience towards what is objectively true and good; the second deals with the practical attitude of the international community toward the individual sovereign state and the attitude of the individual state towards the international community as regards religion and morality. The first question can hardly be a matter for discussion... The second question, on the other hand, can be of extreme importance and urgency...”

“[N]o human authority, no state, no community of states, whatever its religious character, can give a positive command or positive authorisation to teach or to do that which would be contrary to religious truth or moral good. Such a command or... authorisation would have no obligatory power and would remain without effect... because it is contrary to nature to oblige the spirit and the will of man to error and evil, or to consider one or the other as indifferent. Not even God could give such a positive command or positive authorisation, because it would be in contradiction to His absolute truth and sanctity.

“In the parable of the cockle, Christ gives the following advice: let the cockle grow in the field of the world together with the good seed in view of the harvest (cf. *Matt.* 13: 24-30). The duty of repressing moral and religious error... [is] subordinate to higher and more general norms which in some circumstances permit, and even perhaps seem to indicate as the better policy, toleration of error in order to promote a greater good... Thus the two principles are clarified... First: that which does not correspond to truth or to the norm of morality objectively has no right to exist, to be spread, or to be activated. But (secondly) a failure to impede this with civil laws and coercive measures can be justified in the interests of a higher and more general good.”

Accordingly, when Pope Pius XII condemns conduct *contrary to religious truth or moral good* he condemns all assertion of religion and morality which does not conform to the truths revealed by God and proclaimed throughout the ages by His Holy Church. Far from endorsing, this is a rejection of, the Secretariat's interpretation which would render the adjective 'religious' inclusive of every vague

human inclination. That interpretation obliterates the distinction between *tolerating* religious error and *endorsing* the error.

N. *The whole world is awaiting a decree in favour of religious liberty...*

Perhaps the simplest response to this *cri de coeur* was provided by G. K. Chesterton—
“What is needed is not a Church that moves with the world, but a Church that will
move the world.”⁵⁵

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7. One must understand the Secretariat’s thesis in the light of the subjectivist impulse. Once a subjectivist seizes upon an idea and elevates it to the status of a certain truth he sees in the sources he quotes only a meaning which accords with that idea. He is incapable of viewing reality other than through the rose coloured glasses of his preconception.⁵⁶

8. The pre-eminent problem with the term ‘religious liberty’ is ambivalence. It can mean any one of a number of things *or all of them*—the freedom to believe in the one religion founded by Almighty God (the Catholic principle) the freedom to believe in any religion at all (the Masonic principle); or (inevitably) the freedom *to believe in no religion* (the atheistic principle). This ambivalence is sufficient to alert any objective student to the perils attendant upon the use of the expression as a claim of right. The Secretariat sought to confine the meaning it wished to apply to the term, but in vain; for it embraced—and it invited the Council Fathers to embrace—the Masonic principle *that one is free to believe in any religion at all*.⁵⁷ Notwithstanding the disclaimers subsequently made in *Dignitatis Humanae* the term ‘religious liberty’ is universally understood to permit the freedom to embrace any religion, *or no religion*, precisely the peril Leo XIII had identified eighty years earlier.⁵⁸

9. When the Church speaks infallibly through the mouth of Pope or Council about some element of faith or morals, she establishes that fact as true forever. As St Athanasius said of the Council of Nicaea—

“The words of the Lord which were spoken by the General Council of Nicaea remain in eternity.” [*Epist. ad Afros 2*]

⁵⁵ The author has not found the original of this quotation but renders it from speech reported in Joseph Pearce, *Old Thunder, A Life of Hilaire Belloc*, San Francisco (Ignatius Press), 2002, p. 82.

⁵⁶ As to subjectivism’s cause and development, see *Life Under The Bane Of Subjectivism*, I, n. 5; II, nn. 9-28; III, nn. 29, 42 et seq. http://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/life_under_the_bane_conflated.pdf

⁵⁷ It is difficult for the objective observer not to regard the Secretariat as having been infiltrated, in some measure, by Freemasons.

⁵⁸ *Immortale Dei* (1.11.1885), n. 32. “To hold... that there is no difference in matters of religion between forms that are unlike each other, and even contrary to each other, most clearly leads in the end to the rejection of all religion in both theory and practice. And this is the same thing as atheism however it may differ from it in name...”

It is impossible that the Church can, or ever will thereafter, contradict that truth. It is this principle to which, obliquely, the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* refers in its *Doctrinal Commentary* of 29th June 1998.

“The diversity of [the symbols witnessing to the unity of faith and communion] expresses the richness of the one faith; none of them is superseded or nullified by subsequent professions of faith formulated in response to later historical circumstances.” [ibid. n. 2]

Consistent with the teaching of St Vincent of Lerins a doctrine can never transmute into its contradictory; the *condemnation* of a proposition can never ‘develop’ into its *affirmation*. One who asserts that it can involves himself in a breach of the most basic of logical principles, the principle of non-contradiction.

10. There were many among the Council’s bishops and *periti* who understood this: they accepted that with the proclamation of the *Declaration on Religious Liberty*, the Church must be taken to have resiled from her previous infallible teaching to the contrary. But this is impossible for the Church does not contradict herself. What follows? It was not Christ’s Church but *the Church’s bishops* who committed this solecism.

It is worthy of note that it had taken just 95 years for the bishops of the Catholic Church to reject the teaching of the Vatican Council in *Pastor Aeternus* defining the circumstances in which a pope teaches infallibly.

APPENDIX

Relatio (introduction) to the Chapter of *De Oecumenismo* on Religious Liberty of
Bishop Emile de Smedt, 19th November 1963⁵⁹

Very many Conciliar Fathers have insistently demanded that this Sacred Synod clearly explain and proclaim the right of man to religious liberty. Among the reasons given, four principal ones should be listed:

1. *Truth*: The Church must teach and defend the right to religious liberty because there is question of truth, the care of which was committed to her by Christ;
2. *Defence*: The Church cannot remain silent today when almost half of mankind is deprived of religious liberty by atheistic materialism of various kinds;
3. *Peaceful Social Life*: Today in all nations of the world, men, who adhere to different religions or who lack all religious belief, must live together in one and the same human society; in the light of truth, the Church should point the way towards living together peacefully;

⁵⁹ Reproduced from Appendix IV of Michael Davies’ *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*. The emphases appear in the document reproduced.

4. *Ecumenism*: Many non-Catholics harbour an aversion against the Church or at least suspect her of a kind of Machiavellianism because we seem to them to demand the free exercise of religion when Catholics are in a minority in any nation and at the same time refuse and deny the same religious liberty when Catholics are in the majority.

Religious liberty is such a grave problem in modern society that it cannot be omitted in a pastoral decree on Ecumenism. Therefore, we submit to your deliberations this fifth chapter of our schema on Ecumenism. The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, to the best of its ability, has carefully watched over the preparation of this material.

Since we are treating a most difficult question and at the same time one of great importance in modern life, the authors of the schema cherish the hope that your attention and pastoral consideration will emend what needs emendment and perfect what is still imperfect in the schema now offered to you.

The term 'Religious Liberty' has a definite meaning in our text. In the forthcoming discussion, great confusion might arise if any of the Fathers give to the expression a meaning that differs from the one intended by the text.

When religious liberty is defended, it is not asserted that it is proper for man to consider the religious problem according to his own whim without any moral obligation and decide for himself according to his own will whether or not to embrace religion (religious indifferentism).

Nor is it affirmed that the human conscience is free in the sense that it is as it were outside of the law, absolved from any obligation towards God (laicism).

Nor is it said that falsehood is to be considered on an equal footing with truth, as though there were no objective norm of truth (doctrinal relativism).

Nor is admitted that man in any way has a quasi-right to maintain a peaceful complacency in the midst of uncertainty (dilettanistic pessimism).

If anyone were to insist upon giving any of the aforesaid meanings to 'Religious Liberty', he would attribute to our text a meaning which neither the words nor our intention possess.

What, therefore, is meant in the text by 'Religious Liberty'? Positively, religious liberty is the right of the human person to the free exercise of religion according to the dictates of his conscience. Negatively, it is immunity from all external force in his personal relations with God, which the conscience of man vindicates to itself.

Religious liberty implies human autonomy, not from within certainly but from without. From within, man is not freed of the obligation towards the religious problem. From without his liberty is offended when obedience to the dictates of his conscience in religious matters is impeded.

At this point, two questions must be asked: 1. Can each man claim for himself religious liberty as a sacred right given to him by God? 2. Is there, and to what extent is there, a duty on the part of others to recognise the aforesaid religious liberty?

Our decree, since it is pastoral, tries to treat the present matter especially from the practical point of view and, after the manner of John XXIII, will carefully strive to remove the whole question from that world of abstractions which was so dear to the nineteenth century. The question is put therefore regarding real man in his real dealings with other men, in contemporary human and civil societies.

I

The first pastoral problem which must be examined now by this Sacred Synod is this: *how must Catholics because of their faith conduct themselves towards men who do not belong to the Catholic faith?* We propose the following answer for your deliberations:

1. All Catholics are invited by Christ to strive by prayer, penance, witness and evangelising in the Holy Spirit to bring our non-Catholic brothers to the blessing of the evangelical light and of the life of the Church. The sacred, absolute rights of God as well as the evangelical and natural truths must always and everywhere be honoured and observed by them.
2. They must abstain from all direct and indirect coercion. Although God wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, the disciples of Christ may not infringe upon the religious liberty of the individual person. On the contrary, they must respect and esteem the right and duty of non-Catholics to follow the dictate of their own conscience even when, after sincere and sufficient study, it errs in good faith. What is the reason of faith why non-Catholics can be forced by no one to admit the Catholic doctrine against their conscience? This reason is found in the very nature of the act of faith. For this act, on God's part, is a supernatural gift, which the Holy Spirit most freely gives to whom and when He wills; and, on man's part, it is and must be an assent which man freely gives to God.
3. All Catholics are bound, by the command of the Lord, to love and to help their non-Catholic brothers with sincere and active charity.

II

At this point, the schema takes a step forward and asserts that each and every man, who follows his conscience in religious matters, has a natural right to true and authentic religious liberty. In this second part, it is proposed that the Sacred Synod solemnly demand religious liberty for the whole human family, for all religious groups, for each human person whether his conscience be sincere (rectam) and true or sincere and false concerning faith, provided only that he sincerely follow the dictate of conscience. Therefore, a general principle is laid down: *no human person can be the object of coercion or intolerance.*

What is the reason why observance of religious liberty is demanded of all? The human person, endowed with conscious and free activity, since he can fulfil the will of God only as the divine law is perceived through the dictate of conscience, can obtain his ultimate end only by prudently forming the judgement of conscience and by faithfully carrying out its dictate.

From the nature of things, in forming this judgement, whereby man tries freely to conform to the absolute demands of God's rights, neither any other man nor any human institution can take the place of the free judgement of man's conscience. Therefore, the man who sincerely obeys his own conscience intends to obey God

Himself, although at times confusedly and unknowingly, and is to be considered worthy of esteem.

When religious liberty is violated, then the very freedom of the human person is violated in its principal matter, in a fundamental demand, in man's ordination to the supreme and ultimate end. The greatest injury is to prevent a man from worshipping God and from obeying God according to the dictate of his own conscience.

III

The schema takes still another step forward and enters upon a most difficult question. Religious liberty would be fruitless and empty if men were not able to carry out the dictate of their conscience in external acts whether in private life, in social life, or in public life, or if human persons were prevented from forming religious groups whose members could worship the Supreme Deity by common and social acts and lead a religious life.

Here, however, there arises a most difficult problem. For, if a human person carries out the dictate of his conscience by external acts, there is danger of violating the rights and duties of another or of others. Since man is a social being and since in the human family men are subject to error and to sin, the conflict of rights and conflict of duties cannot always be avoided.

From this it is evident that the right and duty to manifest externally the dictate of conscience is not unlimited, but can be and at times must be tempered and regulated for the common good.

This ordering of the common good must be done juridically in human society and belongs to public authority (*potestati publicae*). "One of the fundamental duties of civil authorities, therefore," we read in *Pacem in terris*, "is to coordinate social relations in such fashion that the exercise of one man's rights does not threaten others in the exercise of their own rights nor hinder them in fulfilment of their duties. Finally, the rights of all should be effectively safeguarded and, if they have been violated, completely restored."

How is public authority to carry out this duty? In establishing order for the common good, public authority can never act contrary to the order of justice established by God. As St Thomas says: "Human law is truly law to the extent that it is in accordance with right reason; and therefore it is evident that it is derived from the eternal law. In so far as it departs from reason, it is a so-called 'wicked law', and therefore is not truly a law but a kind of violence' [*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 93, a, 3, ad 2.].

Recent Roman Pontiffs again and again have bewailed the fact that not a few governments have gone too far in this matter, ignoring and violating religious liberty. In our own day, there are some regions in which tolerance in religious matters has been so little observed that the Supreme Pontiff, Paul VI, in his allocution to the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council on 29 September 1963, said, speaking of the violated right to religious liberty:

"Because of sufferings of this kind, with what sadness are We affected, and how deeply We are grieved, when We behold that in some territories religious liberty, together with the other principal rights of man, is suppressed by the principles and arts of those who do not tolerate opinions different from theirs on politics, on races of

men, or on religion of any kind. We are sorrowed also by the many injuries which are done to those who would like to profess their religion honestly and freely.”

IV

In order that we might clearly understand the doctrine of the Church on the extent and limits of the civil power's duty relating to religious liberty, we must, in a few words, develop the history of this doctrine. Bear with me, Venerable Fathers, if I seem to make more than just demands on your patience. But the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity is convinced that many difficulties and confusions can be avoided in the study of the schema if, before the discussion begins, I show very briefly what the Supreme Pontiffs since the time of Pius IX have taught concerning the duties of public authority in religious matters.

On the question of religious liberty the principal document is the encyclical *Pacem in terris*, in which Pope John XXIII especially developed these two points of doctrine: 1. By the law of nature, the human person has the right to the free exercise of religion in society according to the dictates of a sincere conscience (*conscientia recta*) whether the conscience be true (*conscientia vera*), or the captive either of error or of inadequate knowledge of truth and of sacred things. 2. To this right corresponds the duty incumbent upon other men and the public authority to recognise and respect that right in such a way that the human person in society is kept immune from all coercion of any kind (cf. AAS 55, 1963, p. 299, pp. 273-4).

Moreover, this doctrine must be understood as the contemporary terminus of a process of evolution both in the doctrine on the dignity of the human person and in the Church's pastoral solicitude for man's freedom. This doctrinal evolution took place according to a two-fold law:

1. *Law of continuity*: The Church's doctrine and solicitude are always self-consistent, always remain the same. This perennial doctrine can be expressed in the words of Pope John: "The dignity of the human person demands this, that in his actions man should enjoy his own counsel and freedom" (ibid p. 265). This doctrine has its deepest roots in the Sacred Scriptures which teach that man was made to the image of God. From this doctrine stems the continual pastoral solicitude of the Church for man's true freedom.
2. *Law of progress*: The ecclesiastical magisterium adapts, explains and defends genuine doctrine according to the demands of errors which are spread and according to the needs which arise from the development of man and of society. By this progress the mind of the Church is led to search more deeply into doctrine and to understand it more clearly.

In this way, there has arisen in two areas a distinction which no one has explained more clearly than Pope John XXIII in his encyclical *Pacem in terris*: 1. A clearer distinction between false *philosophical teachings* and the *endeavours and institutions* which these ideologies give rise to or nourish. While on the one hand the ideologies are always to be condemned, on the other hand the economic, social and civil institutions which have arisen therefrom can contain something that is good and worthy of approval. 2. A clearer distinction between *errors* and the person who *errs* in good faith. While on the one hand errors must always be rejected, on the other hand the man in error "does not cease to be endowed with human nature, nor does he

ever lose his dignity as a person, due consideration of which must always be maintained” (ibid. pp. 299-300).

These two laws of continuity and progress must be kept before our eyes always when the documents of the Apostolic See are read and interpreted.

V

In this way the door is opened to a correct understanding of many pontifical documents which in the nineteenth century treated of religious liberty in such words that this liberty appeared as something that had to be condemned. The clearest example is found in the encyclical *Quanta cura* of Pius IX, in which we read: “From this completely false concept of social rule (naturalism), they do not hesitate to foster that erroneous opinion which is especially injurious to the Catholic Church and the salvation of souls, called by our predecessor Gregory XVI *deliramentum*, namely that the freedom of conscience and of cults is the proper right of each man, and this should be proclaimed and asserted in every rightly constituted society.” (ASS 3, 1867, p. 162)

As is evident, this freedom of conscience is condemned because of the ideology of the rationalists who founded their conclusions upon the principle that the individual conscience is under no law, and, therefore, is subject to no divinely given norms. (Cf. *Syllabus*, prop. 3; ASS 3, p. 168). Freedom of worship is condemned also when it is based upon religious indifferentism (ibid., prop. 15, p. 170). Finally, there is condemned that separation of the Church from the State which is based upon the rationalistic principle of the juridical omnicompetence of the State, according to which the Church is to be incorporated into the monistic organism of the State and is to be subjected to its supreme authority (ibid., prop. 39, p. 172).

To understand these condemnations correctly, we must see in them the constant doctrine and solicitude of the Church concerning the true dignity of the human person and his true liberty (law of continuity). For the ultimate basis of human dignity lies in the fact that man is a creature of God. He is not God himself, but an image of God. From this absolute dependence of man upon God there flows every right and duty of man to claim for himself and for others true religious liberty. For man is subjectively bound to worship God according to the sincere dictate of his own conscience (*juxta rectam suae conscientiae normam*) because objectively he is absolutely dependent upon God.

In order, therefore, that his absolute dependence upon God might not be infringed in any way, man must not be impeded in any way by others or even by public authority from freely practising his religion. Therefore, in opposing the philosophical and political tenets of laicism, the Church was fighting for the dignity and true liberty of the human person. In accordance with the law of continuity, then, the Church in spite of changing conditions, has remained consistent both in the past and in the present.

Leo XIII had already started this doctrinal development when he distinguished clearly between the Church, the People of God, and the civil society, a terrestrial and temporal people (cf. *Immortale Dei*, ASS 18, 1885, pp. 166-7). By this means he opened the way to a new affirmation of the due and lawful autonomy which belongs to the civil order and to its juridical dispositions. Because of this, it was possible to take a step forward (law of progress) towards a new judgement on ‘modern freedoms’.

These freedoms can be tolerated (cf. *Ibid.*, p. 174; *Libertas praestantissimum*, ASS 20, 1887, pp. 609-610). And yet they were to be *tolerated* only. The reason was evident. For at that time in Europe, the regimes which proclaimed the modern freedoms, religious liberty among them, consciously drew their inspirations from the laicist ideology. There was danger, therefore—and Leo XIII sensed this—that the civil and political institutions of this kind of republic, since they were of laicist orientation, would lead to such abuses that they would necessarily do violence to the dignity and true liberty of the human person. In accordance with the law of continuity, what was dear to Leo XIII is always dear to the Church—the safeguarding of the human person.

With the rise of State-Totalitarianism in its various forms, Pope Pius XI brought the pastoral and doctrinal development to a new height. There is no longer any danger, as there was in the nineteenth century, that the false concept of liberty might do violence to human dignity. There is a new danger, that every kind of human and civil liberty, and above all religious liberty, will be destroyed. For this reason, the Church is beginning in a new way to manifest her concern, which through the centuries has never wavered, for human liberty and dignity. With the increase of her pastoral concern, the Church's doctrine continues to develop.

Faithfully observing the law of continuity, Pius XI maintained the unstinting opposition of the Church to anti-religious laicism: "Those things which Pius X condemned we also condemn; as often as there is in 'laicism' any meaning or purpose that is harmful or contrary to God or religion, we condemn laicism, and openly declare that it must be condemned, as alien to God and religion" (*Maximam gravissimamque*, ASS 16, 1924, p. 10).

But observing the rule of progress no less, Pius XI introduced a new distinction which was of great importance for a deeper understanding of Catholic doctrine. He made a distinction between the "freedom of consciences" and the "freedom of conscience". The latter he rejected as "equivocal", as often used by the laicist to signify "an absolute independence of conscience, which is an absurdity in man who was created and redeemed by God"; the former however, "freedom of consciences", he accepted, stating that he would joyfully fight the good fight for "freedom of consciences" (*Non abbiamo bisogno*, ASS 23, 1931, pp. 301-2).

Moreover, Pius XI not only fought for the religious liberty of the faithful, but he was at the same time compelled to show the pastoral concern of the Church on a wider basis. For not only Christian, but human reality was at stake, if we can rightly distinguish between two things that are in reality one.

By the way of new advances, Pius XI developed a truly liberal and Christian doctrine when he taught: "man as a person possesses God-given rights which must remain immune from all denial, privation, or interference on the part of society" (*Mit brennender Sorge*, AAS 29, 1937, p. 159). And he continues in no ambiguous words: "The believer possesses the inalienable right to profess his faith and to practise it in a proper way. Laws which interfere with or render difficult this profession and practice are in contradiction to the natural law" (*ibid.*, p. 160). No one, who understands the condition of the times and the purposes of this encyclical, can fail to understand the universal intent of this statement.

Deeply sharing the pastoral solicitude of his predecessor, Pius XII developed further and expanded his doctrine (law of progress). One thing he kept before his mind, the

human person, created by God, redeemed by Christ, yet placed in stringent circumstances and surrounded on all sides by dangers.

In this context of doctrine and pastoral solicitude (law of continuity) must we read the text which in this matter is supreme. Enumerating “the fundamental rights of the person” which must be recognised and respected in every well-ordered society, he repeats the doctrine of Pius XI and vests it with new authority, affirming “the right to the private and public worship of God, including religious *actio caritativa*” (*Nuntius radiophonicus* 24 Dec. 1942, AAS 35, 1943, p. 19).

The Roman Pontiff did not propose this doctrine as a tenuous opinion or as a theory belonging to the schools. On the contrary, he carries the doctrine to its juridical conclusions so that it becomes a principle according to which just limits are placed on public authority: “The chief duty of any public authority is to safeguard the inviolable rights that are proper to men and so to provide that each one might more easily fulfil his duties (*Nuntius radiophonicus*, 1 June, 1941, AAS 33, 1941, p. 200).

Here we must recall especially the doctrine of Pius XII on the limitation of the State, because it deals with the suppression of errors within society: “Could it be that in certain circumstances He (God) would not give men any mandate, would not impose any duty, and would not even communicate the right to impede or to repress what is erroneous and false? A look at things as they are gives an affirmative answer.” Then, having cited the example of divine providence, he proceeds: “Hence the affirmation: religious and moral error must always be impeded, when it is possible, because toleration of them is in itself immoral, is not valid absolutely and unconditionally. Moreover, God has not given to human authority such an absolute and universal command in matters of faith and morality. Such a command is unknown to the common convictions of mankind, to Christian conscience, to the sources of revelation, and to the practice of the Church” (*Ci riesce*, AAS 45, 1953, pp. 798-9).

This declaration (law of progress) is of the greatest importance for our question, especially if we keep in mind what was in the past held concerning the role of the State.

At the end of this historical development comes the encyclical *Pacem in terris*. This document comes forth as the ripe fruit of a slow process of growth which has taken place within the Church, under the light of the Holy Spirit, throughout the whole of the last century.

Our schema had already been prepared and had been studied by the Central Commission and by the Commission for Coordination when Pope John, on 11 April of this year, published his last encyclical *Pacem in terris*. We believe that our text is in complete conformity with his pellucid doctrine, which was received within the Church and outside of the Church with unprecedented praise.

We now submit this text for your consideration. In the historical conspectus of this doctrine, we have shown that, in the pontifical documents, along with continuity, we must look for a progressive spelling out of doctrine. It is evident that certain quotations from the Popes, because of a difference of words, can be put in opposition to our schema. But I beseech you, Venerable Fathers, not to force the text to speak outside of its historical and doctrinal context, not, in other words, to make the fish swim out of water.

Let our document be studied as it stands. It is not a dogmatic treatise, but a pastoral decree directed to men of our time. The whole world is waiting for this decree. The voice of the Church on religious liberty is being waited for in universities, in national and international organisations, in Christian and non-Christian communities, in the papers and in public opinion—and it is being waited for with urgent expectancy.

We hope that it will be possible to complete the discussion and the approbation of this very brief, but very important, decree before the end of this second session. How fruitful our work would appear to the world if the Conciliar Fathers, with the voice of Peter's successor, could announce this liberating doctrine on religious liberty!

Venerable Fathers, we will add our labours to yours. Our Secretariat will study your emendations most attentively and also with the utmost speed. We will work day and night. But our hope is in the Lord. May Jesus Christ assist all of us with His grace. If at the end of this session He asks of us: "Young men, do you have any fish?", seeing the faith and good will of this Council, He might say to their successors what once He said to the Apostles: "Cast the net to the right of the boat; and you will find..." (John 21: 6).

THE TROUBLE WITH *DIGNITATIS HUMANAЕ*—ERROR MASQUERADING AS RIGHT

The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came and sowed darnel all among the wheat and made off...

Matt. 13: 24 et seq.⁶⁰

In the Declaration, *Dignitatis humanae*, (7 December 1965) the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, by a majority of 2,308 to 70, made the following claim—

“This Vatican Synod declares that the human person has a right to religious liberty.”⁶¹

They then detailed the ways in which this right manifested itself including the following.

-) In matters religious a man may not be compelled to act otherwise than in accordance with his beliefs. [n. 2]⁶²
-) The exercise of religion consists in the acts whereby a man directs his course to God. [n. 3]
-) Religious bodies have the right not to be hindered in their public teaching and witness to their faith... [n. 4]

The claim presented an immediate problem.

A Problem of Interpretation

In the first place, “liberty” names two realities, 1) natural liberty, and 2) moral liberty. The first is the fountainhead from which all other liberties flow. The second is the liberty proper to man as a creature ruled by reason and confers on him the dignity that “he is in the hand of his counsel”⁶³ and has power over his actions. “[T]he manner in which such dignity is exercised,” as Pope Leo XIII says, “is of the greatest moment inasmuch as on the use that is made of [it] the highest good and the greatest evil alike depend.” The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council did not specify to which of these two they were referring. In some places they seem to refer to the first; in others to the second. And at times they run the two together as in n. 11—

“God calls men to serve Him in spirit and in truth, hence they are bound in conscience but they stand under no compulsion.”

This sentence is on its face self-contradictory. If men are bound in conscience they certainly *do* stand under compulsion. The assertions can be reconciled, of course, but only if distinctions are made. In the *conclusio* they are referring to moral freedom; in the *exceptio* to natural freedom. Why do they refrain from making the distinctions?

⁶⁰ Cf. footnote 17 to the original Latin text of the Declaration. The reader should note that there are a number of different sets of footnotes in the English editions which include interpolations and excisions from the authorised text.

⁶¹ *Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 2: *Haec Vaticana Synodus declarat personam humanam ius habere ad libertatem religiosam.*

⁶² This right is expressed twice, once positively, once negatively, but the two are reduced to the same.

⁶³ *Ecclesiasticus* 15: 14

Next, they did not specify what they meant by the noun “religion” (*religio*) or its cognate adjective “religious” (*religiosus*).⁶⁴ That this left the scope of the asserted right obscure may be seen from an analysis of each of the three subsidiary claims instanced above.

In matters religious a man may not be compelled to act otherwise than in accordance with his beliefs.

By “matters religious” here they must refer to the beliefs these encompass. Did they mean, to take six possible instances, —

- belief in the one true God Who has revealed Himself to men?
- belief in the Muslims’ ‘Allah’?
- belief in the achievement of the Buddhists’ contrived oblivion?
- belief in one or other of the Mormons’ multiple divinities?
- belief in the Freemason’s ‘Great Architect’?
- belief in an amorphous ‘deity’?

Or did they mean any and all of these; and, in addition, any other ‘God’ in which men may have professed belief? In n. 4, for example, they indicate their support for religious communities that “honour the supreme being in public worship” (*numen supremum cultu publico honorent*).

*The exercise of religion consists in the acts whereby a man directs his course to God.*⁶⁵

“The exercise of religion” (*exercitium religionis*) here must refer to the attitude of the believing individual. The same questions recur. Did the Council Fathers mean belief in the One True God, or in one or other of the various alternatives suggested? Save for belief in God according to the revelation He has made to mankind each of these alternatives resolves into what the respective believer conceives to be God. In the absence of a clear explanation the Fathers’ subsequent claim that “no merely human power can either command or prohibit acts of this kind” does not logically follow. It may be true; but it may equally be false. For if the ‘God’ to which they refer is only a product of the believer’s conception a “merely human power” might be entirely justified “in commanding or prohibiting acts of this kind”.

*Religious bodies have the right not to be hindered in their public teaching and witness to their faith...*⁶⁶

What did they mean by “religious bodies”? Any society whose members claim to follow some religion or other? Experience demonstrates that the term “religious” can be claimed for activities that range from the honest to the fraudulent; from the benevolent to the plainly murderous. In the absence of essential distinctions, it does

⁶⁴ As they comment on the exercise of this right they introduce qualifications but this seems to the reader to have been done *ad hoc*, as if to deal with objections that might arise, rather than to modify its force.

⁶⁵ *Exercitium namque religionis ex ipsa eius indole, consistit imprimis in actibus internis voluntariis et liberis, quibus homo sese ad Deum directe ordinat.*

⁶⁶ *Communitates religiosae ius etiam habent, ne impediuntur in sua fide ore et scripto publice docenda atque testanda.*

not follow necessarily that a “religious body” should not be hindered in its public teaching or witness to its faith.

How, then, is one to interpret *Dignitatis Humanae*? It is all very well to make claims of principle but they must be consistent with reason. “Why,” the reader might ask, “did the Council Fathers not commence their considerations with a study of the nature of the religious belief of their own, the members of the Catholic Church?” They were, after all, *Catholic* bishops not experts in other forms of belief. Moreover, their experience as bishops, if not their knowledge of theology, ought to have told them that Catholic belief is radically different from every other.⁶⁷ Yet here they were speaking as if Catholic faith and every other form of faith were but species of a common genus. Two evils follow on this failure of precision: 1) they reduce the Catholic faith to the level of a merely human thing; and (worse) 2) they elevate merely human categories of faith to the level of the Catholic.

This confusion of the two is manifest in two statements. In n. 12 of the Declaration we find this—

“In faithfulness... to the truth of the Gospel, the Church is following the way of Christ and the apostles when she recognises and gives support to the principle of religious freedom as befitting the dignity of man and as being in accord with divine revelation.”

Yet Christ expressly told the Jews (and Samaritans) that they were *not* free; that Almighty God had specified precisely how He wanted them to worship Him:

“[T]he hour is coming—in fact it is already here—when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants...”⁶⁸

“It is my Father’s will that whoever sees the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life...”⁶⁹

True religion comes, and comes only, through Jesus Christ as St Paul attests:

“In many and various ways in times past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets. But now, in our day, He has spoken to us through His Son.”⁷⁰

Then, in n. 13 of the Declaration the Council Fathers say—

“[A] harmony exists between the freedom of the Church and [this] religious freedom...”

This is false: no such harmony exists. Indeed, as St Paul teaches, it is impossible.

“Do not harness yourself together with unbelievers. Virtue is no companion for crime. Light and darkness have nothing in common. Christ is not the ally of Belial, nor has a believer anything to share with the unbeliever. The temple of God has

⁶⁷ It may be argued against the thesis advanced here that it was not so much the bishops as their *periti* who were responsible for the document. This cannot seriously be advanced. The relevant distinction is that between principal and instrument. The *peritus* may advise; but it is the principal, the bishop, who is responsible when he adopts his advice.

⁶⁸ *John* 4: 23

⁶⁹ *John* 6: 40

⁷⁰ *Hebrews* 1: 1

nothing in common with idols, and that is what we are, the temple of the living God”⁷¹

A Problem of Expression

The thoughtful reader soon discovers a further problem with the document; one of expression. The Declaration does not read like a Catholic document as any number of instances serves to illustrate. Take this quote from n. 3:

“Truth... is to be sought in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature. The enquiry is to be free, carried on with the aid of teaching or instruction, communication and dialogue, in the course of which men explain to one another the truth they have discovered, or think they have discovered, in order thus to assist one another in the quest for truth.”

The clumsiness in expression here is only matched by the lack of intellectual rigour. There is no analysis of *truth*; no insistence that truth is measured by reality (and only by reality). Indeed, the paragraph seems ambivalent about it. The Fathers make not the slightest reference to the riches of the Church on the subject.

Then there is the content of n. 9. The first sentence advises us that “the exigencies of the dignity of the person have come to be fully known through centuries of experience”. This is a curious claim by leaders of that Institution which maintains that human dignity derives from human nature, God’s creation. Moreover, the Catholic Church has ever insisted that the dignity of the Christian exceeds that of his fellow man *precisely in his Catholic belief*. “Christian, remember your dignity! It is God’s own nature that you share...” is the memorable cry of the great St Leo in his first sermon on the Nativity of Christ. Yet the Council Fathers lump the Christian together with the pagan on the score of dignity. The impression given is that human dignity is of greater importance than the dignity accorded the Christian.

In the second sentence of n. 9 the Fathers say,

“What is more, the doctrine [i.e., ‘of religious liberty’] has its roots in divine revelation”⁷².

Their use here of the Latin conjunction *immo* conveys the impression that this religious freedom is somehow prior to God’s revelation. This is reinforced with the claim that Christ Himself shows respect for it (*observantiam Christi erga hominis libertatem in exsequendo officio credendi verbo Dei demonstrat*); and, accordingly, that His disciples (that is, the Catholic faithful) must also subordinate themselves to its demands (*atque de spiritu nos edocent quem discipuli talis Magistri debent in omnibus agnoscere et sequi*). The impression is reinforced via the adverb *praesertim* in another passage:

“Especially is religious freedom in society consonant with the freedom of the act of Christian faith.”⁷³

⁷¹ 2 Corinthians 6: 14-16

⁷² Immo haec doctrina de libertate radices habet in divina revelatione, quapropter eo magis a Christianis sancte servanda est.

⁷³ Praesertim libertas religiosa in societate plene est cum libertate actus fidei christianae congrua.

A cynic might render the meaning of the whole like this: “The rights of man, including the right to religious liberty, come first in the order of reality: how fortunate that Christianity manages to conform with their demands!”

There are similar passages of concern in n. 12.

“[T]he Church is being faithful... when she recognises and supports (agnoscit eamque fovet) the principle of religious freedom (rationem libertatis religiosae) as consonant with the dignity of man and the revelation of God (tamquam dignitati hominis et Dei revelationi).”

Note that “the dignity of man” appears before “the revelation of God”. Then, in the passage that follows, the conjunction *etsi* is used to qualify the Fathers’ acknowledgement of the faithful transmission down the centuries of the Church’s doctrine—

“and yet... there has at times appeared a way of acting hardly in accord (minus conformis) with the spirit of the Gospel and even opposed (immo contrarius) to it.”

In other words, the Church has not measured up in the past to the rightful demands of this principle of religious freedom; and now that the Council Fathers have exposed it, both the Church and her members must conform.

We are not saying that these passages cannot be read in a Catholic sense but that their character demands another reading. Those who reject this criticism will no doubt point to the fact that the Council Fathers specifically reserve the full Catholic teaching at the outset of the document (in n. 1)—

“Religious freedom... has to do with immunity from coercion in civil society. Therefore it leaves untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies towards the true religion and towards the one Church of Christ.”

But this assertion is misleading. The very claim of a right of “religious freedom” touches Catholic doctrine fundamentally as we will show and it was objectively dishonest for the Council Fathers to contend that the contrary was the case. Moreover, there is no necessary contradiction between traditional Catholic doctrine and immunity from coercion in civil society.

There is more. The Declaration uses as the criterion for determining the limits of this religious freedom the preservation of public order.⁷⁴ It does not appeal to the standard the Catholic Church has insisted upon for at least eight centuries, the common good.⁷⁵ Public order has to do with social justice. It is a precondition, a necessary foundation, for the common good an immensely greater reality. The

⁷⁴ In nn. 2, 4 & 8.

⁷⁵ St Thomas teaches: “He that seeks the good of the many seeks in consequence his own good for two reasons. First, because the individual good is impossible without the common good of the family, state or kingdom. Hence Valerius Maximus says of the ancient Romans *they would rather be poor in a rich empire than rich in a poor empire*. Secondly, because, since man is a part of the home and state, he must needs consider what is good for him by being prudent about the good of the many. For the good disposition of parts depends on their relation to the whole; thus Augustine says (*Confessions*, iii) *that part is unseemly that does not harmonise with the whole*.” *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 1, 47, a. 10, ad. 2

common good is all encompassing: it respects the fundamental health of society, not only justice but charity, which as St Thomas says, is the mother of all virtues.⁷⁶

“[S]ocial charity and social justice ... both serve the common good... Social justice demands that each individual in the social organism give to others their due in the interest of the common good; and social charity lays obligations of brotherly love on all in society with a view to promoting the common good by mutual service and cooperation.⁷⁷

And again, in dramatic contrast to the Church’s perennial claim to precedence in any civil society, because she alone of all the religions on earth is of God, the Council Fathers (in n. 13) restrict the rights of the Church simply to the freedom to proclaim her doctrine which they now assert to be “the fundamental principle in what concerns the relations” between Church and State.

Quite apart from these departures from traditional Catholic teaching there is a great deal missing. There is no mention, for instance—

-) that human nature is perfected by grace; and, accordingly
-) that, before one can pronounce on what is due to humanity, it is essential to understand the nature of sanctifying grace and the ambit of its influence;
-) that it is the eternal law of God which is the sole standard and rule of human liberty; and therefore,
-) that before one can pronounce on man’s “religious” liberty one must first know the nature of the eternal law.

Moreover the Council Fathers seem unaware that they have put the cart before the horse. Far from human liberty being, as it were, the ground of religion, it is the virtue of religion which is the ground of human liberty.

The impression that the Declaration is not so much a Catholic document as a secular one with Catholic interpolations is reinforced in n. 15:

“Indeed [this] religious freedom has already been declared to be a civil right in most constitutions, and it is solemnly recognised in international documents.”

Why should this be a desideratum? Does not the Church look to another and higher standard than any posited in the secular world? With its use of verbs in the indicative rather than the subjunctive mood, the Declaration reads in places like a statute promulgated by an institution of world government.⁷⁸ The interlarding of Catholic principle seems largely irrelevant.

⁷⁶ *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 23, a. 8, r. 3

⁷⁷ Bishop Aloisius J Muench, *Social Charity*; in *Summa Theologica, First Complete American Edition*, Benziger Brothers, Inc., Vol. III, 3326 at 3327.

⁷⁸ For instance, in n. 6: “Therefore government *is* to assume the safeguard of religious freedom...” “Government *is* also to help create conditions...” In n. 7: “In the use of all freedoms the moral principle of personal and social responsibility *is* to be observed...” ; Men *are* to deal with their fellows in justice and civility.” “[G]overnment *is not* to act in an arbitrary fashion...” “Its action *is* to be controlled by juridical norms...”

The Problem of Contradiction

In footnote 2 to the Latin authorised edition of the Declaration, the Fathers cite Leo XIII in *Libertas praestantissimum* (20th June 1888) as authority for the proposition—
the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself.

But the great reforming Pope said no such thing, whether in that encyclical or anywhere else in his writings.⁷⁹ And this brings us to the most significant problem with the Declaration.

In that encyclical, *Libertas praestantissimum*, Leo XIII fulfilled the duty which the Council Fathers neglected. Preparatory to explaining how the faculty of human liberty relates to the worship of God, he exposed and elaborated its nature. He then said this (at nn. 19 and 20)—

“Let us [now] examine that liberty in individuals which is so opposed to the virtue of religion, namely, the liberty of worship, as it is called. This is based on the principle that every man is free to profess as he may choose any religion, or none.

“But assuredly, of all the duties which man has to fulfil, that without doubt is the chief and the holiest which commands him to worship God with devotion and piety. This follows of necessity from the truth that we are ever in the power of God, are ever guided by His will and providence, and having come forth from Him, must return to Him. Added to which, no true virtue can exist without religion for moral virtue is concerned with those things which lead to God as man’s supreme and ultimate good; and therefore religion, which (as St Thomas says) “performs those actions which are directly and immediately ordered to the divine honour,” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 81, a. 6; resp.) rules and tempers all virtues.

“And if it be asked which of the many conflicting religions it is necessary to adopt, reason and the natural law unhesitatingly tell us to practise that one which God enjoins upon us and which men can easily recognize by certain exterior notes through which Divine Providence has willed that it should be distinguished, because in a matter of such moment the most terrible loss would be the consequence of error. Wherefore, when a liberty such as We have described is offered to man the power is given him to pervert or abandon with impunity the most sacred of duties, and to exchange the unchangeable good for evil. Which, as We have said, is no liberty at all but its degradation and the abject submission of the soul to sin.”⁸⁰

⁷⁹ The dishonesty implicit in the misuse of footnotes occurs all too frequently in modern Church documents. English layman Michael Davies notes that not one of the authorities cited by the Council Fathers in support of this proposition in the footnote in fact does so: cf. his *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 211-2. [Note that Davies refers to Leo’s encyclical *Libertas praestantissimum* throughout as *Libertas humana*.]

⁸⁰ All relevant sections of *Libertas praestantissimum* are set forth the Appendix to this paper.

Leo here expounds⁸¹ the truth proclaimed by his predecessor, Pius IX, in the *Syllabus of Errors* attached to the encyclical, *Quanta Cura*, on 8th December, 1864, in condemning (in n. 15) the following proposition:

“Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, led by the light of reason, he thinks to be the true religion.”

Pius IX had formally endorsed the teaching of *his* predecessor, Gregory XVI (1831-1846), in the encyclical *Mirari vos* (August 15th, 1832) condemning certain propositions of the French priest, Félicité de Lamennais⁸².

The terms in which Pius IX pronounced his condemnations do not admit of cavil or contradiction. They were enjoined upon the bishops of the Catholic Church strictly:

“We, truly mindful of Our Apostolic duty, and especially solicitous about our most holy religion, about sound doctrine and the salvation of souls divinely entrusted to Us, and about the good of human society itself, have decided to lift our voice again. And so all and each evil opinion and doctrine individually mentioned in this letter, by Our Apostolic authority We reject, proscribe and condemn; and We wish and command that they be considered as absolutely rejected, proscribed and condemned by all the sons of the Catholic Church.”⁸³

In condemning the proposition *that a man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, led by the light of reason, he thinks to be the true religion*, Pius IX was addressing a matter of faith—because it concerns what a man must believe. He was also addressing a matter of morals—because morality has to do with human acts, each of which bears upon man’s last end, and the act whereby a man embraces and professes the one true religion is fundamental to the attainment of that end.

Less than six years after this condemnation, in the Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, the Vatican Council defined as dogma—that is, as revealed by God—that the Pope speaks infallibly when, 1) speaking *ex cathedra*, that is, carrying out his duty as pastor and teacher of all Christians; 2) in accordance with his supreme apostolic authority; 3) he explains a doctrine of faith or morals; 4) to be held by the universal Church. Each of these four conditions is fulfilled in *Quanta Cura* as analysis shows:

1. [M]indful of Our Apostolic duty... solicitous about our most holy religion, about sound doctrine and the salvation of souls entrusted to us, and... the good of human society;
2. by Our Apostolic authority;
3. We reject, proscribe and condemn [all and each evil opinion and doctrine individually mentioned]; and... wish and command they be considered as absolutely rejected, proscribed and condemned;
4. by all the sons of the Catholic Church.

In 1946, Pope Pius XII reiterated these truths when he taught—

⁸¹ But not for the first time: he had earlier, in *Immortale Dei* (1.11.1885), endorsed Pius IX’s condemnation.

⁸² Félicité de Lamennais (1782-1854) was a French priest whose views were most influential in his day. At first those views were orthodox, but later he lapsed into heresy. He eventually abandoned his priesthood and, finally, all adherence to Christianity.

⁸³ *Quanta Cura*, n. 6

“The Catholic Church... is a perfect society and has as its foundation the truth of Faith infallibly revealed by God. For this reason, that which is opposed to this truth is, necessarily, in error, and the same rights which are objectively recognized for truth cannot be afforded to error. In this manner, liberty of thought and liberty of conscience have their essential limits in the truthfulness of God in Revelation.”⁸⁴

From all of the above it can be seen that *it is impossible* that the teaching of the Council Fathers in *Dignitatis Humanae* in contradiction of the condemnation in *Quanta Cura* and the constant teaching of his successors could bind the Catholic faithful. Indeed, the Catholic faithful are bound on this authority to reject the teaching in that document as false.

Liberty—St Thomas and Pope Leo XIII

Before one can speak of “religious liberty” he must first understand the nature of liberty. *Liberty* (or freedom), as we noted above, names two things: 1) natural liberty; and 2) moral liberty. *Natural liberty* is simply the name we give to the faculty and exercise of free will. Free will, as St Thomas says, is a power of man, the intellectual being, and is indifferent to good or evil as an object of choice⁸⁵. *Right* (in Latin *ius*) signifies the object of justice⁸⁶. Right is either natural or positive⁸⁷, but the human will cannot posit as just something contrary to natural justice⁸⁸—as e.g., no legislator can make it lawful for a woman to abort her child. The assertion of *liberty*, as, for instance in the slogan of the French Revolutionaries, is the assertion not of the exercise of the power of free will, but the unspoken assertion of a *right* in man to exercise it. As in all slogans there is as much of error as of truth, for it makes no distinction between *natural liberty* and *moral liberty*. The bland assertion of “liberty” without distinction, then, is not only misleading, but dangerously so.

In *Libertas praestantissimum* Leo XIII lays out the reasoning behind his predecessor’s condemnation in *Quanta Cura*. We set out his argument here with the paragraph numbers added to assist the reader’s analysis. The full text of the relevant sections of the encyclical appears in the Appendix.

- a. When the Pope speaks of “liberty” in this encyclical he is referring not to natural liberty but to moral liberty. [n. 3]
- b. The end or object both of the rational will and of its liberty is that good only which is in conformity with reason. [n. 5]

⁸⁴ Discourse *Ecco che gia un anno* of 6th October 1946, quoted in Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

⁸⁵ *Summa Theologiae*, I, 88, 2

⁸⁶ *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 57, 1

⁸⁷ *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 57, 2

⁸⁸ *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 57, 3, ad 2. When the Council Fathers’ claimed in *Dignitatis Humanae*—“the human person has a right to religious liberty”—they were either asserting a *positive* right or declaring a *natural* right. But if there was no such natural right, no assertion by the Council Fathers of the existence of a positive right could render it so.

- c. The choice of something contrary to reason is an abuse of human liberty and, indeed, corrupts its very essence—which is why Our Lord says “anyone who commits sin is a slave”. The man who sins in that very act loses his liberty. [n. 6]
- d. Man’s liberty, in order that it be liberty, must be conformed to law, i.e., the ordination of reason, whether natural or positive law. “Nothing more foolish can be uttered or conceived than the notion that, because man is free by nature, he is therefore exempt from law.” [n. 7]
- e. The natural law is nothing but the eternal law of God (commanding good and forbidding evil) implanted in man. [n. 8]
- f. Therefore, human liberty demands conformity of a man with the eternal law; and it is precisely in this conformity that man’s liberty is protected and perfected. [n. 11]
- g. If something be suggested as liberty from which conformity with law is removed, this is not freedom at all, but a most foolish licence. [n. 14]
- h. Of all the duties that man has to fulfil, the chief and the holiest is that which commands him to worship God with devotion and piety. And reason and the natural law unhesitatingly tell us that the religion man is bound to adopt and practise (among all those available) is that religion which God enjoins upon us and which men can easily recognise by certain exterior notes whereby Divine Providence has willed it should be distinguished. [n. 20]
- i. Hence, when a so-called liberty of worship, that is “religious liberty”, [n. 19] is offered to man, the power is given him to pervert or abandon with impunity the most sacred of duties and to exchange the unchangeable good for evil. This is no liberty at all but its degradation and involves the abject submission of the soul to sin. [n. 20]

From all this it can be seen that what the Council Fathers called “religious liberty” was nothing but “religious licence”.

The Influence of de Lamennais and Freemasonry

Hugues Félicité Robert de Lamennais (June 19th 1782-February 27th 1854) was a French priest (ordained 1816 by the Bishop of Rennes) whose views exercised great influence on the people of his day. He moved from a reasonable orthodoxy to heresy. Many of his views whilst he was orthodox were not only sound but incisive. He realised that Luther’s introduction into religion of private judgement had infected Descartes and Leibniz (in philosophy and science), and Rousseau and the Encyclopaedists (in politics) and that this had resulted in a practical atheism. In 1817 he produced a book which became immensely popular, *Essai sur l’indifférence en matière de religion* (An Essay on Religious Indifference). His popularity brought him a following and he was responsible for the conversion of many intellectuals to the faith. Regrettably it also enlarged his sense of self importance and he was carried away with his own theories on how to combat the errors of the age.

In a second volume of his *Essai*, published in 1820, he advanced a philosophical position designed to combat that of René Descartes. Here is an extract from the analysis of his thought in the on-line *Catholic Encyclopaedia*.

“The philosophic system which he expounded... was based on a new theory of certitude. [C]ertitude cannot be given by the individual reason... only to the general

reason, that is to the universal consent of mankind, the *common* sense; it is derived from the unanimous testimony of the human race. Certitude, therefore, is not created by evidence, but by the authority of mankind; it is a matter of faith in the testimony of the human race, not the result of free enquiry... There exists... a true religion... one, which is absolutely necessary to salvation and to social order. Only one criterion will enable us to discern the true religion from the false... the authority of testimony. The true religion, therefore, is that which can put forth on its own behalf the greatest number of witnesses. This is the case with the Christian, or rather, the Catholic religion. It is in reality the true, the only religion which began with the world and perpetuates itself with it. The result of a primitive revelation, this unique religion has perfected itself in the course of ages without being essentially modified; Christians now believe all that the human race has believed, and the human race has always believed what Christians believe...

“The philosophic system of Lamennais, like his apologetics, called forth serious objections... [His] philosophy and apologetics favoured scepticism by denying the validity of individual reason. If the latter can furnish no certitude, how can we expect any from the general reason, which is but a synthesis of individual reasons? It was also a confusion of the natural and the supernatural orders, of philosophy and theology, to base both alike on the authority of the human race; and, since according to him both alike are based on human testimony, religious faith was at once reduced to human faith...”

With his founding of the journal *L’Avenir* in 1830, de Lamennais’ opinions began to move even further from orthodoxy and Pope Gregory XVI was moved to condemn them in his encyclical *Mirari vos* (1832). The Pope required him to submit to the judgements set forth there but de Lamennais refused. Later he abandoned his priesthood and, finally, all adherence to Christianity, ending in atheism.

De Lamennais taught *inter alia* that—

-) the individual citizen should have a freedom of conscience which is full, universal, without restriction or privilege;
-) governments only exist to maintain unity and harmony among the citizens of the State;
-) the only power the State should have is the power to repress crimes which would attack the liberties of its citizens;
-) the only prohibited religious (or anti-religious) propaganda should be that calculated to incite violence or sedition;
-) error should be accorded the unlimited power of diffusing itself;
-) there should be absolute separation between Church and State;
-) all concordats between the nations and the Holy See should be abolished.

Once the Church renounced the use of force, he claimed naively, the nations would, under the influence of her truth, flock to her embrace, leading to—

“the temporal sovereignty of Christ by means of the emancipation of peoples and freedom of thought and conscience...”

The reader will observe that many of these claims are reflected in the language of *Dignitatis Humanae*. He will also detect a certain resonance between de Lamennais' teachings and the thinking of Pope John XXIII manifested in his Opening Speech to the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council:

“[Certain Catholics] behave as though at the time of former Councils everything was a full triumph for the Christian idea and life and for a proper religious liberty... Today... the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations... [Fallacious teaching, opinions and dangerous concepts] are so obviously in contrast with the right norm of honesty and have produced such lethal fruits that by now it would seem that men of themselves are inclined to condemn them... They are ever more deeply convinced of the paramount dignity of the human person and of his perfections, as well as of the duties which that implies...”⁸⁹

In his encyclical, *Humanum Genus* (20th April, 1884)⁹⁰, Pope Leo XIII set out the program that Freemasonry seeks to bring about in the world. Many of the heads of that program are reflected in the teachings of de Lamennais including the following:

- all religions are alike and there is no reason why one should have precedence over another;
- each one must be left at liberty to follow whatever religion he may prefer;
- it is an act of violence to require men to obey any authority other than that which is obtained from themselves;
- the civil state should be without God;
- a regard for religion should be held as an indifferent matter;
- the teaching office and authority of the Catholic Church should be of no account in the civil state;
- Church and state ought to be altogether disunited;
- (consequently) states ought to be constituted without any regard for the laws and precepts of the Church.

Again the reader should have little difficulty detecting in *Dignitatis Humanae* a reflection of many of these elements of the Masonic program.

The Absence of Argumentation

Since it was founded by the Author of reason, the Catholic Church is pre-eminently the religion of reason. In any document issued by the Church giving a decision or judgement on some topic of faith or morals, then, one is entitled to expect to see the reasons laid out with clarity. Moreover, if there is any argument to the contrary of a decision or judgement enjoined upon the faithful, one expects to see that argument addressed and any difficulties satisfactorily resolved. Consider *Dignitatis Humanae* in the light of these prescriptions.

⁸⁹ Abbott at p. 712. We have remarked elsewhere on the naivety of the late Pope's views; cf. *Failure of the Executive Power* below, pp. 132 et seq.

⁹⁰ In sections 12 to 23.

The Church had spoken previously on the critical distinction between natural liberty and moral liberty. Why did the Council Fathers choose not to repeat it? There can be only one answer. It would have impeded, not assisted, their novel claim. In every report of the many preparatory debates among the Council Fathers⁹¹ it is clear that the Church's earlier teachings were in issue. They were debated *in extenso*. Why, then, is there nothing in the document stating them? Or addressing them? Or at least attempting to resolve them? Nowhere in any of the footnotes to the authorised Latin edition of the document will a reader find any mention of the *Syllabus of Errors* attached to Pius IX's Bull, *Quanta Cura*; or of proposition n. 15 which it condemned; or of Leo XIII's studied endorsement of that condemnation in *Libertas praestantissimum*. A cynic would be justified in opining that these matters were not mentioned because the Fathers had no answer to them; or no answer which would bear the light of critical analysis.

But more than this there is evidence the Council Fathers engaged in a deliberate obfuscation of the *status quo* for when they came to enunciate their novel principle (if one omits the intervening chapter heading) this is what they said—

“[This Vatican Council] intends to develop the doctrine of recent popes on the inviolable rights of the human person and the constitutional order of society. [It] declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion etc...”

First, they were aware that there existed a pre-existing statement of Pius IX expressed in the most solemn manner contradicting the claim they were now making. Secondly, by adopting the device of referring only to “recent popes” they gave the impression that they were deferring to the Church's tradition when in fact they were contradicting it. Thirdly, in obscuring the existing Church teaching, they were denying the need for Catholics to conform to its demands.

We mentioned above the Fathers' departure from the Church's perennial standard of the common good in favour of the preservation of public order as the criterion for determining the limits to their asserted right to religious freedom. There is reason latent in this theological aberration which demonstrates a degree of wilful attention.

Any reference to the common good demands that due order be observed with regard to man and society. In respect of matters religious this entails that respect be given not to any religion at all but to that religion established by Almighty God because the common good cannot ultimately be secured save by the religion established by the Founder of society. Now, as St Thomas says “the individual good is impossible without the common good of the family, state or kingdom”⁹²; but religious liberty *simpliciter* is

⁹¹ As, e.g., the commentators' papers in *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M Abbott S J, General Editor; London, 1966; Ralph M Wiltgen in *The Rhine flows into the Tiber; A History of Vatican II*, New York, 1967 (my copy a reprint by TAN Books, 1985); and Michael Davies in *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit.

⁹² For convenience we repeat footnote 75 quoting St Thomas. “He that seeks the good of the many, seeks in consequence his own good for two reasons. First, because the individual good is impossible without the common good of the family, state or kingdom. Hence Valerius Maximus says of the ancient

against the common good of any of these. Hence it is impossible that it be for the good of the individual; for which reason any appeal to the common good would have betrayed the Council Fathers' claim that *the human person has a right to religious liberty*.

Christ's Faithful People who have long suffered the effects of what, if it was not wilful disobedience of the Church's existing teaching, was certainly recklessness towards it, are entitled to feel a righteous anger against the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council over these falsifications, and against the Pope who sanctioned them.

Perhaps it was the scope given the Devil by the errors in *Dignitatis Humanae* to which Pope Paul VI was referring when, on June 29th 1972, he told a Vatican audience—

“We believed that after the Council would come a day of sunshine in the history of the Church. But instead there has come a day of clouds and storms, and of darkness... And how did this come about? We will confide to you the thought that may be, we ourselves admit in free discussion, that may be unfounded, but that is that there has been a power, an adversary power [at work]. Let us call him by his name: the Devil... It is as if from some mysterious crack, no, it is not mysterious, from some crack the smoke of Satan has entered the temple of God...”

We will in a further paper discuss the evils that have befallen the Church and the world as a result of the errors in *Dignitatis Humanae*.

Romans *they would rather be poor in a rich empire than rich in a poor empire*. Secondly, because, since man is a part of the home and state, he must needs consider what is good for him by being prudent about the good of the many. For the good disposition of parts depends on their relation to the whole; and thus Augustine says (*Confessions*, iii) *that part is unseemly that does not harmonise with the whole*.

APPENDIX

Selected passages from *LIBERTAS PRAESTANTISSIMUM*, Encyclical letter of Pope Leo XIII, 20th June 1888, *On the Nature of Human Liberty*.

3. It is with *moral* liberty [that we are dealing].... But, first of all, it will be well to speak briefly of *natural* liberty; for, though it is distinct and separate from moral liberty, natural freedom is the fountainhead from which liberty of whatsoever kind flows, *sua vi suaque sponte*⁹³. The unanimous consent and judgment of men, which is the trusty voice of nature, recognizes this natural liberty in those only who are endowed with intelligence or reason; and it is by his use of this faculty that man is regarded rightly as responsible for his actions. For, while other animate creatures follow their senses, seeking good and avoiding evil only by instinct, man has reason to guide him in each and every act of his life. Reason sees that whatever things that are held to be good upon earth may exist or may not, and discerning that none of them are of necessity for us, it leaves the will free to choose what it pleases. But man can judge of this contingency, as We say, only because he has a soul that is simple, spiritual, and intellectual—a soul, therefore, not produced by matter, nor dependent on matter for its existence, but created immediately by God—and, far surpassing the condition of things material, which has a life and action of its own so that, knowing the unchangeable and necessary reasons of what is true and good, it sees that no particular kind of good is necessary to us. When, therefore, it is established that man's soul is immortal and endowed with reason and not bound up with things material, the foundation of natural liberty is at once most firmly laid.

...

5. ...Considered as to its nature, [liberty] is the faculty of choosing means fitted for the end proposed, for he is master of his actions who can choose one thing out of many. Now, since everything chosen as a means is viewed as good or useful, and since good, as such, is the proper object of our desire, it follows that freedom of choice is a property of the will or, rather, is identical with the will in so far as it has in its action the faculty of choice. But the will cannot proceed to act until it is enlightened by the knowledge possessed by the intellect. In other words, the good wished by the will is necessarily good in so far as it is known by the intellect; and this the more because in all voluntary acts choice is subsequent to a judgment upon the truth of the good presented, declaring to which good preference should be given. No sensible man can doubt that judgment is an act of reason, not of the will. The end, or object, both of the rational will and of its liberty is that good only which is in conformity with reason.

6. Since, however, both these faculties are imperfect, it is possible, as is often seen, that the reason should propose something which is not really good, but which has the appearance of good, and that the will should choose accordingly. For as the possibility of error, and actual error, are defects of the mind and attest its

⁹³ "by one's own power and free will."

imperfection, so the pursuit of what has a false appearance of good, though a proof of our freedom (just as a disease is a proof of our vitality), implies defect in human liberty. The will also, simply because of its dependence on the reason, no sooner desires anything contrary to reason than it abuses its freedom of choice and corrupts its very essence. Thus it is that the infinitely perfect God, although supremely free, because of the supremacy of His intellect and of His essential goodness, nevertheless cannot choose evil; neither can the angels and saints, who enjoy the beatific vision. St. Augustine and others urged most admirably against the Pelagians that, if the possibility of deflection from good belonged to the essence or perfection of liberty, then God, Jesus Christ, and the angels and saints, who have not this power, would have no liberty at all, or would have less liberty than man has in his state of pilgrimage and imperfection. This subject is often discussed by the Angelic Doctor in his demonstration that the possibility of sinning is not freedom but slavery. It will suffice to quote his subtle commentary on the words of our Lord: *Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin* (John 8: 34). 'Every thing,' he says, 'is that which belongs to it naturally. When, therefore, it acts through a power outside itself it does not act of itself but through another, that is, as a slave. But man is by nature rational. When, therefore, he acts according to reason he acts of himself and according to his free will; and this is liberty. Whereas, when he sins he acts in opposition to reason, is moved by another, and is the victim of foreign misapprehensions. Therefore, *Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin.*' [*On the Gospel of St. John*, cap. viii, lect. 4, n. 3 (ed. Vives, Vol. 20 p. 95)]. Even the heathen philosophers clearly recognized this truth especially they who held that the wise man alone is free; and by the term 'wise man' was meant, as is well known, the man trained to live in accordance with his nature, that is, in justice and virtue.

7. Such, then, being the condition of human liberty, it necessarily stands in need of light and strength to direct its actions to good and to restrain them from evil. Without this the freedom of our will would be our ruin. First of all, there must be *law*; that is, a fixed rule of teaching as to what is to be done and what is to be left undone. This rule cannot affect the lower animals in any true sense since they act of necessity, following their natural instinct and cannot of themselves act in any other way. On the other hand, as was said above, he who is free can either act or not act, can do this or do that, as he pleases, because his judgment precedes his choice. And his judgment not only decides what is right or wrong of its own nature but also what is practically good and therefore to be chosen, and what is practically evil and therefore to be avoided. In other words, reason prescribes to the will what it should seek or shun for the eventual attainment of man's last end for the sake of which all his actions ought to be performed. This ordination of *reason* is called law. In man's free will, therefore, or in the moral necessity that our voluntary acts comply with reason, lies the very root of the necessity of law. Nothing more foolish can be uttered or conceived than the notion that, because man is free by nature, he is therefore exempt from law. Were this the case, it would follow that to become free we must be deprived of reason; whereas the truth is that we are bound to submit to law precisely because we are free by our very nature. For, law is the guide of man's actions; it turns him toward good by its rewards, and deters him from evil by its punishments.

8. Foremost in this office comes the *natural law*, which is written and engraved in the mind of every man; and this is nothing but our reason, commanding us to do right and forbidding sin. Nevertheless, all prescriptions of human reason can have the force of law only inasmuch as they are the voice and the interpreters of some higher power on which our reason and liberty necessarily depend. For, since the force of law consists in the imposing of obligations and the granting of rights, authority is the one and only foundation of all law—the power, that is, of fixing duties and defining rights, as also of assigning the necessary sanctions of reward and chastisement to each and all of its commands. But all this, clearly, cannot be found in man, if, as his own supreme legislator, he is to be the rule of his own actions. It follows, therefore, that the law of nature is the same thing as the *eternal law* implanted in rational creatures and inclining them *to their right action and end*; and can be nothing else but the eternal reason of God, the Creator and Ruler of all the world. To this rule of action and restraint of evil God has vouchsafed to give special and most suitable aids for strengthening and ordering the human will. The first and most excellent of these is the power of His divine *grace*, whereby the mind can be enlightened and the will wholesomely invigorated and moved to the constant pursuit of moral good, so that the use of our inborn liberty becomes at once less difficult and less dangerous. Not that the divine assistance hinders in any way the free movement of our will; just the contrary, for grace works inwardly in man and in harmony with his natural inclinations, since it flows from the very Creator of his mind and will by whom all things are moved in conformity with their nature. As the Angelic Doctor points out, it is because divine grace comes from the Author of nature that it is so admirably adapted to be the safeguard of all natures and to maintain the character, efficiency, and operations of each.

9. What has been said of the liberty of individuals is no less applicable to them when considered as bound together in civil society. For what reason and the natural law do for individuals, that *human law*, promulgated for their good, does for the citizens of States. Of the laws enacted by men, some are concerned with what is by its very nature good or bad; and they command men to follow after what is right and to shun what is wrong, adding at the same time a suitable sanction. But such laws by no means derive their origin from civil society, because, just as civil society did not create human nature, so neither can it be said to be the author of the good which befits human nature, or of the evil which is contrary to it. Laws come before men live together in society, and have their origin in the natural, and consequently in the eternal, law. The precepts, therefore, of the natural law contained bodily in the laws of men have not merely the force of human law, but they possess that higher and more august sanction which belongs to the law of nature and the eternal law. And within the sphere of this kind of laws the duty of the civil legislator is, mainly, to keep the community in obedience by the adoption of a common discipline and by putting restraint upon refractory and viciously inclined men so that, deterred from evil, they may turn to what is good, or at any rate may avoid causing trouble and disturbance to the State. Now, there are other enactments of the civil authority, which do not follow directly, but somewhat remotely, from the natural law, and decide many points which the law of nature treats only in a general and indefinite way. For instance, though nature commands all to contribute to the public peace and

prosperity, whatever belongs to the manner, and circumstances, and conditions under which such service is to be rendered must be determined by the wisdom of men and not by nature herself. It is in the constitution of these particular rules of life, suggested by reason and prudence, and put forth by competent authority, that human law, properly so called, consists, binding all citizens to work together for the attainment of the common end proposed to the community, and forbidding them to depart from this end, and, in so far as human law is in conformity with the dictates of nature, leading to what is good, and deterring from evil.

10. From this it is manifest that the eternal law of God is the sole standard and rule of human liberty, not only in each individual man, but also in the community and civil society which men constitute when united. Therefore, the true liberty of human society does not consist in every man doing what he pleases, for this would simply end in turmoil and confusion, and bring on the overthrow of the State; but rather in this, that through the injunctions of the civil law all may more easily conform to the prescriptions of the eternal law. Likewise, the liberty of those who are in authority does not consist in the power to lay unreasonable and capricious commands upon their subjects, which would equally be criminal and would lead to the ruin of the commonwealth; but the binding force of human laws is in this that they are to be regarded as applications of the eternal law, and incapable of sanctioning anything which is not contained in the eternal law, as in the principle of all law. Thus, St. Augustine most wisely says: 'I think that you can see, at the same time, that there is nothing just and lawful in that temporal law, unless what men have gathered from this eternal law.' (*De libero arbitrio*, lib. I, cap. 6, n. 15 [PL 32, 1229].) If, then, by anyone in authority something be sanctioned out of conformity with the principles of right reason and consequently hurtful to the commonwealth such an enactment can have no binding force of law as being no rule of justice, but certain to lead men away from that good which is the very end of civil society.

11. Therefore, the nature of human liberty, however it be considered, whether in individuals or in society, whether in those who command or in those who obey, supposes the necessity of obedience to some supreme and eternal law which is no other than the authority of God commanding good and forbidding evil. And, so far from this most just authority of God over men diminishing or even destroying their liberty, it protects and perfects it, for the real perfection of all creatures is found in the prosecution and attainment of their respective ends; but the supreme end to which human liberty must aspire is God.

...

14. If when men discuss the question of liberty they were careful to grasp its true and legitimate meaning, such as with reason we have just explained, they would never venture to affix such a calumny on the Church as to assert that she is the foe of individual and public liberty. But many there are who follow in the footsteps of Lucifer and adopt as their own his rebellious cry 'I will not serve'; and consequently substitute for true liberty what is sheer and most foolish license. Such, for instance, are the men belonging to that widely spread and powerful organization who, usurping the name of liberty, style themselves 'liberals'.

15. What *naturalists* or *rationalists* aim at in philosophy, that the supporters of *liberalism*, carrying out the principles laid down by naturalism, are attempting in the domain of morality and politics. The fundamental doctrine of rationalism is the supremacy of the human reason which, refusing due submission to the divine and eternal reason, proclaims its own independence and constitutes itself the supreme principle and source and judge of truth. Hence, these followers of liberalism deny the existence of any divine authority to which obedience is due and proclaim that every man is a law unto himself; from which arises that ethical system which they style *independent* morality, and which, under the guise of liberty, exonerates man from any obedience to the commands of God and substitutes for it a boundless license. The end of all this is not difficult to foresee, especially when society is in question. For, when once man is firmly persuaded that he is subject to no one it follows that the efficient cause of the unity of civil society is not to be sought in any principle external to man, or superior to him, but simply in the free will of individuals; that the authority in the State comes from the people only; and that, just as every man's individual reason is his only rule of life, so the collective reason of the community should be the supreme guide in the management of all public affairs. Hence the doctrine of the supremacy of the greater number and that all right and all duty reside in the majority. But, from what has been said it is clear that all this is in contradiction to reason. To refuse any bond of union between man and civil society, on the one hand, and God the Creator and consequently the supreme Law-giver, on the other, is plainly repugnant to the nature, not only of man, but of all created things; for of necessity all effects must in some proper way be connected with their cause; and it belongs to the perfection of every nature to contain itself within that sphere and grade which the order of nature has assigned to it, namely, that the lower should be subject and obedient to the higher.

16. Moreover, besides this, a doctrine of such character is most hurtful both to individuals and to the State. For, once ascribe to human reason the only authority to decide what is true and what is good, and the real distinction between good and evil is destroyed; honour and dishonour differ not in their nature, but in the opinion and judgment of each one; pleasure is the measure of what is lawful; and, a code of morality being provided which can have little or no power to restrain or quieten the unruly propensities of man, a way is naturally opened to universal corruption. With reference also to public affairs: authority is severed from the true and natural principle whence it derives all its efficacy for the common good; and the law determining what it is right to do and avoid doing is at the mercy of a majority. Now, this is simply a road leading straight to tyranny. The empire of God over man and civil society once repudiated, it follows that religion, as a public institution, can have no claim to exist, and that everything that belongs to religion will be treated with complete indifference. Furthermore, with ambitious designs on sovereignty, tumult and sedition will be common amongst the people; and when duty and conscience cease to appeal to them, there will be nothing to hold them back but force, which of itself alone is powerless to keep their covetousness in check. Of this we have almost daily evidence in the conflict with *socialists* and members of other seditious societies, who labour unceasingly to bring about revolution. It is for those, then, who are capable of forming a just estimate of things, to decide whether such

doctrines promote that true liberty which alone is worthy of man, or rather, pervert and destroy it.

...

18. There are [some]... who affirm that the morality of individuals is to be guided by the divine law, but not the morality of the State, such that in public affairs the commands of God may be passed over, and may be entirely disregarded in the framing of laws. Hence follows the fatal theory of the need of separation between Church and State. But the absurdity of such a position is manifest. Nature herself proclaims the necessity of the State providing means and opportunities whereby the community may be enabled to live properly, that is to say, according to the laws of God. For, since God is the source of all goodness and justice, it is absolutely ridiculous that the State should pay no attention to these laws or render them abortive by contrary enactments. Besides, those who are in authority owe it to the commonwealth not only to provide for its external well-being and the conveniences of life, but still more to consult the welfare of men's souls in the wisdom of their legislation. But, for the increase of such benefits, nothing more suitable can be conceived than the laws which have God for their author; and, therefore, they who in their government of the State take no account of these laws abuse political power by causing it to deviate from its proper end and from what nature itself prescribes. And, what is still more important, and what We have more than once pointed out, although the civil authority has not the same proximate end as the spiritual, nor proceeds on the same lines, nevertheless in the exercise of their separate powers they must occasionally meet. For their subjects are the same, and not infrequently they deal with the same objects, though in different ways. Whenever this occurs, since a state of conflict is absurd and manifestly repugnant to the most wise ordinance of God, there must necessarily exist some order or mode of procedure to remove the occasions of difference and contention, and to secure harmony in all things. This harmony has been not inaptly compared to that which exists between the body and the soul for the well-being of both one and the other, the separation of which brings irremediable harm to the body, since it extinguishes its very life.

19. To make this more evident, the growth of liberty ascribed to our age must be considered apart in its various details. And, first, let us examine that liberty in individuals which is so opposed to the virtue of religion, namely, the liberty, as it is called, of worship,. This is based on the principle that every man is free to profess as he may choose any religion or none.

20. But, assuredly, of all the duties which man has to fulfil, that, without doubt, is the chief and the holiest which commands him to worship God with devotion and piety. This follows of necessity from the truth that we are ever in the power of God, are ever guided by His will and providence, and, having come forth from Him, must return to Him. Added to which, no true virtue can exist without religion, for moral virtue is concerned with those things which lead to God as man's supreme and ultimate good; and therefore religion, which (as St. Thomas says) "performs those actions which are directly and immediately ordained for the divine honour," rules and tempers all virtues. And if it be asked which of the many conflicting religions it is necessary to adopt, reason and the natural law unhesitatingly tell us to practice

that one which God enjoins, and which men can easily recognize by certain exterior notes, whereby Divine Providence has willed that it should be distinguished, because, in a matter of such moment, the most terrible loss would be the consequence of error. Wherefore, when a liberty such as We have described is offered to man, the power is given him to pervert or abandon with impunity the most sacred of duties, and to exchange the unchangeable good for evil; which, as We have said, is no liberty, but its degradation, and the abject submission of the soul to sin.

21. This kind of liberty, if considered in relation to the State, clearly implies that there is no reason why the State should offer any homage to God, or should desire any public recognition of Him; that no one form of worship is to be preferred to another, but that all stand on an equal footing, no account being taken of the religion of the people, even if they profess the Catholic faith. But, to justify this, it must needs be taken as true that the State has no duties toward God, or that such duties, if they exist, can be abandoned with impunity, both of which assertions are manifestly false. For it cannot be doubted but that, by the will of God, men are united in civil society; whether its component parts be considered; or its form, which implies authority; or the object of its existence; or the abundance of the vast services which it renders to man. God it is who has made man for society, and has placed him in the company of others like himself, so that what was wanting to his nature, and beyond his attainment if left to his own resources, he might obtain by association with others. Wherefore, civil society must acknowledge God as its Founder and Parent, and must obey and reverence His power and authority. justice therefore forbids, and reason itself forbids, the State to be godless; or to adopt a line of action which would end in godlessness—namely, to treat the various religions (as they call them) alike, and to bestow upon them promiscuously equal rights and privileges. Since, then, the profession of one religion is necessary in the State, that religion must be professed which alone is true, and which can be recognized without difficulty, especially in Catholic States, because the marks of truth are, as it were, engraven upon it. This religion, therefore, the rulers of the State must preserve and protect, if they would provide—as they should do—with prudence and usefulness for the good of the community. For public authority exists for the welfare of those whom it governs; and, although its proximate end is to lead men to the prosperity found in this life, yet, in so doing, it ought not to diminish, but rather to increase, man's capability of attaining to the supreme good in which his everlasting happiness consists: which never can be attained if religion be disregarded.

22. All this, however, We have explained more fully elsewhere. We now only wish to add the remark that liberty of so false a nature is greatly hurtful to the true liberty of both rulers and their subjects. Religion, of its essence, is wonderfully helpful to the State. For, since it derives the prime origin of all power directly from God Himself, with grave authority it charges rulers to be mindful of their duty, to govern without injustice or severity, to rule their people kindly and with almost paternal charity; it admonishes subjects to be obedient to lawful authority, as to the ministers of God; and it binds them to their rulers, not merely by obedience, but by reverence and affection, forbidding all seditions and venturesome enterprises

calculated to disturb public order and tranquillity, and cause greater restrictions to be put upon the liberty of the people. We need not mention how greatly religion conduces to pure morals, and pure morals to liberty. Reason shows, and history confirms the fact, that the higher the morality of States, the greater are the liberty and wealth and power which they enjoy...

THE DILEMMA

“Is religion in the Church of Christ incapable of progress?—But surely there must be progress and that not a little! ... We must make this reservation however, that the progress shall be a genuine progress and not an alteration of the faith [*profectus non permutatio*]. We have progress when a thing grows and yet remains itself; we have alteration when a thing becomes something else...”

St Vincent of Lérins⁹⁴

Catholics are faced with a dilemma in the conflict in teaching between two Church documents; or rather, between two *lines* of Church documents—

- 1) *Quanta Cura* of Pius IX and *Libertas praestantissimum* of Leo XIII, and the various utterances of later Popes confirming their teaching down to Pius XII; and,
- 2) the Declaration on Religious Liberty of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, *Dignitatis Humanae*, and the utterances of later Popes confirming that teaching.

This dilemma is demonstrated by the following comment on an earlier paper in this series.

“[I]f the bishops [of Vatican II] were assembled in General Council (as indeed they were) they received the influence of the Holy Spirit which made their pronouncements on faith or morals infallible.”

How can a document issued by a body which, when it addresses an issue of faith or morals is incapable of erring, yet be replete with error?

In his *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, Dr Ludwig Ott writes:

“The totality of the bishops is infallible when they, either assembled in General Council or scattered over the earth, propose a teaching of faith or morals as one to be held by all the faithful. (De Fide) ...

“á) The bishops exercise their infallible teaching power in extraordinary manner at a general or ecumenical council. It is in the decisions of the General Councils that the teaching activity of the whole teaching body instituted by Christ is most decisively exercised. It has been the constant teaching of the Church from the earliest times that the resolutions of the General Councils are infallible...”

“In order that a Council should be a general one it is necessary: áá) that all the ruling bishops in the world be invited; ββ) that... so many bishops from the various countries come, that they may be regarded as being representative of the whole Episcopate; γγ) that the Pope summon the Council, or at least invest the assembly with his authority and preside personally or by his representative at the meeting, and ratify the resolutions. From the Papal ratifications, which can be explicit or implicit, the resolutions derive general legal binding power...”⁹⁵

⁹⁴ *Commonitorium*, XXIII, 1-3. Quoted in Charles Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, (transl. of the authors' *L'Eglise du Verbe Incarné*), London [Sheed & Ward], 1955, pp. 536-7.

⁹⁵ *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (transl. from the German by Patrick Lynch), Mercier Press, Cork, 1960, Fourth edition, p. 300.

In his 2001 redaction of Archbishop Michael Sheehan's *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine*, Fr Peter Joseph says (at pages 184-5):

"THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH TEACHING. The Church may convey her infallible teaching to us either on her *solemn* or her *ordinary* authority.

"With her *solemn* authority she commands us to believe all doctrines contained in the four Creeds, or expressed in definitions of Popes or General Councils...

"*General or Ecumenical Council*: a meeting of a large number of bishops, representative of the entire Church, assembled at the summons or with the approval of the Pope, and passing doctrinal or disciplinary decrees which he confirms. That the concurrence and approval of the Pope are necessary for the work of a General Council follows from the doctrine of Apostolicity...

"With her ordinary authority the Church commands us to believe the doctrine which the Pope and Bishops throughout the world, in the everyday exercise of their pastoral office, unanimously teach as revealed truth.

...

"DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOLEMN AND ORDINARY TEACHING. The Church is as infallible in her ordinary teaching as she is in her solemn teaching. The only points of distinction between the two which we need note are: (1) Her solemn teaching is made known at once to all the faithful by a most public and solemn declaration, definitively excluding the possibility of holding any contrary doctrine. It is thus a most effective organ of infallibility, a most effective means of combating widespread error. (2) Her ordinary teaching, though less effective as an organ of her infallibility, is of greater importance, because it is her ordinary, everyday means of propagating and preserving the faith, and has gone on without interruption since Apostolic times. (3) Her solemn teaching is of rare occurrence and is never more than a clear and emphatic explanation of doctrines that have always formed part of her ordinary teaching...

"A Pope or a General Council may propose a doctrine for our acceptance without binding us to an assent of faith. This is usually called 'provisional teaching'..."⁹⁶

A little later, at pp. 196-7, he adds this:

"*Twofold teaching authority of the Pope*. The Pope does not always speak with his charism of infallibility. He possesses a twofold teaching authority, viz., supreme or infallible, and ordinary. When he employs his ordinary authority, he is authoritative but not infallible and does not, of course, bind us to an assent of faith or an irrevocable assent..."

Though Fr Joseph promises to detail the occasions when a General Council may propose a doctrine for acceptance without binding the faithful to an assent of faith, nothing appears on the subject in his text.

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⁹⁶ *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine*, Revised and Edited by Fr P M Joseph, St Austin Press, London, 2001.

How do you solve a dilemma? There are two rules. You must accept, in their generality, the terms of the two conflicting principles. You must then look for a distinction in the one, or in the other, or in both. Let us endeavour to do so.

1. God's Holy Church is infallible and indefectible. She is the spotless Bride of Christ. The Church cannot do otherwise than utter the truth. Her Founder is Truth Himself; her soul is the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit. Her end is Truth, Almighty God. When the Church speaks formally we can be certain it is God Who is speaking, for she is a Divine thing in the midst of the mundane.

2. The Church is a principal; the pope and bishops are her instruments. She exercises her office of teaching (as she exercises her office of discipline) through them. She is identified with them for she cannot speak save through their mouths; she does not appear in the world save through their persons. However, she is distinct from, and superior to, them.

3. A General (or Ecumenical) Council of the Church is a conference of the bishops of the whole Church convened to discuss and settle matters of Church doctrine and practice. St Augustine describes the sort of factors that often served to precipitate the convocation of a General Council:

“[T]he hot restlessness of heretics stirs up questions about many articles of the Catholic faith, the necessity of defending them forces us both to investigate them more accurately, to understand them more clearly and to proclaim them more earnestly...”⁹⁷

4. Because she is of God, the Church is infallible. She is also, for the same reason, indefectible. St Irenaeus wrote: “Where the Church is, there is also the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace; but the Spirit is truth.” [*Adv. haer.* III, 24, 1]. The Pope, or the Pope and bishops together in Council, are infallible not by nature, as is the Church, but by participation. They participate—for the moment—in the Church’s infallibility and serve to manifest it. To put it another way, the Church is infallible by essence, the Pope and the bishops are infallible by accident, the accident of their being called to serve the Church *at this time and in this place*. The critical issue to be grasped is that it is the Church’s infallibility that Pope, or Pope and Council, exercise as occasion demands.

5. When the Church speaks infallibly through the mouth of Pope or Council about some element of faith or morals, she establishes that fact as true forever. To quote St Athanasius: “The words of the Lord which were spoken by the General Council of Nicaea remain in eternity.” [*Epist. ad Afros* 2] It is impossible that the Church can, or ever will thereafter, contradict that truth. When Pius IX condemned religious liberty in *Quanta Cura* he anticipated each of the four requirements of the Decree *Pastor*

⁹⁷ *De Civitate Dei*, XVI, ii

Aeternus (July 18, 1870) of the (first) Vatican Council. It follows that the Church there spoke infallibly.

6. In *Pastor Aeternus* the Church has spelt out the circumstances in which a Pope is infallible. In contrast, the circumstances in which a Council is Ecumenical, i.e., infallible, have not been spelt out by a formal decree of a Council. Its charism is guaranteed, as Dr Ott notes above, by the Church's constant teaching. Since a General Council depends both for validity and licit-ness upon the Pope's endorsement, it is clear that the ambit of its power cannot exceed that of the Pope. One might have expected, then, that such power would require just as careful a delineation. But until Vatican II the need to do so had not arisen. No General Council of the Church had been convoked other than to address some pressing matter of doctrine or of practice. The focus of each, its *raison d'être*, was determined in advance—the resolution of some issue essential to the wellbeing of the Church and of the faithful and matters incidental thereto.⁹⁸ The essentiality of the need gave to each its character of extraordinary infallibility. In the language of metaphysics its finality determined the formality of infallibility.⁹⁹

7. However, the reason for the Second Vatican Council's convocation was something else—*aggiornamento*—the asserted need “to bring the Church up to date”, a euphemism for adapting the Church's teaching to the demands of the secular world. Pope John XXIII was quite explicit about the absence of any doctrinal issue:

“The salient point of this Council is not... a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church which has repeatedly been taught by the Fathers and by ancient and modern theologians, and which is presumed to be well known and familiar to all.”¹⁰⁰

But the Church had no such need. Why? Because she is outside time: the Church is timeless. Hence, with Vatican II the ordination which had marked each of the previous twenty Councils was reversed: instead of the resolution of an issue giving legitimacy to a Council, a Council resolved to give legitimacy to an issue.¹⁰¹ What was the result? The end being absent, the formality ensuring that the determinations of the Council would be infallible was likewise absent. Vatican II was not invested with the charism of *extraordinary* infallibility which had characterised every prior ecumenical council. In other words, the Second Vatican Council was not an ecumenical council of the Church.

⁹⁸ For a summary of the reasons for the convocation of the twenty Ecumenical Councils prior to Vatican II see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenical_council. It is necessary to distinguish in the list given there those Councils endorsed by the Eastern Orthodox Church.

⁹⁹ As in the artificial order, for instance, the *end* of being able to eat my dinner from a surface above floor level determines the *form* of a table; and, in the natural order, the *end* of being able to communicate with my fellows mandates I have the *form* which is the power of speech.

¹⁰⁰ Pope John's Opening Speech in *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M Abbott S J, General Editor; London, 1966, p.710 at p. 715.

¹⁰¹ Or, to put it more precisely, instead of the resolution of a *doctrinal* issue giving legitimacy to the Second Vatican Council, the Second Vatican Council resolved to give legitimacy to a *secular* issue.

What remained?—the bishops' *ordinary* teaching office, "the ordinary everyday means of propagating and preserving the faith", as Fr Joseph puts it, whose terms demanded that the bishops abjure all novelty and maintain strict compliance with the constant teaching of the Church in line with the admonition of St Vincent of Lérins:

"[A]ll possible care must be taken that we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always and by all [*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*]. For that is truly and in the strictest sense Catholic which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally. This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity and consent. We shall follow *universality* if we confess that one faith to be true which the whole Church throughout the world confesses; *antiquity*, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which characterised in such noteworthy fashion our holy ancestors and fathers; and *consent*, in like manner if in antiquity itself we adhere to the definitions and determinations consented to by all, or at least of almost all, priests and doctors."¹⁰²

8. As demonstrated in an earlier paper the thesis proposed in *Dignitatis Humanae* was novel; it was a radical departure from the Church's previous teaching. The argument which it propounded was, moreover, characterised by innumerable fallacies. It is inevitable that the Church speaking through the mouth of a future Pope or General Council will address both thesis and errors and condemn them. When this is done it would seem inevitable, as incidental thereto and essential for the welfare of the Church, that the circumstances in which a General Council can be understood as pronouncing infallibly on some issue of faith or morals will be clarified infallibly.

II THE DEVASTATION THAT FOLLOWED

"The fact that an individual may in good faith think that his false religion is true gives no more right to propagate it than the sincerity of the alien anarchist entitles him to advocate his abominable political theories... or the perverted ethical notions of the dealer in obscene literature confer upon him the right to corrupt the morals of a community."

Monsignor John A. Ryan¹⁰³

The Problem of Subjectivism

One of the deficiencies in reasoning in the modern world manifests itself in the insouciance with which a reasoner will pass from the real to the mental order or vice

¹⁰² St Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitorium* II, 6. Emphasis added.

¹⁰³ *Catholic Principles of Politics*, New York, 1940, pp. 317-8; quoted in Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, The Neumann Press, Minnesota, 1992, p. 51. John A Ryan Ph.D., STD (1869-1945), was Professor of Political Science and of Moral Theology at the Catholic University of America from 1916 until 1939.

versa quite unconscious of the fact that in doing so he is breaching the rules of logic. Another mark of this lack of rigour is the reasoner's unwillingness to define his terms. Blandly he will arrive at conclusions which the premises, properly defined, could not possibly justify. Both failures derive from the intellectual evil of the age, subjectivism.¹⁰⁴

Truth (logical truth) is the identity of what is asserted with what is, i.e., reality. For the subjectivist, however, truth is the identity between what is asserted and what he thinks is real. The realist¹⁰⁵ begins with the facts and follows where they lead: thus Aristotle; thus St Thomas Aquinas. The subjectivist begins with an idea, something he thinks to be true then plumbs the facts to find some that will support it: thus Karl Marx¹⁰⁶; thus Charles Darwin; thus Félicité de Lamennais. The realist arrives at the truth; the subjectivist arrives where he started, surrounded by his own illusions. Subjectivism has two evil effects: it overlooks real distinctions; it discovers distinctions which do not really exist.

These evils are manifest in *Dignitatis Humanae*. The Council Fathers did not, as we have demonstrated in the first paper in this series, begin their consideration of the subjects of liberty and religion by analysing those realities and teasing out from them the truth of their interchange. They began with an idea then endeavoured to justify it. They refused to define their terms. They asserted as a reality something (freedom from coercion) which has no existence distinct from natural freedom¹⁰⁷. They failed to acknowledge the impossibility of a natural freedom unfettered by a corresponding moral freedom.

These evils are manifest in the comments of the *peritus* chiefly responsible for the Declaration's radically defective content, American Jesuit John Courtney Murray. With unconscious irony he writes¹⁰⁸—

“It was, of course, the most controversial document of the whole Council, largely because it raised... the issue of the development of doctrine... The course of the development between the *Syllabus of Errors* (1864) and *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965) still remains to be explained by theologians. But the Council formally sanctioned the validity of the development itself...”

Only one who confuses what exists in mind with what exists in the real could regard the *contradiction* of some principle as a *development* of that principle.

The Evolution of Dignitatis Humanae

Father Murray summarises the stormy course of the Council Fathers' statement:

¹⁰⁴ On the nature and causes of the intellectual evil of subjectivism see *The Loss of Metaphysics* below at pp. 148 et seq.

¹⁰⁵ Or, more properly, “the objectivist”.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Paul Johnson's study “Karl Marx: Howling Gigantic Curses”, in his *Intellectuals*, London (George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Limited), 1988.

¹⁰⁷ It is simply natural freedom under a different conception.

¹⁰⁸ In his introduction to *Dignitatis Humanae* in the Walter M. Abbott edition of the *Documents of Vatican II*, London, 1966, pp. 672-4.

“The first text had appeared as Chapter V of the Decree on Ecumenism. The second text had appeared as a Declaration, but in an appendix to the Decree on Ecumenism.

With the third text the Declaration assumed independent status...”¹⁰⁹

In his book *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, English layman Michael Davies gives a more comprehensive account of the Declaration’s progress from the rejection of the original (and orthodox) text of the Preparatory Commission through to its promulgation in heterodox form more than three years later.¹¹⁰

Objective and Subjective Moral Responsibility

God alone is the Judge of the human heart. Those who regard the actions of men may form a view as to their conformity, or lack of it, with right reason or with the rule of morals. But they cannot judge the internal dispositions of the agents. In this paper and its predecessors we have expressed certain views about the conduct of the Popes, of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council and of their *periti*. These views relate, and relate only, to the objective state of the actions of the persons involved and their consequences. They are not to be taken as a judgement on the state of the souls of those acting. One might, for instance, counter our criticism of certain views of Pope John XXIII by pointing out that he has been raised to the altars of the Church. But sanctity does not guarantee freedom from error. If it were otherwise every saint would qualify as a Doctor of the Church, but there are only thirty three Church Doctors.

The Consequences of Dignitatis Humanae for the Church and the World

Catholics are given great powers through their baptism, confirmation and (for the clergy) holy orders. If they misuse those powers the harm that results is proportionately great. The men responsible for the greatest crisis in western civilisation, Martin Luther and Henry Tudor (Henry VIII), were both Catholics.

Error works harm and the greater the error the greater the harm; but also, the greater the dignity of the body that has made the error the greater the harm for the body lends its authority to the error. There are three reasons, therefore, why the evils worked in the Church and in the world as a result of the errors in *Dignitatis Humanae* are proportionally great. We list here the chief of those evils. There are, doubtless, others equally pernicious.

1. The Promotion of Atheism

In his encyclical *Immortale Dei* (November 1st 1885), *On the Christian Constitution of States*, Pope Leo XIII taught this—

“To hold... that there is no difference in matters of religion between forms that are unlike each other, and even contrary to each other, most clearly leads in the end to the rejection of all religion in both theory and practice. And this is the same thing as atheism however it may differ from it in name. Men who really believe in the existence of God must, in order to be consistent with themselves and to avoid absurd

¹⁰⁹ *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M Abbott S J, General Editor; London, 1966, p. 672.

¹¹⁰ *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 106 et seq.

conclusions, understand that differing modes of divine worship involving dissimilarity and conflict even on most important points cannot all be equally probable, equally good, and equally acceptable to God.”¹¹¹

He confirmed this teaching in *Libertas praestantissimum*:

“Civil society must acknowledge God as its Founder and Parent, and must obey and reverence His power and authority. Justice therefore forbids, as reason itself forbids, the State to be godless; or to adopt a line of action which would end in godlessness—namely, to treat the various religions (as they call them) alike, and to bestow upon them promiscuously equal rights and privileges...”¹¹²

In all the history of mankind there has been no shift in the public psyche to compare with the abandonment of belief in God which followed the close of the Second Vatican Council. It was the denial implicit in *Dignitatis Humanae* that Catholicism is the one true religion on earth, the one religion to which men are bound to give their allegiance, which led such numbers to embrace atheism. The very thrust of the document was self defeating. The Council Fathers’ failure to adhere to Catholic principle, the infallible teaching of their Church, betrayed them. Their adoption of de Lamennais’ errors brought with it for many in their flocks a replication of de Lamennais’ end—*atheism*. The effects have been devastating.

“Every sin consists formally in aversion from God... Hence the more a sin severs man from God, the graver it is. Now man is more than ever separated from God by unbelief, because he has not even true knowledge of God: and by false knowledge of God, man does not approach Him, but is severed from Him... Therefore it is clear that the sin of unbelief is greater than any sin that occurs in the perversion of morals.”¹¹³

2. The Abandonment of the Church’s Rightful Position as regards the State
No politician on earth opens his mouth to speak of religion today but he must first deny the entitlement of the Church to involve itself in the affairs of the State. The mantra repeated without exception is “separation of Church from State”. This is not Catholic teaching but, as has been shown, Masonic doctrine given free scope by the conduct of the Council Fathers in *Dignitatis Humanae*. As Leo XIII remarked:

“This kind of liberty [i.e., religious liberty], if considered in relation to the State, clearly implies that there is no reason why the State should offer any homage to God or should desire any public recognition of Him; that no one form of worship is to be preferred to another, but that all stand on an equal footing, no account being taken of the religion of the people, even if they profess the Catholic faith. But to justify this it must be taken as true that the State has no duties towards God, or that such duties, if they exist, can be abandoned with impunity, both of which assertions are manifestly false. For it cannot be doubted but that by the will of God men are united in civil society, whether its component parts be considered, or its form—which implies authority—or the object of its existence, or the abundance of the vast services which it renders to man...”

¹¹¹ *Immortale Dei* (1.11.1885), n. 32

¹¹² *Libertas praestantissimum* (20.6.1888), n. 21

¹¹³ St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 10, a. 3

“Since, then, the profession of one religion is necessary in the State, that religion must be professed which alone is true, and which can be recognized without difficulty... because the marks of truth are, as it were, engraved upon it. This religion, therefore, the rulers of the State must preserve and protect if they would provide—as they should—with prudence and usefulness for the good of the community. For public authority exists for the welfare of those whom it governs; and, although its proximate end is to lead men to the prosperity found in this life, yet in so doing, it ought not to diminish, but rather to increase, man’s capability of attaining to the supreme good in which his everlasting happiness consists, which never can be attained if religion be disregarded.”¹¹⁴

Driven by the ethos in *Dignitatis Humanae* the Popes and bishops of the Church have abandoned her rightful claim to establishment in nation states. They have taken active steps in those countries where the Church has enjoyed her proper position to destroy the *status quo* by eviscerating the relevant concordats or treaties.¹¹⁵ What is the result? Countries formerly determinately Catholic have permitted the entry of Protestant sects and pagan religions with detrimental effects to the common good and individual good of their citizens. Countries determinately Catholic have fallen under the sway of ideology. The Church formerly had concordats with Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. The reader may recall the contempt with which Pope John Paul II was treated by the ruling juntas in these countries on his visit in March, 1983. Why should anyone be surprised? The Church’s leaders having abandoned her claim to precedence in the world, why wonder when secular leaders, their heads filled with ideology, choose to do the same with the Pope?¹¹⁶

Typical of the effects of *Dignitatis Humanae* are those reported by English layman, Michael Davies, in that most Catholic of countries, Malta:

“[B]efore Vatican II, Jehovah’s Witnesses were not allowed to proselytise. Now Maltese who have apostasized in such countries as Australia and the U.S.A. are coming back in large numbers and systematically visiting every home on the island, persuading thousands of Catholics to join this pernicious sect.”¹¹⁷

3. The Concession that Error has Rights¹¹⁸

The Catholic Church exists to lead men to God. She is the force for good in a world of evil. She possesses all truth. Yet in the last forty years an independent observer would be hard pressed to accept this. Popes and bishops seem to be afflicted by a

¹¹⁴ *Libertas praestantissimum*, n. 21

¹¹⁵ Cf. Michael Davies in *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 250-1, on the initiative of the Holy See in seeking the suppression of the Christian constitution of Columbia, and the admission by the Apostolic Nuncio to Switzerland in March 1976 that the same had occurred in respect of the Christian constitution of the Swiss Catholic canton, the Valais.

¹¹⁶ In a sense Pope John Paul II brought the obloquy on himself with his support of *Dignitatis Humanae*.

¹¹⁷ *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 51-2.

¹¹⁸ Michael Davies rightly rejects John Courtney Murray’s contention that the phrase ‘error has no rights’ is meaningless: “The formula is just a convenient way of stating that persons holding erroneous beliefs do not possess a natural right to propagate them.” Cf. *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., p. 52.

sort of terror at defending the truth. Since the death of Pius XII, for example, the world has been increasingly afflicted by ideologies such as Secular Humanism, Feminism, Darwinianism and other of the ideological fruits of subjectivism encapsulated under the heading “political correctness”. Yet where is the encyclical that has addressed any of them? Or addressed the philosophical defect (subjectivism) which has given them rise?

People in their millions wander bemusedly among the bookshops and websites of the world seeking the truth. The Church possesses the truth *in respect of each one of these issues*. Why do the Popes and bishops not provide them with it? Because of the evil that flows from the concession that error has rights. The first of these evils is the acknowledgment that people should not be disturbed in their error; the second is loss of confidence in those possessed of the truth that they do, in fact, possess it.

The best of physicians deals not with the symptoms of disease but with the disease itself—not with the effects, but with the cause. Recent Popes have addressed the effects but ignored the causes. Thus Pope John Paul could promulgate *Veritatis Splendor* (6.8.1993) on the Church’s moral teaching, and *Evangelium Vitae*, (25.3.1995) on abortion and contraception, but never in an encyclical addressed the evil that disposes men to abandon moral principle—*atheism*. Why not? Because the Catholic position against atheism has been compromised. Once more, if we would understand the truth, we must turn to Leo XIII—

“[W]hen once man is firmly persuaded that he is subject to no one, it follows that the efficient cause of the unity of civil society is not to be sought in any principle external to man, or superior to him, but simply in the free will of individuals; that the authority in the State comes from the people only; and that, just as every man’s individual reason is his only rule of life, so the collective reason of the community should be the supreme guide in the management of all public affairs. Hence the doctrine of the supremacy of the greater number, and that all right and all duty reside in the majority. But, from what has been said, it is clear that all this is in contradiction to reason. To refuse any bond of union between man and civil society on the one hand, and God the Creator and... supreme Law-giver on the other, is plainly repugnant to the nature, not only of man, but of all created things; for, of necessity, all effects must in some proper way be connected with their cause; and it belongs to the perfection of every nature to contain itself within that sphere and grade which the order of nature has assigned to it, namely, that the lower should be subject and obedient to the higher.

“Moreover, besides this, a doctrine of such character is most hurtful both to individuals and to the State. For, once ascribe to human reason the only authority to decide what is true and what is good, and the real distinction between good and evil is destroyed; honour and dishonour differ not in their nature, but in the opinion and judgment of each one; pleasure is the measure of what is lawful; and, a code of morality being provided which can have little or no power to restrain or quieten the unruly propensities of man, a way is naturally opened to universal corruption...¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ *Libertas praestantissimum*, nn. 15, 16

The concession that error has rights manifests itself in the attitude of bishops and clergy towards the teaching, liturgy and administration of the Catholic Church. No longer confident that they are possessed of the truth, bishops, priests and theologians decline to proclaim it. They will not confront the lying media or the multitude of false proponents of materialism. They remain silent when they should speak; they decline invitations to debate contentious issues or to stand up publicly for the truth. One is more likely to find the Church defended by the Catholic laity than the Catholic clergy in the modern world.

4. The Loss of the Sense of Evil in Human Religions

The loss by the world of the influence proper to Catholicism has brought in its train a loss of the sense of the evil present in all merely human religions. Only the orthodox Catholic possessed of the truth understands, for example, how Mohammedanism inverts and mocks the religion established by Almighty God. He is a God of love; He created us in love. That the Muslims' 'Allah', in contrast, is seen as a ruthless tyrant demanding obedience is reflected in the violence that characterises proselytism in that religion and the violence offered any 'believer' who defects from it. Almighty God creates each man free to accept His revelation or reject it: with its resort to fear and intimidation, Mohammedanism effectively denies human freedom. Almighty God created man in his own image and likeness—*male and female He created them*—establishing man and woman in a proportional equality. For the Muslim, however, a woman is virtually a slave¹²⁰. Almighty God moves a man to martyrdom in imitation of the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, Who gave up His life for all mankind. The Muslim regards as a 'martyr' one who slaughters his fellow man in the name of 'Allah'.

Notwithstanding their rejection of Christianity peoples in formerly (i.e., nominally) Christian countries still retain Christian values. But because they have lost the reason for holding these values *they have lost the perception that accompanies them*. They welcome Muslims into their countries in the naïve belief that these people will observe their values as something universally to be respected. They do not understand that Christian values mean nothing to the Muslim and that he will only ever give them lip service. Catholics fought for centuries—for ten centuries in the case of Spain and Portugal—to rid their countries of the evil of Mohammedanism. It has returned to penetrate every one of them in just forty years, the years since *Dignitatis Humanae*. Christ died for all men, even for Muslims. Why has there been nothing from Christ's Vicar insisting that no one can hope to enter heaven who slaughters his fellow man, even if he claims to be doing it for God?

5. The Indulgence of Ideologies

¹²⁰ This may be regarded as an excessive judgement. The writer has certainly known Muslim women who were treated with dignity by their fathers, husbands and brothers. But this does not accord with the 'normal' attitude of Muslims towards women.

A further characteristic of the indulgence of error is the tacit, sometimes explicit, acceptance by members of the Church hierarchy of the various ideologies that, pretending to be works of intellect, trouble the world.

The worst of these, Communism, is in decline. There were members of the Vatican Curia notorious for their sympathy with Communist ideology.¹²¹ The collapse of the Russian Communist state resulted from the felicitous interaction of a profound level of information provided to the West by Oleg Georgievski, a disaffected member of Russia's Security Service, a man-made disaster (the explosion of the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl) and the personal charisma of Pope John Paul II. But the late Pope might have achieved much more and achieved it more quickly had he condemned publicly the evil which grounds both Communism and Western materialism. Had he done so, moreover, the reaction of the subjugated peoples to the overthrow of the Communist tyranny might have been better focussed. Instead, they turned to that other atheistic pathway, the materialism promoted by Western culture. The equation is a simple one – atheism = materialism: materialism = atheism.

Pope John Paul II publicly endorsed the follies of Feminist ideology, only excepting—and that illogically as Feminists were quick to point out—its inevitable consequences, contraception and abortion. He has left the members of Christ's Church with a legacy of infatuation over Feminism's foolish ideas.

Darwinian ideology, with its implicit atheism, is allowed free reign among the Catholic faithful and hardly a word is uttered, whether by Pope or bishops, to demonstrate its folly. Indeed, they seem incapable of seeing through its defects. We repeat: the Church has the truth in respect of this issue within her philosophical and theological teachings. All that is needed to demonstrate the folly of Darwinianism is to plumb those teachings.

But perhaps the most insidious of the silences of the Vatican since the death of Pius XII is that regarding Freemasonry. And who should wonder, given the success of Masonic ideas in *Dignitatis Humanae*? The 'party line' propagated by Masons today is that the old antipathies between the Church and Freemasonry are a thing of the past. One hears Catholic priests and prelates saying the same thing. It is false. Freemasonry is of the Devil who does not sleep. In 1890 Leo XIII warned his Italian people of the influence of the followers of Freemasonry in these terms:

“Possessed by the spirit of Satan, whose instrument they are, they burn like him with a deadly and implacable hatred of Jesus Christ and of His work; and they endeavour by every means to overthrow and fetter it. This war is at present waged more than elsewhere in Italy, in which the Catholic religion has taken deeper root; and above all

¹²¹ Such as Cardinals Casaroli and Silvestrini whose apparent Masonic affiliations disposed them to indulge the parallel errors found in Communism. Casaroli oversaw the betrayal of Cardinal Mindzenty, the Metropolitan of Hungary.

in Rome, the centre of Catholic unity, and the See of the Universal Pastor and Teacher of the Church.”¹²²

In the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* (canon 1374) the penalty of excommunication for adherence by a Catholic to any Masonic organisation present in the 1917 *Code* (canon 2335) was removed. Notwithstanding the directive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Quaesitum est* (26.11.1983), that “the Church’s negative judgement in regard to Masonic association remains unchanged”, and Cardinal Ratzinger’s reiteration of this thereafter, the evil of membership by Catholics of this Satanic organisation continues. The issue of the presence of Masons in the Vatican has been bruited for 50 years. Augustin Cardinal Bea, head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity during the Second Vatican Council, and responsible for introducing the critical schema that resulted eventually in *Dignitatis Humanae* is said to have been a Mason. The Secretaries of State spanning the period 1969 to 1990, Cardinals Villot and Casaroli, are said to have been Masons. Other alleged Masons, such as Cardinal Bugnini, are notorious for the damage they have worked within the Church.

Leo XIII exposed the evils of Freemasonry in a number of encyclicals.¹²³ Perhaps the most significant remark he made for the purposes of identifying the influence of the cult on the actions of its members was this —

“[N]o matter how great may be men’s cleverness in concealment and their experience in lying, it is impossible to prevent the effects of any cause from showing, in some way, the intrinsic nature of the cause whence they come. *A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor a bad tree produce good fruit.* [Matt. 7: 18] Now, the Masonic sect produces fruits that are pernicious and of the bitterest savour.”¹²⁴

Given the bitter fruit that have resulted from *Dignitatis Humanae* one may ponder the extent of the influence of Freemasonry among the Council’s bishops.

6. The Modification of the Church’s teaching on Salvation

God’s will is salvific towards all men. But they cannot be saved through persisting in their own ‘religion’ (unless their ignorance is invincible) only through conversion to the faith and the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Christ is the only way a man may get to heaven. The effect of the false teaching in *Dignitatis Humanae* denies this need. It allows that those in error are right to continue in error. This falsity is reflected in Pope John Paul II’s first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*. Any objective reader would be hard pressed to interpret that document in any way other than allowing that baptism in the Catholic Church is no longer essential to salvation. The same error appears in some of his later encyclicals.

¹²² Encyclical on Freemasonry in Italy, *Dall’alto dell’apostolico seggio*, October 15, 1890.

¹²³ Summarised by the author, with appropriate references, in three articles on the superflumina website: ‘Leo XIII and Freemasonry’; ‘Freemasonry, the Church’s Law up to Vatican II and Beyond’; and ‘Freemasons in the Church.’

¹²⁴ *Humanum Genus* (20.4.1884), n. 10.

Members of the Jewish faith take umbrage over the prayers of the Church that require their conversion *and with reason*. For they have been led for some forty years now to believe that the Church has abandoned her insistence that they be converted from Judaism. But it is not the Church which has misled them: it is the Church's erring ministers in a continuing line back to the bishops and popes of Vatican II.

Pope John Paul II's initiative in inviting pagan religious leaders to Assisi for a world day of prayer for peace in October 1986 raised great concerns not only among the faithful but among his cardinals and bishops. George Weigel wrote:

"[C]urial officials and some bishops around the world wondered whether John Paul was not veering dangerously close to the heresy of syncretism with one of the most innovative initiatives of his pontificate—a World Day of Prayer for Peace, involving non-Catholic and non-Christian religious leaders from all over the globe..."¹²⁵

But his conduct was consistent with the errors taught in *Dignitatis Humanae*. If *the human person has a right to religious freedom* it follows that it is no longer essential to salvation that a man believe in Jesus Christ and be baptised. If membership of any "religion" (or, indeed, of none) suffices for salvation, why should not the Pope gather together the heads of the various religions each praying to what he conceived to be God?

7. The Submission of the Church to the United Nations Organisation

Some two months before the Council Fathers promulgated *Dignitatis Humanae*, Pope Paul VI addressed the United Nations General Assembly on the twentieth anniversary of its foundation. In the course of doing so he said this—

"What you set forth here are the rights and fundamental duties of man; his dignity; his liberty, and above all his religious liberty. We feel that you are the interpreters of what is most exalted in human wisdom, we would almost say its sacred character."¹²⁶

The Pope did not wait for the document's formal promulgation to assert the licit-ness of "religious liberty". The draft, in its fourth redaction, had passed with 1,997 bishops in favour and 224 against it just thirteen days prior at the conclusion of a debate described by the Italian *peritus*, Msgr Pietro Pavan, as "perhaps the most violent ever to have taken place in the *aula*."¹²⁷ If the Council Fathers would not, the Pope had certainly made up *his* mind on the subject.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains these provisions—

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status...

¹²⁵ *Witness to Hope, The Biography of Pope John Paul II, 1920-2005*, HarperCollins, London, revised edition, 2005, p. 511,

¹²⁶ "Ce que vous proclamez ici, ce sont les droits et les devoirs fondamentaux de l'homme, sa dignité, sa liberté, et avant tout la liberté religieuse. Nous sentons que vous êtes les interprètes de ce qu'il y a de plus haut dans la sagesse humaine, Nous dirions presque: son caractère sacré."

¹²⁷ Cf. Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., p. 153. Doubtless, "violent" was a euphemism for "characterised by gross failures in charity".

...

Article 18 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

The reader will note the reflection of their content in the Council Fathers' Declaration. The attitude of deference to the standards of this mere worldly institution which had characterised the dealings of the Church's leaders since the beginning of the reign of John XXIII was formally confirmed in *Dignitatis Humanae*.

In 1979, the new pontiff, Pope John Paul II, addressed the UN General Assembly in these terms (*inter alia*):

"[The relationship of representation] is what provides the reason for all political activity... for in the final analysis this activity comes from man, is exercised by man and is for man. And if political activity is cut off from this fundamental relationship and finality... it loses much of its reason to exist... I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, to excuse me for speaking of questions that are certainly self-evident for you. But it does not seem pointless to speak of them, since the most frequent pitfall for human activities is the possibility of losing sight, while performing them, of the clearest truths, the most elementary principles." [nn. 6, 7]

Those familiar with the Church's constant teaching until John XXIII ascended the papal throne will appreciate the irony of these words. For in his very endorsement of such a facile political theory, Pope John Paul II *had* lost sight of *the clearest truths, the most elementary principles*. So far so that he never thought to speak of them to the secular body he was addressing. In this he emulated the predecessors whose names he had adopted.

For on that association of nation states called the United Nations there falls no less a duty than that which falls on each of the states that comprise it, to give due deference to the Creator and Redeemer of mankind. And on the Pope, *especially since he chose to descend into the arena of their deliberations*, there fell the clear duty to warn them of their obligations, as his illustrious predecessor Leo XIII had warned.

"[S]ince God is the source of all goodness and justice, it is utterly ridiculous that the State should pay no attention to [His laws] or render them abortive by contrary enactments. Besides, those who are in authority owe it to the commonwealth not only to provide for its external well-being and the conveniences of life, but still more to consult the welfare of men's souls in the wisdom of their legislation. But, for the increase of such benefits, nothing more suitable can be conceived than the laws which have God for their author; and, therefore, they who in their government of the State take no account of these laws abuse political power by causing it to deviate from its proper end, and from what nature itself prescribes... [And] assuredly, of all the duties which man has to fulfil, that, without doubt, is the chief and the holiest which commands him to worship God with devotion and piety. This follows of necessity from the truth that we are ever in the power of God, are ever guided by His will and providence, and, having come forth from Him, must return to Him. Added to which, no true virtue can exist without religion, for moral virtue is concerned with those things which lead to God as man's supreme and ultimate good; and therefore religion, which (as St. Thomas says) 'performs those actions which are directly and

immediately ordained for the divine honour,' rules and tempers all virtues. And if it be asked which of the many conflicting religions it is necessary to adopt, reason and the natural law unhesitatingly tell us to practice that one which God enjoins, and which men can easily recognize by certain exterior notes, whereby Divine Providence has willed that it should be distinguished, because, in a matter of such moment, the most terrible loss would be the consequence of error...¹²⁸

The addresses of Paul VI and of John Paul II are replete with references to peace. Yet neither bothered to offer their hearers an analysis of that reality, *the tranquillity of order*, or to show how peace is impossible which is rooted in the fundamental disorder which follows on a denial of the deference due to Almighty God, the fount and source of all order. They had, each of them, the riches of the Church's thought on the subject extending over almost 2,000 years at their behest, yet hardly one word did they utter that could have led their hearers to see or to appreciate the truth.

The hopes expressed in their addresses, flavoured as they were with the tang of *Americanism* (one of whose tenets is that the majority will always arrive at moral truth), have been betrayed. The United Nations General Assembly has proved to be just the broken reed any objective observer could have forecast, promoting contraception, abortion and a multitude of other evils. The naïve hopes expressed by John XXIII about mankind in his *Opening Speech* to the Council Fathers have proved just as illusory. And all this flows from the fact that the principles upon which the Popes and bishops relied were not Catholic.

8. The Compromise of the Church's Theology

Dignitatis Humanae is an attempt to reduce Catholic theology to conformity with Masonic ideology. Its mentality is reflected in *Redemptor Hominis*, Pope John Paul's first encyclical, which exalts man at the expense of his Creator and Redeemer and provided a precedent for his endorsement of other ideologies.

In various places but particularly in his Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, Pope John Paul essayed the reduction of the Church's theology to conformity with Feminist ideology. His radical teaching, grounded in a tortured exegesis of the early chapters of *Genesis* and the teaching of St Paul in *Ephesians* Chapter 5, was first expounded in Wednesday audiences in the early years of his pontificate. It was collected later in the *corpus* known as the 'Theology of the Body' whose title, a contradiction in terms, is as bemusing as its content.

The Pope and bishops countenance, if they do not completely accept, that the Church's theology must somehow conform itself with yet another ideology, Darwinian evolutionary theory, which even if accredited by modern science is grounded in nothing more than one man's idea about reality. But modern science accepts Darwinian ideology not because it is an inevitable conclusion of scientific research, but because science has, since before the time of Newton, committed itself

¹²⁸ Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum* (June 20, 1888), nn. 18, 20.

to materialism's view of reality. Were it to abandon that foolish philosophy in favour of the Church's metaphysics, there would be no need to rely upon Darwin's facile explanations for the natural world.

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The Resolution of the Conflict

We have mentioned in a previous paper the need for the Church to address the defects in *Dignitatis Humanae* and, as incidental thereto, to define precisely in what circumstances a General Council is infallible. It is unlikely that the Catholic world in general will accept that *Dignitatis Humanae* is a document enshrining error until a reforming Pope, or a General Council under his direction, addresses the issue of its contradiction of the Church's teaching explicitly and definitively, invoking as necessary the Church's plenary power in condemning it.

Hasten the day!

*Magna est veritas et praevalabit!*¹²⁹

¹²⁹ "The truth is great and it will prevail." From the apocryphal *III Esdras* 4: 41

AMERICANISM & AMERICA'S PROBLEMS WITH RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

"If a blind man leads a blind man both will fall into a pit."

Matthew 15 : 14

On 1st March, 2010, Charles Chaput, Archbishop of Denver, Colorado, addressed a Protestant gathering at Houston Baptist University. He praised America's bishops for a pastoral letter, *The Christian in Action*, issued in November 1948 for its strong endorsement "of American democracy and religious freedom". The Archbishop's address maintained an interpretation of Catholicism which has been in vogue in America now for more than a century.

In January, 1895, in his encyclical *Longinqua oceani* to America's bishops, Pope Leo XIII had said this :

"[T]he Church among you, unopposed by the Constitution and government of your nation, fettered by no hostile legislation, protected against violence by the common laws and the impartiality of the tribunals, is free to live and act without hindrance. Yet, although all this is true, it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced."

Four years later, in the encyclical *Testem Benevolentiae*, directed likewise to the American bishops, the Pope addressed a further matter, a heresy he labelled *Americanism*, whose character he had detected in certain of the writings of American Catholics.

"[Its] underlying principle... is that, in order more easily to attract those who differ from her, the Church should shape her teachings more in accord with the spirit of the age, relax some of her ancient severity and make some concessions to new opinions... not only in regard to ways of living, but even in regard to doctrines which belong to the deposit of the faith. [Many] contend that it would be opportune, to gain those who differ from us, to omit certain points of her teaching which are of less importance and tone down the meaning the Church has always attached to them... The Vatican Council [1870] says concerning this point: '[T]he doctrine of faith which God has revealed has not been proposed as if it was a philosophical invention to be perfected by human ingenuity... Hence that meaning of the sacred dogmas is perpetually to be retained which our Holy Mother the Church has once declared, nor is that meaning ever to be departed from under the pretence or pretext of a deeper comprehension..."

"We cannot consider as altogether blameless the silence which purposely leads to the omission or neglect of some of the principles of Christian doctrine, for all the principles come from the same Author and Master, 'the Only Begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father.' - John i, 18..."

That the rot of Americanism was well entrenched among the American clergy even as the Leo XIII addressed it is manifest in the denial by the Archbishop of Baltimore, James Cardinal Gibbons—to whom the encyclical was addressed—and other American prelates that American Catholics held any of these positions. There was no fire that had caused the smoke the pontiff had detected.

The view that the United States is a Protestant country has become an *idée fixe* among commentators. It is not true. America is a Masonic country. Its founding fathers were Masons and Deists who imported the errors of the French Revolution into the country's legislative framework. The concepts of religious liberty and of separation of Church and State embodied in the American Constitution are not Protestant protocols but Masonic. Protestantism (that is, anti-Catholicism) is merely the sea in which the country floats. America is saturated with Masonic and quasi-Masonic organisations, the average American seeing nothing abnormal about including in his *curriculum vitae* membership of one or more of these God-mocking associations.

The 1948 pastoral letter *The Christian in Action* was a response *inter alia* to a decision of the United States Supreme Court handed down the previous year, *Everson v The Board of Studies*, which rendered explicit the Masonic principle of separation of Church and State in the US Constitution. Marked by deference to the US Constitution rather than criticism of its shortcomings, the letter consisted largely of generalisations about the importance of a 'Christian', as opposed to a secular, way of life. It was notable not so much for what it said as for what it did not say. What should it have said?

The answer to that question lies in an analysis of the evils adopted uncritically in the Supreme Court decisions. The issues in *Everson* turned on a series of errors in natural principle over the education of children, Masonic protocols, embraced willy nilly by an American populace blind to ultimate principle which, by their silence, had been tolerated by America's bishops for decades. The pastoral letter failed—

-) to defend the Church's insistence, against the claims of the US Constitution and its component States, that it is the right and duty of parents not of the state, to educate their children, a right which includes the concomitant right that they not to be deprived by state exaction of the means to fulfil their duty ;
-) to point out that any rights the state may have in education are limited to the setting of standards consistent with the natural moral law and oversight as to compliance with those standards ;
-) to insist that the state exists to support, not to derogate from, these parental rights ;
-) to point up the systematic injustice of a system of state patronage founded on the erroneous assertion of state rights over education ;
-) to fulfil their duty of proclaiming that the Church Christ instituted is the one

true religion on earth and that all other religions are but human inventions ;
 J to insist, against the claim in the American Constitution, that no reality corresponds to the alleged right to 'religious liberty', that is, a liberty to adopt any but the one true religion established by Almighty God on earth, the Catholic faith ;
 J to insist, moreover, that the American Constitution is defective in its exclusion of the assistance that the Catholic Church, the Church that God has established on earth, could give it—
 and failed to support these various issues with appropriate rational arguments.

The pastoral letter contained a remarkable sentence. After commenting on the secular interpretation of the language of the First Amendment ('Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion or forbidding the free exercise thereof') in recent court decisions, the bishops said this:

"One cannot but remark that if this secularist influence is to prevail in our Government and its institutions, such a result should be, in candor and logic and law, achieved by legislation adopted after full, popular discussion and not by the ideological interpretation of our Constitution."

Is this appeal to 'the will of the people' as final resort an argument one would expect from a Catholic bishop? Or is it, rather, what one might expect from an American citizen indifferent to the truth or otherwise of the Catholic faith? Is it the sort of argument a man would offer who thought his first allegiance was to the Church of the God-man, Jesus Christ whom he had sworn to serve?

The Christian in Action was an Americanist manifesto, its nominal adherence to Catholic principles compromised by ambivalence over their application to society. The bishops' silence on the issues mentioned was the silence Leo XIII had reproved.

There will be those who consider this judgement harsh, who will assert that no bishop could reasonably be expected to assert the principles referred to above, even if it be conceded they are Catholic principles, in the face of the overwhelming claims of the secular in the world. This argument might be strengthened, for the current age, with the consideration that the popes themselves have deferred to the secular at the expense of Catholic principle as, for instance, Paul VI in his address to the United Nations General Assembly on 5th October 1965, and the subsequent addresses to that body by Pope John Paul II. Why should an individual bishop seek to distinguish himself by bucking the trend? The answer is that a bishop is a successor of the Apostles and bound to look to them and the courage they exercised rather than to the example of other bishops, however eminent, caught up in the *zeitgeist* of the world.

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"It has become fashionable among Church historians," writes Peter Kwasniewski,

"to deny that there ever existed a heresy called Americanism, at least on the shores of America itself. The usual line is that it was only ever a living idea in

France, and even there, it meant little more than the liberalism of advocating the absolute separation of Church and State..." (*Resurgent in the Midst of Chaos*, Kettering Ohio, Angelico Press, 2014, ch. 4)

American Catholics lament the evils that beset them as a result of secular, and atheistic, interpretations of their country's laws. It never occurs to them that these are precisely the perils of which Leo had warned. Nothing is more symptomatic of their blindness than their appeal to 'religious liberty' as the solution. They do not understand that that concept is itself the problem. 'Religious liberty' derives from the false liberty trumpeted by the French Revolutionaries, a liberty that refused to acknowledge that human actions are governed in their very nature by the rule of morals laid down by the Author of creation. The symbol of Americans' governance by that false understanding is the *Statue of Liberty*, gift of the Masonic French to the American people.

There is hardly an American Catholic commentator, bishop, priest, theologian or layman—even the best of them—capable of recognising the problem besetting his faith.¹³⁰ In 2014 Anthony Esolen published a study of the social teachings of Pope Leo XIII (*Reclaiming Catholic Social Teaching*, Sophia Press, Manchester, New Hampshire) analysing the content of various of the great Pope's encyclicals. He did not neglect his most important encyclical, that on the nature of human liberty, *Libertas praestantissimum* (20th June 1888), or those addressing the evils of Freemasonry. Nor did he ignore *Longinqua Oceani* (6th January 1895) or *Testem Benevolentiae* (22nd January 1899). But he offered no comment on the influence on American Catholics of Masonic protocols or on the mindset that immersion in them has wrought.

More recently, we have had from the studious and incisive American commentator Thomas Storck a collection of essays over twenty years bearing the encouraging title *From Christendom To Americanism And Beyond* (Kettering Ohio, Angelico Press, 2015). The collection contains much that is valuable, including his assessment of the contribution of the empiricist John Locke to the concept of 'religious freedom'. He advances a Catholic assessment of social principle, but he does not address the disposing cause of Americanism, the failure of America's bishops to confront the country's Masonic mindset. Indeed the title of his collection is misleading. For Catholics—not just American Catholics—have not got *beyond* Americanism: they remain enmeshed in it.

As far as the internet goes, *The Catholic Thing* website might better be termed *The Americanist Thing*, and *First Things* website termed *First Americanist Things*. Hardly a

¹³⁰ Dr John Rao of The Roman Forum is an exception. See his *Americanism And The Collapse Of The Church In The United States* at <http://jcrao.freeshell.org/Americanism.html>. Dr Peter Kwasniewski is another.

month goes by where some commentator on one or other does not appeal to the 'religious liberty' guaranteed in the Constitution as the way to relieve the Catholic faithful of the burden of Masonic impositions which daily grow heavier. Contributor George Weigel is on record as saying that John Courtney Murray S J, signal promoter of Americanism, should be raised to the ranks of the blessed.¹³¹ Principals of the various American Catholic blogsites, even as they give judgement on every passing issue, are similarly bereft of insight.

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In his address to the Houston Baptists Archbishop Chaput condemned John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Democrat candidate for the US Presidency, for an address he gave to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in 1960 in which he endorsed the Masonic doctrine of separation of Church and State.¹³² Archbishop Chaput's condemnation was, with respect, fifty years too late. The vast majority of the bishops of the Catholic Church had long since adopted this Masonic protocol as a consequence of the acceptance of the Americanist position at the Second Vatican Council, manifest most clearly in the final document, *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Declaration on Religious Liberty.

Consistent with that mind, in the years after the Council the Vatican pressed for the alteration of the concordats the Church enjoyed with the governments of various Catholic countries to remove reference to the fact that Catholicism was their official religion. This brought in its wake enormous damage to the faith and to the welfare of the inhabitants of the relevant countries. (Cf. Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, The Neumann Press, Long Prairie, Minnesota, 1992; Appendix III, *Dignitatis Humanae and Spain*)

If anyone is in doubt about this fundamental shift in the Church's 'official' position, let him study Pope John Paul II's letter to the French episcopacy (11th February 2005) marking the anniversary of the 1905 Law of Separation pursuant to which the Masonic French government had confiscated all the Church's property in France. On 11th February 1906, in his encyclical *Vehementer nos*, Pope Pius X had condemned that law as founded upon "a thesis absolutely false, a most pernicious error". One hundred years later, Pope John Paul told the French bishops that now "the principle of *laïcité* (secularity) to which your Country is deeply attached is also part of the social teaching of the Church". Pius X's majestic sacrifice in the face of a Masonic imposition which had caused immense suffering to the French clergy and faithful was degraded by John Paul II to the level of a quixotic gesture to impracticable principle.

¹³¹ Misreading Murray, Yet Again', *First Things*, 9th October, 2013

¹³² See the author's consideration of certain of those evils in the next three chapters, *America's Problems with Religious Liberty, Americanism, the US Supreme Court & the Catholic Episcopacy* and *Archbishop Chaput, America's Bishops, John F Kennedy & Religious Liberty*.

That he may understand the Americanist character of Fr Courtney Murray and his influence, and that of his sponsors at the Council, we refer the reader to the studied analysis of the late Michael Davies in Chapter XII of his *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty* (The Neumann Press, Long Prairie, Minnesota, 1992). Canadian commentator, John R T Lamont, has recently argued, and persuasively, that the mentality promoted by the Council Fathers owed more to the influence of French thinkers such as Jacques Maritain than to the Americans. (*Catholic Teaching on Religion and the State*¹³³) It is, with respect, neither here nor there for the evils adopted by the Americans, entrenched in the US Constitution and endorsed time out of number by America's Catholic episcopacy owe their provenance ultimately to the Masonic French and to the shades of Rousseau and Voltaire.

Thomas Storck has remarked appositely—

“[I]t does not seem to admit of reasonable disagreement that the conduct of the Second Vatican Council, and much more its aftermath and application, have generally been a disaster for the Church, a disaster at once pastoral, intellectual, and institutional...” (*From Christendom To Americanism And Beyond*, op cit, p. 38)

There are times when orthodox Catholics would be forgiven for wondering whether the Church's prelates belong to the Church Christ founded, or to another church, one of their own imagining!

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When are we going to hear from a bishop—just one bishop—that the Catholic Church's chief problems over the last sixty years derive from errors embraced at the Second Vatican Council? There is a sort of terror abroad over the prospect of criticising the Council. One hears rumblings of concern among the Catholic intelligentsia but nothing more. In his admirable lecture *St Maximilian Kolbe and the Problem of Freemasonry*, (Lighthouse Catholic Media, 2015), for instance, Dr Mark Miravalle of the Franciscan University, Steubenville, insists upon the need, consistent with the teaching of St Maximilian, that Our Blessed Lady be proclaimed *Mediatrice of All Graces* and that we reject the gnostic mindset of Freemasonry among whose tenets are the protocols of 'religious liberty' and separation of Church and state. Dr Miravalle contradicts explicitly views which were embraced by a majority of the Council's bishops but he does not grasp the nettle.

If we had one, sane, outspoken bishop to point up the extent of the evils that have flowed from Vatican II the tide would begin to turn. Once turned, the flood of restoration of sanity in the Church would follow.

¹³³ https://www.academia.edu/877072/Catholic_teaching_on_religion_and_the_state . A slightly different version of this paper is available in *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 96, Issue 1066, pp. 674-698 (16 July 2015)

God send us a pope who will not be afraid to tackle the heresies, such as Americanism, that beset His Holy Church, a pope who will not crave the attention of the masses, or think his chief function is to wander the world talking to journalists; a pope who will direct faithful and unfaithful alike in the way of salvation.

God send us another Leo XIII.

II

Two papers on *The Catholic Thing* website some three months apart demonstrate the problems inherent in the concept of religious liberty. On 7th February, 2013 the editors published a contribution by Thomas W. Josziewicz, Professor of history at the University of Dallas, entitled *The Founders' Vision of Religious Liberty*. On 2nd May they published Gerald J Russello's *The New Era of Religious Liberty*. These papers being in the public domain, copies are reproduced for the assistance of the reader in the Appendix. This article considers the problems with the concept.

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I. One must first address the whole issue of belief in God.

The apogee of belief lies in a man's acceptance that it is reasonable to hold that an intellectual and non-material (and therefore invisible) being of supreme power, *a Person*, exists on whom he is utterly dependent; who created him, who keeps him in existence. He accepts additionally that God has revealed himself and his plans for man who is the chief of his material creatures¹³⁴; that God is concerned with, and influences momentarily, his life and the life of every man despite what may at times appear to the contrary. He understands that the issue the human mind must address in relation to belief is not, 'Why is there evil in the world?' but 'Whence comes the good in the world of which evil is the deprivation?'

While this faith begins as something human, because it addresses God the ultimate reality it involves an interchange, a conversation, with Him. In this converse God reveals something of His own inner life, notably that in this one Supreme Being there is not one only but three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He reveals also man's flawed nature in consequence of Original Sin and that the Son, the Second Person, became a man, Jesus Christ, to redeem mankind from eternal perdition; that He established a Church, an institution comprised of men of which Christ Himself is the Head. God confirms the believer's acceptance with a gift, the gift of faith, which is something divine.

This is the one, the Catholic faith, of whose unity God himself is the source:

*[J]ust as the power of the sacred flesh unites in one body all who receive it, so too... the one Holy Spirit is not divided among all those in whom he has come to dwell, but brings all men to a spiritual unity.*¹³⁵

¹³⁴ "[I]t is a violation of reason not to believe in the existence of God... a violation of our moral sense not to believe that God has made himself known to man... that the revelation he has given is Christianity; and... that Christianity is Catholicism..." Henry Edward Cardinal Manning, "The Temporal Mission of the Holy Spirit", quoted in *Manning and Chesterton*, Sheridan Gilley, *The Chesterton Review*, vol. xiii, p. 494.

¹³⁵ St Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on St John's Gospel*, II, ii.

II. He who chooses to reject some aspect of God's revelation compromises this faith which lapses into a merely human religion.¹³⁶ Of these there are, first, those who accept his revelation only with qualifications.¹³⁷ This is Protestantism which, since *quot homines tot sententiae*, exists in a great variety of forms some approximate to others removed from, the faith given by God. Whatever its shade, this faith is of man, mutable; easily turned into another variety, or lost completely.

The category divides, secondly, into those who reject the vast body of God's revelation but retain basic features—such as that God is the Creator, that he is one, that he has promised felicity to those who follow his teaching, and so on—but add features that suit their own proclivities, features arrived at usually through some private 'revelation'. These are the sects, the religions founded on nothing but assertion, lacking any proof that demonstrates a Divine involvement. Of such are the Unitarians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, Mohammedans and the like.

Finally, there are those who reject the assertion of God's existence and its possibility: agnostics, Deists, Freemasons and atheists. Today, the majority of Western peoples fall into this last category.

Thus, the passage from belief in God in accordance with his gift through the Divine Redeemer, Jesus Christ, to mankind down to a professed atheism follows a logical, if irrational, process.

III. The move from belief in God to belief in 'no-God' brings with it deleterious effects on both intellect and will. As he descends from divine faith to the blindness of the secular, a man departs from the felt need to comply with the demands of reality and to acknowledge constantly the truth as true. He rejects reality when he rejects the truth that he could not exist without some cause (itself uncaused) of *what* he is and of *that* he is. He is disposed by this folly to embrace the simplistic explanations of *materialism* (which contend that natural beings have no more than one cause, matter)¹³⁸ and the claims of *subjectivism*, that what matters is not reality, but what he (or the majority of men) think about reality.

¹³⁶ "[H]e who adheres to the teaching of the Church as to an infallible rule, assents to whatever the Church teaches. It is otherwise if he holds what he chooses to hold of the things taught by the Church and rejects what he chooses to reject, for he no longer adheres to the teaching of the Church as to an infallible rule, but to his own will... It is clear that such a heretic with regard to one article has no faith in the other articles, but only a kind of opinion in accordance with his own will." St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 5, a. 3; cf. II-II, q. 11, a. 1.

¹³⁷ Such as, the teaching that Christ founded a Church, that he gave the headship of the Church to St Peter and his successors; that it is the Church, and not some self promoting individual, that determines what has been Divinely revealed in the scriptures; that tradition in that Church is to be respected as well as sacred scripture; that marriage is indissoluble; that there are seven sacraments; and so forth.

¹³⁸ Whose dominant thesis is Darwinian evolutionary theory.

The disposing cause of these departures from principle is that the human intellect is feeble, so feeble that no man is capable of comprehending creation in all its immensity and intricacy. If a man will not believe in God he cannot thereby escape the need for belief. If he will not believe in God, he must believe in something else; must rely on the assertions—most of them unproven—of others. The way is open to engage in further folly, a folly not lessened because he shares it with many others.

IV. Inevitably, when peoples with diverse religious affiliations try to live together in society there are tensions. They will agree over the things they have in common and disagree over the things they do not. The test of unity in matters social is the common good. Pope John XXIII defined it shortly in *Mater et Magistra* as—

“The totality of those conditions of social living which enable men more fully and more readily to achieve their own perfection.”¹³⁹

St Thomas was more expansive in his commentary on book I of Aristotle’s *Ethics*:

“It is evident that insofar as a cause is prior and more powerful it extends to more effects. Hence, insofar as the good, which has the nature of a final cause, is more powerful, it extends to more effects. So, even though the good be the same objective for one man and for the whole state, it seems much better and more perfect to attain, to procure and preserve, the good of the whole state than the good of any one man. Certainly it is a part of that love which should exist among men that a man preserve the good even of a single human being. But it is much better and more divine that this be done for a whole people and for states... more divine because it shows greater likeness to God who is the ultimate cause of all good. But this common good... is the object of... the particular skill called political science. Hence to it, as the most important science, belongs in a most special way the consideration of the ultimate end of human life.”¹⁴⁰

Now it is religion that addresses the ultimate end of human life. Hence the most fundamental issue affecting the common good is religion. So, Pope Pius XII wrote—

“The origin and the primary scope of social life is the conservation, development and perfection of the human person, helping him to realise accurately the demands and values of religion and culture set by the creator for every man and for all mankind, both as a whole and in its natural ramifications.”¹⁴¹

Accordingly, while toleration of a particular religion may be required in a social mix, the extent to which that toleration should be extended is determined by the effect on the common good. No religion, no ideology, harmful to the common good has a right to be fostered or promoted. Indeed, society’s good may demand its suppression.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ 15.5.1961, n. 65; and cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 26.

¹⁴⁰ Book I, Lecture 2, n. 30.

¹⁴¹ In his Christmas Message of 1942.

¹⁴² The demands of the common good were sufficient to justify the outlawing of the Communist Party in Australia in 1950. The Australian High Court erred when it disallowed the *Communist Party Dissolution Act* of Liberal/National Party Government. Sir Owen Dixon, a dominant member of the Court, adverted obliquely to the applicable principle when he endorsed the American view that “it is within the necessary power of [a] federal government to protect its own existence and the unhindered

Where there is no religion—where atheism reigns—the fundamental element underlying the common good is lost and with it the sense which gives life its ultimate purpose, which makes it worth living. The descent into hedonism of western nations whose members flourished under even a *residual* Christianity but whose bulk has now resorted to atheism is patent for all to see.

V. *The Founders' Vision of Religious Liberty*

This is the setting in which to weigh the views of Thomas W. Josziewicz. 'The Founders' to which he refers are, of course, the Founding Fathers of the Republic of the United States of America.

The revolution that destroyed the salutary influence of Christ's Church in France in the late eighteenth century had its effects on the mix of peoples that had gathered, and would gather thereafter, on the North American continent. The burgeoning nation was a melting pot for the religious distortions that flowed from the Protestant Revolt. Yet the dominant influence there was not Protestantism but something that derived from it, the Deism that underlay the French Revolution. This quasi-religion denied that any revelation could come from a supreme being. It offered in lieu a 'religion' derived from reason and nature. Deism's offspring, Freemasonry, soon flourished in innumerable forms in the United States so that Protestantism and even Catholicism there became infected with its tenets. The resolution of the issue of religion was not based on the limits demanded by the common good but on a compromise dictated by Deism/Freemasonry. The title of that compromise was 'religious liberty'.

The 'First and the Second Great Commandments' to which Professor Josziewicz refers in his paper are not the first two of the Ten Commandments in *Leviticus* 19: 18, but those Christ referred to in *Mark* 12: 29—

*The first of all the commandments is that you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, all your mind and with all your strength. And the second is like to it, you must love your neighbour as yourself.*¹⁴³

Benjamin Franklin's reported perception that the most acceptable service to God was the doing of good to man subordinated God, and the duties owed Him, to the demands of mankind. This is Deism's reduction of religion to a pragmatic atheism. So separated, the second commandment reduces to *altruism*: the acts it inspires are not done for God's sake—not as a return in quasi-justice for the ineffable gifts of

play of its legitimate activities." [*Australian Communist Party v Commonwealth* (1951) 83 CLR 1, at 188] While he adverted to the principle which is embodied in Cicero's aphorism *salus populi suprema lex* in passing—in a citation from an earlier judge of the Court addressing the powers of the Court in time of war—he did not see it as a principle which applied at all times. Legal positivism deprives the modern judge of the realisation that there is no element of posited law which is not an application by the human mind of law imprinted on his being by Almighty God through his human nature; a further instance of the evils that follow on loss of belief in God.

¹⁴³ And *Matthew* 22: 34 et seq.

creation, conservation and redemption—but for man’s sake. Every Mason, every quasi-Mason, substitutes *altruism*, a sort of worship of his fellow man, for *latria*, the worship he owes Almighty God.¹⁴⁴

VI. Josziewicz’s bland recitation of the vision of America’s founders—written be it noted for an allegedly Catholic website—ignores the reality that *every American*, no matter what his religious affiliation, *every man* no matter what his provenance, is created by the One God; that that One God established a religion for mankind’s welfare and salvation; that a man reduces *that* religion to parity with any man-made religion at his peril. But that is just what ‘religious liberty’ does.

He fails to recognise that the critical issue is not as, under the influence of the atheism of the French revolutionaries, America’s founders thought, *freedom*, but freedom’s right usage. He does not see as Leo XIII, the greatest of modern popes, saw that the word ‘freedom’ expresses not one but two realities, *absolute freedom* and *moral freedom*, and that one may not laud ‘freedom’ let alone ‘religious freedom’ unless he has first understood the distinction and its implications.

So he treats freedom as if there is no such distinction. He repeats the current learning on religious freedom as if it was Catholic teaching. It is not: it never has been Catholic teaching, the ill considered decision of some 2,300 bishops of the Catholic Church in December 1965 notwithstanding. The very concept of religious liberty is self-contradictory and conflictive as anyone with an ounce of sense can see.

Consider Josziewicz’s conclusion to his paper:

“[W]e would do better with our Founders’ vision of religious liberty, a renewed commitment to ordered liberty and civil conversation that includes religious ‘values’ and even – dare one say – religious truths?”

For a start *the Founders* were more inclined to atheism than to religion and ‘religious freedom’ includes *eo ipso* the entitlement to embrace atheism as Leo XIII noted in *Immortale Dei*.¹⁴⁵ Next, ‘religious values’ are as various as the religions from which they stem, the ‘religious value’ of one frequently at odds with the ‘religious value’ of another. Thirdly, the term ‘religious truths’ can be said rigorously only of the truths of the Catholic faith because they alone are of God. The ‘truths’ of other religions are truths only in a qualified sense.

‘Religious liberty’ is not, as the bishops of Vatican II thought, an expression of *moral* liberty. It is *absolute* liberty by another name. Just as absolute liberty unfettered by the demands of the moral law offends the common good, so does ‘religious liberty’. No one has a moral right to follow the religion of his choice unless that religion is the one true religion established by Almighty God. No religion but *this* religion has a moral right to exist, which is not to say that some society may not tolerate a man-

¹⁴⁴ Who, in the blasphemous oaths in which he indulges, mocks God to His face.

¹⁴⁵ 1st November, 1885, n. 31.

made religion, a *foreign* religion, provided the harm it works does not outweigh the limited advantages it may bring to that society.

VII. *The New Era of Religious Liberty*

The views of Gerald J Russello are hardly less confused than those of Josziewicz, albeit that Russello is alive to the practical problems of endorsing the Deistic concept.

The American legal system suffers the debility—another legacy of France’s revolution—of a ‘bill of rights’ mentality. The mind at work in such a system is inherently atheistic and materialistic. For it involves the implicit assertion of an impossibility, namely, that one can delineate exhaustively the rights that attach to man. Man, the chief of the material creatures of an infinite God, made in God’s image, is himself objectively infinite. So is the ambit of his rights.¹⁴⁶

A much better system of law is that derived from the influence (over one thousand years) of the Catholic Church on the peoples of the British Isles, the English Common Law. Despite the debilitating influence of Protestantism after the sixteenth century, the integrity of the Common Law was largely preserved, continuing with little modification (until recently) in those countries whose legal systems derive from the British.

The Common Law starts with the Catholic assumption that man’s freedom is given him by God and is only to be curtailed where necessary through laws which proscribe actions which offend the moral law or the demands of society which reflect the moral law. Here everything is permitted except what is forbidden: with a ‘bill of rights’ system, the tendency is to hold that everything is forbidden except what is permitted.

Underlying a ‘bill of rights’ system is the preconception that a man’s freedom is something given him by his fellows (associated with Rousseau’s erroneous thesis of ‘the social contract’), not by God. And, what his fellows have given they may take away! The problems with such a system are manifest in the near impossibility of determining with finality the ambit of any of such legislated ‘rights’. In Australia we have but one such. Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution provides that *trade, commerce, and intercourse among the States, whether by means of internal carriage or ocean navigation, shall be absolutely free*. This provision has been a constant source of litigation. The High Court has changed its interpretation on numerous occasions and it unlikely that the latest ruling will long abide demand for a further change. No lawyer would be surprised in the least, then, at Russello’s assertion of the situation in the United States in relation to the guarantee in their First Amendment¹⁴⁷ —

¹⁴⁶ Experiential proof of this is provided by the recurring exercise by the United States legislature addressing perceived shortcomings in existing ‘rights’ by ‘Amendments’ to their Constitution.

¹⁴⁷ *Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

“that the jurisprudence of religious liberty has long been a near-hopeless mess.

In a Common Law system the citizen may, where a law is oppressive, vote out the lawmaker in the hope that his replacement will change things for the better. In a ‘bill of rights’ system the citizen is in the hands of the law’s interpreters, the judges, and the ideology to which, from time to time, they adhere. Hence, the assertion in Josziewicz’s paper is, with respect, naïve that—

“[r]eligious liberty, a protected Constitutional right at federal and state levels, is under renewed attack.”

And if, as Russello complains—

“[c]ourts across [America] have been ruling against religious institutions” — it is not *in spite of* ‘religious liberty’ it is *because of* ‘religious liberty’. For ‘religious liberty’ entitles you to believe or disbelieve *ad libitum*. And if the majority of the people believe in no-God, and the judges are elected by the people *as they are in America*, the majority will prevail and the rest must suffer the consequences.¹⁴⁸

It was primarily because they operated in a ‘bill of rights’ system that the members of the United States Supreme Court were free to import into the Constitution the interpretation of “a wall of separation between church and state”. The reality represented by that expression is not religious, it is Masonic. The ideal situation for any society created by God is active cooperation between the one Church founded by God, the Catholic Church, and the members of that society as Leo XIII taught in *Immortale Dei* (November 1st, 1885). But Masonry insists on a doctrine whose slogan one may hear on the lips of any schoolchild, as on those of any social commentator, of any politician—‘separation between church and state’. The ‘church’ at which this doctrine is aimed is the Church of God, the Catholic Church.

Consider the material Russello quotes in the address in 1845 of ‘the great Catholic American thinker Orestes Brownson’

“R]eligious liberty asserts the absolute freedom of conscience before the State, and denies the right of the State, or of any human power whatever, to force it, or in any sense to intermeddle with what concerns it...”

‘Religious liberty’ is simply *absolute* liberty by another name. It is Masonic (derived from Protestantism) to claim that individual conscience is superior to lawful authority. Brownson’s is not a Catholic, but a Masonic, understanding of principle. That ‘religious liberty’ is not immune from the demands of the moral law nor from rightful intervention by the state for the common good was confirmed in 1851 when Pope Pius IX condemned the proposition—

‘Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, led by the light of reason, he thinks to be the true religion.’¹⁴⁹

He repeated this condemnation in 1862¹⁵⁰ and confirmed it formally in the *Syllabus of Errors* annexed to the Bull, *Quanta cura* (December 8th, 1864), in terms which

¹⁴⁸ Democracy’s major problem: a wrong thinking majority exercises a sort of tyranny over the right thinking minority.

¹⁴⁹ In the Condemnation *Multiplikes inter*, June 10th 1851.

¹⁵⁰ In the Allocution *Maxima quidem* on June 9th, 1862.

conformed to the requirements laid out six years later (in the Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* of the Vatican Council) for a papal teaching to proclaim an infallible truth.

Just as *absolute* liberty should be proscribed whenever *moral* liberty demands it, so 'religious liberty' should be proscribed whenever it offends the common good, when the harm its exercise brings exceeds any incidental good that may result. Hence a good argument could be mounted that, for the good of the American people Mormonism in its original form at least, should have been proscribed. Likewise, an argument can be mounted that Mohammedanism, a religion which troubles the common good of any society in which it is embedded, should be proscribed. This is the practical, if not the theological, reason behind Catholicism's age-long opposition to Islam.

VIII. Consider the dilemma for America and Americans. The country proclaims itself 'the land of the free'. A sort of idolatrous proclamation of freedom, the gift of the heirs of France's Revolution, stands at the entrance of the country's chief harbour. Freedom is lauded in America as if it had its home in no other place on earth.

Yet Americans lack many basic freedoms enjoyed by the peoples of other countries. You cannot, for instance, at Christmas time set up in a public place in America a Christmas crib depicting the Holy Family, the shepherds and the wise men who attended them. You would be prosecuted for breaching 'the wall of separation'; prosecuted, in other words, for offending the Masonic agenda. Americans are deprived by their heritage of the ability to see things other than in fixed categories. Is a foreigner poor or rich? Is he black or white? Is he Protestant or Catholic? That he should be welcomed because he is an individual created by God, because he is a member of the human race, hardly weighs.

The obsession with firearms in the name of 'freedom', a consequence of the passage of the *Second Amendment*, puts the very life of the country's citizen, the very ground of his personal freedom, at risk. The suspicion of a breach of a law in America brings with it consequences which are draconian, utterly removed from a sense of balance. The suspect is likely to be constrained in chains that reduce him to the level of a slave, a great irony given the country's history. The effect is to assume guilt until the suspect proves himself innocent: the 'social gift' of freedom is peremptorily taken from him until he can justify to the people why they should return it.

In their naïve obsession with the *concept* of freedom, Americans have betrayed its *reality*. How has this come about? They have adopted the errors of Deism, the errors of the French Revolutionaries. They have confused *absolute* freedom with *moral* freedom. They have confused *moral* freedom with *absolute* freedom.

Some illustrations of the distinction of the two species of freedom

A man is *absolutely* free to kill another man; he is not *morally* free to do so.

A man is *absolutely* free to advocate anarchic political theories in society; he is not *morally* free to do so.

A dealer in obscene literature is *absolutely* free to corrupt the morals of a community; he is not *morally* free to do so.

A man is *absolutely* free—though its tenets mock Almighty God to his face—to embrace Freemasonry; he is not *morally* free to do so.

A man is *absolutely* free to embrace any religion he chooses; he is not *morally* free to do so unless that religion is the religion God has established.

IX. *Adoption of the American Folly by the Bishops of Vatican II*

Why has the world descended into atheism at a rate unprecedented in history? Because the Pope and bishops of the Church at Vatican II decided that *aggiornamento* was more important than adherence to the principles Christ's Church had laid down. In effectively abandoning the claim of the Catholic Church to be the one true Church of God they gave atheism free reign.

APPENDIX

Part One

THE FOUNDERS' VISION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Thomas W. Josziewicz (Professor of History at the University of Dallas)

The Catholic Thing, 7th February 2013

[<http://www.thecatholicthing.org/columns/2013/the-founders-vision-of-religious-liberty.html>]

It seems politically incorrect today, but the truth is there truly were "Founding Fathers" of the American republic in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The most prominent of these Founders (and Framers as those who would write the second constitution in 1787 were called) are familiar names: Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton.

Not quite so well known, but part of this company were John Jay, Charles Carroll of Carrollton (the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence), George Mason, Luther Martin [!] (a participant at the Constitutional Convention in 1787 who opposed its ratification particularly because it recognized a legal slave trade for at least another twenty years), James Wilson, and Benjamin Rush, among many others.

The best known earned their historical reputations by their contributions and their willingness to engage various issues at a high level, despite deep differences in their personal views. What, then, of religion, religious toleration, and religious liberty?

It is important that there is no religious test, whether for citizenship or office, in either the Articles of Confederation (1781-1788) or the Constitution (ratified in 1788). Further, the First Amendment (1791) prohibits Congress from making any laws “respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” The states were not so restricted.

Beginning in 1776, and continuing with various revisions into the nineteenth century, state constitutions in a number of instances created Protestant church establishments and/or political disabilities for non-Protestants, especially Catholics. There was toleration, but not yet complete religious freedom.

These disabilities were noticed. In a 1789 letter congratulating the newly elected president from several Catholic figures, including Fr. John Carroll (who would soon become the first U.S. Catholic bishop), Washington was reminded of Catholic involvement in the recent Revolutionary War. This surely offered “a well founded title to claim from her [the United States] justice [and] equal rights of citizenship.” The writers would continue to “pray for the preservation of... [equal rights], where they have been granted; and expect the full extension of them from the justice of those States, which still restrict them.”

Washington’s reply implied his recognition of state sovereignty and the immediate prospect of toleration rather than complete religious liberty for all: “As mankind become more liberal, they will be more apt to allow, that all those who conduct themselves as worthy members of the community are equally entitled to the protection of civil government.”

Washington’s liberality regarding America’s future religious liberty was shared by many of the Founders, but not without some unease regarding Catholics. The new republic, as its state constitutions often indicated, was on the local level a Protestant community, perhaps a self-conscious “Christian nation.”

A number of the Founders, while inclined towards Deism or outright Deists, were not necessarily convinced by Protestant theology, but they were more comfortable with various trends at work among Protestant groups toward a more rational religion, such as Unitarianism, which emphasized right action rather than – often contested right (sic) – doctrine.

Benjamin Franklin understood the proper role of religion to be emphasizing the Second Great Commandment: “that the most acceptable Service of God was the doing Good to man.” Too often, involvement with the First Great Commandment raised thorny issues, and even religious wars, regarding orthodox belief.

As to revelation, Franklin argued that actions were not good or bad according to Divine command, but actually were good or bad, “in their own Natures, all the Circumstances & Situations considered.” In short, reason applied to “the Nature of Man alone” was quite enough to arrive at governing human truths.

In that view, the Catholic Church, with its Creed, along with an insistence on institutional mediation between God and man, introduced the “priestcraft” and clerical abuse associated with the European *ancien régime*, an establishment thus anti-liberal, anti-freedom, anti-republican, and, well, anti-social!

Not all Americans agreed with Franklin, or course, but a habit of anti-Catholicism in the Anglo-American background inclined towards reasonable toleration rather than complete liberty for Catholicism, which might challenge the new regime or even seek to evangelize it.

Franklin or the decidedly anti-Catholic John Adams did not speak for all Americans or all of the Founders, but their vision of religious liberty in the new nation was not quite an absolute commitment to a completely free exercise of religion beyond safeguards against a federal assault on such freedom.

Still, by 1833, all states had eliminated the establishment of religion. And the nation's history would continue to be marked by an uneasy relationship with Catholicism, which occasionally even led to violence.

It was not easy to overcome this gap. In 1960, John F. Kennedy offended even some Protestant observers with his elevation of Jefferson's "wall" to breathtaking heights with an absolute personal separation of church and state. Kennedy's own moral compass appeared to be so thoroughly secular that he seemed to suggest that religion had no legitimate place in the public square.

It was a successful political move, but the Founders would probably have been puzzled at this "naked public square" from which certain personal beliefs, especially religiously grounded beliefs, would apparently be banished.

Religious liberty, a protected Constitutional right at federal and state levels, is under renewed attack. With an absolutist secularism, we have once again begun to trend back toward a religious toleration that is intended to silence any suspicious *sectarian* voices.

Religion, personal and private, is to remain... personal and private.

But we would do better with our Founders' vision of religious liberty, a renewed commitment to ordered liberty and civil conversation that includes religious "values" and even – dare one say – religious truths?

Part Two

THE NEW ERA OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Gerald J Russello

The Catholic Thing, 2nd May 2013

[<http://www.thecatholicthing.org/columns/2013/the-new-era-of-religious-liberty.html>]

It is a truism among legal scholars that the jurisprudence of religious liberty has long been a near-hopeless mess. Almost seventy years ago, the Supreme Court imported into the Constitution the phrase "wall of separation of church and state," which has caused endless confusion – since that "wall" was in the mind of no Founder other than perhaps Jefferson, who in any event was in France when the First Amendment was drafted. In response to a perceived need to address this "wall," the Supreme Court and lower federal courts have devised various tests, standards, and thresholds to interpret the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion.

Added to the confusion is the Court's importation of the Amendment's protections against the states, even though the text itself begins, "Congress shall make no law..." Thus, in religion, as in so many other areas, the federal courts have usurped the democratic process that once allowed citizens of the several states to govern their affairs. And on top of this heavy-handedness lies the secularism of the judiciary and legal elite, which has transformed religion from the first liberty to a begrudged and increasingly threatened privilege.

It was not so long ago, however, that, even with this disarray, those concerned with religious liberty were confident in its preservation. The Court, in cases like *Rosenberg v. University of Virginia* and the earlier *Witters v. Washington Department of Services for the Blind* confirmed that religious institutions and groups could receive the same benefits available to other, nonreligious recipients.

‘State courts have a more muddled history, but they have been active as well, ruling on their own constitutional and statutory provisions, which may differ in crucial respects from the First Amendment. Many states have so-called “Blaine” amendments for example, which are intended to limit support for “sectarian” (historically Catholic) schools. However, even there, state courts (the most recent being Colorado) are finding that religious persons can support religious institutions if they so choose without raising an issue of excessive and unconstitutional state “entanglement.”

‘And yet the confusion remains, to religion’s detriment. Courts across the country have been ruling against religious institutions. As the rulings on contraceptive coverage and similar topics show, the courts remain hostile to claims that religious institutions are autonomous at least when that autonomy clashes with a government “value,” such as “health care.”

‘How to explain these differing paths? On closer inspection, both groups of cases are based on the same assumption: choice conquers all. In many of the school-funding or benefits cases, the determining factor for the courts has been that the benefit passes through another party, usually the parents, who may choose to use the benefit at a religious school or program, but need not. This inoculates the program from constitutional challenge.’

The same principle seemingly applies when the state switches from umpire to participant, as in the contraception cases. (The definitive work on the intellectual underpinnings of this shift is Robert Vischer’s *Conscience and the Common Good*.) The right of a person to choose contraceptive coverage, for example, often has inoculated a statute requiring such coverage from constitutional challenge.

‘Cases in states such as California and New York challenging mini-mandates have failed because the courts find it difficult to reject the premise that state action to further choice is constitutionally problematic. In this way of thinking, a neutral benefit should be provided to all, who may then choose whether to use it.

‘This solution is superficially attractive, but ultimately dangerous. The “neutrality” in the first set of cases is not the same as in the other. In the contraception cases, the state puts its thumb on the scale by furthering a value that it “neutrally” imposes on all, whether the religious beliefs of people or institutions forced to comply are compatible with that value or not. The school cases do not present that issue at all, and allow all who can receive the benefit to use it as they see fit.’

Courts have not yet fully articulated the consequences of this reasoning, though others have. The great American Catholic thinker Orestes Brownson put the case to his countrymen in 1845 in this way:

‘Has the State the right to legislate for conscience, to subject conscience to its laws? Certainly not. The principle of our American government is, confessedly, that conscience is free, that where conscience begins, there the authority of the State ends. And it must be so, if we enjoy religious liberty as distinguished from religious toleration. Toleration presupposes the right on the part of government to force conscience, but that for certain prudential reasons it forbears to do so; but religious liberty asserts the absolute freedom of conscience before the State, and denies the right of the State, or of any human power whatever, to force it, or in any sense to intermeddle with what concerns it. In this country, the government, according to its profession, does not merely tolerate; it acknowledges religious liberty. Then it confesses that its sovereignty ends where conscience begins. Then I owe no

allegiance to the State in matters of conscience; and then it has no right to command me to do what my conscience forbids; and I have the right, in all cases in which it so commands me, to refuse to obey it. If you deny this, you deny religious liberty, and assert for the temporal power the right to force conscience.'

The new era of religious liberty—in choosing choice over conscience—promises to be perhaps less confusing, but more threatening to believers.

AMERICANISM, THE US SUPREME COURT & THE CATHOLIC EPISCOPACY

The problem with American Catholics is *Americanism*, their acceptance of the Masonic doctrines of separation of Church and state and religious freedom. The heresy derives from the errors of the French Revolution. It manifests itself among the American Catholic faithful in conscious or unconscious subjection of the Church's teachings to the demands of the world's greatest nation state. It afflicts bishops, clergy, religious and laity alike.

On 16th June 2015, American layman Hadley Arkes penned a piece for *The Catholic Thing* website which reflected, quite unconsciously, his infection with the virus. The piece, anticipating a decision of the United States Supreme Court, was entitled 'Waiting for the Decision on Marriage'. The issue before the Court involved, as a peripheral matter, whether homosexuals in one of the American States, had 'married' in accordance with a 'law' of that State. Contrary to the implication in the title and in its text, the status of marriage does not depend on the fiat of any judge or on the legislation of any state. The essence or *quiddity* of marriage (what it is) is not something within the power of man. True, whether one marries or not is a matter of will, but the institution itself is of nature. It was established by nature's Author.

Men and women marry pursuant to a law implanted in their being for the good of mankind. Long before governments or 'marriage laws' had existed men and women married: they will do so long after government has fallen into disarray, a reality which may be with us shortly. Nor does a 'marriage celebrant' marry a man and a woman no matter what any law may say to the contrary. They marry each other. Not even a priest in a Catholic wedding marries the couple: they confer the sacrament on each other. The state's authority is limited to ensuring marriage is conducted in an orderly fashion, that its demands as regards consent, competence and lack of impediment are met, and its celebration is recorded. This, which accords with right reason, has ever been the Catholic Church's teaching.

The business was, all of it, quite clear until 500 years ago when the English king, Henry VIII, decided to arrogate to himself authority over marriage by forcing parliament to declare he had never been married to his lawful wife, Queen Catherine, so he could 'marry' his mistress. The virus of thinking that men can subvert, or control the natural order by human legislation has been with us ever since the Protestant disruption.

Americanism manifests itself in systematic silence on moral and social questions by the Church's bishops. For the best part of 100 years they have assisted the subjugation of natural (and Catholic) principle to secular demands and aided the

flourishing of these errors in the secular world. They have conceded the Protestant, and secular, view that marriage is of human will, and so tacitly endorsed the falsity imposed by the English tyrant. Had they insisted—and persisted in insisting— that marriage is of nature and not of human will the folly of 'homosexual marriage' might never have arisen.

Conjugal union is of the essence of marriage: there can be no conjugal union between homosexuals. Any 'marriage' between them, then, is a paper marriage only no matter what any 'law' or a judge may say to the contrary.

The evil is not confined to America. Most Catholic bishops throughout the world are infected for it was transmitted to them via the Second Vatican Council's embrace of Masonic doctrines and the Vatican's enthusiastic enforcement of their poison. The effects, the permission of secular access to the Church's sacred precincts, reduction of the sacred liturgy to a species of entertainment, denial of proper philosophical formation to seminarians and the removal of the *raison d'être* for personal religious dedication, are manifest in the harm wrought among two generations of the Catholic faithful. Not the least of the harm worked is the brainwashing that followed; the categorical denial by a majority of bishops and clergy that the Council was responsible for these evils.

One of the evils deserves special mention, the compromise over the involvement of Catholic lawyers in the evil of divorce. On 28th January 2002 Pope John Paul II addressed the Roman Rota on the question of marriage and its indissolubility.¹⁵¹ He laid down the conditions subject to which a lawyer might involve himself in divorce without incurring the sin of proximate material cooperation, namely, *when in the intention of the client, it is not directed to the break-up of the marriage, but to the securing of other legitimate effects that can only be obtained through such a judicial process in the established order.* He was repeating here, as was his duty as Sovereign Pontiff, the Church's perennial teaching.

Bishops around the world went out of their way to 'white-ant' the Pope's condemnation to justify continued cooperation of Catholic lawyers in divorce. In Australia, the conspiracy to diminish the force of the Pope's words was particularly offensive.¹⁵² Some time after the resulting coup this commentator suggested to one of Australia's regional bishops that he had full power in his own diocese and was free to eschew this rejection of the Pope's teaching. The bishop promised to consider the proposal. His response, two days later, was a vehement refusal. Reading between the lines, he had been given his 'riding instructions' by the other bishops of the Australian Episcopal Conference.

¹⁵¹ It is reproduced here—http://www.superflumina.org/pope_on_divorce.html

¹⁵² Cf. Commentary on Press Release by the President of Sydney's St Thomas More Society at http://www.superflumina.org/commentary_on_divorce.html

The scandal of the involvement of Catholic lawyers in divorce continues unabated around the world. If the bishops of the Catholic Church find their arguments against 'gay marriage' falling on deaf ears, they have no one to blame but themselves. Having contributed to the denigration of marriage by tacitly conceding it may be modified by human will, they have aided that deafness.

II

On March 1st, 2010, Charles J Chaput, Archbishop of Denver, Colorado, addressed the members of Houston Baptist University on the subject of the vocation of Christians in American public life. His speech is set out in Appendix 1 below. Archbishop Chaput used the occasion to place his Protestant audience within the Catholic understanding of salvation. He had some refreshing things to say on the order of the obligations to God and to one's country, and, perhaps unwittingly, he cast light on the provenance of an evil that has afflicted the Church for fifty years.

In the course of his address Archbishop Chaput endorsed the verdict of English historian, Paul Johnson, that America was "born Protestant".

"Whatever America is today or may become tomorrow, its origin was deeply shaped by a Protestant Christian spirit, and the fruit of that spirit has been, on the balance, a great blessing for humanity."

This analysis was, with respect, a little simplistic. As well as Protestant believers among America's Founding Fathers, there were many Freemasons. While the latter accepted that they must endorse the Protestant cast in the country's founding documents, they were at pains to interpret them in accordance with Masonic principle when they could. With the passage of time the Protestant influence has diminished and the Masonic has increased.

Protestantism is Catholicism eviscerated of those elements of Catholic belief its adherents refuse to accept. The Protestant does not believe as the Catholic believes, conforming himself *to* God's authority *on* God's authority in one faith.¹⁵³ The Protestant believes on his own authority, in any of a multitude of faiths. The one faith, the Catholic faith, is from God, a gift [*Ephesians* 2: 8]¹⁵⁴. Protestant faith in all its varieties comes from man; any passing influence may shake it. The lives of many celebrated men show this passage: they begin as Protestants, often leading

¹⁵³ Submitting his conscience to the teaching of God's Church because he knows he can trust its authority.

¹⁵⁴ There is an apodictic proof of this in a phenomenon of which Catholics—and only Catholics—are aware. When a man loses the Catholic faith he loses all memory of the thing he once possessed. If the Catholic faith was of man and not of God, one who had forsaken that faith would yet remember the reality of what he had forsaken.

practitioners of their sect, only to lose faith in its tenets as the cares of life multiply and they end as atheists. The order follows logically: the Protestant rejects what God has revealed; implicitly he rejects God's authority, and rejects God. Explicit atheism is but a step away. In Protestantism lies the root of modern atheism.

On such a shifting foundation it was inevitable that some Protestants would follow the path of Michael Servetus and reject even the most fundamental elements of God's revelation; deny that in the One God there are three Persons; deny that Christ is God. It is a short step from this (Unitarianism) to reducing the understanding of God to whatever the heretic chooses to make it. This is Freemasonry.

Archbishop Chaput's Address is a timely reminder of the extent to which the Masonic *zeitgeist* has flourished since the end of World War II not only in America but throughout the world. This malign influence has affected the thinking even of members of the Catholic Church. It affected that of the American bishops. It affected John Fitzgerald Kennedy who, in September 1960, in the course of an address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, thought he must appeal to it to secure the support of the American people¹⁵⁵. It affected the ruminations of the bishops of the Second Vatican Council and marked certain of their determinations as Freemasons afterwards frankly acknowledged.

Kennedy's appeal to the Masonic principle of Separation of Church and State had followed its adoption thirteen years earlier by the United States Supreme Court in *Everson v. Board of Education*. Archbishop Chaput refers with approval to the answer the American bishops gave to the Court's ruling in *Everson*, their pastoral letter of November 1948 entitled *The Christian in Action*. The letter contained, indeed, some admirable passages. But it failed to address at least three injustices, each of them rooted in Masonic principle. A copy of the pastoral letter is set out as Appendix 2

Freemasonry, since it is of the Devil, attacks human society where it is most vulnerable, in the family. It aims its blows at parents and at their children, made in the image and likeness of God, to disturb the pursuance of their eternal destiny at the very earliest opportunity. The moral right and corresponding duty to educate children is vested by nature in their parents not in the state. This right and duty belongs to them from the very nature of the family. No state *no matter what its constitution or laws may say* has the right to deprive parents of either right or duty by purporting to shoulder them itself. It is a corollary of this principle that no state has the right to exact from parents the moneys they require to educate their children, even under colour of the return of those moneys by way of 'grant' or 'subsidy' or similar device. Freemasonry, aided and abetted by Protestantism, had by 1948 ensured that its protocol that the state *does have* rights in child education was well established in the laws and usages of the American states.

¹⁵⁵ "I believe," he said, "in an America where the separation of Church and state is absolute."

A serious departure from justice such as this in any country ought to be among the principal considerations in any pastoral letter of the country's bishops dealing with Christian activity. The American bishops did not deal with it in *The Christian in Action*, nor did they set forth the evils that would flow from its continuance. To the contrary they seemed to accept the *status quo*. They complained of the Masonic push to refuse funding to Catholic schools. "[Secularism] has banned religion from tax-supported education..." They asked for a deeper appreciation of the contribution Catholic institutions of higher learning were making to a Christian reconstruction of society and urged "a more generous support of their work" including, it would seem, a claim on Federal and State authorities for more generous *financial* support. It does not seem to have occurred to them that while they were objecting to *one* application of Masonic principle they were busily endorsing *another*.

The second injustice arose from the bishops' failure to distinguish the only religion to which a man can be bound by duty to adhere, the religion established by Almighty God, the Catholic faith, from Protestantism or from any other religion for that matter. They said—

"The essential connection between religion and good citizenship is deep in our American tradition. Those who took the lead in establishing our independence and framing our Constitution were firm and explicit in the conviction that religion and morality are the strong supports of national well-being, that national morality cannot long prevail in the absence of religious principle, and that impartial encouragement of religious influence on its citizens is a proper and practical function of good government."

In the absence of appropriate distinction, this statement was inaccurate. There are a variety of meanings that might have been accorded the word 'religion' and its cognate adjective, 'religious', in 1948. As we in the 21st century know only too well, 'religion' can be advanced to excuse mass murder or mass suicide. Even in the mid-20th century the word could not have been used without qualification. The cults of Unitarianism, Mormonism, and Jehovah's Witness-ism, to name but three, could each have claimed to be classified under the heading 'religion', yet each was problematic, and none of their adherents would have subscribed to the American bishops' sentiments. Even if the bishops' claim was read as embracing only Protestantism and Catholicism, it was inaccurate.

For Protestantism is a false religion; it is redeemed only by the Catholicism which underpins it. The Protestant, the *renegade*, part of it—the rejection of what God has revealed at the instance of human opinion (of how so many different human opinions!)—is evil. Insofar as Protestantism achieved any good in American society it did so because of Catholic principle not yet abandoned. As time has gone by more and more of that underlying principle has been lost.¹⁵⁶ Chesterton spoke to the point when he said (of England) almost 100 years ago that it was living on its Catholic capital, and it was rapidly running out.

¹⁵⁶ The great attacks on society, divorce, contraception and abortion, have all emanated from adherents of one sect or another of Protestantism.

The third injustice arose upon the bishops' use without distinction of the expression 'religious freedom'. At best that expression means the freedom to exercise some sort of religion, without insisting that it be the religion founded by Almighty God. At worst it means that one is free to choose to reject any form of religion and embrace atheism. In neither case can its use be justified as indicating the existence of a right. The Church had formally declared this to be the case—

“[W]hen [religious] liberty... is offered to man the power is given him to pervert or abandon with impunity the most sacred of duties, and to exchange the unchangeable good for evil; which... is no liberty, but its degradation, and the abject submission of the soul to sin.”¹⁵⁷

In contrast to this statement of certain truth by the Church the American bishops said this:

“We feel with deep conviction that for the sake of both good citizenship and religion there should be a reaffirmation of our original American tradition of free cooperation between government and religious bodies—cooperation involving no special privilege to any group and no restriction on the religious liberty of any citizen.”

But 'religious liberty' is a *Masonic* ideal! It has been part of the Masonic program since the French Revolution. Let the reader peruse sections 12 to 23 of Leo XIII's encyclical *Humanum Genus* (20. 4. 1884) to see that program laid out in detail.

Here was a remarkable thing: Catholic bishops sought to answer *one* element of Masonic doctrine—separation of church and state—by advancing *another*. Bemused by centuries of custom in which the dominant religious force in their country was Protestantism, the American bishops had aligned their thinking with a Protestant, instead of a Catholic, view of the issues and adopted a Protestant tolerance of Masonic principle. Seventeen years later something even more remarkable occurred. At the urging of the American Church's *illuminati*, including one John Courtney Murray¹⁵⁸, almost every one of the Catholic Church's bishops renounced the solemn teaching of their Church and embraced Masonic doctrine with their “Declaration on Religious Liberty” *Dignitatis Humanae*.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum* (On the Nature of Human Liberty), 20.6.1888, n. 20. Leo expounded here the reasons underlying the formal condemnation by his predecessor, Pius XI, of the proposition “Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, led by the light of reason, he thinks to be the true religion.” *Syllabus of Errors* attached to the encyclical, *Quanta Cura*, 8th December, 1864; n. 15.

¹⁵⁸ In passing, it should be said that Archbishop Chaput was unwise to quote Murray in support of his argument to the Houston Baptist University. The often poetic way Murray had of expressing himself gave an impression of profundity but it masked an inability to think rigorously. One of the less happy actions of Francis Cardinal Spellman (Archbishop of New York 1939-1967) was his summoning of Murray to Rome as *peritus* during the second session of the Second Vatican Council. He ignored the fact that the Vatican had earlier ordered Murray to cease writing on religious freedom because of his heterodoxy.

¹⁵⁹ The present author has argued elsewhere that this failure to adhere to the Church's solemn teaching demonstrates that, contrary to the expressed views of popes, bishops and laity, the Second Vatican Council was *not* an ecumenical council of the Catholic Church. See the chapters *What Went Wrong with Vatican II* and *The Trouble with Dignitatis Humanae*.

Archbishop Chaput argues that—

“[Kennedy’s] Houston remarks profoundly undermined the place not just of Catholics, but of all religious believers, in America’s public life and political conversation...”

Did they? Or is the fault, rather, to be laid at the feet of America’s bishops for their failure to deal with the crucial issues of justice referred to above?

A good argument can be mounted that if they had addressed them the blunder of *Dignitatis Humanae* would never have occurred.

APPENDIX

Part One

THE VOCATION OF CHRISTIANS IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

Charles J. Chaput

One of the ironies in my talk tonight is this. I'm a Catholic bishop, speaking at a Baptist university in America's Protestant heartland. But I've been welcomed with more warmth and friendship than I might find at a number of Catholic venues. This is a fact worth discussing. I'll come back to it at the end of my comments. But I want to begin by thanking Drs. Sloan and Bonicelli and the leadership of Houston Baptist University for their extraordinary kindness in having me here tonight. I'm very grateful for their friendship.

I also want to thank my friend Dr. John Hittinger of the University of St. Thomas. Part of my pleasure in being here is to encourage his efforts with the John Paul II Forum on the Church in the Modern World. The Forum is hugely important – and not just for Catholics, but for the whole Christian community. I'm grateful to the leadership of the University of St. Thomas for supporting him.

I need to offer a few caveats before I turn to the substance of our discussion.

The first caveat is this: My thoughts tonight are purely my own. I don't speak for the Holy See, or the American Catholic bishops, or the Houston Catholic community. In the Catholic tradition, the local bishop is the chief preacher and teacher of the faith, and the shepherd of the local Church. Here in Houston you have an outstanding bishop – a man of great Christian faith and intellect – in Cardinal Daniel DiNardo. In all things Catholic tonight, I'm glad to defer to his leadership.

Here's my second caveat: I'm here as a Catholic Christian and an American citizen – in that order. Both of these identities are important. They don't need to conflict. They are not, however, the same thing. And they do not have the same weight. I love my country. I revere the genius of its founding documents and its public institutions. But no nation, not even the one I love, has a right to my allegiance, or my silence, in matters that belong to God or that undermine the dignity of the human persons He created.

My third caveat is this: Catholics and Protestants have different memories of American history. The historian Paul Johnson once wrote that America was “born Protestant” (1).

That's clearly true. Whatever America is today or may become tomorrow, its origin was deeply shaped by a Protestant Christian spirit, and the fruit of that spirit has been, on the balance, a great blessing for humanity. But it's also true that, while Catholics have always thrived in the United States, they lived through two centuries of discrimination, religious bigotry and occasional violence. Protestants of course will remember things quite differently. They will remember Catholic persecution of dissenters in Europe, the entanglements of the Roman Church and state power, and papal suspicion of democracy and religious liberty.

We can't erase those memories. And we cannot – nor should we try to – paper over the issues that still divide us as believers in terms of doctrine, authority and our understandings of the Church. Ecumenism based on good manners instead of truth is empty. It's also a form of lying. If we share a love of Jesus Christ and a familial bond in baptism and God's Word, then on a fundamental level, we're brothers and sisters. Members of a family owe each other more than surface courtesies. We owe each other the kind of fraternal respect that "speak[s] the truth in love" (Eph 4:15). We also urgently owe each other solidarity and support in dealing with a culture that increasingly derides religious faith in general, and the Christian faith in particular. And that brings me to the heart of what I want to share with you.

*

Our theme tonight is the vocation of Christians in American public life. That's a pretty broad canvas. Broad enough that I wrote a book about it. Tonight I want to focus in a special way on the role of Christians in our country's civic and political life. The key to our discussion will be that word "vocation." It comes from the Latin word "vocare," which means, "to call." Christians believe that God calls each of us individually, and all of us as a believing community, to know, love and serve him in our daily lives.

But there's more. He also asks us to make disciples of all nations. That means we have a duty to preach Jesus Christ. We have a mandate to share his Gospel of truth, mercy, justice and love. These are mission words; action words. They're not optional. And they have practical consequences for the way we think, speak, make choices and live our lives, not just at home but in the public square. Real Christian faith is always personal, but it's never private. And we need to think about that simple fact in light of an anniversary.

Fifty years ago this fall, in September 1960, Sen. John F. Kennedy, the Democratic candidate for president, spoke to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association. He had one purpose. He needed to convince 300 uneasy Protestant ministers, and the country at large, that a Catholic like himself could serve loyally as our nation's chief executive. Kennedy convinced the country, if not the ministers, and went on to be elected. And his speech left a lasting mark on American politics. It was sincere, compelling, articulate – and wrong. Not wrong about the patriotism of Catholics, but wrong about American history and very wrong about the role of religious faith in our nation's life. And he wasn't merely "wrong." His Houston remarks profoundly undermined the place not just of Catholics, but of all religious believers, in America's public life and political conversation. Today, half a century later, we're paying for the damage.

Now those are strong statements. So I'll try to explain them by doing three things. First, I want to look at the problems in what Kennedy actually said. Second, I want to reflect on what a proper Christian approach to politics and public service might look like. And last, I want to examine where Kennedy's speech has led us – in other words, the realities we face today, and what Christians need to do about those realities.

*

John Kennedy was a great speaker. Ted Sorensen, who helped craft the Houston speech, was a gifted writer. As a result, it's easy to speed-read Kennedy's Houston remarks as a passionate appeal for tolerance. But the text has at least two big flaws (2). The first is political and historical. The second is religious.

Early in his remarks, Kennedy said: "I believe in an America where the separation of Church and state is absolute." Given the distrust historically shown to Catholics in this country, his words were shrewdly chosen. The trouble is, the Constitution doesn't say that. The Founders and Framers didn't believe that. And the history of the United States contradicts that. Unlike revolutionary leaders in Europe, the American Founders looked quite favorably on religion. Many were believers themselves. In fact, one of the main reasons for writing the First Amendment's Establishment Clause – the clause that bars any federally-endorsed Church – was that several of the Constitution's Framers wanted to protect the publicly funded Protestant Churches they already had in their own states. John Adams actually preferred a "mild and equitable establishment of religion" and helped draft that into the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution (3).

America's Founders encouraged mutual support between religion and government. Their reasons were practical. In their view, a republic like the United States needs a virtuous people to survive. Religious faith, rightly lived, forms virtuous people. Thus, the modern, drastic sense of the "separation of Church and state" had little force in American consciousness until Justice Hugo Black excavated it from a private letter President Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1802 to the Danbury Baptist Association (4). Justice Black then used Jefferson's phrase in the Supreme Court's *Everson v. Board of Education* decision in 1947.

The date of that Court decision is important, because America's Catholic bishops wrote a wonderful pastoral letter one year later – in 1948 – called "The Christian in Action." It's worth reading. In that letter, the bishops did two things. They strongly endorsed American democracy and religious freedom. They also strongly challenged Justice Black's logic in *Everson*.

The bishops wrote that "it would be an utter distortion of American history and law" to force the nation's public institutions into an "indifference to religion and the exclusion of cooperation between religion and government." They rejected Justice Black's harsh new sense of the separation of Church and state as a "shibboleth of doctrinaire secularism" (5). And the bishops argued their case from the facts of American history.

The value of remembering that pastoral statement tonight is this: Kennedy referenced the 1948 bishops' letter in his Houston comments. He wanted to prove the deep Catholic support for American democracy. And rightly so. But he neglected to mention that the same bishops, in the same letter, repudiated the new and radical kind of separation doctrine he was preaching.

The Houston remarks also created a religious problem. To his credit, Kennedy said that if his duties as President should "ever require me to violate my conscience or violate the national interest, I would resign the office." He also warned that he would not "disavow my views or my church in order to win this election." But in its effect, the Houston speech did exactly that. It began the project of walling religion away from the process of governance in a new and aggressive way. It also divided a person's private beliefs from his or her public duties. And it set "the national interest" over and against "outside religious pressures or dictates."

For his audience of Protestant ministers, Kennedy's stress on personal conscience may have sounded familiar and reassuring. But what Kennedy actually did, according to Jesuit scholar Mark Massa, was something quite alien and new. He "secularize[d] the American presidency in order to win it." In other words, "[P]recisely because Kennedy was not an adherent of that mainstream Protestant religiosity that had created and buttressed the 'plausibility structures'

of [American] political culture at least since Lincoln, he had to 'privatize' presidential religious belief – including and especially his own – in order to win that office" (6).

In Massa's view, the kind of secularity pushed by the Houston speech "represented a near total privatization of religious belief – so much a privatization that religious observers from both sides of the Catholic/Protestant fence commented on its remarkable atheistic implications for public life and discourse." And the irony – again as told by Massa – is that some of the same people who worried publicly about Kennedy's Catholic faith got a result very different from the one they expected. In effect, "the raising of the [Catholic] issue itself went a considerable way toward 'secularizing' the American public square by privatizing personal belief. The very effort to 'safeguard' the [essentially Protestant] religious aura of the presidency... contributed in significant ways to its secularization."

Fifty years after Kennedy's Houston speech, we have more Catholics in national public office than ever before. But I wonder if we've ever had fewer of them who can coherently explain how their faith informs their work, or who even feel obligated to try. The life of our country is no more "Catholic" or "Christian" than it was 100 years ago. In fact it's arguably less so. And at least one of the reasons for it is this: Too many Catholics confuse their personal opinions with a real Christian conscience. Too many live their faith as if it were a private idiosyncrasy – the kind that they'll never allow to become a public nuisance. And too many just don't really believe. Maybe it's different in Protestant circles. But I hope you'll forgive me if I say, "I doubt it."

*

John Kennedy didn't create the trends in American life that I've described. But at least for Catholics, his Houston speech clearly fed them. Which brings me to the second point of my talk: What would a proper Christian approach to politics look like? John Courtney Murray, the Jesuit scholar who spoke so forcefully about the dignity of American democracy and religious freedom, once wrote: "The Holy Spirit does not descend into the City of Man in the form of a dove. He comes only in the endlessly energetic spirit of justice and love that dwells in the man of the City, the layman" (7).

Here's what that means. Christianity is not mainly – or even significantly -- about politics. It's about living and sharing the love of God. And Christian political engagement, when it happens, is never mainly the task of the clergy. That work belongs to lay believers who live most intensely in the world. Christian faith is not a set of ethics or doctrines. It's not a group of theories about social and economic justice. All these things have their place. All of them can be important. But a Christian life begins in a relationship with Jesus Christ; and it bears fruit in the justice, mercy and love we show to others because of that relationship.

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets" (Mt 22:37-40). That's the test of our faith, and without a passion for Jesus Christ in our hearts that reshapes our lives, Christianity is just a word game and a legend. Relationships have consequences. A married man will commit himself to certain actions and behaviors, no matter what the cost, out of the love he bears for his wife. Our relationship with God is the same. We need to live and prove our love by our actions, not just in our personal and family lives, but also in the public square. Therefore Christians individually and the Church as a believing community engage the political order as an obligation of the Word of God. Human law teaches and forms as well as regulates; and human politics is the exercise of power – which means both have moral implications that the Christian cannot ignore and still remain faithful to his vocation as a light to the world (Mt 5:14-16).

Robert Dodaro, the Augustinian priest and scholar, wrote a wonderful book a few years ago called "Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine". In his book and elsewhere, Dodaro makes four key points about Augustine's view of Christianity and politics (8).

First, Augustine never really offers a political theory, and there's a reason. He doesn't believe human beings can know or create perfect justice in this world. Our judgment is always flawed by our sinfulness. Therefore, the right starting point for any Christian politics is humility, modesty and a very sober realism.

Second, no political order, no matter how seemingly good, can ever constitute a just society. Errors in moral judgment can't be avoided. These errors also grow exponentially in their complexity as they move from lower to higher levels of society and governance. Therefore the Christian needs to be loyal to her nation and obedient to its legitimate rulers. But he also needs to cultivate a critical vigilance about both.

Third, despite these concerns, Christians still have a duty to take part in public life according to their God-given abilities, even when their faith brings them into conflict with public authority. We can't simply ignore or withdraw from civic affairs. The reason is simple. The classic civic virtues named by Cicero – prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance – can be renewed and elevated, to the benefit of all citizens, by the Christian virtues of faith, hope and charity. Therefore, political engagement is a worthy Christian task, and public office is an honorable Christian vocation.

Fourth, in governing as best they can, while conforming their lives and their judgment to the content of the Gospel, Christian leaders in public life can accomplish real good, and they can make a difference. Their success will always be limited and mixed. It will never be ideal. But with the help of God they can improve the moral quality of society, which makes the effort invaluable.

What Augustine believes about Christian leaders, we can reasonably extend to the vocation of all Christian citizens. The skills of the Christian citizen are finally very simple: a zeal for Jesus Christ and his Church; a conscience formed in humility and rooted in Scripture and the believing community; the prudence to see which issues in public life are vital and foundational to human dignity, and which ones are not; and the courage to work for what's right. We don't cultivate these skills alone. We develop them together as Christians, in prayer, on our knees, in the presence of Jesus Christ – and also in discussions like tonight.

*

Now before ending, I want to turn briefly to the third point I mentioned earlier in my talk: the realities we face today, and what Christians need to do about them. As I was preparing these comments for tonight, I listed all the urgent issues that demand our attention as believers: abortion; immigration; our obligations to the poor, the elderly and the disabled; questions of war and peace; our national confusion about sexual identity and human nature, and the attacks on marriage and family life that flow from this confusion; the growing disconnection of our science and technology from real moral reflection; the erosion of freedom of conscience in our national health-care debates; the content and quality of the schools that form our children.

The list is long. I believe abortion is the foundational human rights issue of our lifetime. We need to do everything we can to support women in their pregnancies and to end the legal killing of unborn children. We may want to remember that the Romans had a visceral hatred for Carthage not because Carthage was a commercial rival, or because its people had a different language and customs. The Romans hated Carthage above all because its people sacrificed their infants to Ba'al. For the Romans, who themselves were a hard people, that

was a unique kind of wickedness and barbarism. As a nation, we might profitably ask ourselves whom and what we've really been worshipping in our 40 million "legal" abortions since 1973.

All of these issues that I've listed above divide our country and our Churches in a way Augustine would have found quite understandable. The City of God and the City of Man overlap in this world. Only God knows who finally belongs to which. But in the meantime, in seeking to live the Gospel we claim to believe, we find friends and brothers in unforeseen places, unlikely places; and when that happens, even a foreign place can seem like one's home.

The vocation of Christians in American public life does not have a Baptist or Catholic or Greek Orthodox or any other brand-specific label. John 14:6 – "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me" – which is so key to the identity of Houston Baptist University, burns just as hot in this heart, and the heart of every Catholic who truly understands his faith. Our job is to love God, preach Jesus Christ, serve and defend God's people, and sanctify the world as his agents. To do that work, we need to be one. Not "one" in pious words or good intentions, but really one, perfectly one, in mind and heart and action, as Christ intended. This is what Jesus meant when he said: "I do not pray for these only, but also those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn 17:20-21).

We live in a country that was once – despite its sins and flaws – deeply shaped by Christian faith. It can be so again. But we will do that together, or we won't do it at all. We need to remember the words of St. Hilary from so long ago: "Unum sunt, qui invicem sunt", they are one, who are wholly for each other (9). May God grant us the grace to love each other, support each other and live wholly for each other in Jesus Christ – so that we might work together in renewing the nation that has served human freedom so well.

(1) Paul Johnson, "An Almost-Chosen People," *First Things*, June/July 2006; adapted from his Erasmus Lecture.

(2) Full text of the Kennedy Houston speech is available online from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

(3) John Witte, Jr., "From Establishment to Freedom of Public Religion," Emory University School of Law, Public Law and Legal Theory Research Paper Series, Research Paper No. 04-1, 2003, p. 5.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 2-3.

(5) U.S. Catholic bishops, pastoral letter, "The Christian in Action," No. 11, 1948; see also Nos. 12-18; reprinted in "Pastoral Letters of the American Hierarchy, 1792-1970," Hugh J. Nolan, *Our Sunday Visitor*, 1971.

(6) Mark Massa, S.J.; quotations from Massa are from "A Catholic for President? John F. Kennedy and the 'Secular' Theology of the Houston Speech, 1960," *Journal of Church and State*, Spring 1997.

(7) John Courtney Murray, S.J., "The Role of Faith in the Renovation of the World," 1948; Murray's works are available online from the Woodstock Theological Center Library.

(8) Robert Dodaro, O.S.A.; see private correspondence with speaker, along with "Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine," Cambridge University Press, 2008 (first published in 2004), and "Ecclesia and Res Publica: How Augustinian Are Neo-Augustinian Politics?," collected in "Augustine and Post-Modern Thought: A New Alliance Against Modernity?," Peeters, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium*, 2009.

(9) Referenced in Murray, "The Construction of a Christian Culture;" essay originally delivered as three talks in 1940, available as noted above.

APPENDIX

Part Two

US Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter 1948, *The Christian In Action*

HUMAN life centres in God. The failure to centre life in God is secularism—which, as we pointed out last year, is the most deadly menace to our Christian and American way of living. We shall not successfully combat this evil merely by defining and condemning it. Constructive effort is called for to counteract this corrosive influence in every phase of life where individual attitudes are a determining factor—in the home, in the school, at work and in civil polity. For as man is, so ultimately are all the institutions of human society.

To combat secularism, the individual Christian must get the full vision of Christian truth. It is not divisible. One cannot pick and choose from it. Either it is accepted as a whole or it counts for little in real life. When the Christian does get this full vision, he becomes enthusiastic in trying to share it with the world about him. It is a wonderful vision which gives new meaning to human life and an impelling urge to selfless action.

The sorry fact is that many, very many, Christians see this vision only dimly and vaguely and miss its impact on reality. They hold themselves to be Christians and are accepted as Christians, but they have never been thrilled by the glory of the truth of Christ in action. By their apathy they actually abet those who work for destruction and chaos. They criticise and even deplore the decay of morality and the spread of corruption in public life, but they feel no obligation to do anything about it. They simply do not realize that the great wonder of Divine Love is that it brings the Divine into human life and that godliness in living is giving self to God.

The great Christian paradox is that to find, you must lose ; to get you must give. Much of the confusion and chaos about us is attributable more directly to the inaction of Christians than to the effectiveness of the feverish efforts of the destroyers. The destroyers are definitely a minority and yet the work of destruction goes on. The crisis is at hand.

Today every Christian must face the full Christian vision and with no thought of compromise must seek vigorously to live it. Every day he must ask himself : 'What am I doing . to build a Christian world ? ' No matter what his condition or state, there is much that he can do. The reconstruction must start with the individual. He must be vigorously Christian in thought and in action—in the home, in the training of his children, in his office or workshop and in his community.

Religion in the Home

In the full Christian vision, there is the Divine ideal of the home—the basic social institution. It is not enough to profess the Christian truths of the stability and sanctity of the marriage bond and to keep in mind the purposes of marriage. The Christian must make his home holy. It remained for modern history to record the first experiment in secularizing the home, an experiment which is at the root of so many of our greatest social evils. The Christian home must realize the Christian ideal. The whole atmosphere of the home must be impregnated with genuine Christian living. The domestic virtues must be practised and family prayer made a daily exercise. It is in the home that the children learn their responsibility to God and in this responsibility their duty to others. The home is the child's first school, in which he is

taught to make the vision of Christian truth the inspiration of all living. We strongly commend organized effort to make the home more truly Christian.

Our Catholic Family Life Bureau plans and offers programmes which make for a veritable apostolate of the Catholic home. It is gratifying to see the use that is being made of the programmes by our Catholic lay organizations and the spread of this work in our dioceses. These activities serve as a powerful antidote to the venom of secularism and withstand its withering effect on piety and virtue in the American home. All of us are familiar with the problems which the family faces in our complex and maladjusted society. In trying to solve these problems, we must not compromise our Christian principles. The solution of these problems is only a part of the solution of the wider social problems of our day. To do their part, our homes must be thoroughly Christian and must let the glory of the full vision of Christian truth illuminate them.

Religion in Education

We know the sacrifices made by our people to educate their children in schools in which the superabundant wisdom is the Gospel of Christ. Catholic parents closely associate their schools with their Christian homes because they know that human living must centre in God. Year after year we are making wider provisions for the education of our Catholic youth.

At a time when secularism has captured the minds of very many leaders in education, it is heartening that Catholic parents are becoming more insistent in their demands for schools in which the best standards of instruction and training are integrated in the teaching of religion. It behooves us to see that we enable our schools to work out fully the Christian educational ideal. The field of higher education in particular demands a wider and more active interest. Our institutions of higher learning are the natural training grounds for Christian leadership. The ranks of Christian leadership will draw recruits largely from the undergraduate schools, but these ranks will not be filled without the Christian scholars who are formed in graduate schools.

Perhaps much of the success of the secularist is due to the fact that the number of excellent Christian scholars is inadequate for the needs of our times. We ask a deeper appreciation of the contribution our institutions of higher learning are making to a Christian reconstruction of society and we urge a more generous support of their work. For if we as Christians are to do our part in restoring order to a chaotic world, Christ must be the Master in our classrooms and lecture halls and the Director of our research projects.

Religion in Economic Life

Christian principles should be put into action in economic life. It is not enough to find fault with the way our economic system is working. Positive, constructive thought and action are needed. The secularist solutions proposed by eighteenth century individualism or twentieth-century statism issue either in perpetual conflict or deadening repression. Christian social principles, rooted in the moral law, call insistently for co-operation, not conflict ; for freedom, not repression in the development of economic activity. Co-operation must be organized—organized for the common good ; Freedom must be ordered—ordered for the common good.

Today we have labour partly organized, but chiefly for its own interests. We have capital or management organized, possibly on a larger scale, but again, chiefly for its own interests. What we urgently need, in the Christian view of social order, is the free organization of capital and labour in permanent agencies of co-operation for the common good. To ensure that this organization does not lose sight of the common good, government, as the responsible custodian of the public interest, should have a part in it. But its part should be to

stimulate, to guide, to restrain ; not to dominate. This is perfectly in line with our Federal Constitution, which empowers government not only to establish justice' but also 'to promote the general welfare.'

The Constructive Catholic Programme

Catholic social philosophy has a constructive programme for this organic development of economic life. Pope Pius XI, rounding out the social principles formulated by Leo XIII, laid down the broad outlines of this programme seventeen years ago. In line with that constructive programme, we advocate freely organized co-operation between the accredited representatives of capital and labour in each industry and in the economy as a whole, under the supervision but not the control of government.

The agencies of this freely organized co-operation have been called by various names : Occupational Groups, Vocational Groups, or, more recently Industry Councils. American Catholic students of the Social Encyclicals have expressed their preference for the name Industry Councils' to designate the basic organs of a Christian and American type of economic democracy into which they would like to see our economic system progressively evolve.

This evolution can come only as the fruit of painstaking study and effort to safeguard, in justice and charity, the rightful interests of property and the rightful interests of labour in the pursuit of the dominant interest of all, which is the common good. Such a constructive programme of social order seems to us to be the answer to the questionings of high minded leaders of industry and to the explicit proposals of sound and responsible leaders of organized labour. We bespeak for it in these critical times dispassionate consideration and calm, open discussion in an atmosphere of good-will and in a disposition to seek solutions by agreement rather than by force, whether political or economic.

We call upon men of religious faith and principle, both in management and labour, to take the lead in working out and applying gradually if need be a constructive social programme of this type. For the moral and social ideals which it would realize are their heritage.

Religion and Citizenship

The inroads of secularism in civil life are a challenge to the Christian citizen—and indeed to every citizen with definite religious convictions. The essential connection between religion and good citizenship is deep in our American tradition. Those who took the lead in establishing our independence and framing our Constitution were firm and explicit in the conviction that religion and morality are the strong supports of national well-being, that national morality cannot long prevail in the absence of religious principle, and that impartial encouragement of religious influence on its citizens is a proper and practical function of good government.

This American tradition clearly envisioned the school as the meeting place of these helpful interacting influences. The third amendment of the North-west Ordinance passed by Congress in 1787, re-enacted in 1790, and included in the Constitution of many States, enjoins : 'Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good citizenship and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall for ever be encouraged.' This is our authentic American tradition on the philosophy of education for citizenship.

In the field of law our history reveals the same fundamental connection between religion and citizenship. It is through law that government exercises control over its citizens for the common good and establishes a balance between their rights and duties. The American concept of government and law started with the recognition that man's inalienable rights—

which it is the function of government to protect — derive from God, his Creator. It thus bases human law, which deals with man's rights and their correlative duties in society, on foundations that are definitely religious, on principles that emerge from the definite view of man as a creature of God. This view of man anchors human law to the natural law, which is the moral law of God made clear to us through the judgments of human reason and the dictates of conscience. The natural law, as an outstanding modern legal commentator has written, 'is binding over all the globe, in all countries and at all times ; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this.' Thus, human law is essentially an ordinance of reason, not merely a dictate of will on the part of the State. In our authentic American tradition, this is the accepted philosophy of law.

On this basically religious tradition concerning the preparation of the citizen through education and the direction of the citizen through law, secularism has in the past century exercised a corrosive influence. It has banned religion from tax-supported education, and is now bent on destroying all co-operation between government and organized religion in the training of our future citizens. It has undermined the religious foundations of law in the minds of many men in the legal profession, and has predisposed them to accept the legalistic tyranny of the omnipotent State. It has cleverly exploited to the detriment of religion and good citizenship the delicate problem of co-operation between Church and State in a country of divided religious allegiance.

That concrete problem, delicate as it is, can be solved in a practical way when good-will and a spirit of fairness prevail. Authoritative Catholic teaching on the relations between Church and State, as set forth in Papal Encyclicals and in the treatises of recognized writers on ecclesiastical law, not only states clearly what these relations should normally be under ideal conditions, but also indicates to what extent the Catholic Church can adapt herself to the particular conditions that may obtain in different countries.

Examining, in the full perspective of that teaching, the position which those who founded our nation and framed its basic law took on the problem of Church-State relations in our own country, we find that the First Amendment to the Constitution solved that problem in a way that was typically American in its practical recognition of existing conditions and its evident desire to be fair to all citizens of whatever religious faith. To one who knows something of history and law, the meaning of the First Amendment is clear enough from its own words : Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion or forbidding the free exercise thereof.' The meaning is even clearer in the records of the Congress that enacted it. Then, and throughout English and Colonial history, an 'establishment of religion' meant the setting up by law of an official Church which would receive from the government favours not equally accorded to others in the co-operation between government and religion— which was simply taken for granted in our country at that time and has, in many ways, continued to this day. Under the First Amendment, the Federal Government could not extend this type of preferential treatment to one religion as against another, nor could it forbid or compel any State to do so.

If this practical policy be described by the loose metaphor 'a wall of separation between Church and State,' that term must be understood in a definite and typically American sense. It would be an utter distortion of American history and law to make that practical policy involve the indifference to religion and the exclusion of co-operation between religion and government implied in the term 'separation of Church and State' as it has become the shibboleth of doctrinaire secularism.

Within the past two years secularism has scored unprecedented victories in its opposition to governmental encouragement of religious and moral training, even where no preferential treatment of one religion over another is involved. In two recent cases, the Supreme Court of the United States has adopted an entirely novel and ominously extensive interpretation of the 'establishment of religion' clause of the First Amendment. This interpretation would bar any co-operation between government and organized religion which would aid religion, even where no discrimination between religious bodies is in question. This reading of the First Amendment, as a group of non-Catholic religious leaders recently noted, will endanger 'forms of co-operation between Church and State which have been taken for granted by the American people' and 'greatly accelerate the trend towards the secularization of our culture.'

Reluctant as we are to criticise our supreme judicial tribunal, we cannot but observe that when the members of that tribunal write long and varying opinions in handing down a decision, they must expect that intelligent citizens of a democracy will study and appraise these opinions. The Journal of the American Bar Association, in a critical analysis of one of the cases in question, pertinently remarks : 'The traditionally religious sanctions of our law, life and government are challenged by a judicial propensity which deserves the careful thought and study of lawyers and people.'

Lawyers trained in the American tradition of law will be amazed to find that in the McCollum case the majority opinions pay scant attention to logic, history or accepted norms of legal interpretation. Logic would demand that what is less clear be defined by what is more clear. In the present instance we find just the reverse. The carefully chiselled phrases of the First Amendment are defined by the misleading metaphor 'the wall of separation between Church and State.' This metaphor of Jefferson specifies nothing except that there shall be no 'established Church,' no State religion. All the rest of its content depends on the letter of the law that sets it up and can in concrete imply anything from the impartial co-operation between government and free religious bodies (as in Holland and traditionally in our own country) all the way down to the bitter persecution of religion (as in France at the turn of the century). As was pointedly remarked in a dissenting opinion : 'A rule of law cannot be drawn from a metaphor.'

A glance at the history of Jefferson's own life and work would have served as a warning against the broad and devastating application of his 'wall of separation' metaphor, that we find in his case. The expression first appears in a letter written by Jefferson in 1802 and, significantly enough, in a context that makes it refer to the 'free exercise of religion' clause rather than to the 'establishment of religion' clause of the First Amendment. Twenty years later, Jefferson clearly shows in action that his concept of 'separation of Church and State' was far different from the concept of those who now turn to his metaphor as a norm of interpretation. As the rector of the State University of Virginia, Jefferson proposed a system of co-operation between the various religious groups and the university which goes far beyond anything under consideration in the case at hand. And Mr. Madison, who had proposed the First Amendment and who led in carrying it through to enactment by Congress, was one of the visitors of the University of Virginia who approved Jefferson's plan. Even one who is not a lawyer would expect to find in the opinion of the Court some discussion of what was in the mind of the members of Congress when they framed and adopted the First Amendment. For it would seem that the intent of the legislators should be of capital importance in interpreting any law when a doubt is raised as to the objective meaning of the words in which it is framed.

In regard to the 'establishment of religion' clause, there is no doubt of the intent of the legislator. It is clear in the record of the Congress that framed it and of the State Legislatures that ratified it. To them it meant no official Church for the country as a whole, no preferment of one religion over another by the Federal Government—and at the same time no

interference by the Federal Government in the Church-State relations of the individual States. The opinion of the Court advances no reason for disregarding the mind of the legislator. But that reason is discernible in a concurring, opinion adhered to by four of the nine judges. There we see clearly the determining influence of secularist theories of public education—and possibly of law. One cannot but remark that if this secularist influence is to prevail in our Government and its institutions, such a result should be, in candour and logic and law, achieved by legislation adopted after full, popular discussion and not by the ideological interpretation of our Constitution.

We, therefore, hope and pray that the novel interpretation of the First Amendment recently adopted by the Supreme Court will in due process be revised. To that end we shall peacefully, patiently and perseveringly work. We feel with deep conviction that for the sake of both good citizenship and religion, there should be a reaffirmation of our original American tradition of free co-operation between government and religious bodies—co-operation involving no special privilege to any group and no restriction on the religious liberty of any citizen. We solemnly disclaim any intent or desire to alter this prudent and fair American policy of government in dealing with the delicate problems that have their source in the divided religious allegiance of our citizens. We call upon our Catholic people to seek in their faith an inspiration and a guide in making an informed contribution to good citizenship. We urge members of the legal profession in particular to develop and apply their special competence in this field. We stand ready to co-operate in fairness and charity with all who believe in God and are devoted to freedom under God to avert the impending danger of a judicial 'establishment of secularism' that would ban God from public life. For secularism is threatening the religious foundations of our national life and preparing the way for the advent of the omnipotent State.

The statement is signed by Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, Archbishop of Philadelphia ; Edward Cardinal Mooney, Archbishop of Detroit ; Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago ; Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York ; Francis P. Keough, Archbishop of Baltimore ; John T. McNicholas, O.P., Archbishop of Cincinnati ; Robert E. Lucey, Archbishop of San Antonio ; Richard J. Cushing, Archbishop of Boston ; Joseph E. Ritter, Archbishop of St. Louis ; John Mark Gannon, Bishop of Erie ; John F. Noll, Bishop of Fort Wayne ; Emmet M. Walsh, Bishop of Charleston ; Karl J. Alter, Bishop of Toledo ; Michael J. Ready, Bishop of Columbus.

III

Sacred Scripture warns that he who fails in little things shall fall little by little. This applies not only to the will but to the intellect. The intellectual drift away from principle is likely, then, to occur gradually. Such a drift is demonstrated in *The Christian in Action*; for the bishops there endorsed two principles *separation of Church and state* and *religious liberty* which had been repeatedly condemned by the Church in her social teaching.

That the American bishops sought to colour the endorsement of each principle with an appealing gloss did not affect their commitment. Give qualified endorsement to a

principle and the qualification matters not: the commitment is made. Admit a principle and consequences flow. Here the consequences included i) that religion should be totally excluded from the operations of the state; and ii) that each man should be free to acknowledge any religion or no religion as he chose.

Christ's Holy Church in her wisdom had foreseen these perils and had condemned the principles giving rise to them.¹⁶⁰ She had, moreover, warned America's bishops about the dangers inherent in the unbridled enthusiasm for democracy and the liberal spirit towards religion which characterised their nation—

“[I]t would be very erroneous to conclude that in America is to be sought the type of status most desirable for the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced. The fact that Catholicity with you is in good condition, nay, is even enjoying a prosperous growth, is by all means to be attributed to the fecundity with which God has endowed His Church, in virtue of which unless men or circumstances interfere, she spontaneously expands and propagates herself; but she would bring forth more abundant fruits if, in addition to liberty, she enjoyed the favour of the laws and the patronage of the public authority.”¹⁶¹

But in *The Christian in Action* the American bishops chose to ignore her warnings; chose to be silent on the essential issue that the institution established on earth for man's eternal salvation is the Catholic Church *and no other*; and chose to neglect to make it clear that while America may have flourished in large measure under the influence of Protestantism it had done so because Protestantism was underpinned by Catholic principle.

The American bishops said nothing of the perils attendant on the Protestant distortion of Christianity; nothing of that particular evil amounting to idolatry, itself a product of Protestantism, Freemasonry; nothing of the perils that would flow to the American people from the continued toleration of Masonic influence in the running of the country. Again the bishops chose to ignore the Church's repeated warnings.¹⁶² Nor did they mention that, far from harming the operations of the state, the involvement of Christ's Church in those operations could not do otherwise than assist in achieving the welfare of its citizens and, even more, could marvellously enhance the achievement of that end.¹⁶³

Had the American bishops followed Catholic teaching in *The Christian in Action* they would never have made the mistake of endorsing Masonic principle in its stead; and

¹⁶⁰ Leo XIII, *Humanum genus* (20.4.1884); *Immortale Dei* (1.11.1885); and *Libertas praestantissimum* (20.6.1888).

¹⁶¹ Leo XIII, *Longinqua oceani* (6.1.1895), n. 6. See also the same Pope's warnings to the American bishops of the incipient heresy called *Americanism* in *Testem benevolentiae* (22.1.1899).

¹⁶² Clement XII, Bull *In Eminenti* (28.4.1738); Benedict XIV, Constitution *Providas* (18.3.1751); Pius VII, Constitution *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo* (13.9.1821); Leo XII, Apostolic Constitution *Quo graviora* (13.3.1826); Leo XIII, Encyclical *Humanum genus* (20.4.1884).

¹⁶³ *Immortale Dei*, nn. 19 and 22; *Longinqua oceani* (6.1.1895).

their objection to the ruling of the US Supreme Court in *Everson v. Board of Education* written by the Mason, Justice Hugo Black, the previous year would have had a logical foundation. As it was, their characterisation of Black's assessment of the doctrine of separation of Church and state as "the shibboleth of doctrinaire secularism" was rodomontade. Notwithstanding their assertions, they had themselves embraced secular principle.

Archbishop Charles J Chaput praised this 1948 pastoral letter in his address to members of the Houston Baptist University on 1st March 2010 for its strong endorsement "of American democracy and religious freedom". His Grace's praise was, with respect, misplaced. He criticised John Fitzgerald Kennedy for remarks he made in his Speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in September 1960. That criticism was also misplaced. If the American bishops had deemed it appropriate to ignore the Church's teaching on such important issues why should a member of the laity do otherwise? Here is the ground for John Kennedy's endorsement of *separation of Church and state*. He was simply spelling out the implications of the American bishops' commitment to Masonic principle.

Let the reader test the thesis for himself: see if he can find any criticism by the body of the American Catholic Bishops of what Kennedy said in his 1960 Houston address.

FAILURE OF THE EXECUTIVE POWER

"I bend my knee to the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its name."

Ephesians 3:14-15

It belongs to the father of a household to exercise discipline in his family. This is true equally of the household of the Church. The Pope and each of the bishops of the Church, indeed each priest, is a father in charge of a household. Each has duties to rule and govern his household with authority given him by God. If he fails in those duties the harm that results is as extensive as the reach of his authority.

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On 11th October, 1962, in his Opening Speech to the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII said this—

"In the daily exercise of our pastoral office, we sometimes have to listen, much to our regret, to voices of persons who, though burning with zeal, are not endowed with too much sense of discretion or measure. In these modern times they can see nothing but prevarication and ruin. They say that our era, in comparison with past eras, is getting worse, and they behave as though they had learned nothing from history, which is, none the less, the teacher of life... We feel we must disagree with those prophets of gloom, who are always forecasting disaster, as though the end of the world were at hand."

Almost fifty years later this declaration makes embarrassing reading. For the era *did* get worse. And those who foresaw ruin and disaster lived to see their prophecies realised. One statistic alone is telling: in the twenty years that followed 46,000 priests throughout the world abandoned their ministry¹⁶⁴

Two Influences

It is two generations since these words were uttered and in that period the greatest harm in the Catholic Church has been wrought by two causes, two influences, working in tandem. One came from outside the Church. It was not the greater of the two but it had the greater effect because the other, from within, disposed the members of the Church to accept it.

The influence from outside the Church was Feminism, the ideology which seeks to reduce men and women to a common level. A corollary of Marxism, many of whose marks it bears; disposed for by the disorders wrought in society by two world wars; preached by the evil Sartre and his mistress, de Beauvoir, in the cafés of Paris; fed by that lack of sense of any values transcending the material which is the dowry of modern philosophy; adopted by the irreligious; vaunted as the wisdom hidden from

¹⁶⁴ Figure quoted by George Weigel in *The Courage to be Catholic*, New York, 2002, p.27. It would seem to understate the position. Romano Amerio says that a comparison of figures published by the Secretary of State for 1969 and 1976 shows the number of priests fell in those seven years alone by 70,000: Romano Amerio, *Iota Unum, A Study of Changes in the Catholic Church in the XXth Century*, Sarto House, transl. from 2nd Italian Edition by Fr John P. Parsons, Kansas City, 1996, p.182.

all previous ages: this simplistic ideology took hold of modern thought and came at last to infect the priests and bishops of the Catholic Church. But it would not have done so without the influence from within the Church which disposed many to accept its simplistic claims.

The second influence was the loss of the sense of discipline in the Church which began with remarks of Pope John XXIII made in the speech quoted above, the Opening Speech to the Second Vatican Council. The Pope said—

“The Church has always opposed... errors. Frequently she has condemned them with the greatest severity. Nowadays however, the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than the arms of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations. Not, certainly, that there is a lack of fallacious teaching, opinions, and dangerous concepts to be guarded against and dissipated. But these are so obviously in contrast with the right norm of honesty, and have produced such lethal fruits that by now it would seem that men of themselves are inclined to condemn them, particularly those ways of life which despise God and His law or place excessive confidence in technical progress and a well-being based exclusively on the comforts of life. They are ever more deeply convinced of the paramount dignity of the human person and of his perfection as well as of the duties which that implies. Even more important, experience has taught men that violence inflicted on others, the might of arms, and political domination, are of no help at all in finding a happy solution to the grave problems which afflict them.”

This paper will first consider the influence of these words. It will then consider Feminism and show how these two influences coalesced to produce the harm in the Church that has resulted.

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*The Abdication of Authority*¹⁶⁵

When, in the words quoted above, the Pope addresses error he uses the figure of speech called metonymy. The evil, ‘error’, stands for *the people affected by* the evil. When the Pope refers to *the arms of severity* he is referring, metonymically again, to *discipline* of which severity is a quality. He refers to mercy. Mercy is sorrow at another’s misfortune accompanied by a desire to help him¹⁶⁶. Condemnation of error is a work of mercy since, by exposing it for what it is, those labouring under it are corrected and others are preserved from falling into it. It makes no sense, then, to juxtapose discipline to mercy when discipline is itself a part of mercy. Whatever the weakness in his reasoning, the Pope’s words established as a principle the renunciation of the Church’s authority to discipline the erring.

After this the Pope went on to assert something novel in the history of the Catholic Church that the men of the present age enjoyed a wisdom that those of former ages

¹⁶⁵ I have adopted in large measure the studied analysis of John XXIII’s speech by Italian theologian Romano Amerio in *Iota Unum*, op. cit., pp. 79-82.

¹⁶⁶ St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q.30, a.1.

had not. This was a remarkable claim when weighed against the constant teaching of the Catholic Church on the effects of Original Sin in the human soul, the wounds of ignorance, malice, weakness and desire, wounds compounded by other sins.¹⁶⁷ Almighty God formed the Catholic Church, a Divine thing in the midst of the mundane, precisely to deal with those wounds, to provide inspiration, to heal, to direct, to bring peace and to lead to heaven. The Pope seemed almost to be denying the efficacy of that teaching. Experience has given the lie to the Pope's claim. Indeed *history... the teacher of life* ought to have warned him, if Catholic doctrine had not, that the claim was ill founded and naïve. Less than eight months later he was dead. But his legacy has lived on to work harm in the lives of the Catholic faithful.

Italian theologian, Romano Amerio, provides this analysis of the late Pope's proclamation—

"The general effect of renunciation of authority is to bring authority into disrepute and to lead it to be ignored by those who are subject to it, since a subject cannot hold a higher view of authority than authority holds of itself."¹⁶⁸

Once the Pope failed to act up to his name *Il Papa*—the father—other fathers, bishops, priests and laymen, would fail in sympathy. And this bad example would carry over to the world outside the Church.

*The Influence of Feminism*¹⁶⁹

Feminism is founded on the assertion of a simple equality between men and women; on the face of things it is an attractive proposition. It says that men and women have equal rights; that they are equally talented in every respect, whether at the material level or the spiritual, at the physical level or the psychological. Women have hitherto been oppressed by men, Feminism asserts, and their rights suppressed. This is why they have been unable to achieve the same status as men in work and in social and public life. Women must, so the argument goes, struggle to throw off this oppression imposed on them for so long.

Feminism is a materialist ideology. It ignores, as does Marxism from which it draws its energy and characteristic antipathy, essential distinctions. It sees success only materially, the achievements written on the pages of history the only desiderata, the things done behind the scenes as beneath dignity. It exalts pride; it derides humility. The only ends worth pursuing are those which men pursue. Women, the thesis proceeds, have been conditioned to believe that they are incapable of performing the activities or achieving the ends that men achieve. They must put aside that conditioning. A paradox follows: while Feminists are loud in their call for 'women's rights', they are not seeking 'women's rights' at all but 'men's rights', that is, the right to conduct themselves as men.

¹⁶⁷ *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q.85, a.3.

¹⁶⁸ *Iota Unum*, op. cit. p.147

¹⁶⁹ The writer has written elsewhere on the ideology of Feminism and its destructive effects on society. See the paper *Feminism* at <http://superflumina.org/feminism.html>. Much of what follows is taken from that paper.

From its insistence on this one idea, simple equality between the sexes, the ideology spreads its influence throughout society. It begins with woman but because she is at the heart of mankind it affects her husband and, more significantly, her children. It brings a revolution in the way men and women regard each other and it attacks the structure of the family.

The Feminist assertion is wrong. While men and women are equal *they are also unequal*.¹⁷⁰ They are equal in that they are persons with all the rights and duties that attach to the person: they are unequal in that their ordinations differ fundamentally. Their equality is not a simple but a *proportional* equality. Woman, taken in relation to the rights and duties that attach to womanhood, is equal to man taken in relation to the rights and duties which attach to manhood.

This distinction in ordinations, a difference placed in them by their Author, determines the relationship between them. Ordination signifies 'end'. There is an end proper to the man and another, not identical, end proper to the woman. Separate man from the ordination proper to him, separate woman from the ordination proper to her, and you do violence to each and to society of which they constitute the elements. There follows confusion over what constitutes masculinity and femininity, an evil characteristic of our time.

The father is the head of the family as the mother is its heart. Feminism denies to a man the authority to guide, to govern, to be a provider, to protect, to be the head of his family. It denies he has authority over his wife and his children in flat contradiction of Divine revelation¹⁷¹ discouraging men from the virtue proper to manhood of *fortitude*, the courage to cope with the demands of a hard life, to exercise his true vocation as leader and father, to shoulder responsibilities. Just as Feminism has moved many women to adopt the mindset and the habits of men it has moved many men to adopt those of women—to become effeminate, another evil of our time.

Through its attack upon the subordination of wife to husband Feminism attacks Christ and his Church. St Paul teaches—

“Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is the head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; and as the Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything.” [Ephesians 5: 23-24]

¹⁷⁰ Although he was not addressing the claims of Feminism, which was still in the stages of gestation in his day, Pope Leo XIII spoke to the point when, in *Humanum genus*, he wrote: [N]o one doubts that all men are equal one to another so far as regards their common origin and nature; or the last end which each one has to attain; or the rights and duties which are thence derived. But as the abilities of all are not equal, as one differs from another in powers of mind or body, and as there are very many dissimilarities of manner, disposition and character, it is most repugnant to reason to endeavour to confine all within the same measure and to extend complete equality to the institutions of civil life. [n. 26]

¹⁷¹ Cf. Ephesians 5:22; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:12; Titus 2:4, 5

Feminism denies that a wife is subject to her husband: hence it must deny that the Church is subject to Christ. This is the reality behind the Feminist complaints that the Church is 'paternalistic' and represses women. The attack on Christ extends to the Church's hierarchical structure. Feminism attacks the Pope as the Holy Father of all the people of God; the bishops as fathers in their dioceses; priests as fathers in their parishes.

Feminism's simplistic ideas and arguments have penetrated every level of society. They could have been countered effectively had the wisdom to do so been exercised as it should. The fount of this wisdom, since it is of God, lies within the Catholic Church. Yet the Church's authorities have not seen fit to address Feminism's follies much less to take resolute action to isolate and condemn them. Instead a great number of bishops and cardinals have embraced them. The late Pope John Paul II endorsed them, only excepting from this their logical consequences—contraception, abortion, and the inclination to effeminacy.

To the failure by the Pope to exercise his proper authority as father of the faithful, then, in a sort of malevolent fortuitousness, was added Feminism's attack on the authority of the father in his household. Little wonder many priests and bishops came to refuse to exercise in their own households the duties proper to their state; declined from the virtues proper to fatherhood of manliness, courage and authority; became effete in the exercise of their office, ceding to women the conduct of certain of their priestly functions and authority; and, finally, argued for bestowing, if it were possible, the priesthood of Jesus Christ on women.

The Effects

The consequences of this executive paralysis have manifested themselves at every level of the Church's hierarchy, papal (including the Vatican dicasteries), episcopal and clerical, for close on fifty years. They have been felt most strongly at the parish level where the perception of the priest as father of his people has largely been lost. There are few priests who know and understand that despite the failures of the Catholic hierarchy the priest is the father of his parish and has the rights and duties of that office. Even fewer realise how they must juggle the exercise of their rightful authority with the knowledge that they will not be supported in the exercise of it by their bishop—that they must *be as wise as serpents yet as harmless as doves*.¹⁷²

As a general rule, the Catholic faithful throughout the world—those who not only profess all the truths of the Catholic faith but practise them¹⁷³—live in a state of perpetual exasperation over episcopal negligence. They look to their bishop for leadership, but in vain. They look to him to act to uphold the teachings and practice of the faith; again in vain. There is almost a terror amongst the Catholic episcopacy of being seen to be acting with authority. Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln,

¹⁷² *Matthew* 10: 16

¹⁷³ The distinction is between *orthodoxy* and *orthopraxis*. Many proclaim their orthodoxy, but fail when it comes to living out their alleged faith.

Nebraska, in the United States, stands out among the bishops of the western world for doing so. He is treated as a pariah by many of his fellow bishops in consequence.¹⁷⁴ The current scandals in the Church over episcopal failures to act on sexual abuses carried out by members of their clergy are merely the fruit of this neglect of duty in one area, a notable area, of morality.

Paul VI

The abdication of authority mandated by John XXIII flourished under Paul VI. In his book, *The Courage to be Catholic*¹⁷⁵, George Weigel addresses the failures of the American bishops over the systematic neglect of their duties. He deals with the problems of the 1960s and 1970s following the Second Vatican Council, “problems,” he says, “exacerbated by what often seemed to be uncertain papal leadership during the fifteen year pontificate of Pope Paul VI (1963-1978).”¹⁷⁶ In three of his actions in particular the abdication of authority by Paul VI appears forcefully.

The first was his failure after the receipt by him in mid 1966 of a report from the *Pontifical Commission for the Study of Population, the Family and Birth* to rein in false expectations among the faithful of an imminent change in the Church’s teaching on contraception. This was fuelled by the actions of certain theologians associated with the Commission in leaking one of the Commission papers favourable to change to *Le Monde* in France, *The Tablet* in Great Britain, and the *National Catholic Reporter* in the United States in April 1967.

Two years were to pass before the Pope addressed the issues definitively in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. There never was any doubt as to how the Pope would rule on this issue. Eminent American moral theologian, Fr John C. Ford S.J., expressed it trenchantly when he remarked that if the Pope had ruled in any other way than he had, he, Fr Ford, would have had to leave the Church. The failure of the Pope to warn the faithful of the falsity of these hopes—to act as a true father—caused incalculable harm.

The second turned on the procurement by Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, Paul VI’s emissary, of the withdrawal of József Cardinal Mindszenty, Primate of Hungary, from the American embassy in Budapest. After his imprisonment by the Communist authorities and condemnation in a show trial repudiated by the free world the Cardinal took the opportunity presented by the 1956 Hungarian uprising to take refuge in the American embassy. He remained there for fourteen years a thorn in the sides of the Communist regime and of Communist fellow travellers within the Vatican. These prevailed upon Paul VI to seek his removal.

¹⁷⁴ Witness the disavowal of his Mandate to the members of his diocese dated 19th March 1996 by American Cardinals Bernardin, Mahoney and Law.

¹⁷⁵ *The Courage to be Catholic*, Perseus Books, New York, 2002

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid* p.67

In the course of negotiations with Cardinal Mindszenty to secure his removal Casaroli hid from him that one of the terms to which the Vatican had agreed with the Communists was that it would ensure he would do or say nothing that could displease the Hungarian government. On his arrival in Rome on 29th September, 1971, Paul VI assured him—

“You are and remain Archbishop of Esztergom and primate of Hungary. Continue working, and if you have difficulties, always turn trustfully to us.”

When the Cardinal endeavoured to exercise his authority he was hindered at every turn. When he learned subsequently of the secret undertaking he remarked—

“Had I known about any guarantee of this sort, I would have... asked the Holy Father to rescind all the arrangements that had been made in conjunction with my departure from Hungary.”

The actions of the Pope’s emissary were, of course, attributable to the Pope.

The third was the failure of Paul VI over what came to be known as ‘the Washington Case’. The details are set forth in *The Courage to be Catholic*¹⁷⁷. Priests of the Archdiocese of Washington joined the public dissent against *Humanae Vitae*. With commendable application Patrick Cardinal O’Boyle issued a number of warnings and subsequently disciplined nineteen of his priests over the issue, suspending several of them. The priests publicised their cases and appealed to the authorities in Rome. After intervention by the head of the Congregation for the Clergy, John Cardinal Wright, Cardinal O’Boyle was persuaded to lift the sanctions against such of the priests who would agree to certain findings of a report by the Congregation. Those findings did not require the priests to repudiate their dissent or to affirm the teachings in *Humanae Vitae*. Weigel remarks—

“According to the recollections of some who were present, everyone involved understood that Pope Paul VI wanted the ‘Washington Case’ settled without a public retraction from the dissidents because the Pope feared that insisting on such a retraction would lead to schism.”¹⁷⁸

This failure in exercise of authority had the most scandalous effect as Weigel goes on to explain—

“Theologians, priests and nuns who publicly dissented from *Humanae Vitae*... were encouraged by the Truce of 1968 to continue, even amplify, their dissent... [It] taught the Catholic bishops of the United States that the Vatican would not support them in maintaining discipline among priests and doctrinal integrity among theologians... Catholic lay people also learned something from the Truce of 1968, even if they [had] never heard of it. The tacit vindication of the culture of dissent during the *Humanae Vitae* controversy taught two generations of Catholics that virtually everything in the Church was questionable: doctrine, morals, the priesthood, the episcopate, the lot.”¹⁷⁹

An instance, from the other side of the world serves to illustrate its effect—

¹⁷⁷ Ibid pp. 68-72

¹⁷⁸ Ibid pp.69-70

¹⁷⁹ Ibid pp.70-2

At a clergy conference in Hobart [Tasmania] on November 6, 1968, a senior priest from the North West coast moved that the priests send an assurance of their acceptance of the Encyclical and their complete obedience to the Pope. During heated discussion which followed, [Archbishop Guildford] Young was accused of lack of leadership. In an emotional speech he summarised statements from world hierarchies on freedom of conscience and claimed he had saved Australia from the 'Alice in Wonderland' situation which had arisen in the Washington (U.S.A.) Archdiocese of Cardinal O'Boyle. 'One day,' he said, 'the full story would be told.' He refused to accept the motion."¹⁸⁰

A former priest of the Hobart Archdiocese who had known Archbishop Young well told this commentator and others in a private meeting many years later that the Archbishop suffered great anguish when in the last years of his life he came to realise the error of his views on conscience with respect to *Humanae Vitae*.

John Paul II

Karol Wojtyla, who became on 16th October 1978 Pope John Paul II, was a stronger character than Giovanni Battista Montini, Paul VI. He brought to the office of Pope an unbounded admiration for his predecessors.—

"I chose the same names that were chosen by my beloved Predecessor John Paul I... I wish like him to express my love for the unique inheritance left to the Church by Popes John XXIII and Paul VI and my personal readiness to develop that inheritance with God's help..." (*Redemptor Hominis*, 4.3.1979)

Regrettably, this inheritance included the inclination to refrain from executive action. There are any number of instances of this throughout the twenty six and a half years of his pontificate. What follows is a sample.

* Swiss theologian, Hans Küng, denied 1) the divinity of Christ, 2) the bodily Resurrection of Christ, 3) that Christ founded an institutional Church, 4) that the Mass is the re-presentation of the sacrifice of Calvary. He called for a revision of Church teaching on papal infallibility, on contraception, on mandatory celibacy for priests. The Vatican put up with 15 years of his recalcitrance before it took action against him. On 18th December 1979 the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith withdrew Küng's *missio canonica* stating that he could *no longer be considered a Catholic theologian nor function as such in a teaching role*. Küng was not suspended; he was not excommunicated. He continued to be free to celebrate Mass, to hear confessions, to preach and to advise, notwithstanding his rejection of the Pope's infallible teaching in 1994 against the ordination of women.¹⁸¹

* Richard P. McBrien, Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, was another described as 'a priest in good standing', a priest of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut. He was responsible for detailed and consistent dissent from the teachings of the Catholic Church over more than 20 years. His misnamed book *Catholicism* went to a third edition. The work was theologically

¹⁸⁰ *The Wisdom of Guildford Young*, W.T. Southerwood, Stella Maris Books, George Town, Tasmania, 1989, p. 419.

¹⁸¹ Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, 22nd May 1994.

defective in 1980. It remains so. Among other things he teaches that 1) Christ did not found the Catholic Church; 2) though He was God Christ could have sinned; 3) Christ's death was not a sacrifice but a peace offering; 4) Christ was ignorant of who He was. He casts doubts on the perpetual virginity of Our Blessed Lady. He teaches that papal judgments in matters of faith and morals (if not infallibly proclaimed) do not bind the consciences of the faithful and that the sinfulness of contraception and homosexual acts are to be left to the supremacy of the individual conscience.

* American priest, Charles Curran, was permitted to teach error for close on 20 years. The following extract from his curriculum vitae is taken from an advertisement placed in the *Rochester Democrat-Chronicle* by a group of concerned Catholics of the American Diocese of Rochester in 1986—

“Since his 1968 dissent from *Humanae Vitae*, Fr. Curran has repeatedly undermined Catholic teaching on faith and morals, giving scandal to faithful Catholics in this Diocese and throughout the world. In his writings and lectures, he has contradicted Catholic doctrine on premarital sex, masturbation, contraception, abortion, homosexuality, divorce, euthanasia, and in vitro fertilization.”

* Peter Leo Gerety was appointed Archbishop of Newark, New Jersey, in June 1974. He sponsored the Call To Action movement which supports birth control, homosexuality and lesbianism, rejected papal infallibility and encouraged Charles Curran to teach in his Archdiocese. His conduct was an open scandal in the Church in the United States.

* In July 1983, Cardinal Silvio Oddi, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, addressed a public meeting in Arlington, Virginia, in the USA. He was pressed as to why the Holy See did not remove people such as Curran and did not correct and disavow bishops such as Gerety. The Cardinal replied with words which reflected precisely John XXIII's abdication of authority—

“The Church no longer imposes punishments. She hopes instead to persuade those who err... The Church believes it is better to tolerate certain errors in the hope that when certain difficulties have been overcome, the person in error will reject his error and return to the Church.”

The advertisement in the *Rochester Democrat-Chronicle* quoted above was placed there on March 23rd, 1986. The Catholics of the Diocese of Rochester were doubtless voicing their frustration at the inaction of authorities of the Church when they added to what is set out above—

“It has been an intolerable situation that Fr. Curran has been allowed to teach in the name of the Catholic Church while denying its teachings.”

Their efforts eventually bore fruit. In July of the same year the Vatican acted by stripping Curran of his status as a theologian. It had taken them seven years to move Rome to act. In the same year the Vatican forced Archbishop Gerety to withdraw his *Imprimatur* from a questionable catechetical text called *Christ Among Us*. Gerety did so but tendered his resignation from the Archdiocese of Newark with effect from June 1986 two years before he was due to resign.

* The Church suffered persistent problems with the bishops of Germany in the 1990s. In 1993 three of them gave permission for divorced and remarried Catholics to receive Holy Communion as long as they believed in conscience that their first marriage was invalid. Here was another instance of the plague that has afflicted the Church since Karl Rahner first exalted conscience above the authority of the Church in 1968 in his commentary on *Humanae Vitae*.¹⁸² It took a year of negotiation with the Vatican before these bishops would agree to cease giving this permission.

In 1998 the Vatican had to take the German bishops to task again. According to German law no woman may submit herself for an abortion unless she has a certificate indicating that she has attended for counselling. The German bishops were providing such certificates and, in doing so, giving proximate, material (that is, culpable) cooperation to the killing of the unborn. Again the issue was settled not by a peremptory directive from Rome backed by the threat of sanction but by negotiation.

* Throughout the course of John Paul II's pontificate, of the many who might have been, only one theologian was ever excommunicated, Fr Tissa Balasuriya OMI, in Sri Lanka in January 1997. The excommunication was lifted a little over a year later not on the terms laid down by the Vatican, but on terms insisted upon by the offender and accepted by the Vatican. Fr Balasuriya is reported to have said subsequently that he had taken nothing back.

There were any number of admirable directives from Rome during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II: amongst them—

- the instruction *Inaestimabile Donum* (17.4.1980) concerning worship of the Eucharist within and outside Mass;
- the apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (22.5.1994) reserving priestly ordination to men alone;
- the reply to a *Dubium* concerning the teaching in this apostolic letter affirming that the teaching belonged to the deposit of faith (28.10.1995);
- the instruction regarding collaboration by the laity in the sacred ministry of priests (15.8.1997);
- the motu proprio *Ad Tuendam Fidem* (28.5.1998) strengthening the force of certain provisions in the Code of Canon Law;
- the declaration *Dominus Jesus* (6.8.2000) reaffirming the unicity and universal salvific effect of Jesus Christ and His Church in the face of theories seeking to justify religious pluralism;
- the motu proprio *Misericordia Dei* (7.4.2002) addressing abuses of the Sacrament of Penance particularly ceremonies of so called 'general absolution'.

¹⁸² Rahner's assertion of the primacy of conscience over the teaching of the Church is simply a restatement of the assertion of Martin Luther. It is Protestantism.

Yet these directives were rarely enforced by any exercise of executive power.¹⁸³ The result was that despite these and many other documents issued by the late Pope and the Vatican dicasteries abuses continued more or less unabated. If they are not borne out by action all the words in the world will achieve nothing. The wise father does not waste his time speaking to his disobedient child. He acts.

The extent of the executive paralysis in the Vatican is manifested most tellingly, perhaps, in the following admission by Msgr Camille Perl, Secretary of the Pontifical *Ecclesia Dei* Commission, to a member of the Lefebvrist faithful and reported by the Lefebvrist bishop, Bernard Fellay, in an address he gave in Kansas City, Missouri on 7 January 1999, to members of the Society of St Pius X—

“One of our faithful in France wrote a letter to Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger describing the scandalous behaviour of a particular French bishop. On behalf of the Cardinal, Msgr. Perl answered, ‘Yes, you’re right. The situation in the Church is anarchy. If you expect that an order from Rome regarding the above will solve the situation, you are in total illusion.’”

The so-called theologians, Küng, Curran, McBrien and their ilk continued to spread their errors. What they taught was not Catholicism but some religion of their own devising; yet they have been allowed to continue to mislead the faithful. Any suspension of the ability of one or other to teach in Catholic institutions achieves little without explicit condemnation accompanied with either suspension *a divinis* or excommunication. The faithful are infected with the illegality of the age and, in the absence of action by the leaders of the Church to enforce her authority, they see no danger to their immortal souls in continuing to favour false teachers like these.

John Paul II and Feminism

Pope John Paul II brought to the office of the papacy a philosophical inheritance which inclined him to accept the tenets of Feminist ideology.¹⁸⁴ He endeavoured to incorporate them into Catholic theology by radically re-interpreting sacred scripture.

Before proceeding we should address the concerns of those who might be scandalised at the assertion that a Pope may err. Every Pope is human; he can, and often will, commit error. The definition of the First Vatican Council, in setting out the precise circumstances in which a pronouncement of the Pope bears the character of infallibility¹⁸⁵, concedes implicitly that he may err. Pope Benedict XVI summarised the situation in an impromptu address to the priests of Aosta on 29th July 2005: *The*

¹⁸³ An exception was the excommunication on 5th August 2002 of seven women who had undergone a purported ‘ordination’ in June 2002. The excommunication was confirmed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 21st December 2002.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. *Message for Celebration of World Day of Peace*, 1.1.1995; *Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday*, 25.5.1995; *Message to Mrs Gertrude Mongella, Secretary General of U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women*, 26.5.1995; *Letter to Women*, 29.6.1995.

¹⁸⁵ ‘...when in discharge of the office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church...’ Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, n. 1839.

Pope is not an oracle; he is infallible in very rare situations... George Weigel quotes Melchior Cano, theologian to the Fathers of the Council of Trent, to the point—

“Peter has no need of our lies or flattery. Those who blindly and indiscriminately defend every decision of the supreme Pontiff are the very ones who do most to undermine the authority of the Holy See—they destroy instead of strengthening its foundations.”¹⁸⁶

The Pope cannot, in pursuit of some personal preoccupation, depart from the Church’s constant teaching. He may not, for example, infer that baptism is no longer necessary for salvation; or say that Adam was not created by God before Eve; or deny that Eve was formed from Adam’s body. Should he express views along these lines, they cannot be a valid exercise of his authentic teaching authority.

Teaching from 1979 Wednesday Audiences—on Genesis

There are in the Book of *Genesis* two accounts of creation, one each in Chapters 1 and 2. In the catechesis in his 1979 Wednesday Audiences Pope John Paul II compared these two accounts. He said—

“the first account... the one held to be chronologically later, is much more mature both as regards the image of God, and as regards the formulation of the essential truths about man... [It] is concise, and free from any trace whatsoever of subjectivism.”¹⁸⁷

In this first account there was not, what he called, “the problem of solitude...man is created in one act as ‘male and female’.”¹⁸⁸ In the second chapter of *Genesis* he said—

“The woman is made ‘with the rib’ that God-Yahweh had taken from the man. Considering the archaic, metaphorical and figurative way of expressing the thought, we can establish that it is a question here of homogeneity of the whole being of both.”¹⁸⁹

His conclusion of the comparative study of these two accounts of creation was that after God had cast a deep sleep over him—

“the first man, awakens from his sleep as ‘male and female’.”¹⁹⁰

Or, to express it in terms which he said accorded with the first chapter of *Genesis*—

“man, in fact, is ‘male and female’ right from the beginning.”¹⁹¹

A little later he expounded the thesis in this way—

“[M]an became the ‘image and likeness’ of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons which man and woman form right from the

¹⁸⁶ Melchior Cano, quoted in *Witness to Hope, The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, George Weigel, New York, 2001, p.15.

¹⁸⁷ General Audience 12.9.1979. Reproduced in *Original Unity of Man and Woman—Catechesis on the Book of Genesis*, 1981, pp.22, 23. Also at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/jp2tb2.htm> The content of the various Audiences can be found by exploring this website.

¹⁸⁸ General Audience 10.10.1979. *Original Unity of Man and Woman* etc., op. cit., p. 45.

¹⁸⁹ General Audience 7.11.1979. *Original Unity*, p. 65.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ *Original Unity*, p. 61

beginning... Man becomes the image of God not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion..."¹⁹²

Insofar as this teaching can be understood it seems irreconcilable with Catholic doctrine that the first man, Adam, was first created by God and the body of the first woman, Eve, was formed from his body.

Teaching in Mulieris Dignitatem—on Genesis

In August, 1988, in his Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, the Pope built upon this foundation. In n. 10 he said—

"[The words *Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you* (Genesis 3:16)] refer directly to marriage, but indirectly they concern the different spheres of social life: the situations in which the woman remains disadvantaged or discriminated against by the fact of being a woman."

He went on to endorse what he called—

"the rightful opposition of women to what is expressed in the biblical words 'He shall rule over you...'"

Elsewhere in the same section he described this subordination, ordained by God, as indicating—

"the disturbance and loss of the stability of that fundamental equality which the man and the woman possess in the 'unity of the two'."

This teaching appeared to enlarge the discordance with the Church's teaching mentioned for now it bore upon the doctrine of Original Sin; it seemed to contradict the Church's teaching about women manifest in—

Genesis 2:18—"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

Tobit 8:6—"You made Adam and you gave him a wife, Eve, to be his help and support..."

Ecclesiasticus 17:5 in the Vulgate—"Out of (Adam) he created a helper similar to him."

1 Corinthians 11:9—"It was not man that was created for woman's sake but woman for man's."

Teaching in Mulieris Dignitatem—on Ephesians Ch. 5

In n. 24 of *Mulieris Dignitatem*, referring to St Paul's admonition in *Ephesians* 5:22-23: "Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of his wife..." the Pope said—

"The author knows that this way of speaking, so profoundly rooted in the customs and religious tradition of the time, is to be understood and carried out in a new way: as a 'mutual subjection out of reverence for Christ' ..."

There is no objective evidence to support this gloss. St Paul does not say there is to be mutual subjection of husband and wife. His words are clear: *Let women be subject*

¹⁹² *Original Unity*, pp. 73-4.

to their husbands... Verse 21 is adjectival to the content of the previous paragraph which deals with general admonitions. The sentence is grouped this way in the Latin Vulgate, the only edition of Sacred Scripture the Church has declared to be authentic.¹⁹³ The verbs in verses 19, 20 and 21 of *Ephesians* 5 in the original Greek are all in the present imperative participle—*Speaking to yourselves... singing and making melody in your hearts... Giving thanks always... Being subject to one another in the fear of Christ*. The verb in verse 22, in contrast, is in the present subjunctive—*Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord*. St Paul is dealing with a different subject.

The sense in which the passage has been consistently interpreted by the Church appears, for example, in the following extracts from the Catechism of Trent—

“It is the duty of the husband to treat his wife generously and honourably. It should not be forgotten that Eve was called by Adam his companion. The woman, he says, whom you gave me as a companion. (Gen.3:12). Hence it was, according to the opinion of some of the holy Fathers, that she was formed not from the feet but from the side of man; as, on the other hand, she was not formed from his head, that she might understand that it was not hers to command but to obey her husband...” (Part II, Ch. VIII *On the Sacraments in General*, Q. XXVI *The Chief Duties of a Husband*)

“On the other hand, the duties of a wife are thus summed up by the Prince of the Apostles: ‘Let wives be subject to their husbands ... For after this manner the holy women who trusted in God adorned themselves, subjecting themselves to their husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord’ (1 Peter. 3:1 ff)... Let wives never forget that next to God they are to love their husbands, to esteem them above all others, yielding to them in all things not inconsistent with Christian piety, a willing and ready obedience.” (Q. XXVII *What the Duty of a Wife requires*)

This sense is to be found also in the works of—

St John Chrysostom (*Homily 20, On Ephesians 5:22-33*);
St Augustine (*De Moribus Ecclesiae* 1, Ch.30, n.63); and,
St Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae* I, Q.93, Art.4, ad 1).

It is to be found in the encyclicals, or addresses, of—

Pope Leo XIII (*Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae*—On Christian Marriage [10.2.1880] nn.11, 16; *Diuturnum Illud*—On the Origin of Civil Power [29.6.1881] n.11; *Immortale Dei*—On the Christian Constitution of States [1.11.1885] nn. 19, 20);
Pope Benedict XV (*Natalis trecentesimi*—to the Superior General of the Ursulines [27.12.1917]);
Pope Pius XI (*Casti Connubii*—On Christian Marriage [31.12.1930] nn. 4, 26, 27, 74 to 77); and of
Pope Pius XII (*Address to Married Couples*, 10 September, 1941; *Address to Women of Catholic Action*, 21 October, 1945).

¹⁹³ Council of Trent, Session iv, April 8, 1546; D. 785.

The Council of Trent said that no one should dare to interpret Sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which is held by Holy Mother Church.¹⁹⁴ Leo XIII added to this when he said that an interpretation of Sacred Scripture is to be rejected “as senseless and false which [would make] inspired authors in some manner quarrel amongst themselves.”¹⁹⁵ But the interpretation posed by Pope John Paul II in *Mulieris Dignitatem* would make St Paul’s teaching in *Ephesians* 5 quarrel with his teaching in his letters—

1 *Corinthians* 11:3—*The head to which a wife is united is her husband, just as the head to which every man is united is Christ;*

Colossians 3:18—*Wives must be submissive to their husbands as the service of the Lord demands;*

1 *Timothy* 2:12—*a woman shall have no leave from me to teach or to issue commands to her husband;* and in

Titus 2:4, 5—*the younger women must learn... how to be... submissive to their own husbands.*

It would make it quarrel also with the teaching of St Peter in 1 *Peter* 3:1 and in 1 *Peter* 3:6 referred to by the Council of Trent in the passage quoted above.

We do not say that Pope John Paul’s teaching *is* discordant with the Church’s constant teaching, only that *it appears to be so*. It is for theologians to address the question whether that teaching can be reconciled with the Church’s teaching.¹⁹⁶

In any event, his teachings added to the dilemma for priests, bishops and fathers of families who wished to exercise the authority given them by God. Not only had they to face the facts that dissenters within the Church would not be corrected or punished and that their own endeavours to exercise their God given authority would not be supported by their bishop, but any argument they might put at an intellectual level to ground their rightful claims to authority was undermined by the Pope’s public support for this contrary position.

Conclusion

It must be assumed that, at all times, each of the Popes referred to has acted in what he regarded as the best interests of the Church. The criticisms that have been offered should not be taken as a reflection on the personal integrity of any one of them for we have dealt here with matters in the external, not the internal, forum and God

¹⁹⁴ Session iv, April 8, 1546; D.786

¹⁹⁵ *Providentissimus Deus*, D.1943

¹⁹⁶ Fr Brian Harrison, for instance, deals with the issue as an objection to his exposition of the Church’s teaching on the formation of Eve from the side of the sleeping Adam in his *Did Woman Evolve From The Beasts?* Cf. his articles at <http://www.rtforum.org/lt/lt97.html> and <http://www.rtforum.org/lt/lt98.html>. He argues that it would be unwarranted to conclude that the Pope was necessarily implying a negation of the traditional doctrine. He was not addressing the historicity of the accounts in *Genesis* of how the first human bodies were formed. Moreover, it could not be argued that he intended to require the assent of the faithful to the exegetical observations expressed in those comments as if this were in itself a teaching of faith or morals.

alone is the Judge of the soul. Moreover, the First See is judged by no one.¹⁹⁷ Pope John XXIII is a Blessed of the Catholic Church, and Pope John Paul II is about to be proclaimed a Blessed. *But, it is possible for a saint to err.* Were it otherwise, every saint would be a doctor of the Church, and the Church has bestowed the honour of *Doctor Ecclesiae* on very few saints—thirty three only.

Yet we insist that each of these Popes has played a part in the abdication of the Church's authority, an authority which must be restored if the Church is to exercise to the full her sanctifying role in the world.

The solution lies in the resumption by Pope Benedict XVI, or his successors, of the full powers of the office given them by Christ to be Father of all the faithful and to exercise those powers with vigour. The Pope must visit with the sanctions at his command—suspension, removal, interdict, excommunication—those theologians, bishops, priests and lay people who persist in denying the Church's teaching or in proclaiming as true some departure from that teaching. He must, moreover, expose systematically the evils of Feminism for what they are, and prudently, but firmly, move to extirpate them from the Church—from top to bottom.

¹⁹⁷ *Prima sedes a nemine iudicatur*; Decree of Gratian (1140 AD). Cf. *Code of Canon Law* c. 1404. 'Neither by Augustus, nor by all the clergy, nor by religious, nor by the people will the judge be judged... The first seat will be judged by no one.' Epistle by Pope Nicholas I to Michael the Emperor, 865, quoting words attributed to St Sylvester, and to the apocryphal synod of Sinuessa 303. [cf. Denzinger n. 330];

THE LOSS OF METAPHYSICS

Bernard of Chartres used to say that we are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants. We see more, and things that are more distant, than they did, not because our sight is superior or because we are taller, but because they raise us up and their great stature adds to ours.

John of Salisbury (c.1115-1180), *The Metalogicon*, bk III, ch.4

What Is Metaphysics?

The term *metaphysics* derives from an accident of history. Aristotle [384-322 BC] wrote a number of works. His editors categorised them after his death. *A number of treatises were placed immediately 'after the Physics'... from which their title Metaphysics is derived. This work is not a single finished work, but a collection of treatises composed by Aristotle at different times...*¹⁹⁸ The accident was a happy one for in the *Metaphysics* Aristotle dealt with being at the highest level of formal abstraction—and the term *metaphysics* has become synonymous with first philosophy.

The first hurdle for the student of metaphysics in the English tongue is one of terminology. In English there is no unambiguous term for its subject *being*, in Latin, *ens*. The word 'being' can mean a number of things, including: existence, life, substance, nature, or a thing that exists. The *being* which is the subject of *metaphysics* is that act whereby some thing exists abstracted from here and now, abstracted from any particular category, or quality of a thing. Some have tried to use the word *existence* to convey this reality but it is inadequate. Dr Austin Woodbury, quondam Regent of Sydney's Aquinas Academy in the 1950s and 1960s, preferred the term *be* rather than *being*. He reasoned—

talk, is the act exercised by a talker; *jump* is the act exercised by a jumper; so, *be* is the act exercised by a be-er (or a *being*, as our clumsy English language puts it). Rather than say of a thing that it exists, we should say that it be's.

What is metaphysics?

Here is a typical opening sentence in the consideration of the metaphysical doctrine of causality—

Of every thing that exists, there are four causes. Not one only, or two, or three, but four. There are no less than four; there are no more.

Any person who makes an assertion such as this in the modern world is looked at askance. He is regarded as dogmatic, or opinionated, or as not having checked all available sources, or as trying to impose his world view on others. He finds himself peppered with any number of other criticisms; for one cannot be permitted to be so certain about anything in a world where uncertainty reigns. Yet the statement is true. And for many centuries all the western world knew the statement to be true.

¹⁹⁸ Editor's Preface, pp.viii-ix, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Everyman, London, 1979, ed. by John Warrington.

But its truth is hidden from the citizens of the modern world who has been deprived of all sense of the metaphysical.

There are two fundamental problems about being that exercised Greek thought some 450 years before Christ.

The first problem was that of the universal. How is it that this thing, a dog, is at the same time both one and many. This quality, 'dog-ness', is found in this dog, *Fido*. Yet it is also found in all these other dogs, *Lassie* and *Shep* and *Collie* and *Buttons*, and so on. What is this universal quality, 'dog-ness', that they all share? Is it something real? Is there somewhere (as Plato was to maintain) a really existing universal dog of whose existence *Fido* and *Lassie* and all the others are but reflections? Or is it only a name we give to all these individual things? Or is it something whose existence is real but of the mind, something realised in each individual material dog?

The *second* problem is associated with the first. It involves the constant change which is the condition of our existence. Nothing seems ever to be stable. Was Heraclitus [c.545-480 BC] right when he said that nothing ever remains the same with itself for an instant; that *we never step twice into the same river*? Is reality, as Heraclitus argued, nothing but pure change, pure BECOME?¹⁹⁹

Or was Parmenides [c.515-440 BC] right when he said that all change is illusory, that in truth being is unchangeable. *What is* (he is reported to have said) *is uncreated and imperishable, for it is entire, immovable and without end. It was not in the past, nor shall it be, since it is now, all at once, one, continuous... How could what exists thereafter perish? And how could it come into existence?* For Parmenides, there was no possible mid point between be and be-not. The testimony of the senses that change occurred in the midst of reality should be ignored. Reality was pure BE.

Now, clearly, both were wrong. Heraclitus failed to concede the existence of certain realities which are quite unchangeable such as the natures of things. Individual dogs might come and go, but that curious thing 'dog-ness' is quite fixed. Parmenides on the other hand failed to concede the changes which took place around him every moment of the day. Of the two, Heraclitus may be said to have preferred the evidence of his senses, Parmenides the conclusions of his intellect.

The solution to these dilemmas was not provided until the arrival of Aristotle who taught that we must distinguish between a thing and its nature. Things are, each of them, singulars; the nature they share (eg, dog-ness) is something universal. He taught²⁰⁰—

) The universal is not simply a common name or a concept, but a reality which exists as singular in the physical world, but as universal in mind. This dog, *Fido*,

¹⁹⁹ The reader will recognise the Heraclitean mentality in Darwinian evolutionary theory.

²⁰⁰ *Physics* Bk I, II; *Metaphysics* Bk I, chs. v, ix.

exemplifies in this singular instance the reality of the universal which is multiplied, but never exhausted, by the millions of other really existing dogs. Human knowledge is of universals²⁰¹. When we define something, it is the universal characteristic of the thing, its nature, we define²⁰².

J) Being, (or, as Dr Woodbury would put it, *be*) when carefully analysed, reveals two aspects of itself, *can-be-ness* and *does-be-ness*. Isaac Newton is (*does-be*) an astronomer; young Jack is not yet but *can be* an astronomer. On the other hand *Toby*, young Jack's dog, neither is nor ever can be an astronomer. It follows that there is something in young Jack which is not in his dog. This *can-be-ness* is called *potency*. The *does-be-ness* is called actuality or *act*. Potency is a sort of midway point between non-existence and existence; between be-not and be.

The influence of Aristotle waned. In the 11th and 12th centuries AD under the influence of Christianity intellectual life in the western world again reached a pitch where active minds were concerned to try and solve the problem of universals. Through the workings of Divine Providence translations of Aristotle's works, and commentaries on them by Arab Mohammedan philosophers, came to the attention of thinkers at the new centres of learning, the universities of Europe.

The Church's greatest mind, the Dominican Friar, St Thomas Aquinas [1225-1274], refined and reformed the thought of Aristotle. He took the Aristotelian distinction between *potency* and *act* to a sublime height when he extended it to the most fundamental issue that concerns any thing—its very existence. *What* something is (its essence) and *that* something is (its *ens*, or existence), St Thomas taught, are really distinct and the distinction *de ente et essentia* is the most fundamental distinction.

This is the way St Thomas's exalting of the distinction is explained by Fr Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, doyen of teachers of St Thomas's thought at the Pontifical Athenaeum of St Thomas, known universally as *The Angelicum*, in the mid twentieth century—

*Nothing has actuality except by existence. It is that which actuates all things, even their forms; it is not compared to other things as the receiver is to the received, but rather as the received to the receiver.*²⁰³

In other words, every thing on the earth is a receiver of this most fundamental reality: *ens*; existence; *be*.

*

*

Metaphysics reveals the shallowness of the modern world view of reality and the transitoriness and evanescence of worldly considerations. It reveals, too, the majesty

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, Bk XIII, ch.x.

²⁰² *Metaphysics*, Bk VII, ch.xi.

²⁰³ *God, His Existence And His Nature*, R. Garrigou-Lagrange O.P., transl. from Fifth French Edition, London, 1955, Volume II, Epilogue, p.553, where the author quotes from St Thomas in the *Summa Theologiae*, Part I, qq. 4, art. 1, ad 3, and 7, art. 1

of creation and the almost infinite order that characterises it. To adapt words Belloc once applied to the Catholic Church—it provides the possession of perspective in the survey of the world. A grasp of metaphysics is essential when we come to deal with the great problems that confront us especially moral problems. Ignorance of metaphysics leaves us floundering.

How Did It Come To Be Lost?

From the time of St Thomas, the Catholic Church was the repository, the protector and nourisher, of his metaphysics. The rest of the world depended on the Church and on her teachers of philosophy for the spread of its beneficent influence. That influence was conveyed to priests and to religious in Catholic seminaries. These in turn passed it on to the Catholic faithful who acting as the salt of the earth and the light of the world, consistent with the teaching of their Church's Founder²⁰⁴, spread that influence throughout society.

The loss of metaphysics to the world came about through the disobedience of Catholic clergy and laity to the teachings of successive Popes. Though it had begun in the nineteenth century, this disobedience occurred chiefly in the twentieth.

From the time of the Council of Trent at least, the Church had insisted on adherence to the teaching of St Thomas. In particular, the popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII (from 1878 to 1958) insisted that students for the priesthood and religious life should be taught in the tradition of St Thomas²⁰⁵. They warned of the perils of departing from the soundness of his philosophy²⁰⁶. Bishops, seminary heads and clergy disobeyed them—secretively, systematically, trenchantly—exposing the minds of their young charges to the erroneous thinking of modern philosophers. The formation of the priests ordained, and of the religious formed in this atmosphere of disorder was defective.

²⁰⁴ cf. *Matthew* 5: 13, 14

²⁰⁵ Leo XIII in *Aeterni Patris* [4.8.1879]; Pius X in *Pascendi* [8.9.1907] and in motu proprio *Sacrorum antistitum* [1.9.1910] and motu proprio *Doctoris Angelici* [29.6.1914]; Benedict XV in CIC 1917, canon 1366 § 2; Pius XI in *Studiorum Duce*m [29.6.1923]; Pius XII in *Humani Generis* [12.8.1950].

²⁰⁶ Thus Leo XIII in *Aeterni Patris*: *Now, as the Apostle warns us, it is by philosophy and vain deceit (Col. 2:8) that the minds of Christ's faithful are most often deceived and purity of Faith is corrupted among men... Since it is natural in fact, for man to take his own reasoning faculties as a guide for his actions, it so happens that the defects of mind easily seduce those of the will. Under the impulse of the 'Reformers' of the 16th Century, man began to philosophise without any regard for the Faith and each one granted the other full liberty to allow the mind to wander as it liked and according to its natural bent. The result, of course, was that philosophical systems multiplied. Those multiple systems resting simply on the authority and judgment of each particular thinker have but a shifting basis... and can only produce a shaky philosophy without consistency. And Pius XII in *Humani Generis* warned (in n. 32) of those who extol other philosophies of all kinds... by which they seem to imply that any kind of philosophy or theory, with a few additions and corrections if need be, can be reconciled with Catholic dogma. No Catholic can doubt how false this is, especially where there is question of those fictitious theories they call immanentism or idealism or materialism, whether historic or dialectic, or even existentialism, whether atheistic or simply the type that denies the validity of the reason in the field of metaphysics.*

Theology is founded on sound philosophy. Get your philosophy wrong and your theology goes awry. These young priests and religious were deprived of the equipment to cope with the challenges to their faith and to the faith of those placed in their care. They brought to their tasks a measure of ignorance and incompetence from which their predecessors had not suffered. Given the disturbance to the psyche arising from the flourishing of secular ideologies in and after the 1960s it was inevitable that there would occur a growing mood of disillusionment among students for the priesthood and amongst young priests and religious over the philosophical inadequacy of the reasons advanced to ground their faith. This mood gathered momentum with the upheaval in priestly and religious life precipitated by the Second Vatican Council.

The Council's admonitions about the philosophical studies of students for the priesthood were weak, to say the least. The Council Fathers said—

*Philosophy should be taught in such a way that students will be led to acquire a solid and coherent understanding of man, of the world, and of God. Basing themselves on a philosophic heritage which is perennially valid, students should also be conversant with contemporary philosophical investigations, especially those exercising special influence in their own country, and with recent scientific progress...*²⁰⁷

The philosophy of St Thomas is not mentioned here other than obliquely in the expression *a philosophic heritage which is perennially valid*, a paraphrase, apparently, of words used by Pius XII in *Humani Generis*, n.29—that sound philosophy which has long been, as it were, a patrimony handed down by earlier Christian ages...²⁰⁸ True, St Thomas is mentioned in the following paragraph in respect of the study of Dogmatic Theology. He is also mentioned in *Gravissimum Educationis* [On Christian Education] n.10. But nowhere in the Council documents is there any focus on the critical importance of metaphysics as the foundation of a rational understanding of the Catholic faith. This is illustrated by a formal question put to the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities two months after the publication of *Optatam Totius*—*What is the proper and concrete meaning of the words 'a philosophical heritage which is perennially valid' which occur in n.15 of the Decree Optatam Totius...?*²⁰⁹

The influence of the disobedient was in the ascendant. Their students now promoted the cause of modern philosophy. The damage to the Church which followed was to be profound.

Popes Paul VI was a graduate of the Angelicum. From time to time he expressed his admiration for St Thomas's teaching most notably in his Apostolic Letter *Lumen*

²⁰⁷ *Optatum Totius* (Decree on Priestly Formation), para 15.

²⁰⁸ ...*sana illa philosophia imbuta, quae veluti patrimonium iamdudum exstat a superioribus christianis aetatibus traditum...* [AAS 42:561 at 571]

²⁰⁹ Sacred Congregation for Seminaries and Universities, *Private Reply*, 20.12.1965, reprinted in *Canon Law Digest*, 6 (1963-1967) 252.

Ecclesiae [20.11.1974] addressed to Fr Vincent De Couesnongle, Master General of the Dominican Order, commemorating the 700th Anniversary of the death of St Thomas.²¹⁰ However, Paul VI took no practical steps to ensure that moves against the teaching of the philosophy of St Thomas in seminaries and schools were circumvented.

John Paul II followed in the steps of Paul VI. His position is peculiar because of his involvement with Phenomenology. We will return to him in the last section of this paper. To complete this section, it suffices to show how the devaluation of the importance of St Thomas's metaphysics in the Documents of Vatican II was confirmed.

The Apostolic Constitution on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties which followed the Council was long in coming. The Constitution, *Sapientia Christiana*, was not published until 25th May 1979. Cardinal Garrone, then Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, said this on its publication—

This document had been signed by Pope Paul VI and was to have been published on 15 August 1978: at that moment Paul VI was already dead. His successor had intended to make it public as soon as possible; the date chosen was 8 December, but on that date John Paul I had passed away. Finally Pope John Paul II, in his turn, who was a member of the Sacred Congregation for all the time in which the text was being prepared and who, as is known, has always dedicated the greatest interest to high theological studies, decided that the Constitution which was to bear his signature, after having been carefully revised by him, would be published on Easter Day, 15 April 1979.

*Rarely must a document of this kind have known such vicissitudes...*²¹¹

These vicissitudes reflected the disturbances to the philosophical foundations of Catholic Tertiary education the document would entrench. The relevant provisions of the Constitution run as follows—

Article 79

1. An Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy has the aim of investigating philosophical problems according to scientific methodology, basing itself on a heritage of perennially valid philosophy.(24) It has to search for solutions in the light of natural reason and, furthermore, it has to demonstrate their consistency with the Christian view of the world, of man, and of God, placing in a proper light the relationship between philosophy and theology.

...

Article 80

²¹⁰ This Apostolic Letter is reproduced on the website superflumina.org sub nom. *Paul VI On St Thomas Aquinas*

²¹¹ *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition., 4.6.1979, p.12

In the teaching of philosophy, the relevant norms should be observed which are contained in the documents of the Second Vatican Council (25) and in other recent documents of the Holy See concerning academic studies (26).

Footnote 24 refers to *Optatam Totius* n.15 mentioned above; footnote 25 to an earlier passage in the same document and to the passage in *Gravissimum Educationis* n.10 already referred to. Footnote 26 cites Paul VI's letter on St. Thomas Aquinas, *Lumen Ecclesiae*, of November 20, 1974, and a Circular letter of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education to all Ordinaries of the Church throughout the world, *On the Study of Philosophy in Seminaries*, of January 20, 1972. Paul VI's Letter is a fine tribute to St Thomas and his doctrine. The Circular Letter revealed only too clearly the problems which had begun to emerge in seminaries. It detailed the problems with modern culture and the loss of the sense of transcendence in the world—part of the embrace of the *spiritus mundi* promoted by the Council—but it failed to address the cause, the permissions which had allowed seminaries to become caught up in the mundane intellectual upheaval. Nor did it offer solutions. Instead, it made ineffectual recommendations—

In every case it is a good thing to wish to obtain the highest possible level; but... we must be realistic and avoid the fault of 'perfectionism'. In the difficulties of the present time, each seminary must come to realise what is possible, taking into account the concrete situation and the local resources, without attempting a completely perfect ideal...²¹²

Given this advice, its appeal to St Thomas was hardly convincing—

The Council wished that the teaching of philosophy in seminaries should not leave out the riches of past thought which have been handed down but should also be open to accepting the riches which modern thought continually brings forth. In this sense the repeated recommendations of the Church about the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas remain fully justified and still valid...²¹³

The norms mandated in *Sapientia Christiana* replaced those instituted by Pius XI in his Apostolic Constitution *Deus Scientiarum Dominus* of 24th May, 1931. Pius XI had there directed that Pontifical Universities impart—

the full and coherent synthesis of philosophy according to the method and the principles of St Thomas Aquinas; in the light of his teaching, moreover, the different systems of the other philosophers are to be examined and judged.²¹⁴

Those directions reflected the norms which had been set forth by Pius X and Benedict XV in Canon 1366 § 2 of the 1917 *Code of Canon Law*—

Professors shall treat studies in rational philosophy and theology and the education of students in these disciplines wholly according to the reasoning, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor, and hold to them religiously.

²¹² English Translation in Canon Law Digest 9 (1978-1981) 807 at 816.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 820

²¹⁴ *Deus Scientiarum Dominus*, 24.5.1931, art. 29: [AAS 23:253]

The 1983 *Code*, in contrast, reflects the ambivalence manifested in *Sapientia Christiana*, in canon 251—

Philosophical formation must be based on the philosophical heritage that is perennially valid, and it is also to take account of philosophical investigations over the course of time. It is to be so given that it furthers the human formation of the students, sharpens their mental edge and makes them more fitted to engage in theological studies.

In their commentary on this provision, the editors of the University of Navarra/St Paul University *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, say—

*The Code Commission... in reporting on the revision of this canon explained the meaning of this expression in the following words: "There is no explicit reference to Thomistic philosophy as was requested by certain consultative bodies, because it is already indicated in the classical expression 'patrimonio philosophico perenniter valido'."*²¹⁵

The effect in the Church of the teaching of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council (influenced as they were by *periti* infatuated with modern philosophy), the failure of Paul VI to follow up his words with executive action and, as will be shown, a pontiff, John Paul II, whose acknowledgement of the Church's debt to St Thomas was always qualified by his preoccupation with modern philosophy, was a loss of conviction about the Church's age long insistence on adherence to the metaphysics of St Thomas. That insistence was removed from the substance of the Church's essential teaching documents and relegated to footnotes.

With subjectivism there comes a certain blindness. Its practitioners do not comprehend just how critical it is that philosophy, which underlies all other studies, be fixed, that it be sound, and that it be certain. In vain did Pius X say in *Pascendi: let Professors remember that they cannot set St. Thomas aside, especially in metaphysical questions, without grave detriment* [n.45]. Pius, the only saint among popes in 400 years, foresaw clearly the perils which could afflict God's Holy Church should modern philosophy be given free rein.

The Fundamental Causes of Its Loss

All heresies suffer from the same defect. Their proponents know better than God and His Holy Church. This better (and higher) knowledge has a generic name—*gnosticism*. The peculiar heresy, the peculiar version of gnosticism, which gave impetus to the flight from metaphysics and from reason is called *Modernism*. It was condemned comprehensively by Pope Pius X²¹⁶.

²¹⁵ *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, E. Caparros, M. Thériault, J. Thorn, editors, Wilson & Lafleur Limitee, Montreal, 1993, p.216

²¹⁶ *Pascendi*, 8.9.1907 and the syllabus of Modernist errors, *Lamentabili Sane*, 3.7.1907

Modernism

Modernism taught—and teaches today, for it is all around us—that the Church's assertions that God is utterly transcendent, and truth objective, are false. Truth, according to its followers, is subjective and personal, and so is religion. Modernism seeks, then, to substitute for the objective and supernatural in religion the subjective and the natural. But it does not do so blatantly. The attacks on scripture, the endeavours to change the liturgy by inserting so-called 'inclusive' language; the bowing to the demands of Feminism; the soft peddling on, or silence about, the Church's teachings on contraception and abortion; all these and more besides, are elements of the Modernist attack. It is spoiling and disobedient towards the Church and its laws.

Modernism proceeds insidiously never proclaiming its doctrines clearly but insinuating them by the way it uses Catholic terminology. It uses the words of the Church but uses them in a way which is different from the Church's traditional usage so they infer the Modernist view. The heresy is insidious and poisonous.

All the ancient heresies asserted some particular knowledge which made them superior to the truths of Catholicism. The secret that drives the followers of Modernism is more universal; they know *that all assertions of transcendence are nothing but a cover for purely natural explanations*. Whatever the errors of the ancient heresies, Modernism embraces them all. It was for this reason that St Pius X labelled Modernism *the synthesis of all heresies*.

Descartes

Modernism has its source in modern philosophy and the spirit which animates all modern philosophy, *subjectivism*. According to subjectivism, what matters is not *reality*, but *what I think about reality*. The first philosopher to cut himself adrift from reality was René Descartes [1596-1650]. His aphorism *cogito ergo sum*²¹⁷ encapsulates the step he took. It is the reverse of common sense which is—*I am, and therefore I think*. There can be no thinking unless first there is a thinker. *Do* follows *be*, not the other way around.

Once place yourself, rather than reality, at the centre of philosophy and you are stuck on a merry-go-round from which there is no escape. For you cannot be sure, in the end, whether the whole of the apparent world is anything but a figment of your own mind and imagination. The realist observing the changing patterns of modern philosophy from the 17th Century through to the present day is struck by the attempts of each successive philosopher to justify *his* brand of subjectivism by measuring it against reality. He always finds some source of complaint with the thought of his predecessors and moves to develop a variant of his own. In due course this variant itself becomes the subject of attack by his successors.

²¹⁷ 'I think therefore I am.'

Luther and Disobedience

Martin Luther [1483-1546] led the revolt against the Church founded by God. He asserted, and all his followers have maintained, that the authority of that Church, which was the authority of God, should be refused in favour of the authority of the believer. It was inevitable that this refusal of acceptance of the authority of Almighty God should have its effects elsewhere. Italian theologian, Romano Amerio, has described the process—

*Luther... places both the Bible and its meaning in the hands of the individual believer, rejects any mediating role for the Church, entrusts everything to the individual's private lights and replaces the authority of an institution by an immediacy of feeling which prevails over all else... The liveliness of an individual's impressions is called 'faith' and declared to be an immediate gift of grace. The supremacy of this individual conscience removes the foundation of all the articles of faith, because they stand or fall according to whether the individual conscience assents to, or dissents from them... [I]t is no longer the divine authority of the Church which guarantees them, but subjective individual impressions... It is not the thing which demands assent, but assent which gives value to the thing. If then, by an internal logic, this criticism of divine authority as a theological principle becomes a criticism of the authority of reason as a philosophical principle that is no more than might have been expected...*²¹⁸

You cannot get out into the real world unless you admit your utter reliance on reality, and, inevitably, on the Author of all reality, God. The modern philosopher suffers the same problem as the Protestant. It may be summarised in one word—*submission*. The Protestant will not submit himself to God's authority: he knows better. The modern philosopher will not submit himself to the authority of reason²¹⁹. *He knows better!*

What has taken its Place?

Nature abhors a vacuum. Men will think speculatively, as well as practically. If sound principle is abdicated, they will look elsewhere. What has taken the place of metaphysics in the Church, as in the world, is the uncertainty which attends modern philosophy in all its guises.

Inductive Logic

Metaphysics inclines its students to think analytically, that is, *deductively*. It takes a principle and concludes to the effects that flow from that principle. St Thomas's analysis of *cause* is an example. It may be paraphrased as follows—*A cause is that which exercises influence unto the be (ens, existence) of a thing dependent in regard to its be*. But a thing may be dependent in regard to *be* in one of four ways: in its form, in its matter, in the agent which produces it, and in the end for which the agent acts. St

²¹⁸ Romano Amerio, *Iota Unum*, [translated from 2nd Italian edition by Fr John P. Parsons], Sarto House, Kansas City, 1996, p.p 23-25.

²¹⁹ The proper formal object of the intellect is the quiddity (the 'whatness') of real things, that is, of reality. Thus, reality is the measure of reason.

Thomas demonstrates this fourfold dependence in his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*²²⁰ and in a notable passage in his *Summa Theologiae*²²¹ where he shows that to this fourfold dependence corresponds the four causes: formal; material; efficient and final. The conclusion is absolutely certain *because the effect is contained in the principle*.

In contrast, the modern world under the influence of modern philosophy prefers to think *inductively*—proceeding in the opposite direction; from effect to cause. This is the modus of all science. It notes certain phenomena, such as—*this material boils at 100 degrees centigrade; it freezes at 0 degrees centigrade*—it concludes to a cause of these effects: *this material is water*. But its conclusions do not enjoy absolute certitude. The material might, possibly, be something other than water. A scientific theory is conditional on further information not disproving its thesis. The scientific theory of evolution, for instance, despite all the support it receives from scientists, remains just that, a theory. But from a philosophical point of view, evolution is nonsense. Why? Because it reduces all causality to one cause only, the material cause.

Subjectivism

Subjectivism is the curse of the age, the ground in which all ideology flourishes. Feminism, Secular Humanism, Marxism, Existentialism and the like, have no basis which will bear rigorous intellectual analysis, yet millions adopt their tenets and live their lives under them, suffering the consequences of doing so and thinking that these must be borne. These ideologies²²² pretend to give reasons to justify moral perversions like contraception, abortion, *in vitro* fertilisation and experimentation on human embryos, homosexual behaviour and the sexual perversion of children.

Subjectivism is the source of that phenomenon of the modern world, political correctness. *Political correctness* may be defined as a communal attitude of mind exercised by a substantial body of the citizenry endorsing, without rational analysis, a standard in respect of some social or moral issue and vigorously opposing any argument, or anyone arguing, against that standard. Political correctness is founded in emotion. It is perhaps the most telling manifestation of a society's inability to think or, better, of the substitution in a society of emotion for thought. There is a sentence in Amerio's analysis of the effects of Luther's revolt against the authority of God and His Church which summarises political correctness perfectly—*It is not the thing which demands assent, but assent which gives value to the thing*. The body of the citizenry say that it must be, therefore it must be so!

The Effects of the Loss

Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage [*Genesis* 25: 33]. So also, when they discarded metaphysics did those disobedient bishops and seminary heads sell the Church's patrimony for a mess of pottage—modern philosophy. And as Esau

²²⁰ *In II Physics*, Lect. 10, n.240

²²¹ *Summa Theologiae* I, q.104, art. 1 *Whether creatures need to be kept in being by God*.

²²² *Ideologies* because each flows from the idea of some thinker rather than from reality.

suffered over his loss [*Genesis* 27: 36 et seq.] so the members of Christ's Church have suffered over this betrayal of principle.

What is not understood is that these failures have had their effect throughout the Church from bottom to top. The priests so defectively formed between the 1940s and the 1990s became the bishops and cardinals of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. These have not addressed the problem—indeed most of them would deny there was a problem *because they are themselves part of the problem*.

John Paul II

Karol Wojtyła began his studies for the priesthood in the underground seminary of Warsaw. Italian philosopher, Rocco Buttiglione, a friend of the late Pope, wrote a history of Wojtyła's thought. He says in that work—*Wojtyła was entrusted to the care of Reverend Kazimierz Kloska... [who] had him read his first work on metaphysics, Ontologia czyli Metafizyka, a treatise by Kazimierz Wais. This book, which reflects the influence of transcendental Thomism, the School of Louvain which attempted to reconcile Kant and St Thomas, is still famous among Polish students, largely for its nearly insuperable difficulty.*²²³ This revelation, that Wojtyła's first gaze at metaphysics was through the eyes of a subjectivist commentator, is critical in understanding all that followed in the mind of the future Pope.

After seminary training conducted in spartan conditions under Nazi occupation in Cracow, Karol Wojtyła was ordained on 1st November 1946 by the heroic Archbishop of Cracow, Adamo Sapieha, whom Pius XII had elevated to the Cardinalate earlier the same year. Cardinal Sapieha sent him to Rome to study theology at the Angelicum where he came under the influence of Fr Garrigou-Lagrange. Buttiglione remarks: *It is interesting to note that the main objection which Father Garrigou-Lagrange made to Wojtyła's work concerned the fact that he refused to use the term Object in relation to God.*²²⁴

In January 1947 Fr Wojtyła wrote of St Thomas to a friend: *His entire philosophy is so marvellously beautiful, so delightful, and at the same time, so uncomplicated... But I still have far to travel before I hit upon my own philosophy*²²⁵. What else could make clearer that, for all his studies, Fr Wojtyła had not made St Thomas's metaphysics his own?

He successfully defended his doctoral thesis, *The Doctrine of Faith according to St John of the Cross*, in June 1948 but his doctorate was conferred in the December following not by the Angelicum but by the Polish Catholic Jagiellonian University.

Fr Wojtyła's second doctoral thesis followed his release from pastoral duties between 1951 and 1958. According to George Weigel, the late Pope's biographer, Archbishop

²²³ Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła: the thought of the man who became Pope John Paul II*, transl. by Paolo Guietti and Francesca Murphy, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1997, p.31

²²⁴ Buttiglione, op. cit., p.35, footnote 22.

²²⁵ Quoted in *Pope John Paul II, An Authorised Biography*, Lord Longford, New York, 1982, p.54.

Eugeniusz Baziak, de facto successor of Cardinal Sapieha, directed him to return to academic life so as to qualify him to lecture at university level. At the instance of a Professor of Theology at the Jagiellonian University, Fr Ignacy Rozycki, Fr Wojtyla conducted lengthy studies in personalism, existentialism and phenomenology. He immersed himself in subjectivism, absorbing the works of Max Buber, Gabriel Marcel and Max Scheler amongst others. The thesis he subsequently produced was accepted in November 1953 by the Theological Faculty of the Catholic University of Lublin²²⁶ in Poland.

George Weigel says that Wojtyla synthesised there the metaphysical realism of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas and the sensitivity to human experience of Scheler's phenomenology.²²⁷ The verb he employs recalls the *thesis-antithesis-synthesis* of the Hegelian dialectic where the *synthesis* always entails the compromise of one or of both of the earlier two terms. Inevitably, Karol Wojtyla's *synthesis* of realism and subjectivism brought with it the compromise of realism. There is no better illustration of this than appears in the following criticism of Wojtyla's definitive statement of his philosophy, *Person and Act* [known also in English as *The Acting Person*], published in 1969 after he became a Cardinal. Professor Stanislaw Kowalczyk of the Catholic University of Lublin, where Karol Wojtyla taught, passed this judgement—

*Wojtyla recalls the classic adage agere sequitur esse [do follows be]... but he interprets it differently from Thomism. The latter explains the acting of a man by what he is. Person and Act proposes the inverse explanation, that the being of a man is explained by his actions. This is the road traced by Descartes, borrowed in our days by phenomenology and existentialism.*²²⁸

There is a sense in which a man is the product of his own actions. We are not mere pawns, victims of an inevitable fate: we work out our own destiny. But this consideration occurs in the area of *morals*, not in the make up of our essential being. A man has first to exist before he can improve himself. *Do follows be*. According to Cardinal Wojtyla's philosophy, however, *be follows do*. His proposal turns metaphysics on its head.

With his election as Pope in October 1978, Karol Wojtyla addressed, from time to time, the question of the place of St Thomas in the life of the Church. He did so in his Address to the International Pontifical Athenaeum (*The Angelicum*) on 17th November 1979. His Address to the VIIIth International Thomistic Congress the following year

²²⁶ *An Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing a System of Christian Ethics on the Basis of the System of Max Scheler.*

²²⁷ George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, New York, 2001, pp. 128-9

²²⁸ This analysis is exposed by Stanislaw Kowalczyk in *Personnalisme polonais contemporain*, in *Divus Thomas*, 1985, p.63. The work is quoted in Abbé Daniel Le Roux, *Peter, Lovest Thou Me?*, op. cit. p. 78.

(13th September 1980) in tribute to Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris*²²⁹, was outstanding—a studied and erudite exposition of the moderate realism of St Thomas's metaphysics, of the primacy of objective reality, of St Thomas's approach to truth and error, his profound courtesy towards opponents, his deference in all things to revelation and the voice of the Church, and of the place of man in God's creation.²³⁰

Yet it must be understood of Karol Wojtyla that although he had studied and understood St Thomas's teaching and could expound it and quote from it *ad libitum*, he did not embrace it. He did not accept that the great edifice of thought expounded by the Angelic Doctor and adopted by the Church down the centuries provides the only rational and completely satisfying explanation for the universe and all it contains.

It was inevitable that the long years of his pontificate would work changes in the late Pope's thinking. The preoccupations of his early writings were largely missing from *Fides et Ratio* [14.9.1998], his encyclical on the relationship between faith and reason. There he expressed reservations about modern philosophy and insisted that truth was universal. He condemned Modernism, at least implicitly, and praised fulsomely the philosophy of St Thomas. Yet he remained agnostic about whether there existed one true philosophy.

This moved him to write: *The Church has no philosophy of her own nor does she canonise any one particular philosophy in preference to others.*²³¹ The authority he gives for this proposition is Pope Pius XII in *Humani Generis* [12.8.1950] AAS 42:566. A study of the text cited fails, however, to reveal any support for the assertion. In fact that text—indeed the whole thrust of Pius XII's encyclical—supports the very contrary proposition²³². Moreover in making this assertion, John Paul II ignored explicit teaching by two of his predecessors to the contrary. In his encyclical on St Dominic, *Fausto Appetente Die*, [29.6.1921], Pope Benedict XV wrote that St Dominic's Order

²²⁹ *Method and Doctrine of St Thomas in dialogue with modern culture*, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edn., 20.10.1980, pp. 9-11. This Congress was dedicated to the study of the origin and content of the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* of Leo XIII and its implementation by Leo's successors.

²³⁰ A copy of this is available at http://www.superflumina.org/johnpaul_on_stthomas.html

²³¹ n. 49

²³² Thus, a few paragraphs further on, [*Humani Generis* nn. 29 & 31] Pius XII says: *It is well known how highly the Church regards human reason, for it falls to reason to demonstrate [the truths which are the foundation for the Christian faith]... But reason can perform these functions safely and well only when properly trained, that is, when imbued with that sound philosophy which has long been, as it were, a patrimony handed down by earlier Christian ages... For this philosophy, acknowledged and accepted by the Church, safeguards the genuine validity of human knowledge, the unshakeable metaphysical principles of sufficient reason, causality and finality, and finally the mind's ability to attain certain and unchangeable truth... If one considers all this well, he will easily see why the Church demands that future priests be instructed in philosophy according to the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor, since, as we well know from the experience of centuries, the method of Aquinas is singularly pre-eminent both for teaching students and for bringing truth to light; his doctrine is in harmony with divine revelation, and is most effective both for safeguarding the foundation of the faith and for reaping, safely and usefully, the fruits of sound progress.*

acquired new lustre when the Church declared the teaching of Thomas to be her own...²³³

And Pius XI taught, in his encyclical *Studiorum Ducem* [29.1.1923] at n.11—

We so heartily approve the magnificent tribute of praise bestowed upon this most divine genius that We consider that Thomas should be called not only the Angelic, but also the Common or Universal Doctor of the Church; for the Church has adopted his philosophy for her own, as innumerable documents of every kind attest.

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The Church has always in the past moved to address imminent evils. So Pius XI on 14th March, 1937, dealt with the errors of National Socialism in his encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge* and, less than a week later, on 19th March, he addressed the evils of Communism in *Divini Redemptoris*. In the same way Pius XII addressed Chinese Communism in his encyclical *Ad Apostolorum Principis* on 29th June, 1958.

It cannot be coincidence that with the loss of the influence of metaphysics in the Church there has grown an apparent inability in the Vatican to deal with certain fundamental problems. These can be categorised as arising from gnosticism, from philosophy and from ideology.

Gnosticism—there has been no encyclical to follow up Leo XIII's condemnations of Freemasonry which appeared in *Humanum Genus* [20.4.1884], in *Dall'alto Dell'apostolico Seggio* [15.10.1890], in *Custodi Di Quella Fede* [8.12.1892] and in *Inimica Vis* of the same date. Yet Freemasonry is flourishing as never before and the rotten fruit produced by Freemasonry, which Leo XIII details at length in his encyclicals, are all around us. The heresy of Modernism, exposed by Pius X in *Pascendi* in 1907, is rampant in the Church today yet, one hundred years on, no encyclical has drawn attention to its extent or to the persistence of its pernicious influence.

Philosophy—Darwinian evolutionary theory dominates the modern mind. Yet Darwin's ideas are only the working out at the physical and biological levels of the philosophical evolutionary theory of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). Spencer's theory is fundamentally flawed and cannot survive metaphysics' explication of the doctrine of causality mentioned earlier in this article. Yet there has been no criticism of the theory from the Vatican since Pius XII in *Humani Generis* 55 years ago.

Ideology—there has been no systematic critique and exposure of twin errors whose influence, great in the modern world, has percolated into Church institutions and into educational programs, namely, Secular Humanism and Marxism. Perhaps the most outstanding instance of this inability of the Vatican to deal with fundamental problems has been the failure to provide a systematic criticism of the ideology which has done the greatest harm in the Church and in the world in the last 30 years, namely, Feminism.

²³³ AAS 13:332

In a world demonstrably worse than it was in 1950, how far we are from a categorising of current errors such as Pius XII set forth in *Humani Generis* and an admonition such as his—

*We charge the Bishops and the Superiors General of Religious orders, binding them most seriously in conscience to take most diligent care that such opinions be not advanced in schools, in conferences or in writings of any kind, and that they not be taught in any manner whatsoever to the clergy or the faithful.*²³⁴

In every age there is a certain type of thinker attracted to philosophy. Philosophy needs a mind which, as St Thomas says, is concerned with *mirandum*—wonder. Poets, he says, have a similar facility. There is in such souls a yearning for the infinite, for ultimate intellectual solutions. Yet the tools which would enable those solutions to be discovered by such minds are hidden from them.

What Is To Be Done?

It is vital for the life of the Church that her philosophers return to the metaphysics of St Thomas. One can agree with Pope Paul VI when, in urging all those who wished to form a mature judgement in the matter of philosophical studies, he adopted the words of Pius XI—

*'Go to Thomas'!*²³⁵ *Obtain and read his works, not simply to find safe nourishment in his rich intellectual treasures but also, and especially, to gain a personal grasp of the sublimity, abundance and importance of the doctrine contained therein.*²³⁶

But there is a practical problem. The sheer immensity of St Thomas's undertaking is likely to intimidate the beginner and prevent him even embarking on the task. Metaphysics is an intricate science, with its own scientific terminology. Who is going to teach it? Who is going to convey to modern pupils the doctrines of causality; of potency and act; of essence and existence; of matter and form; of substance and accident; and the great intellectual revelation of the Thomistic theory of knowledge? Who is going to train these pupils in the use of the marvellous instrument of Aristotelian logic?

It is an essential condition of the resurrection of metaphysics that there are teachers, themselves metaphysicians, to convey these fundamentals to students for the priesthood and the religious life. This can only occur if the Church embarks on a renaissance of Thomistic studies after the example given by her great predecessors, Leo XIII and Pius XI.

²³⁴ *Humani Generis* n. 41

²³⁵ Pius XI, *Studiorum Ducem*: AAS 15:323

²³⁶ *Lumen Ecclesiae* n. 3

THE POPE AND THE QUESTION OF 'CONDOMS'

I

Many Catholics have been less than pleased to hear the Church's teaching in the critical moral matter of the use of the 'condom' or 'french letter' proclaimed by the Pope in an interview with a journalist rather than with the application and precision it deserves in a formal Church document; especially when there seems to be no such Church document dealing with the topic. Commentators refer the enquirer to Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*, but that encyclical bears upon the device only in passing. It is plain that the 'condom' has more perverted uses than contraception. Why have the Church authorities remained silent? Why has the field been left to the misguided opinions of people like Professor Martin Rhonheimer of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross?

There are two reasons, a theological reason, and a philosophical reason. The theological reason is a reluctance to exercise the Church's authority, a legacy of the abandonment of its enforcement proclaimed by John XXIII in his *Opening Speech* to the bishops of the Second Vatican Council, coupled with an attitude of deference to the secular which followed the Council. The philosophical reason is a comprehensive failure in understanding of the philosophy underlying the Church's moral teachings.

There has been no moral theologian pope capable of solving the dilemmas that seem to confound the Vatican dicasteries since Pius XII. One instance will illustrate the problem and its extent. The faithful have been waiting now for fifteen years for a definitive ruling on the difficult teaching of Pope John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* n. 73. The matters covered by the late Pope permit of clarification in line with Catholic principle, but Vatican authorities seem incapable of performing the task. Apart from an ambivalent expression in a document issued by the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* in January 2003,²³⁷ the Vatican has remained silent. In consequence, innumerable Catholic intellectuals persist in the erroneous view that the provision allows that one may, in certain circumstances, cooperate in evil. It does not.

Pius XII solved difficult moral questions because he was grounded in the Church's metaphysics. Since his death, Church authorities have accompanied lickspittle deference to the intricate and comprehensive teaching of St Thomas with a practical refusal to study, or to adopt, that teaching. This denial of the Church's philosophical riches reached its nadir when, in an encyclical allegedly devoted to human reason, Pope John Paul II misquoted Pius XII as authority for the proposition that the Church

²³⁷ *Doctrinal Note On Some Questions Regarding The Participation Of Catholics in Political Life*, 16. 1. 2003.

has no philosophy of her own, contradicting the teaching of innumerable of his predecessors.²³⁸

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One will find it difficult to discover whether, in the tradition of recent popes, Pope Benedict XVI has adopted a motto. Some authorities assert that the motto he used whilst head of the CDF, *Cooperatores veritatis*, should be attributed to him—in the singular, rather than the plural, presumably. Others say he has adopted that of St Benedict, *Pax*. In the Preface to the 2007 work, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict said his book was not to be regarded as an exercise of the Church's Magisterium, solely an expression of—

“my personal search for ‘the face of the Lord’. Everyone is free, then, to contradict me.” The commentator, Sandro Magister, remarks glibly that this phrase, “Everyone is free to contradict me”, may be taken as the Pope's motto; hardly an appropriate one for the man who stands in the shoes of Truth Himself.

Yet there may be an element of truth in the remark, for it is not difficult to detect an uncertainty in the Pope's make up. He seemed, for instance, to doubt the extent of his own powers in his very first public speech:

“The Pope is not an oracle; he is infallible in very rare situations, as we know. Therefore, I share with you these questions, these problems. I also suffer...”²³⁹

And facts would seem to indicate that, when head of the CDF, he was in doubt as to just when it was that the Pope spoke infallibly, exemplified by the commentary he issued in June 1994 on the authority of Pope John Paul's teaching in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*. The teaching in that apostolic letter fulfilled each of the conditions laid down by the Vatican Council in *Pastor Aeternus* (18.7.1870), yet Cardinal Ratzinger was not prepared to state that it was infallible. It took another year and a half for that declaration to be made.²⁴⁰

Whether this analysis does him justice or not, let us assume, for the purposes of the present exercise, that the Pope is open to criticism about his actions in speaking as he did in the long interview now published under the title *Luce del Mondo*, “Light of the World”.

II

At the heart of the failure of the Vatican to teach definitively on the ‘condom’ is a failure on the part of its theological advisers to understand the distinction between the realities encapsulated in two Latin phrases—*finis operis* and *finis operantis*. These can only be understood once the theologian grasps—that is, understands and

²³⁸ Cf., *The Loss of Metaphysics* p. 148 above.

²³⁹ Impromptu Address to the priests of Aosta, July 29, 2005.

²⁴⁰ Through a formal *Responsum ad Dubium* dated October 28, 1995.

realises—the causes to which they refer. The two phrases translate literally as ‘end of the work’ and ‘end of the agent’. The critical word in each is *end*. This word invokes a whole world of meaning grounded in the metaphysical doctrine of causality.²⁴¹

Of every thing that exists in the universe, St Thomas teaches, there are four causes, four influences that bring about its existence. There are not less than four; there are not more than four. It assists in understanding his teaching to use as example the homely illustration of a carpenter who sets about making a table. The first cause of the table he produces is the *formal* cause, that which determines this thing to be a table. It is not the form of gate, or of chair, or of house, or of boat that he is going to impose on the materials at his disposal, but of table. If this *form* (‘table-ness’) was absent, the thing would not be a table. *Form* is what gives it the essence, so to speak, of what it is.²⁴²

The next cause is the *material* cause, that which can be any thing but which is determined (by the formal cause) to be *this* thing, a table. Matter is that which is determined. If the *matter* was absent, there would be no table. The third cause is the agent, or *efficient* cause, the carpenter who puts the form of table into the matter. If the *efficient* cause was absent, there would be no table. The fourth cause, and the most critical, is the *final* cause. Every agent acts on account of an end; so *the end, or final cause*, must exist in the mind of the carpenter before the table can come into existence. It is the first thing intended by the agent, and the last to be attained.

Now, human art is nothing but the application by a man of his intellect to the works of nature, in imitation of those works. Hence, by art man reproduces in the things he makes the fourfold causality that obtains in all natural things. Just as there are four causes of the table produced by the carpenter, there are four causes of the carpenter. His *material* cause is patent; it is the matter out of which he is made. The *formal* cause, that which makes him be a man (and not a mineral, or a tree, or a monkey, donkey or other beast) is his human (and immaterial) soul. The *efficient* cause is his Creator. And the *final* cause is the reason why his Creator made him and the end He intends for him consistent with his human nature. *End*, then, is that for the sake of which something is done. It is the most important of all the causes—first in intention, and last in execution. But, as appears from what follows, ends are specified in different ways.

Finis operis—the end embodied in the very nature of the action

A rifle is an instrumental cause. When a man fires a rifle, he is bound by the peculiar nature of the instrument.²⁴³ The end of the action of firing it is the forcible

²⁴¹ What follows is a short explanation of the doctrine of causality. The author has set out the teaching in greater detail elsewhere; cf. http://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/essential_encyclical.pdf

²⁴² Though artificial things do not strictly have essences.

²⁴³ Using that term analogically; ‘nature’ is said properly only of natural things. A rifle is, on the contrary, an artificial thing, contrived from natural materials and using their properties to attain the ends of its designer and maker.

penetration of whatever lies in the path of the projectile it emits. Over that 'natural' end, the gunman has no control. He has control only over what he aims at. Once he elects to use the instrument he is bound by the consequences of doing so.

Finis operantis—the end of the agent

The gunman intends to kill a fox; that is his end. To achieve, or attempt to achieve, that end, he uses the end built into the instrument and may or may not, succeed. But there is something else at stake. Because the agent is a man—and not a brute animal, or a blind force such as gravity—his every action is marked by a supervening character flowing from his human nature, morality, i.e., conformity or disconformity with the rule of morals.²⁴⁴ His act of shooting the rifle involves him—whether he likes it or not—in the issue of his own ultimate end, beatitude or damnation. He can no sooner deny the reality of this character than he can force water to flow uphill.

The rule of morals is simple: *do good avoid evil*. No man may breach the rule, no man may do evil, without indelible prejudice to his ultimate end and the loss of that dignity which is proper to him as a man. That prejudicial effect the Catholic Church calls mortal sin; *mortal* because it kills something within him.

The rule of morals has a number of corollaries; the chief of them is this: *it is not licit to do evil that good may come of it*. That is, one may not choose an evil means to achieve a good end; one may not use a good means to achieve an evil end. What follows in the present discussion of *ends*? Neither in the end he adopts, the end embodied in the instrument (*finis operis*), nor in the end he intends in so using it (*finis operantis*), may a man breach the rule of morals without ultimate damage to his soul.

In the light of these principles let us proceed.

III

The 'condom' is an instrumental cause. The morality of an instrument is generally indeterminate.²⁴⁵ Whether it is used for good or for ill is dependent upon the moral choices of the one using it, the principal. Thus, a knife may be used to cut food or to kill an innocent man. However, an instrument may be so designed that *its very ordination* is immoral. Its *end*, (its finality as instrument), and its form, that which makes it be the peculiar instrument that it is, are built into the 'condom'. Its end is the prevention of transmission of semen and the concourse of bodily secretions during intercourse: its form is ordained to that end.

²⁴⁴ The distinction is between the act a man may commit without attention, *actio hominis*, and the act in which he applies his human attention, *actus humanus*. When a man scratches his nose in the course of speaking, the former is a mere *actio hominis*; his speech is an *actus humanus*; We are concerned and concerned only, with those acts done with human advertence.

²⁴⁵ In metaphysical terms, it is *matter* awaiting the *form* of the moral act.

It is impossible for there to be any setting in which the use of a 'condom' as a 'condom' (not as a balloon, or a temporary fluid container, or something similar) could ever be licit. The thing has an inbuilt ordination to immoral activity. It can only be used in a situation of sexual excitement which, by definition, occurs licitly only between husband and wife in marriage and in such a setting its use can never be licit.²⁴⁶ The sin is single—

- 1) contraception.

The use of a condom in *extra marital* natural intercourse is illicit, in an intercourse which is itself illicit. There are two sins—

- 1) fornication, and
- 2) contraception.

To the first sin here is added the additional malice of preventing, or endeavouring to prevent, the natural consequences of intercourse.

The use of a condom in homosexual activity is illicit in intercourse which is not only illicit but unnatural. There are three sins, or rather, three grievous elements in the one sin which add to the heinousness of what is done—

- 1) sexual activity for the sake of pleasure alone;
- 2) conducted against the order of nature;
- 3) using an instrument to circumvent the sanction which is the natural consequence of commission of the first and the second.

There is malice in the unnatural way in which the sin is committed; added malice in the use of a condom in the endeavour to avoid the natural sanction.

An age which has become hardened to self disfigurement and bodily abuse and blinded to their malice will have difficulty accepting that a 'condom' is something whose ordination (as 'condom') is intrinsically evil. That is not a problem with objective truth: it is a problem for those who have abandoned the path of moral rectitude. Our bodies are not our own to do with as we please. They are only to be used in accordance with the rule of morals, and for the uses we make of them we will be called to account. Pope Pius XII dealt with the issue definitively—

“[T]he principle is inviolable. God alone is the Lord of man’s life and bodily integrity, his organs, members and faculties, particularly those which are instruments associated in the work of creation.”²⁴⁷

It may be objected that a 'condom' is simply a species of prosthesis. A prosthesis is an artificial part designed to assist the body to perform its natural functions or to supply for a bodily defect. Its licit-ness, indeed its only justification, derives from its ordination for the good of the body and so of the person. Of such are false teeth, spectacles, and artificial limbs. A 'condom' operates in the very opposite way to a prosthesis; it is a sort of anti-prosthesis, designed to interfere with the way God has

²⁴⁶ Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* [31.12.1930]; Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* [25.7.1968]. This is the case even if either should seek by means of such instrument to avoid the parallel evil of transmission of venereal infection, as to which, see below.

²⁴⁷ *Allocution to the Fourth International Congress of Surgeons*, May 20, 1948.

made our bodies. In that interference lies its illicitness. This may be seen when its use is considered in the light of the *Principle of the Double Effect*.²⁴⁸

IV

It is not licit to do an act wherefrom flow two effects, one good, the other evil, unless four conditions are fulfilled—

1. The act itself is good, or at least morally neutral;
2. The good effect alone is intended;
3. The good and evil effects flow at least with equal immediacy from the act, and not the evil effect prior to the good; and,
4. The good lost by the evil effect does not outweigh that of the good effect.

1. *The act is good.*

What is the act? It is unnatural sexual intercourse using a 'condom'.²⁴⁹ Is such an act a good act? Neither with nor without the impediment is it good because the act, carried out purely for sexual gratification, is against the order of nature. The failure of this, the first of the four conditions, is sufficient to condemn the act as illicit. For the more perfect demonstration of the evils involved, however, we will proceed to consider the three further conditions.

2. *The good effect alone is intended.*

What is the good effect of the act of impeded unnatural intercourse? The *allegedly* good effect is the prevention of the transmission of viruses such as AIDS, the incident of promiscuous sexual activity. Whether such means can ever be an effective preventative for such transmission is beside the point. Is this the only effect intended? It is not. An evil effect, the enjoyment of sexual pleasure in the unnatural act, is also intended. It follows that this second condition is not fulfilled either.

3. *The good and evil effects flow at least with equal immediacy...but not the evil prior.*

By 'immediacy' here is not meant *temporal*, but *ontological*, immediacy—i.e., immediacy not in the order of time, but in the order of reality.²⁵⁰ The two effects do not flow at least with equal immediacy. The evil effect, the perversion of the natural

²⁴⁸ The principle is contained in the teaching of St Thomas on whether it is lawful to kill in self defence. "Moral acts," he says, "take their species according to what is intended, and not according to what is beside the intention, since this is accidental..." *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 64, a. 7.

²⁴⁹ The fitting of the device is not to be treated as if this was hardly different to putting gloves on the hands, or shoes on the feet. The fitting is but the *matter* of that act, and the peril for modern thinkers blinded as they are by materialism, is to regard its *matter* as the whole of the act. It is not. Of infinitely greater importance is the *form* of the act. This is specified by the *end* for which the act is done. Gloves are not placed on the hands without a reason, nor are shoes on the feet. Likewise, a 'condom' is not fitted without a reason. In each case it is the reason which gives the act its formal character. Insofar as the act—the whole act, *matter* and *form*—conforms with the rule of morals, it is good; insofar as it is unconformed to that rule it is evil.

²⁵⁰ For example, in the temporal order a man may be regarded as existing together with his shadow. But in the ontological order the man is prior to his shadow. It cannot exist unless he first exists.

order, is ontologically prior to the alleged good, the prevention of the transmission of the virus. Hence, neither is this condition fulfilled.

4. *The good lost by the evil effect does not outweigh the good of the good effect*

The good lost by the evil effect is objectively infinite in that the one who performs it places himself in a state of eternal perdition. The allegedly good effect, the prevention of attack of the virus, is but a relative good for, in the first place, it is conditional and, in the second, it goes only to the good of the body, a material, and therefore, limited good and that at the expense of the soul which is eternal.

V

Once these distinctions are made, the shortcomings in the article by Martin Rhonheimer in the edition of 10th July 2004 of *The Tablet*, entitled *The Truth about Condoms*, become manifest. The principle according to which he proceeds is the subsidiary principle of harm minimisation. This has no place in the Church's moral lexicon when it conflicts with the principles of theology and of the moral law. The first theological principle is that of charity—*Love God first above all things, and love your neighbour as yourself*. The first moral principle, in the form of its first corollary, is this—*It is not licit to do evil that good may come of it*. Any use of a 'condom', as 'condom', is immoral and against the law of God. It offends against both these primary principles and no appeal to 'harm minimisation' can save it.

Rhonheimer fails to understand that the relevant moral principle applies in respect of both *finis operis* and *finis operantis*. One may not choose an evil means, an instrument whose very use interferes with the natural order, to achieve a good end. Nor can a good intention on the part of the 'condom' user ever justify its use. It follows that his conclusion—*the Church [cannot] possibly teach that people engaged in immoral lifestyles should avoid [condoms]*—is in error.

And what of Pope Benedict's passing comments about the male prostitute 'condom' user in the interview published as *Luce del Mondo*? As has been said above, the use of a 'condom' in unnatural intercourse *adds to* the malice of the sin. How, then, could it be justified to say—

“There may be a basis in the case of some individuals, as perhaps when a male prostitute uses a condom, where this can be a first step in the direction of a moralisation...”

Or, as another translation has it—

“There can be individual cases that are justified, for example when a male prostitute uses a condom, and this can be the first step toward a moral sensitisation...”²⁵¹

²⁵¹ See <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1345667?eng=y>. The text runs as follows: "Die bloße Fixierung auf das Kondom bedeutet eine Banalisierung der Sexualität, und die ist ja gerade die gefährliche Quelle dafür, dass die Menschen in der Sexualität nicht mehr den Ausdruck ihrer Liebe finden, sondern nur noch eine Art von Droge, die sie sich selbst verabreichen. Deshalb ist auch der Kampf gegen die Banalisierung der Sexualität ein Teil des Ringens darum, dass Sexualität positiv

Or, as a third—

“I would say, if a (male) prostitute uses a condom, that can be the first act towards a moralisation, a first step to responsibility, toward developing a consciousness that not everything is permitted...”²⁵²

The only justification possible derives from the metaphysical distinction between what is *essential* and what is *accidental*. An act may be evil *per se* yet result *per accidens* in some good. The murder of a man, evil in itself, may bring in train some salutary good such as the conversion of soul of a witness. But just as this accidental good could never justify the killing of the innocent man, neither can an accidental good justify the appalling abuse of the natural order involved in the use of a ‘condom’.

The Pope’s indiscriminate mixing of the subjective with the objective and the failure to make clear this distinction has led some to say that the Pope’s view permits one to endorse Rhonheimer’s erroneous opinions. Here is testimony enough of the problems the Pope’s words have created.

VI

The toleration of Rhonheimer’s opinions implicit in the failure of the Vatican to correct him is of a piece with its toleration implicit in the failure to correct the equally erroneous interpretation of Pope John Paul’s teaching in *Evangelium Vitae* n. 73 by Rhonheimer’s fellow academic, Professor Angel Luño. At root, each academic advances the moral fallacy *that in certain cases one may do evil that good may come of it*. If that principle is once allowed free rein, the Church’s moral teaching will be destroyed.

These are worrying times for Christ’s faithful people.

gewertet wird und ihre positive Wirkung im Ganzen des Menschseins entfalten kann. Ich würde sagen, wenn ein Prostituiertes ein Kondom verwendet, kann das ein erster Akt zu einer Moralisierung sein, ein erstes Stück Verantwortung, um wieder ein Bewusstsein dafür zu entwickeln, dass nicht alles gestattet ist und man nicht alles tun kann, was man will. Aber es ist nicht die eigentliche Art, dem Übel beizukommen. Diese muss wirklich in der Vermenschlichung der Sexualität liegen”.

²⁵² Translation of James Bogle, cf. <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1345781?eng=y>

PART TWO

“[W]hile the article drew public criticism, mainly from colleagues in moral theology, I was informed that the *Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith*, then headed by Cardinal Ratzinger, had no problem with it or its arguments.”

Martin Rhonheimer²⁵³

VII

Some may have regarded the views expressed in the first part of this article as too critical of the attitude of the Vatican dicasteries on moral questions. Those views have been borne out, however, by another of the objects of that criticism, the moral theologian Professor Martin Rhonheimer speaking of his controversial article in *The Tablet* of 10th July 2004, in a commentary published on the *chiesa* website on 11th December 2010.

Rhonheimer says he wrote that article in response to views advanced by Hugh Henry, then education officer with London’s Linacre Centre, in a previous edition of *The Tablet*.²⁵⁴ According to Rhonheimer Henry had argued that the use of a ‘condom’ by prostitutes or in homosexual acts, even exclusively to prevent the infection of one’s sexual partner,—

“fails to honour the fertile structure that marital acts must have, cannot constitute mutual and complete self giving and thus violates the sixth commandment.”

Against this, Rhonheimer argued—

“But this is not the teaching of the Catholic Church. There is no official magisterial teaching... about condoms... Condoms cannot be intrinsically evil; only human acts; condoms are not human acts, but things...”

From what Rhonheimer has to say in his *chiesa* commentary, however, it would seem that Henry was arguing against the view of Godfried Cardinal Danneels, then Archbishop of Malines-Brussels, premised on the supposition of a refusal by a person infected with HIV to abstain from intercourse, that he had a duty to protect his sexual partner by using a ‘condom’ lest he be guilty of a breach of the fifth commandment. It was the gratuitous comment of *The Tablet*’s then editor, Austen Ivereigh, mocking Henry’s view as inappropriate to address the issue of the protection of a prostitute from contracting the virus from a ‘client’ carrier that Rhonheimer sought to address in his article.

Henry was right to say that the use of the device fails to honour the fertile structure proper to marital acts, and right to say that it constituted a breach of the sixth commandment. But a more universal principle than the prohibition against

²⁵³ Cf. *On the condom and AIDS, the Pope has come down from the Cathedra*, on the *chiesa* website at <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1345909?eng=y>

²⁵⁴ Hugh Henry is now editor of the Australian Catholic journal *Fidelity*.

contraception is necessary to address the greater evil of sexual perversion. This was enunciated by Pope Pius XII and quoted in the first part of this article—

“God alone is the Lord of man’s life and bodily integrity, his organs, members and faculties, particularly those which are instruments associated in the work of creation.”²⁵⁵

The answer to the questions posed is simple: if the use of a condom is intrinsically evil, that use cannot be justified by any good that may result.

If Rhonheimer had not been caught up with subsidiary principle rather than charity and the moral law he would have acknowledged Henry’s point about the sixth commandment. His assertion, that there is no official magisterial teaching about ‘condoms’, is inaccurate. The condemnation of the device is implicit in the teachings of the popes. It is implicit also in the text books of moral theology of the mid 20th century dealing with external sins against chastity.²⁵⁶ His assertion is accurate, however, insofar as it contends that nothing has issued from the Vatican authorities on the topic since John XXIII’s ascension of the papal throne. This is a grave failure of attention in an era when the use of the device has become epidemic.

Rhonheimer remarks—

“Condoms cannot be intrinsically evil, only human acts; condoms are not human acts, but things...”

This is partly right and partly wrong. Any thing, whether natural or artificial, insofar as it is a being, is good because it was created by God. Hence, nothing natural can ever be intrinsically evil. But an artificial thing can be so devised that its purpose is intrinsically evil. Of such is the ‘condom’ when used as it is designed. Hence, using the analogy of attribution, it *can* be said that the ‘condom’ is intrinsically evil.²⁵⁷

VIII

Having made the point that, if one speaks rigorously (rather than analogically), only human acts can be intrinsically evil, Rhonheimer seems to confine the category to acts which are contraceptive.

“But what of promiscuous people, sexually active homosexuals, and prostitutes? What the Catholic Church teaches them is simply that they should not be promiscuous, but faithful to one single sexual partner; that prostitution is a behaviour which gravely violates human dignity, mainly the dignity of the woman, and therefore should not be engaged in; and that homosexuals, as all other people, are children of God and loved by him as everybody else is, but that they should live in continence like any other unmarried person. But if they ignore this teaching, and are at risk from HIV, should they use condoms to prevent infection? The moral norm condemning contraception as intrinsically evil does not apply to these cases...”

²⁵⁵ *Allocution to the Fourth International Congress of Surgeons*, May 20, 1948.

²⁵⁶ Cf., e.g., Henry Davis, *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, London, 1952, Eighth ed. Vol. II, pp. 200-254. Sensitive to the degrading effect of the discussion of sexual perversion on their readers, the moral theologians of the time took the precaution of issuing their teaching on its more morbid aspects in Latin.

²⁵⁷ In the same way might we call life in a sunny climate ‘healthy’ because it contributes to health.

The reader will observe here, first, that he misstates the Church's teaching; then, he lumps together various sinful activities as if there was no distinction between their respective causes.

The Church *does not* teach that the promiscuous should be faithful to one sexual partner. She teaches that there is only one licit use of the sex act that between a man and a woman united conjugally in marriage. Fornication, even with one only sexual partner is sinful because it rejects the institution which God has established and, in doing so, betrays the dignity of each of the participants. On the other hand, sexual activity between those of the same sex is sinful because it is a perversion of the sexual powers given to each by God. Such activity is intrinsically disordered, and hence intrinsically evil. It is not contraceptive (in the sense that it prevents what could result in new life); it is perverted.

In the next sentence he appears to contradict himself—

Nor can there be church teaching about this; it would be simply nonsensical to establish moral norms for intrinsically immoral types of behaviour..."

What is he speaking of here except homosexual and other perverted sexual behaviour? If the Church can lay down norms about the intrinsic evil of contraception, why "would [it] be simply nonsensical" to assert that the Church has authority to do the same about these intrinsic evils? Christ's Church is able to rule on any and every evil to which man is subject: no human perversion is beyond her compass.

However, a perusal of his *chiesa* commentary reveals that what Rhonheimer meant was this—

"There are contexts in which moral orientations completely lose their normative significance because they can at most lessen an evil, not be directed to the good..."

And he cites as instance—

"The only thing the Church can possibly teach about rape... is the moral obligation to completely refrain from it, not how to carry it out in a less immoral way."

Perhaps. But the Church can certainly teach about the grades of evil, and how some additional feature may add to the evil committed. Moreover, she is bound to warn those who contemplate such conduct accordingly.

IX

Almighty God has established a setting—fixed and immutable; ordered and ordananced—in which He placed man, the most noble of His material creatures. So long as he lives in accordance with that order and setting, man is happy. Whenever he departs from that order, he suffers.

The prophet Job said *Naked I came into the world, and naked I shall return...* [Job 1: 21] The critical word in this text is *naked*: for the word signifies that order and setting. *What do you have that you have not been given?* St Paul asked rhetorically [1 Corinthians 4: 7]. The critical word in this text is *given*: for (again) the word signifies that order and setting. The Roman poet Horace [65-8 BC] wrote in his epistles: *Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret.*²⁵⁸ The critical word in this text is *naturam*: for (yet again) the word signifies that order and setting. The root *na-* means 'given'. We are born in the *na-*: we live in the *na-*: we are, at once, determined and yet free, in the *na-*. There is nothing that we have, down to the very air we breathe, that has not first been given us through the medium of nature.

Of this immense reality, St Thomas says profoundly: *res (naturalis) inter duos intellectos constituta...*²⁵⁹—“The (natural) thing is established between two intellects.” The Uncreated Intellect has placed before man (the created intellect) for his edification, nature, that—

“from the good things he sees, he is enabled to discover Him who is; and by studying the works, he is able to recognise the Artificer...”²⁶⁰

The modern world is besotted with nature at the *material* level; and lives in a state of fundamental denial, even terror, of nature at the *formal* level. For to acknowledge nature's *formality* would entail tacit acknowledgement of its *finality*.²⁶¹ And there can be no *finality*, no *end* in nature, without an intellect that intends that end. And the acknowledgement of such an intellect means one must accept the existence of God. And from this, the modern world has long since turned its face away.

Every human act affects a man's ultimate destiny, as we remarked in the first part of this article. Man does not exist *sui juris*, as modern philosophers like to think, but subject to the demands of that setting in which God has established him: and not simply demands, but ordinations. For nature has indelible laws whose breach brings inevitable consequences, evidenced in the aphorism—

“God always forgives; man sometimes forgives; nature never forgives.”

Now, the penalty that a law imposes to preserve the order it mandates is called a *sanction*, a word rooted in the wisdom of our Roman fathers; for it is derived from the Latin verb *to make holy*.

If men ignore the natural order in which God establishes them and ignore the Church's teaching which codifies that order, they incur the sanctions that nature

²⁵⁸ You can drive nature out with a pitchfork, she will always return. *Epistles* I, x

²⁵⁹ *De Veritate* I, 2

²⁶⁰ A paraphrase of *Wisdom* 13: 1 whose text mocks those who refuse to acknowledge the reality: “Naturally stupid are all men who have not known God and who, from the good things that are seen, have not been able to discover Him who is; or by studying the works have failed to recognise the artificer...”

²⁶¹ For *formality* follows on *finality*. *What* something is, its essence, quiddity or nature, is determined by *the end* for which it exists. Even in artificial things this principle applies, as the form of the artificial reality, *bridge*, is determined by the end which it is intended to serve, to enable the passage from one side to another across a gulf, of people, on foot or in conveyances.

imposes spontaneously to punish its abuse. Each such sanction is ordained for the sinner's correction that he might throw off his evil ways, confess his sins and return to a state of innocence, and union with the God Who made him.

X

The first, and most important, of these sanctions is eternal perdition. The one who engages in illicit sexual activity loses the possibility of eternal beatitude in the moment he consents to the sin. In that moment of embrace of the will, he is damned. And he will be so eternally should he die before undergoing conversion of heart. This primary sanction manifests itself in disturbance of conscience and disorder of soul. The sinner suffers, additionally, a weakening of will manifest in reduction of self control in sexual matters; a weakening of the intellect in both speculative and practical judgements; and the burden of vice (evil habit) which affects his behaviour and inclines him to things yet more degraded. In a moment of introspection he may admit to himself that he lives not so much like a man as a beast. His state recalls that recited in parable by Christ our Lord—

[T]he younger son... left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery. When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine and he began to feel the pinch; so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything...²⁶²

But the sanctions of the natural law are not only these non-material, or *immaterial*, ones (using that word in its proper meaning); there are also *material* sanctions, signified in the parable by the famine that afflicted the prodigal son. Among the *material* sanctions that afflict the sexually debauched are the physical *sequelae* of disturbance of the psyche and the internal senses, and venereal diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhoea and HIV/AIDS.

Now, while the sinner who persists in his sins cannot hope to avoid the *immaterial* sanctions, he can try and avoid the *material* ones.²⁶³ This is the context in which the morally defective and their advisers attempt to justify the use of the 'condom' in illicit sexual behaviour. He who uses one of these devices, since he seeks to avoid the natural sanction, compounds the offence he commits. He sets himself against correction, willing to have the sinful pleasure while taking pains to avoid the penalty. He hardens his soul against contrition and conversion to the good; he acts with malice.

One who sins through malice, rather than through passion, St Thomas teaches, is ill disposed in respect of the end of his conduct, since malice signifies the application of willed attention. Now *end* has the character of a principle *that wherefrom something*

²⁶² Luke 15: 13-16

²⁶³ For instance by taking drugs to correct psychological imbalance.

proceeds, as Aristotle teaches in the *Metaphysics*.²⁶⁴ But a defect of principle is the worst of all defects, for everything that flows from the principle is affected by it. Therefore a sin committed through malice is worse than one committed through passion.²⁶⁵ Hence, the use of a ‘condom’ in illicit sexual activity adds grievously to the evil committed.

Once this is understood, it can be seen how defective is the argument that the use of such a device by one who persists in engaging in such behaviour ostensibly to protect the party with whom he commits it “may be a first step to responsibility, (or moralisation)”. Such an argument involves the assertion that one may do evil that good may come of it. The reader will understand immediately how crucial is this judgement. We will return to it.

XI

Rhonheimer goes on in his *Tablet* article to argue —

“Equally, a married man who is HIV-infected and uses the condom to protect his wife from infection is not acting to render procreation impossible, but to prevent infection. If conception is prevented, this will be an —unintentional— side effect and will not therefore shape the moral meaning of the act as a contraceptive act... ”

This is a specious attempt to invoke the *Principle of the Double Effect* in aid of the subsidiary principle of harm minimisation at the expense of the moral law. The principle of morals is not *First ensure that you avoid harm*: it is, *Do good; avoid evil*. A correct analysis of the application of the *Principle of the Double Effect* under the moral law in respect of impeded natural intercourse is as follows.²⁶⁶

The principle—It is not licit to do an act wherefrom flow two effects, one good, the other evil, unless four conditions are fulfilled—

1. The act itself is good, or at least morally neutral;
2. The good effect alone is intended;
3. The good and evil effects flow at least with equal immediacy from the act, and not the evil effect prior to the good; and,
4. The good lost by the evil effect does not outweigh that of the good effect.

1. *The act is good.*

What is the act? It is the use of a ‘condom’ in the act of natural sexual intercourse. Is such an act a good act? Without the impediment, the act is not only good, but mandated for those who are conjugally united. With the impediment the act is incapable of achieving its end, the possibility of procreation, and is therefore evil.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ *Metaphysics* I

²⁶⁵ *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 78, a. 4. In fact St Thomas says there are *three* reasons why a sin committed through malice is the more grievous. The reason referred to here seems the most telling of the three.

²⁶⁶ The parallel analysis of the application of the *Principle* in the case of *unnatural* sexual intercourse appears in the first part of this article.

²⁶⁷ Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* [31.12.1930]; Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* [25.7.1968].

Indeed, since acts are specified by their ends, and the end in such an act—pure sexual gratification—differs from the end of natural intercourse between spouses, it is a different act.²⁶⁸ The failure of this, the first of the four conditions, is sufficient to condemn the act as illicit.

2. *The good effect alone is intended.*

What is the good effect of the act of impeding natural intercourse? The *allegedly* good effect is the prevention of the transmission by the husband of his wife with the HIV virus. Is this the only effect intended? It is not. Another effect, the enjoyment of sexual pleasure is also intended *with the procreative order of nature excluded*. The husband cannot ignore the *finis operis*, the consequences of the operation of the instrument he uses,²⁶⁹ by pretending preoccupation with his own end (*finis operantis*), and those consequences are *contraceptive*. The second condition is not fulfilled.

3. *The good and evil effects flow at least with equal immediacy...but not the evil prior.*

On the hypothesis of the effectiveness of the 'condom', neither the ordination of the natural act, nor the transmission of the virus can occur. That is, the good and the evil effects flow at least with equal immediacy. Thus, the third condition is fulfilled.

4. *The good lost by the evil effect does not outweigh the good of the good effect.*

The good lost by the evil effect is objectively infinite, the possibility of creation of a human life. The good effect, the prevention of transmission of the virus, is a relative good for it is conditional and it goes only to the good of the body, a material, and therefore, limited good. The fourth condition is not fulfilled.

Accordingly, the act is illicit and Rhonheimer's assertion is false.

XII

He makes this further statement—

"There may be other reasons to warn against the use of a condom in such a case, or to advise total continence, but these will not be because of the Church's teaching on contraception but for pastoral or simply prudential reasons—the risk, for example, of the condom not working. Of course, this last argument does not apply to promiscuous people, because even if condoms do not always work, their use will help reduce the evil consequences of morally evil behaviour."

²⁶⁸ In the argument on the application of the *Principle of the Double Effect* in our earlier paper, we asserted the act under consideration was "The use of a condom in the act of unnatural sexual intercourse". One questioner has queried whether there are not in fact two acts rather than one, the act of intercourse and the act of wearing a 'condom'. There is only one act. The performance of an act of unnatural intercourse is really different from the performance of an act of unnatural intercourse using a 'condom' as the performance of the act of walking down a public street by a man fully clothed is really different from the performance of that act by a man naked. The distinction between the two in each instance is found in the accident *habitus*. Nine accidents qualify every material substance, viz., *quantity, quality, relation, when, where, action, passion, habitus* and *situs*. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 7: St Thomas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, Bk. V, 9, 886 et seq.

²⁶⁹ On the distinction between *finis operis* and *finis operantis*, see section II, part one of this paper.

It is patent that Rhonheimer is a materialist. While paying lip service to the Church's teaching as to the eternal worth of the individual person, he regards the evil consequences of evil behaviour as primarily *material*, rather than *immaterial*. His approach allows the limited values of this present life to take precedence over the infinite value of the person created in the image and likeness of God. That infinite value demands that the eternal welfare of the prostitute, the homosexual, be given pre-eminence by the moral theologian over every other consideration *in every instance*.

Not only is Rhonheimer wrong here, he is doubly wrong. Far from "help[ing] to reduce the consequences of morally evil behaviour", the use of a 'condom' *adds to* those evil consequences in that it makes the return of the sinner to moral rectitude more difficult as he strays the further from its path. Moreover, since those consequences occur at the *immaterial* level, they are infinitely more significant than any hoped for reduction of evil at the *material* level.

In his *chiesa* commentary, Rhonheimer says this—

"What the Linacre Centre proposed as the authentic catholic position was that there exists a moral obligation for unchaste people engaging in sinful sexual acts at least to abstain from using condoms—so as to avoid a further sin against the sixth commandment and therefore to render their sinful acts less sinful, even if they thereby will infect other people or themselves with a deadly disease. Such an argument makes people falsely believe that it is the Church's teaching on contraception which leads to such counter intuitive consequences... but that teaching does not apply in such circumstances..."

That the Linacre Centre was right in its conclusion—if wrong in the authority on which it sought to rely—appears from the application of the principles set out above.

1. A person who engages in illicit sexual acts commits a grave sin.
2. One who in the course of so doing uses a 'condom' adds to the gravity of the sin he commits.
3. It is no justification that he may achieve some good in using it, because it is not licit to do evil that good may come of it. This is the case even if the good he intends may be the preservation of the other party from infection with a deadly disease.
4. In the event that the offence occurs in a natural sexual act (i.e., between a man and a woman), the sin is fornication, and the use of a 'condom' constitutes the sin of contraception, for the *finis operis* of the device—which the agent adopts—is contraceptive.
5. In the event that the offence occurs in an unnatural sexual act, the sin is sodomy (or one of its variants), and the use of a 'condom' constitutes an act of added malice, for the *finis operis* of the device—which the agent adopts—serves to avoid the natural material sanctions of the sin.

The above points solve each of the difficult cases Rhonheimer puts forward as well as Cardinal Danneels' bizarre suggestion.

XIII

This final quote from *The Tablet* article confirms Rhonheimer's materialism.

"Stopping the worldwide AIDS epidemic is not a question about the morality of using condoms, but about how to effectively prevent people from causing the disastrous consequences of their immoral behaviour. Pope John Paul II has repeatedly urged that the promotion of the use of condoms is not a solution to this problem because he holds that it does not resolve the moral problem of promiscuity. Whether generally, campaigns promoting condoms encourage risky behaviour and make the AIDS pandemic worse is a question for statistical evidence which is not yet easily available. That it reduces transmission rates in the short term among highly infective groups like prostitutes and homosexuals is impossible to deny. Whether it may decrease infection rates among 'sexually liberated' promiscuous populations or, on the contrary, encourage risky behaviour, depends on many factors."

We do not need to waste time proceeding *a posteriori* when, through His Church, Christ has provided us *a priori* with the essential principles to solve the problem.²⁷⁰ Since the 'condom' is intrinsically evil, it is *morally impossible* that the solution to the problem can ever be achieved by means of it.

As we have explained above, the consequences of immoral behaviour are but elements of the sanction that Divine Providence imports to correct sinful men. There is only one way to avoid those consequences: the behaviour must cease, or at least be substantially curtailed. One institution on earth alone is capable of achieving in the hearts of men that conversion, the Catholic Church—because it is of God. The Catholic bishops of Uganda have amply demonstrated the effectiveness of the Church's teaching among their flocks with their appeal to men to be men and not weaklings, and abstain from immoral sexual behaviour.

It is only through the salutary influence of the Church that the AIDS epidemic will be curtailed but the operation of that influence has just received its worst possible setback.

XIV

From what has been said above it is demonstrable that Pope Benedict XVI has erred in the opinion he expressed on the issue of the use of 'condoms' in his interview with journalist, Peter Seewald. Because sexual immorality has become epidemic throughout the world, that opinion is capable of causing immense scandal.

²⁷⁰ Conclusions reached *a posteriori*, that is, proceeding from observed effects to a cause, can rarely arrive at absolute certitude as one can never be sure that sufficient instances of the relevant effects have been gathered. On the other hand, conclusions reached *a priori*, that is, proceeding from cause to effect, provide a certitude identical with the certitude of the cause, because the effects are simply corollaries of the cause.

No pope is indefectible: he can err. This is the reason the *Vatican Council* laid out in the Decree *Pastor Aeternus* [18.7.1870] the precise circumstances that must obtain in order that when a pope speaks he *does not* err. The Dominican, Melchior Cano, theologian to the Fathers of the Council of Trent, summarised the issue before us:

“Peter has no need of our lies or flattery. Those who blindly and indiscriminately defend every decision of the supreme Pontiff are the very ones who do most to undermine the authority of the Holy See—they destroy instead of strengthening its foundations.”²⁷¹

We are bound, then, in accordance with the teaching of the Church’s Angelic Doctor, to correct in charity even so eminent a figure as the Pope.

“A subject is not competent to administer to his prelate the correction which is an act of justice through the coercive nature of punishment: but the fraternal correction which is an act of charity is within the competence of everyone in respect of any person towards whom he is bound by charity...”²⁷²

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Principal

His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, should forthwith withdraw the opinion he has expressed that the use of a ‘condom’ (by a male prostitute) “may be a first step to responsibility (or moralisation)”,²⁷³ and publish that withdrawal as extensively, and in as many languages, as its publication in the book *Luce del Mondo*.

Ancillary

His Holiness should, moreover, forthwith direct that the license to teach in any Catholic institution of Professor Martin Rhonheimer be suspended pending an acknowledgement in acceptable terms by that moral theologian that he has corrected his views in line with the mind of the Catholic Church.

²⁷¹ Quoted in George Weigel, *Witness To Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, London, 2005, p. 15.

²⁷² *Summa Theologiae* II-II, 33, 4.

²⁷³ “Ich würde sagen, wenn ein Prostituirter ein Kondom verwendet, kann das ein erster Akt zu einer Moralisierung sein, ein erstes Stück Verantwortung, um wieder ein Bewusstsein dafür zu entwickeln, dass nicht alles gestattet ist und man nicht alles tun kann, was man will.”

ARE GOOD & EVIL NO MORE THAN DICTATES OF THE DIVINE WHIMSY?

In his admirable essay, *Tyranny and sexual abuse in the Catholic Church: A Jesuit Tragedy*²⁷⁴, John R T Lamont exposes the connection between the mentality of subservience currently at work among a majority of the Catholic clergy, and the understanding of the virtue of obedience fostered by the Jesuits since the time of St Ignatius of Loyola. In the course of argument he says this:

“The intellectual origins of this conception of authority and obedience are largely to be found in nominalist theology and philosophy. William of Ockham notoriously came down on one side of the *Euthyphro* dilemma by asserting that good actions are good simply because they are commanded by God, and that God could make idolatry, murder, and sodomy good, and abstention from these actions evil, if he commanded that they be performed. This conception of divine authority lends support to a tyrannical understanding of authority in general as based on the arbitrary will of the possessor of power, rather than on law.

“A law-based understanding of authority, in contrast, holds that law derived from the nature of the good provides the source of the authority of a ruler, and delimits the sphere in which a ruler can give commands...”

The reasoning behind this passage deserves to be explored, for there is much more to the business than a dialectic between ‘tyranny’ and ‘law’ even where ‘law’ is understood (rightly) as derived from the nature of the good.

Intellect & Will

The first thing to be grasped is the nature of the faculty of will, whether created or uncreated (divine). Will is the appetite that follows on intellect. Intellect orders; will acts on what intellect ordains. Hence it is impossible for will to exist unattached to the ordinations of intellect, to exist autonomously. To conceive of it as if unfettered by the rule of intellect, as Occam (Ockham) conceived of it, as Descartes conceived of it, as Muslims conceive of it in respect of their ‘Allah’, is to indulge in fallacy.

The opinion that the moral discrimination of human actions derives solely from the free will of God is grounded in the false supposition that the essences of things depend on the divine will. But the essences of things depend on the divine intellect and, radically, upon the divine essence itself.

“[T]hat ideal [existence] into which are resolved the essences of things abstracted from real existence can only be in some intellect [and this] can be none other than the divine intellect. But antecedent to the divine intellect there is no other reality than the divine essence, which is only mentally distinguished from the divine intellect.

²⁷⁴ <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2018/10/tyranny-and-sexual-abuse-in-catholic.html> 27th October, 2018. A copy is reproduced in the Appendix.

Therefore the knowledge of the divine intellect is primarily borne upon the divine essence in which, and through which, it understands all other things and whereupon, consequently, all essences and all [possible beings] remotely or radically depend." (A. M. Woodbury Ph.D, S.T.D., *Ethics*, Aquinas Academy, Sydney, 1960, Section 3, Ch. 7, art. 3, p. 200.)

Moreover, to assert that actions are good or evil on no other ground than that they proceed from the divine will is to deny God's essential sanctity and moral goodness.

"For if the morality and moral discrimination of human actions depended solely on a determination of God's free will, then God, as far as what is from his essence is concerned, is utterly indifferent between commanding that good be pursued and done and commanding that evil be pursued and done (...between commanding that men love God and each other, and so act as to obtain their own happiness, and commanding that men hate God and each other, and so act as to incur their own perfect misery). Wherefore, St Thomas writes (*QQ. Disp. de Veritate*, q. 23, a 6): *Will... is directed by reason and intellect, not only in us but in God... Therefore the first (principle), on which the objective concept of all justice depends, is the wisdom of the divine intellect which constitutes things in due proportion both to each other and to their cause... But to say that justice depends on the simple will of God is to deny that the divine will proceeds according to the order of wisdom, which is blasphemous.*" (A. M. Woodbury Ph.D, S.T.D., *ibidem*)

The Parallel Error in Mohammedanism

Before proceeding further it is appropriate to consider the radical misunderstanding of the nature of God manifest in Mohammedanism. Mohammed's religion is, as Belloc saw, at root a Christian heresy of the most radical kind.²⁷⁵ Its departure from Christian orthodoxy lies in a rejection of God's revelation to the Jews in the Old Testament and, through Jesus Christ, to all mankind in the New.

So Mohammedanism rejects the revelation of the Trinity, the One in Three and the Three in One; it rejects Christ's claim to be the Second Person of the Trinity become man. It rejects the doctrine of Original Sin; the doctrine of sanctifying grace, the created participation in the life of God bestowed on believers through baptism. It rejects Christ's establishment of a religion and a Church for mankind's salvation. In lieu of God's revelation it asserts its own but its claims have a fundamental defect, as St Thomas noted —

"Mohammed failed to elicit any signs produced in a supernatural way, which alone fittingly gives witness to divine inspiration; for a visible action that can be only divine reveals an invisibly inspired teacher of truth." *Summa Contra Gentes* Bk. I, 6 [4]

Having erred on so fundamental a matter as the true revelation made to man by Almighty God, it was inevitable Mohammedanism would err in its understanding of the Divine nature God had revealed, an error manifest in Muslims' conception of

²⁷⁵ *The Great Heresies*, London, 1938, pp. 71 et seq.

'Allah' as a being of unfettered will. The blasphemy involved, of attributing to God a will undirected by an intellect which orders all things in due proportion, a will utterly indifferent between commanding that good be pursued and done and that evil be pursued and done, appears in many of the effects of Muslims in the world.²⁷⁶

Everything Created Is Good

Every thing that exists has its provenance in God. *Omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est* (John 1: 3). Every thing made has in its being a reflection of the Being of God, notably in possessing what is known as the transcendental perfections, *One, Something, True* and *Good*. Every thing simply in virtue of the fact that it exists is good, reflecting in this the goodness of its Creator.

Good is *that which all things appetite* (*Ethic.* I 1094a). It is always something positive. Evil in contrast is negative, the lack of something. But it is not any sort of deficiency. It is not evil in a tree that it lacks the power of sight for it is not due to a tree that it be able to see. But it is evil in a horse. It is not evil that a dog lacks a moral sense for it is not due to a dog that it has one. But it is evil in a man. Hence, *evil is the lack, the negation, of a due good*. Thus, *idolatry* is the worship of some person or thing other than God and negates, therefore, what is due to God alone. *Murder* is the killing of an innocent man or woman and negates the right to life that is due to every man and woman. *Sodomy* is a perversion of the sexual act. It negates its due end, its sole justification, by rendering the attainment of it impossible.

The Consequences of Occam's Errors

The philosophy of William of Occam (Ockham) was 'notoriously' defective in its denial of the immaterial realities known as *universals*, the natures of things, of which each created thing is, by Divine decree, a singular manifestation, and separate from which its existence is impossible.²⁷⁷ Occam's lapses in other matters, notably his defective understanding of the nature of God—so far forth as it can be understood by man—and his defective understanding of morality and of the principles that underlie morality, flowed from his failure to grasp the reality of the immaterial.

His diminution of the operations of the Divine will to the level of the human—as if God was as unpredictable in His behaviour as fallen man—is typical of the childishness of his understanding. These defects in thinking influenced Martin

²⁷⁶ Christianity owes a debt to Mohammedanism. Its thinkers passed on the thinking of the greatest original mind that has ever lived, Aristotle. Muslim philosophers profited from Aristotle's expositions and added contributions of their own. But Aristotle's analysis of reality presented a dilemma for the received texts of the Muslim holy book, the Qu'ran, were frequently in conflict with what Aristotle had taught about reality. Was (Muslim) theological thought true, then, or were Aristotle's profound analyses? The best endeavour to reconcile the two was that of Averroes (1126-1198), a learned Muslim of the Iberian Peninsula known to Christian philosophers as 'the Commentator', in his *Decisive Treatise Determining the Nature of the Connection between Religion and Philosophy*. But his efforts were disowned by Mohammedans and his philosophical works burned.

²⁷⁷ This defect in Occam's thinking has been exposed in the *Lessons in Philosophy* on the website http://www.superflumina.org/contents_prof_solomon.html 4th Series: in particular, Lessons 1, 2 and 12.

Luther in his revolt against God and His Church and produced the immense evils that accompanied the birth of Protestantism, evils that continue to afflict us today.

A tyrannical will follows on a perverted intellect, one turned away from pursuit of the true and the good. Of such is Satan to whom is attributed the words, "Know that I am without mercy". Of such, too, are those who follow Satan such as Martin Luther who, pressing his followers to sin more vehemently, indulged in anger, calumny, hatred and lying and became obsessed with filth and obscenity.²⁷⁸ Of such are those Muslims who think that they do God's will by slaughtering the innocent even at the expense of their own lives. Of such, too, are modern atheists who give themselves excuses for murdering the innocent unborn, who support the perversions of the natural order in contraception and in homosexual practices, and who think it rational to indulge in the disorder of systematic fornication.

Dominican & Jesuit Attitudes to Obedience

John Lamont has highlighted the differences between the attitude to obedience attributed to St Ignatius and that taught by the Church's Angelic Doctor. There has always been tension between Dominicans and Jesuits on the issue, the Dominican insisting that the faithful are not automatons or slaves; that they bring to their acts of will the nobility of intellect with which they have been endowed by their Creator.

It is arguable that the Jesuit misconception of the virtue of obedience is at the heart of the claim found in the *Commentary* published on Pope John Paul II's Motu Proprio *Ad Tuendam Fidem* in 1998 by the head of the CDF, Cardinal Ratzinger, that among truths connected to revelation by historical necessity and to be held definitively by those formally professing the faith is "the celebration of" an ecumenical council. This assumes that the mere assertion that a council was ecumenical is sufficient to compel the submission of the faithful. This is a constraint the fathers of the councils that followed the Council of Nicaea would not have tolerated, for among their first considerations was the issue whether the Church was bound by earlier councils.

Acceptance of the Jesuit misconception goes far to explaining why innumerable complaints over the content and conduct of the Second Vatican Council and doubts over its status as an ecumenical Council voiced by the Catholic laity find not one voice of support among the episcopacy and clergy.

²⁷⁸ Cf. Jacques Maritain, *Luther*, in *Three Reformers*, New York (Charles Scribner), 1950; especially the extensive footnotes.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE *NOVUS ORDO*

The final cause of any thing or any action is the chief of its four causes for it is on account of the end that the other causes are activated. It is first in intention and last in execution; it exists first in the mind and, at the last, in what the mind produces. I desire to shelter my family. This moves me to build a house and, after much labour, I bring the house into existence. First I consider my family's needs; then I adopt the means to secure them, and finally, I secure those needs. Local men desire to improve their town's facilities. They apply their differing talents to the project and the facilities are improved. What existed first in their minds comes to exist in the real.

What was the final cause of the Second Vatican Council? What was it that Pope John XXIII intended in summoning that convention of the Church's bishops and which the bishops went on to achieve? To answer this question we must extract the relevant parts from the Pope's *Opening Speech* on 11th October 1962. He said:

"In calling this vast assembly of bishops [I intend] to assert the [Church's] magisterium... in order that this magisterium... might be presented in exceptional form to all men throughout the world...

.....

"The salient point of this Council is not... a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church which has repeatedly been taught by the Fathers and by ancient and modern theologians, and which is presumed to be well known and familiar to all. For this a Council was not necessary. But... the Christian, Catholic and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formation of consciousness in... conformity with authentic doctrine which, however, should be studied and expounded through methods of research and... the literary forms of modern thought...

.....

"[T]he Catholic Church, raising the torch of religious truth by means of the Ecumenical Council, desires to show herself to be the loving mother of all, benign, patient, full of mercy and goodness toward the brethren who are separated from her..."

From this we may gather that the Pope was not entirely sure just what it was the Council would achieve, though he had coined a word for what he had in mind, *aggiornamento*, which indicated that he thought the church should be 'brought up-to-date'. What he *did not* have in mind—he was clear about it—was that the Church's teaching should be refined or developed in any way.

Next let us turn to what Pope Paul VI had to say at the Council's close on 7th December 1965, and extract from it his understanding of what the Council had achieved. Perforce, the extract is somewhat lengthy.

"[T]he Council devoted its attention not so much to divine truths but rather, and principally, to the Church... This secular religious society, which is the Church, has endeavoured to carry out an act of reflection about herself, to know herself

better, to define herself better and, in consequence, to set aright what she feels and what she commands...

"The Council... has been deeply committed to the study of the modern world. Never before perhaps, so much as on this occasion, has the Church felt the need to know, to draw near to, to understand, to penetrate, serve and evangelize the society in which she lives; and to get to grips with it, almost to run after it, in its rapid and continuous change...

.....

"Yes, the Church of the Council has been concerned, not just with herself... but with man—man as he really is today: living man, man all wrapped up in himself, man who makes himself not only the centre of his every interest but dares to claim that he is the principle and explanation of all reality...

.....

"[W]e call upon those who term themselves modern humanists, and who have renounced the transcendent value of the highest realities, to give the Council credit at least for one quality and to recognize our own new type of humanism: we, too, in fact, we more than any others, honour mankind...

.....

"The modern world's values were not only respected but honoured, its efforts approved, its aspirations purified and blessed...

.....

"The modern mind, accustomed to assess everything in terms of usefulness, will readily admit that the Council's value is great if only because everything has been referred to human usefulness. Hence no one should ever say that a religion like the Catholic religion is without use, seeing that when it has its greatest self-awareness and effectiveness, as it has in council, it declares itself entirely on the side of man and in his service."²⁷⁹

Let us note, first, the restatement of Pope John's words: the Council's focus was *not* the Church's teachings. Its focus, rather, was rapprochement between the Church and man. The Catholic faith must adapt its teachings and its practice to the demands of the world.

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It does not seem to have occurred to either of the Popes or to the bishops that what they had striven for was the very opposite of what was appropriate. It is not for the Church to adapt herself to the world. The Church's function is encourage man, to encourage the world, to adapt to her and her reasonable demands, for she is the One, the Unique, body in time and human history founded by God for man's salvation.

It is not as if the issue was obscure. The gap between the Church and the world is immense as St Paul shows—

"Now instead of the spirit of the world, we have received the Spirit that comes from God to teach us to understand the gifts that he has given us. Therefore we teach not

²⁷⁹ *Address Of Pope Paul VI During The Last General Meeting Of The Second Vatican Council, 7 December 1965*

in the way in which philosophy is taught, but in the way that the Spirit teaches..." (I Cor. 2: 12-13)

This is the reason St Peter called the members of Christ's Church—

"a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light". (I Peter 2: 9)

But the Popes and the bishops of the Council seem to have had another idea. One is driven to the view they thought the first pope had overstated things when he wrote:

"anyone who has escaped the pollution of the world once by coming to know our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and who then allows himself to be entangled by it a second time, and mastered, will end up in a worse state than he began". (II Peter 2: 20)

In the years that followed Pope Paul and the bishops set to work to implement the Council's focus on man. The *novus ordo* liturgy is part of that work. It has problems, problems that flow from its attempt to accommodate the faith that God established with the demands of the world. Let us consider some of them.

First, there is the loss which the new form facilitates and encourages of the sense of the sanctity and the immense dignity of the priest as one set apart to take the place of Christ. The debasement flows from the Council's misconception of the priesthood as a "function of the People of God", as if that ineffable office depended for its legitimisation on the faithful; the view that Our Lord, at the beginning, "established ministers among his faithful" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* n. 2). But Christ did no such thing. He chose and prepared the Apostles as priests long before there were any faithful—in order that there might be faithful.

Second is the abandonment of the rigour that characterised the Church's sacred liturgy of the Mass for almost twenty centuries in favour of a calculated laxity in imitation of the secular. The rigour in the strictures that attended readings, words and rubrics governing the celebration of the Mass ensured that God would be honoured in a seamless fashion, universally, as He deserves. The *novus ordo* indulges novelty and experimentation for its own sake.

Third is the degradation of the Mass from a solemn exercise of the duty to give glory to God to a species of entertainment in which, as little more than an incident of the action—almost an afterthought—bread and wine are consecrated. It may be said that this overstates the case. Certainly, there are priests who conduct themselves becomingly as priests within the limitations of the new rite. But the average *novus ordo* priest seems to regard himself as a performer, the chief actor in a drama, with his vestments the necessary stage props. With official endorsement of the abuse which abandons the disposition *ad orientem*, the priest finds that he has a stage and an audience. The male and female assistants who throng the sanctuary provide a

supporting cast. He has the opportunity for 'business', interpolating his own contributions in the drama's text and directions.

No wonder the members of congregations think themselves entitled, from time to time, to indulge in applause.

Fourth is the effect of the error contained in the Council's directive that among the "functions" of the priesthood, the first place is to be given to preaching, *sub textum* "proclaiming the Gospel of God to all" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* n. 4). This contrasts dramatically with the Church's millennial understanding of what characterises the priesthood, confirmed by the Council of Trent:

"If any one says that there is not in the New Testament a visible and external priesthood; or that there is not any power of consecrating and offering the true body and blood of the Lord, and of forgiving and retaining sins; but only an office and bare ministry of preaching the Gospel... let him be anathema."
(Session XXIII, Canon I)

When renegade Catholics abandoned the Mass in protest against Christ and His Church they were left with nothing but its paraphernalia. The pulpit replaced the altar and unctuous declamations of right replaced the eternal sacrifice. This is the aberration Trent addresses in the Canon cited above. Historian H.J.A. Sire has remarked how "the rich economy of salvation given us in the sacraments and the Mass is reduced to a religion of preaching at people".²⁸⁰ He adds, acerbically, "If words were sufficient to bring men to Him, God would not have needed to become man and die for us; He could have founded a newspaper".

The scope given to preaching provides priests of Modernist inclinations (and their name is 'legion') with a platform in which to air their heterodoxy. How many faithful Catholics have said to themselves, "if only Father — — was prevented from preaching we could attend his Masses with impunity"?

Fifth, and deserving of special mention, is the phenomenon of 'prayers of the faithful'. Such prayers were used at the time of the early Fathers and are referred to by St Justin and St Augustine. They were discontinued in the Roman rite with the realisation that they were unnecessary. The Church has for centuries confined the exclamation of specific prayers, the Great Intercessions, to a ceremony once a year on Good Friday, the one day of the year, be it noted, when no Mass is celebrated.

In *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 50 the bishops of the Council directed that scope was to be given for restoration "to the earlier norm of the holy Fathers" of "elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history". The suppression of these prayers was no accident but a step taken with sound theological understanding, shown by the fact that the Church adopted it as her permanent practice. Nor did it follow that,

²⁸⁰ *Phoenix from the Ashes - The Making, Unmaking, and Restoration of Catholic Tradition*, Kettering, Ohio, Angelico Press, 2015, p. 262

because a practice had once been followed by the Church Fathers, it should be resurrected. The Mass is the perfect act of impetration for the living and the dead, for it is Christ who is doing the praying. The 'prayers of the faithful' of the *novus ordo* are otiose. They are, moreover, tedious and repetitious. But the chief objection to them is that they denigrate the right understanding of the Mass as the central act of impetration.

Typically a deal of time is devoted to these intercessory prayers which should be given to the proper celebration of the Offertory (emasculated in the *novus ordo*) and to the Canon. Time which should be spent on the act of *perfect* impetration is wasted in a ceremony of *imperfect* impetration. In practice, the time so wasted moves the priest to adopt one or other of the shorter Eucharistic Prayers, a choice which diminishes further a right focus on the re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice.

The intercessory prayer ethos has affected, too, the offices of *Morning Prayer* and *Evening Prayer*—formerly *Lauds* and *Vespers*—the chief hours of the Divine Office, at the expense of two of the five psalms that marked those hours. The Divine Office is the Canticle of Praise of God brought into the world with the coming of Our Saviour Jesus Christ and continued by His Church. It is grounded in a tradition formalised by St Benedict of reciting each week all one hundred and fifty psalms. That tradition has been abandoned in favour of the recitation of a majority, but not all, of the 150, over four weeks with certain of the psalms shortened or emasculated. Other padding has been added by interpolating extracts, as if they were psalms or canticles, from the epistles and from the books of the Old Testament.

The Office was always focussed on Christ's sacrifice and each hour reflected the Mass, as its aureole reflects the glory of the Sun, in the repetition of the Collect. This unity was fractured when the smorgasbord mentality of the *novus ordo* invited the use of other prayers.

Sixth is the obsession with following *seriatim, litterate et ad nauseam*, the texts of Old and New Testaments in cycles (three years for Sundays, two years for weekdays) that disrupt the unity of the Church's liturgical year. Why, after centuries of ordered access to those parts of sacred scripture that best suit the Church's sacred liturgy, was it necessary to engage in a slavish study of every book in the Bible large parts of which involve passages which are either tiresome or difficult? Why must the faithful bear the evil of dislocation to the Propers of the Mass that follows? Memorials of the saints are accompanied by readings mandated to satisfy this burdensome regime which are utterly inappropriate. There can be no explanation for the disorder that followed other than a perceived need to defer to Protestant views about the Bible.

Seventh is the loss of the unifying principle entailed in the use of the common liturgical language, Latin. There is a species of theft involved in the removal of this mark of the universality of the religion whose name, Catholic, it signifies. The

fracturing of the unity of his faith is patent for any member of the faithful who finds himself in a foreign country attending Mass in the vernacular.

Eighth is the corresponding loss of the majesty of the solemn celebration of the Mass in the Gregorian form, something Catholics shared universally irrespective of country or local imperatives. This is made manifest, in its negation, by the mockeries of that majesty that accompany solemn celebrations of the *novus ordo*, where songs in imitation of the secular take the place of hymns, secular instruments replace the organ, and the ethos of the Mass as entertainment is most manifest.

Ninth is the impertinence that characterises many *novus ordo* celebrations where a few appoint themselves, or are appointed, to dictate to the rest of the faithful how they should conduct themselves in the course of the liturgy. Abstracting from the right, and duty, to correct another when necessary no Catholic is entitled to do this. A feature of this abuse is the pressure to communicate with others during Mass whose bad example leads to a lack of silence and indulgence in conversation where respect for Almighty God demands the contrary—*Vacate et videte quoniam ego sum Deus* (Psalm 45 v.11).

The unwarranted extension to all the faithful of the kiss of peace, a feature of High Mass confined to those on the sanctuary—deacon, sub-deacon and servers—where it reflected the loving cooperation of those assisting the priest in his presentation of Christ's sacrifice, has no justification. The motivation seems to be to enhance the ethos of 'the priesthood of the laity' conceived, falsely, as a sharing in that of the priest, and further the endeavour to reduce the Mass to conformity with the secular.

Tenth is the toleration of the abuse of women (or girls) on the sanctuary, to the permission of which novelty a pope allowed his preoccupation with ideology and deference to its adherents to destroy a tradition as old as the Church herself.

Eleventh is the syndrome of de-sacralisation in which many *novus ordo* priests think themselves bound to indulge. Even the best feel they must be 'hail-fellow-well-met' in their behaviour towards the faithful. Many actively encourage the faithful to conduct themselves as if they were in a place no different from the secular, as if the real presence of Almighty God, their Creator and Saviour reserved in the church in the Blessed Sacrament, was no different to any natural presence.

The prime offender, by his silence if not by his active encouragement, is the priest. The syndrome of de-sacralisation is part of the loss of sense of the dignity of the office of the priesthood mentioned above. At root is the absence of the Gift of the Holy Spirit called *Filial Fear*. There is no better illustration of the evils of deferring to the secular let loose by the bishops of Vatican II and the Pope who encouraged them.

Twelfth is the raft of ersatz Eucharistic Prayers, the second, third and fourth of the ordinary form, and the novel versions authorised by the Vatican for various

occasions. The smorgasbord mentality at work typifies the deference to the secular at the expense of the solemnity demanded by the re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice.

Thirteenth is the degradation of the Church's solemn feast days. Days of Obligation have been diminished to the point where there is hardly a member of the faithful who recognises those that remain, or recognises his duty to attend Mass on such days. Solemn celebrations have been sidelined to accommodate the secular. Thus the Ascension has been moved from Ascension Thursday to the Sunday following and its celebration forty days after Christ's Resurrection has been falsified. The Mass for a feast or memorial that falls on the date of some secular celebration such as, in Australia, Australia Day and Anzac Day, is suppressed in favour of endorsement of some worldly event.

Fourteenth is the reinvention of the liturgical calendar. Whatever the reasons given for this act of disruption, its motive would seem to be to show that the 'new Church', the Church that came into being after Vatican II, was discontinuous with the old. The chaos that has followed this revolution has only grown with the passage of time as innumerable saints of the new dispensation have been added to the calendar.

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In his recent paper, *The New Synthesis of All Heresies*, Peter Kwasniewski remarks the way Catholic values have been 'transvalued' as a result of Vatican II.

"Every bit of the Mass, every aspect of the Divine Office, every sacramental rite, every blessing, every piece of clerical and liturgical clothing, every page of Canon Law and the Catechism—all had to be revamped, reworked, revised, usually in the direction of diminution and softening: "the Word was made bland, and dwelt in the suburbs". The beauty and power of our tradition was muted at best, silenced at worst. No form was safe, stable, or deemed worthy of preservation as it stood, as it had been received."²⁸¹

We have argued elsewhere that it can be proven *a priori* and *a posteriori* that the Second Vatican Council was *not* a general or ecumenical council of the Church. *If this is the case*—and it is for the Church to pronounce verdict formally—none of the directives issued by the Council's bishops, even though endorsed by Pope Paul VI, are binding on the Church or the faithful, for they lack legitimate authority. Its teachings, where they departed from the perennial teachings of the Church are no more than the collective opinions of its bishops.

If this is the case there was no need to interfere with the Church's liturgical practices; no need for a new order of the Mass. *That* is the chief problem with the *novus ordo*.

²⁸¹ Cf. <https://onepeterfive.com/the-new-synthesis-of-all-heresies-on-nietzschean-catholicism/> May 16, 2018.

Many Catholics are coming to the view that, with the increasing availability of the *Extraordinary Form* of the liturgy, they will submit themselves to the fatuities of the *Ordinary Form* no longer.

PART II

“Is it really possible for an ecumenical council to say that any heretic has the right to draw the faithful away from Christ, the Supreme Pastor, and to lead them to pasture in their [sic] poisoned fields?”

Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney 1940-1971²⁸²

Whether they did so wittingly or unwittingly the bishops of Vatican II attacked three elements of the Church’s undertaking—

-) the Blessed Eucharist,
-) the sanctity of the office of the priesthood, and
-) the truth that membership of the Catholic Church is necessary for all men for salvation.

The Church’s sacred liturgy, as Peter Kwasniewski reminds us in a recent paper, *The Ninefold Kyrie*,²⁸³ is not something useful. Some things are above use, such as fine music and art. These are ends in themselves and it is for this reason that we call them ‘fine’.²⁸⁴ Now, the things which most deserve to be called ‘fine’ are the ceremonies of true religion, the Mass, the Divine Office and the celebration of the Sacraments, for these concern *man’s ultimate end*, union with his Creator and Redeemer here on earth and forever in heaven. The very last consideration about our celebration of the Church’s liturgy is its utility. We have a duty to ‘waste’ our time in its action because it is infinitely more important than the merely useful.

Their blindness to this distinction (*inter multa alia*) warped the thinking of the bishops of Vatican II. It grounded their condemnation of what they asserted, in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, to be ‘useless repetitions’ in the liturgy. It sullied the whole approach of those who set about reforming the liturgy after the close of the Council. Of this defective attitude the *novus ordo* (the *forma ordinaria*) is the apotheosis. Let’s look at the three elements the Council bishops attacked in reverse order.

²⁸² Quoted in John W O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, Cambridge Mass., 2010, p. 218

²⁸³ *The Ninefold Kyrie: An Example of “Useless Repetition”?* The New Liturgical Movement website—<http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2018/07/the-ninefold-kyrie-example-of-useless.html#.W2I0x9IzbIU> An edited version is reproduced in the Appendix to this paper.

²⁸⁴ ‘Fine’ is from the Latin noun *fnis*, meaning end.

The Council attacked the truth of the doctrine that membership of the Catholic Church is necessary for all men for salvation.

This is most manifest in the Council's final document, the *Declaration on Religious Liberty* in which, after giving the doctrine lip service (in chapter 1), the bishops proceeded to betray it in the chapters that followed. If man is free to embrace any religion he chooses, as the Council held, if he has a fundamental right to do so regardless of the demands of right reason and the revelation of Almighty God, it was utterly illogical for them to assert that their teaching "[left] untouched the Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men... toward the true religion and... the one Church of Jesus Christ".

The Council attacked the Office of the priesthood

In adopting the Protestant perception of the priest as a function of the people of God the Council's bishops rejected the Church's position that he is chosen by God to stand in the place of Christ before men. The Protestant view is that the priest (or pastor) is a servant, a means to an end. The Catholic view is that the priest is an end, as Christ (Whom he represents) is an end, and that we are bound to heed him as we would heed Christ if we are to embrace the salvation promised us by God.

The sanctity of the office of the priesthood appears nowhere more clearly than in the celebration of High Mass in the Tridentine rite (*forma extraordinaria*). The celebrant, the one who stands in the place of Christ, is the focus. The centrality of his position is adverted to again and again in the ceremonies—

- in the emulation of his posture by servers and faithful in standing for the opening psalm (*Psalms 42*) and *Confiteor*, in sitting for the *Gloria*, in standing for the Gospel, for the Creed;
- in the precedence accorded him in all the actions of the Mass;
- in the conduct of those who exercise the priestly functions on his behalf—subdeacon in chanting the Epistle, deacon in the chanting of the Gospel;
- in the order of precedence in which the *thurifer* uses the censer;
- in the deference with which his hand is kissed by *thurifer* and by servers in the execution of their offices.

The celebrating priest consummates the action of the Mass by his invocation of Christ's words in the double consecration. He is the *alter Christus* for all who attend, the one who performs the functions Christ Himself would perform. Indeed, Christ *is* present among them, present in the person of the priest.

The effect of the Council's abandonment of the Church's understanding of the sanctity of the priesthood is seen in the utter devastation of priestly and religious vocations and the disruption of the life of the faithful that followed the Council.

The Council attacked the Blessed Eucharist

The reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament is reflected in the detail and the rigour of ceremony that has marked the holy sacrifice of the Mass since time immemorial.

It is reflected in the attitude, one of respect for the sacred, given the altar on which the eternal sacrifice is offered.

“The essential principles of the liturgy were... strongly preserved by the traditional Church, foremost among them the understanding of the altar, which, far above any text, is central to the sense of Christian worship. This understanding has been destroyed by modern changes. The altar was replaced by a table, following an amateur’s deduction from church archaeology, and the whole sense of what an altar is was lost in the disruption. What we see in modern churches is, in effect, not an altar but a platform for the priest’s apparatus. We have all seen altars on which the most prominent object is a microphone—an apt symbol of the mechanical communication to which the liturgy has been reduced... [O]n the traditional altar... the only permitted things are the sacred vessels and the missal... In the traditional liturgy, as in the primitive Church, neither crucifix nor candles stand on the altar itself, and even less is there a place for flowers, which are extraneous to liturgical tradition... The placing of candles, and even more, of flowers on the altar is precisely the kind of late custom that the liturgists professed to be reforming; the result of their work has been to produce aberrations of which even the most ignorant priest of the old order would not have been guilty.” (H.J.A. Sire, *Phoenix from the Ashes: the Making, Unmaking and Restoration of Catholic Tradition*, Kettering Ohio (Angelico Press) 2015, p. 263)

The Council bishops’ attitude to the Blessed Eucharist, and to the Mass of which it is the Divine fruit, may be gathered from their behaviour at the discomfiting of Cardinal Ottaviani, Secretary of the Holy Office, in the Council’s First Session on October 30th, 1962.

[The Cardinal said] “Are we seeking to stir up wonder, or perhaps scandal, among the Christian people, by introducing changes in so venerable a rite that has been approved for so many centuries and is now so familiar? The rite of Holy Mass should not be treated as if it were a piece of cloth to be refashioned according to the whim of each generation.” Speaking without a text, because of his partial blindness, he exceeded the ten-minute time limit which all had been requested to observe. Cardinal Tisserant, Dean of Council Presidents, showed his watch to Cardinal Alfrink, who was presiding that morning. When Cardinal Ottaviani reached fifteen minutes, Cardinal Alfrink rang the warning bell. But the speaker was so engrossed in his topic that he did not notice the bell, or purposely ignored it. At a signal from Cardinal Alfrink, a technician switched off the microphone. After confirming the fact by tapping the instrument, Cardinal Ottaviani stumbled back to his seat in humiliation. The most powerful cardinal in the Roman Curia had been silenced, and the Council Fathers clapped with glee. (Ralph A Wiltgen, *The Rhine flows into The Tiber*, New York, 1967; my copy Tan Books, 1985, pp. 28, 29)

The loss of the respect due to the Blessed Eucharist was confirmed in what followed, described by Sire as a “tide of anarchy... let loose in the Church as soon as the Council ended”. (op. cit., p. 245) There followed—

- admission of ministers other than the priest for the distribution of Communion,
- reception of Communion while standing,
- reception of Communion in the hand,
- wholesale distribution of the Precious Blood with the inevitable desecration that follows on human clumsiness,
- celebration of Mass in places other than a dedicated church ('home Masses').

Sire goes on:

"In May 1967 the official process of desacralising the Mass was taken a long step further by the instruction *Tres Abhinc Annos*. It sanctioned the abandonment of the Latin Canon, and, in addition, gestures were abolished such as the laity's genuflection at the *Incaratus* in the Creed, the repeated signs of the cross made by the priest during the Canon, the first genuflection at the Consecration, and most of the kissings of the altar; the priest was no longer required to keep his forefinger and thumb together after consecrating the Host, and the washing of hands at the end of the Mass was made optional. The attack on reverence and on the concept of the Mass as an action in which gesture is as expressive as words, was embodied in these changes." (Sire, op. cit., pp.245-6)

All that the modern Catholic has grown to expect of his local priest, his—

- inability to refrain from adding his own input in the vernacular to the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice;
- deliberate acts, or words, of desacralisation after Communion;
- inappropriate bonhomie towards the faithful in the sacred place;
- diminution, or denial, of one or other elements of the Church's doctrine in his sermons or interventions—

derive from this threefold attack initiated by the Council's bishops. They have produced in the faithful a languishing of the seventh of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, *Fear of the Lord*. And, since as St Thomas teaches, the Supernatural Virtues and the Gifts grow like the fingers on a hand, it has produced a diminution generally of the force of the Virtues and of the Gifts among the faithful.

The Novus Ordo is doomed

Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret, the Roman poet Horace wrote:²⁸⁵ "You may toss nature out with a pitchfork she will always return." Grace imitates nature. *A fortiori, ergo*, though the sacred has been pitched aside by the reformers it is inevitable it will return. The Church's dedicated reverence for her Founder, Jesus Christ, will not abide the de-sacralisation and trivialising of the Mass which the reformers have embodied in the *novus ordo*, as it will not abide the prevarications and compromises of the faith embraced by the bishops of the Second Vatican Council and their successors.

²⁸⁵ *Epistles* bk. 1, n. 10, I, 24

Come the Pope who will return the faithful to the fullness of their calling, it is inevitable the rite will be condemned as it deserves to be.

But why wait? Every bishop has the fullness of the priesthood. Any bishop may heal the rite of its major defects in his diocese. Let him direct his priests to abandon the ersatz Eucharistic prayers (which are nothing but novelties for the sake of novelty) in favour of the Roman canon, 'the First Eucharistic Prayer'. Let him direct that Mass be offered *ad orientem*, i.e., facing Almighty God, not *versus populum*. Let him direct that his priests abandon:

-) all interventions in the vernacular in the course of the Mass;
-) limit their contribution in the vernacular to a sermon exploring the lessons in Gospel and Epistle, and only on Sundays and solemnities;
-) offertory processions,
-) the 'kiss of peace'
-) interventions by anyone other than the priest before, during or after Mass, for any purpose.

Let him forbid, moreover, the presence of any woman or girl on the sanctuary. Let him insist that Communion will be given only to those kneeling, and never in the hand. Let him direct that a sacred silence, one that respects the immensity of the Divine Presence, shall be ever maintained by priests and people in all his churches at all times.

Let the bishop put his episcopacy on the line in these matters. Let him be a leader of his people; a shepherd not a sheep.

APPENDIX

THE NINEFOLD KYRIE: AN EXAMPLE OF "USELESS REPETITION"?

Peter Kwasniewski,
New Liturgical Movement website, 30th July 2018

Like the Byzantine liturgy, the traditional Roman liturgy is characterized by many examples of what we might call "purposeful repetition."

The *Asperges* antiphon and the Introit antiphon are repeated after their verses and doxologies. The doxology is said many times throughout Mass. *Psalm* 42 as laid out at the start features a number of repeated phrases. The *Kyrie*, of course, has nine petitions in three sections (3 x 3), of which the outer members are verbally identical. The *Confiteor* is said by the priest, then repeated by the servers with small differences, and then said again later in the Mass, right before the communion of the faithful. The *Domine, non sum dignus* is said three times by the priest, and then

three times by the servers (either alone or together with the faithful). If we look beyond the Mass to the Divine Office, we see many more examples.

Most of these repetitions were discarded or brutally reduced in the liturgical reform, purportedly in pursuance of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 34, which called for the reduction of “useless repetitions” (*repetitiones inutiles*, or *ineptas* as the original draft read).

St. Gertrude the Great was privileged with some of the most wondrous and detailed visions that any saint has ever received. In her *Revelations*, we read about a mystical Mass celebrated by Our Lord, in which Gertrude saw the Eternal High Priest Jesus Christ offering the High Mass in the convent. Here is the part that pertains to the Kyrie:

At the first *Kyrie eleison*, He granted her the remission of all the sins which she had contracted through human frailty; after which, the angels raised her up on her knees. At the second, He pardoned her sins of ignorance; and she was raised up by these princes, so that she stood before God. Then [at the third] two angels of the choir of Cherubim led her to the Son of God, who received her with great tenderness.

At the first *Christe eleison*, the Saint offered our Lord all the sweetness of human affection, returning it to Him as to its Source; and thus there was a wonderful influx of God into her soul, and of her soul into God, so that by the descending notes the ineffable delights of the Divine Heart flowed into her, and by the ascending notes the joy of her soul flowed back to God. At the second *Christe eleison*, she experienced the most ineffable delights, which she offered to our Lord. At the third *Christe eleison*, the Son of God extended His Hands, and bestowed on her all the fruit of His most holy life and conversation.

Two angels of the choir of Seraphim then presented her to the Holy Spirit, who penetrated the three powers of her soul. At the first *Kyrie eleison*, He illuminated her reason with the glorious light of Divine knowledge, that she might always know His will perfectly. At the second *Kyrie eleison*, He strengthened the irascible part of her soul to resist all the machinations of her enemies, and to conquer every evil. At the last *Kyrie eleison*, He inflamed her love, that she might love God with her whole heart, with her whole soul, and with her whole strength. It was for this reason that the choir of Seraphim, which is the highest order in the heavenly hosts, presented her to the Holy Ghost, who is the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity, and that the Thrones presented her to God the Father, manifesting that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are One God, equal in glory, co-eternal in majesty, living and reigning perfect Trinity through endless ages. [1]

On another occasion, we read of how “the saint receives a triple absolution and benediction from the Blessed Trinity, through the merits of Jesus Christ.” Once again this threefold mystical grace was granted precisely during the *Kyrie* of the Mass:

As the saint heard Mass one day with the greatest fervour, it appeared to her that her guardian angel took her in his arms as if she were a little child, at the *Kyrie Eleison*, and presented her to God the Father, to receive His benediction, saying: “Eternal Father, bless Thy little child.” And because for a time He replied not, as if He would testify by His silence that so miserable a creature was unworthy of this favour, she began to enter into herself, and to consider her unworthiness and nothingness with extreme confusion. Then the Son of God arose, and gave her the merits of His most holy life to supply her defects, so that she appeared as if clothed with a rich and shining robe, and as if she had attained to the full age and strength of Jesus Christ.

Then the Eternal Father inclined lovingly towards her, and gave her His absolution thrice, as a sign of the triple remission of all the sins which she had committed against His omnipotence in thought, word, or deed. The Saint offered in thanksgiving the adorable life of His only Son; and at the same time the precious stones with which her garments were adorned emitted a harmonious concert to the eternal glory of God, which testified how agreeable it is to Him to offer Him the all-perfect and holy life of His Son.

The same angel then [at the *Christe*] presented her to God the Son, saying: “Bless Thy sister, King of Heaven”; and having received from Him a triple benediction, to efface all the sins she had committed against the Divine Wisdom, he then presented her to the Holy Spirit, with these words: “O Lover of men, bless Thy spouse”; and she received from Him also a triple benediction, in remission of all the sins which she had committed against the Divine Goodness.

Let those who read this reflect on these three benedictions at the *Kyrie Eleison*. [2]

By the time St. Gertrude was beholding these visions (she lived from 1256 to ca. 1302), most of the great *Kyrie* chants of the Gregorian repertoire had already been composed. These chants artistically exploit the musical balance and contrast made possible by a 3+3+3 structure. Perhaps the most stunning example is the *Kyrie* of Mass IX, the *Missa cum jubilo*.

The very fact that an age-old structure, numerologically luminous, on which mystical visions and musical masterpieces had been built up, was put aside by a committee of self-styled “experts” shows the extent to which the reform proceeded from crass contempt for liturgical tradition and sacred music, in spite of what *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had said elsewhere. How many examples of this sort of thing, examples sadly available *ad nauseam*, would it take to convince the fence-sitters that the reform deserves nothing better than the rubbish bin?

The ninefold *Kyrie* of the Mass is obviously directed to the Holy Trinity, as its oddness of number blocks any impression of “call and response”. It is not a dialogue between “presider and assembly” but a cry of the faithful to the Most Holy Trinity. The sixfold *Kyrie*, on the other hand, is a textual expression of the anthropocentric “closed circle” of which Ratzinger wrote: the priest or cantor calls out “Lord, have mercy” to the people, and they respond to the priest or cantor. The *object* of the prayer (the Holy Trinity) is in tension with the *structure* of it (a binary this-that, back-and-forth)—since *one* set of *Kyrie eleison/Christe eleison/Kyrie eleison*, as in the monastic Office, would have sufficed, if God were the one being addressed.

Let me try to express this point again: the ancient ninefold *Kyrie* was replaced with a sixfold *Kyrie* in order to facilitate an “active participation” construed verbally and extrinsically, for there is no other textual, ritual, or musical justification for it.[3] We see here how utilitarian considerations outweighed continuity with tradition, aesthetics, and theological coherence. The lumbering sixfold *Kyrie* is symptomatic of the entire mentality behind the *Novus Ordo*, a point Henry Sire captures well in his book *Phoenix from the Ashes*:

The achievement of the liturgical purists, as they condemned the incoherences of the old rite, has thus been to introduce far more incoherences in the rite they have invented. The reason for this is the lack of integrity in their intentions, but it also stems from the method used when the Consilium set about recasting the liturgy. The Mass was divided into sections and each one given to a separate committee to revise. The result was that each part of the Mass had to be slightly tampered with; otherwise the committee concerned would not have justified its existence. The changes made follow no liturgical logic. In the *Kyrie eleison*, the old threefold repetition, going back to the earliest days of the Church, has been replaced by a twofold one. This was in pursuance of the Modernists’ principle of abolishing ritual repetitions. Yet, if that were logically followed, there is no reason why the prayer should not be reduced to *Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison*, or indeed to *Kyrie Christe eleison*. Thus both logic and tradition go overboard so that a committee should do its petty meddling. At the same time, while one committee pruned repetitions here, another was introducing them in another part of the Mass, those of the responsorial psalm and the bidding prayers, which show repetitions of a kind from which the old rite was free. In their poverty of conception, the innovators’ rule was that repetition was wrong unless they could think of nothing better themselves. [4]

Sire has put his finger on an irony that few have dared to speak about, namely, that the *Novus Ordo* exhibits more and worse defects in some of the very areas against which the cancer-

phase Liturgical Movement directed its blazing arrows. Thus, we find far more useless repetition in the *Novus Ordo* than in the traditional Mass. Think about the Prayer of the Faithful: how many millions of times have we wearily said “Lord, hear our prayer” to the laundry-list of ill-formulated, poorly-read petitions at the podium? Or how many times have we repeated the response to the responsorial psalm, while visions of Hallmark cards danced in our heads, or we wondered if we or the rest of the people would remember the response, or whether all this has any point to it except to give the unemployed some work to do? Those who rejected the repetitions of tradition were punished for their pride with the lacklustre redundancies of concocted rites. [5]

In the Byzantine Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, *Lord, have mercy* is sung over 40 times by the people. The cascading petitions create an aura very like that which silence creates in the Roman Rite. An Eastern Orthodox Christian online wrote the following, to someone’s objection about the number of *Kyrie’s* in the liturgy:

I have found that the more I say it, the more genuine I get. It’s like the first 10 times I’m slowly getting rid of all distracting thoughts. The next 10 times, I’m starting to get myself in the right frame of mind for prayer. The next 10 I’m starting to think about the meaning behind each word. Then during the final 10 I can actually pray it from my heart. [6]

The fact that lip service is paid to the “ancient and glorious East” by the very liturgists who savagely denuded the Roman Rite (or the Ambrosian or Mozarabic, etc.) or who today defend its naked state, shows up the intellectual dishonesty of the reforms and their pursuit of agendas at all costs, even at the price of consistency of principle. The Eastern liturgical tradition contains countless examples of textual and ritual repetition on a scale far more extravagant than anything the Latin tradition ever boasted. Take the liturgy of baptism, with its many threefold statements; or the multitude of prostrations in penitential seasons.

At the end of the day, the problem boils down to this: is *usefulness*, “cash value” so to speak, the best or ultimate criterion of whether something belongs in the liturgy or not? Let us ask this question: Is it *useful* to contemplate God? Do we justify our contemplation by saying that research shows that it strengthens the brain, promotes good sleep and low blood pressure, and leads to statistical improvements in cheerfulness? Or is it something worth doing for its own sake, or rather, for God’s sake—and *therefore*, not surprisingly, something beneficial to us? Similarly, repetition, which is always meaningful and profitable when done in faith, hope, and charity, is a discipline primarily aimed at offering God praise, adoration, and glorification, an earthly likeness of the song of angels crying out “Holy, holy, holy...” in the presence of the Most Holy Trinity.

It is therefore strange, passing strange, that the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy should tell us that repetition must be “useful”. It is useful, but not in a utilitarian way, as David Clayton has recently explained—and yet, it is hard to see how the Council meant anything other than a surrender to modern American pragmatism: let’s get things done as quickly and efficiently as possible. Boyz, we got things to do!

The solution, as it always has been and always will be, is to treat with the utmost respect all that proceeds from the mouth of God in His liturgical Providence. The ninefold *Kyrie* of the Mass was just such a thing, coming to us from ancient times, stretching unbroken through the dark centuries of Roman decline, the bright centuries of the Middle Ages, the tempestuous centuries of Reformation and Revolution. No one would have thought of changing it—no one, that is, until the [cretins] who believed that their lego-brick liturgies, assembled in study weeks, were superior to the vintages of Christendom matured over long ages. In verses that apply equally well here:

“When they knew God, they have not glorified him as God, or given thanks; but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (*Rom* 1:21–22).

And:

“The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain” (1 *Cor* 3:20).

Or perhaps most aptly of all:

“Omnes declinaverunt, simul *inutiles* facti sunt” (*Ps.* 13: 3).

Kyrie, eleison.

NOTES

[1] Source: *The Life and Revelations of St. Gertrude* (London: Burns & Oates/New York: Benziger, 1870), of which a typo-ridden version is available...

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] I am aware that when litanies are recited, there is a doubling of the Kyrie rather than a tripling. But this is the authentic structure of the litanies, even as the ninefold structure was the authentic structure in the Mass. It flies in the face of all respect for inherited rites to do violence to an ancient (6th-century) structure in order to bring it into conformity with a modern predilection for call-and-response mechanisms.

[4] H. J. A. Sire, *Phoenix from the Ashes* (Kettering, OH: Angelico Press, 2015), 261.

[5] And please do not tell me that the responsorial psalm was something ancient that, having been forgotten, was rightly revived. In the form in which it was re-launched in 1969, and above all in the manner in which it is done, it has nothing to do with ancient practice.

[6] This comment is from a thread in which various Orthodox laymen are discussing the benefits of repetition in liturgical prayer. It interests me especially because there is no indication that anyone in the discussion is a theologian or a liturgist; they are just ordinary folks trying to live their tradition, as we should do.

<http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2018/07/the-ninefold-kyrie-example-of-useless.html#.W2I0x9IzbIU>

PART III

The Ceremonies of Holy Week

“Sicut ovis ad occisionem ductus est, et dum male tractaretur, non aperuit os suum: traditus est ad mortem, ut vivificaret populum suum...”

Response 1, Matins (1st Nocturn) *Tenebrae*, Holy Saturday²⁸⁶

When, after decades of attendance at the *novus ordo*, the writer began a return to the Latin rite which he had served as a boy, something occurred at Mass at St Brigid’s, Canberra, which highlighted the difference between the two and exposed one of the new rite’s fundamental flaws.

After the consecration the priest intoned *Praeceptis salutaribus moniti, et divina institutione formati, audemus dicere*, and began the *Pater Noster*. Following the rubric of the *novus ordo* the writer joined in aloud only to desist as he realized that no other member of the congregation was doing so. The issue to which, in due course, this solecism woke him was the ineffable reality and dignity of the priesthood, for it is the priest *in persona Christi* who celebrates the Mass. The faithful play no part other than as witnesses. When the priest recites the *Pater Noster* it is Christ, *He Who has just sacrificed Himself anew via the double consecration*, Who prays it on behalf of the faithful. Christ calls upon His Father with the evidence of the sacrifice of Calvary before Him anew to have mercy on the faithful and all the world.²⁸⁷ This is evidenced further by the fact that only once in the Year does the Church in her liturgy *in forma extraordinaria* require the faithful to join the priest in the *Pater Noster*, on Good Friday before they receive the Eucharist reserved from Mass on Holy Thursday.

The dysfunctional rubric of the *novus ordo* which mandates lay intervention here reflects the falsity encapsulated in Vatican II’s Protestant inspired assertion of ‘the priesthood of the laity’.

At Low Mass in the *Tridentine* rite one may follow *ipsis verbis* the priest in his actions. The Latin is not hard and a translation in the vernacular reduces the difficulties. The rubrics assist with their punctuation of the text. You can accompany the priest as he makes his way. In a *Missa Cantata* or Solemn High Mass, however, one is relegated with the schola to singing the Introit, Gradual and other parts of the Proper, and the Kyrie, Gloria and other parts of the Common. Being prevented from following each

²⁸⁶ Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter: and though shamefully dealt with he did not open his mouth; he was delivered to death that he might give life to his people.

²⁸⁷ A point made by the late Bishop Fulton Sheen in Ch. 42 of his *Life of Christ*: “The High Priest must offer the sacrifice alone.”

step of the Mass (so to speak) matters not for *it is the priest* who is performing the sacred action, and one can leave to him one's intentions for the living and the dead.

Nothing demonstrates so vividly the shortcomings of the *novus ordo* as the banality of its celebration of Holy Week, the most critical passage in the Church's liturgical year. The pomp that marks the original rite in Latin and the manner in which it fills the days of the Easter Triduum contrast dramatically with the diminution of ceremony, the shifting texts and the optional shortenings that characterise the *novus ordo*.

Palm Sunday Ceremonies

In the *forma extraordinaria* the long Gospel passage is fixed; it is that of St Matthew. The threefold division of the voices (reflected, in bland recitation, in the *novus ordo*) of Christ, of the Narrator, and of all the other players in the passage related (the Other voices) is observed in the drama of what is sung. The Narrator observes a middle tone suitable to narrative; Christ speaks, or responds, in a lower tone, the pitch of reason and counsel. The Other voices take a higher tone, the pitch at which anger, regret and sorrow are expressed. By exciting the emotions in this way the Church enhances the effects of the narrative upon the faithful who attend. There is one other difference to the protocol introduced with the *novus ordo*. The three are faced, not towards the faithful—as if performing for an audience—but at ninety degrees to the altar (and nave).

Tenebrae

On the mornings of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, priests, deacons and choir sing the Offices of *Matins* and *Lauds*, the *Tenebrae*, with great solemnity.²⁸⁸ The psalms of *Matins* are interspersed with nine Lessons, three after every three of the psalms, the most celebrated of which (the first three each day) are taken from the *Lamentations* of Jeremiah. The cantor sings them from the centre of the apse facing towards the altar. The nine psalms of *Matins* and the five of *Lauds* proceed without *Gloria Patri* in the presence of an elevated candelabrum whose fifteen candles are extinguished one by one as the psalms are completed until one alone remains. All other lights including those on the altar are extinguished as the *Benedictus* (Canticle of Zachary) is sung at the close of *Lauds*. After the final antiphon all kneel and sing—

*Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem.*²⁸⁹

The *Pater Noster* is then said silently after which the celebrant recites, in sombre voice, the final prayer—

²⁸⁸ In this they follow the direction of Pius XII that these offices are not to be anticipated by being sung on the evening of the previous day (*Maxima Redemptionis*, November 16, 1955). It is asserted that this directive has detracted from the setting that demands that *Tenebrae* (lit. 'darkness', or 'night') should be sung at night. The complaint lacks logic. Nothing prevents them being sung between 3.30 or 4.00 am and dawn, the proper time for *Lauds*.

²⁸⁹ On Friday there is added: *Mortem autem crucis*. On Saturday there is added further: *propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum et dedit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen*.

Respice, quaesumus Domine, super hanc familiam tuam, pro qua Dominus noster Jesus Christus non dubitavit minibus tradi nocentium et Crucis subire tormentum.
(then silently, *Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate...*)²⁹⁰

The ceremony closes dramatically with the *Strepitus*. Every participant joins in thumping the pew and stamping his feet to produce a sound symbolising the earthquake that accompanied the death of Our Blessed Lord.

After this all depart in silence.

Good Friday Ceremonies

The Gospel sung is that of St John (retained in the *novus ordo*). As on Palm Sunday the voices are heard at their respective pitches. Again the three are faced across the nave as they sing. After this, for the one and only time in the liturgical Year, the celebrant priest intones *The Great Intercessions* which address every possible intention. This is the only day of the Year (if one takes Holy Saturday as blended with its midnight celebration) when Mass is *not* said—that is, when Christ does not intercede for the faithful and for all the world in the repetition of His sacrifice. It is the only day of the Year in which prayers of the faithful are offered.



After the frightful fire on Monday in Holy Week 2019 in *Notre Dame de Paris* what remains? The altar on which for 800 years the immemorial sacrifice was celebrated until the advent of the *novus ordo*.

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The loss of the celebration of the *Tenebrae* connived at by the reformers under Paul VI has led many in the *novus ordo* to try and fill the lacuna. Typical of such attempts was a proto-liturgy at the Cathedral of St Patrick in the Sydney suburb of Parramatta²⁹¹ on the evening of Monday, April 15, 2019, presided over by the Bishop,

²⁹⁰ On Saturday the prayer runs: *Concede quaesumus, Omnipotens Deus: ut qui Filii tui resurrectionem expectatione praevenimus; eiusdem resurrectione gloriam consequamur* (and in silence, *Per eundem Dominum nostrum Jesus Christum...*)

²⁹¹ Referred to facetiously as ‘St Aldi’s Cathedral’ for its appalling architecture and adornment.

Vincent Long. Despite its participants' best intentions the result, anachronistic, dislocated and disordered, was no part of the Church's liturgy. To be more specific—

-) *Tenebrae* does not occur on the Tuesday or Wednesday of Holy Week;
-) Pius XII directed that the office was *not* to be anticipated by singing it the evening prior to the relevant day;
-) it was inappropriate to lard the texts of the *novus ordo* *Office of Readings* for the Tuesday with excerpts from the *Lamentations* of Jeremiah;
-) polyphony (the proto-liturgy featured four motets) has no part to play in the aridity of the *Tenebrae*.²⁹²

The result was not liturgical in either *forma ordinaria* (even with its smorgasbord approach to the liturgy) or *forma extraordinaria*. It was, in truth, little more than an evening concert.

Yet in fairness the event paid tribute to, and perhaps expressed regret over, the abiding loss of profundity that characterises the *novus ordo* in its celebration of the holiest week of the Church's Year.

One might usefully address its proponents and those who entertain doubts that the *novus ordo* could ever satisfy the demands of the Catholic soul with the call of the prophet Jeremiah in his *Lamentations* repeated each day in the *Tenebrae*—

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

²⁹² The gratuitous addition of Allegri's *Miserere* at the end of the ceremony in the Sistine Chapel from the mid-Seventeenth Century was abolished in 1870.

THE ROT BEGAN WITH JOHN XXIII

For close on two millennia the Catholic Church, her popes and bishops, taught that the Jews were responsible for the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on Calvary. Objective evidence bore out the claims in the texts of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St Peter and St Paul. The faithful were never in doubt about the matter until the advent of Pope John XXIII, Guiseppe Roncalli, to the papacy.

This Pope had a bee in his bonnet, a sentimental sympathy for the Jewish nation afflicted so appallingly by the Nazis before and during the Second World War, the extent of whose persecution at their hands has absorbed the world's peoples for decades since. That the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis was irrelevant to the issue of the responsibility of the Jewish nation for the death of Christ never seems to have occurred to him.

Pope John was not alone among the clergy in refusing to make necessary distinctions. The intellectual weakness it evidences had grown exponentially among the Church's ministers with the loss of the metaphysical perception of reality in favour of a materialist and subjectivist one. Allied to this was an attitude that saw no difficulty in subjecting what is perennially true to the demands of the times, a position C.S. Lewis labelled 'historical parochialism'.

By insisting that all references in the Church's liturgy that blamed the Jews for Christ's death should be excised John XXIII abused his office. Christ's Church, her popes, her bishops, her doctors and theologians, may have insisted on the truth for close on twenty centuries but 'good' Pope John knew better; and he would have his will, the exercise of which has served to mislead generations of the faithful since. This weakness was matched by the Pope's arrogance.

In this obsession and wilful insistence are the seeds of the chaos that flowered at the Second Vatican Council. Two principles are advanced. First is the contention *that the Catholic Church is in error on a fact central to Christ's sacrifice on Calvary*. It may be thought only a small error; it is an error notwithstanding. Second, is the insistence that *no matter what the Church had maintained in the past she must now defer to the demands of the secular*. These two principles underlie the chief error for which Vatican II is responsible, its teaching in breach of the Church's long held rejection of the claim—formally proclaimed in the *Syllabus of Errors* of Pius IX—that every man has a right to pick and choose as he will among the religions on earth, a right to 'religious freedom'.

1. The Church may have taught against this in the past: she is in error.
2. Whatever position she may have held, she must now defer to the secular.

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The chief effect of Vatican II, it can be argued, was a reform of the Church's liturgy which abandoned a fixed and determinate structure, one that had obtained from time immemorial, in favour of one whose chief characteristic was novelty. The reform attacked the Catholic faith by attacking her liturgy—attacked the *lex credendi* by attacking the *lex orandi* and, in consequence, the *lex vivendi*. As Dr Kwasniewski has noted: *The course of our prayer cannot but affect the course of our doctrine, and the course of our doctrine will necessarily spill over into the realm of behaviour.*²⁹³

One need only study the extracts from St Augustine's teaching on the psalms in the Second Nocturn of the office for Good Friday (*On Psalm 63*) to see how, by excising it, the reformers obeyed John XXIII's demand of the Church's liturgy. This is what St Augustine and the Church taught before the *novus ordo* came along:

"We know of the malignant gathering of the Jews and what a multitude there were working iniquity. What was the nature of the iniquity? In that they willed to kill the Lord Jesus Christ. Many good works, he said, have I showed you: for which of these do you desire to kill me? He bore all their infirmities. He healed all their sick. He preached the kingdom of heaven. He did not keep silent over their iniquities that they might be moved to hate them rather than the Physician who would heal them. Yet being ungrateful for all these, his remedies, like men possessed by a high fever, they raged against the Physician who had come to heal them and took counsel as to how to achieve his destruction. It was as though they would put it to the proof whether he were man that could die, or whether he were something more than man so that he would not suffer himself to die. In chapter 2 of the Book of *Wisdom* we have, as it were, their very words: Let us examine him. 'Let us condemn him to a shameful death: for he shall be visited, we have his word for it; if the just man be the Son of God, God will help him and deliver him from the hand of his enemies.'" (Lesson V)

And—

"They have sharpened their tongue like a sword. Let not the Jews say: We did not kill Christ. For they delivered him up to Pilate's tribunal in order that they should themselves seem innocent of his death. Thus when Pilate said to them: take him and crucify him, they answered: It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. Thus they sought to cast the guilt of their crime upon a human judge. But could they by this deceive God the Judge? What Pilate did made him, perforce, in some sort a partaker of their crime. But in comparison with them he was less guilty. For he did what he could to rescue him out of their hands, and therefore ordered him to be scourged and brought before them. That is to say, not by way of persecution did he scourge the Lord but as wishing to satisfy their rage, that when they saw him scourged, they might relent and cease to desire his death. Nevertheless he did kill him. But if we hold him to guilty who did it against his will, shall they be innocent who forced him to do it? By no means. Pilate did pronounce sentence on him and commanded him to be crucified and so in some wise it might be said that he did kill him. But, you, his own Jewish people, you in truth did kill him. And how did you do it? With the sword of the tongue. For like a sword you sharpened your tongue.

²⁹³ *Hyperpapalism and Liturgical Mutation...*, Lepanto lecture, February 19, 2019

And when did you strike the blow? When you cried out, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!'" (Lesson VI)

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Of a piece with Pope John's insouciance towards the Church's perennial teaching was disregard for the Church's discipline manifested in his *Opening Speech* to the Second Vatican Council.²⁹⁴ The departure from principle and example of wrong teaching set forth there were confirmed when, under pressure from a vocal cadre bent on departing from the rigour of the Church's teaching and her discipline, he chose to abandon rules he had laid down for the conduct of the Council.

The confusion of mercy with indulgence coupled with a practical denial of the effects of Original Sin on modern man expressed in the *Opening Speech* was a further mark of the Pope's problems.

The second of these vices appeared in the thinking of the pope who borrowed his name, John Paul II, whose early encyclicals,²⁹⁵ one would be forgiven for thinking, advanced the thesis that men were saved simply by being born, an utterly heterodox position. John Paul's deference to the ideology of Feminism with the divisive effects among the faithful wrought by his whimsical decision to allow women and girls access to the altar are further instances of the operation of the two principles.

1. The Church may have taught against this in the past: she is in error.
2. Whatever position she may have held, she must now defer to the secular.

In his splendid study of the chaos that has beset the Church as a consequence of the Second Vatican Council and the popes who promoted and supported it, *Phoenix from the Ashes* (Angelico Press, Kettering Ohio, 2015), H J A Sire maintains that John XXIII inflicted a wound on the Church from which it will take centuries to recover (p. 182). Anyone who has grasped just how radical are the problems that beset the Church would find it hard to disagree.

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The happy-clappy religion of many—perhaps a majority of—Catholics in our time follows on the Council's endorsement of a rapprochement with Protestantism and secularism. Their religion is a sort of proto-Protestantism. "The Church," G K Chesterton had said, "is the one thing that saves a man from the degrading servitude of being a child of his time." The bishops of Vatican II and its popes did their best to change that. Today the body of the faithful in the average Catholic church at the conclusion of Mass resembles nothing so much as a tea party after a public meeting. Loud talk and laughter, aided and abetted, *incited*, by the parish priest, drown the

²⁹⁴ Addressed in the paper *Failure of the Executive Power*.

²⁹⁵ *Redemptor Hominis* (March 4, 1979) for instance.

silent worship due to the presence of Christ in the tabernacle. The modern Catholic thinks it his duty to be a child of his time.

In 1970 Robert Speight summarised the evils the Second Vatican Council had precipitated:

“We were concerned to sacralise the world, not to secularise the Church. We may have wished to simplify the altar, in so far as we bothered about such things at all; we had no desire to displace it for a kitchen table. The Latin of the Mass was not only familiar but numinous, and we had no wish to barter it for a vernacular which has justified our worst fears. We did not wish priests to dress like parishioners, any more than we wished judges to dress like jurymen. We were anti-modernist and even, except in aesthetics, *anti-modernes*; radical only in the sense that we wanted to get down to roots, not in the sense that we wanted to pull them up. We were more anxious to preserve the values of an ancient civilisation than to set about the construction of a new one.” (Quoted in Joseph Pearce, *Literary Converts*, Ignatius Press, ch. 27)

According to the mind of the bishops of Vatican II the Church was to enter a new, and radically different, phase of her existence in the process of being “brought up to date” (*aggiornamento*), a phase marked by rupture with what had obtained in the past. A significant instance of this rupture was a recasting of the calendar of the Church's liturgical year.

It is vain to assert that Vatican II did not authorise the abandonment of Latin in favour of the vernacular in the celebration of Mass and the Divine Office, or the turning of the priest towards the people, or other of the aberrations in the sacred liturgy sanctioned by Paul VI. It is vain, also, to assert that Paul VI's claim in his address of 26 November 1969 that “our first obedience is to the Council” was disingenuous, that these changes were his own initiative. One cannot acquit the Council's bishops of the consequences of their radical actions. In opening the Church to Protestant and secular influences they paved the way for the abuses that followed. It was their compromise with these influences that led Paul VI to assert:

“It is Christ's will, it is the breath of the Holy Spirit, which calls the Church to make this change. A prophetic moment is occurring in the mystical body of Christ which is the Church. This moment is shaking the Church, arousing it, obliging it to renew the mysterious art of its prayer.”

Replacing Latin with the vernacular diminished the universality of the Mass. It detracted from the catholic character of the Catholic sacrifice.

“The existence of a common liturgical language... is a sign of the Church's mission to reverse the curse of Babel and to create a bond of unity between the peoples.” (Christopher Dawson, quoted in Joseph Pearce, *Literary Converts*, Ignatius Press, ch. 27)

The (yet still Anglican) Ronald Knox understood the Catholic Church's insistence on its universal language. When he was asked to perform a baptism in the vernacular he said this:

“The baby doesn't understand English, and the Devil knows Latin.” (Quoted in Evelyn Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, London, 1959, p. 94).

Latin is not a dead language; it is fixed language. You can't fiddle with it. The liturgy is a formalised ritual of worship. It is not open to personal input. The fixity of Latin suits it perfectly.

A member of the faithful long immersed in the reinvented liturgy who, of a sudden, finds himself at weekday Mass in the *usus antiquior* is immensely surprised. The priest offers no gratuitous remarks at the beginning, in the course of, or at the end of Mass. He preaches no homily. There are no normative 'prayers of the faithful' where mostly banal intercessions are matched by spontaneous and hardly controlled outpourings from one or other of the congregation. There is no 'offertory procession'; no fumbling for the right 'acclamation' after the consecration; no compulsory 'kiss of peace'; no scope for the priest to adapt the words of the liturgy to some passing fancy. The canon of the Mass with its appeal to the exclusive cadre of the canonical saints is unchanging; its momentous process rigorous and circumscribed. All the elements of *material* participation imported by Paul VI into the reinvented liturgy are missing. What our surprised Catholic hears is Mass *simpliciter*; unadulterated; the eternal sacrifice for the living and the dead in a form fixed from time immemorial. In twenty five minutes or so he is free to return to the obligations of his state with his religious duties complete. He would be forgiven for reflecting that, in the reinvented liturgy to which he is accustomed, the sacrifice of the Mass has been subverted.

What matters in the liturgy is not material but *formal* participation. Evelyn Waugh's comment is apposite:

“‘Active participation’ doesn't necessarily mean making a noise. Only God knows who are participating. People can pray loudly like the Pharisee and not be heard.” (Quoted in Selina Hastings, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography*, London, 1994, p. 619)

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How poorly the Catholic faithful have been served by the popes since 1960. And how extensively has Christ's Church suffered under their aegis. Consider the one outstanding exercise of his office by John Paul II, the Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, and balance against it his master-stroke of incompetence in allowing the admission of females to the sanctuary. Just how much harm to the faithful and to the work of the Church this fiat has precipitated will only be known on the Day of Judgement.

Unmitigated admiration for his predecessors has been a feature of each of the last five pontiffs, an admiration formalised now by papal pronouncement that certain of these limping successors of St Peter enjoy the vision of God in heaven.

Almost forty years have passed since English commentator Michael Davies laid out the shortcomings of the Second Vatican Council in *Pope John's Council* (Kansas City [Angelus Press], 1977). "No rational person can deny," he wrote, "that up to the present Vatican II has produced no good fruits" (p. 4). Nothing has occurred in the interim to alter the accuracy of that judgement.

What must amaze an objective observer over those forty years is the systematic failure of the Catholic clergy, of bishops in particular, to address the issue, to condemn the Council for the evils for which it is responsible. There is not one, *not one*, of the 5,000 odd bishops of the Catholic Church, even the best of them, who will say that the Council was flawed; none, that is, save the followers of the late Archbishop Lefebvre. It has been suggested—and who would disagree?—that it has been a master stroke on the part of Satan to achieve disobedience to Catholic principle on the part of the clergy through slavish obedience to papal and curial directives. At the heart of this longstanding ultra-montanist mentality is an inability to distinguish between pope and Church. The Pope is not the Church. He is her servant; he can, and does, err. The Church, in contrast, cannot err. A Catholic's primary allegiance is not to the Pope but to Christ's Church.

It would seem that Divine Providence has allowed the election, at last, of an incompetent pope so that the clergy might wake to the error of their ways and admit to themselves the systematic exercise in folly that was the Second Vatican Council.

Pope Francis travelled to Lund, Sweden in October 2016 to "celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation", that is, of Martin Luther's apostasy from Christ's Church. This visit was entirely consistent with the rapprochement with Protestantism embraced by the bishops of Vatican II and disguised under the totem of ecumenism. It is consistent with the foolish, not to say blasphemous, conduct in which John Paul II engaged at Assisi in October 1986. Pope Francis's initiative diminished, as Protestants desire, the heroism of the saints who suffered as a result of the Protestant Revolt, John Fisher, Thomas More, Edmund Campion, Robert Southwell, Margaret Clitheroe and hundreds of others.

On the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, 1972, not seven years after the close of the Council, Pope Paul lamented publicly that what he called "the smoke of Satan" had somehow entered the Church of God. All the expectations of renewal, of a splendid future for the Church, had fallen to the ground. Who could disagree with Michael Davies judgement that "[i]t was the Council itself which provided the breach in the ramparts of the City of God through which the mysterious enemy of man wormed his way into the very bosom of the Church..."? (*Pope John's Council*, op. cit., p. 9)

Nothing the Council decided which departed from the Church's constant teaching can bind the Church, or the faithful. All rapprochements with the Protestant and the secular in which its bishops engaged served only to obscure adherence to Catholic truth and Pope Paul's initiative to alter the sacred liturgy was not, as he thought, the

fruit of Christ's will or "the breath of the Holy Spirit" but endorsement of the Council bishops' collective folly. Vatican II has produced immense harm to the Church and to the faithful. With Pope Francis that harm is coming, at last, to its crisis.

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Not so long ago the Prefect of the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, Gerhard Cardinal Müller, warned the faithful to exercise vigilance over the risk of imminent division in the Church having regard to the effects, five hundred years ago, of the Protestant schism. With all due respect to the Cardinal the division has been with us now for fifty years. It is a schism quite unlike any previous one: it does not so much involve a denial that the reigning pope is head of the Church as a division among the faithful as to just what are the truths of the Catholic faith. The division is between the many—perhaps a majority (including bishops and some popes)—who think that the Church's doctrine has altered as a result of the teachings of Vatican II and the balance who remain faithful to what the Church taught and had been accepted prior to the Council *semper et ubique et ab omnibus*.

It was inevitable, if the Council was wrongly claimed to be ecumenical, that its bishops would fall into error. Many of its utterances were disordered, the most grievous occurring in *Dignitatis Humanae*, the 'Declaration on Religious Liberty', where willy nilly the bishops engaged in a denial of the supreme principle of reason, the *Principle of Non-Contradiction*. This illogic has emerged in the teachings and utterances of popes and bishops in the decades that have followed. It is as if, the Council's bishops having adopted illogic as a principle of operation, their successors should think it appropriate to give it an airing from time to time.

This logical failure is behind Pope John Paul II's attempts, dating from the very beginning of his pontificate, to accommodate the Church's teachings to the folly of Feminist theory. It is behind the religious syncretism of his initiative at Assisi in October 1986. It is at the root of his assertion in *Fides et Ratio* (September 14, 1998) that the Church has no philosophy of her own, in which opinion he contradicted, insouciantly, the teachings of innumerable of his predecessors.

The logical failure is at work in the text of a recent document on Christian-Jewish dialogue issued by the *Commission of Religious Relations with Jews*, a Vatican sub-dicastery, entitled "The Gifts and Calling of God are Irrevocable". That document cites Vatican II's Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*) as authority for the proposition that the "universal and therefore also exclusive mediation of salvation through Jesus Christ" may be read consistently with a denial that this demands that the Church of Jesus Christ has superseded the Jewish religion.

To mark the anniversary of *Mortalium Animos*, Pius XI's encyclical (on the Feast of the Epiphany, 1928) in which the Church's understanding of religious unity was

concisely expressed, *Rorate caeli* featured a comment on the understanding of ecumenism by Vatican II's bishops by Don Pietro Leone footnoted below.²⁹⁶ Don Leone agrees that the bishops of Vatican II breached the principle of non-contradiction.

Italian philosopher, Paolo Pasqualucci, has produced a list of twenty six departures from Catholic principle in the Council's documents which he refers to as 'points of rupture'. The list, reproduced on the website *OnePeterFive*, is taken from the Introduction to his book *Unam Sanctam* (Chieti, 2013).²⁹⁷ These 'points of rupture' are no news to those who have studied the Council and its ravaging effects on the faith and faithful over fifty years. Indeed on some matters, such as the errors in *Dignitatis Humanae*, Pasqualucci could have gone much further. Historian H J A Sire has written in his celebrated work *Phoenix from the Ashes*:

"The fact needs to be clearly stated: the Second Vatican Council was a betrayal of the Church's faith. Its consequences cannot be put right until that betrayal has been recognised and reversed."²⁹⁸

The question can only be determined by a meeting of the Church's bishops with the approval of the Pope under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in what would be truly an ecumenical council because summoned to resolve a problem threatening the Church's very life. But before this can occur there is a threshold to be crossed—the bishops must be moved to act. Theologian John Lamont put the dilemma succinctly in February 2018:

"[The] almost unanimous betrayal of their office by Catholic bishops, and the episcopal infidelity that this betrayal reveals, is the fundamental problem in the Church."²⁹⁹

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Each of the academics cited above is a layman and criticism of the Council has been conducted in the main by members of the laity. Very few of the clergy have been prepared to join them. Given their duties of obedience and deference to the ruling mentality it is understandable that they should be reticent to challenge the Council's status. Yet obedience to Christ and respect for His Church must always take precedence over obedience to, and respect for, the Church's prelates.

But where is the bishop who is prepared to put Christ and His Church before Pope, cardinals and bishops?

²⁹⁶ <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2016/01/ecumenism-essay-on-ecumenism-by-don.html#more>

²⁹⁷ <https://onepeterfive.com/the-points-of-rupture-of-the-second-vatican-council-with-the-tradition-of-the-church-a-synopsis/>

²⁹⁸ *Phoenix From The Ashes: The Making, Unmaking, And Restoration Of Catholic Tradition* (Kettering Ohio, 2015) p. 205

²⁹⁹ *The Meaning Of Amoris Laetitia According To Pope Francis*, February, 2018 - <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2018/02/important-guest-essay-meaning-of-amoris.html>

The Holy Spirit is the Soul of the Church. When He decides the rot has gone far enough, a bishop or bishops will appear with the necessary courage. Christ's Church is ever the guardian and protector of the truth and to her alone it falls to determine the matter as, in the fullness of time, she will.

The Threshold Issue

Acknowledgement by the bishops of the Catholic Church, severally and collectively, that they are bound to examine the claim that the Second Vatican Council was a general, or ecumenical, council.
