

IS VATICAN II UNTOUCHABLE?

This is the title of the most recent offering of Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò published on the website OnePeterFive which continues the debate about the legitimacy, if not the validity, of the Second Vatican Council. It may be read on that website for the date September 21, 2020; it is reproduced in the Appendix for those who wish to read it here. Despite his previous avowed acknowledgement of the Council as a valid ecumenical council, the Archbishop has gone further than he has in any previous statement in casting doubts on its legitimacy. The reader should read his paper in full before returning to this commentary.

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The Archbishop distinguishes the Council's *form* from its *substance*. The reader should not treat these terms as reflecting a metaphysical analysis because 'form', in metaphysics, refers to the determining character of a (natural) thing and is identical with its 'substance'; indeed, 'substance' is simply short-hand for 'substantial form'. No. What the Archbishop means when he refers to the Council's 'form' is the claim, inherent in its title as an ecumenical (or general) council of the Catholic Church, that it has the authority to bind the Catholic faithful. And when the Archbishop speaks of the Council's 'substance' he is referring, contrastingly, to the reality in which heterodoxy was admixed with orthodoxy in a "jumble, of great, good, indifferent, bad, generic, ambiguous, problematic (and the) erroneous", as Dr Peter Kwasniewski has put it.

We have remarked how, despite the extent of their attacks on its shortcomings, the Council's various critics (including Dr Kwasniewski) have refrained from taking the logical step of expressing doubt as to whether Vatican II was in fact an ecumenical council.

Archbishop Viganò takes the criticisms a step further with his remarks here, notably the following:

"Archbishop Guido Pozzo's recent comments leads us to ask ourselves whether... by not remaining in the furrow of Tradition and by not being able to be read in the light of the whole Tradition, [the Council]... can actually be defined as [an ecumenical council]...

...

"[I]t is not possible to impose a Catholic interpretation on a proposition that, in itself, is manifestly heretical or close to heresy, simply because it is included in a text that has been declared magisterial [such as that contained in *Lumen Gentium* n. 16 respecting followers of the Mohammedan religion]... Belonging to any other religion is an impediment to the pursuit of eternal beatitude. Those who are saved, are saved because of at least an implicit desire to belong to the Church, and *despite* their adherence to a false religion – never by virtue of it.

...

"If the evidence shows that some propositions contained in the Council documents... are heterodox, and if doctrine teaches us that the acts of the Magisterium do not contain error, the conclusion is not that these propositions are not erroneous, but that *they cannot be part* of the Magisterium.

...

"If a conciliar text formulates an heretical concept, or one close to heresy, there is no hermeneutical criterion that can make it orthodox simply because that text belongs to the Acts of a Council. We all know what deceptions and skilful manoeuvres have been put in place by

ultra-progressive consultants and theologians, with the complicity of the modernist wing of the Council Fathers. And we also know with what complicity John XXIII and Paul VI approved this *coup de main* in violation of the norms which they themselves approved.

...

“The central vice therefore lies in having fraudulently led the Council Fathers to approve ambiguous texts—which they considered *Catholic enough* to deserve the *placet*—and then using that same ambiguity to get them to say exactly what the Innovators wanted. Those texts cannot today be changed in their substance to make them orthodox or clearer: they must simply be rejected—according to the forms that the supreme Authority of the Church shall judge appropriate in due course—since they are vitiated by a malicious intention. It will also have to be determined whether an anomalous and disastrous event such as Vatican II can still merit the title of Ecumenical Council once its heterogeneity, compared to previous councils, is universally recognised—a heterogeneity so evident that it requires the use of a hermeneutic, something that no other Council has ever needed...”

It is but a small step to asking the question whether the Second Vatican Council was in fact an ecumenical council. When the Holy Spirit is ready, a bishop will appear who will propose it for the consideration of his fellow successors of the Apostles. Hasten the Day!

Michael Baker

September 29th, 2020—*St Michael the Archangel*

Defend us in battle; be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil...

Appendix

ARCHBISHOP VIGANÒ: IS VATICAN II UNTOUCHABLE?

Peter Kwasniewski’s recent commentary, titled “*Why Viganò’s critique of the Council must be taken seriously*”, impressed me greatly. It appeared on *OnePeterFive*, on June 29, and is one of the articles on which I have been meaning to comment: I do so now, with gratitude to the author and publisher for the opportunity they have given me.

First, it seems to me that I can agree with practically all of what Kwasniewski has written: his analysis of the facts is extremely clear and polished and reflects my thoughts exactly. What I am particularly pleased about is that “*ever since Archbishop Viganò’s June 9 letter and his subsequent writing on the subject, people have been discussing what it might mean to ‘annul’ the Second Vatican Council*”.

I find it interesting that we are beginning to question a taboo that, for almost sixty years, has prevented any theological, sociological and historical criticism of the Council. This is particularly interesting given that Vatican II is regarded as untouchable, but this does not apply – according to its supporters – to any other magisterial document or to Sacred Scripture. We have read endless addresses in which the defenders of the Council have written off the *Canons of Trent*, the *Syllabus of Errors* of Blessed Pius IX, the encyclical *Pascendi* of St. Pius X, and *Humanae Vitae* and *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* of Paul VI (sic) as “outdated”. The change to the *Catechism of the Catholic*

Church, whereby the doctrine on the legitimacy of the death penalty was modified in the name of a “changed understanding” of the Gospel, shows that for the Innovators there is no dogma, no immutable principle that can be immune from revision or cancellation: the only exception is Vatican II, which by its nature – *ex se*, theologians would say – enjoys that charism of infallibility and inerrancy that is denied to the entire *depositum fidei*.

I have already expressed my opinion on the *hermeneutic of continuity* theorised by Benedict XVI, and constantly taken up by the defenders of Vatican II, who – certainly in good faith – seek to offer a reading of the Council that is harmonious with Tradition. It seems to me that the arguments in favour of the hermeneutical criterion, proposed for the first time in 2005^[1], are limited to a merely *theoretical* analysis of the problem, obstinately leaving aside the reality of what has been happening before our eyes for decades. This analysis starts from a valid and acceptable postulate, but in this concrete case it presupposes a premise that is not necessarily true.

The postulate is that all the acts of the Magisterium are to be read and interpreted in the light of the entire magisterial corpus, because of the *analogia fidei* [2] [analogy of faith], which is somehow also expressed in the hermeneutic of continuity. Yet this postulate assumes that the text we are going to analyse is a specific act of the Magisterium, with its degree of authority clearly expressed in the canonical forms envisaged. And this is precisely where the deception lies, this is where the trap is set. For the Innovators maliciously managed to put the label “Sacrosanct Ecumenical Council” on their *ideological manifesto*, just as, at a local level, the Jansenists who manoeuvred the Synod of Pistoia had managed to cloak with authority their heretical theses, which were later condemned by Pius VI.^[3]

On the one hand, Catholics look at the *form* of the Council and consider its acts to be an expression of the Magisterium. Consequently, they seek to read its *substance*, which is clearly ambiguous or even erroneous, in keeping with the analogy of faith, out of that love and veneration that all Catholics have towards Holy Mother Church. They *cannot comprehend* that the Pastors have been so naïve as to impose on them an adulteration of the Faith, but at the same time they understand the rupture with Tradition and try to explain this contradiction.

The modernist, on the other hand, looks at the *substance* of the revolutionary message he means to convey, and in order to endow it with an authoritativeness that it does not and should not have, he “magisterialises” it through the *form* of the Council, by having it published in the form of official acts. He knows well that he is forcing it, but he uses the authority of the Church – which under normal conditions he despises and rejects – to make it practically impossible to condemn those errors, which have been ratified by no less than the majority of the Synod Fathers. The instrumental use of authority for purposes opposed to those that legitimize it is a cunning ploy: on the one hand, it guarantees a sort of immunity, a “canonical shield” for doctrines that are heterodox or close to heresy; on the other hand, it allows sanctions to be imposed on those who denounce these deviations, by virtue of a formal respect for canonical norms. In the civil sphere, this way of proceeding is typical of dictatorships. If this has also happened within the Church, it is because the accomplices of this *coup d'état* have no supernatural sense, they fear neither God nor eternal damnation, and consider themselves partisans of progress invested with a *prophetic* role that legitimizes them in all their wickedness, just as Communism’s mass exterminations are carried out by party officials convinced of promoting the cause of the proletariat.

In the first case, the analysis of the Council documents in the light of Tradition clashes with the observation that they have been formulated in such a way as to make clear the subversive intent of their drafters. This inevitably leads to the impossibility of interpreting them in a Catholic

sense, without weakening the whole doctrinal *corpus*. In the second case, the awareness that doctrinal novelty was being slipped into the acts of the Council made it necessary to formulate them in a deliberately ambiguous manner, precisely because it was only in making people believe that they were consistent with the Church's perennial Magisterium that they could be adopted by the authoritative assembly that had to "clear" and circulate them.

It ought to be highlighted that the mere fact of having to look for a hermeneutical criterion to interpret the Council's acts demonstrates the difference between Vatican II and any other Ecumenical Council, whose canons do not give rise to any sort of misunderstanding. An unclear passage from Sacred Scripture or from the Holy Fathers can be the object of a hermeneutic, but certainly not an act of the Magisterium, whose task is precisely to dispel any lack of clarity. Yet both conservatives and progressives find themselves unwittingly in agreement in recognising a kind of dichotomy between what a Council is and what *that* Council – i.e., Vatican II – is; between the doctrine of all previous Councils and the doctrine set forth or implied in *that* Council.

Archbishop Guido Pozzo, in a recent commentary in which he quotes Benedict XVI, rightly states that "*a Council is such only if it remains in the furrow of Tradition and it must be read in the light of the whole Tradition.*"^[4] But this statement, which is irreproachable from a theological point of view, does not necessarily lead us to consider Vatican II as Catholic, but rather to ask ourselves whether it, by not remaining in the furrow of Tradition and by not being able to be read in the light of the whole Tradition, without upsetting the *mens* that wanted it, can actually be defined as such. This question certainly cannot be met with an impartial answer in those who proudly profess to be its supporters, defenders and creators. And I am obviously not talking about the rightful defence of the Catholic Magisterium, but only of Vatican II as the "first council" of a "new church" claiming to take the place of the Catholic Church, which is hastily dismissed as *preconciliar*.

There is also another aspect that, in my view, should not be overlooked; namely, that the hermeneutical criterion – seen in the context of a serious and scientific criticism of a text – cannot disregard the concept that the text means to express. Indeed, it is not possible to impose a Catholic interpretation on a proposition that, in itself, is manifestly heretical or close to heresy, simply because it is included in a text that has been declared magisterial. *Lumen Gentium's* proposition: "*But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place amongst these there are the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind*" (LG, 16) cannot be interpreted in a Catholic way – firstly, because the god of Mohammed is not one and triune, and secondly because Islam condemns as blasphemous the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity in Our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true Man. To affirm that "*the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator*" and that "*in the first place amongst these there are the Muslim*?" blatantly contradicts Catholic doctrine, which professes that the Catholic Church is the one and only ark of salvation. The salvation eventually attained by heretics, and by pagans even more so, always and only comes from the inexhaustible treasure of Our Lord's Redemption, which is safeguarded by the Church. Belonging to any other religion is an impediment to the pursuit of eternal beatitude. Those who are saved, are saved because of at least an implicit desire to belong to the Church, and *despite* their adherence to a false religion – never by virtue of it. For what good it contains does not belong to it, but has been usurped; while the error it contains is what makes it intrinsically false, since the admixture of errors and truth more easily deceives its followers.

It isn't possible to change reality to make it correspond to an ideal schema. If the evidence shows that some propositions contained in the Council documents (and similarly, in the acts of

Bergoglio's magisterium) are heterodox, and if doctrine teaches us that the acts of the Magisterium do not contain error, the conclusion is not that these propositions are not erroneous, but that *they cannot be part of the Magisterium*. Period.

Hermeneutics serve to *clarify* the meaning of a phrase that is obscure or that appears to contradict doctrine, not to *correct it* substantially *ex post*. This way of proceeding would not provide a simple key to reading the Magisterial texts, but would constitute a corrective intervention, and therefore the admission that, in that specific proposition of that specific Magisterial document, an error has been stated which must be corrected. And one would need to explain not only why that error was not avoided from the beginning, but also whether the Synod Fathers who approved that error, and the Pope who promulgated it, intended to use their apostolic authority to ratify a heresy, or whether they would rather avail themselves of the implicit authority deriving from their role as Pastors to endorse it, without calling the Paraclete into question.

Archbishop Pozzo admits: "*The reason why the Council has been received with difficulty therefore lies in the fact that there has been a struggle between two hermeneutics or interpretations of the Council, which indeed have coexisted in opposition to one another.*" But with these words, he confirms that the Catholic choice to adopt the hermeneutic of continuity goes hand in hand with the novel choice to resort to the hermeneutic of rupture, in an arbitrariness that demonstrates the prevailing confusion and – what is even more serious – the imbalance of the forces at play, in favour of one or the other thesis. "*The hermeneutic of discontinuity risks ending in a rupture between the pre-conciliar and post-conciliar Church and presupposes that the texts of the Council as such are not the true expression of the Council, but the result of a compromise,*" Archbishop Pozzo writes. But this is exactly the reality, and denying it does not resolve the problem in the slightest but rather exacerbates it, by refusing to acknowledge the existence of cancer even when it has very clearly reached its metastasis.

Archbishop Pozzo's affirmation that the concept of religious freedom expressed in *Dignitatis humanae* does not contradict Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors*^[5] demonstrates that the Council document is *in itself* deliberately ambiguous. If its drafters had wished to avoid such ambiguity, it would have been sufficient to reference the propositions of the *Syllabus* in a footnote; but this would never have been accepted by the progressives, who were able to slip in a doctrinal change precisely on the basis of the absence of references to the earlier Magisterium. And it doesn't seem that the interventions of the post-conciliar Popes – and their own participation, even *in sacris*, in non-Catholic or even pagan ceremonies – have ever, or in any way, corrected the error propagated in line with the heterodox interpretation of *Dignitatis humanae*. Upon closer examination, the same method was adopted in the drafting of *Amoris laetitia*, in which the Church's discipline in matters of adultery and concubinage was formulated in such a way that it could *theoretically be interpreted* in a Catholic sense, while *in fact* it was accepted in the one and obvious heretical sense they wanted to disseminate. So much so, that the interpretive key that Bergoglio and his exegetes wanted to use, on the issue of Communion for divorcees, has become the *authentic interpretation* in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*^[6].

The aim of Vatican II's public defenders has turned out to be the struggle of Sisyphus: as soon as they succeed, by a thousand efforts and a thousand distinctions, in formulating a seemingly reasonable solution that doesn't directly touch their little idol, immediately their words are repudiated by opposing statements from a progressive theologian, a German Prelate, or Francis himself. And so, the conciliar boulder rolls back down the hill again, where gravity attracts it to its natural resting place.

It is obvious that, for a Catholic, a Council is *ipso facto* of such authority and importance that he spontaneously accepts its teachings with filial devotion. But it is equally obvious that the authority of a Council, of the Fathers who approve its decrees, and of the Popes who promulgate them, does not make the acceptance of documents that are in blatant contradiction with the Magisterium, or at least weaken it, any less problematic. And if this problem continues to persist after sixty years revealing a perfect consistency with the deliberate will of the Innovators who prepared its documents and influenced its proponents, we must ask ourselves what is the *obex*, the insurmountable obstacle, that forces us, against all reasonableness, to consider Catholic what is not, in the name of a criterion that applies only and exclusively to what is certainly Catholic.

One needs to keep clearly in mind that the *analogia fidei* applies precisely to the truths of Faith, and not to error, since the harmonious unity of the Truth in all its articulations cannot seek coherence with what is opposed to it. If a conciliar text formulates a heretical concept, or one close to heresy, there is no hermeneutical criterion that can make it orthodox simply because that text belongs to the Acts of a Council. We all know what deceptions and skilful manoeuvres have been put in place by ultra-progressive consultors and theologians, with the complicity of the modernist wing of the Council Fathers. And we also know with what complicity John XXIII and Paul VI approved this *coup de main* (surprise attack) in violation of the norms which they themselves approved.

The central vice therefore lies in having fraudulently led the Council Fathers to approve ambiguous texts – which they considered *Catholic enough* to deserve the *placet* – and then using that same ambiguity to get them to say exactly what the Innovators wanted. Those texts cannot today be changed in their substance to make them orthodox or clearer: they must simply be rejected – according to the forms that the supreme Authority of the Church shall judge appropriate in due course – since they are vitiated by a malicious intention. And it will also have to be determined whether an anomalous and disastrous event such as Vatican II can still merit the title of Ecumenical Council, once its heterogeneity compared to previous councils is universally recognised— a heterogeneity so evident that it requires the use of a hermeneutic, something that no other Council has ever needed.

It should be noted that this mechanism, inaugurated by Vatican II, has seen a recrudescence, an acceleration, indeed an unprecedented upsurge with Bergoglio, who deliberately resorts to imprecise expressions, cunningly formulated without precise theological language, with the same intention of dismantling, piece by piece, what remains of doctrine, in the name of applying the Council. It's true that, in Bergoglio, heresy and heterogeneity with respect to the Magisterium are blatant and almost shameless; but it is equally true that the Abu Dhabi Declaration would not have been conceivable without the premise of *Lumen gentium*.

Rightly, Dr. Peter Kwasniewski states: “*It is the mixture, the jumble, of great, good, indifferent, bad, generic, ambiguous, problematic, erroneous, all of it at enormous length, that makes Vatican II uniquely deserving of repudiation.*” The voice of the Church, which is the voice of Christ, is instead crystal clear and unambiguous, and cannot mislead those who rely on its authority! “*This is why the last council is absolutely irrecoverable. If the project of modernization has resulted in a massive loss of Catholic identity, even of basic doctrinal competence and morals, the way forward is to pay one's last respects to the great symbol of that project and see it buried.*”

I wish to conclude by reiterating a fact which, in my view, is very indicative: if the same commitment that Pastors have exerted for decades in defending Vatican II and the “conciliar church” had been used to reaffirm and defend the entirety of Catholic doctrine, or even only to

promote knowledge of the *Catechism* of St Pius X among the faithful, the situation of the ecclesial world would be radically different. But it is also true that faithful formed in fidelity to doctrine would have reacted with pitchforks to the adulterations of the Innovators and their protectors. Perhaps the ignorance of God's people was intended, precisely so that Catholics would be unaware of the fraud and betrayal perpetrated against them, just as the ideological prejudice that weighs on the Tridentine Rite serves only to prevent it from being compared with the aberrations of the reformed ceremonies.

The cancellation of the past and of Tradition, the denial of roots, the de-legitimation of dissent, the abuse of authority and the apparent respect for rules: are not these the recurring elements of all dictatorships?

+ Carlo Maria Viganò, *Archbishop*
September 21, 2020
St. Mathew, *apostle and evangelist*

Official translation from the Italian by Diane Montagna

NOTES:

[1] http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/it/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia.html

[2] CCC, n. 114: "By 'analogy of faith' we mean the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation."

[3] It's interesting to note that, even in that case, of the 85 synodal theses condemned by the Bull *Auctorem fidei*, only 7 were totally heretical, while the others were defined as "*schismatic, erroneous, subversive of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, false, reckless, temerarious, capricious, insulting the Church and its authority, leading to contempt for the Sacraments and the practices of Holy Church, offensive to the piety of the faithful, disturbing the order of the various churches, the ecclesiastical ministry, and the peace of souls; in contrast to the Tridentine decrees, offensive to the veneration due to the Mother of God, the rights of the General Councils.*"

[4] <https://www.aldomariavalli.it/2020/09/10/concilio-vaticano-ii-rinnovamento-e-continuita-un-contributo-di-monsignor-pozzo/>

[5] "*At the same time, however, Vatican II in Dignitatis humanae reconfirms that the only true religion exists in the Catholic and apostolic Church, to which the Lord Jesus entrusts the mission of communicating it to all men (DH, n.1), and thereby denies relativism and religious indifferentism, also condemned by the Syllabus of Pius IX.*"

[6] <https://lanuovabq.it/it/lettera-del-papa-ai-vescovi-argentini-pubblicata-sugli-acta>
