

## FROM THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL TO THE SYNOD

We commend to our readers a paper given by Robert de Mattei as the Michael Davies Memorial Lecture in London on Friday, 10th July 2015, after requiem Mass at the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption and St Gregory, Warwick Street, entitled *From the Second Vatican Council to the Synod : the Teaching of Michael Davies*. The paper may be viewed on the Rorate Caeli blogsite—<http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2015/07/exclusive-for-rorate-michael-davies.html#more>—or, for those who so desire, via a pdf file listed at the end of this commentary. Professor de Mattei holds the chair of Modern History and Christian History at Rome's European University.

His paper provides valuable background information in respect of both the Vatican Council of 1870 and the Second Vatican Council. Of particular interest are Professor de Mattei's comments as to the rigorous control exercised by Pius IX over the first Council, his noting of Cardinal Manning's assessment of the misreporting of its proceedings and the secular attempts to mock the arguments of participants and diminish the Council's determinations. These attacks, foiled effectively at the first Council, were renewed to much greater effect at the second. He is critical of the railroading of Vatican II's order and procedure by a coterie of bishops with a political rather than Catholic agenda, and of many of the determinations the Council issued. Perhaps his most acerbic comment, made in passing, has to do with Pope Benedict's assertion that the texts of Vatican II had been distorted by an abusive post conciliar praxis. He sees in the Pope's abdication "an admittance of the failure of this hermeneutical line." We agree with his later comment, "The problem of the relationship between the crisis of faith and the Second Vatican Council demands... an answer not only on the hermeneutical level, but also, if not chiefly, on the historical level."

Visitors to this website who may have reservations about our attitude to Vatican II will find in Professor de Mattei's analysis much food for thought.

Michael Baker

15th July 2015—St Bonaventure, Bishop, Doctor

## Appendix

Exclusive for Rorate Caeli <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/>

### Michael Davies Memorial Lecture by Roberto de Mattei

#### From the Second Vatican Council to the Synod: The Teaching of Michael Davies

Roberto de Mattei

Dear friends,

It's an honour and a pleasure for me to be here to speak about the work of Michael Davies, whom I met personally and consider one of the few true defenders of the Catholic faith of the 20th century.

His books anticipate those of Romano Amerio <sup>1</sup> and Monsignor Gherardini <sup>2</sup> and my History of the Second Vatican Council II is also indebted to them.<sup>3</sup>

In the first paragraph of his book *Cranmer's Godly Order* (published in 1976) Michael Davies wrote that the Church was going through "*the greatest crisis since the Protestant Reformation, quite possibly the greatest since the Arian heresy*". For Davies this crisis has its most recent roots in the Second Vatican Council to which he dedicated an entire volume, the second of his memorable trilogy, *The Liturgical Revolution*.<sup>4</sup>

He returned to Vatican II in 1992 with another important book: *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty* <sup>5</sup>. The problems relating to the liturgy and religious liberty at first glance, appear distant from each other but actually have a common origin in the Second Vatican Council and its consequences.

In this conference, I'll be focusing on the fundamental aspect of Mr. Davies' work: that is, his contribution to the understanding of Vatican II and its aftermath.

#### **The convocation of the Second Vatican Council**

On October 9<sup>th</sup> 1958 Pope Pius XII died. On January 25<sup>th</sup> 1959, only three months after his election to the papal throne, the new Pope, John XXIII, announced the convocation of the Second Vatican Council.

Davies retraces Vatican II starting from its convocation, by using the words of Cardinal Pietro Sforza Pallavicino (1607-1667), a historian of the Council of Trent,

quoted by Cardinal Manning: "... to convoke a General Council, except when absolutely demanded by necessity, is to tempt God"<sup>6</sup>.

This was not what some conservative cardinals thought, seeing that from the moment John XXIII was elected, they encouraged him to convoke an ecumenical Council. The First Vatican Council had been brusquely interrupted by the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, and these cardinals imagined its continuation – in their intentions - would be culminated with the drafting of a "Syllabus" of contemporary errors. They counted on the support of Monsignor Domenico Tardini, seeing that they had imposed on John XXIII, Tardini's nomination as cardinal and Secretary of State, as a condition for his election to the Papacy.

Monsignor Tardini's unexpected death on July 30th 1961, while the preparatory phase for the Council was in progress, upset these plans. The conservative cardinals also, overestimated the strength of the Roman Curia and underestimated their adversaries, who were forming a powerful and well-organized party. In his book, *The Rhine flows into the Tiber*, Father Ralph Wiltgen, was the first to reveal the existence of this organized structure.<sup>7</sup> In my book about the Council I reported new elements based on the memories of some protagonists and some archival documents, which came to light in recent years.

In June 1962, when the first seven schemas of the conciliar constitutions (which had been worked on by ten committees for three years under the supervision of Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani) were submitted to the Pope, John XXIII was still convinced that the Council would have been closed by December. The Pope approved the preparatory schemas and in July, three months before the opening of the Council, ordered that they be sent to all the Council Fathers, as a basis for discussion at the general congregations.

The Second Vatican Council opened in St. Peter's Basilica on October 11<sup>th</sup> 1962.

In all Revolutions, the decisive moment is the first act, since it contains in itself the seeds of its subsequent development. The entire history of the French Revolution, for instance, is found in the first two months, of June and July 1789, when the procedural coup d'état happened: the transformation of the general States into the Constituent Assembly. Also at Vatican II there was a decisive juridical coup d'état in the first week, which Davies highlighted very well by defining it a "blitzkrieg", a "lightening war". Professor Paolo Pasqualucci, a philosopher of Italian Law, recently dedicated a small volume to what he defined as the "procedural brigandage" of the first days.<sup>8</sup>

The progressive party obtained the re-mixing of the votes for the Commissions with a first “blitzkrieg” and with a second one were able to monopolize the Commissions, by inserting their own men - along with some sympathizers - into them. Right from the dawn of the Council, the Rhine began flowing into the Tiber.

Another significant alteration to the procedures was the “new” rule that stated it was enough for a minimum of 5 members in each Commission to approve any amendment. An interesting coincidence – notes Davies – that the group of Fathers from Central Europe had no less than 5 of its representatives in each Commission. The periti (experts) were also given the chance to speak during the debates, at least on some occasions. Michael Davies, in the wake of Father Wiltgen, notes that with good reason, Vatican II was defined as “the Council of periti”. The periti – defined by Davies, as “*the shock troops of the liberal forces*”<sup>9</sup> – had an incredible influence, much, much greater than most of the Council Fathers had.

It was precisely those periti that should get the credit for perhaps the progressives’ most resounding victory in the conciliar hall: the rejection of all the preparatory schemas – [which were] perfectly orthodox, in conformity with the doctrine of the Church and fruit of the diligent work of 871 experts. Two years it had taken to finish those precious schemas which the conciliar assembly threw literally into the dust-bin - through an irregular procedure - lacking 2/3 of the votes required. Bishop William Adrian from Nashville, Tennessee, wrote in no uncertain terms that the European periti had imbibed the pernicious errors of Teilhard de Chardin and situation-ethics, - errors which in the final analysis destroy the faith, morals and any established authority. “*These liberal theologians seized on the Council as the means of decatholicizing the Catholic Church while pretending only to de-Romanize it*”<sup>10</sup> .

Cardinal Heenan didn’t hesitate in saying that John XXIII’s Council “*provided an excuse for rejecting so much of the Catholic doctrine which he wholeheartedly accepted*”. The perfectly efficient organisation of the Rhine Fathers allowed them to arrive in Rome in a similar way to a well-formed [political]party with very precise politics to follow and clear aims to achieve. The other Fathers arrived in Rome just as simple “Catholics” without even knowing the exact reason for that convocation. Cardinal Heenan explains how most of the British and American bishops arrived in Rome in absolute ignorance of what was about to happen and, most of all, unaware of how “ecumania” as Heenan defined it, had infected their European confreres. The German Bishops, in particular, had made ecumenism almost into a religion. Heenan affirmed that John XXIII had seen the Council like “*an episcopal safari*”. But, before the

end of the first session, “ (Pope John) must have thought of his Council less like a safari than a siege”<sup>11</sup>.

The day after the opening of the Council, John XXIII, like Frankenstein, realized he had given birth to a creature - the Council - that he couldn't control anymore. When he died on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1963, the Council was firmly in the hands of the progressives.

In order to be sure of completely dominating the Council, the Rhine Fathers had to be certain that the procedures were altered so as to weaken the Roman Curia's influence, which the new Pope, Paul VI, did without any qualms, by nominating 4 cardinals as “moderators” who would be responsible for “*directing the activities of the Council and determining the sequence in which topics would be discussed at the business meetings*”<sup>12</sup>. When the names of three of the four cardinals were made known (Döpfner, Lercaro, and Suenens) the direction in which the Council was heading was very clear. At the third session, when the *Coetus Internationalis Patrum* was formed, it was already too late to resist the advance of the progressives. The liberals and the “periti” had already absolute monopoly of the Council.

### **Ambiguous texts and time-bombs**

Another victory for the progressives - and perhaps the most devastating - was that of having inserted into the conciliar texts, what Michael Davies, drawing on Monsignor Lefebvre's expression, defined with eloquent imagery as the “time-bombs”<sup>13</sup>. These bombs would have been set-off by the periti following the Council, after they had taken control of the Commissions for the implementing of the texts. These “time-bombs” consisted of: 1. *Ambiguous passages* inserted by the Fathers and the periti which weakened traditional doctrine as they had abandoned traditional language; 2. *Omissions*; sometimes more dangerous than the heterodox phrases; 3. *Ambiguous phrases* which seemed to favour or at least seemed to be compatible with a non-Catholic interpretation of the texts. In a nutshell, they were formulas that could have been interpreted in both the traditional sense or the liberal sense.

The compromise present in the texts was also due - if not prevalently - to “ecumania” - the ecumenical mania, “*almost a religion of ecumenism*”, according to Cardinal Heenan <sup>14</sup> - which was in the very air of the conciliar hall. Monsignor Luigi Carli, Bishop of Segni, ended up complaining, that in order to avoid damaging ecumenism, you couldn't talk anymore about the Blessed Virgin, nobody could be

called a heretic anymore, the expression - the Church Militant - couldn't be used anymore and the powers of the Catholic Church couldn't be referred to anymore.

The lack of precision in the texts was justified by the pastoral non-dogmatic orientation of the Council. There was no definition authorized. Everything was discussed, but nothing was defined as it was a pastoral Council. The pastoral dimension, in itself accidental and secondary in respect to the doctrinal dimension, in reality, turned out to be the priority, producing a revolution in style, language and mentality.

### **The failure to condemn Communism**

Each one of the 20 Councils prior to Vatican II had been convoked to extinguish heresies or to correct the most grave evils of the times. The "gravest evil" of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was certainly Communism. Its condemnation would have justified the convocation of the conciliar assizes. Nonetheless, paradoxically – Communism was precisely the evil that Vatican II did all the summersaults it could to AVOID condemning.

Up until the Second Vatican Council, the Magisterium of the Catholic Church had denounced Communism repeatedly in words of clear condemnation. John XXIII's predecessors had condemned Communism declaring the total incompatibility between this "intrinsically perverse" (Pius XI) ideology and the Catholic Church. In the *vota* of the Conciliar Fathers who came to Rome before the celebration of the assizes, Communism seemed the gravest error to condemn. Even if more than 200 Fathers from 46 different countries had asked for a clear rejection of the errors of Marxism in the Second Session; even if the *Cætus Internationalis* had laid out a petition containing exactly 10 reasons for which Communism had to be condemned, informing the assembly that an abstention in this sense would have involved a repudiation of the Council – and rightly so – for its silence on Communism which would have been interpreted as a sign of cowardice and connivance - -the Council – through a clearly altered voting procedure– didn't condemn Communism but sought dialogue with it 15.

Today we can say that the Conciliar assizes would have been the perfect place to initiate a trial against Communism similar to the one in Nuremberg against National Socialism; not a trial of a penal nature, and neither a trial *ex post* of the victors over the defeated, which Nuremberg was, but a cultural and moral trial, *ex ante* of the

victims with regard to the persecutors, as the so-called dissidents had already begun to do.

*“Every time an Ecumenical Council met – Cardinal Antonio Bacci declared in the hall – it always resolved the great problems that were troubling that period and condemned the errors of the time. Silence on this issue, I believe would be an unforgivable lacuna, actually, a collective sin. [...] This is the great theoretical and practical heresy of our times; and if the Council does not deal with it, it may give the impression of a failed Council”.*

The constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, which was the sixteenth and last document promulgated by the Second Vatican Council, intended a completely new definition of relations between the Church and the world. In it there was no condemnation of Communism in any form.

Many times in the course of his studies on the Second Vatican Council, Davies insisted on the fact that the Holy Spirit was assisting the Council, even if [it was] merely pastoral, from falling into heresy. Which means, however, he repeats, that it doesn't indicate the Council *“has said all that needed to be said on any particular topic, or even that what it does say is phrased in the clearest or most prudent manner”*<sup>16</sup>. The failure to condemn Communism is evidently one of those omissions – perhaps the gravest – to which the Second Vatican Council will [have to] respond to God and mankind for.

What was the reason for the failure to condemn Communism? Today we know that in August 1962, in the small French town of Metz, a secret accord was stipulated between Cardinal Tisserant, the Vatican representative, and the new Orthodox Archbishop of Yaroslavl, Monsignor Nicodemus, who was an agent for the KGB, - this as was documented after the opening of the archives in Moscow. On the basis of this accord the ecclesiastical authorities agreed not to discuss Communism at the Council. This was the condition requested by the Kremlin which would permit the participation of observers from the Patriarchate of Moscow at the Council.

In the Secret Vatican Archives, I found a note in Paul VI's own handwriting that confirms the existence of this agreement. Other documents of particular interest were published by George Weigel in the second volume of his impressive biography on John Paul II. Weigel, in fact, consulted sources such as the KGB archives of the Polish *Sluzba Bezpieczenstwa* (SB) and the East German Stasi. The documents confirm how the Communist governments and the secret services of eastern countries penetrated the Vatican to favour their interests and infiltrate the highest ranks of the Catholic hierarchy.

But this is not enough to explain the missing condemnation. In reality what we have here is a new theology of history. In 1925, Pius XI's encyclical (*Quas Primas*) - its

90<sup>th</sup> anniversary falls this year - had presented to Catholics a theology of history based on the Social Kingship of Christ. The work by Jaques Maritain, *Integral Humanism* 17, appeared in 1936, and was the manifesto for a new philosophy of history and society which offered the basis for an evolution of Catholic thought in the opposite sense of the theology of history outlined in *Quas Primas*. In the final analysis, *Integral Humanism* embraces the principles of the French Revolution - condemned by the Pontifical Magisterium - and destined to infiltrate massively, from then on, into Catholic environments, all to the benefit of socialism and "progressivism".

The spirit of "ecumania" which raged in the Second Vatican Council, - according to Davies - was integral humanism, a philosophy, at least implicitly, which denies the right of the Church to intervene in the social order; in other terms, it is: "*a denial of the social kingship of Jesus Christ*"<sup>18</sup>. The consequence - explains Davies - is that "*the Church must take her place on equal terms with other religions and philosophies within a world which had a duty not to command but to serve*"<sup>19</sup>. Maritain dreamed of "universal brotherhood" which the Church had to be the inspiration of or the "big sister". And for the "big sister" to win over her "little brother" - the world - she must not be intransigent nor authoritarian. She must make religion acceptable. And for the truth of faith and morals to be acceptable, Christianity "*must be practical rather than dogmatic*"<sup>20</sup>. Now, it is well-known that Paul VI was an admirer and disciple of Jaques Maritain. For this - according to Davies - the enigma of Paul VI can only be understood in the context of his adhesion to **integral humanism**.

In "The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty", Michael Davies, contrasted the doctrine of the Social Kingship of Christ to the principal of religious liberty enunciated in the declaration of *Dignitatis Humanæ*. One of the Protestant observers present at the Council, the theologian Oscar Cullman, didn't hesitate in saying that "*the definitive texts are for the most part compromise texts*"<sup>21</sup>. According to Davies "*There is no document of the Second Vatican Council to which these comments are more applicable than Dignitatis humanae*"<sup>22</sup>.

Davies often quotes an author who should never be forgotten: Hamish Fraser. In the February 1976 issue of *Approaches*, Hamish Fraser stated that *Quas Primas* is virtually ignored by the so-called Catholic nations and by the Catholic clergy. It was, he lamented, the greatest non-event in the entire history of the Church. Certainly it was a great non-event, a great omission by the Second Vatican Council. The refusal of the Kingship of Christ is at the origins of an itinerary of apostasy that has brought Catholic countries to legalize divorce, abortion, in-vitro-fertilization and sodomy.

Ten years later in 1986, when the liberal Prime Minister of Ireland, Garret Fitzgerald organized a referendum which he believed, would authorise his government to legalize divorce, Hamish Fraser commented on the result with these words:

“In a hundred year’s time, the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 1986 should be recalled as one of the most memorable days in Irish history. For on that day, by an overwhelming majority (63,5% against, 36,5% for) – the Irish people voted “No” in the Referendum which was intended to obtain their permission to legalize divorce in the Republic” 23.

Less than thirty years later, on May 22nd 2015, Ireland introduced an even more memorable date into its history: the day the Irish people - with the same percentages – approved homosexual unions in the Republic. The responsibilities of this apostasy, go back to the liberal orientation of the ecclesiastical authorities – both Irish and international – on the basis of *Dignitas Humanae* and the spirit of Vatican II.

### **The role of the media**

In the creating of the so-called “spirit of Vatican II”, the media – and the press in particular – played a decisive role. Davies notes that something similar had already occurred a century before, at Vatican I, so much as to conclude that “*the animating force behind the two campaigns was the same*”<sup>24</sup>. Cardinal Manning’s testimony – which Davies reports in Appendix III of his book - *Pope John’s Council* – is extremely interesting. According to the great English Cardinal, at Vatican I the idea was circulated that the Council would have rejected the doctrines of Trent, or would have given them a more open significance, or would have re-opened discussions considered closed, or a compromise would have been reached with other religions, or at least it would have adapted the dogmatic inflexibility of Tradition to modern thought and theology. “*This belief excited an expectation, mixed with hopes, that Rome by becoming comprehensive might become approachable, or by becoming inconsistent might become powerless over the reason and will of men*”<sup>25</sup>.

At the time of the First Vatican Council, the media wanted to obstruct the proclamation of papal infallibility. We’re talking here about the anti-Catholic press which held worldwide control. When the media had singled out some bishop opposed to dogmatic definition, they launched a campaign in his favour. This minority of opposers was naturally exaggerated by the media. Suddenly, explains Cardinal Manning: “*all the world rose up to meet them. Governments, politicians, newspapers, schismatical, heretical, infidel, Jewish, revolutionary, as with one unerring instinct, united in*

*extolling and setting forth the virtue, learning, science, eloquence, nobleness, heroism of this 'international opposition'. With an iteration truly Homeric, certain epithets were perpetually linked to certain names. All who were against Rome were written up; all who were for Rome were written down"*26.

Cardinal Manning carefully followed what the international press reported on the Council. When he was asked by England what was to be believed from the reports of the media: *"Read carefully the correspondence from Rome published in England, believe the reverse and you will not be far from the truth"*27. The Cardinal noted how well prepared and organized beforehand the media campaign was in its attack against the First Vatican Council. *"A league of newspapers fed from a common centre, diffused hope and confidence in all countries, that the science and enlightenment of the minority would save the Catholic Church from the immoderate pretension of Rome, and the superstitious ignorance of the universal Episcopate 28"*.

But the campaign against the First Vatican Council – and here lies the difference with the Second Vatican Council – failed. It failed, writes Davies, because Pius IX resisted like an immovable rock, he condemned the errors, and to those who called for adapting the truth to modern times, he replied by confirming the clarity of Trent. In spite of the prophecies of doom that (even in those times!) insinuated the dogma of papal infallibility was nothing less than the Church's last breath, pontifical authority emerged stronger and more vigorous than ever. The world's hate for the Church was made manifest, and, at the same time, the Divine nature of the Bride of Christ was made manifest. Pius IX followed the example of Christ. The great storm that hit him immediately after the Vatican Council I was nothing other than the sign of his complete belonging to the Passion of Christ.

Quite different was the fate of the mass-media at the Second Vatican Council. Father Louis Bouyer (1913 – 2004) a liturgist, converted from Lutheranism to Catholicism, didn't hesitate in saying – if - as was said, the Council had been freed from the tyranny of the Roman Curia – it had however, been handed over to the dictatorship of journalists, and *"particularly the most incompetent and irresponsible among them"*29. These were almost *in toto* collaborators with the Rhine Fathers and the periti. There were key-words that the journalists of Vatican II used with dramatic skill: opening, dialogue with the world, the needs of the modern world, aggiornamento (updating), but above all "the spirit of Vatican II". However, there was a slogan, according to Davis – that became a sort of article of faith: "public opinion". It is a well-known fact that public opinion, which the press should reflect, is on the contrary ably manipulated by the press itself, thus conditioning its effect on

the public. They even went as far as calling public opinion “the modern magisterium”. But that wasn’t even enough. “*The theory that God teaches the Bishops through the instrumentality of the liberal press*” was diffused, with the aberrant conclusion that “*the Catholic journalist is the theologian of the present day*”<sup>30</sup>.

The press created their very own myth of conciliar “heroes” such as Cardinals Bea and Suenens or the theologian Kung<sup>31</sup>. It divided the conciliar Fathers into “the good and “the bad”. The good were the progressives, the bad the traditionalists. The progressives were described as fine men endowed with superhuman intellectual gifts, enveloped in a romantic and captivating light, even calling their actions – for example when they spoke about ecumenism - “sacramentals”. Yes, comments Davies, when Vatican II is discussed they’re “*sacramental discussions*”!

The conservative conciliar Fathers were looked upon with suspicion and described as men of the Curia with no brains. Monsignor Luigi Carli, one of the protagonists of the conservative resistance, was described, for example, as the man with the “pathetic voice<sup>32</sup>” when he spoke in the council hall favouring the Petrine Primacy and against the collegiality of Bishops. Some journalists like the correspondent for “Le Monde”, Henri Fesquet, had no problem in thinking his own ideas much better than those of any bishop who had the temerity to distance himself from the prefabricated consensus (by the periti and the mass-media) which the Fathers had to accept.

The role of the media at the Council was the centre of numerous discourses by Benedict XVI, from his famous one to the Roman Curia on December 22<sup>nd</sup> 2005 to the last, no less important, on February 14<sup>th</sup> 2013 to the Roman Clergy, three days after announcing his abdication. He maintained the thesis, that a virtual Council, imposed by the means of communication, had betrayed the real Council, which was expressed in the conclusive documents of Vatican II. It is to these texts, distorted by post-conciliar abusive praxis, that we should return to re-discover the truth of the Council. And yet the renunciation of Pope Benedict’s papacy reveals itself to be, in my view, an admittance of the failure of this hermeneutical line.

Indeed, what’s real in the age of communication is what’s communicated and how it’s communicated. The Council of the media was no less real than the one of the documents, so much so, that the thesis could be sustained - if there had been a virtual Council – it was precisely the one of the 16 official documents of the Council, left in the Holy See’s archives, but never absorbed into concrete historical reality. The problem of the relationship between the crisis of the faith and the Second Vatican Council demands, in my view, an answer not only on the hermeneutical level, but

also, if not chiefly, on the historical level. The problem is not the interpretation of the Council documents but the judging of Vatican II as a historical reality. And this is Michael Davies' precious contribution.

### **The status of the documents**

After 50 years, the long, interminable hermeneutical diatribe on the texts produced by the Council has substantially come to nothing. Michael Davies, in the general brawl of the immediate post-council, understood at once that *"no one, whatever his rank, can compel us to accept an interpretation of moral or doctrinal teaching in a conciliar document which conflicts with the previous teaching of the Church"*<sup>33</sup>. Davies refers back to Newman who asserted that when a new form is not faithful to the idea that it attempts to express better, such a new form is an unfaithful and false development *"more properly called a corruption"*. Citing Bellarmine, Cardinal Newman recalls that: *"All Catholics and heretics agree in two things: first that it is possible for a pope, even as Pope, and with his own assembly of councillors, or with a General Council, to err in particular controversies of fact, which chiefly depend on human information and testimony..."*<sup>34</sup>.

The weak point in the Council's documents for M. Davies is in the fact that they don't always say everything that they should say and thus they leave the door open for a modernist interpretation of the texts. It's also true that many abuses diffused after the Council don't have a direct counterpart in the conciliar documents, but *"the Council cannot be exonerated from responsibility for such abuses"*. Moreover *"the fact that they have the approval of the Vatican – adds Davies – does not in any way affect the fact that they are abuses"*<sup>35</sup>. M. Davies reflects in a special way on *Sacrosanctum Concilium* noting that the Commission for its application, the so called Consilium, was formed mainly by progressives with the surprising addition of 6 Protestant observers. In other words, notes Davies, *"the liberals had constructed the Liturgy Constitution as a weapon with which to initiate a revolution and the Council Fathers then placed this weapon in the hands of the very men who had forged it"*<sup>36</sup>, who – as Archbishop R.J. Dwyer said – were men *"either unscrupulous or incompetent"*<sup>37</sup>.

It's a fact that Archdeacon Pawley, had recognised that the Council's liturgical reform not only matched Cramner's but actually outdid it <sup>38</sup>. It's useful to cite Cardinal Heenan once more: *There is a certain poetic justice – he said – in the humiliation of the Catholic Church at the hands of liturgical anarchists. Catholics used to laugh at Anglicans for being 'high' or 'low'... The old boast that the Mass is everywhere the same and that Catholics are happy whichever priest celebrates is no longer true. When on 7th December,*

1962 the bishops voted overwhelmingly (1922 against 11) in favour of the first chapter of the Constitution on the Liturgy they did not realize that they were initiating a process which after the Council would cause confusion and bitterness throughout the Church" 39.

With regard to SC, - but it applies to all the documents - the only consolation – which indicates the Holy Spirit didn't abandon the Church – is in the fact that *"this promulgation would be disciplinary not doctrinal in character, and as a consequence would not involve the Church's infallibility"* 40.

### **Towards the upcoming Synod: Gaudium et Spes, the warning sign of moral collapse**

Reading M. Davies' work can help us understand the present crisis. We are now faced with a Synod of Bishops on the Family that seems to be questioning the indissolubility of marriage and opening the door to homosexual couples. If Michael Davies were alive, he would perhaps see its origins in the abandonment of the original schema on Marriage and the Family at Vatican II, substituted by a few ambiguous passages in Gaudium et Spes. M. Davies individuated immediately the dangers lurking in GS on the inversion of the ends of marriage. Indeed, by placing procreation after conjugal love, all of Catholic morality was altered. Davies reports the Master General of the Dominicans, Cardinal Browne's warning – during a conciliar session – he rose to his feet and said in a loud voice: *"Caveatis, caveatis! If we accept this definition we are going against the whole tradition of the Church and we shall pervert the whole meaning of marriage"* 41.

If the first end of marriage is not procreation, it has its highest expression in conjugal love - but the love of the spouses comes from an act of the will and an act of the will can decree its end. If morality is not rooted in nature, but in the person, the relationship of the couple prevails over the objective good of the family. And if the primacy of inter-personal relations is established, this principle is condemned to extend to extra-marital relations and then, from heterosexual to homosexual relations.

According to M. Davies, the eternal enmity between the Augustinian City of God and the City of Man, appears to be extinct in GS. *"While there are statements in GS which insist that the heavenly kingdom is still the primary goal of the Church, it is beyond dispute that the document displays a pervasive and obsessive preoccupation with the earthly Kingdom. If the amount of print devoted to the former and the latter is compared, the contrast*

*is both startling and depressing. It is replete with the spirit of Integral Humanism and Sillonism”*<sup>42</sup>.

### **Michael Davies’ legacy**

The Synod’s enemies, in part, are the same ones as Vatican II: with an aggravating factor, which is - while the forces at the Council were in some way outside the Church, now they are inside, in the sense that - after 50 years of post-Council devastation - Bishops and Cardinals don’t even hide their admiration for Luther, nor for the Communist ideology, today presented in terms of Eco-liberation Theology. Most of the mass-media is in the hands of the Church’s enemies and their influence is etched into public opinion in an increasingly aggressive manner - in respect to the Vatican II years -which, as Davies stated, they themselves have created.

However now we have an advantage, which is - having the experience of the Council behind us, when the Church’s enemies prevailed in some way because the good people were not prepared, we can and we must organize a resistance which doesn’t **again** catch real Catholics by surprise. Let’s not forget, as Cardinal Newman reminds us, that “ *At the time of Arianism it was the fidelity of the lay that saved the Church.*”

I think that M. Davies would have invited Catholics worthy of this name - first and foremost, to take up supernatural arms- the most important certainly being the Traditional Latin Mass, Michael Davies’ great love, for which he laudably ‘spilled rivers of ink’, driven by the holy zeal, with which he loved and adored what Father Faber called “*the most beautiful thing this side of Heaven*”.

Spiritual means must be the spirit of natural means. These can consist in the fitting and proper use of the mass-media (which the enemies use to serve the world and its Prince) to defend traditional values. We should create “little forts of resistance” to defend Tradition and the unchangeable doctrine of the Church; **we should** study well, as M. Davies did, the limits of obedience to the Pope and the “fluid” Magisterium he offers daily, holding dearly, on this issue, to the teaching of the great English Cardinal, J.H. Newman, whom M. Davies admired as he did Cardinal Manning<sup>43</sup>. I know he was the object of criticism for his admiration of Newman, considered a liberal by some traditionalists. Newman’s anti-liberal orthodoxy was, however, confirmed not only by Leo XIII, who made him a cardinal, but also by St. Pius X in his papal brief to the Bishop of Limerick of March 10<sup>th</sup> 1908. As far as I’m concerned, I can say that if I had lived at the time of the First Vatican Council, I would have been with Manning,

against Newman. But since I live in the times of Vatican II, I think that Cardinal Newman, in his works, most of all the one dedicated to the Arians of the IV century, offer us better arms than Manning's to combat the Modernists who have taken over the running of the Church.

Davies attributes part of the conciliar disaster also to a false obedience Catholics think is due to the Pope. Von Hildebrand, affirms that deeming every Papal decision inspired by God, and thus not subject to any criticism, "*places insoluble problems before the faithful in regard to the history of the Church*"<sup>44</sup>. Cardinal Manning, himself - one of the most ultramontane cardinals at Vatican I - said: "*Infallibility is not a quality inherent in any person, but an assistance attached to an office*"<sup>45</sup>. The First Vatican Council doesn't teach the charism of infallibility is ALWAYS present in the Vicar of Christ, but simply that *it is not absent* in the exercise of his office in its supreme form, that is, when the Sovereign Pontiff teaches as universal Shepherd, *ex cathedra*, in matters of faith and morals<sup>46</sup>.

The upcoming Synod will have the family and all the problems relating to it as its theme - which M. Davies foresaw as a direct consequence of GS in which the ends of marriage were inverted and a clear condemnation on contraception was omitted. - , in particular, divorce and possible Communion for the divorced and remarried. In this case, the case of divorce, "Catholic" England is on the front line and strong in its history and martyrs and thus called to give a special witness to the Faith. Five hundred years ago, it was a divorce that caused the Anglican Schism. We know what defection was like among the clergy and the people, which must be deplored, but we also know about the heroic witness of many martyrs, whom we still venerate, who by opposing that divorce, paid for it with their lives. It's certainly no coincidence that in the doctrinal and moral confusion of that time, the first consistent group to raise their voice came from England. Here the blood of the great martyrs of the 16th century - such as Bishop John Fisher and Thomas More - still testify that marriage is of Divine right and nobody, not even "the Church has any power over it" (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger).

And if this voice continues to go unheeded, what Michael Davies wrote in 1977 ought to be remembered: "*no one, whatever his rank, can compel us to accept an interpretation of moral or doctrinal teaching in a conciliar document which conflicts with the previous teaching of the Church*".

If a direction contrary to the traditional teaching of the Church should be imposed at the next Synod, we need to stay faithful to the Church's unchangeable

doctrine, mindful of St. Thomas More's words: "If I have all the bishops against me, I have all the Saints and Doctors of the Church with me."

Roberto de Mattei

Translation: Francesca Romana

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Notes:

- 1 Romano Amerio, *Iota unum*, Ricciardi, Milano-Napoli 1985, translated into six languages.
- 2 Mons. Brunero Gherardini, *Vatican II A Much Needed Discussion*, Casa Mariana, Frigento 2009; *Un Concilio mancato, (A Council that Failed)* Lindau, Torino 2011; *Vaticano II, alla radice di un equivoco, (Vatican II, The Roots of a Misunderstanding)* Lindau, Turin 2012.
- 3 *The Second Vatican Council, An Unwritten Story*, Lindau, Turin 2011.
- 4 *Pope John's Council*, Augustine Publishing Company, Chawleigh, Chulmleigh (Devon) 1977.
- 5 *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, The Neumann Press, Long Prairie (Minnesota) 1992.
- 6 H. Manning, *Petri Privilegium*, Three Pastoral Letters to the Clergy of the Diocese, III, Londra 1871, p. 24, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 3.
- 7 Ralph M. Wiltgen, *The Rhine flows into the Tiber*, Hawthorn Books, London 1967.
- 8 Paolo Pasqualucci, *Il Concilio parallelo. L'inizio anomalo del Vaticano II, (The Second Vatican Council. The Irregular Beginnings of Vatican II,)* Fede e Cultura, Verona 2014,
- 9 *Pope John's Council*, p. 45.
- 10 Bishop W. Adrian, of Nashville (Tennessee), *The Wanderer*, 1 August and 8 August 1969, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 44.
- 11 J. Heenan, *A Crown of Thorns*, Londra 1974, p. 354, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 11.
- 12 Ralph M. Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber*, p. 82, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 34.
- 13 *Pope John's Council*, pp. 52-78.
- 14 J. Heenan, *A Crown of Thorns*, p. 339.
- 15 M. Davies dedicated a whole chapter to this thorny and controversial issue in his book, *Pope John's Council*, with the title "Left Turn" (pp.139-157)
- 16 *Ivi*, p. 153.
- 17 JACQUES MARITAIN, *Humanisme intégral. Problèmes temporels et spirituels d'une nouvelle chrétienté*, Aubier-Montaigne, Paris 1936, ora in JACQUES e RAISSA MARITAIN, *Oeuvres complètes*, Editions Universitaires, Fribourg 1984, vol. VI, pp. 293-642..
- 18 *Pope John's Council*, p. 178.

- 19 *Ivi*, p. 179.
- 20 H. Le Caron, *Le Courrier de Rome*, 15 October 1975, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 181.
- 21 Henri Fesquet, *Le Journal du Council*, H. Morel 1964, pp. 517-518, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 56.
- 22 *Religious Liberty*, p. 174.
- 23 *Religious Liberty*, p.185.
- 24 *Pope John's Council*, p. 264.
- 25 L.-J.Suenens, *La Croix*, 6 April 1965, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 91.
- 26 Cf *Pope John's Council*, App. IV, pp. 270ss.
- 27 *Ivi*, p. 273.
- 28 *Ivi*, p. 212.
- 29 J. H. Newman, *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, London 1974, Ch. II, Sec. II., p. 11, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 212.
- 30 *Pope John's Council*, p. 214.
- 31 *Ivi*, p. 226.
- 32 R. J. Dwyer, *The Tidings*, 9 July 1971, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 226.
- 33 Cf *Pope John's Council*, p. 242.
- 34 J. Heenan, *A Crown of Thorns*, p. 367, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 243.
- 35 X. Rynne, *The Second Session*, London 1964, p. 297, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 227.
- 36 M. Lefebvre, *Un Eveque Parle*, Parigi 1974, pp. 155-156, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 67.
- 37 *Pope John's Council*, p. 186.
- 38 *Lead Kindly Light: The Life of John Henry Newman*, Neumann Press, 2001
- 39 *Ivi*, p. 174.
- 40 H. Manning, *The True Story of the Vatican Council*, London 1877, p. 179, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 175.
- 41 Cf *Pope John's Council*, pp. 175-176.
- 42 *Pope John's Council*, p. 186.
- 43 *Lead Kindly Light: The Life of John Henry Newman*, Neumann Press, 2001
- 44 *Ivi*, p. 174.
- 45 H. Manning, *The True Story of the Vatican Council*, London 1877, p. 179, cited in *Pope John's Council*, p. 175.
- 46 Cf *Pope John's Council*, pp. 175-176.