

## COMMENTARY ON RECENT PAPERS OF BISHOP SCHNEIDER & ARCHBISHOP VIGANÒ

Bishop Athanasius Schneider, Auxiliary Bishop of Kazakstan, and Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, former Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America, have expressed doubts as to the legitimacy of the Declaration on Religious Freedom of the Second Vatican Council, *Dignitatis Humanae*. Their offerings are remarkable in the extent to which they depart from ‘the party line’ which has been maintained for 50 years within the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. We reproduce them below from their sources on the websites *Lifesitenews*<sup>1</sup> and *The Remnant*<sup>2</sup> and commend our readers to study each carefully *before* reading further in this commentary.

Despite their force, the two papers reveal inconsistencies in reasoning. Bishop Schneider opens by adopting, as reflecting the Church’s traditional doctrine, the Council bishops’ expression in n. 1 of *Dignitatis Humanae* (which repeats their assertion in *Lumen Gentium* n. 8) that “the one true religion *subsists in* the Catholic and Apostolic Church”. This does not, however, express accurately the Church’s traditional doctrine. In fairness he makes amends towards the end of his paper: “Any statement must be avoided that, even remotely, might weaken or obfuscate the divinely revealed truth that the religion born of faith in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God and only Saviour of mankind, is the only religion positively willed by God”. In *his* paper, Archbishop Viganò comments in respect of the expression *subsistit in* that it gave rein to a ‘half error’ which has been seized upon by the Modernists.

Bishop Schneider criticises the Council’s bishops for contradicting themselves. In doing so he raises *the* critical question about the Council: “How can [the fact that truth and error are being asserted in one and the same sentence of *Dignitatis Humanae*] be explained, given that the... statement was made by an Ecumenical Council?” His complaint reflects the concerns of many of the bishops who attended, exemplified in a statement of Sydney’s Cardinal Gilroy, “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?”<sup>3</sup>

Bishop Schneider endeavours to save the Council. He distinguishes *this* ecumenical council from all previous councils by noting that, in contrast with them, it had neither the claim nor the intention to propose its own doctrine in a definitive and infallible way. He notes that certain statements of other ecumenical councils have become obsolete, or forgotten, or have been corrected. His purpose seems to be to show that an ecumenical council may err, though each of the statements he mentions, save one, concerns particular rather than general or

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lifesitenews.com/opinion/bishop-schneider-how-church-could-correct-erroneous-view-that-god-wills-diversity-of-religions>

<sup>2</sup> <https://remnantnewspaper.com/web/index.php/articles/item/4929-vigano-on-revolution-in-the-church-from-vatican-ii-onwards-a-parallel-church-was-built>

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in John W O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, Cambridge Mass., 2010, p. 218

universal issues of faith and morals. The one that does involve an issue of faith concerns *the matter* of the Sacrament of Order (*that which is determined*), not *the form* of the Sacrament, *that which determines its effect*, which is inalterable. Upon this foundation the bishop argues that one may rightly hope and believe that a future pope or ecumenical council will correct the error in *Dignitatis Humanae*. His argument might be reduced to this:

Ecumenical councils may make mistakes.

Vatican II (an ecumenical council) made a mistake.

*Ergo* a future pope or ecumenical council may correct it.

The weakness in his argument is that the correcting pope or ecumenical council may err in turn. Archbishop Viganò is right to say: “This appears to me to be an argument that, although made with the best of intentions, undermines the Catholic edifice from its foundation”.

Archbishop Viganò acknowledges the fundamental flaws in *Dignitatis Humanae* but goes further. The assertion of a right to religious freedom, he says, “contradict[ed] the testimony of Sacred Scripture and the voice of tradition, as well as the Catholic Magisterium, which is the faithful guardian of both”. He proceeds to condemn errors in other documents of the Council and distinguishes it sharply from all previous ecumenical councils.

If an ecumenical council is not infallible, the Church’s claim to be indefectible fails. If an ecumenical council is always infallible the debility of Vatican II is exposed. The solution to the question of the status of Vatican II may be seen in the juxtaposition of Pius IX’s condemnation of a right to religious freedom in *Quanta Cura* and the acknowledgement of the licitness of such a right in *Dignitatis Humanae*. Archbishop Viganò is rightly critical of an interpretation of magisterial acts which would see Pius IX’s teaching as having been “corrected by” Vatican II. It was not corrected: it was overturned—*ipsissimis verbis*. As we have argued on this website for more than ten years, Pius IX’s condemnation of the error of ‘religious freedom’ in that encyclical constituted part of the Church’s infallible teaching and, accordingly, *on this issue if on no other* Vatican II is fundamentally flawed.<sup>4</sup>

Either a council is an ecumenical one or it is not. It is irrelevant to the issue whether Vatican II was such a council that the popes who instituted or fostered it intended it be characterised as “predominantly pastoral”. But it is relevant to the issue that its purpose was not “the discussion of one or another theme of the fundamental doctrine of the Church” for purpose, or end, is the critical determinant of a council’s status. Formality (*what something is*) follows finality (the end, or purpose, for which it exists). If the purpose for which a council is established is inappropriate to an ecumenical council, that council is not an ecumenical one and lacks the charism of infallibility that attaches to it.

Study of each and all of the twenty previous ecumenical councils reveals that some issue essential to the good of the faith had arisen for determination and the Pope of the time (or the Emperor with the Pope’s later endorsement) moved to address it by summoning the Church’s bishops. The *end* came first; the *means* to the end, the council and its character as ecumenical,

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<sup>4</sup> See ebook *The Problem with Vatican II* and [http://www.superflumina.org/PDF\\_files/dignitatis\\_humanae\\_2.pdf](http://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/dignitatis_humanae_2.pdf)

was determined by it. 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.”

In the Appendix to the paper *What went wrong with Vatican II* on this website 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.<sup>5</sup>

Neither Pope John XXIII nor his advisors understood this critical issue of finality when he moved to summon the bishops to the Vatican in 1962. His *Opening Address* indicated 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.

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. 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. The *end* being absent, the *form* which would ensure that the Council’s 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.

Bishop Schneider’s contention that the errors which he recognises in *Dignitatis Humanae* may be corrected by a later pope or ecumenical council is grounded in two false premises: 1. that Vatican II was an ecumenical council which just happened to make an error; and 2. that the error it made falls within the category of those involving particular matters or issues rather than errors about general or universal truths.

He is wrong on the first score for the reasons given above. He is wrong on the second because—as he concedes with his elaboration of the teachings of Tertullian and Melito of Sardis and the consequences of adhering to *Dignitatis Humanae*—the error involved concerned a general or universal truth of faith.

Archbishop Viganò comes close as is possible to acknowledging the fundamental flaw in the claim that Vatican II was an ecumenical council without saying it explicitly when he contrasts it with previous ecumenical councils: “[N]ever in the history of the Church has a Council presented itself like this one as being different from any other... The reason is obvious: those

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.superflumina.org/PDF\\_files/vatican\\_ii\\_www.pdf](http://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/vatican_ii_www.pdf)

Councils were all, indiscriminately, the expression in unison of the voice of Holy Mother Church, and for this reason the voice of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Michael Baker

June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020—*Saints Peter & Paul*

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## APPENDICES

### THERE IS NO DIVINE POSITIVE WILL OR NATURAL RIGHT TO THE DIVERSITY OF RELIGIONS

Bishop Athanasius Schneider  
May 31, 2020, Feast of Pentecost

[Life Site News, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020]

There is sufficient reason to suggest that a cause and effect relationship exists between the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*, and the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, signed by Pope Francis and Sheik Ahmed el-Tayeb in Abu Dhabi, on February 4, 2019. On his return flight to Rome from the United Arab Emirates, Pope Francis himself told journalists: “There is one thing ... I would like to say. I openly reaffirm this: from the Catholic point of view the *Document* does not move one millimetre away from the Second Vatican Council. It is even cited, several times. The *Document* was crafted in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.”

*Dignitatis Humanae* reaffirms the Church's traditional doctrine, stating: “We believe that this one true religion subsists in the Catholic and Apostolic Church,” and it reasserts the “moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ” (n.1). Unfortunately, just a few sentences later, the Council undermines this truth by setting forth a theory never before taught by the constant Magisterium of the Church, i.e., that man has the right founded in his own nature, “not to be prevented from acting in religious matters according to his own conscience, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits” (*ut in re religiosa neque impediatur, quominus iuxta suam conscientiam agat privatim et publice, vel solus vel aliis consociatus, intra debitos limites*, n. 2). According to this statement, man would have the right, based on nature itself (and therefore positively willed by God) not to be prevented from choosing, practising and spreading, also collectively, the worship of an idol, and even the worship of Satan, since there are religions that worship Satan, for instance, the “church of Satan”. Indeed, in some countries, the “church of Satan” is recognized with the same legal value as all other religions.

The only condition that *Dignitatis Humanae* places on religious freedom is that “just public order” be observed (n. 2). And so a religion called “the church of Satan” is able to worship the Father of Lies, so long as they observe “public order” within due limits. Hence the freedom not to be prevented in choosing, practising and spreading the worship of Satan, individually or collectively, would be a right that has its foundation in human nature, and is therefore positively willed by God.

The dangerous ambiguity of this statement is concealed by the fact that it is part of a single sentence, whose first part obviously corresponds to the traditional and constant doctrine of the Church. This first part says: “in religious matters, no one should be forced to act against his conscience” (*ut in re religiosa neque aliquis cogatur ad agendum contra suam conscientiam*, n.2), i.e., no one should be forced against his will to believe in God and accept a religion, even the only true one religion, which is the Christian religion.

Truth and error are being asserted in one and the same sentence — in the same breath, so to speak. The existence and exercise of free will and, consequently, the freedom from external coercion, are founded in human nature itself, and are therefore willed by God. The faculty to choose between good and evil, truth and error, between the only one and true religion and other religions, is founded in human nature. However, one cannot conclude from the existence of the faculty to choose between good and evil, between truth and error, that there follows the natural right to choose, execute and spread error, i.e. a false religion.

Immunity from external coercion in accepting the only one true Faith is a natural right. It is also a natural right not to be forced to carry out evil (sin) or error (false religion). However, it does not follow from this that God wills positively (natural right), that man should not be prevented from choosing, carrying out and spreading evil (sin) or error (false religion). One has to keep in mind this fundamental distinction between the faculty to choose and do evil, and the right to choose and do evil. God tolerates evil and error and false religions; He even tolerates the worship of the so-called “church of Satan”. However, God’s tolerance or allowance (His permissive will) of evil and error does not constitute in man a natural right to choose, practise and spread them, i.e. it does not constitute God’s positive will. Christian Apologists in the first centuries told the pagan civil authorities that, if Christians would worship a false religion, the State could forbid such a religion. The key point in the first-century Christian apologetics was this: to prove the truth of the Christian religion and the falsehood of pagan religions. Tertullian said that all pagan, i.e. non-Christian religions, are “worshipping a lie, and they commit the crime of real irreligion against the truth” (*Apologeticum*, 24). How can immunity from coercion in choosing and committing a crime against the truth be a right based on man’s nature itself and, therefore, positively willed by God? St. Melito of Sardis, a holy bishop and apologist from the second century, said: “The greatest of all errors is this: when a man is ignorant of God, and in God’s stead worships that which is not God” (Eus. *h.e.* 4, 26)

There are two distinct realities. It is one thing to force someone against his conscience to accept a religion and carry out religious acts. It is another to proclaim a natural right, positively willed by God, to choose, practise and spread error and false religions, as in the case, for instance, of choosing, practising and spreading the religion of the “church of Satan”.

For anyone who is intellectually honest, and is not seeking to square the circle, it is clear that the assertion made in *Dignitatis Humanae*, according to which every man has the right based on his own nature (and therefore positively willed by God) to practise and spread a religion according to his own conscience, does not differ substantially from the statement in the Abu Dhabi Declaration, which says: “The pluralism and the diversity of religions, colour, sex, race and language are willed by God in His wisdom, through which He created human beings. This divine wisdom is the source from which the right to freedom of belief and the freedom to be different derives.”

How can this fact be explained, given that the aforementioned problematic statement in *Dignitatis Humanae* was made by an Ecumenical Council? The first basic thing to consider is the fact that both Popes of the Council — John XXIII and Paul VI — and Vatican II itself, clearly stated that, unlike all previous Councils, it had neither the aim nor the intention to propose its own doctrine in a definitive and infallible way. Thus, in his address at the solemn opening of the Council, Pope John XXIII said: “The main purpose of this Council is not, therefore, the discussion of one or another theme of the fundamental doctrine of the Church”. He added that the character of the Council’s magisterium would be “predominantly pastoral” (October 11, 1962). For his part, Pope Paul VI said in his address at the last public session of the Council, that Vatican II “made its program” from “the pastoral character” (7 December 1965). Furthermore, in a note made by the Council’s Secretary-General, on November 16, 1964, one reads: “Taking conciliar custom into consideration and also the pastoral purpose of the present Council, the sacred Council defines as binding on the Church only those things in matters of faith and morals which it shall openly declare to be binding”.

There have been statements made by other Ecumenical Councils that have become obsolete and been forgotten or have even been corrected by the later Magisterium.

Let us consider a few of the obsolete and erroneous statements made by previous Ecumenical Councils, so as not to be scandalized by the fact that a non-infallible affirmation in a conciliar Declaration (not even a Constitution or Decree) like *Dignitatis Humanae*, can be corrected by the Magisterium in the future.

The IV Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (870) harshly condemned Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople, in Canon 4, declaring that he was a “dangerous wolf in Christ’s flock and that he filled the entire world with a thousand riots and agitations, and that he was never a bishop, and all the churches and altars, consecrated by him, should be re-consecrated”. Yet the Byzantine Orthodox Church venerates this same Photios as “Saint Photios the Great and Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople”, and it celebrates his liturgical feast on February 6. With a future union of the Byzantine Greek Orthodox Church and the Holy See, Canon 4 of the IV Council of Constantinople would most certainly be abolished.

The III Ecumenical Lateran Council (1179) stipulated in Canon 26 that neither Jews, nor Muslims, could employ Christians as workers in their homes. It also said that Christians who dared to live in the homes of Jews and Muslims should be excommunicated. Can the Catholic Church today still maintain such an affirmation made by an Ecumenical Council?

The IV Lateran Council (1215) titled an entire Constitution (Constitution 4), “On the pride of the Greeks against the Latins” (*De superbia Graecorum contra Latinos*). Such an affirmation is surely offensive to our separated brethren.

The same Council titled another Constitution (Constitution 26) “The Jews must be distinguished from the Christians by their clothing”. And Constitution 27 states that Jews should not hold public offices.

The Ecumenical Council of Constance (1415), in its 13<sup>th</sup> session, excommunicates those priests who administer Holy Communion under both species.

Let us consider another example. The Ecumenical Council of Florence (1439) stated that the matter (*materia*) of priestly ordination was the delivery of the chalice, and completely omitted any mention of the laying on of hands by the bishop. It stated: “The sixth is the sacrament of the Order. The matter of this sacrament is what confers the Order. Thus, the presbyterate is conferred with the delivery of the chalice with wine and the paten with bread” (Bull of the union with the Armenians *Exultate Deo*, 22 November 1439).

In 1947, Pope Pius XII corrected this error by reasserting the perennial Catholic doctrine, which also corresponded to the liturgical practice of the universal Church, in both East and West. He proposes a definitive teaching, using the following expressions: “After invoking the divine light, We by Our Apostolic Authority and from certain knowledge declare” and “In order to remove all controversy and preclude any doubts of conscience”. This is the decisive statement: “We do by Our Apostolic Authority declare, and if there was ever a lawful disposition to the contrary, We now decree that at least in the future the *transmissio instrumentorum* is not necessary for the validity of the Sacred Orders of the Diaconate, the Priesthood, and the Episcopacy” (Apostolic Constitution *Sacramentum Ordinis*, 30 November 1947).

One may rightly hope and believe that a future Pope or Ecumenical Council will correct the erroneous statement made in the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration, *Dignitatis Humanae*. This error has precipitated a series of disastrous practices and doctrines, such as the interreligious prayer meeting in Assisi in 1986, and the Abu Dhabi Document in 2019. Such practices and doctrines have greatly contributed to the theoretical and practical relativisation of the divinely revealed truth that the religion born of faith in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God and only Saviour of mankind, is the only religion positively willed by God.

In accord with the perennial Magisterium, Pope Paul VI taught that the “Christian religion effectively establishes with God an authentic and living relationship which the other religions do not succeed in doing, even though they have, as it were, their arms stretched out towards heaven” (Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 53).

Any statement must be avoided that, even remotely, might weaken or obfuscate the divinely revealed truth that the religion born of faith in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God and only Saviour of mankind, is the only religion positively willed by God. *Dignitatis Humanae's* assertion that man has a natural right (positively willed by God) not to be impeded in choosing, exercising and spreading, even publicly, any form of religion according to his conscience, and the Abu Dhabi Document's assertion that God wills the diversity of religions, in the same way as He wills positively the diversity of sex (based on man's nature itself), will surely one day be corrected by the Papal Magisterium of the Cathedra of St. Peter — the *cathedra veritatis*. Indeed, the Catholic Church is and will always remain in time (*semper*), in space (*ubique*) and in perennial consent (*ab omnibus*) the “the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15).

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## VATICAN II MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A FALSE, PARALLEL CHURCH

Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò

9 June 2020  
*Saint Ephraem*

I read with great interest the essay of His Excellency Athanasius Schneider published on *LifeSiteNews* on June 1, subsequently translated into Italian by *Chiesa e post concilio*, entitled *There is no divine positive will or natural right to the diversity of religions*. His Excellency's study summarises, with the clarity that distinguishes the words of those who speak according to Christ, the objections against the presumed legitimacy of the exercise of religious freedom that the Second Vatican Council theorised, contradicting the testimony of Sacred Scripture and the voice of Tradition, as well as the Catholic Magisterium which is the faithful guardian of both.

The merit of His Excellency's essay lies first of all in its grasp of the causal link between the principles enunciated or implied by Vatican II and their logical consequent effect in the doctrinal, moral, liturgical, and disciplinary deviations that have arisen and progressively developed to the present day.

The *monstrum* generated in modernist circles could have at first been misleading, but it has grown and strengthened, so that today it shows itself for what it really is in its subversive and rebellious nature. The creature that was conceived at that time is always the same, and it would be naïve to think that its perverse nature could change. Attempts to correct the conciliar excesses—invoking the hermeneutic of continuity—have proven unsuccessful: *Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret*—‘You may drive nature out with a pitchfork; she will always return’ (Horace, Epist. I, 10, 24). The Abu Dhabi Declaration—and, as Bishop Schneider rightly observes, its first symptoms in the *pantheon* of Assisi—was conceived in the *spirit of the Second Vatican Council* as Bergoglio proudly confirms.

This *spirit of the Council* is the license of legitimacy that the innovators oppose to their critics, without realising that it is precisely in the confession of that legacy that is confirmed not only the erroneousness of the present declarations but also the heretical matrix that supposedly justifies them. Looked at more closely it may be seen that never in the history of the Church has a Council presented itself like this one as being different from any other: there was never talk of a *spirit of the Council of Nicea* or the *spirit of the Council of Ferrara-Florence*, even less the *spirit of the Council of Trent*, just as we never had a “*post-conciliar*” era after Lateran IV or Vatican I.

The reason is obvious: those Councils were all, indiscriminately, the expression in unison of the voice of Holy Mother Church, and for this very reason the voice of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Significantly, those who maintain the *novelty* of Vatican II also adhere to the heretical doctrine that places the God of the Old Testament in opposition to the God of the New Testament—as if there could be contradiction between the Divine Persons of the Most Holy Trinity. Evidently this opposition, which is almost gnostic or cabalistic, is functional to the legitimisation of a new subject that is voluntarily *different and opposed* to the

Catholic Church. Doctrinal errors almost always betray some sort of Trinitarian heresy, and it is by returning to the proclamation of Trinitarian dogma that the doctrines that oppose it can be defeated: *ut in confessione veræ sempiternæque deitatis, et in Personis proprietas, et in essentia unitas, et in majestate adoretur aequalitas*—“that in professing the true and eternal Divinity, we adore what is proper to each Person, their unity in substance, and their equality in majesty”.

Bishop Schneider cites several canons of the Ecumenical Councils that propose, in his opinion, doctrines that today are difficult to accept, such as for example the obligation to distinguish Jews by their clothing, or the ban on Christians serving Muslim or Jewish masters. Among these examples there is also the requirement of the *traditio instrumentorum* declared by the Council of Florence [as *the matter* of the sacrament of Holy Orders; MJB] which was later corrected by Pius XII's Apostolic Constitution *Sacramentum Ordinis*. Bishop Athanasius comments: *One may rightly hope and believe that a future Pope or Ecumenical Council will correct the erroneous statement made by Vatican II*. This appears to me to be an argument that, although made with the best of intentions, undermines the Catholic edifice from its foundation.

If in fact we admit that there may be Magisterial acts that, due to a changed sensitivity, are susceptible to abrogation, modification, or different interpretation with the passage of time, we inevitably fall under the condemnation of the Decree *Lamentabili*, and we end up offering justification to those who, precisely on the basis of that erroneous assumption, declared recently that the death penalty *does not conform to the Gospel*, and thus amended the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. And, by the same principle, in a certain way we could maintain that the words of Blessed Pius IX in *Quanta Cura* were in some manner corrected by Vatican II, just as His Excellency hopes could happen for *Dignitatis Humanae*. Among the examples he presents, none of them is in itself gravely erroneous or heretical: the fact that the Council of Florence declared that the *traditio instrumentorum* was necessary for the validity of Orders did not in any way compromise priestly ministry in the Church, leading her to confer Orders invalidly. Nor does it seem to me that one can affirm that this aspect, however important, led to doctrinal errors on the part of the faithful, something which instead has occurred only with the most recent Council.

And when in the course of history various heresies spread, the Church always intervened promptly to condemn them, as happened at the time of the Synod of Pistoia in 1786, which was in some way anticipatory of Vatican II especially where it abolished Communion outside of Mass, introduced the vernacular tongue, and abolished the prayers of the Canon said *submissa voce*; but even more so when it theorised about the basis of episcopal collegiality, reducing the primacy of the pope to a mere ministerial function. Re-reading the acts of that Synod leaves us amazed at the literal formulation of the same errors that we find later, in increased form, in the Council presided over by John XXIII and Paul VI. On the other hand, just as the Truth comes from God so error is fed by, and feeds on, the Adversary, who hates the Church of Christ and her heart: the Holy Mass and the Most Holy Eucharist.

There comes a moment in our life when, through the disposition of Providence, we are faced with a decisive choice for the future of the Church and for our eternal salvation. I speak of the choice between understanding the error into which practically all of us have fallen, almost always without evil intentions, and wanting to continue to look the other way or justify ourselves.

We have also committed the error, among others, of considering our interlocutors as people who, despite the difference of their ideas and their faith, were still motivated by good intentions and who would be willing to correct their errors if they could open up to our Faith. Together with numerous Council Fathers we thought of ecumenism as a process, an invitation that calls dissidents to the one Church of Christ, idolaters and pagans to the one True God, and the Jewish people to the promised Messiah. But from the moment it was theorised in the conciliar commissions, ecumenism was configured in a way that was in direct opposition to the doctrine previously expressed by the Magisterium.

We have thought that certain *excesses* were only an exaggeration of those who allowed themselves to be swept up in enthusiasm for novelty; we sincerely believed that seeing John Paul II surrounded by *charmer-healers*, buddhist monks, imams, rabbis, Protestant pastors and other *heretics* gave proof of the Church's ability to summon people together in order to ask God for peace, while the authoritative example of this action initiated a deviant succession of *pantheons* that were more or less official, even to the point of seeing



Bishops carrying the unclean idol of the pachamama on their shoulders, sacrilegiously concealed under the pretext of being a representation of sacred motherhood.

But if the image of an infernal divinity was able to enter into Saint Peter's, this is part of a *crescendo* which the other side foresaw from the beginning. Numerous practising Catholics, and perhaps also a majority of Catholic clergy, are today convinced that the Catholic Faith is no longer necessary for eternal salvation; they believe that the One and Triune God revealed to our fathers is the same as the god of Mohammed. Some twenty years ago we heard this repeated from pulpits and episcopal *cathedrae*, but recently we are hearing it affirmed with emphasis even from the highest Throne.

We know well that, by invoking the saying in Scripture *Littera enim occidit, spiritus autem vivificat* (The letter brings death, but the spirit gives life, 2 Cor 3: 6), the progressives and modernists astutely knew how to hide equivocal expressions in the conciliar texts, expressions which at the time appeared harmless but today are revealed in their subversive colours. It is the method employed in the use of the phrase *subsistit in*: saying a *half-truth* not so much as not to offend the interlocutor (assuming that is licit to silence the truth of God out of respect for His creature), but with the intention of being able to use the *half-error* that would be instantly dispelled if the entire truth were proclaimed. Thus *Ecclesia Christi subsistit in Ecclesia Catholica* does not specify the identity of the two, but the subsistence of one in the other and, for consistency, also in other churches: here is the opening to inter-confessional celebrations, ecumenical prayers, and the inevitable end of any need for the Church in the order of salvation, in her unicity, and in her missionary nature.

Some may remember that the first ecumenical gatherings were held with the *schismatics* of the East, and... with other Protestant sects. Apart from Germany, Holland, and Switzerland, in the beginning the countries of Catholic tradition did not welcome celebrations that mixed Protestant pastors with Catholic priests. I recall that at the time there was talk of removing the penultimate doxology from the *Veni Creator* to avoid offending the Orthodox who refuse to accept the *Filioque*. Today we hear the *surahs* of the Koran recited from the pulpits of our churches; we see an idol of wood adored by religious sisters and brothers; we hear Bishops disavow what up until yesterday seemed to us to be the most plausible excuses of so many extremisms. What the world wants, at the instigation of Freemasonry and its infernal tentacles, is to create a *universal religion* that is humanitarian and ecumenical, from which the *jealous God* whom we adore is banished. And if this is what the world wants, any step in the same direction by the Church is an unfortunate choice which will turn against those who believe that they can jeer at God. The hopes of the Tower of Babel cannot be brought back to life by a globalist plan that has as its goal the cancellation of the Catholic Church in order to replace it with a confederation of idolaters and heretics united by environmentalism and universal brotherhood. There can be no brotherhood except in Christ, and only in Christ—*qui non est mecum, contra me est*.

It is disconcerting that few people are aware of this race towards the abyss, and that few realise the responsibility of the highest levels of the Church in supporting these anti-Christian ideologies, as if the Church's leaders want to guarantee that they have a place and a role on the bandwagon of *aligned thought*. And it is surprising that people persist in not wanting to investigate the *root causes* of the present crisis, limiting themselves to deploring the present excesses as if they were not the logical and inevitable consequence of a plan orchestrated decades ago. If the pachamama could be adored in a church, we owe it to *Dignitatis Humanae*. If we have a liturgy that is Protestantised and at times even paganised, we owe it to the revolutionary action of Msgr. Annibale Bugnini and to the post-conciliar reforms. If the Abu Dhabi Declaration was signed, we owe it to *Nostra Aetate*. If we have come to the point of delegating decisions to the Bishops' Conferences—even in grave violation of the Concordat, as happened in Italy—we owe it to *collegiality*, and to its updated version, *synodality*.

Thanks to *synodality* we have found ourselves with *Amoris Laetitia*, having to look for a way to prevent from appearing what was obvious to everyone: that this document, prepared by an impressive organisational machine, intended to legitimise Communion for the divorced and cohabiting just as *Querida Amazonia* will be used to legitimise women priests (as in the recent case of an 'episcopal vicaress' in Freiburg) and the abolition of Sacred Celibacy. The Prelates who sent the *Dubia* to Francis, in my opinion, demonstrated the same pious ingenuousness: thinking that Bergoglio, when confronted with the reasonably argued contestation of the error, would understand, correct the heterodox points, and ask for forgiveness.

The Council was used to legitimise the most aberrant doctrinal deviations, the most daring liturgical innovations and the most unscrupulous abuses, while Authority remained silent. This Council was so exalted that it was presented as the only legitimate reference for Catholics, clergy, and bishops while obscuring and connoting with a sense of contempt the doctrine that the Church had always authoritatively taught; as well as prohibiting the perennial liturgy that for millennia had nourished the faith of an uninterrupted line of faithful, martyrs, and saints. Among other things, this Council has proven to be unique in having a multitude of interpretative problems and contradictions with respect to the Magisterium that preceded it; no other council, from the Council of Jerusalem to Vatican I, has shared its demands for interpretation or failed to harmonise perfectly with the Magisterium.

I confess it with serenity and without controversy: I was one of the many people who, despite many perplexities and fears which today have proven to be absolutely legitimate, trusted the authority of the Hierarchy with unconditional obedience. In reality, I think that many people, including myself, did not initially consider the possibility that there could be a conflict between obedience to an order of the Hierarchy and fidelity to the Church herself. What made tangible this unnatural—indeed I would even say *perverse*—separation between the Hierarchy and the Church, between obedience and fidelity, was certainly this most recent Pontificate.

In the Room of Tears adjacent to the Sistine Chapel, while Msgr. Guido Marini prepared the white rocchetto, mozzetta, and stole for the first appearance of the newly elected Pope, Bergoglio exclaimed: *Sono finite le carnevalate!* (The carnivals are over!), scornfully refusing the insignia that all the Popes up until then had humbly accepted as the distinguishing garb of the Vicar of Christ. But those words contained truth, even if spoken involuntarily. On March 13, 2013 the mask fell from the conspirators who were free at last of the inconvenient presence of Benedict XVI and brazenly proud of having succeeded, at last, in promoting a Cardinal who embodied their ideals, their way of revolutionising the Church, of making doctrine malleable, morals adaptable, liturgy adulterable, and discipline disposable. And all this was considered, by the protagonists of the conspiracy themselves, to be the logical consequence and obvious application of Vatican II, weakened according to them, by the critiques expressed by Benedict XVI. The greatest affront of that Pontificate had been the liberal permission of the celebration of the venerated Tridentine Liturgy, the legitimacy of which was finally recognised, disproving the illegitimacy of its ostracization over fifty years. It is no accident that Bergoglio's supporters are the same people who saw the Council as the first event of a *new church*, prior to which there was an *old* religion with an *old* liturgy.

It is no accident—it is undeniable—that what these men affirm with impunity, scandalising the moderates, is what Catholics also believe, namely, that despite all the efforts of the *hermeneutic of continuity* (which suffered miserable shipwreck at its first confrontation with the reality of the present crisis), from Vatican II onwards a *parallel church* has been built, superimposed over and diametrically opposed to the true Church of Christ

This parallel church progressively obscured the divine institution founded by Our Lord in order to replace it with a spurious entity corresponding to the desired *universal religion* that was first theorised by Freemasonry. Expressions like *new humanism*, *universal fraternity*, *dignity of man*, are the watchwords of philanthropic humanitarianism which denies the true God, of horizontal solidarity, of vague spiritualist inspiration and of ecumenical irenicism that the Church unequivocally condemns. *Nam et loquela tua manifestum te facit*—Even your speech betrays you (*Matt. 26: 73*). This very frequent, even obsessive, recourse to the vocabulary of the enemy betrays adherence to the ideology he inspires; while on the other hand the systematic renunciation (by its adherents) of the clear, unequivocal and crystalline language of the Church confirms the desire to detach itself not only from the Catholic *form* but even from its *substance*.

What we have for years heard enunciated, vaguely and without clear connotations from the highest Throne, we find elaborated in a true and proper *manifesto* in the supporters of the present Pontificate:

- the democratisation of the Church, no longer through the *collegiality* invented by Vatican II, but by the *synodal path* inaugurated by the Synod on the Family;
- the demolition of the ministerial priesthood through its weakening with exceptions to ecclesiastical celibacy, and the introduction of feminine figures with quasi-sacerdotal duties;

- the silent passage from ecumenism directed towards *separated brethren* to a form of pan-ecumenism that reduces the Truth of the One Triune God to the level of idolatries and the most infernal superstitions;
- the acceptance of an interreligious *dialogue* that presupposes religious relativism and excludes missionary proclamation;
- the *demythologization* of the Papacy pursued by Bergoglio as a theme of his pontificate;
- the progressive legitimization of all that is *politically correct*—gender theory, sodomy, homosexual marriage, Malthusian doctrines, ecologism, immigrationism...

If we do not recognise that the roots of these deviations are found in the principles laid down by the (Second Vatican) Council, it will be impossible to find a cure: if our diagnosis persists, against all the evidence, in excluding the initial pathology, we cannot prescribe a suitable therapy.

This operation of intellectual honesty requires great humility, first of all in recognising that for decades we have been led into error in good faith by people who, established in authority, have not known how to watch over and guard the flock of Christ: some for the sake of living quietly, some because of having too many commitments, some out of convenience, and finally some in bad faith or even malicious intent. These last ones who have betrayed the Church must be identified, taken aside, invited to amend and, if they do not repent they must be expelled from the sacred enclosure. This is how a true Shepherd acts, who has the well-being of the sheep at heart and who gives his life for them; we have had and still have far too many mercenaries, for whom the consent of the enemies of Christ is more important than fidelity to his Spouse.

Just as, honestly and serenely obeying questionable orders sixty years ago, I believed that they represented the loving voice of the Church, so today with equal serenity and honesty I recognise that I have been deceived. Being *coherent* today by persevering in error would represent a wretched choice and would make me an accomplice in this fraud. Claiming a clarity of judgment from the beginning would not be honest: we all knew that the Council would be more or less a *revolution*, but we could not have imagined that it would prove to be so devastating, even for the work of those who should have prevented it. And if up until Benedict XVI we could still imagine that the *coup d'état* of Vatican II (which Cardinal Suenens called '*the 1789 of the Church*') had experienced a slowdown, in these last few years even the most ingenuous among us have understood that silence for fear of causing a schism; the effort to *repair* papal documents in a Catholic sense in order to remedy their intended ambiguity; the appeals and *dubia* made to Francis that remained eloquently unanswered; are all a confirmation of the situation of the most serious apostasy to which the highest levels of the Hierarchy are exposed, while the Christian people and the clergy feel hopelessly abandoned and are regarded by their bishops almost with annoyance.

The Abu Dhabi Declaration is the ideological manifesto of an idea of peace and cooperation between religions that could have some possibility of being tolerated if it came from pagans who are deprived of the light of Faith and the fire of Charity. But whoever has the grace of being a Child of God in virtue of Holy Baptism should be horrified at the idea of being able to construct a blasphemous modern version of the Tower of Babel, seeking to bring together the one true Church of Christ, heir to the promises made to the Chosen People, with those who deny the Messiah and with those who consider the very idea of a Triune God to be blasphemous.

The love of God knows no measure and does not tolerate compromises, otherwise it simply is not Charity, without which it is not possible to remain in Him: *qui manet in caritate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo*—whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him (1 Jn 4:16). It matters little whether it is a declaration or a Magisterial document: we know well that the subversive *mens* of the innovators plays games with these sort of quibbles in order to spread error. And we know well that the purpose of these ecumenical and interreligious initiatives is not *to convert* those who are far from the one Church to Christ, but to divert and corrupt those who still hold the Catholic Faith, leading them to believe that it is desirable to have a great universal religion that brings together the three great *Abrahamic* religions *in a single house*: this is the triumph of the Masonic plan in preparation for the kingdom of the Antichrist! Whether this materialises through a dogmatic Bull, a declaration, or an interview with Scalfari in *La Repubblica* matters little, because Bergoglio's supporters wait for his words as a signal to which they respond with a series of initiatives that have already been prepared and organised for some time. And if Bergoglio does not follow the directions he has

received, ranks of theologians and clergy are ready to lament over the *solitude of Pope Francis* as a premise for his resignation (I think for example of Massimo Faggioli in one of his recent essays). On the other hand, it would not be the first time that they use the Pope when he goes along with their plans, and get rid of him or attack him as soon as he does not.

Last Sunday, the Church celebrated the Most Holy Trinity, and in the Breviary it offers us the recitation of the *Symbolum Athanasianum*, now outlawed by the conciliar liturgy and already reduced to only two occasions in the liturgical reform of 1962. The first words of that now-disappeared *Symbolum* remain inscribed in letters of gold: *Quicumque vult salvus esse, ante omnia opus est ut teneat Catholicam fidem; quam nisi quisque integram inviolatamque servaverit, absque dubio in aeternum peribit*—Whosoever wishes to be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith; For unless a person shall have kept this faith whole and inviolate, without doubt he shall eternally perish.

+ Carlo Maria Viganò

[Translated by Giuseppe Pellegrino with some corrections in expression by MB]

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